



*It's All About
Eve:
God's Design
and Plan for
Women*

*By
Peggi Klubnik*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

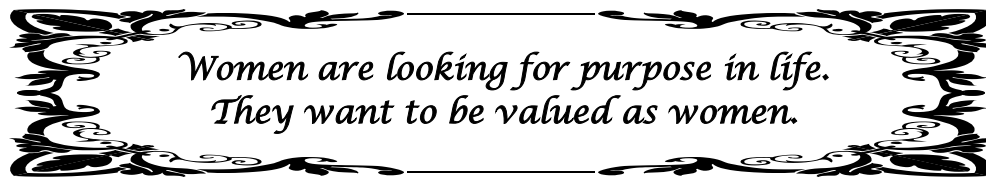
<i>A QUEST FOR ANSWERS</i>	2
<i>UNIQUELY FASHIONED</i>	5
<i>WOMEN OF THE BIBLE</i>	10
Old Testament Women.....	10
Women In The New Testament	12
<i>THE ISSUE OF HEAD COVERINGS</i>	14
1 Corinthians 11:3-16	14
<i>SILENCE IN THE CHURCH</i>	19
1 Corinthians 14:34-35	19
<i>THE CHILDREN OF EVE</i>	21
1 Timothy 2:9-15.....	21
<i>WOMAN TO WOMAN</i>	25
Titus 2:3-5.....	25
<i>THE WEAKER VESSEL</i>	29
1 Peter 3:1-7	29
<i>LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH</i>	32
<i>FINDING OUR NICHE</i>	34
<i>APPENDIX A</i>	36
THE DANVERS STATEMENT.....	36
<i>APPENDIX B</i>	38
THE HEADSHIP OF ADAM.....	38
<i>APPENDIX C</i>	39
HOW TO DETERMINE GOD'S WILL	39
<i>APPENDIX D</i>	40
SPIRITUAL GIFTS	40
<i>APPENDIX E</i>	44
TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.....	44
<i>APPENDIX F</i>	45
TEACHER'S GUIDE	45

A QUEST FOR ANSWERS

A short time ago a young Russian woman and I were talking about the role of women in Russia. She had become a believer a few years earlier while translating for some American Christians. During our conversation, I asked about the Russian church's view of women. I was surprised when she told me that her pastor teaches that a woman is not really a person, but merely a helper. He did not consider women to be equal to men. As I relate this incident to women in Bible college courses that I teach in Russia, I ask the women students to raise their hands if they have ever heard this opinion. There are always several who respond. Some even say that this view is taught in their churches.

The role of women in the church and home is one of the most controversial issues among Russian believers today. While prayer is encouraged among women, studying and teaching the Word of God by women is not tolerated in some churches. On the other hand, there are women in the position of pastoring a church, perhaps not officially, but in practice. But what is hard to believe is the teaching by some that women are not considered to be a person in the same sense as a man.

There seems to be no clear-cut definition of a woman's significance and role in society. For example, many women are attempting to fulfill their obligations as mothers while working full-time. A vast number of women are divorced. Some women are choosing to remain single or marry at a later age. Women are looking for a purpose in life. They want to be valued as women. But they are bombarded by the many voices that seem to pressure and influence them from every segment of society.



Articles and books written about women's issues have not only failed to resolve the problems of women in today's world, but have actually raised more questions. A heated debate can almost always be expected when the subject of equality of men and women is addressed. This reflects the growing development of seemingly endless views about women.

There are three popular philosophies today concerning the roles of women. It is evident that these positions seem to be grounded in three different points of view regarding Scripture. The first usually denies the inspiration of the Bible, often considering it to be irrelevant. The second view interprets the Bible from a feminist viewpoint in what is considered to be an attempt to liberate the Scriptures from its patriarchal bias and oppression of women. The last perspective believes the Bible to be inspired, seeking to interpret it in a precise manner. As a result of their varied views of the Scriptures, the differences between the teachings of these three positions on the role of women are contradictory.

- **Secular Feminists** deny any male headship or authority, usually regarding the Genesis account as a myth. They do not accept the Bible as authoritative. They consider men and women to be equal in their roles. Therefore, they believe that these roles are interchangeable in society, in the church, and in the home.

- **Christian Feminists** (egalitarians) argue that men and women were created equal, but lost their equality at the fall. They claim that the headship of man originated as part of the curse. Quoting Galatians 3:28, they believe the work of Christ on the cross restored that equality, overcoming the curse of man's headship. They base the leadership of the church on spiritual gifts and ability, rather than on gender.
- **Conservative Christians** (complementarians) believe that God created men and women equal in essence, but with distinct roles. Holding to the headship of Adam before the fall, they believe God intends for men and women to fulfill different gender roles in the church and in the home.

It is clear that differing methods of interpreting Scripture have a decisive impact on one's definition of the role of women in the church and in the family. Various interpretations of biblical passages result in conflicting views on the subject of women. Some conservative Christians hold to a broad interpretation of passages regarding the role of women in the church, resulting in an overly strict application of Scripture.

In interpreting the Bible, it is important to determine the meaning of the verse or passage based on its historical, grammatical, and literary contexts. In addition, the interpretation of the biblical text must be in agreement with the teaching of the rest of Scripture on the subject. Care must be taken not to allegorize Scripture, that is search for a hidden or secret code or meaning separate from the normal, literal reading. Observation and interpretation must be accurate because without precise interpretation, there can be no correct application.

For example, some teach that 1 Timothy 2:11 prohibits women from any leadership role in the church, even over women and children. Others hold that the silence of women in the church (1 Cor. 14:34) means that women should not express their opinions in church. In addition, tradition often plays a major role in the explanation and application of biblical passages relating to women. Unless the Word of God is considered to be the sole authority in the formulation of a doctrine on the role of women, tradition and society will continue to dictate attitudes and beliefs about women.

Culture changes. Society evolves. But the Word of God endures forever (Matt. 24:35). Tradition and popular views about women should be evaluated in light of Scripture. A careful study of the biblical passages relating to the role of women must be the foundation of the church's view of women.

In addition, the application of the Bible to today's culture must be true to Scripture and be in harmony with the context of the passage. The church must consider how God's unique design and plan for women, as revealed in the Scriptures, affects Christian women today. Specific issues must be addressed from the Bible in response to secular or non-biblical positions. Believers must adequately demonstrate the relevance of the Bible to culture's ever-changing views of a woman's role. Questions must be answered from the Scriptures, rather than a reliance on tradition or society. Does God consider women to be inferior to men? Is there any sense in which men and women are portrayed in Scripture as being equal? Are their roles distinctly portrayed in the Bible? Did the fall of Adam and Eve affect the function of woman as created by God? How do these findings affect the role of women in the church and in the home?

Women today have tremendous influence in the church by virtue of their numbers, their training of their children as future leaders of the church, their influence on their husbands who may be pastors or elders, and their work within the church itself. In many ways, they are the strength and backbone of the church.

There are three primary passages in the New Testament which discuss the behavior of women in the context of church worship: 1 Corinthians 11: 3-16, 1 Corinthians 14:34, and 1 Timothy 2:9-1. Are these texts to be understood only in light of their historical setting or were they intended by Paul to be applied to women today?

As we will see, there appears to be an apparent contradiction in Paul's instructions to women regarding their behavior in the worship assembly. In 1 Corinthians 11, women pray and prophesy. Yet in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, they are told to be quiet. The church's application today of these instructions ranges from absolute prohibition of the participation of women in worship services to the ordination of women as pastors. A study of these passages will help us understand the biblical role of women today. In addition, the roles of the older and younger women in Titus 2:3-5 will be discussed. The submission of wives and the meaning of the term *weaker vessel* in 1 Peter 3:1-7 will be also examined. The issues of deaconesses and female apostles will be considered in the overall context of church leadership.

A biblical study of the role of women must begin with the creation of Eve as depicted in Genesis 1 and 2. As we will see, Genesis is the background sketch from which the biblical portrait of a woman is painted.

* * *

Study Guide in Preparation for Lesson 1

Pray that God the Holy Spirit would guide you as you study and apply His Word.

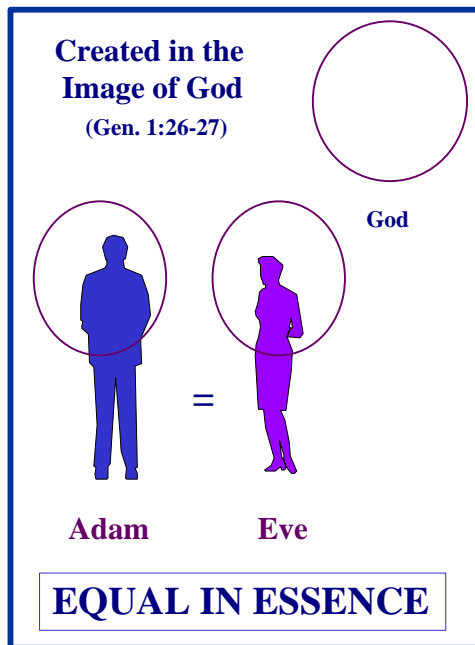
1. Read Genesis 1 – 2. Write down any questions you might have about the passage. Make a list of things you would like to study in more depth.
2. Write down any phrase or word that indicates God gave Adam authority that was different than that which He gave Eve. Be sure to write down the verse references.
3. Read Genesis 3. Write down any questions you might have about the passage.
4. What was the significance of the serpent talking to Eve rather than Adam? What should have been Eve's response to the serpent?
5. List the consequences of sin for Eve (Gen. 3:16) and for Adam (Gen. 3:17-19).
6. In what way do you think Genesis 4:7 helps us understand the meaning of Genesis 3:16b?
7. List some women (along with their ministries) that were used of God in both the Old and New Testaments.
8. Memorize Galatians 3:28. What do you think is the significance of this verse?
9. How can you apply what you have learned to your life?

