

Gender Roles @ Religious Beliefs

By David Lee Burris

Cultural Standards Can Be Social Constructs



"I get the feeling, gentlemen, that you don't take having a female boss that seriously."



"I've just never worked anyplace where the 'alpha male' was a woman."

These expectations are called *femininity* and *masculinity*. Femininity refers to the cultural expectations we have of girls and women, while masculinity refers to expectations we have of boys and men. A familiar nursery rhyme nicely summarizes these two sets of feminine and masculine traits:

What are little boys made of?

Snips and snails,

And puppy dog tails,

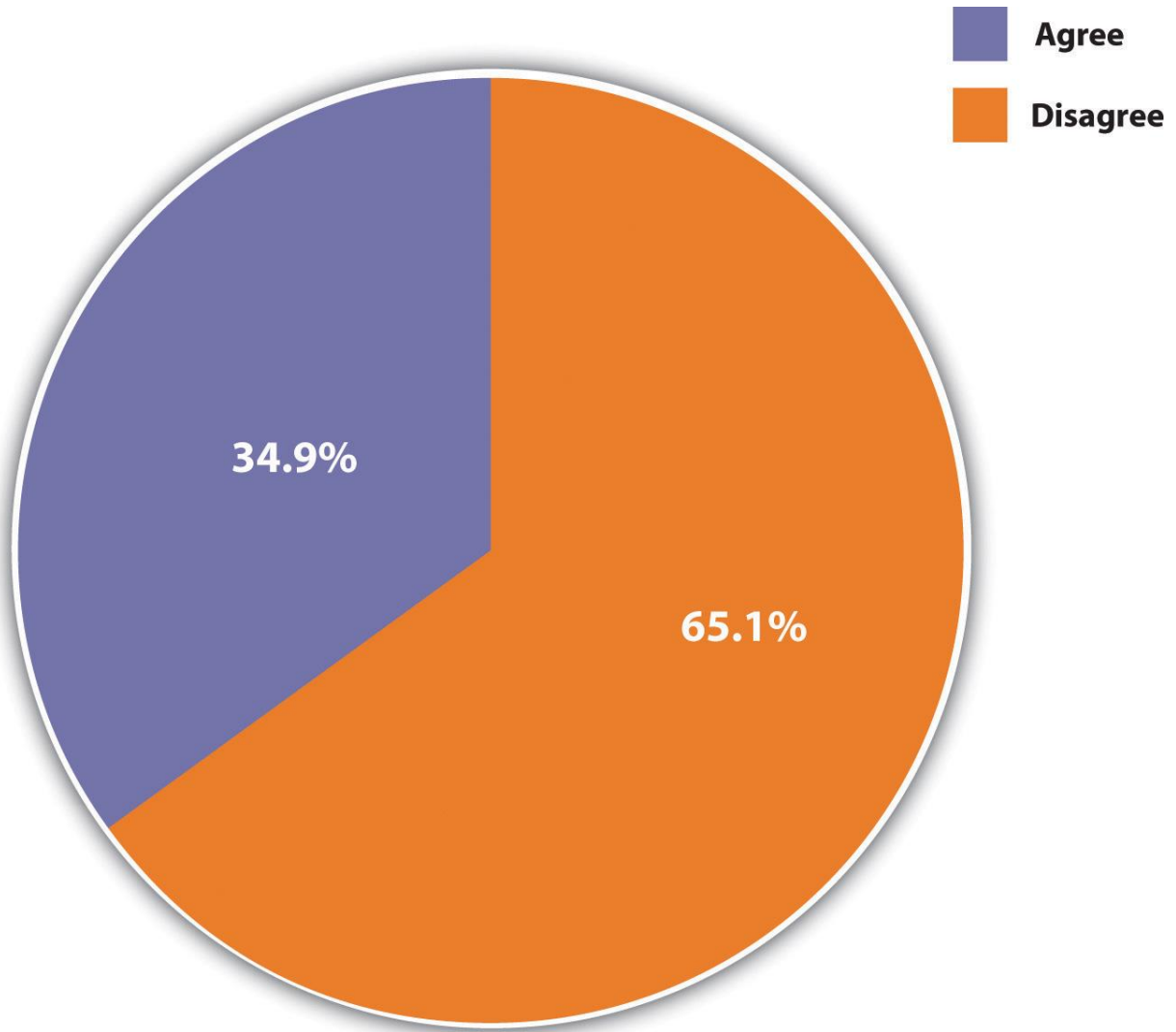
That's what little boys are made of.

What are little girls made of?

Sugar and spice,

And everything nice,

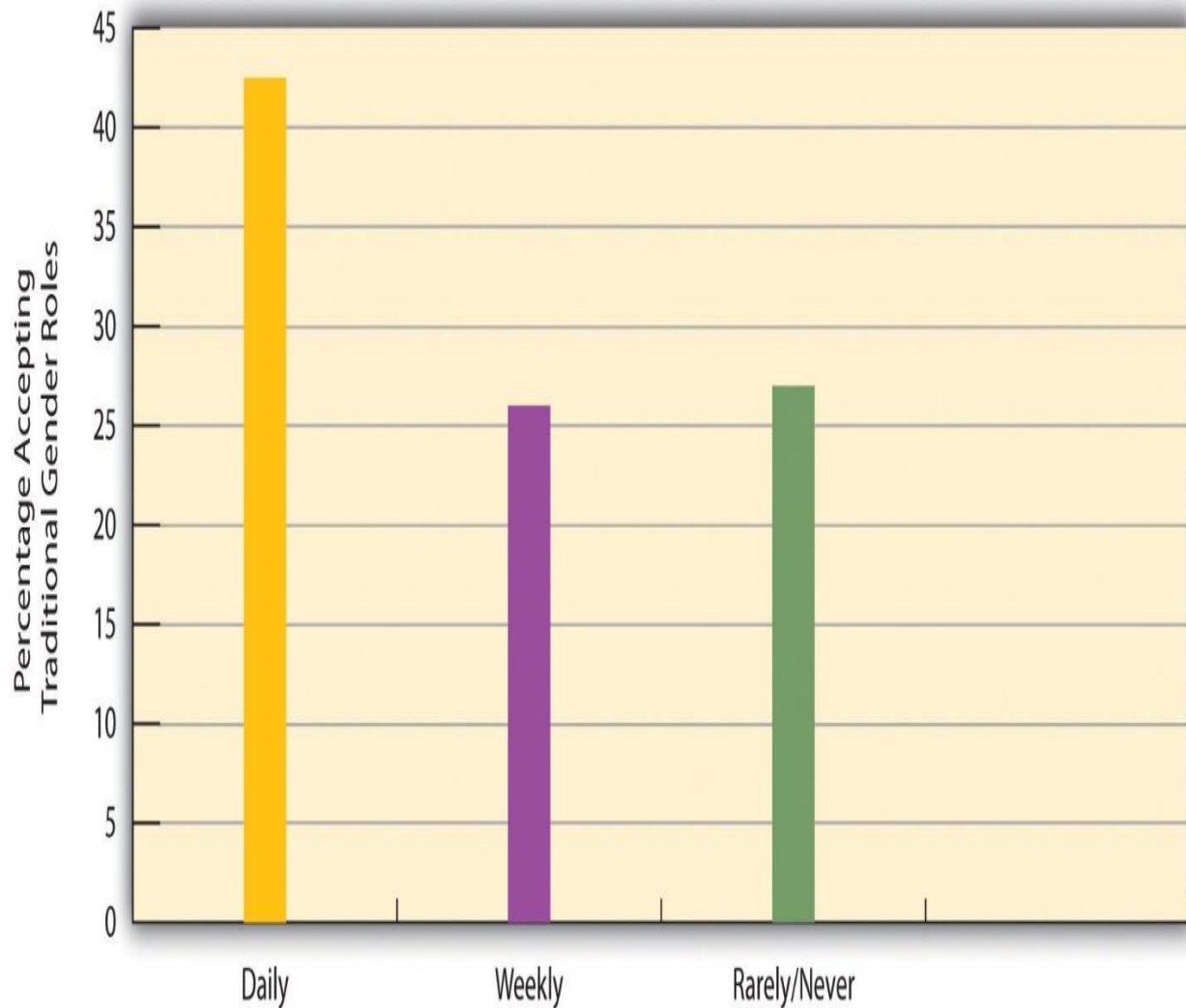
That's what little girls are made of.



