



Summer of Lies

LIE#7: A Man is the Priest of His Home and a Covering for His Family. All a Woman Needs to do is be Submissive.

Week 1: LIE: God uses shame to correct me and change me.

Week 2: LIE: God is not concerned with my everyday life, only the things I do for Him.

Week 3: LIE: Women are not Created to be Leaders

Week 4: LIE: You MUST be Married to Please God

Week 5: LIE: All I Need is God, Who Needs Friends.

Week 6: LIE: God Doesn't Speak to People Today. It was just for Biblical Times.

JUNE 22nd

Summer of Lies: When Scripture is misunderstood. When Scripture is used to deceive. When Scripture is not studied. Join Pastor Mike as he deals with this lie: **LIE #8: God is Angry.**

Join the Wednesday Night Crew along with Pastor Orleen, Pastor Robin and Michelle Ingram in the auditorium at 6:30PM to face this lie and find His truth.

Lie#7: A Man is the Priest of His Home and a Covering for His Family. All a Woman Needs to do is be Submissive.

A Man is the Priest of His Home and a Covering for His family:

1. HOW DO WE HEAR ABOUT THIS CONCEPT?

When is the first time you have heard of this concept?

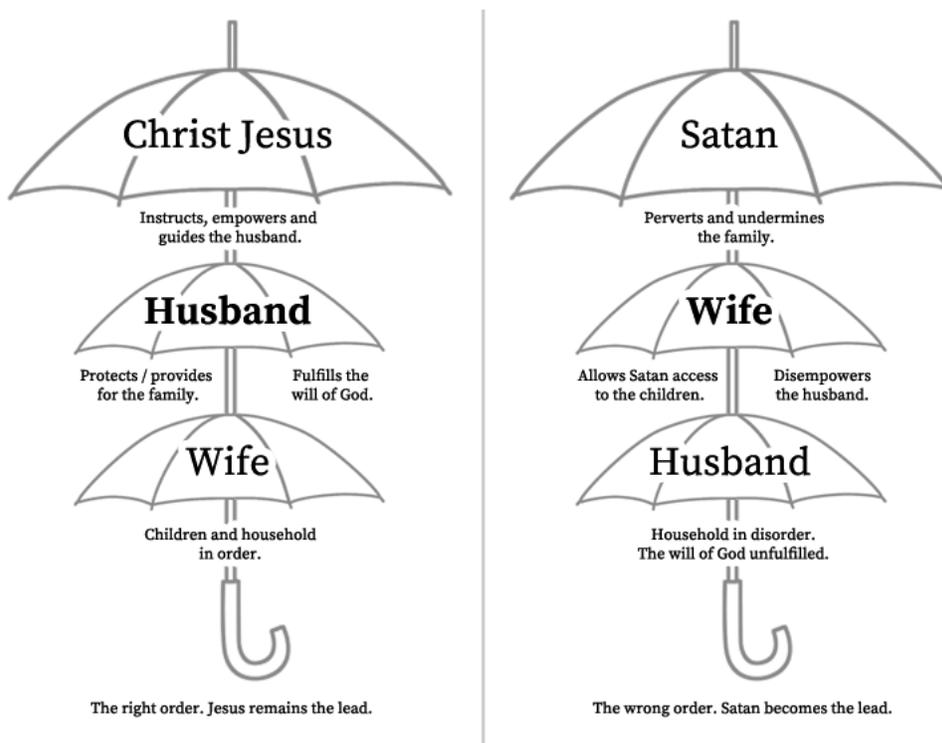
- As a man, how did it strike you?

Encouraging.

Fearfully.

Heady...and overwhelming with the power/responsibility.

I am the boss.



- As a woman, how does this strike you?



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Seriously? Who says so?

I love Jesus.

Is this real?

Bit embarrassed?

Isn't this God's word, so...

- I am a woman who love Jesus intensely, I will find a way to live with it.
- "Why grapple for position when you're already seated on my lap?" Julie Williams
- It is Jesus I love, the rest will take care of itself. I do trust other Christian leaders to know more than me. Pr O

2. CHRISTIANS HISTORICAL VIEW OF WOMEN

[How God Sees Women: The End of Patriarchy by Terran Williams [gs 29-33]

"Women was the author of man's fall...even wit our fingertips, how can we desire to embrace such a sack of dung?" Odo of Cluny 936CE

"It is shameful for a woman to speak in church...calling for complete silence in women, even if they wanted to say something excellent or holy, merely because their words "come from the mouth of a woman". Church Father Origen (184-253)

Church Father **John Chrysostom** (347-407 CE) refused women from teaching anything because "she taught Adam once and taught him badly...Therefore let her descend from the professor's chair! She is now subjected to the man, because of sin." He warned male pastor's to be wary of women as they hold an ability to entice men.

Tertullian, the father of Latin Christianity – North Africa/Carthage (160-225 CE)

"Woman is a temple built over a sewer."

"Do you not know that you are (each) an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway. You are the first deserter of the divine law. You are she who persuaded him who the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert, even the Son of God had to die".

Tertullian also states that women *are not only responsible for their own sexual purity but also for that of men. He wrote long treatises on women avoiding attractiveness – they were not to bathe their dirty bodies but to cover them from head to toe in dark shapeless clothing, and to keep out of the public square so as not to tempt a man. Though they could be redeemed by Christ, nonetheless they were especially bound up by sin, and it was best to segregate and subordinate them.*

Tertullian also introduce Roman Political methodology into church structure to transform it from its organic roots into an organization.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE)



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Could not detect any comparable intelligence in the women he know. He contributed to the church's theology of gender by reviving Aristotle's preposterous idea that females were defective human beings, the result of an accident to the male sperm, which would have produced another male under normal circumstances. The implication of this is that "women are naturally subject to men, because in men reason predominates."

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

"The word and works of God is quite clear, that women were made either to be wives or prostitutes."

- Martin Luther, who was not concerned about sounding politically correct in his views, was insulting when he taught on the role of women. He believed that if women die during childbirth, there is no great loss since women have no real function in life other than to have babies! He wrote: "If women get tired and die of [child]bearing, there is no harm in that; let them die as long as they bear; they are made for that."

John Knox – Scottish Reformer/Founder of Presbyterianism

Women cannot lead..."it is a monstrosity"

Weak. Frail. Impatient. Feeble. Inconstant. Cruel. Lacking in counsel.

Created to be subject to man.

"Not pity is to be offered to women who may suffer in childbirth and in this subjection to man – it is her just deserts in Eve. As such she must surrender all her appetites and will to her husband and to his will.

John Calvin – Reformer "Women are born to obey."

During the 1800s, when the education of women became more common (until then it was considered improper for women to learn anything other than domestic skills), Christian clergymen who opposed the trend actually taught from their pulpits that women were destined by God to be ignorant—and that as a result, schooling them was contrary to divine order. **Some even theorized that females had fewer brain cells.**

The underlying idea that women are created by God to serve men as subordinates has produced a familiar subset of lies that have been taught from pulpits and in Sunday school classes—and even in women's Bible studies taught by other women. Perhaps these statements sound familiar to you:

- Women are more fit for cooking, cleaning, and childcare because they have a God-given inclination for domestic activities.
- Because woman was created to serve her husband, a godly wife shouldn't pursue a career or place her career ambitions above her husband's.
- Because Eve was "given" to Adam as his sexual partner, it is a wife's responsibility to fulfill her husband's sexual desires even if she does not agree with his requests.

3. WHERE DO IDEAS LIKE THIS COME FROM

A. Must ask if this is part of the CURSE in Genesis 3

Man seeking to dominate woman.

Genesis 3:16 (6-24) NRSV *yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."*

B. Must ask how much of this is due to CULTURE



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Structure:

Patriarchy – Kinship model of community (week 13 of Ephesians...Walking in His Amazing Grace)
Male leader makes sure the tribe survives. Everyone does their part. Women are married at 15/17 while men are older. Women are to have children to make sure the tribe survives.

Beliefs:

Dualism – Body/Matter = Evil. Spirit/Mind = Good.

Man is more rational. Works with his mind = Good.

Woman have not rational thought and their bodies are what give them value = Evil.

Women became associated with all physical appetites = Jezebel.

(Gnostic thought)

Church Father John Chrysostom (347-407 CE) taught that Adam and Eve before sin entered the garden there was no sexual activity. “desire for sexual relations ... was removed from their souls”. After the Fall, sex became necessary to produce children. Sin = sexual activity.
Only to create children.

Honor: Celibacy. Virginity. Poverty. Mary being a virgin and only having Jesus as a child.
Priestly celibacy.

Is this type of thought fodder for the statement: The Man is the Priest of the Home?

F.Y.I. SCRIPTURE NEVER SAYS A MAN IS THE PREIST OF THE HOME.

C. Must ask.... Scripture to bring CLARITY. [Nightmare-is it scripture inspired-MAN COVERING...]

1 Peter 2:1-5, 9 NKJV

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

The Chosen Stone and His Chosen People

⁴ Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.^[a]

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones let yourselves be built^[b] into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

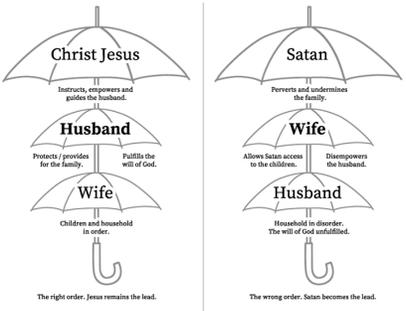
⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people,^[c] in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. NRSV



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Back to the Umbrella Image



- If this were true, how would females find salvation?
- Does Jesus teach that salvations comes in any other way than through Him?
- Does He ever state that it must come through the male head?
- He lived in this patriarchal society. He operated in this patriarchal society.

John 14:6

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many ^[a]mansions; if it were not so, ^[b]I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And where I go you know, and the way you know."

⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Acts 4:11-13

¹¹ This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. ¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

1 Timothy 2:5 NKJV

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

This process of LIES is not new.

- We see it in the Garden. (Question God. Help Define God.)
- Use Scripture to our own advantage.
- Use Scripture to create an Us and a Them. An I instead of a WE.

Curse. Culture. Clarity of scripture... **warning:**

D. The use of Fear as a wrapper for our personal beliefs

John Piper

"We are convinced that a denial or neglect of male authority and female submission will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large."

[How God Sees Women: The End of Patriarchy by Terran Williams [gs 45]

The Creation of Complementarianism:

Some will say it is the original design of Genesis before the Fall.



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	<i>Female inferiority?</i>	<i>Female subordination?</i>
<i>Historic hierarchicalism (100–1960s)</i>	Yes	Yes, because females are inferior
<i>Complementarianism (1960s onwards)</i>	No	Yes, for new reasons
<i>Mutualism (1960s onwards)</i>	No	No

- No longer do we say women are inferior and should not question men's authority over them.
- Now, let us say God has ordained it. And we will prove it with scripture. [Warning! Looking for scripture to back us up instead of scripture leading us to truth.]

Maybe.

Maybe we need more than that.....

Page 47 of How God Sees Women Terran Williams

Prosperity Gospel – Sowing financial seed to the man of God will bring you prosperity

Complementarianism – A socioreligious movement that proports that Genesis states man's authority over women and it should still be in our culture today. Male Headship. Female submission.

Arose around the same time in American church culture: 1970 and packaged to promote in 1980's.

George Knight III

"The New Testament on the Role Relationship of Men and Women"

Cancelled the idea/word "inferior" for women but uses:

- Equal but Different

G. Knight III Based on:

- Speaks about equality in Christ for genders, but insist it had no social implications for gender hierarchies in society and the church.
- He omits any teachings about or from Jesus.
- States subordination was ordained before the fall and
- 1 Timothy 2:11-14 (authentein is a positive authority instead of 'ruling over' aggressive authority); 1 Corinthians 11:3 (Head of woman is man = man's superior rank); 1 Corinthians 14:33-38 shows Paul endorses "the creation order" in churches.

That Eve was deceived (in history used to prove women were inferior morally and intellectually) in an act of role reversal – had ignored and bypassed Adam's authority.

Questions that arise:

- Where does **Genesis 1:26-28** fit in?

²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; **let them** have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every



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creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- **Galatians 3:28**

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- Where are Jesus’ teachings and how He relates to women?
- Where are Paul’s commending of women as leaders?

Knight wasn’t making the headway he thought he was due so...
He devises a campaign with Pastor John Piper and Dr Wayne Grudem.

Wrote: Danvers Statement* (see in notes below)

Formed an organization committed to uphold this belief:

- The Council on biblical Manhood and Womanhood.
- Piper – word Complementarianism (patriarchy and hierarchy because of the negative connotations?)
- Complementarianism = “equality and mutually beneficial differences”.
- Grudem ESV “The most influential creations of the complementarian fold” pg 49
- Crossway publishing

Equal but Different in (in ROLES)

Just a smoke screen.

Separate but Equal = Apartheid

[How God Sees Women: The End of Patriarchy by Terran Williams [gs 27]

4. WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE REALLY SAY?

Old Testament:

A. God interacting in everyday life with Women

- **Genesis 16:13-14** Hagar – God spoke to her and she defined a name of God

¹³ Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, *You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees*; for she said, “Have I also here seen Him who sees me?” ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called *Beer Lahai Roi*; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

- **Numbers 27:1-11** The Daughters of Zelophehad

*Then came the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these were the names of his daughters: **Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.** ² And they stood before Moses, before Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and all the congregation, by the doorway of the tabernacle of meeting, saying: ³ “Our father died in the wilderness; but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the Lord, in company with Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons. ⁴ Why should the name of our father be removed^[a] from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father’s brothers.”*

⁵ So Moses brought their case before the Lord.



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⁶ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ⁷ “The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father’s brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them. ⁸ And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. ⁹ If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. ¹⁰ If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father’s brothers. ¹¹ And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to the relative closest to him in his family, and he shall possess it.’ ” And it shall be to the children of Israel a statute of judgment, just as the Lord commanded Moses.

- **Joshua 14:13-19 15:16-19** Achsah, the daughter of Caleb

Land and then, water.

- **Job 42:12-15**

¹² Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. ¹³ He also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴ And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. ¹⁵ **In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.**

TRUTH OR LIE: A MAN IS CREATED WITH GOD ORDAINED RIGHT TO LEAD AND FOR WOMEN TO BE SUBORDINATE because...

B. God. Adam. Eve. (Gives WHAT to Adam? OR God Does WHAT to Adam?)

God Gives Adam a “Helper”

- **Genesis 2:18** Eve unto Adam

¹⁸ And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”

Genesis 1:26-31

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man[a] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

WHAT DID GOD REALLY “GIVE” ADAM?

- From the process of naming the animals taught Adam what God already knew: Adam could find among them no suitable companion to whom he could relate physically, intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually.
- From the Genesis 1 text, we can identify the LORD’s design of:
 - Man and woman were both created in God’s image.
 - Male and Female were created equal in nature.



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- Women share in the responsibility and authority to create and care for society.

- **What does Genesis 2:18 mean?**

HELP:

5828 עֵזֶר [*`ezer /ay-zer/*] n m. From 5826; TWOT 1598a; GK 6469; 21 occurrences; AV translates as “help” 19 times, and “help meet” twice. 1 help, succour. 1A help, succour. 1B one who helps. (Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon)

“Brings another to fulfillment.”

Of the nineteen times ‘ezer is used in the Old Testament, fifteen times it is used to refer to God helping people.

Examples:

Exodus 18:4 “*My father’s God was my helper...*”

Deuteronomy 33:7 “*Hear, O Lord, the cry of Judah; bring him to his people. With his own hand he defends his cause. Oh, be his help against his foes.*”

Psalms 10:14 “*But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.*”

Psalms 33:20 “*We wait in hope for the Lord; He is our help and our shield.*”

Psalm 59:4 “*I have don o wrong, yet they are ready to attack me. Aries to help me; look on my plight.*”

The four other times it is used to refer to people helping people.

MEET: (Believe this is the only place these two words are combined)

(Heb. *kenegdo*, lit. “corresponding to what is in front of him”)

The word “meet” is most commonly used in contemporary English as a verb meaning “**to come face to face with**”; “to come together”; “to join”; “to settle or fulfill.”

²² *Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”* **Genesis 2:22-23**

Full equality is implied in the means God used to create woman (Genesis 2:22). God took a rib from Adam and used it as the basis for forming Eve. **If God had made Eve as He formed Adam—from the dust of the earth—there would have been no essential connection between man and woman.** Woman would have been a separate and subsequent creation. By using Adam’s rib, God further affirmed the identity of man and woman as humans who were equally possessors of the divine image-likeness.

Full equality was expressed in Adam’s response to Eve (Genesis 2:23). Gordon Wenham, in the *Word Biblical Commentary*, noted that this verse scans as Hebrew poetry. He captured its essence when he described Adam as “in ecstasy,” bursting into poetry on meeting his perfect helpmeet. Adam understood fully the fact that in Eve God had created a person who was “flesh of my flesh”—**a person who shared with him all that it means to be human.** In the deepest sense, Adam and Eve—and the men and women who have descended from them—are not “different” but one. ¹

What does scripture say about:

- **Adam was created first, so he is superior. Women are subordinate.**

Some theologians have taught that since Adam was created first and Eve later, it proves that man is superior to woman. But this is a sexist interpretation that makes no sense unless we also believe that **Adam was inferior to the rest of creation—which God made before He formed Adam from the dust of the earth!** Eve, in fact, was presented to Adam not as an inferior being, but as the crown of God’s

¹ Richards, L. (1998). *Every miracle in the Bible* (p. 38). Nashville: T. Nelson.

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creation to bring the man from a state of incompleteness to a state of fulfillment. She was not his superior, but she complemented the man so perfectly that she could stand beside him as his equal.

Whatever Eve was made from, it was in Adam.

It is like calling himself firstborn when he is divided in half.

“Marriage is not about who is in control or who serves whom. It is about *becoming one*.”

J.L. Grady

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become **one flesh**.

Matthew 19:5-6

and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become **one flesh**’?

So then, they are no longer two but **one flesh**. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Ephesians 5:31

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become **one flesh**.”

TRUTH OR LIE: BECAUSE OF EVE, WOMEN NOW MUST PAY THE PRICE OF THE CURSE UNTIL...

C. The Problem of Sin

Genesis 3:6-

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

⁹ Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

¹¹ And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”

¹² Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”

¹³ And the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ **So the Lord God said to the serpent:**

“Because you have done this,

You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field;

On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity

Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head,

And you shall bruise His heel.”

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16 To the woman He said:

“I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.”

17 Then to Adam He said, *“Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’:*

“Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.”