UNIQUELY FASHIONED

The first three chapters of Genesis establish and define God's unique plan and design for women. These chapters are foundational to understanding women's issues in any era because they address such subjects as women being created in the image of God, evolution, the headship of man, male and female distinctions, and the effects of the fall. A New Testament study of the role of women reveals references to Eve in 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 and 1 Timothy 2:13 and challenges us to examine the creation passages in the Book of Genesis.

Without an accurate understanding of Eve, New Testament passages relating to the responsibility of women can easily be misinterpreted and wrongly applied. Eve is not only our prototype, but her creation, fall, and punishment are the basis for understanding the role of women throughout Scripture. So we must begin at the beginning, where God begins to weave the tapestry of a woman.

Genesis 1:26-31 records the creation of man on the sixth day. Man was not a product of either atheistic or theistic evolution, but was created as a deliberate and willful act of God Himself.



These days are not ages, but literal 24-hour days. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *yom*, when used with a number, always means 24-hour days. The term *Sabbath* in Exodus 20:11 also implies this interpretation.¹

It is evident that the word *man* in Genesis 1:26 and 27 is a generic term for mankind, because of the use of the word *them* in both verses and the use of the Hebrew word *Adam*, meaning "a class of being created by God without regard to sex, with a focus as a class of creature, distinct from animals, plants, or even spiritual beings."² Both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God. They were identical in essence, yet distinct physically.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Rather than the words *image* and *likeness* referring to two aspects of the God's nature, the words are synonymous. The second adds emphasis to the first. Some have attempted to explain the terms theologically, stating that *image* denotes man's essence, which is unchangeable, and *likeness* refers to the changing part of man, which may be lost. But this is disproved by the interchangeable use of the words in Genesis 5:1 and 9:6. A distinction between these two terms must be rejected both exegetically and theologically.

¹Allen Ross, "Genesis" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An exposition of the Scriptures. J. F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Editors. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985.

²Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (HGK132). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

The image of God is not a physical likeness since God is spirit (John 4:24). In his commentary on the Book of Genesis, Allen Ross remarks on the meaning of the phrase *image of God*.

Being in God's image means that humans share, though imperfectly and finitely, in God's nature, that is, in His communicable attributes (life, personality, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, justice), and so have the capacity for spiritual fellowship with Him.³

The image of God consists of that which distinguishes man from the lower creation and enables man to have fellowship with God. It includes spirituality (immortality), personality (mind, volition, emotion, and self-consciousness), and being free of sin (Gen. 2:7, 15–25; Jam. 3:9.)

The reference to *male* and *female* in Genesis 1:27 does not mean that each person has both male and female qualities. Rather it means that when God created mankind, he made one man and one woman. Although Adam and Eve were equal in personhood, they were unique in masculinity and femininity. Like Adam, Eve was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). She was created as equal in essence with Adam. Both were created in the image of God. Both were blessed by God (Gen. 1:28).

In chapter two of Genesis, the author describes the creation account of the previous chapter. This is not a second creation, as some claim, but a more detailed account of the creation of Adam and Eve. There were not two Adams and two Eves. Genesis 2:7 states, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The word *life* in the original is plural, implying the impartation of both physical and spiritual life.⁴ Adam was created from dust—worthless—but was given great value by God, created in His image, given life by His breath. With the breath of God, the clay became alive.

Some say that men have a wild side (a love for the outdoors, a desire to explore, etc.) because Adam was created in the wilderness. Eve then, because she was created in the Garden, is said to have a love for beautiful things and an innate desire to care for things. But there is nothing in the Scripture to support this view, which implies that Adam would have been happier and more fulfilled if he had remained in the wilderness. Rather, God created men and women with personality differences that would complement each other.

Adam was valued not by that of which he was made, but because of Who made him and what he became—a living soul. When the Scriptures speak of man being created in the image of God, the word *Elohim* is used to emphasize deity and power. But when the Lord God created Adam and Eve, the word *Jehovah* is used to emphasize their relationship with God (Exo. 3:15). *Jehovah* appears eleven times in Genesis two, emphasizing the fact that the creator of the universe is the One who not only created Adam and Eve, but also has a personal relationship with them.

In His infinite wisdom, God designed a plan for Adam and Eve that was unique to each of them. Although they were equal in their essence and in their relationship with God, Adam was designated as the head of the relationship.

The headship of Adam is evident in the book of Genesis. The generic term "man" is used for Adam and Eve (1:26-27), Adam was created first (2:7), Adam was placed in the garden to "cultivate it and keep it" (2:8, 15), Adam was given the command not to eat of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" and was warned of spiritual and physical death (2:17), and God fashioned Adam's rib into a "helper suitable for him and brought her to Adam (2:18, 21, 22).

³Allen Ross, "Genesis" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An exposition of the Scriptures*. J. F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Editors. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985.

⁴Wuest, K. S. (1997, c1984). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English reader*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Scriptural proof of the headship of Adam as ordained by God prior to the fall is important in light of the Christian feminist's teaching that headship was lost at the fall and regained at the cross.⁵ This view teaches that the headship of man is a curse and therefore does not exist today either in the church or in the home. This issue will be addressed in more detail later in the study of both 1 Corinthians 11 and Ephesians 5.

In Genesis 2:16-17, God commands Adam not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil:

The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

The authority of Adam is evident as God directs this command to Adam prior to the creation of Eve.

Although Eve was created as a complement for Adam (Gen. 2:18-25), she was in no way inferior to him. She was God's special gift to Adam. Her role as helper, rather than being demeaning, was positive and active. God is referred to in Psalm 54:4 as Israel's helper. In John 14:16, 26, Jesus Christ predicts the coming of Holy Spirit and refers to Him as a comforter, "one called along side to help." The term "helper," therefore does not signify inferiority. Women are created by God with great value. Their role as helper is given special significance by God taking on the role of helper to the nation Israel and to believers today.

The distinction in roles is further emphasized when the instructions for marriage specifies that man is to be the initiator (Gen. 2:24). It is the man that leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife. The result is that the two become one flesh. This introduces God's design for marriage—one man and one woman. Yet God's perfect plan was disrupted when sin entered the world.

It is Eve rather than Adam that Satan chooses to tempt. The serpent (the devil, Rev. 20:2) shrewdly approaches Eve with a statement that implies God is unfair by restricting them from eating from every tree of the garden. Eve's temptation is not due to some weakness or flaw in her that enabled her to be deceived. Adam could not have been deceived because God spoke personally to him. Adam knew what God said. But Eve had secondhand information. Would she trust her husband, who heard directly from God, or believe the tempter?

Eve's response is that they may eat from any tree except the one in the middle of the garden, adding to God's command the prohibition of even touching the tree (Gen. 3:3). However, she clearly understood that the result of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil would be death. Satan immediately argues that this is not true, thereby accusing God of lying. However, Satan has been a liar from the beginning (John 8:44) and he cleverly deceives Eve into abandoning her role as helper.

We must wonder why Eve so readily spoke with this crafty creature. Since the Lord was the topic of the conversation, why did she not ask God directly what He had said, especially when the serpent accuses God of lying (Gen. 3:4)? Or, why did she not ask her husband, who appears to

Distinct in Function



**In the home
(Garden of Eden)**
(Gen. 2:18)

⁵ See Appendix A – The Headship of Adam

be in close proximity (v. 6)? Unfortunately, Eve falls for the serpent's temptation to act independently of both God and Adam, the husband whom God has put in authority over her. He deceived her into rejecting the role that God had designed for her.

Just as Satan sinned by wanting to be like God (Isa. 14:14), so he tempts Eve in the same manner. He implies that God doesn't want them to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil because He knows that their eyes would be opened and they would be like God, knowing both good and evil (Gen. 3:5). At this point, Eve yields to temptation.

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food [lust of the flesh], and that it was a delight to the eyes [lust of the eyes], and that the tree was desirable to make one wise [pride of life], she took from its fruit and ate . . . (Gen. 3:6)

The three categories of temptation mentioned in 1 John 2:16 correlate with the three temptations of Eve.

good for food – lust of the flesh
delight to the eyes – lust of the eyes
desirable to make one wise – pride of life

Then Eve took the fruit of the tree and ate. Then she gave to Adam, who was with her, and he ate also. And thus sin entered the world.

This passage should challenge us as Christian women to stand firm in the Lord. Eve sinned first of all by listening to Satan and then by encouraging Adam to sin. The lesson for us as women today is that we must be alert to resist temptation to sin. We must also be careful of the way in which we influence others, especially those closest to us. Are we a stimulus for good or for evil? Do we encourage others to walk with the Lord and obey Him? Or, do we attempt to persuade them to sin? It is amazing to realize the influence we have on those whom God has put in our lives. We have a grave responsibility to be strong in the Lord personally and to become a catalyst for other to grow in Christ. This is an instance in Scripture where we can learn from a bad example. Instead, of following in Eve's footsteps we must seek God's will through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Only then will we glorify God and fulfill the plan for which He designed us.

Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can the curse be reversed and harmony be restored.

It was Adam who bore the responsibility for sin for the entire human race, which implies headship of all mankind (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21-22). Yet Eve also bore responsibility for her sin (3:10, 16). The consequences of the fall for Eve, stated in Genesis 3:16-19, differed from those which Adam was to experience. It was prophesied that the woman's pain in childbirth would be *greatly multiplied* and that her *desire* would be for her husband. *Desire* is sometimes interpreted as a woman's intense love for her husband. Yet this same Hebrew word in Genesis 4:7 denotes an "attempt to usurp or control." As a result of the curse, women have a tendency to dominate their husbands.