Agreement or disagreement with statement that “it is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.”

Source: Data from General Social Survey, 2008.

Figure 11.3 **Frequency of Prayer** and Acceptance of Traditional Gender Roles in the Family



Percentage agreeing that “it is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.”

Source: Data from General Social Survey, 2008.

A SOCIAL PRIMER AND GOD'S WORD

GRISSOM ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Merriam-Webster defines a primer as “1: a small book for teaching children to read 2: a small introductory book on a subject 3: a short informative piece of writing.” “Primers were once a standard part of every child’s education. The first primer printed in North America, The New England Primer (ca. 1690), was typical; it contained many quotations from the Bible and many moral lessons, and the text was accompanied by numerous woodcut illustrations. We no longer use the word in early education...” Too bad.

It seems we need a primer to wade through the changing terminology of the present evil age. Commonly used words no longer have their accepted meanings. People are afraid to speak, and truth suffers.

Most of all, we need to know and speak God’s truth. We must know and compare the definitions and applications people are giving words and deeds to God’s word. It is the truth in which we must abide (John 8:31-32).

Christians are not “of the world,” but we do live in this world (John 17:16; 1 Cor. 5:9-10). Being “wise as serpents” includes knowing our environment in order to know our enemy (Matt. 10:16; 2 Cor. 2:11). To do that, we must identify error and sin to avoid it (Eph. 5:3-7; Gal. 5:19-21).

The following primer is by no means official or exhaustive. Neither is it a political statement (although people with political agendas often use these terms). We will not shy away from preaching God’s word with its application to politics. We aim for accuracy so fair evaluations can be made. So, here’s my primer of some current terms and what God’s word says about them.

LGBTQ. An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (or Queer). The Bible says such conduct is sin and those who practice such face God’s eternal punishment (Jude 7; 2 Pet. 2:6; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Birth sex. One's biological gender at birth. Most female mammals (including humans) have two of the same kind of sex chromosome (XX), and most males have two distinct sex chromosomes (XY). This is God's order and arrangement for procreation from creation (Gen. 1:27-28). An increasing number of people are challenging this science differentiating between birth gender and gender identity. CNN reported this week (without scientific documentation), "It's not possible to know a person's gender identity at birth, and there is no consensus criteria for assigning sex at birth" (Devan Cole, cnn.com).

Assigned sex. The gender a baby is assigned based on physical appearance. (see "birth sex" above). Telling a boy he is a girl does not make it so, and it is a lie (Eph. 4:25).

Gender identity. The gender you think and feel you are. "A person's internal sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female, or neither male nor female" (M-W). The Gender Equality Act now before Congress will allow males who identify as females to use women's restrooms, locker rooms, etc., as well as compete in women's sports. This is an affront to God's creation of male and female (Gen. 1:27; cf. Deut. 22:5).

Gender dysphoria. "Persistent unease with having the physical characteristics of one's gender, accompanied by strong identification with the opposite gender and a desire to live as or to become a member of the opposite gender" (thefreedictionary.com). Children in elementary and up are being introduced to the possibility of being a different gender than their biological gender. The Bible says children should be taught what is true (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4).

Gender fluidity. Gender can change over time; it is not static. (See "Assigned sex.")

Cancel culture. A form of censorship, it withdraws support for people and companies that offend current progressive sensibilities. It stigmatizes and "cancels" people. The Bible says to "reason together." The cancel culture stifles reasoned discussion (Isa. 1:18; 41:21; Jude 3; 2 Pet. 3:15; Acts 17:2-4, 11). Let's increase the kindness culture, not the cancel culture (Matt. 7:12).

The gospel of Christ is the solution to all these social ills because sin is at the root of them all. When hearts are converted to Christ, lives are changed, and nations change. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12)

Cultural Constructs Versus Religious Belief



BIOLOGICAL SEX

FEMALE

INTERSEX

MALE



GENDER IDENTITY

WOMAN

NON-BINARY

MAN



GENDER EXPRESSION

FEMININE

ANDROGYNOUS

MASCULINE



SEXUAL ORIENTATION

HETEROSEXUAL

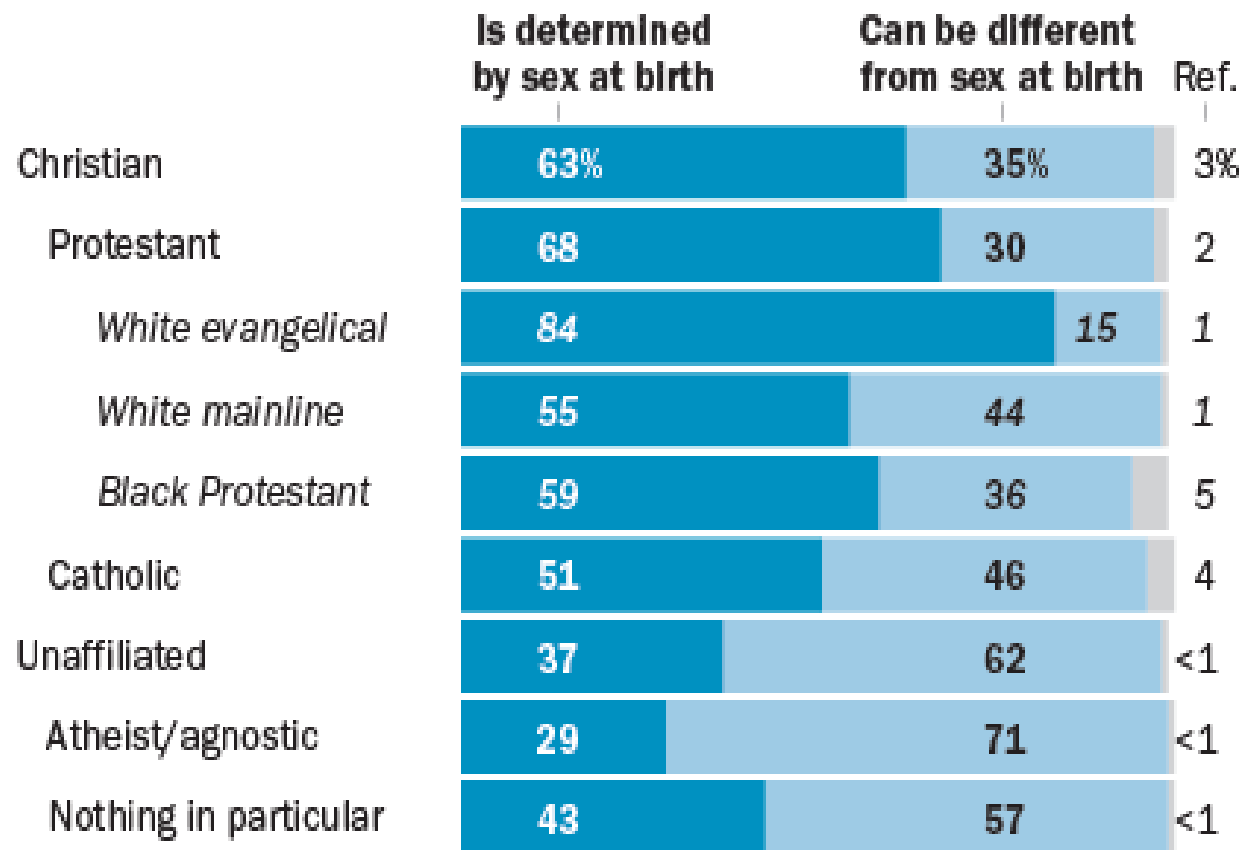
BISEXUAL

HOMOSEXUAL



Six-in-ten Christians say gender determined at birth; six-in-ten religious ‘nones’ disagree

% who say that whether a person is a man or a woman ...