²⁰ *And Adam called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.*

²¹ *Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.*

²² *Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—²³ therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.*

- Is it God’s intention for woman to be ruled by man?
Or is God saying that now, because sin has entered the world, man will not respect you as his equal? [a consequence of disobedience not a new order from the Lord][Curse of oppression]
- Does the statistic of 1 out of 3 women are sexually assaulted speak to which?
- What affect does the redeeming work of Christ have on the curse of oppression?
- Sweat of his brow...it will now be hard to support a family. The curse of Poverty has entered society
- Is poverty God’s design for society? [Not any more than men wanting to rule women]
- Is God saying men should all have agrarian occupations?
- What affect does the redeeming work of Christ have on the curse of poverty?

Looking for clarity in the New Testament:

1 Corinthians 11:11-12

“In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.”

Philippians 2:1-4

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- Jesus says NOTHING about a husband’s leadership of his wife. WHY?
- If the basis of society depends on it, why did He not instruct the early church to enforce it.

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[Study: Jesus and His treatment of women]

Does Ephesians 5 support the subordination of women or does it support the victory of Jesus' D,B,R in breaking the curse of Genesis 3? [Man&Woman]

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All a Woman Needs to do is be Submissive.**

NOTE:

NO CONVERSATION GOING ON HERE ABOUT WOMEN SUBMITTING TO ANYONE BUT CHRIST and to honor **her husband** with the same process.

INTERPRETING Ephesians 5

There is no break in the letter Paul has written to the Ephesians. Vs 21 blends right in to vs. 22. Btw, vs. 22 does not have the word submit in it. The Greek EXPECTS US to connect vs. 21

Ephesians 5:21

²¹ **Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

- Is Paul asking believers to submit to fellow believers?
- Or just to those in authority over them? (Grudem's view)
- Is Paul asking us to submit to a role? Or to a person?

FOUR INTERPRETATIONS OF EPHESIANS 5:

- The Husband as the Decision Maker - Grudem
- The Husband as the Tiebreaker - Piper
- The Husband as the Servant of His Equal – Williams (MUTUALIST)
- The Husband as Redeemed Paterfamilias – But what if....

Ephesians 5:17

¹⁷ *Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is*

. ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Ephesians 5:21-

²¹ *submitting to one another in the fear of God....*

²² **Wives**, *submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

As the church humbly serves and pleases Christ in everything, so should wives humbly serve and please their husbands in everything. [NO BEGRUDGING. RESPECT. It honor Jesus.]

²³ *For the husband is **head** [source] of the wife, as also Christ is **head** [source] of the church; and He is the **Savior** of the body.*

- Is Paul talking authority as head? Kyrios (lord). Exousia (authority) Proestotes (manage).

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- Why did he use the name Savior and not Lord then for Christ?
- Is Paul focusing on Care and Service instead of authority?
- Head = Kephale “life source” **STATED THAT HE IS ONE, NOT BE ONE**
How is a husband a life source?

Head = Source

The word used here for “head” in the Greek is *kephale*, which can be translated “source,” as the headwaters of a river are the source of the river. If Paul had meant to say, “The husband is the boss of the wife,” or “The husband is the leader of the wife,” he would have used the Greek word *archon*, which is often used in the New Testament to denote authority. Instead, he uses *kephale*, a rarer term. J. Lee Grady

²⁴ *Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

[Subject = Submit like you do with Christ because you are part of man. Take the trusting process you have learned with Christ and apply it to your husband.] [end of wife instruction]

²⁵ **Husbands**, love your wives, just as [WHAT? LOVE Her???]

CULTURAL CONTEXT [J.Lee Grady “10 Lies the Church Tells Women”]:

- Women were viewed as the property of either their fathers or their husbands.
- Women were usually 15-17 years old. 20 is on your way to spinsterhood.
- She no longer in her family home. Her job is to have kids. Help make the family stronger and more productive.
- Men – 30ish. Needed to be able to support and care for their family.
- He is to keep the family together and...they all submit to him, the Patriarch.
He. Is. In. Charge = Power of life and death.
- Men considered women to be ignorant (and most of them were, since men didn’t allow females to be educated).

THERE IS NO ROMANCE. THERE IS SURVIVAL.

- First-century Ephesus was steeped in Greek and Roman culture.
 - Greeks viewed women with disdain – no rights
 - “Athenian law of all periods tended to regard the wife as a veritable child, having the legal status of a minor compared to her husband,” Tucker writes. There were no laws against wife abuse. And if a man divorced his wife for any reason, she was economically stranded; the law gave her no recourse to claim any of his estate. Historian Ruth Tucker
- Romans taught that wives should stay in their place as inferiors.
 - The Roman philosopher Plutarch believed that women “ought to do their talking either to their husbands or through their husbands.”
 - The famous statesman Cato once warned Roman leaders in a speech: “As soon as [women] begin to be your equals, they will become your superiors.”

Lie#7: Man the Priest of the Home/the Covering for Women. All a Woman needs to do is be Submissive.

Husbands LOVE LIKE THIS INSTEAD:

Ephesians 5:25-27

*Christ also loved the church and gave **Himself for her**, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

- In New Testament times: Ruling your family =
Wife shut away in the house to do household chores,
Care for the family farm,
Sexual gratification
Have as many children as possible to help run the farm/business
If she died in childbirth, he found another wife.
If she didn't please him in bed, he paid a younger woman outside the home to meet his sexual needs. If his wife shamed him, he beat her. If she dared to run away, he found her and beat her again. **[HOW DOES ONE LOVE PROPERTY?]**
- The followers of Christ redefined family code.
- Patriarchal is no longer. Jesus leads. ALL OF US.
- THE CURSE OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN IS BROKEN = Yes or No?
- Paul **came with a radically new model of family** that went to the very core of what was wrong with the world: "*Husbands, love your wives*" (Eph. 5:25).
Love their wives "as their own bodies" (v. 28). **This meant that men and women were equals.**
Gender prejudice – NO MORE
- And when Paul told the men to love their wives "as Christ also loved the church" (v. 25), he implied something even more revolutionary: **women are just as deserving of the grace of God as men are.**

Husbands, this is why...

Ephesians 5:28-33

²⁸ *So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.*

²⁹ *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. [Jesus does it]*

³⁰ *For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. [Submit!]*

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³¹ *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”* [What??? LEAVE father and mother...separate family unit]

³² *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* ³³ *Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.* NKJV

- Is there any instruction for the husband to have rule over his wife?
- Is Paul asking the husband and wife to submit to roles? **Or to a person?**
- Is Paul reinforcing the curse of Genesis? “rule over you’?
- Working Together...is this the best fit?

- Is this usage of submit used to state it is to be this way or this is how it functions in our patriarchal society?
- Is Paul saying that a husband “covers” his wife? That a woman needs a man to cover her?
- Salvation runs through the headship of man for a family. **THE MAN IS THE PRIEST OF THEIR HOME?**
The wife must let him make all the final decisions, what he says goes? Doesn’t this sound more like the patriarchal culture that already existed????

In non-military use, it was “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden”.²

We also must note that **the Greek word for submission, *hupotasso*, is written in the Greek middle voice, which means it is something that an individual imposes upon himself or herself.** It means to choose to yield to another, rather than demanding one’s own way. Submission remains the freewill right of the one choosing to yield. *It cannot be demanded from another individual or imposed upon one person by another.* When this occurs, it stops being *hupotasso* and becomes **domination**, which was an attitude Christ forbade His disciples to operate in with regard to one another (Matt. 23:10). Submission is not something that can be required or exacted from another person. J. Lee Grady

But wait.....

Paul appears to be guiding a patriarchal society husband into a new type of relationship with his wife.

And the entire clan:

Ephesians 6:1-9

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² *“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise:* ³ *“that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”*

⁴ *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

Bondservants and Masters

² Strong, J. (1995). In *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

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⁵ *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

⁹ *And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,*

LIE Shield:

Good hermeneutical practices-

Is it clear in the O.T. and in the N.T.

Is Jesus quoted.

Is it a theme throughout scripture.

Scripture interprets scripture.

Is it a foundational principal for faith.

Does it apply anywhere and at anytime. [3rd world country as well as Industrialized]

Who benefits from the teaching if it is true.

Who is marginalized if it is true.

How far away from the importance of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection does it fall.

The Bible is written FOR US not TO US.

Other ways to state a LIE:

- Is Paul saying a Christian wife's submission to her husband is a witness to the world of the churches submission to Christ? [Does an egg represent an object lesson of the Trinity – Shell, White, Yolk]

Functional Subordination Theory

- Is Paul saying a marriage suppose to mirror the relationship of the Son to the Father in the Trinity? [NO. Scripture nowhere supports nor says that we are to model our

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submission to God byway of a relationship with a human. Are we saying then that Christ is not equal with God? Are we using the “equal but different” statement here?

“There is no earthly relationship that can properly depict the relationship within the Trinity.” T. Williams

- Grudem actually coined “Eternal Functional Subordination”. Stating that the Son was always subordinate to the Father. It was never temporary. Smells of the heresy of “Arianism” = Christ was never equal to the Father “in eternal essence” less than the Father. (Gnostic?)

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

John 1:1 HCSB

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Colossians 1:15-16

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

NoTes and more NotEs

2. LEADERSHIP

a. Servanthood

Mark 9:34-35

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But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. ³⁵ And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

[Mark 10:43-44 ESV](#)

But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and...

[Matthew 20:26-27 ESV](#)

It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and...

[Matthew 23:11-12 ESV](#)

The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and...

[Luke 22:26 ESV](#)

But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader...

b. Headship

Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, in her book *Good News for Women*, explains that there are really **two kinds of male headship** from which to choose.

- One is what she calls "life-giving headship," which was instituted by God in the Garden of Eden when He took Eve out of Adam's side.
- The opposing model is what she refers to as "ruling headship," which began with the Fall when man and woman came under the curse of sin. Christian men today often view ruling headship as the godly way to lead a family—but it is the wrong model.

Writes Groothuis: "The biblical headship of the husband described in Ephesians 5 is redemptive, **in that it mitigates the effect of the fall which places the woman under male rule, and it helps to reinstate woman in her creational place of cultural responsibility alongside man.** In life-giving headship, the social privilege and power of maleness is shared by the husband with the wife, and utilized by him according to the terms of love rather than of male conquest and demand. By recognizing her personal and spiritual equality with him, and by putting all that he has and is at her disposal, a husband undoes the male rulership of the Fall and, by God's grace, saves his wife from its effects."

In other words, true biblical headship in marriage can be seen only when the husband:

- (1) recognizes that his wife is his equal**
- (2) loves her sacrificially**
- (3) empowers his wife by allowing her to step into her authority.** (J.Lee Grady)

JUST LIKE JESUS DID FOR THE CHURCH

Origin of woman:

Taken out of man (the source)

"And because she came from him, she as the wife enjoys a unique connection to him that cannot be paralleled by any other human relationship." J. Lee Grady

Mutual Dependence

c. Priesthood

1 Peter 2:5-9

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⁵ You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture:

*“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and **whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.**”*

*⁷ So **the honor is for you who believe**, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”*

⁸ and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Are we placing human relationships above our relationship with God when we enforce cultural roles instead of biblical ones?

Galatians 3:23-29

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Ephesians 5 is not about hierarchy nor patriarchy; it is about the challenge to equality that Christ brings.

COVERING

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 – Head Coverings

² Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. ⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ⁶ For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. ⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man is not from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ¹¹ Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. ¹² For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

*¹³ Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? ¹⁵ But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. ¹⁶ **But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.***

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2 Corinthians 3:18. *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

An Alternative Translation by J. Lee Grady

- Does 2 Corinthians 3:18 contradict Paul's writings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16?
- To veil or not to veil and WHY?
- Greek scholars of the New Testament have suggested that certain verses in 1 Corinthians 11 may actually be quotes from a letter that was written to Paul by leaders in Corinth. Paul, in fact, refers to these letters in 1 Corinthians 7:1 when he says, "**Now concerning the things about which you wrote.**" His answers to their specific dilemmas form the basis of his epistle.
- The Greek language had no punctuation as we do in English to set apart quotations or quoted material. Therefore it is possible that a verse such as 1 Corinthians 11:10,

"Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels," **was a quote from the letter Paul received.**

The church leaders in Corinth, who came from a Jewish rabbinical tradition, **were quoting their rabbinical rules and regulations about head coverings.**

- Yet Paul seems to counter their argument in the next verse, when he says, "However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman" (v. 11).
- He contradicts them again in verse 13 by saying, "Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with head uncovered?" Then, after explaining that a woman's hair is enough of a covering for her head, he makes this curious statement in verse **16: "But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice(custom), nor have the churches of God."**

In other words, it is possible that Paul was saying this: "If you want to fight over this, then let me say clearly that the gospel of Christ does not require us to wear veils."

Creating theological practices from one section of verse – bad hermeneutics

NoTeS:

<https://cbmw.org/about/danvers-statement/>

The Danvers Statement summarizes the need for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) and serves as an overview of our core beliefs. This statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts, in December of 1987. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in Wheaton, Illinois in November of 1988.

Rationale

We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which we observe with deep concern:

1. The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity;

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2. the tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;
3. the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives;
4. the widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women;
5. the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality;
6. the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;
7. the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness;
8. the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts;
9. the consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm of technical ingenuity;
10. and behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

Purposes

Recognizing our own abiding sinfulness and fallibility, and acknowledging the genuine evangelical standing of many who do not agree with all of our convictions, nevertheless, moved by the preceding observations and by the hope that the noble Biblical vision of sexual complementarity may yet win the mind and heart of Christ's church, we engage to pursue the following purposes:

1. To study and set forth the Biblical view of the relationship between men and women, especially in the home and in the church.
2. To promote the publication of scholarly and popular materials representing this view.
3. To encourage the confidence of lay people to study and understand for themselves the teaching of Scripture, especially on the issue of relationships between men and women.
4. To encourage the considered and sensitive application of this Biblical view in the appropriate spheres of life.
5. And thereby

—to bring healing to persons and relationships injured by an inadequate grasp of God's will concerning manhood and womanhood,

—to help both men and women realize their full ministry potential through a true understanding and practice of their God-given roles,

—and to promote the spread of the gospel among all peoples by fostering a Biblical wholeness in relationships that will attract a fractured world.

Affirmations

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood ([Gen 1:26-27](#), [2:18](#)).
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart ([Gen 2:18](#), [21-24](#); [1 Cor 11:7-9](#); [1 Tim 2:12-14](#)).
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin ([Gen 2:16-18](#), [21-24](#), [3:1-13](#); [1 Cor 11:7-9](#)).
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women ([Gen 3:1-7](#), [12](#), [16](#)).
 0. In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 1. In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

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5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
 0. In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7).
 1. In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2).
8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21).
10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

Adam is right next to Eve

Genesis 3:6-7

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

While Eve was deceived. She did not hear the following from God as she was not created yet.

Adam's role in the Garden: **Genesis 2:15**

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **work** it and **keep** it.*

*¹⁵ Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **tend** and **keep** it. NKJV*

- ❖ Work: abad (aw-bad') to work, implied to serve, enslave, bond servant, compel, husbandman, keep, labor, bring to pass, servant, service, be wrought, worshipper.
- ❖ Keep/Take Care of: shamar (shaw-mar') to hedge about as with thorns, beware, be circumspect, **guard, protect**, attend to, take heed, mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, save, sure wait, watch.

Adam is instructed by the LORD about the rules of the Garden (Note: Eve has not been created yet):

Genesis 2:16-17

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¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you^{l1} shall surely die.” NKJV

Adam was wrestling with outright disobedience.

Romans 5:12-13

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Lie #1

God created women as inferior beings, destined to serve their husbands.

MOST ISRAELITES WHO traveled through the Sinai desert with Moses probably knew about the daughters of Zelophehad. While other women hid inside tents and covered themselves head to foot with heavy veils, these girls—Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah—defied the patriarchal system of their day and earned a special place in biblical history.

We rarely hear sermons about Zelophehad’s daughters today, even though they are mentioned in the Bible in three places (Num. 27:1–7; 36:1–12; Josh. 17:1–6). Maybe this is because many church leaders simply don’t want to empower women or are afraid to do so. But it is time we unlocked these women’s secret for a new generation.

It is time for all of God’s daughters to understand who they are, how their heavenly Father views them, and what He has commissioned them to do in His kingdom. The daughters’ portion must be claimed.

You may have been told that as a woman you have only second-class status in the church or that your role is limited because of your gender. You may have even been told that women are less valuable to God or less useful. But the Bible contradicts this view.

In fact, the Old Testament contains accounts of three sets of daughters who were empowered and given their full inheritance—in an age when boys were preferred over girls and women had no civil rights. The stories of these daughters are recorded in Scripture so that you, too, will muster the courage to claim your inheritance.

At a time when most women in Israel lived like prisoners in polygamous households, the daughters of Zelophehad must have spent lots of time outside their tent. They were curious. They had a zest for life. And they refused to be confined by the limitations of their culture.

Why did they think differently than other women of that era? My theory is that their parents had a special love for these girls, and Zelophehad—who had no sons—must have decided after his first daughter was born that he was content to raise a house full of women. He recognized their value. He was generous with his affection and instilled in his daughters a sense of personal destiny.

Zelophehad probably showered his daughters with gifts, held them in his lap after dinner, and told them stories about the exodus from Egypt while he tucked them into bed. They knew their daddy loved them, and his affirmation nurtured a sense of empowerment.

I can imagine these playful girls dancing and singing next to their father’s goat pens as they did their chores. Their ankle bracelets jingled as they skipped past the tents in Manasseh’s encampment.

Neighbors might have even complained about all the giggling that came from Zelophehad’s household. They may have shouted to Zelophehad’s wife, “Tell those girls to be quiet!”

But these girls were not easily silenced. They were God-ordained troublemakers who would soon make history.

As the girls blossomed into women, their confidence grew. They must have started talking among themselves about the problems with patriarchy, finally asking the most forbidden questions: “Why don’t the

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women have any privileges around here? Why can't women own land? Why can't we get an inheritance when we cross the Jordan?"

The Bible tells us that after Zelophehad's death, his daughters went to Moses and made a daring proposal: "Why should the name of our father be withdrawn from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father's brothers" (Num. 27:4).

We can't even begin to imagine how bold and audacious was this request. Women in Israel did not ask for rights. Yet the daughters of Zelophehad risked their reputations by approaching the leader of their nation to ask for something revolutionary.

What is most remarkable is that Moses took their request seriously and sought God about it. Most church leaders who restrict women's involvement in ministry don't pray about this issue at all. They simply consult their denominational policies and traditions, such as "No women in the pulpit," "Women can't teach men," or "Women shouldn't be allowed to lead," and then they reinstate man-made rules that quench the Holy Spirit.