However, the emphatic statement in verse 16 is that her husband would *rule* over her, or, more accurately, attempt to "lord it over" them. This same Hebrew word is translated "master" in Genesis 4:7. Therefore, we get an idea of the impending battle for control between Adam and

Eve as we read of the struggle between Cain and sin. The husband's rule over his wife is part of the curse. It is not the initiation of the headship of man. Nor is it the prolonging of the roles assumed in the fall—Eve as dominant and Adam as passive. Rather it is a distortion of the roles, which results in a power struggle. The result of the curse is that there is now conflict where there was harmony; competition where there was unity. The new sinful nature of Adam and Eve, acquired as a result of sin, will seek to dictate their lives as Satan continues to influence God's creation.

Yet Ephesians 5:22-33 challenges wives to submit to their husbands with respectful love and husbands to love their wives with the same sacrificial, unselfish love as Christ loves the church. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can the curse be reversed and harmony be restored. In fact, throughout the Bible, there are accounts of women who were greatly used by God in spite of the curse.

* * *

Study Guide in Preparation for Lesson 2


1. Read Exodus 15:20-21 and Numbers 12:1-16. Write down any questions or comments you have about the passages.
2. Summarize Numbers 12, paying particular attention to the relationship between Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. What is the lesson God is teaching them?
3. Read Judges 4:1-12; 5:1-3, 24, 31. Summarize these verses in your own words.
4. What do you think is the significance of the story of Deborah and Barak?
5. How can you personally apply what you have learned about Miriam and Deborah?

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

Old Testament Women

The authority that was first given to Adam continues through the Old Testament as God designated men as leaders in Israel. Although Moses exhibited great faith as God's servant in leading His people out of Egypt, the task of judging the people in the wilderness became a demanding responsibility. Following the advice of his father-in-law, Moses chose able men as heads and leaders of the people (Exo. 18:17-27). This enabled Moses to teach the Israelites the law and provide guidance for everyday life. The men selected by Moses judged the minor disputes, thereby lessening his burden of leadership.

Distinct in Function



**In the Nation
Israel**

Heads of Tribes, Priests, Kings
(Exo. 18:21; 28:41; 1 Sam.12:13; 15:1)

In Exodus 28:41, the sons of Aaron were ordained and consecrated so that they could serve the Lord as priests. Although the priesthood resided solely within the tribe of Levi by a perpetual statute, it was only the sons, not the daughters, who were chosen to minister to the Lord and intercede for the nation. Prior to the institution of the priesthood, it was the father as the head of the family who served as priest (Gen. 31:54; Job 1:5).

When the Nation Israel rejected the theocracy (a nation ruled by God), the Lord chose a man to reign as king over them (Deut. 17:14-15; 1 Sam. 9:16-17; 15:1). Because of Saul's disobedience, God then selected David, commanding the prophet Samuel to anoint him as king (1 Sam. 16:12). Men, not women, were anointed by God to reign over Israel (Psa. 132:17; 1 Sam. 12:13; 15:1).

Although men were designated as leaders in the Old Testament, many women were used by God and exhibited strong faith. Miriam, the sister of Moses, was a prophetess in

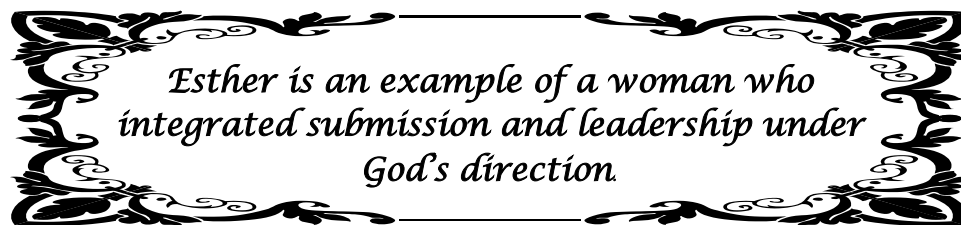
Israel, who encouraged Israel to sing praises to the Lord (Exo. 15:20-21). However, the Lord rebuked her and Aaron when they spoke against Moses and were jealous of God speaking through him (Num. 12:1-10). God explained that He spoke directly to Moses, but to the prophets He used dreams, visions, and riddles (a direct reference to Miriam). He then reprovved them for daring to speak against Moses, whom He called "My servant" (v. 8). The anger of the Lord burned against Aaron and Miriam, making her leprous. If Aaron had been struck with leprosy, he could not have performed the duties of a priest (Lev. 22:2-3).

As a priest, Aaron would have been familiar with leprosy and realized the seriousness of the illness. Aaron then begged Moses to not hold them accountable for their sin. So Moses prayed for her healing. God answered his prayer and in one week she was healed. It is interesting that Aaron the priest sought intercession through Moses. This incident seems to be an example of God confirming the leadership and authority that He had established in Israel through Moses. The mention of Miriam's name first in Numbers 12:1 may imply that she was the leader in the rebellion. It is clear that she is the one who bore the punishment for their sin.

Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophetess who judged Israel (Jud. 4:4) during a time when “there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Jud. 21:25). This was a period of rebelliousness in Israel when unlikely leaders were used of God to judge the nation. Although the word *judge* can also be translated *govern* or *rule*, the depiction of Deborah sitting under a tree in the hill country of Ephraim, rather than in the gate of the city, is a picture of counsel rather than national leadership. It appears that her judging was private, rather than public. However, she is said to have judged Israel, apparently for forty years. God raised her up as a judge in response to Israel crying out to the Lord following twenty years of severe oppression by Jabin, king of Canaan (5:1).

Deborah sent for Barak and prophesied to him God’s instructions in leading the army of Israel. Through Deborah, the Lord God of Israel commanded Barak to take 10,000 men to Mount Tabor to fight against Sisera, the commander of the army of Jabin, King of Canaan. Deborah prophesied the defeat of Sisera. However, Barak refused to follow God’s orders unless Deborah accompanied him. Because of his refusal to assume this leadership role without a woman going with him, God gave the honor of the victory to a faithful woman rather than to Barak.

Deborah was a godly woman in a time of rebellion and ungodliness. She is an example for us of faithfulness in fulfilling the ministry God had designated for her. She was willing to play a supportive role and did not attempt to take either authority or honor for herself. She let Barak lead the battle and praised Jael as a blessed women. It is likely that Deborah composed the song of praise to the Lord, God of Israel, that was sung by Deborah and Barak (Jud. 5:7). Following the defeat of Sisera, the land was “undisturbed for forty years” (Jud. 5:31).



In Proverbs 31, a woman is honored for her virtue. Her qualities come to light as the crowning touch of this book of wisdom. She is the counterpart to the mighty man of valor—warrior of Israel. As this courageous hero was indispensable to the nation Israel, so was the virtuous woman to the home. The king depended on the warrior; her husband trusted in her. He provided strength in war; she imparted strength of character. He was clothed in crimson; she was adorned in scarlet. He conquered a nation; she managed a household. He surveyed a battlefield; she selected a vineyard. He was honored by a nation; she was praised by her family. She was characterized by wisdom and managed her home well. The basis of her wisdom was her fear of the Lord. She was the Mary/Martha of the Old Testament. Her faith was combined with good deeds and her loving care of her family. She receives the praise of not only her family, but also the entire community.

In contrast to this woman, Athaliah is an example of a woman who rebelled against God’s plan for Israel. The daughter of Jezebel and Ahab, she was the only ruling queen of Judah. She destroyed all the royal sons except Joash, who was hidden from her. She reigned over the land of Judah for six years until the high priest ordered that she be put to death (2 Kings 11:1-20).

The account of Huldah, the prophetess, is recorded in 2 Kings 22:8–20. In the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign over Judah, a copy of the book of the law was discovered during the renovation of the temple in Jerusalem. King Josiah tore his clothes and commanded Hilkiah the high priest and four of his officers to inquire of the Lord concerning the Word of God. Huldah was personally selected by these men and was used of the Lord to foretell the impending disaster that would come upon Jerusalem and the disobedient people of Judah. Because of his tender heart and

humility, Huldah prophesied that God would spare Josiah from seeing the evil that he would bring on Jerusalem.

Over time, Israel was made more vulnerable as a nation due to her rebelliousness and the failure of her prophets, priests and kings to be faithful to the Lord. This enabled the nation to be led astray, drawn into idolatry and even conquered. In Isaiah 3:12, God pronounces judgment on His people, stressing the lack of godly male leadership (cf. Nahum 3:13).

O My people! Their oppressors are children,
And women rule over them (Isa. 3:12).

Following the return of a remnant to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple, Esther, a young Jewish orphan, became queen of the great Persian Empire (Est. 2:17). The obedience Esther learned as a child prepared her to be used by God to intercede for the Jews, resulting in their deliverance. Her godly qualities of humility, wisdom, and faithfulness are clearly shown throughout the book that bears her name. The providence of God is intricately interwoven throughout the book as Esther realizes she has been made queen "for such a time as this" (Est. 4:14). Her bravery is evident as she risks her life to gain an audience with the king and plead with him for the nation Israel.

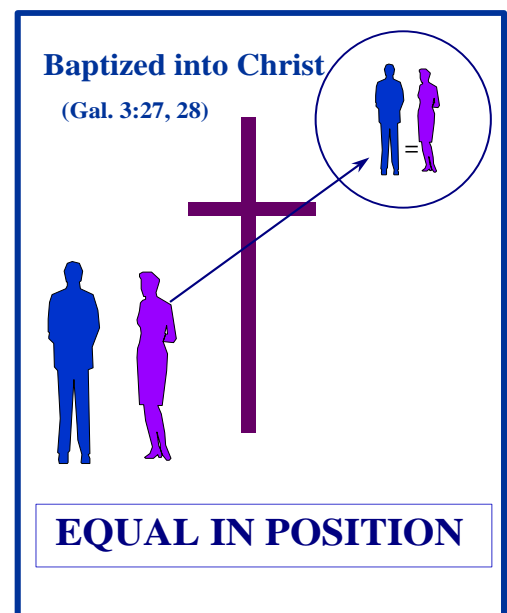
Cursing is turned to blessing, as the Jews are victorious over their enemies under the leadership of Esther and Mordecai. Esther is an example of a woman who integrated submission and leadership under God's direction. She is faithful to carry out every part of Mordecai's plan to counteract the decree of Haman and save the Jews from extinction. Her intercession foiled the plot of Satan to destroy the line through which Christ would come.