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 8-21 and Sept. 14-28, 2017.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The Bible Says Both Sex & Gender Are Binary!

THE BIBLE ADDRESSES MALE & FEMALE GENERALLY

The Role of Woman

By [Wayne Jackson](#)

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And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.

And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man (Genesis 2:7, 18, 21-23).

The ancient Jewish Rabbis were fond of saying: "God had not formed woman out of the head, lest she should become proud; nor out of the eye, lest she should lust; nor out of the ear, lest she should be curious; nor out of the heart, lest she should be jealous; nor out of the hand, lest she should be covetous; nor out of the foot, lest she be a busybody; but out of the rib, which was always covered," indicating the modesty that was to characterize her (Edersheim 1957, 146).

The divine portrait of woman, as painted on the biblical canvas, is remarkable indeed. The Genesis narrative distinctly lends itself to the impression that Eve, as the culmination of the creative week, was a climactic jewel in Jehovah's handiwork.

The Plight of Ancient Woman

In order to appreciate the role of New Testament womanhood, one must, by way of contrast, consider the plight of ancient woman as she stood in the world in general.

In the antique Greek environment, women were considered inferior to men. Aristotle viewed women as somewhere between slaves and freemen. Wives led lives of seclusion and practical slavery. In Rome women enjoyed greater practical (not legal) freedom than in Greece, but licentiousness was rampant. Chastity and modesty among women were virtually unknown (Romans 1:26). Wives were truly second-class persons; more honor was shown to a man's mistress than to his wife.

The Jewish opinion of womanhood during the time of Christ needed considerable improvement. A male's morning prayer expressed thanks to God that the petitioner was neither a Gentile, a slave, nor a woman. Such attitudes, however, were the result of heathen influences.

While women were somewhat legally inferior under the law of Moses, practically speaking, wives and mothers in Israel enjoyed great dignity. Mothers were to be honored (Exodus 20:12), and to rebel against or show disrespect for one's mother was a most serious offence which could be punished by death (Deuteronomy 21:18; 27:16).

Though the Hebrew woman was under the authority of her father and later of her husband, she enjoyed considerable freedom and was not shut up in the harem. . . . Though women did not ordinarily inherit property, in a case of a sonless home the daughters might inherit (Num. 27). It was a man's world, but Hebrew law protected woman's person. Rape was punishable. Harlotry was forbidden (Lewis 1966, 425).

Edersheim pointed out that the Hebrew husband

was bound to love and cherish his wife, to support her in comfort, to redeem her if she had been sold into slavery, and to bury her, on which occasion even the poorest was to provide at least two mourning-fifes and one mourning woman. He was to treat his wife with courtesy, for her tears called down Divine vengeance (Edersheim n.d., 270).

If it be objected that the Old Testament practice of polygamy, along with its ease of divorce for men, placed women in an unfavorable status, it may be replied that such matters were tolerated in that “moonlight” dispensation due to the “hardness” of Israel’s hearts (Matthew 19:8), and were to be abolished with introduction of the “better” system of the New Testament.

Womanhood in the New Testament

The very first chapter of the New Testament portends the status to be accorded women under the law of Christ. There, four women are alluded to in the legal ancestral catalog of the Lord. Though the practice of mentioning women in such lists was not wholly unknown, it was, in the words of A. B. Bruce, “unusual from a genealogical point of view” (1956, 62).

Paul affirmed that “God sent forth his Son, born of a woman” (Galatians 4:4). The birth of Jesus to the virgin Mary was the turning point in human history for women. The Savior openly defied the attitudes of his day in his frequent dealings with women. He conversed with the woman at Jacob’s well (a Samaritan at that—a thing that shocked even the disciples [see John 4:27]). He refused to bend to Pharisaical pressures that he shun the sinful woman who anointed and kissed his holy feet (Luke 7:36ff). Godly women were numbered among those who ministered to the Christ (Luke 8:3), some of them accompanying him even to the foot of the cross (John 19:25).

It is important at this point some general considerations be noted.

First, under the law of Christ, both male and female are equally obligated to the marriage ordinance; neither husband nor wife should depart from the other (1 Corinthians 7:11). But should a husband (as in the case of an unbeliever) leave his wife, she is not bound (as a slave [Arndt and Gingrich, 205]) to follow the deserter (v. 15). And in the case of marital infidelity, the woman is granted the equal privilege of divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11-12).

Second, inspiration clearly stresses the mutual dependence of men and women in Christ. Paul says, “Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:11). **Neither is complete without the other.**

Third, in the matter of salvation, both stand on equal footing before God. Paul says concerning those who have obeyed the gospel: “There can be no male and female; for ye all are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

Professor Colin Brown observed:

This, however, is not a call to abolish all earthly relationships. Rather, it puts these relationships in the perspective of salvation history. As Paul goes on to say, “And if you are Christ’s then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:29; cf. also Rom. 10:2). All who are in Christ have the same status before God; but they do not necessarily have the same function (Brown 1976, 570).

Galatians 3:28 is certainly in harmony with 1 Peter 3:7, which makes it clear that women are “joint-heirs of the grace of life.”

Fourth, the New Testament authorizes woman a domain of authority within the home. Younger widows are advised to marry, bear children, and “rule the household” (1 Timothy 5:14). Lenski says:

“To rule the house” means as the wife and mother in the home, to manage the household affairs. This is the domain and province of woman, in which no man can compete with her. Its greatness and its importance should ever be held up as woman’s divinely intended sphere, in which all her womanly qualities and gifts find full play and happiest gratification (1961, 676).

This does not indicate, of course, that the woman’s authority in the home equals the man’s. He is the head of the wife and she is to be in subjection to him **willingly** (Ephesians 5:22, 23). Yet, he should lovingly allow her the freedom to exercise authority in the management of domestic matters, for God has ordained it.

One historian has noted:

The way in which the Church began to lift woman up into privilege and hope was one of its most prompt and beautiful transformations from the blight of paganism. Too long in the darkness, she was now helped into the sunlight (Hurst 1897, 146).

Such a transformation impressed even the heathen world; Libanius, a pagan writer, exclaimed: “What women these Christians have!” (Pratt 1939, 3103).

The Divine Subordination of Woman

By divine design, man is to be the “head” of woman. This principle obtains in society at large, in the church, and in the home (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-24). The graduation of authority rests on two bases: first, the original constitution of the sexes as they were created; and, second, woman’s role in the fall.

Concerning the former, the Bible teaches:

1. **Woman was made as a help for man—not the reverse (Genesis 2:18, 20).**
2. **Paul wrote: “For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man: for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (1 Corinthians 11:8-9).**
3. **Again, “For Adam was first formed, then Eve” (1 Timothy 2:13).**

As to woman’s role in the fall, she believed Satan’s lie that she might become as God, hence, was “beguiled” (Genesis 3:13; 2 Corinthians 11:3) or “deceived” (1 Timothy 2:14), whereas Adam, laboring under no such deception (1 Timothy 2:14), merely sinned due to his weakness for the woman (Genesis 3:12). Accordingly, woman’s subjection was increased after her fall (v. 16).