But Moses asked God, and God had a surprising reply: "The daughters of Zelophehad are right in their statements. You shall surely give them a hereditary possession among their father's brothers, and you shall transfer the inheritance of their father to them" (v. 7).

In that moment, God contradicted centuries of prejudice and wrong-headed tradition. He made it clear that in His kingdom, women are not afterthoughts or appendages. They have equal value with men and full rights to His benefits. When God looks at redeemed mankind, through the blood of Jesus Christ, He does not limit women from full participation in His kingdom purposes.

A Daughter's Double Portion

Hidden in another Old Testament book is the story of Achsah, the daughter of Caleb. (See Joshua 14:13–19.) Like Zelophehad's daughters, this daring young woman also claimed territory in the land of Canaan.

Can you imagine what it would have been like to grow up in the household of Caleb, one of Israel's champions of faith? The giants who ruled Canaan did not intimidate this man—and I suspect he imparted that same fearlessness to this young girl.

The Bible tells us that when Caleb inherited his territory in the land of Judah, his daughter approached him with a bold proposal: she asked him for land, in a day when women were not considered worthy of owning anything.

But the story does not stop there. Achsah said to her father: "Give me a blessing; since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water" (v. 19). Caleb, not one to deny his little girl anything, gave her "the upper and the lower springs."

Achsah had spunk. She wasn't satisfied with the status quo. Not only did she boldly ask for land, she asked for more! She pressed forward until she got the water necessary to turn the dry desert into a garden.

Why is this obscure passage included in the Scriptures? I believe the Holy Spirit has woven a subtle theme throughout the Bible, pointing to the fact that redeemed women will inherit the kingdom. They will not live on the sidelines while men partake of heaven's blessings. They will not be penalized from full participation in the church simply because of gender.

Today, God is calling for women of faith to arise and claim land for Him. He is looking for women who have a giant-killer mentality. Dare I say it? He is looking for women with an *apostolic spirit*—women who carry the Great Commission in their hearts, whose burden for souls weighs so heavily upon them that they cannot rest until the whole earth has been filled with His glory.

God wants women who are not content to simply work in the nursery and lead women's luncheons. (Nothing against the nursery, but the church has lost so much of its power by limiting women's gifts to domestic functions.) It is time for women to shake loose from the trappings of religious culture and step into their full potential.

Women can still perform domestic functions within the church (as can men, since all of us are called to be servants). But women can also plant churches, disciple new believers, counsel the addicted, heal the sick, perform miracles, cast out devils, own and run successful businesses, open soup kitchens, feed the poor, get elected to political office, and transform nations for Christ. There is so much territory yet to be claimed.

Perhaps you did not know you could ask for the nations. Perhaps you did not even realize that God has a role for you to play in the evangelization of the world. But as you get to know the Father more intimately, you will come to understand that He is eager to give you more when you are willing to ask for it.

A Beautiful Company of Women

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There is yet a third Old Testament reference to daughters who claimed their inheritance. They are the daughters of Job—Jemimah, Keziah, and Keren-happuch—who are described as the most beautiful women in the land. (See Job 42:12–15.)

Job must have had special affection for these girls. After all, he had lost all ten of his original children years earlier when a storm destroyed his house. When God restored Job's fortunes and gave him double for all that had been taken from him, Job had ten more children. It is interesting to note that the Bible says Job had seven sons and three daughters—and then it provides the names of the girls only.

Then Job 42:15 says: "In all the land no women were found so fair as Job's daughters; and *their father gave them inheritance* among their brothers" (emphasis added).

Why are the daughters' names mentioned but not the sons' names? Why is there a reference to the girls' beauty? And why are we told that they were given an inheritance?

Again, the Holy Spirit is showing us God's heart for women. Although men have abused, marginalized, and oppressed women—even in the church—God will have the last word on this subject. This passage in Job, one of the oldest books of the Bible, offers a glimpse into the last days. It signifies a day when women who are empowered by the Holy Spirit will be fully restored to their place of spiritual authority.

Like Job, human beings were stripped of their dignity and spiritual power because of sin. But when Jesus Christ purchased redemption at Calvary, His blood paid not only the full price for our transgressions, but it also broke the power of shame, guilt, and oppression off women. It made them beautiful again and restored to them their rightful spiritual inheritance.

Do you know that the Lord sees you as beautiful? Perhaps your self-image has been marred by life's disappointments and tragedies. Many women struggle to find their identity in Christ because of sexual molestation, domestic abuse, or the shame of abortion or fornication. Don't let the mistakes of the past or the wounds inflicted by people stop you from gaining your inheritance.

God calls you beautiful. He can take your filthy rags and give you a new wardrobe—one of righteousness and purity. Regardless of the pain of your past, He has a glorious future planned for you.

God has placed a passion in my heart to see women take their full place in the church and society. Perhaps that's because I have four daughters of my own.

As soon as my first daughter, Margaret, was born twenty years ago, I realized that girls are special. So my wife and I kept having more. Meredith was born in 1987. Gloria arrived two years later. Charlotte came along in 1992. Four girls in seven years!

I tell people that I have been drowning in a sea of estrogen since the day we brought that first baby girl into our home. But I have no regrets. I know that the Father does not look at girls as inferior. He did not make them to serve as appendages to men. He created women with unique callings that must be released.

Most of my income today is being spent on their college education, and more will be spent on weddings. I could never deny my daughters any good gift. How much more is the Father willing to lavish His blessings, spiritual gifts, and empowering grace on His girls?

Although you may have experienced gender prejudice in the church, this tragic attitude does not reflect the Father's heart for you. It is His good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Are Women Second Class?

Mission agencies in England told Gladys Aylward that she would never be an effective minister in China. In the 1930s, British women were rarely sent to the foreign field to preach; females could go as missionaries only if they were schoolteachers or nurses. Gladys wasn't a teacher or a nurse, but she couldn't resist the call of God. So she raised enough money to buy a one-way train ticket to China, then went there with little money and no knowledge of the language.

Her story, which climaxed with her brave efforts to save dozens of Chinese orphans from invading soldiers during the Japanese occupation, was the subject of the classic 1964 motion picture *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, starring Ingrid Bergman. Yet despite the impact Gladys Aylward made on China, and despite the lives she protected from certain death, this humble spinster viewed her work as second-rate.

She once admitted this publicly: "I wasn't God's first choice for what I've done for China. There was somebody else . . . I don't know who it was—God's first choice. It must have been a man—a wonderful man. A well-educated man. I don't know what happened. Perhaps he died. Perhaps he wasn't willing . . . and God looked down . . . and saw Gladys Aylward."

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Aylward's humility is certainly admirable. Yet it is sad that she believed her gender relegated her into an inferior category, as if women are God's discount-rate substitutes when His prime, first-choice candidates don't respond. This was also the opinion of Kathryn Kuhlman, one of the most prominent healing evangelists of the twentieth century. She too believed that God commissioned her to preach only because His first choice, a man, did not answer the call.

Although huge crowds jammed municipal auditoriums all over the United States to hear Kuhlman speak, and many were regulars at her Monday night Bible studies at First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, she often apologized for the fact that she was female. She assured her audiences that she knew her "place" as a woman, and she begged people not to think of her as a woman preacher even though she performed marriages and funerals (not to mention many documented healings) and was referred to as "pastor" by some of her followers.

Kuhlman made a strange admission when she said, "I'd give anything if I could have just been a good housewife, a good cook. And I'd like to have had a big family. It would have been nice to have a man boss me around."

Did God draft Kathryn Kuhlman and Gladys Aylward into the ministry at the last minute because a man said no to the Holy Spirit? If not, why would these chosen vessels view themselves as second-class ministers? It's because of a lie.

It's a lie that tells women they aren't good enough and they will never measure up to a man's worth or abilities. It's a lie that tells women they weren't created on the same level with men. It's a lie that says God made man first and then created woman as an afterthought. All these lies have been promoted for centuries by religious people.

It is obvious from the words of St. Augustine (a.d. 354–430) and John Knox (1505–1572)—two celebrated fathers of the Christian faith quoted at the beginning of this chapter—that gender prejudice is certainly not a new problem in the church. This is pride in its most insidious form, a religious pride that has been baptized and institutionalized by men who claim to represent God without realizing that their attitudes grieve the Holy Spirit.

A Theology of Male Chauvinism

Although Jesus modeled a revolutionary new paradigm of empowerment by affirming women as coheirs of God's grace, the church throughout the centuries has not adopted His perspective of gender equality except during rare periods of spiritual revival. In fact, Christian attitudes toward women have in many cases more closely resembled the degrading treatment of women seen in Hindu or Muslim cultures than what Jesus called His disciples to demonstrate.

The Gospel narratives describe Christ's radical acts of liberating women, acts that present a totally new view of women that has never been duplicated by any other religion on earth. But tragically, since the earliest days of the New Testament church, patriarchal attitudes have remained in control, partly because leaders found it easier to live in their traditional ruts than to allow their minds to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, who tells us that "in Christ, there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28).

Jewish patriarchal tradition, which was deeply ingrained in the synagogues of Asia Minor in the first century, infected the church in its infancy and continued the tradition of separating men and women during worship—keeping the educated men apart from the "ignorant" women. As ecclesiastical structures evolved, we find in the writings of most early church fathers a shockingly blatant prejudice against women—if not outright hatred of them.

Tertullian, a respected church father who lived in the North African city of Carthage in the second century, blamed the world's problems on females, and his opinions were modeled by the earliest followers of Christianity. He wrote: "You [women] are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that [forbidden] tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law; you are she who persecuted him whom the devil was not vigilant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert [i.e., punishment] that is, death—even the Son of God had to die."

Respected church fathers of subsequent eras, including the most revered reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin, also viewed women with contempt. Not only did they consider women unfit for spiritual service, but they also viewed them as having only a domestic role in life. The theology they concocted said that women were put on earth simply to serve in the home, have sex with their husbands, and bear children.

Martin Luther, who was not concerned about sounding politically correct in his views, was insulting when he taught on the role of women. He believed that if women die during childbirth, there is no great loss since

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women have no real function in life other than to have babies! He wrote: “If women get tired and die of [child]bearing, there is no harm in that; let them die as long as they bear; they are made for that.” I doubt any pastor or Bible scholar would have the gall to level such an insult on Christian women today. But similar insults are still repeated regularly.

During the 1800s, when the education of women became more common (until then it was considered improper for women to learn anything other than domestic skills), Christian clergymen who opposed the trend actually taught from their pulpits that women were destined by God to be ignorant—and that as a result, schooling them was contrary to divine order. Some even theorized that females had fewer brain cells.

One such sermon from a British pastor, Dr. David Thomas, delivered in London in 1853, infuriated the cofounder of The Salvation Army, Catherine Booth. She wrote Dr. Thomas a strongly worded letter, rebuking him for his chauvinism and predicting that women would one day overthrow such a theory after they were given equal access to educational opportunities.

Booth wrote: “The day is only just dawning with reference to female education, and therefore any verdict on woman as an intellectual being must be premature and unsatisfactory. . . . A brighter day is dawning and ere long, woman will assume her true position, and rise to the full height of her intellectual stature. Then shall the cherished dogma of ‘having a cell less in her brain’ be exploded and perish before the spell of her developed and cultivated mind.”

Today, one hundred fifty years after Catherine’s Booth’s prophetic declaration, her words ring true. Women today excel in all disciplines of learning and have made inroads in all professions. Yet the church is still dragging its feet, forever mired in religious tradition. The ghosts of institutionalized male chauvinism still haunt our churches, our Bible colleges, and our seminaries, and the David Thomases of our day are still telling women that they are less capable, less spiritual, less qualified and less anointed by God for service.

The underlying idea that women are created by God to serve men as subordinates has produced a familiar subset of lies that have been taught from pulpits and in Sunday school classes—and even in women’s Bible studies taught by other women. Perhaps these statements sound familiar to you:

- Women are more fit for cooking, cleaning, and childcare because they have a God-given inclination for domestic activities.
- Because woman was created to serve her husband, a godly wife shouldn’t pursue a career or place her career ambitions above her husband’s.
- Because Eve was “given” to Adam as his sexual partner, it is a wife’s responsibility to fulfill her husband’s sexual desires even if she does not agree with his requests.

These statements have no biblical basis. And no scientific study has ever proven that women are genetically engineered to be more proficient at mopping floors, ironing clothes, or changing diapers. As the father of four girls, I can attest to the fact that my daughters did not come into this world with an innate understanding of how to clean their rooms or make their beds!

Certainly women possess a nurturing and protective instinct that makes them good mothers. But it is a cultural bias, not a spiritual or scientific principle, that women were “made” for the kitchen or the laundry room. This is the most common form of male chauvinism, a burden placed on women by selfish men who want someone to wash their dishes.

In a Christian home where the husband and wife relate to each other as equals and “giving preference to one another in honor” (Rom. 12:10), they will always find a way to share job responsibilities fairly. It’s perfectly acceptable if the husband cooks dinner; some of the most famous chefs in the world are men. Millions of American women do “men’s chores” such as taking out the garbage, mowing the lawn, and making household repairs. Recent childcare studies have shown that even though nature requires a mother to breast-feed her infants, family bonds are healthier when fathers also participate in the care of young children.

Because of personal preferences and physical limitations, there are some domestic tasks women will favor. In fact, many women enjoy fulfilling the role of a stay-at-home mother. But is this every married woman’s God-given inclination? Is the role of housewife and full-time mother her only option?

We insult women when we spiritualize condescension by suggesting that God created Eve in order to provide Adam with a maid, cook, and laundress. Regardless of how a Christian couple decides to provide for their financial needs or how they will divide childcare and household duties, the important issue is that they listen to the Holy Spirit’s guidance and seek His will for their situation.

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The essence of this low view of woman is rooted in the misconception that the first female, Eve, was created by God as an inferior creature with deficient physical strength, less astute mental capacities, and limited spiritual giftedness and that because of her weakness she was meant to live in a state of subordination to Adam. It is the idea that because Eve was deceived by the serpent, she must forever be punished for her disobedience by living in the shadow of her superior male counterpart.

We must read Genesis 1–3 without the lens of cultural prejudice. When we study the Bible, we must *read it* rather than *read into it*. We will discover that the Scriptures do not teach that women have been relegated to second-class status or that they are destined to live in a state of subjugation. These ideas are not implied in the biblical narrative, so why is this view of women still so pervasive among Christians today?

Was Eve Inferior?

The most insulting position taken by the evangelical Christian community is that the first woman in the Garden of Eden was created as an inferior creature who was placed at Adam's side as a subordinate. This view is taught even in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that claim to empower women for ministry.

We often misread the biblical account of Eve's creation in Genesis 2:18–25, in which Adam is provided a “help meet” (v. 18, KJV). The Hebrew word used here is sometimes translated as “companion” in more modern Bible versions. It is a word that denotes intimacy and partnership. But through the centuries, “help meet” has been wrongly used to imply that Eve was some type of domestic appendage.

The fact that Eve was presented to Adam to *help* him does not make her inferior. On the contrary, God had already said, “It is *not good* for the man to be alone” (v. 18, emphasis added), acknowledging that Adam was in an inferior condition without a mate. In the ideal marriage, a wife is a help to her husband, and he is a help to her in return. He is also her “help meet.” Their need for each other and their deep sense of mutual dependence are what make marriage so satisfying.

After Eve's creation, God did not tell her: “You are Adam's helper; I command you to serve him well.” She was not created for servitude; she was fashioned to be a co-laborer with Adam so they could rule together over creation, as they were commissioned to do in Genesis 1:28: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

The command to *rule* was not directed only to Adam. Eve was also commissioned with divine authority. The call to exercise godly leadership and righteous authority is programmed into the spiritual DNA of all women. Yet so many Christians today believe that God no longer offers the daughters of Eve a place of spiritual influence. Is it no wonder that the church has struggled to make an impact on society, when we have denied half the world's Christians their rightful place of rulership?

In the account of Eve's creation, we read that after Adam wakes up from divine surgery and realizes his wife was taken out of his side, he announces, “She is part of my own flesh and bone!” (Gen. 2:23, NLT). This was an amazing revelation to the man. He recognizes that she is his co-equal, a perfect and desirable mate. Then the passage states: “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are *united into one*” (v. 24, NLT, emphasis added).

Throughout Scripture the concept of *union* is the most important biblical theme relating to marriage. The uniqueness of holy matrimony is that a man and a woman can unite in a physical and spiritual harmony that supersedes that which can be achieved in any other human relationship. **Marriage is not about who is in control or who serves whom. It is about *becoming one*.** But a married couple cannot enjoy this deep level of oneness if the man views the woman as an inferior person.

Adam was made in the image of God. The fact that Eve was taken from his side indicates that she also was created from the same divine essence. In certain pagan cultures in the ancient world, people believed that the gods made man out of divine matter and woman out of animal matter. But this is not the case in the biblical story. Both male and female are the children of God.

Some theologians have taught that since Adam was created first and Eve later, it proves that man is superior to woman. But this is a sexist interpretation that makes no sense unless we also believe that Adam was inferior to the rest of creation—which God made before He formed Adam from the dust of the earth! Eve, in fact, was presented to Adam not as an inferior being, but as the crown of God's creation to bring the man from a state of incompleteness to a state of fulfillment. She was not his superior, but she complemented the man so perfectly that she could stand beside him as his equal.

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Theologians have argued that the word *help meet*, also translated as “a helper suitable for him,” places woman in a subordinate position in her relationship with man. Yet scholar Rick R. Marrs of Pepperdine University notes that the word *help meet* in Hebrew *is often used for God*. When the Almighty is described as “our Helper,” we certainly do not assume that He is our inferior! Neither should we draw this conclusion when the word is used to describe Adam’s partner—or her daughters.

Eve is called *ezer*, the Hebrew word for “help,” in Genesis 2:18. This is the same word that is used to describe God as a divine help in Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29; Psalm 33:20; 70:5; 115:9–11; and 146:5. Because the same word is used to describe God, it cannot imply that Eve was inferior to Adam. We should note that the term “Helper” is also used to describe the Holy Spirit in John 14–16. Is the Holy Spirit inferior to man because He is a Helper? Of course not!

We need to clarify that Eve’s subordination to man did not occur at her creation; it was a consequence of sin. God’s original plan was not that women would be oppressed, denied opportunities, beaten by their husbands, mistreated, raped, stereotyped, bullied, or shamed. God’s original destiny for woman—a destiny that was reclaimed and secured by Christ at Calvary—is that she rule on earth through the righteousness of Christ.