Women In The New Testament

The New Testament honors women in many significant ways. The incarnation of His Son began in the womb of a woman (Gal. 4:4). Jesus often demonstrated His love and concern for women. Mary and Martha were among His closest friends (John 11:5). He revealed His Messiahship to a woman of Samaria (John 4:26). During His agony on the cross, He provided for the care of His mother by the Apostle John (John 19:26). And, after His resurrection, His first appearance was to a woman from whom He had exorcised seven demons (John 20:14). It was to this woman that Jesus entrusted the news of His resurrection, which she was to deliver to the Disciples. Jesus love and respect for women is evident. However, the Scriptures do not teach that Jesus considered women equal to men in ministerial leadership or spiritual headship. Women were not among those chosen to be His twelve disciples.

Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ is available to all who believe (John 3:16). Men and women are individually responsible to believe in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. At the moment of salvation, every believer is indwelt with the Holy Spirit and placed into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). A woman who has trusted in Christ for salvation is totally and completely accepted by God. Galatians 3:28 teaches that women are equal with men in their position in Christ.

The issue in this verse is theological, not experiential. The context of Galatians 3:28 is justification by faith. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ did not change or



eliminate role distinctions that were initiated in the Garden of Eden prior to the fall. This is spiritual equality, not role equality.

Christian feminists erroneously use this verse as the basis of their philosophy of functional equality in the home and in the church. The theological concept of "in Christ" refers to equality within the spiritual body of Christ. The body of Christ is a metaphor for the universal church (Eph. 1:22-23), of which Christ is the head (Eph. 5:23). Equality within this universal church refers to the equal status of all believers in their standing before God. Each believer is fully accepted by God at the point of salvation. Although all believers are equal positionally "in Christ," believers are not equal in function within the local church. This issue will be addressed in more detail in Lesson 7: Leadership in the Church.

There is no distinction between men and women in the body of Christ. A woman is among the saints who are to be equipped for the "work of service" and for "the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). The commands to believers in the New Testament include her. She is an essential part of the body of Christ. Women in the New Testament times were greatly involved in ministry. Priscilla, who was part of a husband-wife team with Aquila, privately explained to Apollos "the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). Lydia of Thyatira, the first recorded European believer, was a seller of purple in whose home Paul and Barnabas stayed (Acts 16:14-15); prominent women of Thessalonica and Berea were among the first believers in those cities (Acts 17:4, 12); and Euodia and Syntyche, were women who Paul said "shared in my struggle in the gospel" (Phil. 4:2-3). A prayer meeting was held in the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12). Churches met in the homes of Nymphas (Col. 4:15), Philemon's wife, Apphia (Phlm. 2), and Priscilla (1 Cor. 16:19).

The fact that God did not select women for leadership in either the Nation Israel or the New Testament churches does not imply their inferiority. They are not valued less because of this distinction. God's plan for women has been uniquely designed and implemented, beginning with the creation of Eve. It encompasses every era and reveals God's loving purpose for women in each culture. This is evident as we look at Paul's instructions to Corinthian believers in the First Century A.D.

* * *

Study Guide in Preparation for Lesson 3

1. Read 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, writing down your questions as you read the passage. What words or verses would you like to study more in depth?
2. What does Paul say is the subject of the passage? Why is the mention of God and Christ important?
3. List the six reasons that Paul gives for wearing head coverings. Explain why you think each of these is important.
4. Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:31. List several ways you can apply this verse to your life. Are there things in your life that do not glorify God? Are you willing to let all you do be to the glory of God? How do you think God wants you to change?
5. How can you personally apply what you have learned in this passage?

THE ISSUE OF HEAD COVERINGS

1 Corinthians 11:3-16

But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. 4 Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered disgraces his head. 5 But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered disgraces her head, for it is one and the same thing as having a shaved head. 6 For if a woman will not cover her head, she should cut off her hair. But if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or be shaved, she should cover her head.⁶

In 54-55 A.D. the Apostle Paul wrote an epistle to address questions raised by Corinthian believers. Paul challenges Christians in this problem-riddled First Century church to abandon the divisions and immorality in their midst. His exhortations to unity and purity are grounded in positional sanctification. Lives of believers are to reflect their relationship with Jesus Christ. On two occasions, the Apostle addresses women in the Corinthian church. In chapter eleven, he confronts the issue of head coverings as a cultural symbol of submission. Although head coverings are not in use everywhere in the world today, the principles that Paul is teaching in this passage can be applied to all.

It is important to note the teachings of the Apostle Paul in the previous chapters of 1 Corinthians. These chapters provide the contextual background for the section on head coverings. In chapter 1, Paul refers to the Corinthians as those who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus." This refers to their position in Christ as believers. In Chapter 2, Paul condemns their divisiveness and challenges them to unity; in Chapter 4, he condemns their arrogance and challenges them to faithfulness; in Chapter 5, he condemns their immorality and challenges them to purity in the church.

In Chapter 6, Paul counters the Corinthian phrase "All things are lawful," which was used by the Corinthian believers to justify the misinterpretation of the doctrine of freedom in Christ. He states that all things are not profitable and that he will not be mastered by any. The issue is one of personal holiness. Following a chapter on marriage, Paul says he surrenders his liberty to love, not wanting to be a stumbling block to weak believers.

In Chapter 9, Paul gives up his freedom to become a slave to unbelievers that they might come to Christ. Idolatry is condemned in Chapter 10 as Paul states that the ultimate goal in his life is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31). At the conclusion of chapter ten, Paul lists four specific factors for the Corinthian believers to consider in determining their behavior.

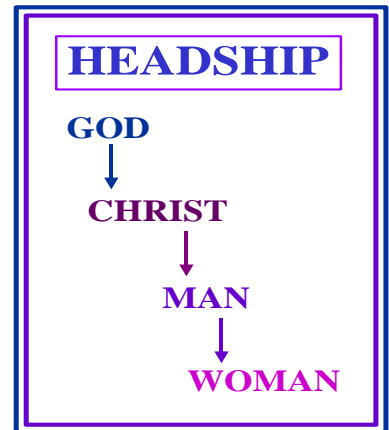
Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of many, so that they may be saved (1 Cor. 10:31-33).

The most important aspect is that all be done to the glory of God. That is the first criteria in making decisions regarding any action. The Corinthian Christians were not to do something that

⁶All Scripture quotations are from the NET Bible®: New English Translation™, (1998).

would offend unbelievers (Jews or Greeks at that time) and therefore be a hindrance to the Gospel. They must take care not to offend or be a stumbling block to believers (the church of God) in such a way that would cause them to sin. Nothing was to be done out of selfishness, or for personal profit, but rather their goal was to be to win others to Christ.

These verses become the background for the discussion on head coverings in chapter eleven. In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, Paul introduces the subject of headship, which is a very important issue in debates on the role of women. The headship of man over woman is Paul's main argument in challenging women not to discard the symbol of their submissiveness when they prophesy or pray. Paul states that God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of a man, and man is the head of a woman (meaning a wife, not women in general). In the Greek language, the word *woman* can refer to either a single or married woman. The context of the passage determines whether or not the word should be translated *woman* or *wife*.



Paul's example of God as the head of Christ is a prototype of the Trinity possessing a hierarchy among equals. The Trinity provides the model of headship in this passage. God the Father and God the son are equal in deity, yet distinct in respect to authority. Authority is given to the Son by the Father (Ps. 8:6; Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:6-8). Yet the Son willingly submits to the Father (Luke 22:42).

Although the context, as well as New Testament usage, argues for *head* meaning authority, some contend that it means source, rejecting any notion of male authority in either the home or the church. Paul's use of headship in 1 Corinthians 11:3 does not allow for equality of roles in marriage. Since creation God has given the husband authority over the wife. But his authority is to be used in the context of sacrificial love (Eph. 5:25).

ARGUMENTS FOR HEADCOVERINGS

1 Corinthians 11:3-16

Headship (v 3):	Authority
Culture (v 5):	Testimony
Creation (v 8):	Origin/Purpose
Angels (v 10):	Witnesses
Nature (v 14):	Femininity
Churches (v 16):	Custom

In this passage, Paul logically supports the custom of head coverings for wives based on the headship (v. 3), culture (vv. 5-6), creation (vv. 8-9), angels (v. 10), nature (v. 14), and church custom (v. 16). The Corinthian women had apparently rejected the concept of subordination, arguing for their equality because of their freedom from the Mosaic Law and their oneness in Christ. Paul discusses the veiling of wives as a cultural manifestation of submission. He challenges women not to assume that their freedom in Christ is justification for rejecting their cultural expression of submission when they pray and prophesy.

Headship and equality as joint heirs of Christ are not mutually exclusive. Children who come to Christ are equal in position with their parents, but this does not nullify the commands of Scripture for children to obey their parents. A woman's freedom in Christ does not affect the order of headship in the family that was established at creation. Headship transcends the law and the church.

The public head covering was a custom in the first century in both the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures. Typically, a portion of the outer garment was pulled over the hair like a hood. For a Jewish woman to appear outside of the house with an uncovered head would not only disgrace her husband (her *head* in verse 5), but it was considered shameful (v. 6). It was also grounds for divorce in the Jewish community.

In Corinth, a woman without a head covering was equated with a prostitute. The temple of Aphrodite in Acro-Corinth had one thousand temple prostitutes with shaved heads. Also, a Jewish woman who had been convicted of adultery had her head shaved. However, Greek women removed their head coverings when worshipping in a pagan temple, claiming they belonged to God.