These facts do not suggest that woman is inferior to man, but they do mean (to those who respect the testimony of Scripture) that she is subordinate in rank to man. It ought to be emphasized that as Christ’s subjection to the Father involved no deprivation of dignity (Philippians 2:5-11), so there is none in woman’s subjection to man. Thus, as we shall presently observe, because of these **historical facts**, the sphere of woman’s activity has been divinely limited.

Male and Female Roles: Gender in the Bible

DAVE MILLER, Ph.D.



In little more than half a century, American culture has experienced a massive restructuring of values and reorientation of moral and spiritual standards. One facet of this multifaceted effacement and erosion of biblical values has been dramatically altered gender roles. The feminist agenda has penetrated the American social landscape. Indeed, the onset of the feminist movement in the turbulent 60s sparked a significant adjustment of societal norms resulting in the transformation of virtually every sphere of American culture—from the home and the church to the business world and beyond. Women now routinely serve in historically male capacities, including the military, politics, sports, and a host of community services including fire, police, ambulance, etc.

Make no mistake, a number of changes with regard to gender have emerged that may be deemed beneficial & positive. Nevertheless, the **overall** impact on American civilization has been negative, and the erosion of femininity has ushered in a host of evils that are hastening America's moral implosion (e.g., abortion and homosexuality). Concomitant with the effort to eradicate gender differentiation has been the degradation of masculinity and the restructuring of the family unit (fundamental building block of humanity—Genesis 1:27; 2:24). As womanhood has been devalued and her function altered, the rest of society has suffered dramatically. After all, women inevitably exert a profound influence on culture and society—for good or ill. Virtuous femininity is the glue that holds human civilization together. In the words of American poet William Ross Wallace's epic poem, "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle, Rules the World" (1865). Sadly, for America, feminism has overturned the rocker, thrown the baby out with the bathwater, punched Dad in the face, and stomped away from the house in a huff.

the bible still has the correct perspective

Amid this polarization that plagues American civilization in general, and Christendom in particular, one chasm continues to widen between those who wish to conform to Bible protocol and those who wish to modernize, update, and adapt Scripture to a changing society. The cry of those who are pressing the feminist agenda is that the church in the past restricted women in roles of leadership and worship simply because of culture and flawed hermeneutical principles. They say we are the product of a male-dominated society and have consequently misconstrued the contextual meaning of the relevant biblical passages.

The underlying catalyst for this social turmoil, and the resulting gender confusion, has been the rejection of the Bible as the authentic Word of the divine Being Who created the Universe & humans. Even among those who continue to profess their allegiance to Christianity, large numbers have capitulated to political correctness and abandoned the traditional, i.e., biblical, depiction of gender roles as defined by the Creator. In their quest to maintain relevance among the shifting sands of secular culture, they have imbibed the spirit of the age, been infected by humanistic philosophy, and consequently have compromised the clear teaching of Scripture on the role of women (cf. "Gender Inclusive...", 2013; "Believe It...", 2006; Pauls, 2013; "The Role of...", 2006; Stirman, 2010).

Nevertheless, Bible teaching on this subject is not that difficult to ascertain. Recent attempts to redefine gender roles fall flat, not only before a sensible assessment of relevant Bible passages on the subject, but in the face of the two-thousand-year history of Christianity which has, for the most part, demonstrated a generally accurate grasp of the basic parameters of God's will on this matter. Such has certainly been true in America where the Founders and 18th century men and women mostly embraced the Christian worldview, and believed that "family integrity was indispensable for the public safety and happiness" (West, 1997, p. 85).

In What Sense Is Man the Head of Woman?

By [Wayne Jackson](#)

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“Though it seems clear that a woman has a certain subordinate role in church matters, what should be her posture in the male business world? If she is a man’s boss, has she usurped his authority?”

There are no explicit guidelines regulating such matters, but there are some sacred principles that surely must be taken into consideration in assessing this issue from a biblical perspective.

Headship

First, there is an appointed scale of authority that God has prescribed for humankind, though such is scarcely recognized in today's modern world. Paul alludes to it in First Corinthians 11:2ff.

Namely, God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of every man; and man is the head of woman.

For our present purpose, we will explore the meaning of the phrase, "the head of the woman is the man."

Man, Head of Woman

The Greek term is **kephale**. The word may be used literally of a physical head (Mk. 6:24) or metaphorically of rank — as in the present case.

God the Father is the head of Christ because Jesus, by means of the incarnation, **subordinated himself** to the Father (Phil. 2:5-8).

Next, Christ is "the head of every man" (1 Cor. 11:3). It is important to note that the expression **every man** is more comprehensive than every **Christian** man. Some commentators take the position that Christ's headship here pertains only to Christian men (Meyer, Fee, etc.). Others insist that the relationship principle is broader than merely that of a Christian woman to a Christian man.

Findlay argues that the issue here:

"is one that touches the fundamental proprieties of life (8-15); and the three headships enumerated belong to the hierarchy of nature" (p. 871).

Lewis Johnson contends that the male gender as such "displays the authority of God on earth" (1247; cf. 11:7).

Lenski asserts that the phrase “every man” must not be restricted to Christian men. Rather, literally, Christ is the head of “every man” whether they accept him or not (433).

The subsequent context regarding creation would appear to support this latter view.

Man and Woman or Husband and Wife?

Next, there is controversy as to whether the terms of verse three are to be rendered “man” and “woman” or “husband” and “wife.”

The KJV, NKJV, ASV, NIV render the Greek terms **aner** and **gune** as “man” and “woman,” while a few other versions (NRSV, ESV) translate the original words as “husband” and “wife,” though inconsistently within the same context.

This diversity is due to the fact that the Greek words serve a dual function. In other words, the same words for man and woman are also used for husband and wife. In such a case, **the context must determine** which English word should be employed.

Neither the immediate passage nor surrounding context warrants the rendition of “husband” or “wife.” Certainly, it is not suggested that Christ is the head of **only husbands**.

Thus, it would appear that in this context the apostle is discussing the principle of headship within the assembly of Christian worship, nonetheless, *the principle of headship applies generally — in the home (cf. Eph. 5:22ff), in the church, and even beyond in our societal relationships.*

Exactly **how this principle is to be applied** in various settings is the tough question.

Recognition of Authority

The word “usurp” as used in the King James translation of 1 Timothy 2:12 is not a very good rendition of the original term. The Greek word **authenteo** simply means to act authoritatively; to exercise authority.

In that context, it appears to have reference to **spiritual matters**. A woman is not to act in any official capacity as an **authority figure** over man in **any sort of religious teaching role**.

Beyond this, however, there are these facts:

Authority In the home

Even in the home, the husband is to be the head and the wife is to be in “subjection” (Eph. 5:22ff). However, there is a sphere in which a woman is allowed to exert some authority. In one of his letters to Timothy, Paul declares that woman is to “rule the household” (1 Tim. 5:14). Allow me to quote from my commentary that addresses this matter.

“Almost surprisingly, Paul contends that the woman is to ‘rule the household.’ The term ‘rule’ (**oikodespotein** — present tense; standard procedure) is a fairly strong word. It signifies to be the ‘master’ of a house, to ‘rule’ a household, ‘manage’ family affairs (Thayer, p. 439). The passage cannot be employed, of course, to cancel the role relationship taught elsewhere (e.g., Ephesians 5:22ff), but it does recognize that women have domestic skills that men do not possess. The wise husband will recognize this and cooperate with his wife, the result being a contented home.