Before the tragedy of Adam and Eve’s fall, we see them in the garden as partners in paradise. They had been given an equal level of authority by God over creation, and they lived in a state of intimacy with God and with each other that was untainted by sin. They enjoyed equal access to God’s presence, and Eve could communicate with the Lord in the same way as Adam.

Their equality encouraged a perfection in their love for each other. The unusual description of the first couple’s relationship in Genesis 2:25, “and they were naked and unashamed” (paraphrased), denotes that their marriage was free from the hidden guilt, bitterness, and buried wounds that have the power to destroy human relationships.

But what happened to Adam and Eve’s perfect union after they succumbed to temptation? God handed down punishments to the man, the woman, and the serpent. For the woman, the curse was pronounced with a sense of finality: “Your husband . . . will rule over you” (Gen. 3:16, NIV).

In some cases the church has taught that Eve’s curse was God’s ultimate will for her: from now on, because of Eve’s deception, women must be ruled by men as a form of punishment. But this is not the intention of God for women; it is simply the consequence of disobedience apart from redemption!

Yes, women throughout the world are oppressed by men as a result of the Fall. Look at any sinful culture and you will find the degradation of women through sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, and the lack of political and human rights. But God does not want things to stay this way. He provided a Savior who has borne the curse for us! Whenever the gospel of Christ is preached, women will find liberation from the pain of abuse, domination, and subjugation mentioned in Genesis 3:16.

Consider the judgment that was placed on Adam. He was told that he would have to toil by the sweat of his brow in the fields. (See Genesis 3:19.) These solemn words refer to the curse of poverty—the tragic economic depravity that rules every pagan culture. But we don’t use this verse to teach that abject poverty is God’s perfect will for men any more than we believe that because of Genesis 3:17–19, all males should have agricultural occupations.

The curse of poverty on man—along with the curse of oppression on women—was reversed because of the grace that was released into the world by the finished work of the Savior’s cross. God’s plan to draw all of His fallen creatures back into fellowship with Him through Jesus Christ includes the strategy to restore both men and women to a place of rulership that the first couple enjoyed before Eve listened to Satan’s seductive whispers. Through the cross, women overcome the curse that befell Eve, and they can once again eat from the tree of life.

It is at the tree of life, the place of restored relationship and intimate communion with our heavenly Father, that we find woman’s ultimate calling. Yet we have tried to define a woman’s destiny by the act of disobedience that occurred at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God has offered woman redemption through Christ and deliverance from the curse of sin—yet our tendency is to continue to blame her for Eve’s deception. God created woman primarily for fellowship with Him, yet we often try to define her worth and value only in terms of what she can do for her husband.

The lie says women were made to serve men as inferior partners. The truth, as revealed in Scripture, is that women were created by God as co-equal, joint-heirs of His grace. The lie says women must find their ultimate

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purpose in serving a man. The truth says that women's ultimate destiny can be discovered only as they seek to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1 Questions for Discussion

1. Can you think of a recent example of male chauvinism you've seen in your church or in the broader Christian community?
2. God described Eve as Adam's "helper" or "help meet." Explain what you think this means in light of the fact that the same Hebrew word for "helper" is used to describe God.
3. Explain why it is illogical to conclude that Eve was inferior to Adam just because she was created after him.
4. Marriage is supposed to be a union in which a man and woman learn to flow in harmony as one. If you are married, do you feel you and your spouse treat each other as equals? If not, why not?
5. Part of the curse of sin for Eve was that her husband would "rule over her" (Gen. 3:16). Explain why this is not the ultimate destiny for a Christian woman.

God maintained the order of each sex by dividing the business of life into two parts, and assigned the more necessary and beneficial aspects to the man and the less important, inferior matters to the woman.

— EARLY CHURCH FATHER JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (A.D. 347–407)

A woman's intellect is normally more feeble and her curiosity greater than those of a man. . . . Women should not govern the state or make war or enter the sacred ministry. Thus they can dispense with some of the more difficult branches of knowledge which deal with politics, the military arts, jurisprudence, philosophy and theology. . . . Their bodies as well as their minds are less strong and robust than those of men.

—FRANCOIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE-FENELON
IN *THE EDUCATION OF FEMALES*
PUBLISHED IN THE LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Woman has no call to the ballot-box, but she has a sphere of her own, of amazing responsibility and importance. She is the divinely appointed guardian of the home. . . . She should more fully realize her position . . . is the holiest, most responsible, and queenlike assigned to mortals; and dismiss all ambition for anything higher, as there is nothing else here so high for mortals.

—FUNDAMENTALIST LEADER JOHN MILTON WILLIAMS
IN *WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE* (1893), WHICH USED THE BIBLE TO OPPOSE
THE MOVEMENT TO GIVE WOMEN THE RIGHT TO VOTE

We don't believe there's a place for women elders in the church. When the apostle Paul said that a woman should not "teach or exercise authority over a man" (1 Tim. 2:12), he did not follow that statement with a cultural argument. Rather he went all the way back to creation to show that women weren't intended to dominate men. The reasons he gave are that the woman was created after the man, and that she was deceived when acting independently of his leadership.

—CALIFORNIA PASTOR AND AUTHOR JOHN MACARTHUR
IN A STATEMENT ON WOMEN POSTED ON HIS "GRACE TO YOU" WEB SITE³

Lie #4

A woman should view her husband as the "priest of the home."

WHEN CHRISTIANS TWIST the Scriptures to make them say what they don't mean, the result is obvious: we invent false doctrines. That's what happened when Bible teachers began promoting the idea that husbands should function as "priests of the home." You can research this in a Bible concordance. The

³ Grady, J. L. (2013). *Ten lies the church tells women: how the bible has been misused to keep women in spiritual bondage*. Charisma House.

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phrase can't be found anywhere in the Scriptures. Neither the Old Testament nor the New tells us that men function as priests by representing their wives to God. But this concept has become a primary focus of modern evangelical Christianity.

As a Bible-believing Christian, Mike* had been taught this idea all his adult life. Since the mid-1980s when he and his wife, Jill,* were married, he continually strived to function as the spiritual leader of his home—and his responsibility increased as each of their four children was born. He believed that in order to be a faithful man of God he must always “be in charge.”

Mike also came to believe that if his wife ever stepped into a leadership role of any kind or if her opinions held sway in the home, Satan would be given a license to attack his family. So he insisted on controlling every aspect of home life. Jill was not allowed to pay the monthly bills or handle any aspect of their finances. If the children needed to be disciplined, Mike insisted on spanking them when he came home from work each evening. He made all major purchases—and he got angry with Jill when he discovered that she had bought a lawn chair without asking permission. He insisted on driving when he was in the car with his wife—and even considered it inappropriate for Jill to provide directions.

Mike felt it was his duty to remind Jill constantly that he was the driver in their relationship and that she needed to enjoy the ride. Jill always reluctantly agreed—because she felt God wouldn't be pleased if she didn't respect Mike's headship. She eventually became numb to her husband's controlling demands. Mike was never physically abusive, and his critical comments weren't frequent, but Jill began to feel like a spiritual zombie. Deep down she felt that Mike didn't trust her. And she felt her own desires and dreams were quietly dying.

It all erupted one winter day when their five-year-old son, Tyler,* got the flu. For five days he ran a high fever and had no energy and no desire to eat. In spite of all Jill did to try to strengthen Tyler's immune system by giving him vitamins, the symptoms persisted.

Because Mike and Jill were extremely health-conscious, they always tried natural homeopathic remedies before going to the doctor or taking over-the-counter medicines. But in this instance Tyler didn't seem to be responding to the natural products. So Jill decided to take him to the doctor, and the physician's assistant told her that Tyler had a respiratory infection that might become pneumonia if he didn't take antibiotics.

Jill had the prescription filled and intended to give a dose to Tyler as soon as she got back to the house. But when they arrived and Mike learned about the doctor's report, he told Jill not to give Tyler the medicine. No matter how much Jill pleaded, he refused—saying that the antibiotics might have negative side effects. Jill was so upset and so concerned for her son's safety that she erupted in anger and threatened to give the medicine to Tyler anyway. Mike then shot back: “I am the head of this house! You have to do what I say!”

Jill locked herself in her room and prayed as she wept beside the bed. She felt she'd been pushed into a corner by her husband's ironclad demands. Finally she placed the matter in God's hands. It seemed like the only way to preserve her sanity.

The next morning Tyler was so sick he couldn't get up to the table to eat. Jill felt desperate again, so she dared to express her concerns. “Is it right to withhold something from him that you know will alleviate his symptoms and help him get well?” she asked Mike. “Or would you rather watch him suffer while a bottle of medicine is within our reach?”

Mike looked at his wife with resignation and in a restrained tone said, “Give him the medicine.” Within twenty-four hours Tyler had improved, and in only a few days he was well. Mike and Jill, meanwhile, were nursing the wounds that had resulted from this quarrel. Mike's pride was hurt because he felt his leadership had been challenged. Jill felt exhausted from having to push so hard to help her son. Their marriage was frayed in the process—and they eventually had to seek counseling.

These kinds of disagreements occur in Christian homes every day. In many cases, husbands and wives who argue over an issue will sit down, listen to each other, calmly try to understand the other spouse's perspective and then decide on a resolution. That's the way conflict management is supposed to work. But domestic strife can't be resolved if the husband believes (1) that he is always right, (2) that it is wrong for

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him to defer to his wife, or (3) that his masculinity is weakened if he admits a mistake. If he believes all three of these fallacies, he qualifies as a first-degree tyrant.

Patriarchs Don't Live Here Anymore

Millions of Christian men today believe their spirituality is measured by the level of firm control they can exert over their wives through “male headship,” and they base their beliefs on a wrong interpretation of Scripture. These guys think they are being “real men of God” because they never listen to their wives’ counsel or allow their godly masculinity to be “challenged” by their wives’ opinions. Where did we get the idea that this authoritarian style of leadership is even remotely Christlike?

The rigid, patriarchal view of the Christian family says that men have been placed in the God-ordained role of full-time boss and provider. **The husband’s role, according to the conservative religious model, is to lead and protect his wife, while her role is to trust him and submit to his authority at all times without question.** Since he is supposedly smarter, stronger, and more spiritually capable, the woman has no option but to accept her inferior status.

This view has been derived by misreading the words of Paul in Ephesians 5:23–28:

For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies.

As mentioned earlier in this book, we cannot understand the full meaning of a Bible passage without reading it in light of its cultural context. We must remember that at the time Paul penned these words (probably a.d. 60), women had no rights in society and were viewed as the property of either their fathers or their husbands. Men considered women to be ignorant (and most of them were, since men didn't allow females to be educated).

First-century Ephesus was steeped in Greek and Roman culture. **Greeks viewed women with disdain; Romans taught that wives should stay in their place as inferiors.** The Roman philosopher Plutarch believed that women “ought to do their talking either to their husbands or through their husbands.” The famous statesman Cato once warned Roman leaders in a speech: “As soon as [women] begin to be your equals, they will become your superiors.”⁵

In New Testament times, a man’s idea of “ruling the family” was to keep his wife shut away in the house to do back-breaking chores, tend the family farm, provide sexual gratification, and bear as many children as he wanted so he could have plenty of laborers to harvest the crops. If she died in childbirth, he found another wife. If she didn't please him in bed, he paid a younger woman outside the home to meet his sexual needs. If his wife shamed him, he beat her. If she dared to run away, he found her and beat her again.

Historian Ruth Tucker notes that in Greek society during the New Testament period, most men considered their homebound wives boring—so they typically sought the companionship of *hetaerae*, or professional female escorts. “Athenian law of all periods tended to regard the wife as a veritable child, having the legal status of a minor compared to her husband,” Tucker writes. There were no laws against wife abuse. And if a man divorced his wife for any reason, she was economically stranded; the law gave her no recourse to claim any of his estate.

Yet when Paul introduced the Christian message to the Ephesians, he came with a radically new model of family that went to the very core of what was wrong with the world: “*Husbands, love your wives*” (Eph. 5:25). Perhaps we don't realize what a revolutionary concept these four words were in the first century!

It was even more radical when Paul told the men of Ephesus to love their wives “as their own bodies” (v. 28). This meant that men and women were equals. It meant that Christian men would have to break

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out of their pagan Middle Eastern mind-set and stop looking down on the wives as if they were brainless, inferior animals. Paul's simple words shattered gender prejudice at its core.

And when Paul told the men to love their wives "as Christ also loved the church" (v. 25), he implied something even more revolutionary: women are just as deserving of the grace of God as men are. We find in these tender verses the bedrock foundation for the Christian idea of gender equality.

Two Kinds of Christian Husbands

Paul was blatantly contradicting the worldly philosophy of the ancient world, which taught that men and women live on two different social strata. In the kingdom of God, Paul declared, marriage is different from marriage in the world. Men don't beat their wives; men don't rule their homes like despots; men don't threaten divorce as a means to manipulate or control. In God's kingdom, husbands treat their wives with respect—yes, even as equals.

Paul was declaring in this passage that men are no longer "over" women. Husbands can no longer dominate their wives or treat them like chattel. Now that Jesus Christ has come, the curse of male domination over females that began in the Garden of Eden has been broken. Women have been restored to a place of respect and dignity! This was good news for the women of Ephesus; it is good news for all women today.

But if this is true, then why does Paul still say the husband should function as the "head" of his wife? (See Ephesians 5:23.) Does this not give him the right to dominate her? That depends on whether we want a Christian model of leadership or a worldly one.

After all, didn't Jesus say that leadership was defined by servant-hood?

Ephesians 5 is not about hierarchy; it is about equality. But if we read Paul's words through a warped lens, it's easy to impose our own misconceptions about male-female relationships on the text. That's why we need the Holy Spirit to help us when we read the Scriptures.

Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, in her book *Good News for Women*, explains that there are really two kinds of male headship from which to choose. One is what she calls "life-giving headship," which was instituted by God in the Garden of Eden when He took Eve out of Adam's side. The opposing model is what she refers to as "ruling headship," which began with the Fall when man and woman came under the curse of sin. Christian men today often view ruling headship as the godly way to lead a family—but it is the wrong model.

Writes Groothuis: "The biblical headship of the husband described in Ephesians 5 is redemptive, in that it mitigates the effect of the fall which places the woman under male rule, and it helps to reinstate woman in her creational place of cultural responsibility alongside man. In life-giving headship, the social privilege and power of maleness is shared by the husband with the wife, and utilized by him according to the terms of love rather than of male conquest and demand. By recognizing her personal and spiritual equality with him, and by putting all that he has and is at her disposal, a husband undoes the male rulership of the Fall and, by God's grace, saves his wife from its effects."

In other words, true biblical headship in marriage can be seen only when the husband (1) recognizes that his wife is his equal, (2) loves her sacrificially, and (3) empowers his wife by allowing her to share his authority.

Is this not what Jesus did for the church? He condescended by leaving the glories of heaven and taking on the form of a human being. He gave Himself willingly to die on the cross and then bestowed His heavenly authority on His followers, making us coheirs of His kingdom. This is the pattern Christian husbands must follow. They must humble themselves first by acknowledging that they are on equal footing with their wives. Then they must fully bestow upon their wives the same authority they have—so that together they can rule. This is Christlike headship.

It is a radical concept, and some Christians who have been steeped in the religious tradition of male domination will oppose it violently. Some Christian husbands have made a lifestyle out of being benevolent dictators in the home—and they will most likely quote portions of Ephesians 5 to defend their behavior. Tragically, many women have embraced the idea of being Christian doormats, and they have

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made their subservience such a part of their identity as women that it has become a place of security for them that they cannot abandon—even though the Spirit of God is calling them to a higher place of liberty.

A Better Understanding of Headship

When church leaders raise the issue of male headship, they are referring to two passages in the New Testament: Ephesians 5:23 (“For the husband is the head of the wife”) and 1 Corinthians 11:3 (“the man is the head of a woman”). Some people have assumed that this means men have been designed by God to be the leaders in society, while women are called to be followers. And they assume this is God’s model for the church as well.

But we need to be careful here, noting that in both of these passages Paul is discussing a wife’s relationship with her husband, not a woman’s relationship with all other men. In actuality, it would be a heretical concept to teach that all women are somehow to be placed in subjection to all men. Paul is not talking here about men and women in general. He is discussing marriage in particular.

If we investigate these two passages deeper, we discover that the concept of headship is not really about authority at all. It is about intimacy, mutuality, and the unique connection that exists between a husband and wife. The word used here for “head” in the Greek is *kephale*, which can be translated “source,” as the headwaters of a river are the source of the river. If Paul had meant to say, “The husband is the boss of the wife,” or “The husband is the leader of the wife,” he would have used the Greek word *archon*, which is often used in the New Testament to denote authority. Instead, he uses *kephale*, a rarer term.

Why would Paul say that the husband is the *source* of the wife? In both passages, he is referring to the origin of woman in the Garden of Eden. Adam was the “head,” or “source,” of Eve because she was taken from his side. And because she came from him, she as the wife enjoys a unique connection to him that cannot be paralleled by any other human relationship.

The headship principle, therefore, really has nothing to do with authority in the home. It stresses, rather, the mutual dependence that a man and wife have on each other, and it calls on husbands to nourish and cherish their wives since they have such an intimate connection with them in a spiritual sense. Theologian Gilbert Bilezikian says it best in his book *Beyond Sex Roles*:

Because man as the fountainhead of woman’s existence was originally used to supply her with her very life, and because he continues to love her sacrificially as his own body in marriage, in return a Christian wife binds herself to her husband in a similar relationship of servant submission that expresses their oneness. The imposition of an authority structure upon this exquisite balance of reciprocity would paganize the marriage relationship.

Indeed, if male headship in marriage is not about top-down authority, then why would we impose such a hierarchical concept on male/ female relationships in the church?

We Have One Priest

It is true that husbands function in a priestly role in the home when they pray for their wives and family or when they minister the Word of God to them. But we cannot use the “male headship” reference in Ephesians 5:23 to suggest that wives don’t also function in this same priestly role at home. Don’t wives function as priests when they pray for their husbands? Don’t wives teach the Word of God to their children? Can’t they also teach their husbands, assuming that their husbands are wise enough (and humble enough) to listen to the rich spiritual insights their wives receive from the Holy Spirit?

Many traditionalists act as if only the husband has full access to God’s presence. How ridiculous—and how arrogant! In the throne room of God, His children are not segregated by gender, with men in the holy of holies and women in the outer courtyard. God’s grace is made fully available to women and men alike.

The Bible doesn’t say only men can understand spiritual truths or receive the Holy Spirit’s guidance. When a woman marries, her ability to hear from God is not disconnected. Her authority as a believer in Christ is not surrendered when she recites her wedding vows. Yet this is what we imply when we tell men that they must serve as the sole priests of the home.