As the glory of her husband (v. 7), the wife was not to forsake her complementary role, the cultural expression of which was a head covering. The removal of her head covering, whether as an act of rebellion or a misinterpretation of doctrine, brought dishonor to both her and her head, which was her husband.

Since Paul's mention of angels (v. 10) as observers of the church (cf. Eph. 3:10) immediately follows the section on creation, it is likely that this correlates with the angels who were present at creation (Job 38:7). These angels observed the creation of Adam and Eve and were aware of the authority that had been given to Adam. The issue as far as the angels were concerned was whether or not the Corinthian wives in the church would adhere to God's plan for them, which began at creation and was still in effect.



Freedom in Christ does not supersede the hierarchy within the family or the church.

As is typical of Paul in passages addressing women's issues, the Apostle next reminds men that there is interdependence between men and women in the Lord (v. 11). Reminding them that they are born of women, Paul seems to counteract any potential arrogance on the part of husbands that might come from their knowledge of the doctrine of headship. Submission does not imply inferiority. Both men and women originate from God (v. 12).

In verse 13, Paul appeals to the women to decide for themselves regarding the issue of wearing head coverings. He does not command the wives to wear head coverings, but he tells them to judge for themselves (v. 13) based on the logical arguments of the passage. He assumes that they know it is improper for wives to pray with their heads uncovered.

Having argued culturally and doctrinally for the wearing of head coverings, the Apostle then refers to natural distinctions between men and women in the length of their hair (v. 14). Assuming an affirmative answer, Paul then asks if a woman's long hair is a glory to her (v. 15). Some have taken this verse to mean that long hair is a substitute for a head covering. However, if this were the case, why then does Paul spend this entire passage attempting to convince wives to wear head coverings? Why not just tell them to let their hair grow. Rather Paul is here referring to femininity as an added distinction between men and women, which would not be affected by their freedom in Christ.

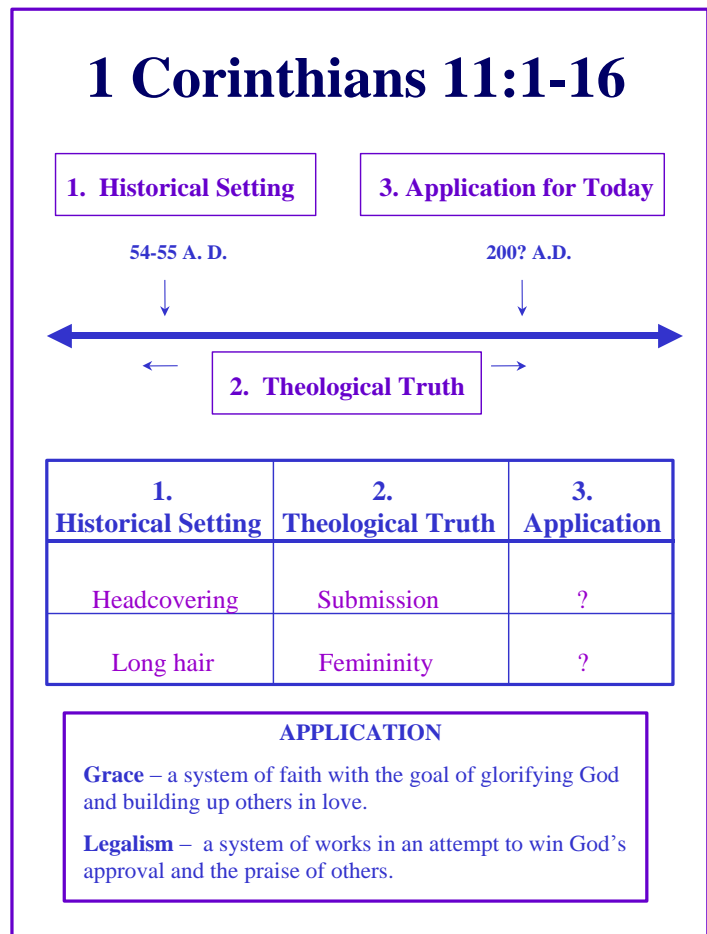
Paul next addresses the issue of women who are rebellious or argumentative. He reminds them that none of the other churches have abandoned the use of head coverings (v. 16). The customs

of other churches revealed conformity to God’s plan. This is Paul’s final argument in his attempt to persuade the wives of Corinth to wear head coverings.

The issue in this passage is headship and submission, not head coverings. Eve didn’t wear one; neither do the angels. But there is to be a distinction between single and married women. In Corinth, that distinction was a head covering. Paul did not encourage believers to break social custom or status (1 Cor. 7:20). Therefore, the cultural expression of headship by women who prayed and prophesied in the worship assembly was not to be abandoned in favor of freedom in Christ. In fact, verse 10 may be taken that the head covering was a symbol of the woman’s equal authority or right to worship God, while being an evidence of her functional subordination.

The issue of a head covering was not a moral or religious issue, but a custom. It was not a matter of the woman’s spiritual relationship with God. The passage never states that God will not hear the prayers of women whose heads are not covered. God looks on our hearts, but men look on the outward appearance (1 Sam. 16:7).

In order to apply this passage today, we must first determine the historical setting (cultural practice at the time of writing)



ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE ISSUES REGARDING HEADCOVERINGS	
Headship (v 3):	Absolute
Culture (v 5):	Relative
Creation (v 8):	Absolute
Angels (v 10):	Absolute
Nature (v 14):	Relative
Churches (v 16):	Relative

and the theological truth (timeless biblical principle) of the text. Instead of attempting to legalistically duplicate the cultural practice of the Corinthian women, we need to recognize the biblical principle of submission in order to apply this passage to our lives as Christian women today. We must identify the doctrine that applies to every era.

In addition, it is important to evaluate the six factors that Paul used to logically persuade the Corinthian wives to wear head coverings. In order to apply this passage today in the church, we must determine which factors represent absolute theological truth and which ones refer to the relative historical or cultural practices.

This is an important distinction because the absolute doctrinal issues do not change over time and are valid today. On the other hand, the relative issues that were culturally significant at the time of writing, may have changed over the centuries. Therefore, the relative issues must be evaluated in light of each woman’s church and social culture. The manner in which a Christian wife manifests her culture’s symbol of submission will have an impact on both believers and unbelievers.

The biblical principles for determining God's will are important in evaluating relative issues in our lives.⁷ In discerning God's will for each of us as individual woman today, we must ask ourselves four questions regarding the use or non-use of head coverings in a particular setting. These questions should also be used in any situation where a decision must be made in areas that are not specifically addressed in the Scriptures.

PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

1. Will my participation in it glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17)?
2. Will it encourage the spiritual growth of weaker believers (1 Cor. 8:7-13; Heb. 10:24; 2 Pet. 3:18)?
3. Will it win a hearing for the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:19-23)?
4. Will it help me grow spiritually (1 Cor. 9:24-27; 10:12; Phil. 1:12; 2 Pet. 3:10)?

It must be noted that there is a difference between a weaker brother and what can be called a legalist. In Matthew 23:1-40, Jesus addressed the legalism of the Pharisees. He did not teach compliance to their ethical standards. The Bible does not say that believers are to be bound by the concerns of legalistic believers. However, we must always show love to those who are inclined to be legalistic and treat them with grace.

The use of non-cultural head coverings today can create a false issue for believer and unbeliever alike. For the believer, it can be assumed to be a sign of holiness, and for the unbeliever it is often a stumbling block to the gospel and true worship. Christian women today must be challenged by this passage to maintain the order of creation and adhere to an expression of their submission and femininity that is appropriate to their culture.

* * *

Study Guide in Preparation for Lesson 4

1. Read Chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians. Write down any questions you have about this chapter?
2. According to verse 40, what is Paul's purpose in writing this chapter? What is its significance to what Paul says in this chapter?
3. How many times in the passage does the phrase *keep silent* occur? To whom is Paul writing in each of these incidences. Why is each one told to keep silent?
4. Memorize 1 Corinthians 13:13. What is the importance of this verse to those addressed in Chapter 14?
5. How can you apply what you have learned to your life?

⁷ See Appendix B – Determining God's Will

SILENCE IN THE CHURCH

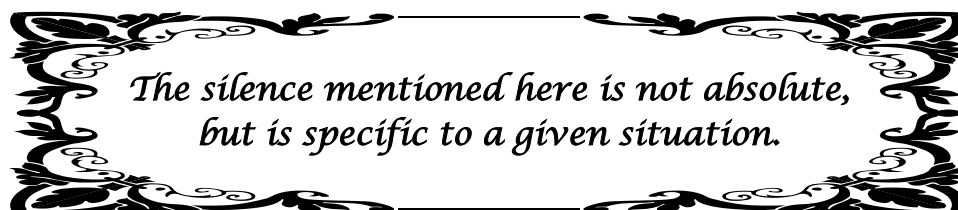
1 Corinthians 14:34-35

The women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. Rather, let them be in submission, as in fact the law says. If they want to find out about something, they should ask their husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church.

This passage appears to be a contradiction of 1 Corinthians 11:5, where women are seen praying and prophesying. Yet in 1 Corinthians 14:34, they are commanded to keep *silent*. Some may attempt to resolve this conflict by claiming that the 1 Corinthians 14 passage is a small group meeting, not a church worship service. However, the context refers to the whole church assembled together (14:23), using their spiritual gifts by ministering to one another. Others state that Paul was not condoning the praying and prophesying of women in 1 Corinthians 14:34, claiming that in fact he disallows it. Some view praying and prophesying as distinct from speaking and teaching.

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul discusses the proper use of spiritual gifts in public assemblies to avoid confusion.⁸ His goal was that believers would be unified in their use of a diversity of gifts. The misuse of spiritual gifts causes division and disharmony (1 Cor. 14:4-11, 14-20). He uses the term "keep silent" to provide guidelines for those taking part in the church worship service.