Lenski well noted that: ‘This is the domain and province of woman, in which no man can compete with her. Its greatness and its importance should ever be held up as woman’s divinely intended sphere, in which all her womanly qualities and gifts find full play and happiest gratification’ (p. 676). It is somewhat surprising at how many commentators slide lightly over this phrase” (*Before I Die – Paul’s Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 146-147).

Authority in Secular Work

In the modern world, there are many instances where a woman might be in a position of having authority over a man.

For example, suppose a business owner dies and the family business falls to his widow. May she continue to operate the business? Few, I suspect, would argue that she may not. The issue then becomes **how she handles herself** (i.e., her disposition and demeanor).

Conclusion

The key issue seems to be this. In any instance where a woman finds herself where she has some level of authority over a man, she must exercise such with great care. She must ever be conscious of their respective roles in the divine scheme of things.

She must always treat the man with respect, even if she is forced to correct him — or maybe even terminate his services. It will be a matter of **attitude** to a considerable degree.

It goes without saying, of course, that man’s headship over woman is **never a license for him to be rude, domineering, or abusive** to her. The golden rule applies to all social relationships.

The Bible Addresses Gender

Specifically: Nuclear Family

Dave Miller Continues...

Grounded in Creation—Not Culture

Paul is saying that God's original design for the human race entailed the creation of the male **first** as an indication of **his responsibility to be the spiritual leader of the home**. He was created to function as the head or leader in the home and in the church. That is his functional purpose. Woman, on the other hand, was specifically designed and created for the purpose of being a subordinate—though not inferior—assistant. God could have created the woman first, but He did not. He could have created both male and female **simultaneously**, but He did not. His action was intended to convey His will with regard to gender as relates to the interrelationship of man and woman.

This feature of Creation explains why God gave spiritual teaching to the man Adam **before** Eve was created, implying that Adam had the created responsibility to teach his wife (Genesis 2:15-17). It explains also why the female is twice stated to have been created to be “an help meet **for him**,” i.e., a helper suitable for the man (Genesis 2:18,20, emp. added). This explains why the Genesis text clearly indicates that in a unique sense, the woman was created **for** the man—not vice versa. It explains why God brought the woman “to the man” (Genesis 2:22), again, as if **she was made “for him”—not vice versa**. Adam confirmed this understanding by stating “the woman whom You gave to be **with me**” (Genesis 3:12, emp. added). It explains why Paul argued in the Corinthian letter on the basis of this very distinction: “Neither was the man created **for the woman**; but the woman **for the man**” (1 Corinthians 11:9). It further clarifies the implied authority of the man over the women in his act of **naming** the woman (Genesis 2:23; 3:20). The Jews understood this divinely designed order, evidenced by the practice of primogeniture—the firstborn male.

God's creation of the man **first** was specifically intended to communicate the authority/submission arrangement of the human race (1 Corinthians 11:8).

Observe that Paul next elaborates on this principle in 1 Timothy 2:14 by noting an example of what can happen when men and women tamper with God's original intentions. When Eve took the spiritual initiative above her husband, and Adam failed to take the lead and exercise spiritual authority over his wife, Satan was able to wreak havoc on the home and cause the introduction of sin into the world (Genesis 3). When Paul said the woman was deceived, he was not suggesting that women are more gullible than men. Rather, when men or women fail to confine themselves to their created function, but instead tamper with and act in violation of divinely intended roles, spiritual vulnerability to sin naturally follows.

God's appraisal of the matter was seen when He confronted the pair. **He spoke first to the head of the home—the man (Genesis 3:9).** His subsequent declaration to Eve reaffirmed the fact she was not to yield to the inclination to take the lead in spiritual matters. Rather, she was to submit to the rule of her husband (Genesis 3:16; cf. 4:4). When God said to Adam, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife..." (Genesis 3:17), **He was calling attention to the fact that Adam had failed to exercise spiritual leadership, thereby circumventing the divine arrangement of male-female relations.**

Paul concludes his instructions by noting how women may be preserved from falling into the same trap of assuming unauthorized authority: "She will be saved in childbearing" (1 Timothy 2:15). **"Childbearing" is the figure of speech known as synecdoche in which a part stands for the whole.** Thus, Paul was referring to the whole of female responsibility. Women may avoid taking to themselves illicit functions by concentrating on the functions assigned to them by God, undertaken with faith, love, and holiness in sobriety (i.e., self-control).

Some argue that this text applies to husbands and wives rather than to men and women in general. **However, the context of 1 Timothy is not the home, but the church (1 Timothy 3:15).** Likewise, the use of the plural with the absence of the article in 2:9 and 2:11 suggests women in general.

1st Corinthians 11: 1-3... We are particularly interested in **verse 3** - "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. " The significant word in this passage is head. It doesn't suggest "source" or a superior/inferior relationship. It denoted one thing only authority (government). The word authority could be substituted for "head" and one would receive a proper understanding of this verse. The woman's subordination does not violate the equality of the sexes. There is a sense in which being in Christ is "neither male nor female" (Galatians 3: 28).

Headship Needed In All Relationships. All groups and units of people must recognize head-ship to be able to successfully function. An army with no leader will be defeated. At the same time it can have only one commander-in-chief who makes the final decisions, or else it will be defeated. "The subjection of a wife to her husband is not that of force and fear and slavery, but of loving submission which comes from freedom. A body with two heads is a monstrosity; a church with two heads cannot prosper; a house with two heads cannot stand" (Lehman Strauss, *Devotional Studies in Galatians & Ephesians*, p. 205). *God made neither the church nor the family a democracy.* He ordained a chain of authority. This does not mean He loves elders more than He loves deacons, or kings more than He loves citizens, or parents more than He loves children, or husbands more than He does wives.

No Difference Based On Gender. There is no distinction in Christ based on gender (Galatians 3: 28). It is not based on the idea that males are His favorites. It does not enhance a man's salvation above that of his wife. It is based on which is best suited for a particular role. God stated near the beginning that "her desire shall be to her husband" (Genesis 3: 16). "This principle involves no humiliation, no injustice, no wrong. It recognizes a difference of function and responsibility, but it precludes selfishness, harshness, and unkindness" (Charles R. Eerdman, *Commentary On I Corinthians*, p. 112). As the Father and Son are "one, " so are man and wife (Ephesians 5: 31). Though Christ is subject to the Father, there is no rivalry between them. Neither did God intend any between husband and wife, though the wife is subject to the husband. While the woman was made for man, man was never complete until woman was there. There is an interdependence upon each other and upon God. Paul recognized this when he said "Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God" (11: 11-12).

Paul is not arguing for anything other than a partnership, though a partnership in which man is the head of his household. The scriptures recognize wives as being on an equality with their husbands mentally, morally, and spiritually.

To Wives Or To Women In General? In both 1 Corinthians 11 and Ephesians 5 Paul is writing to Christians and of married women. In 1st Corinthians 11 Paul indicated this by using the creation as an illustration (v. 7-9, 11, 12). He says the woman is the glory of the man. In Ephesians 5 he specifically refers to husbands and wives. *Generally, a woman is not to usurp authority over a man* (1 Timothy 2: 11- 14), but my wife is not in subjection to every man on the street. Nor does it mean a widow couldn't hire a man to do manual labor for her. However, a wife is to yield her will to her husband's. She is not to take the rule, dominate, and act on her own authority, but to subject herself to her husband. It is the will of God.