Two passages in the New Testament specifically mention the priestly role that a wife can play in her marriage. In 1 Peter 3:1–2, we are told that a Christian woman has the authority in Christ to pull her husband out of disobedience and unbelief. Peter told his readers:

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You wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

Also, Paul told the Corinthians that the woman's authority in Christ can have powerful impact on an unbelieving husband. He writes in 1 Corinthians 7:13–14:

And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

We should never underestimate the power of a praying wife or the power of her Spirit-directed words. A woman who seeks God and intercedes for her family will speak with an anointing that can pierce hard hearts with conviction. Through her prayers, souls can be converted, alcoholic husbands can be delivered from their addiction, and wayward children can be drawn to repentance. Women can rule with God! Why would we want to deny them this God-given place of spiritual authority?

I would certainly not want my wife to stop praying so that I could fulfill all the priestly duties in my family. The two of us are in spiritual partnership. We are co-laborers in the kingdom, and we are both priests unto God. I expect the Lord to speak to my wife. In many instances, the Holy Spirit has shown her things about our future before He has spoken to me. God has never said to me, "I will reveal My will to you for your family, and then you can tell them what I said." He doesn't speak to me first and my wife later, nor does He limit His dealings with her by speaking "through" me alone.

Back in the 1970s, a large number of Charismatic Christians in the United States got involved in what came to be known as the discipleship movement, also known as the shepherding movement. The five ministers who led it from their base in Fort Lauderdale, Florida—Ern Baxter, Charles Simpson, Derek Prince, Bob Mumford, and Don Basham—taught that every Christian needs a personal "shepherd," an older, more mature Christian who can provide counsel about important life decisions. Everyone involved in the shepherding movement had good intentions when they started, but it quickly spun out of control in the 1980s as reports of spiritual abuse became common.

In some churches, pastors told their congregations that they needed to obtain an elder's stamp of approval before taking a new job or relocating to another city. People began to seek permission from their shepherds before making major purchases. A pastor in Virginia told one man in his church that he needed to seek pastoral permission before having another child; another pastor in Michigan chastised a woman because she received a reimbursement check from the Internal Revenue Service and did not seek her shepherd's counsel before spending it. (In many cases these shepherds required their "sheep" to tithe directly to them.)

Many of the people who survived the shepherding controversy without losing their marriages—or their faith altogether—still deal with serious emotional wounds today. Many felt betrayed by spiritual authority; others felt their own relationship with God was stolen from them. By submitting to this form of spiritual abuse, they relinquished the position of access to Jesus Christ that is offered to every believer as a privilege.

Because of the hierarchical structure of the shepherding movement, the sheep were required to go to a man to hear from God. They no longer could approach God for themselves. This often resulted in a sense of worthlessness and shame, and it led to bizarre doctrinal deception because believers started following the teachings of men without listening to the inner witness of the Holy Spirit that is every believer's safeguard.

The shepherding controversy was an embarrassing form of Charismatic excess that became cultic. Yet Bible-believing Christians participate in the same type of cultic behavior when they teach that their husbands must function as their wives' priests. They are, in essence, denying women access to God.

Many Christian traditionalists maintain that women should live in the background and allow their husbands to represent them both to the church and to God. They also teach that the husband is responsible

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for the wife's behavior, as if she were some kind of puppet on a string whom he must manipulate. This is emotionally crippling to women—and it is heretical.

To believe that husbands function as representatives of their wives before God is to believe that women need a mediator other than Christ—and that is the very heresy that sparked the Protestant Reformation! The martyrs who were tortured at the hands of medieval bishops and popes died to defend the doctrine that believers in Christ do not need human mediaries. Why, then, are we promoting today the idea that men must serve as priests for their wives?

The Bible tells us that under the Old Covenant, before the redemptive work of Christ and the advent of the Holy Spirit, God dealt with men through priests. Israel's priesthood represented the people to God and symbolically atoned for their sins by sacrificing animals and offering incense before the holy altar. Of course, their work was simply a foreshadowing of the work of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. (See Hebrews 8:1.)

Before the coming of the Messiah and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God also revealed His purposes through special human messengers who were endowed with a limited measure of the Spirit that enabled them to prophesy and to understand God's will. Under the Old Covenant, God limited His work to these anointed individuals. Yet under the New Covenant, *all* believers have been given the Holy Spirit's power, along with full access to "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. 1:17, NKJV). We do not have to seek out a prophet like Moses or Samuel to know God's will; we don't have to travel to a special place to find God's presence; we don't have to sacrifice animals to find forgiveness or appear before human priests to obtain cleansing.

Now that Jesus has secured our eternal access into the presence of God, the veil that separated Him from the people has been torn from top to bottom. (See Matthew 27:51.) We have been invited to come boldly before His throne. And, most importantly, we now have been qualified to be priests unto God. First Peter 2:5, 9 says:

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. . . . But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

—NKJV, EMPHASIS ADDED

Peter does not tell us here that only male believers in Christ are part of this New Covenant priesthood. There is no reference to gender in this passage because "there is neither male nor female . . . in Christ" (Gal. 3:28, NKJV). Women have been clothed with the priestly garments of holiness, and they have been commissioned to express the authority of His name. No husband has the biblical right to stand in his wife's way, and no wife should dare excuse herself from her higher calling.

Wives Don't Have to Be Wimps

There are, of course, many Christian women who have come to accept the milder, more subtle forms of male domination, and perhaps some of them even enjoy it. They don't want more ministry opportunities, nor do they think other women should push for gender equality. I have heard their arguments often: "I don't want the man's role. My husband provides a spiritual covering for me, and I appreciate it. He's a good provider. I'm glad I have a man to submit to. God speaks to my husband, and I believe I should trust his leadership. God has called women to be meek. I know my place."

It sounds so spiritual! But although it is admirable for a woman to love and trust her husband, submissiveness can actually become a form of idolatry. This happens any time we place a human relationship above our relationship with God. The family is a wonderful creation of God, and we should do everything possible to protect it and enhance it, but we must never love family more than God Himself.

Can a Christian husband become an idol? Yes. Can the ideal of a "happy Christian family" become an idol? Absolutely. How many women have said no to God's will because what He was calling them to do did not match their idea of how a submissive wife should act? How many women have rejected God's plan in order to please their husbands—or their children?

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It is tragic that women would sell their birthrights by settling for such a meager portion. God did not call His daughters to be spineless and passive! He did not destine them to be silent when the world is in need of His witness. When the Holy Ghost energizes a woman, she will feel the fire of God as if it were shut up in her bones (Jer. 20:9), and at that point she will feel as though she must preach, pray, or prophesy. And we the church must not stand in her way. In this hour, we need a generation of holy women who are so consumed with God's purposes that they will not let anything or anyone stop them.

I'm not calling women to be rebellious or to act superior to men. I'm not inviting Christian women to embrace the anger of the secular feminist movement, which teaches women to hate men and to kill unborn babies. But godly women, like godly men, must be as bold as lions. (See Proverbs 28:1.) Christian women need to start roaring!

Traditionalists will condemn this aggressive form of feminine spiritual zeal as inappropriate. They will contend that women must have a "meek and quiet spirit" (quoting 1 Peter 3:4 as their defense) and insist that God's best plan is for men to be on the front lines of spiritual warfare. Don't believe it! Women have a strategic role to play in the army of the Lord; the men cannot do it by themselves.

Does meekness mean women can't preach passionate sermons or storm heaven with prayer? Does meekness mean women can't lead a national campaign to stop injustice in society? Does meekness mean women can't go to Muslim or Buddhist nations and plant churches— even when it is illegal to do so? Does meekness prevent women from charging into blighted urban areas to set up drug rehabilitation programs, feeding stations, and Christian schools to bring social transformation? Jesus was meek, but He took a whip and drove the moneychangers out of the temple.

Jesus was humble, but He looked straight into the eyes of the Pharisees and called them whitewashed tombs. Meekness has nothing to do with wimpishness, and women of God have not been called to be soft and compliant with the devil or cowardly in the face of spiritual challenges.

The history of the church has been enriched by the lives of courageous women who dared to step "out of their place" in society to serve God. The historian Eusebius recorded many of their stories. He tells of Quinta, a woman who was stoned to death under the reign of the Roman emperor Decius because she would not worship idols; of Potamiaena, who was abused by gladiators and then killed when her torturers poured boiling tar on her body; and of the elderly Appollonia, who was burned at the stake after her persecutors pulled out all her teeth with pliers.

Eusebius wrote of these martyrs: "The women showed themselves no less manly than the men, inspired by the teaching of the divine word: Some, undergoing the same contests as the men, won equal rewards for their valor; and others, when they were being dragged away to dishonor, yielded up their souls to death rather than their bodies to seduction."

Foxe's Book of Martyrs tells us of Symphrosia, who was killed under the reign of Emperor Trajan (a.d. 98–117) because she refused to bow her knee to a pagan god. A Roman woman named Felicitas was beheaded during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (a.d. 161–180), and her sons were also tortured and killed because she refused to recant her faith in Christ. Other women were torn in half by metal hooks, laid on hot coals, burned at the stake, drowned in rivers, and even crucified.

Their deaths produced the seeds that gave birth to the bravery of Christian women who would follow. Women like Joan Waste, who was burned at the stake by British Catholics in 1556 because she obtained a copy of the New Testament and memorized large portions of it. Or Teresa of Avila, a sixteenth-century nun who had to hide from her Catholic persecutors because she sought to reform the church by teaching on the love of God. Or Madame Jeanne Guyon, a French Catholic who dared to travel and preach in spite of harsh opposition from her superiors, who told her, "It is the business of priests to pray, not women." Guyon's books were burned, and she spent the last seven years of her life in solitary confinement in the Bastille.

Where would we be today if the brave women of centuries past did not step "out of their place" of passivity to pave the way for the expansion of the kingdom of Christ? What would the world be like if Quaker leader Margaret Fell (1614–1702) had not continued to hold her evangelistic meetings in Boston, even though she was arrested on several occasions and imprisoned for four years? What if eighteenth-

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century Methodist evangelist Sarah Crosby had not spent twenty years of her life riding on horseback to lead gospel meetings in England? What if nineteenth-century missionary Amanda Smith, a daughter of African slaves, had shrunk from her call to India because her Christian critics told her that women shouldn't preach or go to foreign mission fields?

These women didn't let a man stop them from obeying the Holy Spirit's call. They didn't need a man to sanction their ministries or represent them before God. And they didn't wait until a male-dominated church asked them to serve the Lord.

I appeal to you, women of God: let nothing hold you back from fulfilling His call. Don't wait for your husband's permission to pursue God more passionately. Press further into Him, and bring your husband and children with you. Expect to be used by the Holy Spirit to change your world. Dare to ask Him for your holy assignment, and tell Him that you are willing to die to your fears in order to fulfill His mission.

* Names have been changed to protect privacy.

* Not his real name.

Chapter 4 Questions for Discussion

1. Explain the difference between “life-giving headship” and “ruling headship” in a husband. Why is ruling headship not a Christlike way to exercise authority?
2. Discuss the story of Mike and Jill that appears at the beginning of this chapter. How do you think a woman should respond if her husband has an authoritarian view of male headship?
3. Read Ephesians 5:22–29. Why was this instruction to the first-century church in Ephesus such a revolutionary way to describe the relationship between husbands and wives?
4. Discuss ways that husbands and wives both serve God and each other as “priests.” Why is it unhealthy for men to view themselves as the only priests in the home?
5. Peter instructed women to have a meek and gentle spirit. How can women act in this manner and still display courage and spiritual zeal? Do you feel you need to become more bold in your faith? If so, what might be causing you to be passive or fearful?

I am not unacquainted with the word of Paul that women should be silent in the church . . . but when no man will or can speak, I am driven by the Word of the Lord when He said, “He who confesses Me on earth, him will I confess and him who denies Me, him I will deny.”

—ARGULA VON GRUMBACK (1492–1563)

BAVARIAN REFORMER WHO WAS IMPRISONED FOR TEACHING THE BIBLE

The rule is express and plain that women ought not to speak in the church, but to be in silence. . . . And therefore they ought not to vote in church matters, besides voting imports some kind of government, and authority and power: Now it is not government and authority, but subjection and obedience which belongs unto women . . . and so is the practice of women among us.

—NEW ENGLAND CONGREGATIONAL LEADER RICHARD MATHER
(1596–1669)

Meetings of pious women by themselves, for conversation and prayer, we entirely approve. But let not the inspired prohibition of the great Apostle, as found in his Epistles to the Corinthians and to Timothy, be violated. To teach and to exhort, or to lead in prayer in public and promiscuous assemblies is clearly forbidden to women in the holy oracles.

—LAWS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ENACTED BY THE 1837 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Lie #5

A man needs to “cover” a woman in her ministry activities.

SHIRLEY ARNOLD IS a Charismatic preacher and Bible teacher who pastors a church in Lakeland, Florida. She spends much of her time ministering in churches and conferences across the country when she isn't teaching or offering personal prayer ministry at a retreat center called The Secret Place, which she established in 1995 for weary church leaders. Although her husband, Steve, has pastored in the past, he currently co-pastors with her and assists her in her traveling ministry.

Back in the mid-1980s when Shirley was an associate campus pastor at Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma, she and her husband were invited to speak in several churches in Romania. This was prior to the 1989 overthrow of the Communist regime in that country, and Romanian churches at that time were under severe oppression both from dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's government and from stifling legalistic tradition and religious control. Shirley knew it would not be easy to bring her message of the Holy Spirit's joy and liberty to the Christians there, but she walked through every door of opportunity that opened during the trip.

After she and Steve arrived in Timisoara, they were invited to speak at a large Pentecostal church in the city of Cluj. Never in history had a woman stood in the pulpit of that church. The elders of the congregation sat stoically on the stage in large, throne-like chairs during the worship service, looking out over a crowd of three thousand desperate people who had jammed into a building that couldn't seat half that many. Shirley wondered if she would be allowed to speak at all, but she made sure she was wearing conservative clothing and a scarf on her head because she had been warned that Pentecostal tradition required this of all women.

“I looked like the proverbial Romanian grandmother,” said Shirley, who generally preaches in colorful suits, tasteful jewelry and a contemporary hairstyle when she is in the United States.

The leaders of the Romanian church reluctantly had told Steve that Shirley could give a greeting if he preached. So when the music ended he slyly stood and gave a three-minute-long “sermon”—and then invited his wife to the pulpit to give a “greeting” that included numerous Scripture references and lasted more than an hour. In her bold fashion, Shirley taught from the Word of God through an interpreter and challenged the audience to expect God to do miracles in their midst that evening.

Toward the end of the ministry time, a commotion started in the back of the packed auditorium as worshipers began to bring forward a man who appeared to be crippled. Many in the room who seemed to know the man helped slide him up to the altar area. When he was passed all the way to the stage, Shirley learned that he had been in a serious accident several years prior that left him partially paralyzed. She also was stunned when she noticed that the side of his head was misshapen; a crushing blow had literally bashed in his skull. It was not an attractive sight, but Shirley knew that God wanted to visit this church in power.

As the level of faith rose intensely in the room, Shirley chose to look at the expectant faces in the crowd rather than turning to see the elders scowling on the platform behind her. She stretched out her hand and touched the man's head and asked God to perform a miracle. “It was a high moment in my ministry as I watched that man's skull take a new shape right before my eyes,” Shirley told me. “It was a creative miracle performed right in front of everyone.”

Yet after the man stood and was helped back to his seat, Shirley realized that the elders of the church were even more upset than they had been at the beginning of the service. Although they had witnessed the paralyzed man's healing and watched his skull as it was miraculously repaired, they crossed their arms and waited for most people to leave the church. Then they approached Shirley and Steve and filed their complaints.

“You were out of order!” they told Shirley through an interpreter. “God does not permit a woman to minister publicly. God will judge you for this!”

The angry patriarchs then stormed out of the church, leaving Shirley baffled. How could they reject a miracle just because a woman was the instrument God used? She thought of the Pharisees in New Testament times who accused Jesus of being possessed by a demon after He healed a sick person.

Although her encounter with the traditional Pentecostal pastors was not an enjoyable experience, Shirley couldn't help but feel that God had dealt a blow to a powerful religious stronghold at the church in Cluj. It was God Himself who confirmed the message with a supernatural sign.

“I didn't let this intimidate me,” Shirley said. “In fact, when we went back to Romania in 1990 after the overthrow of communism, I challenged a group of eight hundred Bible school students to surrender to the call to ministry. When almost all the women in the room stood to answer that call, the men of the school realized it was time for women to assume their positions of spiritual authority.”

Summer of Lies

Lie#7: Man the Priest of the Home/the Covering for Women. All a Woman needs to do is be Submissive.

Crazy Ideas About “Spiritual Covering”

Like the Romanian Pentecostals who denounced Shirley Arnold’s ministry, many religious leaders in our country have told women that they are “out of order” or insubordinate if they preach or teach biblical truth—especially if men are in the audience. And in many cases, leaders have innocently twisted various Bible verses to suggest that a woman’s public ministry can be valid only if she is properly “covered” by a male who is present. Often women are told that they cannot even lead women’s Bible studies or prayer meetings unless a pastor, deacon, or some other man can provide proper oversight.

Back in the 1970s, one prominent fundamentalist leader taught that single women must remain under the spiritual authority of their fathers until they marry—even if they are responsible adults in their forties or fifties. This man arrived at his conclusion because of a questionable doctrine of “male headship” that has no basis in Scripture and that has been misused to imply that woman must somehow stay under the authority of a man at all times, whether it is her father, her husband, her brother, a male pastor, or some other male relative.

This quirky doctrine—which has evolved into a form of evangelical superstition—has produced some almost laughable practices in the modern church. Some pastors, for example, allow women to carry out almost every imaginable servant ministry by themselves, including secretarial work, child care, Sunday school teaching, and janitorial duty. No oversight is provided for any of these tasks. But if the responsibility includes addressing the church in a public way through teaching, preaching, or giving a testimony, or if the task requires the woman to have authority over men, they insist that a man must “cover” her.

One single Christian woman I know felt the Holy Spirit prompted her to organize a special evangelistic activity for children on Halloween as an alternative to trick-or-treating. A creative, gifted administrator, she planned to organize the volunteers for the event, purchase all the candy and decorations, make posters, and advertise in local neighborhoods. But before she could begin the project, her pastor came to her with questions. He did not feel it would be proper for her to oversee such an event because she might have to exercise authority over a man without the appropriate “covering.”