The word *silent* means, "to keep quiet" or "be still." The meaning is more related to ceasing to talk, rather than not speaking or always being quiet. In Luke 18:35-39, the same word is used by the leaders of the multitude to silence a blind man, who was calling out to Jesus begging for His mercy.



The word *silent* occurs three times in this chapter. Only one of those occurrences refers to women. Those speaking in tongues without an interpreter were told to keep silent (v. 28). If someone was prophesying and another received a revelation, the first was to then be silent (v. 30). The intent of these admonitions is that believers would yield to one another, taking turns in their ministry of worship. The silence mentioned here is not absolute, but is specific to a given situation. The goal is a worship service that would be orderly and peaceful.

In verse 34, Paul addresses the wives of men in the congregations. In the context, their silence apparently refers only to asking questions (either of their husbands or those who were prophesying) since the spiritual gifts referred to in this passage are not limited to men. The Apostle then tells wives who were being disruptive to be silent. The silence cannot be absolute or else the women could not have sung, prayed, or prophesied. This is not a prohibition against

⁸ See Appendix C – Spiritual Gifts

women learning in church, but emphasizes the need for their subjection (probably to those who were teaching or perhaps those interpreting prophecy). It is probably a prohibition against disruption or verbal dialog by women, which would put them in a position of usurping a teaching role where men were involved. This would be in marked contrast to the activity of women who worship in pagan cults.

Paul summarizes this chapter in verse 40, stating that proper conduct in the worship service is the goal of his instruction. Paul is striving for order. Although 1 Timothy 2:12 addresses the issue of the prohibition of women as pastors or teachers of men, 1 Corinthians 14:34-45 cannot dogmatically be used to prove that contention. It appears that the subject in this passage is disruptiveness, rather than roles of women, due to the context.

* * *

Study Guide in Preparation for Lesson 5

1. Read 1 Timothy 2:9-15, noting that the context is a church worship service. What questions do you have about the passage?
2. How would you define godliness? Why is this important as a basis for the dress and actions of Christian women? Why is submission important in order to learn?
3. In what ways was Eve deceived? What are some reasons why *saved* cannot refer to eternal salvation?
4. How can you apply what you have learned to your life?

THE CHILDREN OF EVE

1 Timothy 2:9-15

Likewise the women are to dress in suitable apparel, with modesty and self-control. Their adornment must not be with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothing, 10 but with good deeds, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. 11 A woman must learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or have authority over a man. She must remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first and then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, because she was fully deceived, fell into transgression. 15 But she will be delivered through childbearing, if she [they] continue[s] in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

The occasion of false teachers in Ephesus prompted Paul to write the First Epistle to Timothy. Paul spent two years in Ephesus, a political, religious and commercial center. The temple of the Greek goddess Artemis in Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The epistle includes directives for proper conduct in the worship assembly that included both men and women (1 Tim 1:3-11; 4:1-5). In the context of a church worship service, Paul exhorts believers to godliness in contrast to wrath and dissension by the men and rebellion and lack of submission by the women. He is explaining the manifestation of godliness in the life of women in the church. Instead of behaving in a godly way, their lavish dress and actions were symbols of either a lack of sensitivity or rebellion (Pro. 11:22). Freedom in Christ may have been an issue here as well as in 1 Corinthians 11. This is not a prohibition against makeup or accessories, but a matter of priorities (1 Pet. 3:3; Eze. 16:10).

Christian women are to dress modestly with decency and ethical correctness, or the absence of sexual suggestiveness (strange woman of Proverbs 7:10-11), having an appearance that is simple, moderate, judicious (wise or sensible), and free from ostentation (showiness). In other words, Paul is telling the women not to dress like a pagan woman (or a prostitute) who is trying to attract attention to herself (Pro. 7:10-11). It is also possible that these were wealthy women who could have been proudly displaying their expensive attire or perhaps they were merely dressing in their best clothes to honor their newfound God as they worshipped Him.

Women are to dress in a manner that reflects inner purity and is appropriate for worship. Paul's instruction to these women might be likened to the Proverbs 11:22:

*As a ring of gold in a swine's snout,
So is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.*

Distinct in Function



In the church
(1 Tim. 2:12)

This proverb is a bit humorous to us as we read it today. But in the Jewish culture, this is a linking of the most valuable item in their society (gold) with that which they considered to be completely unclean (swine). This combination would have been shameful to the Jewish people. They clearly understood the impossibility of uniting these two things. The women in particular would have known how distasteful a lack of discretion could be.

According to Deuteronomy 22:5, it is also important that a woman dress in a feminine manner. Wearing the clothes of a man, or attempting to look like a man, is considered an abomination to the Lord. God detests homosexuality (Lev. 18:22; 20:13) so there is to be a clear distinction between the sexes as created and ordained by God. This is in stark contrast to the worship of pagan gods, which was at times characterized by sex reversal and homosexuality.

Paul is telling the Corinthian women that their claim to godliness must be apparent in the way they dress. They should be known for the good deeds they perform, not for how they look. The contrast here is between a woman who walks in church as if she were appearing in a fashion show and one who does not draw attention to herself, but is occupied with the performance of good works. The latter is not thinking of herself, but of others.

In contrast to an outward manifestation of rebellion and selfishness, women should be teachable, learning quietly (not disruptive or domineering), with an attitude of submissiveness (v. 11). Learning in quietness places the women's instruction in line with that of rabbinic students, thereby emphasizing both the equality of women and the seriousness of learning. Quietness, rather than being a rebuke, is a condition of learning that reveals their teachers are worthy of respect. The submission in this verse is not that of a wife to her husband, but is an attitude of submission to the teacher with the expectation that the listener would accept the teaching. This verse clearly teaches that women are to learn the Word of God.

Quietness is a state of undisturbed calmness, which enables one to learn. It does not denote complete silence (Luke 18:39; 1 Cor. 14:34). Rather it means "settled down, undisturbed, not unruly" (Acts 22:2; 2 Thes. 3:12).

Verse 12 has become one of the most frequently debated verses among those with differing opinions regarding the issue of women teaching men in the church. In the early church, teaching was based on the Jewish model. Teaching involved more than merely the transmitting of information. Teachers were typically leaders in the community or masters who had disciples. The authority of the teacher was grounded in a trusting relationship between the teacher and his students or disciples.

Teaching in the Pastoral Epistles included judging, reproof, exhortation and rebuke (2 Tim. 4:1-4). The teacher was to speak confidently, shun controversy and reject divisive persons (Titus 3:8-11), speaking, exhorting and approving with all authority (Tit. 2:15).

Therefore, if women would teach in the context of church worship, they would be placing themselves in authority over men (including their own husbands), usurping the God-given office of pastor or elder. The women are to remain quiet in contrast to teaching or being in authority over men. This corrective measure was probably taken by Paul to offset the behavior of women who were abusing their freedom in Christ or their equality in the body of Christ. Teaching privately or teaching other women was not only permitted, but also encouraged (Acts 18:26; Titus 2:3-4). The issue in verse 12 is women being in the position of authority over men in the church. Paul is not prohibiting women from teaching, but is restricting the sphere of their gift not to include teaching men.

Some consider the Bible to be outdated or irrelevant. When commenting on 1 Timothy 2:12, one woman pastor said, "This is where Paul and I disagree." In other words, she was placing herself in authority over the Apostle Paul and the inspiration of the Word of God.

The phrase "to or exercise authority" involves two separate issues. Paul is not saying that women are not to teach authoritatively. He is prohibiting them from either teaching or exercising authority over men. The issue is not whether or not the woman has the gift of teaching or is better qualified than the men. This is not an injunction against women teaching their husbands. Remember the context is the church service.

A view that some women hold today is that women can teach men or preach in the pulpit if the pastor or elders of the church give them the authority to do. They believe that the command here forbids them to usurp authority. They conclude that if the authority is given to them, then it is permissible for them to preach and teach. However, the passage does not support this view. Teaching and authority are separate issues. Paul did not say women are not to teach authoritatively. Women are to be quiet in contrast to teaching men to having authority over them.

Some use Priscilla as an example of women teaching men in the New Testament. However, the word *teach* is not used in Acts 18:26, where Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, explain doctrine to Apollos. It is important to note that this was done privately and in a team ministry with her husband. In addition, some proponents of women teaching men refer to the fact that the women at the tomb were commissioned by the risen Christ to declare the news of the resurrection to the disciples (Matt. 28:10). Neither of these two instances can be used as examples of women teaching men. Both of these passages are narratives and cannot be considered to be normative for the New Testament church.

Some teach that the reason for Paul's refusal to allow women to teach men was because false teachers had deceived them. This view argues that the command is limited to the time of writing, thereby permitting women today to be pastors, Sunday school teachers, and church board members. However, The culture at the time of writing cannot affect the interpretation in a manner that would be inconsistent with other Scripture.

Women are to be known for their good works and for their submission to those teaching the Word of God. However, they are not permitted to teach or exercise authority over men. If the influence of false teachers were the only problem, then learning correct doctrine would then allow them to teach. It seems unlikely that the women would have been the only ones who would have been unfavorably influenced by false teachers. Men would also have been likely to communicate false doctrine when they taught. The presence of false teachers cannot be used as proof for the prohibition of women teaching men. If false teachers were the only reason for women not to teach men, then neither should they teach men today because there are still false teachers in the churches. False teaching provided the context for the prohibition, but creation provided the reason.

In verses 13-15, Paul refers to creation, the fall, and the curse as an explanation for his prohibition. In Verse 13, the word *for* or *because* is used, showing the reason for the Paul's previous statement. Paul clearly explains that the basis of his restriction is the order of creation. The reason women are not to teach or exercise authority over men is not because of false teachers, but because Adam was created first.

Paul then refers to the fact that it was Eve, not Adam who was deceived. In the context of this passage, the emphasis is on the fact that Eve was deceived into abandoning her God-given role. This is precisely what Paul is warning women against in the Ephesian church.