Ephesians 5: 22-33 - Paul had just stated (v. 21) that Christians are to subject themselves to each other. That means they are not domineering but are concerned about the welfare of one another. But there is a special kind of subjection for wives to their husbands, for "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is also head of the church."

What is the nature of his authority? "It is the authority that empties itself completely, in complete self-sacrifice, in the interest of loved ones. Every true woman who realizes that ground of authority yields to it by the very fiber of her nature" (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Corinthians Letters Of Paul*, page 134). It is almost impossible to discuss the submission of wives without talking of man's love for his wife. *The husband is to love his wife to the same extent Christ loved the church*. He should be willing to give himself up. As Christ is the savior of the church, the man should be devoted to saving his wife. This is his great object in life. Paul emphasizes the dignity of woman. *He is to love her as his own body* (v. 28). This does not mean he loves her "as much as" his own body, but "because she is" his body. He is to nourish her. This involves protecting and comforting. She will look to him for this. "Her desire shall be to her husband" (Genesis 3: 16). They are different physically, biologically, and emotionally. He honors her as the weaker vessel, or body (1 Peter 3: 7). He is to cherish her (v. 29). This means he places a high value on her and esteems her.

To What Extent Is Her Subjection? "In everything!" (v. 24.) That's it. Sounds like a tall order - enough to cause a woman to balk. Some have not only protested but have actually blasphemed against God. Some, both men & women, have never understood this. It means in everything which is not contrary to the will of God, pertaining to a husband's legitimate authority "as is fitting in the Lord" (Colossians 3: 18). I knew a Christian lady who was bewildered by her non-Christian husband. He mistreated her and knew just enough of the Bible to know it said that wives were to "submit to their husbands in everything. " He would command her to do demeaning, demoralizing, and ridiculous things just to prove she was in subjection. As A. C. Grider used to say, "A man like that should be ashamed to live and afraid to die. " She was frustrated, lost her self-esteem, and her faith was greatly shaken as she attempted to meet all of his demands.

WAS THIS WHAT THE LORD HAD IN MIND? Of course not. The person who plucks Ephesians 5: 24 out of context is no different than the one who plucks John 3: 16 out of context and refuses to consider anything else the Bible says on the subject. It is not "fit in the Lord" for her to violate the will of God (Acts 5: 29). Nor is it "fit in the Lord" for man to abuse and mistreat his wife by making a slave of her. It is hard to believe a man could read Ephesians 5: 24 and not also read the next verse (and also vs. 28, 29). Such a man is wresting the scriptures unto his own destruction (2 Peter 3: 16).

Reciprocal Attitudes. The wife's demeanor is that of a meek and quiet spirit (1st Peter 3: 1f). She loves and reverences her husband (Titus 2: 4; Ephesians 5: 33). If she wants her husband to love her, submits and tries to please him. If a husband desires his wife to "honor and obey," let him have the care and concern Christ had for the church. Rather than terror and threats he should have love and attachment. *He is commanded to love her.* When each comes to the marriage willing to give, they shall receive. Some wives have to fight the tendency to be domineering. Some men need to fight the tendency to abdicate and let the woman be in charge - - the head. This is not God's will. Adam Clarke quotes a homely rhyme from Francis Quarles: "Ill thrives the hapless family that shows a clock that's silent, and a hen that crows! I know not which live most unnatural lives, obeying husbands or commanding wives!"

Four reasons why some women living in subjection are not really living at all.

(1) They have not been shown and taught by their mothers. This is a duty enjoined on older women (Titus 2: 3, 4). Not only should they look for opportunities, but elders should plan classes for younger women taught by older women. Even if they didn't learn from their mothers they can learn from the Bible.

(2) They are rebellious toward authority (Romans 1: 30). The feminists shall receive their reward (Rev. 21: 8).

(3) They don't understand God's Reasons. Which are: a. Man was created first (1 Timothy 2: 13). God has always given preeminence to seniority. He did this with the firstborn in families and he does to man in order of creation, b. Woman was easily deceived, thus better suited for subjection than headship. She over-stepped her bounds and took the lead in the first sin and persuaded her husband to join her. (4) They have never seen a good husband. She submits easier to love than to bitterness. "Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them" (Colossians 3: 18). But she is still commanded to submit. **This shows the value of courtship. Headship and submission should be discussed before marriage.** Both husbands and wives have often been greatly disappointed. A woman who made a bad choice for a husband may have to work with him slowly and win him by her behavior (1 Peter 3: 1f). She should spend much time in prayer, for both of them.

Conclusion. Women enjoy the highest happiness in communities and homes where the Bible with its principles of Christianity are accepted and obeyed. The submission of a wife to her husband is part of her obedience to the Lord (Ephesians 5: 22). Eerdman observed that Paul is pictured as an enemy of women, and by leaders of the feminist movement he is regarded with horror and disgust. It is possible that Paul may someday be discovered as the great emancipator and protector of women. – *Dick Blackford*

The Bible Addresses Gender Specifically: Church Family

Wayne Jackson Continues... @Wrestled Scripture

“Prophecy Women”

The New Testament speaks of women prophesying (Acts 2:18; 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5). It is assumed that prophesying was preaching, hence, women of the first century preached. The word “prophecy” is from two Greek roots, pro (forth) and phemi (to speak). It is a very general term which means “to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, [or] comfort” (Thayer 1958, 553; 1 Corinthians 14:3). It also can suggest the idea of “giving thanks and of praising God” (1 Chronicles 25:3). The meaning of the word must thus be determined by the context in which it occurs, as well as from other information in the Scriptures.

Paul limits the extent of a woman’s “forth-speaking” (teaching, etc.) when he writes: “I permit not a woman to teach, nor have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness” (1 Timothy 2:12). The negative conjunction oude (nor) is **explanatory** in force, thus revealing the **kind of teaching** prohibited by the apostle is that which assumes **dominion** over the man (Lenski, 563). Certainly, women may teach (Titus 2:3); they may, in certain ways, teach men. There’s reciprocal teaching in singing (Colossians 3:16), and privately, in conjunction with her husband, Priscilla was involved in teaching Apollos (Acts 18:26). But a woman may not assume the **formal position** of a teacher, with the man subordinated to the role of student, without violating a New Testament command.

“Women Served as Church Deacons”

On the basis of Romans 16:1-2, some have contended that:

1. Phoebe was a church official (deacon);
2. the church was to “assist her,” thus implying her authority over the church; and,
3. she had been a “helper” (prostatis) of many, implying that she had a role of “authority, discipline, over-seeing.”

All of this is supposed to show that Phoebe was a preacher-leader in the early church.

In response:

1. The word diakonos simply means a “servant” (Matthew 23:11; John 2:5, etc.), and any “official” attachment to the term must be demanded by the context, as in Philipians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8, 12.
2. The fact the saints were encouraged to “assist” Phoebe did not imply her authority over them. The Greek word paristemi meant “come to the aid of, help, stand by” (Arndt & Gingrich, 633). When Paul said, “the Lord stood by [pareste] me” (2nd Timothy 4:17), he certainly was not asserting he exercised authority over Christ!
3. The word prostatis (helper) does not necessitate oversight. If so, then Phoebe exercised **authority over Paul**, for she had been his “helper” as well as others! Though it is found only here in the New Testament, this term, which can connote merely the idea of **rendering assistance**, is used in a third-century B.C. letter from a son to his father (the verbal form): “[T]here will be nothing of more importance for me than to **look after** you for the remainder of life, in a manner worthy of you, and worthy of me” (Moulton and Milligan 1963, 551).

Euodia and Syntyche: Paul's "Fellow-Workers"

In Philippians 4:2-3, Paul says that Euodia and Syntyche "labored" with him in the gospel; he calls them, along with others, his "fellow-workers." Again, the assumption is made that this necessitates an authoritarian position comparable to the apostle's.