Another woman I know was told that she could not start a backyard Bible school class in her neighborhood during the summer unless her husband agreed to be present at each session and teach all the Bible lessons. Her church elders said she could plan each day’s crafts and make all the snacks, but the “spiritual” aspects of the outreach had to be conducted by a man since he is the proper “covering.”

Confusion always follows when this kind of policy is enforced in a church. That’s because the “male headship” rule is vague, unwritten, and ill-defined—and it is usually applied arbitrarily. For example, during the last two centuries, church leaders who don’t allow women to preach or teach without proper “covering” in their local church have sent them to foreign mission fields to pioneer churches, start orphanages, or evangelize unreached tribes. The strange rationale used in these situations suggests that God doesn’t require the same covering on the mission field since it is too difficult to send a man overseas just to watch the woman work. Does God override the headship policy, then, when it is not financially feasible?

In most cases the “covering” rule simply means that a man must be present when a woman leads a particular spiritual activity—unless, for example, she is teaching only children. Perhaps the idea is that youngsters are not as vulnerable to deception. Or perhaps they don’t matter as much to God. This is certainly what we imply when we invent such ridiculous rules.

If a woman preaches to adults, the headship doctrine requires her husband or another male authority to be in the room. If she is not married, another male authority must be present. If she leads a prayer meeting, at least one man must provide oversight, even if he simply watches from the back row.

But does this policy make sense? And does it have any biblical basis? What does a man’s presence do for the woman who is ministering? Does the fact that a male is present make the woman’s spiritual gifting more legitimate? Does his authority as a man validate her message? Does his presence in the room prevent the woman from slipping into spiritual error of some kind? Does the presence of a man in a room cause the Holy Spirit to favor what is being accomplished? Conversely, does the Holy Spirit withdraw His blessing from a Bible study or prayer meeting if only women are involved in it?

And what about situations in which women minister outside the confines of the church? If a woman senses the Holy Spirit leading her to share the gospel with an unbelieving man in the parking lot at the grocery store, does she need another Christian man to “cover” her while she shares her testimony or reads to him from an evangelistic tract? If she is invited to speak about her faith to a Bible study group in her workplace, should she turn down the opportunity if there isn’t a male co-worker available to “cover” her?

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How ridiculous that we must even ask such questions in the twenty-first century! Do we not believe that it is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that brings about spiritual results—whether in a church service, at a prayer meeting, in a Bible study or on the streets? If the Holy Spirit’s power is necessary to bring about genuine spiritual impact, then what difference does it make whether the vessel He uses is male or female? To say that the presence of a man adds credibility to prayer or Spirit-empowered ministry is to trust in the flesh—a sin that the Old Testament tells us brings God’s curse. (See Jeremiah 17:5.)

Does a Woman Need a “Covering”?

There is certainly no verse in the Bible that says, “If a woman teaches My Word, make sure a man is present so she will be covered properly.” And there is no passage in Scripture that warns women, “Let every woman be properly submitted to a man so she will not get out of line and lead My people into deception.” Nor does the Bible say, “Since man is the head of woman, she cannot minister in My name unless her male spiritual authority is carefully watching every move she makes.”

Yet conservative Christians today cite these nonexistent “verses” repeatedly when they impose their man-made limitations on women’s spiritual callings and ministries. Why do we add words to the Bible to make it say things that it doesn’t say?

What traditionalists usually cite, if they use the Bible to support their unbiblical view of “male headship,” is two passages from 1 Corinthians 11. Verse 3 says:

But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

Then, a few sentences later in a discussion about whether first-century Christian women in Corinth could worship without head coverings, the apostle Paul says in verse 10:

So a woman should wear a covering on her head as a sign of authority because the angels are watching.

—NLT

Interestingly, those who use Paul’s words here to prohibit women from ministry miss a key point in verse 5, which states:

But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved.

—EMPHASIS ADDED

Notice that the apostle here does not attempt to stop the women of Corinth from praying in a public worship service or from delivering a prophetic message from God. The contentious issue being addressed in this passage is not female prophets. In fact, it would seem that Paul is rather accustomed to having women preach and pray in the early church; we know also that Paul had many female associates whom he considered valuable apostolic “co-workers” and whom he commissioned to carry out his gospel ministry. This is why we must conclude that what he is addressing in this passage in 1 Corinthians is not what women can or cannot do in the ministry but *how they do it*.

While we must acknowledge that this is a complex passage to interpret (some theologians rank 1 Corinthians 11:1–16 as one of the top three or four most difficult sections of Scripture in the whole Bible), we can arrive at three simple conclusions after studying it carefully:

1. Women who have been redeemed by Christ don’t need a superficial spiritual covering.

Although scholars disagree on the details of the context of this verse, it is safe to say that a dispute had arisen in the Corinthian church over whether women should wear head coverings during public worship. We are not certain what these coverings were. Some scholars suggest they were veils; others say they were similar to the Jewish prayer shawl known as the *tallith*—which men wore to signify both reverence before God and an acknowledgment of shame and sinfulness. Whatever the coverings were, the controversy stirred by them had created ugly divisions in the church, and leaders had appealed to Paul for an apostolic resolution to the matter (v. 18).

Some scholars, including American pioneer evangelist Katherine Bushnell, contend that the real purpose behind Paul’s message on head coverings was to forbid the use of them on men. She notes in her 1923 book, *God’s Word to Women*, that early Christians took a strong stand against the Jewish practice of covering the head during worship because it was a sign of the guilt and condemnation that Christ came to remove from us. (This practice has evolved to the use of the *yarmulke* by Jewish men today.) First-century Jewish believers, by continuing to wear the head coverings, were not acknowledging the atoning grace of Christ’s redemption, and this is why Paul says in verse 4, “Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying, disgraces his head.”

Yet the situation was more complicated for women. Most theologians believe that some enthusiastic women converts had discontinued wearing these head coverings because they had come to understand that in Christ they were free from such legalistic requirements. They were rejecting a Jewish religious code that was still very much enforced in the early Christian church. They apparently understood, and rightly so, that they did not need a head

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covering to approach God—because salvation cannot be earned through the law. Salvation is the free gift of the Father because of Jesus Christ’s obedience on the cross; we cannot earn it by our adherence to religious rules or dress codes.

Yet Paul here calls for propriety and order and seems to be saying to these women that it would be better for them to have their heads covered out of a motive of cultural sensitivity—even though the covering was not necessary to bring them into God’s presence or to grant them spiritual favor. Apparently, in Corinthian society, it was considered disgraceful for women to worship without this head covering. In fact, some Greeks associated uncovered women with prostitutes who were known to shave their heads or wear their hair in a wild, loose fashion. Theologian Judy Brown, author of *Women Ministers According to Scripture*, suggests that the covering was designed to hide a woman’s hair:

It seems that a married woman’s hair was regarded as such a display of her feminine beauty that it was reserved for her husband’s eyes alone. For her to uncover her hair in public was an act of immodesty and a display of disrespect for her husband. Amongst Jews, it was grounds for divorce. An honorable wife would not wish to shame her husband by appearing to be single or promiscuous, so she would be sure to cover her hair properly.

It is also entirely possible that some of the women who were violating this cultural rule were converts who were married to unconverted Jews. The Christian women, by breaking tradition, were setting themselves up for serious marital strife. Quite possibly some of the women also were flagrantly ignoring their husbands’ concerns or even treating them with contempt.

So Paul acknowledges that it would be best for the female converts of Corinth to continue wearing head coverings. Yet in his concluding words on the subject he makes this curious statement in 1 Corinthians 11:13: “Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with head uncovered?” Then he says that a woman’s hair is “a glory” and “is given to her for a covering” (v. 15), as if to say that her hair is a sufficient covering and should be displayed.

Paul recognizes here that God has already “covered” His daughters. They do not have to live in shame anymore because Jesus has paid the price for their sinful nature. They do not need a prayer shawl to enter His presence. They do not need to hide their hair, since it symbolizes the God-given beauty of their gender. Yet for the sake of cultural sensitivity and to facilitate harmony in a divided church, he asks women to continue the practice of covering their heads even though it is not a condition for God’s love and acceptance. With his long-range view into the future, Paul most likely understood that these cultural requirements would change over time and that believers in the future would not have to struggle with this issue.

2. Christian wives are called to show respect to their husbands.

It is interesting that in this deeply theological debate over whether Christian men and women should wear head coverings, Paul inserts several key statements about the way husbands and wives are called to relate to each other. He tells the Corinthians that “the man is the head of a woman” (1 Cor. 11:3) and then adds, “for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake” (v. 9).

Why would Paul bring these statements into the argument about head coverings? It is most likely because the women who had decided to worship with their heads uncovered were taking their Christian liberty too far. Though they had come to a genuine realization that they did not need to be covered when they prayed or prophesied, those around them who disagreed viewed their decision to pray in an uncovered state as inappropriate and even rebellious. And because uncovered women were viewed as sensual and immoral, and sometimes compared to prostitutes, the husbands of these women were put in a bad position. Their honor and dignity was at stake because of the actions of their wives.

Paul’s simple solution, therefore, was to remind these women that they could not act independently of their husbands in the matter. The fact that Paul was forced to say, “Man was not created for the woman’s sake” (1 Cor. 11:9) was his way of dealing with an attitude problem in these female converts—some of whom could very likely have been prominent preachers or leaders in the Corinthian church. What he was saying was this: “Hold on! Just because you have the revelation of God’s free grace in Christ doesn’t mean you can put your marriage at stake to prove it!”

It is important to point out that when Paul says “the man is the head of a woman” (v. 3), it should be translated “the husband is the head of the wife.” The Greek word *aner* can be translated either “man” or “husband,” and the word *gunaikos* can be translated “woman” or “wife.” Paul is specifically dealing in this passage with a situation that involved strained marriages. He is not, as some church leaders have wrongly taught, promoting the idea that all men have some type of God-given authority over *all* women. That, in fact, is a heretical notion that has led to serious spiritual and sexual abuse when taken literally.

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Christian women who are called and anointed by God to minister in the church do not have to be covered by a man in order to have a legitimate spiritual impact on the lives of people. However, this passage in 1 Corinthians 11 should serve as a warning to all women who aspire to ministry that they should never use their freedom in Christ to dishonor their husbands or anyone else. Jesus does not bless an arrogant attitude. Women who aspire to serve as pastors, teachers, prophets, or associate ministers must be held to the same standards of character that all elders are called to emulate in 1 Timothy 3. In fact, when Paul lists the qualifiers for women ministers in 1 Timothy 3:11, his first requirement is that they be “dignified.” Part of that dignity is the result of showing respect to their husbands.

3. There is no “gender hierarchy” in the kingdom of God.

Paul’s corrective advice to the Corinthians regarding head coverings, particularly his words in 1 Corinthians 11:3 about man’s headship over woman (“the man is the head of a woman”), has often been used to establish a form of hierarchy in the church: God rules over men, men rule over women. But is this really the message of Scripture? Does God speak to men, and then ask them to represent Him to women? Of course not!

When the Father chose to enact His plan of redemption, He began the process by visiting an unmarried young woman in Israel named Mary. God did not consult with her father to ask permission or to announce His plans, nor did He appear first to Joseph and ask him to explain the process of the incarnation to his fiancée. In fact, Joseph struggled to understand God’s purpose until an angel made it clear to him.

The Bible is full of accounts of women who responded directly to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, apart from the involvement of any man. Hannah, for example, was so burdened with God’s desire to bring a deliverer to Israel that she wept in deep spiritual travail until the promise was given of a deliverer. The male spiritual authority in her life, the priest Eli, was so out of touch with God’s plan for the nation that he did not understand why Hannah was so burdened or recognize that it was the Spirit of God praying through her when she groaned in intercession in the temple. In Hannah’s case, God had to bypass the man to find a woman who would birth His will in prayer. (See 1 Samuel 1:1–28.)

God does not view women on a basement level, as if they are an inferior order of creatures situated “under” the males of the species. He views us all as His children, male and female, and He holds us all accountable for our actions. If a woman sins, God does not seek out the man who is responsible for her misdeed. Also, if she is faithful to the Lord, God does not search for the man responsible for her and then reward him instead.

Yet despite our equality, in marriage God has required a mutuality of love and submission. Paul underscores this when he writes, “However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman” (1 Cor. 11:11). Because he is correcting the Corinthian women for being disrespectful of their husbands, Paul stresses in this passage that wives must display a compliant attitude. He expects wives to be submissive, even as he expects husbands to treat their wives in a loving and respectful manner. Once a man and woman are married, they are *one*. They cannot think independently, as if the other spouse is less important.

An Alternative Translation

This passage about women wearing head coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is tricky to interpret, mostly because Paul seems to contradict himself later in 2 Corinthians 3:18 when he exhorts all believers to behold the Lord’s glory “with unveiled face.” Why does he encourage Christians to worship God without veils in one passage, yet seemingly encourages the use of veils in another?

The answer may be found in a grammatical technicality. Greek scholars of the New Testament have suggested that certain verses in 1 Corinthians 11 may actually be quotes from a letter that was written to Paul by leaders in Corinth. Paul, in fact, refers to these letters in 1 Corinthians 7:1 when he says, “Now concerning the things about which you wrote.” His answers to their specific dilemmas form the basis of his epistle.

The Greek language had no punctuation as we do in English to set apart quotations or quoted material. Therefore it is possible that a verse such as 1 Corinthians 11:10, “Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels,” was a quote from the letter Paul received. The church leaders in Corinth, who came from a Jewish rabbinical tradition, were quoting their rabbinical rules and regulations about head coverings. Yet Paul seems to counter their argument in the next verse, when he says, “However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman” (v. 11).

He contradicts them again in verse 13 by saying, “Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with head uncovered?” Then, after explaining that a woman’s hair is enough of a covering for her head, he makes this curious statement in verse 16: “But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.”

The Greek here can actually be translated, “We have no such custom” (see KJV) rather than “We have no other practice.” In other words, it is possible that Paul was saying this: “If you want to fight over this, then let me say clearly that the gospel of Christ does not require us to wear veils.”

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This interpretation certainly makes more sense. Those traditionalists who maintain any other view must then be forced to adopt the strange view that God intends women to wear head coverings during worship in the twenty-first century!

A Woman's True Covering

Of the many women ministers I respect, author and Bible teacher Alice Smith is one of my personal favorites. An ordained Southern Baptist from Houston, Texas, Alice ministers across denominational lines and has become widely known as an authority on intercession. She is also a skilled practitioner on the subject of deliverance. She prays with authority, and when she casts demons out of people, the spirits come out screaming. But the main reason I respect Alice so much is that her ministry flows out of a deep, intimate relationship with the Lord. In fact, her most popular book, *Beyond the Veil*, is known as a handbook for developing intimacy with God.

The key point of Alice's book is that when Jesus came to redeem us, He paid the ultimate price so that He could bridge the chasm that separated Him from His people. When He spilled His blood at Calvary, God's very presence entered the temple in Jerusalem and tore in half the thick veil that kept us from entering the holy of holies. From that moment on, because of the Savior's obedience, we no longer must linger in the outer courts of the temple. We can come boldly into His presence and enjoy the pleasures of knowing the Father face-to-face.

Alice Smith enjoys this closeness with God. But the sad truth is that many women in the church today do not believe they can come boldly into the Father's presence because the church has told them they must wait outside the door—simply because of their gender. Some women actually believe that they are disqualified from ever having a close, personal relationship with the Lord because they are women. They have swallowed the despicable lie that says that their husbands must “represent them” in the heavenly throne room. Unmarried and divorced women have struggled with the idea that because they do not have a man in their lives to cover them, they too must live on the outskirts of the Lord's presence.

This is a revolting heresy. Jesus did not shed His blood for men only. When He suffered at Calvary, women were there at the foot of His cross—and those same women bravely identified with His death three days later when they brought spices to His tomb on Easter morning. And when He commissioned them to be witnesses of His resurrection, He did not require them to secure a male “covering” first.

Jesus' blood was shed for all women, and it is the only covering they will ever need. Blood-bought women don't need a man to bring them closer to God. Blood-bought women don't need a man to legitimize their ministries. Blood-bought women don't need a man to “cover” their spiritual endeavors or to replace the leadership of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

The blood of Christ is a woman's true covering. For the church to require anything more is to renounce our faith.

A Necessary Caution

While it is unbiblical to state that a woman must have a male covering to perform any kind of legitimate ministry, this does not mean she does not need to recognize spiritual authority. No woman who is called to ministry—and no man, for that matter—should be a spiritual Lone Ranger. Because we all have human frailties and are susceptible to the temptations of pride, deception, and offense, we all need to be in fellowship with other mature believers who can provide guidance and correction as well as encouragement and counsel. That is why we have denominations, church networks, and missionary agencies.

While I aggressively challenge women to enter the ministry, I would never counsel them to go it alone or to harbor a spirit of rebellion or independence. Women do not need a male covering to legitimize them, but they do in fact need a submissive attitude (and the same applies to men). God places authority in our lives to provide accountability, support, and godly guidance. Whether that authority happens to be male or female is beside the point. God has placed both spiritual fathers and spiritual mothers in His family. But we are foolish if we think we can do it without them.

On the flip side, we also need to recognize that spiritual authority in the church, as revealed in the New Testament, is not about ecclesiastical control. We all know that men (and women) can organize a denominational structure with bishops, regional elders, policies, laws, programs, and multilevel bureaucracy—and yet it can be completely devoid of the Holy Spirit's power. We gain nothing from submitting to such a structure.

The spiritual authority established in the Scriptures is the fivefold ministry of apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. And we are told that these gifted individuals are not to rule the church in a Gentile fashion, but rather “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service” (v. 12). They are releasing people into the liberty of Spirit-empowered ministry, not controlling the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believers.

Chapter 5 Questions for Discussion

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1. Discuss what happened to Shirley Arnold during her ministry experience in Romania. Have you ever encountered attitudes toward women similar to those that the Romanian church leaders exhibited?
2. Have you ever heard a church leader tell a woman that she could not minister in a particular setting because there was no man to “cover” her? Explain the situation.
3. Read 1 Corinthians 11:1–16 carefully. What do you think Paul means when he says “the man is the head of a woman” in verse 3?
4. Explain why Paul seems to be exhorting the women in Corinth to wear a head covering at church, even though these women know they do not need to be covered in order to be accepted by God.

Women who work in the mission field must be careful to recognize the leadership of man in ordering the affairs of the kingdom of God. We must not allow . . . the ability and efficiency of so many of our female helpers, nor even the exceptional faculty for leadership and organization which some of them have displayed in their work, to discredit the natural and predestined headship of man in Missions, as well as in the Church of God.