Verse 15 has been interpreted in various ways and is considered by some to be one of the most difficult verses in the New Testament to understand. The phrase *preserved through the bearing of children* has been understood as: 1) physical safety in childbirth, 2) salvation through the birth of Christ, or 3) deliverance from insignificance in the church and corruption in society through motherhood.

However, in the Greek, the verb "preserved" is singular and refers back to Eve in verse 13. But the word "continue" is in the plural referring to "children." The verse should read, "She [Eve] shall be saved through childbearing if they [women who are the offspring of Eve] abide in faith and love and sanctification with self-control." Christian women today are to fulfill the role that God designed for Eve. We are to be what she should have been. When we (as Eve's children) pursue godliness with self-restraint and are not deceived, Eve (through us) is restored to her rightful place. Such women prove to the church and to the world that godly women can fulfill their original God-given role to the glory of God.

One caution must be stated regarding church-related ministries. There is a tendency for parachurch organizations to take to themselves the roles and many external trappings of the church, such as evangelism, missions, discipline, and teaching. This is not improper, because the ministries of the church are given to the church universal and are fulfilled in local settings. But the appropriation of the duties of the church brings with it the restrictions and responsibilities imposed by those duties. For example teaching is a specific command for the universal church (Matt 28:20) but it was practiced in the settings of local congregations (2 Thess 3:6) with the church leaders responsible to see that the teaching was passed down properly (2 Tim 2:2). Paul, however, had certain restrictions in this regard and disallowed women from teaching men Scripture and exercising spiritual authority over men because of his theology of Creation and the Fall; and the application of that teaching was the local church. This was the only context in which to express that theology. When the setting is extended from the meeting of the church, then it is only appropriate, in this writer's opinion, to extend the theology to the new setting. BibSac

Although women are equal with men in their position in Christ, we learn from this passage that equality in position is not equality in role. A Christian woman is prohibited from teaching and exercising leadership over men in the local church, but she can minister to others through the use of her spiritual gifts and by her godly example. Older women exhorted to encourage younger women (Titus 2:3) and teach children (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15). In addition, women are not limited in situations are non-authoritative, such as writing, television and movies.

* * *

Study Guide in Preparation for Lesson 6

1. Read Titus 2:1-5. What topics would you like to study in more detail?
2. What might be some reasons why Paul told Titus that the older women should teach younger women rather than having men teach them?
3. Write a brief summary of the characteristics of the older men.
4. Why are the characteristics of the older women important?
5. In what way could the Word of God be dishonored? By whom?
6. What personal lessons can you learn from this passage?

WOMAN TO WOMAN

Titus 2:3-5

Older women likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slandering, not slaves to excessive drinking, but teaching what is good. 4 In this way they will train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, fulfilling their duties at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the message of God may not be discredited.

Since this passage is often referenced as the primary text for women's ministry, many questions have arisen regarding its interpretation. Who are the *older women*? What does it mean for them to be *reverent in their behavior*? Are the subjects which women are permitted to teach limited to the specific topics listed in the passage regarding *young women*? In answering these questions, we want to first look at the context of the book of Titus as a whole, considering its major themes. Then we want to consider the immediate context of chapter two as it relates to women. Next we will look at Titus 2:3-5 in detail, considering the meaning of the Greek words 2:3-5. Finally, we want to discuss the application of this passage as it relates to women today.

This Epistle of Paul was written to Titus, a Gentile convert (Gal. 2:3) whom Paul had probably led to Christ (Titus 1:4). In about A.D. 63-64, Paul traveled to Crete with Titus, a trusted companion and co-worker who had traveled and ministered with Paul. Following Paul's departure, Titus remained in Crete to help provide leadership for the churches there.

The theme of Titus is found in its first verse: "knowledge of the truth which leads to godliness" (1:1). The Apostle Paul, a bondservant of God, desired that the faith of God's chosen people would result in knowledge of the Scriptures that produced godly living.

The purpose of Paul's epistle to Titus was to instruct him regarding his teaching and administration in the churches on the island of Crete in Greece. Titus was directed to set things in order and appoint qualified elders in every city (1:5-9). Historically, the Cretans to whom Titus ministered were disgracefully immoral (1:10-16). The rebellious and deceptive false teachers claimed to know God intimately, but with their actions contradicted them (1:16). Titus was to silence them and reprove them severely in order that their doctrine would be corrected.

On the other hand, Paul exhorted Titus to teach what was in accord with sound doctrine or "healthy teaching," the opposite of false doctrine (2:1). In contrast to the lifestyle of the Cretans, Paul specifies that believers, male and female, old and young (including Titus), as well as slaves, should produce lives that were characterized by godliness and were in harmony with the Word of God (2:2-10). A godly life would give credibility to the gospel so that those who opposed them would have nothing to accuse them of. Believers' actions were to mirror their inner life, not to gain win favor with God, but as a testimony to the unbelieving world.

Paul reminds Titus of the past, present, and future aspects of sanctification as an exhortation to godly living (2:11-14). The grace of God, which brought salvation, trains believers to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live with righteousness and godliness in the present age as they look forward to the Second Coming of Christ. The Christian life is to reflect the believer's position in Christ as heirs of eternal life.

Paul challenged Titus to speak, exhort, and reprove with all authority, reminding the believers to be subject to authorities, prepared for every good deed, acting with consideration for one (3:1-2). Paul reminded Titus that all believers were once foolish, disobedient and deceived living a life of sin (3:3). But in God's goodness, He saved us not on the basis of good deeds, but according to His mercy, and justified us (3:4-7a). Believers must live as "heirs of eternal life" rejecting controversies and arguments, but engaging in good works which are "good [excellent] and profitable for men" (3:7b-15). Paul closes with the phrase, "Grace be with you all."

The **context** for the passage is speaking that which is suitable or fitting for sound doctrine in contrast to false teaching. In addition to the advice that Paul gives to Titus in this chapter, there are specific instructions for five groups of people: older men, older women, young women, young men, and bondslaves.

After challenging older men to godly living, which is characterized by temperance, dignity, sensibility, soundness in faith, love and perseverance, Paul turns his focus to older women. The word, *older women*, is from the same Greek root as the word *elder* (1:5). It can mean "an adult female advanced in years," but when used in the context with young women is more of a term of comparison.

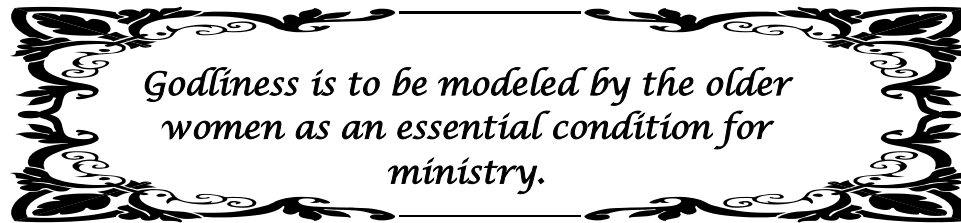
While Paul gives Titus instruction regarding both the older and younger men, it is the older women who are to minister to the young women. Of course, the women would learn during the worship time or Bible studies, but their one-on-one discipleship was to be woman-to-woman. This is important for two reasons. First of all, older women are able to encourage the young women in areas that they have personally experienced as women. Only another woman is able to counsel a woman regarding what it is like to be a wife and mother. In addition, this would also help prevent lack of discretion on the part of Titus and other male leaders.

The Greek phrase, *reverent behavior*, does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The word *reverent* is derived from the same root as *holy* and means, "suited to sacred character, consecrated in behavior." The word *behavior*, which means, "conduct with a focus on demeanor or attitude," is defined in the context as well as in secular literature. It is a complex term that includes attitudes, actions, attire, and speech. The significance of the term *reverent in behavior* is that older women are admonished to act godly, like women who have been redeemed and made saints. In contrast to the false teachers in Crete, whose lives did not concur with their profession to know God, these women were to live in such a way that no one would know doubt that they were believers.

The phrase, *likewise are to be reverent in their behavior*, equates the lifestyle of the older women to that of the older men in the previous verse. In other words, reverent behavior is that which is temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, loving and persevering. A life that is reverently consistent with sound doctrine then becomes the basis for qualifying these older women for ministry to young women. The next two characteristics of godly older women are stated in the negative. These are things that the women were to avoid in their lives. Their presence would prohibit reverent behavior.

The older women are not to falsely accuse others. The word or *slandorous*, in the noun form is a title for the Devil (1 Pet. 5:8). It means that the older women were not to falsely accuse someone or speak critically with the intention of hurting another person (cf. 1 Tim 3:11). And they were not to be addicted or enslaved to wine (cf. 1 Tim. 3:8). In 1 Timothy 5:11-13, Paul denounces the young widows (probably those who were childless) who had become idle, that is useless or unproductive, going around from house to house and being gossips (babbling and talking foolishly) and busybodies (curious, paying attention to things which do not concern them). Older women would also be tempted to misuse their free time, which could be better spent ministering to young women.

In contrast to the false teachers in Crete, the older women were to teach that which was intrinsically good (2 Pet 2:1). The term, *teachers of good*, occurring only here in the New Testament, means "one who teaches what is good and morally right" as opposed to that which is false. The term is used in a "pastoral or ethical sense," implying a relationship between the teacher and her pupil. The purpose is also theoretical and practical knowledge with the highest level of the development of the pupil. Godliness is to be modeled by the older women as an essential condition for teaching.



The older women were to be the opposite of the disorderly, empty talkers, and deceivers of Titus 1:10 who led people astray. Teachers of what is good would mean that by their lives and words they would be in harmony with the Word of God. The term "teachers of good" is a title, implying that this is like a profession. They were "official teachers." It is similar to the phrase that was common in Israel, "teachers of the law" (Luke 5:17; Acts 5:34). The only other title given to teachers in the New Testament is that which describes the rebellious men mentioned in chapter one, "teachers of evil," or false teachers (2 Peter 2:1).