The assumption is unwarranted. Christians are said to be "God's fellow-workers" (1 Corinthians 3:9); obviously, this doesn't suggest that we are authorized to act as deity! Countless Christian ladies have assisted gospel preachers in numerous ways without ever having become **public preachers**.

"Junia Was an Apostle"

It is said that Junia (KJV), a woman, was an apostle, and therefore she certainly occupied a position of authority in the primitive church (Romans 16:7).

In the first place, in the Greek text the name is Junian (in accusative case—the gender of the name is not evident); it could be either Junia (feminine), or more likely, Junias (masculine). Origen, a writer of the third century A.D., considered it a reference to a man (Lightfoot 1957, 96).

But secondly, it is not even certain that Junias is here identified as an "apostle." The phrase, "of note among the apostles" (ASV), is rendered by Zahn as "famed, mentioned with honor in the circle of the apostles" (1909, 418), thus yielding the sense of being well-known **by the apostles**, rather than actually being an apostle.

In the third place, the word apostle is used occasionally in the Bible in a non-technical sense to denote merely a messenger. Jesus says that "one sent" (apostolos) is not greater than the sender (John 13:16). The word need not imply one who has dominion over another, nor even a preacher.

“Women Preachers Authorized by the Law”

Some argue that Paul’s admonition that women be in subjection is limited by the expression, “as also saith the law” (1 Corinthians 14:34). Since the law allowed women prophets (as in the case of Miriam, Huldah, and Anna), and even a woman judge (Deborah), so, preaching executives are permissible in the church today.

In response we must point out:

1. When Miriam prophesied it was “all the women” that went out after her (Exodus 15:20), and there is no evidence that she preached to men.
2. Though Huldah was a prophetess, the solitary record of her prophesying involved some men going to her where they communed privately (2 Kings 22:14ff; 2 Chronicles 34:22ff). It is impossible to find public preaching here.
3. Anna was a prophetess “who departed not from the temple” (Luke 2:36-38). In describing the temple, Josephus (*The Wars of the Jews*, 5.5.2) says: “[T]here was a partition built for the women” that separated them from the men; this was “the proper place wherein they were to worship.” It cannot be proved that Anna publicly preached to mixed audiences.
4. Deborah was a prophetess of the hill country of Ephraim, but there is no indication that she publicly proclaimed God’s message to the multitudes; rather, “the children of Israel came unto her for judgment” (Judges 4:5). She simply gave prophetic judgment as a “mother in Israel” (5:7). The fact that she judged at all is a dramatic commentary on the sickening weakness of the Israelites during this period, and Deborah’s song (chapter 5) laments this woeful condition. This was but one of those occasions where Jehovah had accommodated his working to Israel’s weaknesses (cf. 1 Samuel 8:9; Matthew 19:8).

“1 Corinthians 14:33 Does Not Apply Today”

May 1st Corinthians 14:33 be used to oppose women preachers? One view contends it may not be. It is alleged that contextual considerations indicate that the meeting contemplated in 1st Corinthians 14 is not comparable to any convened in the church today. And so, supposedly, these verses are not applicable to church assemblies today (Woods 1976, 106-112).

Another view, with much greater weight, recognizes that 1st Corinthians 14 has to do primarily with a unique first-century situation, the reception of spiritual gifts. Nevertheless, it sees Paul, in this context, as enunciating essentially the very same **principle** as that set forth in 1 Timothy 2:12ff.

H. P. Hamann writes:

If we have the same writer in both letters writing on the same matter, we have the right to allow one text to explain the other, and especially to let the clearer or more definite throw light on the less precise. So, 1 Timothy 2 is the key for the understanding of 1 Corinthians 14 (1976, 8).

It is certain that 1 Corinthians 14:33ff lends no support to the notion of women preachers. A gender integrated female preaching ministry is not sanctioned anywhere in the Scriptures.

The New Testament Is Clear

Finally, the New Testament makes it clear that males are to lead the acts of worship in assemblies of mixed sexes. In 1 Timothy 2:8, Paul instructs “the men [andras – accusative plural of aner, males only] pray in every place.” Women may certainly pray (1st Corinthians 11:5), and it hardly would be denied that, in some sense, she could pray in **every place**.

However, there is another sense in which only males may pray in **every place**. Obviously, it is the **leading** of prayers in mixed groups that is restricted to the man. Commenting upon this verse, a noted Greek scholar has well said, “The ministers of public prayer must be the men of the congregation, not the women” (White 1956, 106). The same principle, of course, would also apply to other acts of public worship.

“What About Culture?”

It has become fashionable to assert that Paul’s teaching regarding feminine subordination was aimed at conformity to the **culture** of his day—somewhat like instructions concerning slavery. And so, it is claimed, just as the New Testament contained seeds for the abolition of slavery, it contained the seeds for woman’s eventual full equality with man in church life.

The alleged parallel is simply not valid. In the four major contexts where Paul discusses male-female relationships (1st Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33b-35; Ephesians 5:22-23; 1st Timothy 2:8-15), the principle of subjection, as well as its practical application to specific situations, are grounded upon **historical** facts related to the origin and constitution of human relationships, and not upon **culture**.

While it is important to study ancient culture so as to better understand the Bible, it must not be an overriding factor in interpretation. To substitute culture for a **stated apostolic reason** is to turn **exegesis** into **eisegesis**, i.e., thrusting a foreign meaning into the text (Sproul 1976, 13ff).

A Study of 1 Timothy 2:11-12

"Let a woman learn in quietness...." The word "quietness" (here and in verse 12) or "silence" (KJV), is from the Greek word *hesuchia*, meaning "quiet; peaceful; not causing disturbance" (see Acts 22:2; 2 Thess. 3:12). "Quietness" is the opposite of boisterous, disturbing, or domineering loud behavior. It is a calm, meek, and quiet spirit.

Paul adds, *"...with all subjection."* The word "subjection" is from the Greek word *hupotage*, meaning "under authority; subjection" (see 3:4). Paul wants Christian women to learn in subjection and not take the leading role of teaching in a worship assembly where men are present.

"But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man." Note the "permit not" here. Those of a progressive mindset want to allow today what Paul does "not permit." Note also the "but" which presents a contrast. The woman is to learn (v. 11), "but" not to teach (v. 12). Paul's instruction here's not an absolute statement, such as, "women are not to teach, period." If it were, then it would contradict other plain Bible passages which require a woman to teach. The words "teach" and "dominion" modify "over a man." A woman isn't to teach "over a man," nor is she to have dominion "over a man."

"Dominion" is from the Greek word *authentain*, meaning "one who does a thing himself; one who acts by his own authority; to exercise authority; to exercise control." The words "nor have dominion" are explanatory. They explain the word "teach." The word "nor," from the Greek word *oude*, explains the specific kind of teaching that is forbidden. A woman is not to teach in an authoritative way over a man; that is, teaching that dominates over a man. The kind of teaching that is forbidden here is teaching that violates the principle of subjection. It is not teaching per se that is forbidden, but teaching with dominion "over a man" that is forbidden. Elsewhere in the New Testament, women are commanded to teach (Titus 2:3-4; etc.). Yet, here, a woman is not permitted to teach with dominion over a man.