—DIRECTIVE FROM A BAPTIST LEADER IN 1888
RESPONDING TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF WOMEN
HEADED TO THE MISSION FIELD

When a man is drowning, you don't send a lady out to rescue him. You send a great, big he-man.

—AMERICAN FUNDAMENTALIST LEADER FRED SMITH
SPOKESMAN OF THE MEN AND RELIGION FORWARD MOVEMENT OF 1912

One reason why women are taking leadership positions is that the man has too often failed to take his place. When men are weak, women must be strong. Men should willingly step forward to lead the church in every area, but often the men are weak and lazy. . . . Someone has to lead, so the women step in and take control.

—FUNDAMENTALIST BAPTIST LEADER DAVID W. CLOUD
IN A 1998 ARTICLE IN HIS *O TIMOTHY MAGAZINE*⁴

Lie #10

Women must obediently submit to their husbands in all situations.

YEARS AGO, *CHARISMA* magazine reporter Marcia Ford set out to uncover the reason so much spouse abuse occurs in evangelical and Charismatic churches. She was aware of the statistics: an estimated four million women are assaulted each year by their current or former

⁴ Grady, J. L. (2013). [*Ten lies the church tells women: how the bible has been misused to keep women in spiritual bondage*](#). Charisma House.

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spouses. She also had reason to believe that many Christian women were victims in this national trend. But she was surprised to learn, after talking with the director of a prominent counseling clinic, that many of the calls that came into the Rapha Treatment Center's hot line in Dallas not only were from Christians—they were from pastors' wives who said their minister husbands were beating them.

Though the church has been successful at justifying this abuse, or hiding it, one study Ford discovered while doing her research said that pastors typically did not know how to help women who were being abused by their Christian husbands. In a survey of battered women who successfully escaped their abusers, the women who sought help from pastors were usually told to (1) continue to submit to their husbands and (2) pray for the men that they would stop the abusive behavior. It's no wonder the women ranked clergy last in their ability to provide any helpful guidance.

The church has, unknowingly, created an environment that encourages abuse. We cite familiar Bible passages demanding that wives submit to their husbands without providing any explanation of what submission means in a practical sense and without outlining what these same biblical passages demand of husbands. Our counseling has been illogical and irresponsible.

Take, for example, the story of Doris,* a middle-aged woman who attended an Assemblies of God church in the Northeast with her husband, Edward.* Although he was the church's head deacon and was respected by the pastor and the congregation, Edward was privately abusing his wife. For no apparent reason he would erupt into a fit of rage after coming home from work, slapping or hitting Doris in the face so often that she learned to master the art of covering her bruises with makeup.

Doris lived in a prison of inner turmoil. She didn't dare tell anyone at the church about her husband's irrational behavior. She kept trying to appease him. She assumed that one day she would discover what was making him angry and that she would then be able to adjust her own behavior so he wouldn't explode.

Finally, after several serious episodes of violence, she told her pastor. He didn't really believe the abuse was that serious, and he told her she needed to submit.

"He's your husband. You can't just leave him," the pastor said. "It's his house. You're his wife. He has authority over you. You must be making him angry."

Doris was devastated. The pastor had confirmed her worst nightmare. He told her that she was the reason her husband was abusive. It was her fault! On two other occasions Doris returned for pastoral counseling, hoping that perhaps the pastor would change his opinion. On one occasion she expressed sincere fears for her life.

"Don't worry," the pastor said. "Even if you died you would go to be with the Lord. So you win either way. Just keep praying for him. But you are not allowed to leave."

A friend of mine named Nancie finally counseled with Doris and realized how serious the situation had become. She told her to get out of the house immediately, but by then Doris had almost no resolve left. She had been brainwashed into thinking that she was worthless and that her life would be over if she left this man who didn't love her.

Nancie begged Doris to move to a shelter or to a friend's house. But Doris politely declined—and repeated what her pastor had told her. "I know I don't have the right to leave him," she said.

Nancie moved to Florida a few months later, but she tried to keep in touch with Doris. Not long after their last telephone conversation, Nancie heard the dreaded news: Edward had killed Doris. As bizarre as it sounds, this Christian woman was murdered by her own husband, a

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deacon in a Pentecostal church. Those who counsel abused women say this story is not as unique as it sounds.

As is often the case, this church's pastor doubted the battered woman's story, so he dragged his feet instead of properly dealing with a life-and-death situation. He shrugged off this report of a Christian man who acted in a domineering manner—since authoritarian behavior in the home is actually encouraged by many pastors.

After all, if a man erupts in anger at home or is overly demanding, isn't he just demonstrating that he is in charge? Isn't it a godly virtue for Christian men to act strong and authoritarian? Isn't it true that if a man doesn't remain in absolute control, he is in danger of becoming spiritually weak, and this is opening up a door for spiritual attack on his home? Many evangelical Christian men today might agree with this philosophy—but the logic is ridiculous. We should also note that Paul told Timothy that a man given to anger is not qualified to serve in ministry. (See 1 Timothy 3:3.)

One of the most comprehensive studies on domestic violence in the church was conducted in the mid-1980s by clinical psychologist Jim M. Alsdurf, a graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary. Based on a questionnaire sent to fifty-seven hundred Protestant pastors in the United States and Canada, the survey revealed that though most pastors regularly confront spouse abuse in their ministries, they often are not overly concerned because they view the situation from a patriarchal perspective. In essence, this attitude says, "According to the Bible, Christian men are supposed to be in charge of the home, so a little yelling and hitting is OK." Consider Alsdurf's findings:

- Twenty-six percent of the pastors polled said they normally tell a woman who is being abused by her husband that she should continue to submit to him "and to trust that God would honor her action by either stopping the abuse or giving her the strength to endure it."
- About 25 percent of the respondents said a lack of submissiveness in the wife is what triggered the violence in the first place. In other words, these pastors believe that the abuse is actually the woman's fault. The women are told that if they would "learn to submit," the violence will stop.
- A majority of the pastors said it is better for a woman to tolerate some level of violence in the home—even though it is "not God's perfect will"—than to seek separation that might end in divorce. (Is it "better" even if the woman is killed, maimed, or raped?)
- Seventy-one percent of the ministers said they would never advise a battered wife to leave her husband or separate because of abuse, and 92 percent said they would never counsel her to seek divorce.

Christian homes and churches are in a sad state indeed if there have not been significant changes in clergy attitudes since this survey was taken. The Bible is clear on the point that God opposes violence (Prov. 21:7; Ezek. 45:9). In fact, Jesus warned against those who take advantage of people who are physically weaker. Yet we are actually promoting a theology that encourages violence when we tell a woman she must learn to "endure" beatings. (See Matthew 18:1–6.)

A pastor should be willing to counsel a woman to seek separation or divorce when her marriage is jeopardized by domestic violence. Why don't we do this? Because our unbalanced interpretation of Scripture can hinder us from seeing divorce as a viable option for Christians. In a fallen world, however, we must recognize that sometimes it is the only option.

Divorce is a tragic problem in our society, and we can't minimize its negative effects, particularly on children. But some of the Christian community's opposition to divorce has been

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more of a concern for the church's image than for the individuals involved. We aren't proud of the fact that so many Christian marriages fail, so we don't want to do anything to make the statistics worse.

James and Phyllis Alsdurf point out in their book *Abuse and Religion* that we evangelicals are fond of quoting Malachi 2:16, "For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce" (NKJV). Yet if we go to the next sentence we read, "And I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment" (NIV). A footnote in the New International Version says the verse can be translated, "I hate a man's covering his wife with violence."

Yes, God hates divorce. But we can see in this passage in Malachi that He also hates wife-beating and any other form of abuse. Women do not have to stay in dangerous marital situations just to keep divorce statistics low. God cares deeply about the safety and well-being of women. He is not concerned that one more divorce will mar the church's image. We too need to start caring more about vulnerable women (and their children) than about how another divorce might look on our record.

Irresponsible Theology

A distraught Christian woman who had been regularly beaten by her husband for four years finally gained the courage to seek counsel from her pastor, who was affiliated with a prominent evangelical denomination. She told him about her husband's addiction to pornography, his fits of rage, and how he had once thrown her against a wall so hard that she heard a cracking sound in the back of her neck.

The pastor's response was frightening: "If your husband kills you," he advised, "it will be to the glory of God." Her only option, he told her, was to submit and pray that God would change her husband's heart.

This is perverted! How did we ever invent a "Christian" theology that encourages a woman to risk injury or death at the hands of her husband to please God? How warped a woman's view of God would have to be for her to accept such counsel!

The root problem with our theology is that the church has taught that men have a biblical right to dominate—and we have instructed women that their submission to this ungodly behavior is God-ordained suffering, which they must willingly bear. This butchering of biblical texts distorts the character of Christ—who spent much of His time teaching on God's care for the oppressed.

Let's look carefully at a verse that is most often used to promote this wrong view, and set the record straight.

Because the apostle Paul told women to "submit to your husbands as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22, NIV), we have assumed that women should have no say in family matters or that their opinion is second-rate. This verse, taken out of context, has been twisted to mean that the husband is the boss and that the woman must obey his every whim. We portray marriage as a hierarchy, with husbands on the throne and wives at the footstool.

But this is not a Christian view of marriage at all. The first rule of biblical hermeneutics is that we look at *all of Scripture* to clarify the meaning of a particular text. So before we can understand this one verse, we must look at what the Bible in general teaches about submission and authority.

In more than one instance Jesus taught that a true leader in the kingdom of God is a *servant*. He said the greatest must be the *least*. He told His disciples that they must become as *children*.

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He said in Mark 10:44 that “whoever wishes to be first among you shall be *slave of all*” (emphasis added.)

How do we apply this passage to marriage? Certainly it should be clear that if a man is called to lead a family, his leadership must be Christlike. He must serve, not dictate. He must display humility, not a know-it-all attitude. He must lead from a position of meekness, not from prideful superiority, or tyrannical domination.

In fact, Jesus flatly condemned the worldly style of top-down, hierarchical leadership when He taught that His kingdom is not like that of the Gentiles, whose leaders “lord it over” their subordinates. (See Matthew 20:25–26.) Why would Christ condemn this kind of behavior on one hand and then encourage husbands to act in an authoritarian manner at home? He didn’t, and neither did the apostle Paul.

When we read Paul’s discourse on marriage in Ephesians 5, we must start with verse 21, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (NIV, emphasis added). This verse has been conveniently overlooked in many Christian marriage seminars, which usually start the lesson with verse 22, “Wives, submit to your husbands” (NIV). I have often heard teachings on the subject of male headship in the home, but I’ve never heard a pastor encourage men to submit to their wives as suggested in verse 21. Yet in a loving marriage, a man and woman will defer to one another when they make decisions.

A closer look at this passage reveals that this teaching begins with verse 21, which encourages all believers to submit to one another “in the fear of the Christ.” To promote an attitude of submissiveness in the entire church, Paul tells wives to submit to their husbands, husbands to their wives, children to their parents and slaves to their masters. Submission, not in the sense of domination or rulership over another, but in the sense of preferring one another and not demanding personal rights, should be operating in the entire body of Christ in order to reveal the love of Christ to the world.

We also must note that the Greek word for submission, *hupotasso*, is written in the Greek middle voice, which means it is something that an individual imposes upon himself or herself. It means to choose to yield to another, rather than demanding one’s own way. Submission remains the freewill right of the one choosing to yield. *It cannot be demanded from another individual or imposed upon one person by another.* When this occurs, it stops being *hupotasso* and becomes *domination*, which was an attitude Christ forbade His disciples to operate in with regard to one another (Matt. 23:10). Submission is not something that can be required or exacted from another person.

The overarching theme of marriage in the Bible is the concept of *unity* and *oneness*. Couples should develop a deep level of intimacy and trust that blossoms as they work out differences, share dreams, and walk through hardships together. In my twenty-two years of marriage, my wife and I have had plenty of disagreements: over finances, over the education of our children, and over trivial matters. But when we disagree, I do not announce, “I am the head of this house, so what I say goes.” When we reach an impasse, Deborah and I either agree to pray for a season about the matter, or we choose to defer to one another. This is the concept of biblical submission that the apostle Paul attempted to convey in Ephesians. I don’t demand my way, and Deborah doesn’t demand hers. Instead, we both humbly seek after God’s way, His will, and His purpose. When our hearts are truly His, biblical submission is easy.

The point is never who is right or wrong or who is in charge. The issue is how we can discover the mind of Christ. I view my wife as an equal. I am not “over her.” We function as one.

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Paul told husbands, “This is how you love your wives, by giving up your life, your way, and your rights, as Christ gave up His.” Remember that Christ was Lord of the universe and laid down His crown by submitting Himself unto death. The Bible says He took on the form of a servant. He laid down His life to raise us up. This is the purpose of biblical submission.

We must notice also in studying Ephesians 5 that Paul does not focus the text solely on the need for wifely submission. His words in this passage stress the loving attitude husbands should demonstrate at home. Men are commanded to love their wives “as Christ also loved the church” (v. 25) and “as their own bodies” (v. 28). These words were revolutionary in a first-century culture that taught that wives were their husband’s property!

Marriages are doomed to serious dysfunction and ultimate failure if the husband views his wife as inferior or if he arrogantly assumes that God wants him to always have the right answer and the wisest plan in every situation. No! The reason God provided Adam with Eve was because the man couldn’t do it alone. He needed an equal partner who complemented him in every way.

So, Is the Husband the Boss?

The passage of Scripture that is so often misused with regard to the complex issue of male headship is Ephesians 5:22–23:

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church.

—EMPHASIS ADDED

Contrary to popular interpretation, these verses do not give men a license to dominate their wives, nor do they endorse a kind of top-down hierarchy in the marriage relationship.

One of Paul’s main reasons for writing this discourse on family relationships was to stress the beauty of the mystical union between man and wife, which he compares to the communion between Christ and the church. If Paul were trying to declare who was in charge, he would have said, “Wives, *obey* your husbands,” in the same manner that he states in Colossians 3:20, “Children, *obey* your parents” (NIV, emphasis added). But he does not use the word *obey*.

The word *hupotasso* can also mean “to identify with” or “to be attached to.” It can also mean “become one with.” Again, the issue here is oneness and unity between equal partners, not who obeys whom.

But there is another important reason Paul wrote these words, and we cannot understand their meaning without delving deeper into the culture of the New Testament period. Theologian Catherine Clark Kroeger has noted that in the first century, women had no rights and were considered possessions. In the Roman Empire, it was customary for the woman’s father to continue to claim ownership of his daughter even after she was married.

This inhumane system, known as *sine manu*, or “marriage without hand,” was a way for the bride’s dowry to stay under the control of her father even after she moved into her husband’s home. As long as she was brought back to her father’s house three times a year (sometimes against her will), he could claim legal ownership of her and her property. This system, which was later outlawed, obviously created havoc in families.

Knowing the context helps us understand why Paul stressed to the new Christian community in Ephesus that a wife should “be attached to” or “submitted to” or “identified with” her husband. She was no longer to be attached to her father! And this is why Paul, a few verses later, quotes

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Genesis 2:24: “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (Eph. 5:31, NKJV).

But if this passage in Ephesians does not give men permission to dominate their wives, then why does Paul say that a husband is “head” (v. 23) of the wife?

The Greek word for “head” in this passage is *kephale*, which is most often translated “authority over.” However, some Bible scholars point out that this word can and often is translated “source” in ancient texts, in much the same way that we would refer to the “head” of a river being its source. Therefore it is possible that *kephale* can mean here that man is the *source* of woman, a reference to the fact that Eve was created from Adam.

Again, many scholars believe that Paul is setting in order the true Christian family in the midst of a pagan Roman culture that treated women like property and disregarded the autonomy of a newlywed couple. According to God’s plan, when a man and a woman come together in holy matrimony they must sever their ties to parents, grandparents, and any other controlling influences from relatives. The man must leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. (See Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31.) She must “submit,” or “become attached to,” her husband, rather than continue to relate to her father as her “head.”

If we truly want to understand the meaning of Ephesians 5, these cultural factors must be considered. Paul’s words to this infant New Testament church were meant to liberate women who had been subjected to a patriarchal system that did not even recognize their personhood. The gospel proclaimed in this passage set in motion a way to revolutionize that culture—and to transform the nature of men who did not know how to love their wives.

How tragic that we have used Paul’s liberating words to put women in bondage!

Gender Bias Around the World

Gender prejudice has been at the core of fallen human nature since the Garden of Eden, and we see its effects everywhere. It is the way of the world. It has been encoded in all of the world’s religions. A degrading view of women is pervasive in almost every culture, but nowhere is it more evident than in the Middle East.

The stories of abuse of women from the Muslim world are horrific. Take for example the case of a Palestinian girl named Saana, who at age eighteen was forced into an arranged marriage to a Muslim man she didn’t love. *The Middle East Intelligence Digest* reported her tragic story to illustrate that women are incredibly vulnerable in a culture that considers females to be the literal property of their husbands or other male relatives.

Because Saana was so unhappy, she ran away from her new home at one point and ended up with friends in another West Bank village. Her family tracked her down within six hours and forced her to return to her husband. The next day, Saana’s brother killed her, decapitated her body, and carried her severed head through the streets. His act of brutality, which was praised by the local Muslim townsfolk, is what is known in that region as a “family honor killing.” Because Saana had “disgraced” her husband by running away, she got what she deserved according to Islamic tradition.

At least forty such murders are reported in Israel’s Palestinian territories each year, although the number of actual honor killings is probably much higher. In 1994, one woman was seized in broad daylight in east Jerusalem and stabbed sixteen times in the head and shoulder. Her crime: she had insisted on custody of her children in a complicated divorce case.

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In a report released in 2000 by Amnesty International and the United Nations, researchers said as many as one thousand Muslim “honor killings” occurred in Pakistan in 1999. At least four hundred such killings were documented in Yemen in 1997. In a majority of the cases, the UN found that the orders to kill the women came from family members.

The Associated Press reported in July 2000 that the father of one twenty-eight-year-old Pakistani woman who had “disgraced” her family by seeking a divorce from her abusive husband hired an assassin to shoot her. Her father, a prominent businessman in the city of Lahore, was praised by religious and community leaders for killing his daughter.

In Iran, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, and in other Muslim nations where Western influence is strongly resisted, the human rights of women are extremely limited because of Islamic teachings. Women in some Muslim cultures are often strongly discouraged from pursuing any kind of education, and they are considered to be on the same social level as domesticated animals. Muslim women in these Arab nations have been shot, beheaded, stoned, or poisoned for “crimes” such as sitting next to a man on a bus, talking to a man on the telephone, or being raped.