In the KJV, the wording is different. It reads "usurp authority over the man." Because of this translation, some expositors believe that what is forbidden is the "usurping" of authority. They conclude that if a woman is given authority by man (the man acquiesces to the woman or invites her) to preach, be an elder, etc., that she can do it, so long as she does not "usurp" (take by force or assume) the authority for herself. This use of "usurp" in the KJV is misleading. What is forbidden here is simply to "have dominion" (ASV, ERV), "have authority" (NKJV), "exercise authority" (NASV, ESV, NET), or "use authority" (Greek interlinear) over a man. **Paul does not forbid a woman to "usurp" (take by force or assume) authority. He forbids her to "have," or "use" authority over a man.**

A Study of 1 Corinthians 14:34

"Let the women keep silence..." The word "silence" is from the Greek word *sigao*, meaning "to keep silence; hold one's peace; say nothing." The "silence" demanded here is not absolute and unconditional. Rather, the context determines why and when the woman is to be silent. **There is a connection between "silence" and "subjection."** The "silence" of the women shows their "subjection" (vv. 34-35), just as the "silence" of the prophets shows that their spirit is in "subjection" (vv. 28-32). Why do many today ask about the "silence" of the women, but not ask about the "silence" of the tongue-speakers and prophets in verses 28 thru 32? Note that the prophet also had to be "silent" under some circumstances, but later could speak (vv. 30-31). We must not force the meaning of the words "let the women keep silence," beyond the range of its specific application and its immediate context.

Paul adds, *"for it is not permitted unto them to speak."* Again, note the words "not permitted" (just like the "permit not" in 1 Timothy 2:12). The progressive mindset wants to allow today what Paul does "not permit." The word "speak" is from the Greek word *laleo*, meaning "to talk." What kind of speaking or talking did Paul have in mind in this context?

Consider the use of the Greek *laleo* throughout the context of 1st Cor. 14 (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 28, 29, 34, 35, 39). After reading these verses, two things are obvious: first, it's contextually spirit-gift speaking that is occurring (tongue-speaking, prophesying); and, second, it is speaking that leads the assembly or formal speaking in the assembly or publicly addressing the assembly with a public discourse.

The speaking in 1 Corinthians 14 came from one in the *role* or *position* of a public speaker or teacher (tongue speaker, prophet). A woman isn't to have this *role* or *position* in the assembly. She is not to speak in the same manner as the tongue speakers & prophets. (The exception would be the female prophetess mentioned previous in 1st Corinthians 11:5-6 who is veiled.) Paul forbids the women to do a specific kind of speaking; that is, addressing the assembly. Paul is not forbidding speaking in any informal teaching arrangements in which Bible classes are conducted. Rather, he prohibits speaking that leads the formal assembly or speaking that disrupts the formal assembly. Not all speaking is here prohibited; otherwise, a woman would be forbidden to sing (Ephesians 5:19) or say "Amen" (1 Corinthians 14:16). To say that this passage forbids any and all speaking by women is to go against the immediate context and plain teaching of the New Testament.

Paul adds, "*but let them be in subjection....*" The word "subjection" is from the Greek word *hupotasso*, meaning "to arrange under; submit; subject." Note also the word "but." The word "but" presents a contrast. The kind of speaking that Paul had in mind was of the sort that would not allow a woman to place herself in subjection (the verb is in the middle voice, "subject themselves"). It was speaking that was not in subjection. **Paul forbids, not just any kind of speech, but the kind of speech that is not in subjection.** – *Chris Reeves*

May a Woman Ask a Question?

By [Wayne Jackson](#)

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“May a woman ask questions in a Bible class consisting of both men and women? If she may, how is this to be harmonized with Paul’s command that the Christian woman ‘keep silence’ in the church (1 Cor. 14:34)?”

First, one needs to define the meaning of “silence,” as that term is used in the Bible generally, and then as it is employed in 1 Corinthians 14 in particular.

The Greek term is **sigao**, and it is a word that has never demanded absolute, unqualified silence. Rather, the nature of the silence is determined **by the context** in which the expression is used.

Examples of Non-silent “Silence”

The verb **sigao** is found infrequently in the Bible (some 19 times in the Greek Old Testament, and less than a dozen times in the New Testament). A careful examination of the term reveals that the context identifies the **nature of the silence** under consideration.

Complaining Israelites

When the Israelites, pursued by the Egyptians, arrived at the Red Sea, they were terrified. They complained of their plight to Moses. He told them that Jehovah would fight for them, but they were to “hold [their] peace,” i.e., be silent (Ex. 14:14).

Obviously, Moses did not mean that they were forbidden to speak at all. Rather, they were to cease their faithless whimpering.

David’s selective silence

When David described certain hardships in his life as a result of his weaknesses—and the fact that he had “kept silence” under the burden (Psalm 32:3)—he was not speaking of general silence, but silence **regarding his sin**. He had failed to acknowledge it with due dispatch.

The disciples’ lack of conversation

After the disciples witnessed the transfiguration scene, they “held their peace,” i.e., remained silent (Luke 9:36). That does not mean they did not talk at all. Rather, they did not discuss with others what they had seen on the mountain.

Keeping Silent and 1 Corinthians 14

We now direct our attention to 1 Corinthians 14. The verb **sigao** is three times used in this chapter.

One who has the gift of tongues is to **keep silence** if he has no interpreter to use in conjunction with an audience of a different language (v. 28).

If a brother is speaking, and another brother receives a more current revelation from God, the former speaker is to **keep silence** (v. 30).

Both of these prohibitions demand silence **only in the matters being discussed**. They do not forbid these men to speak in a forum, which is otherwise consistent with their divine obligations. Surely these men could sing, lead a prayer, or otherwise exhort any audience which could understand their speech.

Finally, women are to keep silence (v. 34). This does not demand that a woman be absolutely silent at church. Otherwise, she could not even sing, for she surely “speaks” when she sings (see Eph. 5:18-19).

Rather, in harmony with what the apostle taught elsewhere (1 Tim. 2:12), the woman is not to speak or teach **in any way that violates her gender role**.

She is not to occupy the position of a public teacher in such a capacity as to stand before the church and function as the teacher (or co-teacher) of the group. In assuming this **official capacity**, she has then stepped beyond her authorized sphere, and she violates scriptural principle.

When a woman is granted permission to ask a question, and she does so with modesty and with the proper respect for her teacher, there is nothing on earth wrong with her framing that inquiry. Does anyone imagine that just because a student poses a question in class, or makes a comment, in the public school system, that he or she has somehow usurped the role of the teacher?

What About Paul’s Regulation That Women Should Ask Their Husbands?

But let us anticipate an objection. Some, who haven’t understood the context of 1st Corinthians 14, and who have taken this matter to an unwarranted extreme, i.e. - alleging that the woman may not make a comment at all or ask a question, contend that the text specifically says if the woman would learn anything, she must ask her husband at home.

If this extreme, restrictive view is valid, the following conclusions surely must follow.

The woman must resolve not to **learn anything** during a church meeting, for that is what the text says.

If she were unmarried, she could then learn **nothing at all ever** for she would have no husband from whom to learn at home. If, therefore, she has a desire to learn, she must marry, or forever remain in ignorance.

The conclusion is absurd, because the argument is invalid.

What Does It Mean?

The overall context of this concluding portion of 1 Corinthians 14 suggests that there was a definite problem in the Corinthian church, and it had to do with **aggressive** women.

Some of these Corinthian sisters were asserting themselves, speaking out in such a manner as to challenge the role of the male public teachers. Under the guise of wanting information, they likely were asking pointed questions designed to put the service-leaders on the defensive.

Whatever the manifestation of their conduct was, it was contrary to the principle enunciated by the apostle in his more comprehensive treatment of the subject, as found in his first letter to Timothy (1st Timothy 2:12ff).

Remember this. The Scriptures must be viewed as harmonious. It is not a legitimate method of interpretation to array the inspired documents against one another.