Some Muslim women don’t even have the right to venture out in public. Abassi Madani, leader of the Algerian Islamic Front, was recently asked by *Time* magazine when it was appropriate for a Muslim woman to leave her house. His response: “When she is born, when she is married and when she goes to the cemetery.”

Fundamentalist Islam endorses spouse abuse in its cruelest form. Consider what the Qur’an and other holy Muslim texts, or hadiths, say about marriage and Allah’s will for women:

- Men are superior to women (Q 2:228, Q 4:34).
- Women are deficient in intelligence, gratitude, and religion (Hadith Sahih al-Bukhari) and are to be considered “toys” (Hadith No. 919).
- The deception of women is “awesome,” their wickedness is contagious, and bad character and feeble minds are their predominant traits (Hadith Ihy’a ‘Uloum ed-Din).
- The witness of two women is equal to the witness of one man (Q 2:282).
- Women must wear veils, or hijabs, to protect not their own chastity but the chastity of men who might see them (Hadith by Dr. Mohammad Sa’id Ramadan al-Buti).
- A husband’s rights over his wife are divine (Hadith Mishkat al-Masabih).
- It is condescension on the part of the man to spend his life with a woman. She cannot repay this favor, no matter what sacrifice she makes (Hadith by Suyuti).
- A husband who fears rebelliousness in his wife must admonish her first. If that does not work, he has the right to desert her sexually. If that does not work, he may beat her (Q 4:34).
- A footnote in the English translation of the Hadith Mishkat al-Masabih states that a husband may beat his wife mildly if she (1) does not wear “fineries” that he requests, (2) refuses sexual relations without a lawful excuse, (3) is ordered to take a bath to clean herself from impurities for prayer, and refuses, and (4) goes abroad without permission of her husband.
- The Muslim cleric Ibn Kaathir, commenting on a Qu’ranic passage in Q 4:34, says that a man is not to be asked why he beat his wife. It is his unquestionable right.
- Beatings will not only reform “deviations” in behavior but can also be gratifying to women. Some women will not “recognize the power of the man whom they love except when the man conquers them physically” (Sayid Qotb, Fi Zilal al-Qur’an, commenting on Q 4:34).

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Islam isn't the only religion that still promotes wife-beating and female subjugation in the twenty-first century. Hinduism, which boasts an estimated 714 million adherents in India alone, also promotes a degrading view of women even though some of its most important deities are powerful goddesses.

Because of the rise of militant religious nationalism, many Hindus in India today still practice barbaric rituals such as *sati*, the ancient tradition of burning women on funeral pyres after their husbands die. Also in many parts of India today, female babies often are killed quietly by their parents because it is considered shameful to give birth to a girl. The United Nations recently reported that up to fifty million girls are missing from India's population because of infanticide.

Shouldn't Christianity Be Different?

Compared to the abysmal record of human rights abuses evident in Muslim and Hindu cultures, one would expect the status of women to be higher in nations that have been influenced by the gospel. In most cases this is true—it was the influence of Christianity in the United States, for example, that sparked the movement to give women the vote in 1920.

Similar movements occurred later in Canada (1918), Germany (1918), Sweden (1921), France (1944), and Italy (1945). England granted the vote to women in 1918 but required them to be age thirty, while men could vote at age twenty-one; the voting age was not equalized until 1928. Iraq waited until 1980 to grant women's suffrage. South African black women could not vote until 1994.

Governments have finally recognized that women deserve equal rights, yet in the church the degradation of women through spouse abuse still occurs in the Christian church to an embarrassing extent. Although part of Jesus Christ's mission was to redeem women from the curse and to elevate them to a place of safety and righteous influence, church leaders have not always supported that mission. In many cases we have opposed it.

In New Testament times, women were considered the absolute property of their fathers or husbands. They were less valuable than cattle. This is why the apostle Paul's words to husbands in Ephesians 5:28, "Husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies," was such a radical departure from the cultural traditions of the day. The Christian view of husband-wife relationships is one of *equality* and *mutual respect*, not domination, control, and humiliation.

Yet gender prejudice remained entrenched in the church in its earliest days. Throughout the Middle Ages the predominant view among Christians was that women were inferior and should be ruled by their tyrant husbands—and beaten if necessary. Catholic clergy in medieval times endorsed wife-beating for the purpose of discipline, and this was law in France in the thirteenth century. One law stated that men "may be excused for the injuries they inflict on their wives. Provided he neither kills nor maims her, it is legal for a man to beat his wife if she wrongs him."

Although the Protestant Reformation brought a new understanding of the grace of God for salvation, the chief reformers offered little of that grace to women. John Calvin, John Knox, and Martin Luther all displayed blatant chauvinism in their writings, and Luther actually boasted that he hit his wife to correct her.

In Protestant England, wife-beating was a protected act as long as the instrument used was not considered "unreasonable." (One law specified that the stick used to strike a woman could not be thicker than a man's thumb, and some etymologists claim that this evolved into our modern figure of speech, "rule of thumb.") In the United States, lawmakers finally began enacting statutes in the late 1800s that made wife-beating a punishable crime.

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Women in the twentieth century gained political rights and equal access in the workplace, yet today spouse abuse is still a widespread problem. The National Council on Domestic Violence says a woman is battered every fifteen seconds in this country. Tragically, the problem also exists in evangelical churches—but it is often swept under a rug because Christian leaders either don't know how to stop it or can't reconcile the problem with their theology. That's because their own teaching about marriage relationships, particularly their philosophy of wives and "biblical submission," is an underlying cause of this ugly dilemma.

Isn't it time that the church stood up and shined a truly biblical light of truth into the world's dark history of gender bias?

* Not real names.

Chapter 10 Questions for Discussion

1. How would you counsel a woman whose Christian husband is abusing her physically?
2. Explain how you interpret the apostle Paul's words in Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, submit to your husbands" (NIV).
3. After reading the quotes from Islamic holy books, how would you describe the Muslim view of women? How does this view differ from a Christian view of women?
4. Explain why you think Christians in other time periods actually promoted the practice of wife-beating.

The prophet Joel was not against the daughters prophesying, nor the apostles. . . . So you that persecute the daughters on whom the Spirit of the Lord is poured, and believe them not, you are them that despise prophesying, and so have broken the apostles' command. . . . So be ashamed forever, and let all your mouths be stopped forever, that despise the spirit of prophecy in the daughters, and do cast them into prison, and do hinder the women laborers in the gospel.

—GEORGE FOX, FOUNDER OF THE QUAKER MOVEMENT

Oh, that the ministers of religion would search the original records of God's Word in order to discover whether the general notions of society are not wrong on this subject, and whether God really intended woman to bury her gifts and talents, as she now does.

—CATHERINE BOOTH, COFOUNDER OF THE SALVATION ARMY

It is not enough for women to modestly and quietly seek their own redemption; they must proclaim it, even when that proclamation lays them open to the false charge of immodesty. It is wicked for any human being to shut the mouth of anyone, male or female, who will sound forth a testimony to the truth in these days of apostasy.

—MISSIONARY AND BIBLE EXPOSITOR KATHERINE BUSHNELL
WHO HELPED STOP CHILD PROSTITUTION IN INDIA IN THE LATE 1800S

Between four and five years after my sanctification, on a certain time, an impressive silence fell upon me, and I stood as if someone was about to speak to me, yet I had no such thought in my heart. But to my utter surprise there seemed to sound a voice which I thought I distinctly heard, and most certainly understood, which said to me “Go preach the gospel!” I immediately replied aloud, “No one will believe me.” Again I listened, and again the same voice seemed to say—“Preach the gospel. I will put words in your mouth.”

—JERENA LEE, THE FIRST WIDELY TRAVELED FEMALE EVANGELIST
IN THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
DURING THE EARLY 1800S⁵

Ephesian Sermon Notes:

BE IMITATORS OF GOD....

I. BECAUSE THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES

1.) CONSEQUENCE of: Judgement

Ephesians 5:5-7

⁵ For you may be sure of this, that [Ⓜ]everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous ([Ⓜ]that is, an idolater), **has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** ⁶ [Ⓜ]Let no one [Ⓜ]deceive you with empty words, for because of these things [Ⓜ]the

⁵ Grady, J. L. (2013). [*Ten lies the church tells women: how the bible has been misused to keep women in spiritual bondage.*](#) Charisma House.

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wrath of God comes upon ^(a)the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore ^(b)do not become partners with them;

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 – Flee Sexual Immorality

¹² “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³ “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined^(a) to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin^(b) a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

2.) CONSEQUENCE: FRUIT of Purity/Righteousness or....Exposed

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸ for ^(a)at one time you were ^(b)darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. ^(c)**Walk as children of light** ⁹ (for ^(d)the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and ^(e)try to **discern what is pleasing to the Lord.** ¹¹ ^(f)Take no part in the ^(g)unfruitful ^(h)works of darkness, but instead ⁽ⁱ⁾expose them. ¹² For ^(j)it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³ But when ^(k)anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

^(l)“Awake, O sleeper, and ^(m)arise from the dead, and ⁽ⁿ⁾Christ will shine on you.”

3.) CONSEQUENCE: Understanding the Will of the Lord (one step at a time) or...Foolishness

Ephesians 5:15-17

¹⁵ ^(o)**Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, [What does wise walking look like in our life?]** ¹⁶ ^(p)making the best use of the time, because ^(q)the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what ^(r)the will of the Lord is.

4.) CONSEQUENCE: Be Being Filled with the Spirit (Results in: Worship. Thankfulness. Submission one to another.)

Ephesians 5:18-21

¹⁸ And ^(s)do not get drunk with wine, for that is ^(t)debauchery, but ^(u)be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in ^(v)psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ ^(w)**giving thanks always** and for

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everything to God the Father ^(AB)in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ ^(AS)**submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

I. BE IMITATORS OF GOD

II. BECAUSE THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES: Judgment. Fruit. Understanding. Be Being Filled)

II. EXPRESS YOUR IMITATION OF GOD IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS (remember Kinship/Patriarchal)

A. In Marriage

Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives and Husbands [MARRIAGE ROLES, NOT SOCIETAL ROLES]

²² ^(AB)Wives, ^(AS)**submit** to your own husbands, ^(AT)**as** to the Lord.²³ For ^(AU)the husband is the head of the wife even as ^(AV)Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is ^(AW)Himself its Savior.²⁴ Now as the church **submits** (be subject to) to Christ, so also wives should **submit** ^(AX)in everything to their husbands.

Head: 1 Corinthians 11:3

³ But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife^[a] is her husband,^[b] and the head of Christ is God.

²⁵ ^(AY)Husbands, **love your wives**, as Christ loved the church and ^(AZ)gave Himself up for her,

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ Likewise, ^(A)husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker ^(B)vessel, since they are heirs with you^[a] of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

²⁶ that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by ^(BA)the washing of water ^(BB)with the word, ²⁷ so ^(BC)that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, ^(BD)without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.^[a] ²⁸ In the same way ^(BE)husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,³⁰ because ^(BF)we are members of his body. ³¹ ^(BG)“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and ^(BH)the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, ^(BI)let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she ^(BJ)respects her husband.

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Submit

5293 ὑποτάσσω [*hupotasso* /hoop·ot·as·so/] v. From 5259 and 5021; TDNT 8:39; TDNTA 1156; GK 5718; 40 occurrences; AV translates as “put under” six times, “be subject unto” six times, “be subject to” five times, “submit (one’s) self unto” five times, “submit (one’s) self to” three times, “be in subjection unto” twice, “put in subjection under” once, and translated miscellaneously 12 times. **1** to arrange under, to subordinate. **2** to subject, put in subjection. **3** to subject one’s self, obey. **4** to submit to one’s control. **5** to yield to one’s admonition or advice. **6** to obey, be subject. *Additional Information:* A Greek military term meaning “to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader”.

In non-military use, it was “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden”.⁶

We also must note that **the Greek word for submission, *hupotasso*, is written in the Greek middle voice, which means it is something that an individual imposes upon himself or herself.** It means to choose to yield to another, rather than demanding one’s own way. Submission remains the freewill right of the one choosing to yield. *It cannot be demanded from another individual or imposed upon one person by another.* When this occurs, it stops being *hupotasso* and becomes *domination*, which was an attitude Christ forbade His disciples to operate in with regard to one another (Matt. 23:10). Submission is not something that can be required or exacted from another person. J. Lee Grady

As

5613 ὡς, ὡσάν [*hos /hoce/*] adv. Probably from comparative from 3739; GK 6055 and together with Strongs 302 as GK 6056; 492 occurrences; AV translates as “as” 342 times, “when” 42 times, “how” 18 times, “as it were” 20 times, “about” 14 times, and translated miscellaneously 56 times. **1** as, like, even as, etc.⁷

Head

2776 κεφαλή [*kephale* /kef·al·ay/] n f. From the primary kapto (in the sense of seizing); TDNT 3:673; TDNTA 429; GK 3051; 76 occurrences; AV translates as “head” 76 times. **1** the head, both of men and often of animals. Since the loss of the head destroys life, this word is used in the phrases relating to capital and extreme punishment. **2** metaph. anything supreme, chief, prominent. 2A of persons, master lord: of a husband in relation to his wife. 2B of Christ: the Lord of the husband and of the Church. 2C of things: the corner stone.⁸ (SOURCE)

- Is this usage of submit used to state it is to be this way or this is how it functions in our patriarchal society?
- Is Paul saying that a husband “covers” his wife? That a woman needs a man to cover her?
- Salvation runs through the headship of man for a family. THE MAN IS THE PRIEST OF THEIR HOME?

The wife must let him make all the final decisions, what he says goes? Doesn’t this sound more like the patriarchal culture that already existed????

⁶ Strong, J. (1995). In *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

⁷ Strong, J. (1995). In *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

⁸ Strong, J. (1995). In *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

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CULTURAL CONTEXT [J.Lee Grady “10 Lies the Church Tells Women”]:

- Women were viewed as the property of either their fathers or their husbands.
- Men considered women to be ignorant (and most of them were, since men didn't allow females to be educated).
- First-century Ephesus was steeped in Greek and Roman culture.
Greeks viewed women with disdain – no rights
“Athenian law of all periods tended to regard the wife as a veritable child, having the legal status of a minor compared to her husband,” Tucker writes. There were no laws against wife abuse. And if a man divorced his wife for any reason, she was economically stranded; the law gave her no recourse to claim any of his estate.
Historian Ruth Tucker
- Romans taught that wives should stay in their place as inferiors.
The Roman philosopher Plutarch believed that women “ought to do their talking either to their husbands or through their husbands.” The famous statesman Cato once warned Roman leaders in a speech: “As soon as [women] begin to be your equals, they will become your superiors.”
- In New Testament times: Ruling your family =
Wife shut away in the house to do household chores,
Care for the family farm,
Sexual gratification
Have as many children as possible to help run the farm/business
If she died in childbirth, he found another wife.
If she didn't please him in bed, he paid a younger woman outside the home to meet his sexual needs. If his wife shamed him, he beat her. If she dared to run away, he found her and beat her again.

B. JESUS REDEFINES:

1. FAMILY

- Church Family
- Nuclear Family – back to the Genesis model
- **THE CURSE OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN IS BROKEN = Yes or No?**
- Paul **came with a radically new model of family** that went to the very core of what was wrong with the world: “*Husbands, love your wives*” (Eph. 5:25).
Love their wives “as their own bodies” (v. 28). **This meant that men and women were equals.**
Gender prejudice – NO MORE
- And when Paul told the men to love their wives “as Christ also loved the church” (v. 25), he implied something even more revolutionary: **women are just as deserving of the grace of God as men are.**

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- [No such thing as Priest of the home. Heresey, makes man women's savior]

But if this is true, then why does Paul still say the husband should function as the "head" of his wife? (See Ephesians 5:23.) Does this not give him the right to dominate her? **That depends on whether we want a Christian model of leadership or a worldly one.** J. Lee Grady

2. LEADERSHIP

d. Servanthood

Mark 9:34-35

But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. ³⁵ And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

Mark 10:43-44 ESV

But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and...

Matthew 20:26-27 ESV

It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and...

Matthew 23:11-12 ESV

The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and...

Luke 22:26 ESV

But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader...

e. Headship

Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, in her book *Good News for Women*, explains that there are really **two kinds of male headship** from which to choose.

- One is what she calls "life-giving headship," which was instituted by God in the Garden of Eden when He took Eve out of Adam's side.
- The opposing model is what she refers to as "ruling headship," which began with the Fall when man and woman came under the curse of sin. Christian men today often view ruling headship as the godly way to lead a family—but it is the wrong model.

Writes Groothuis: "The biblical headship of the husband described in Ephesians 5 is redemptive, **in that it mitigates the effect of the fall which places the woman under male rule, and it helps to reinstate woman in her creational place of cultural responsibility alongside man.** In life-giving headship, the social privilege and power of maleness is shared by the husband with the wife, and utilized by him according to the terms of love rather than of male conquest and demand. By recognizing her personal and spiritual equality with him, and by putting all that he has and is at her disposal, a husband undoes the male rulership of the Fall and, by God's grace, saves his wife from its effects."

In other words, true biblical headship in marriage can be seen only when the husband:

- (1) recognizes that his wife is his equal
- (2) loves her sacrificially
- (3) empowers his wife by allowing her to share his authority. (J.Lee Grady)

JUST LIKE JESUS DID FOR THE CHURCH

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Head = Source

The word used here for “head” in the Greek is *kephale*, which can be translated “source,” as the headwaters of a river are the source of the river. If Paul had meant to say, “The husband is the boss of the wife,” or “The husband is the leader of the wife,” he would have used the Greek word *archon*, which is often used in the New Testament to denote authority. Instead, he uses *kephale*, a rarer term. J. Lee Grady

Origin of woman:

Taken out of man (the source)

“And because she came from him, she as the wife enjoys a unique connection to him that cannot be paralleled by any other human relationship.” J. Lee Grady

Mutual Dependence

f. Priesthood

1 Peter 2:5-9

⁵ You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

⁸ and *“A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”*

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Are we placing human relationships above our relationship with God when we enforce cultural roles instead of biblical ones?

Galatians 3:23-29

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

**Ephesians 5 is not about hierarchy nor patriarchy;
it is about the challenge to equality that Christ brings.**

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Meet:

In contemporary English the word occurs only as an adjective meaning "suitable or right." Philippians 1:7; Mark 7:27; Luke 15:32; Matthew 3:8; Col 1:12; 2 Kings 10:3

2 Timothy 2:20-21

²⁰ *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and **useful** [right] for the Master, prepared for every good work.*

Philippians 1:7

⁷ *just as it is **right**[meet] for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.*