There is an emphasis in the Epistle to Titus on fruitfulness or good works of believers, which has sound doctrine as its basis (1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14). Titus 2:4 begins with a purpose clause, indicating the intent of the qualifications for the older women that are specified in verse 3. The older women were to be godly for the purpose of encouraging, advising, or urging young women. In other words, Paul is saying, "Now that your children are grown and your grandchildren are in school, act in a godly way so you can get involved in a ministry to young women." The lifestyle of the older women should create both an interest in and a thirst for godliness on the part of the young women. The result is that the young women would be teachable in terms of improving both their character and their actions.

Who are these young women that are to be trained? If they were the daughters of the women, would Paul not have labeled them as such? Perhaps they were young women who were new believers who did not have Christian mothers. They would not be aware of the teaching of the Scriptures regarding godliness and Christlike relationships within a family. They were to be encouraged to love of their husbands and children, treating them with kindness or affection. The focus here is not on a love that is from the heart, but a love that is manifest in gracious actions to others rather than an angry critical spirit. The Greek word, *phileo*, focuses on interpersonal affection in a relationship while *agape*, stresses love and affection based on deep appreciation and high regard. Both terms are used of the relations between the Father and the Son and between God and believers (John 3:35; 5:20; 16:27; Rom. 8:28). The young women were to create an attitude of kindness and acceptance in the home. As the heartbeat of the family, her role was vital, acting like an adhesive that holds the family together.

The older women were also to urge the young women to behave in a sensible or wise manner, in other words, to have self-control. They were also to admonish them to be morally pure, free from defilement and not contaminated (1 John 3:2-3). Their primary focus in life was to be their home, which they were to take care of and manage. Their example was Proverbs 31, a portrait of a godly woman who manages her home, honors her husband, cares for her children, and fears the Lord. The young women were to be *workers at home*, perhaps in contrast to idle women who went from home to home gossiping and meddling. There is a contrast in the passage between the older women who were to be teachers and the younger women who were to be workers. There are two different stages of life represented here. The older woman has already raised her

children and now has time to minister. But the younger woman is busily involved in the daily tasks of a young wife and mother. Paul is exhorting the older women to build a ministry, but he is admonishing the younger women to build a home. Only then, like the elders of 1 Timothy 3:4, will they be qualified to do the work of the ministry.

The younger women were also to be good and to place themselves under subjection to their own husbands in order that the Word of God would not be blasphemed (spoken of in an evil way) (1 Tim. 6:1). Lives lived in accordance with sound doctrine would be a testimony to the truthfulness of the Scriptures and would win a hearing for the gospel.

Paul's goal in this passage is that the godliness of the older women would qualify them to teach the young women how to be a testimony to the Lord to the unbelievers in Crete. The result is that the older women would become more Christlike, the younger women would grow in the Lord through what they are taught by word and example, and the unbelievers of Crete would see that godly living honors the Word of God. The Word of God should have an effect on the way we live as believers.

We have learned from this passage that the ministry of women is needed in the church. Older women with free time are to spend it encouraging young women in the Lord. Godliness is to be modeled by the older women as an essential condition for ministry. They are to encourage the young women, not out of a vacuum, but as an overflow of their personal walk with the Lord. Their lives are to be in harmony with sound doctrine. How is this possible if they do not know the Bible?

A woman needs to know the Scriptures in order to be equipped for "work of service." She can then be a vital factor in helping to build up the body of Christ. She is an important part of the church. Her ministry is essential and it is not limited to encouraging young women. Women can be a dynamic influence on others by their godly example and through the use of their spiritual gifts. They are to be like a magnet that attracts both believers and unbelievers to Christ. What a challenge to ministry!

* * *

Study Guide in Preparation for Lesson 7

1. Read 1 Peter 3:1-7. Summarize in your own words the message of 1 Peter 3:1-4. What is the importance of what Peter is saying?
2. How is Sarah an example to women today?
3. Memorize verse 4. Describe what this kind of women would be like.
4. What are some popular views of the meaning of *weaker vessel*? What are some reasons these might not be correct?
5. What is the meaning of the two responsibilities of a husband (v. 7)?

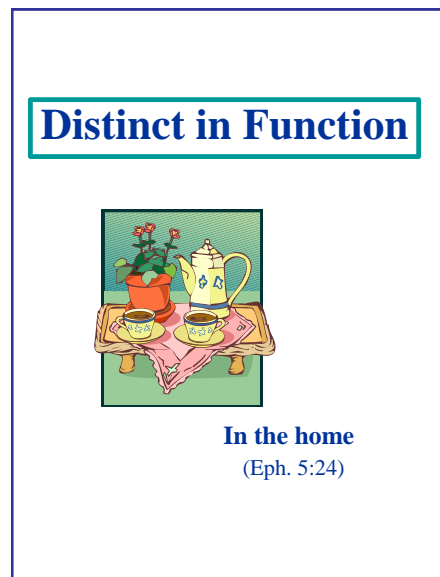
What teaching from this passage do you need to apply to your life? If you are single, what should your attitude be to those in authority over you?

THE WEAKER VESSEL

1 Peter 3:1-7

In the same way, wives, be subject to your own husbands. Then even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live, 2 when they see your pure and reverent conduct. 3 Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold or fine clothes— 4 but the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God’s sight. 5 For in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands, 6 like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You become her children when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so. 7 Husbands, in the same way, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

The biblical model for marriage is found in Ephesians 5:22-33 where the filling of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the husband and wife produces a godly marriage, one of the greatest witnesses for the Gospel. The Apostle Paul describes a godly wife as one who submits to her husband, as unto the Lord. A Spirit-filled husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church.



The distinctions of male and female, authority and submission, are to be balanced in harmony and unity through the power of the Holy Spirit. The husband and wife, who are equal in their position in Christ, but have different functions within the marriage. The roles that were designed by God and inaugurated at the creation of Adam and Eve are unchanged. This teaching is in direct opposition to the Christian feminists’ view that headship began at the fall and ended at the cross.

In the Ephesians passage, Paul is merely restating God’s original plan, revealing that its implementation is only possible through the filling of the Spirit. Sinful natures, acquired at the fall, will always be in conflict, creating discord. Only through the filling of the Holy Spirit can there be peace and love in the home. The husband is to combine his God-given authority with sacrificial love. His wife is to submit to his leadership as unto the Lord. The Apostle Peter also applies the submissive role to Christian wives, even if their husbands are unbelievers.

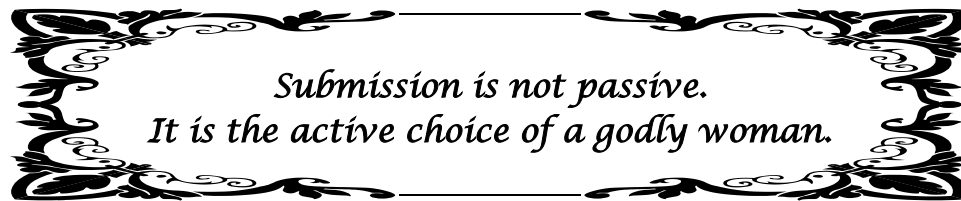
The First Epistle of Peter is written to Christians who had been scattered throughout the world and were being persecuted as they lived in a pagan and hostile society. *In the same way*, which begins this passage, refers back to the examples of submission by citizens to governmental authorities, by slaves to masters, and even by Christ Himself as He endured suffering on our behalf. The subject of the context is unjust persecution.

In this passage, Peter challenges believing wives to adorn themselves with godly submission as a testimony to their husbands, even those who are disobedient to the Word of God, meaning the

Gospel. By application, this would include husbands who are believers, including those who are not walking with the Lord (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18). Conversion to Christ did not exempt wives from being under the authority of their husbands who had not come to Christ. God's design from the beginning is that the husband be the head of the home, the wife's newly acquired relationship with Christ did not change God's original plan. Submission is not inferiority; it is a matter of function based on the order of creation. However, it is important to note that this passage does not require women to be submissive to men in general but only to their *own husbands*. As will be noted, there are limitations to her submission

Submission is a military term, meaning to rank under or to be subject to (1 Cor 15:28; Rom. 13:1). It can be characterized as a willingness to restrict oneself or to give up one's own right or will. This requires both self-discipline and humility. It involves respect (Eph. 5:33). Submission is the freedom to be creative within certain limits. Obedience to God is the foundation of submission, a role designed by God to protect the wife and enhance her femininity.

Submission does not imply inferiority or inactivity. It does not require that one give up the right of expression or opinion. Submission is not passive. It is the active choice of a godly woman—a voluntary yielding in love (Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 5:5). It is an acceptance of the wife's role in the home under the leadership of her husband, whom God has placed as head in the home. It is an attitude of yieldedness to a God-given authority.



The goal of this passage is that the pagan husband be won to Christ by the behavior of his wife. For the unbelieving husband, the object is his salvation; for the disobedient believer, the object is repentance and obedience to the Word. *Without a word* does not mean that she is not to share the gospel or the Scriptures with her husband. But it is her behavior, not her preaching or criticism, which touches the heart of her unbelieving husband and wins him to the Lord.

The wife's undefiled life, based on her fear of the Lord, is one that shows respect to her husband. Both her behavior and her appearance are to reflect godliness in contrast to the woman of the world. Her inner beauty—a gentle and peaceful spirit—is precious in the sight of the Lord. It is a manifestation of her trust in the Lord and her acceptance of her femaleness as designed by God. Her most important attraction is her spirituality, not her physical appearance. Such a gentle and quiet spirit is of great value to God displays an understanding and acceptance of her femaleness as designed by God.

Peter then uses Sarah as an example of a submissive wife. Her obedience to Abraham was grounded in her trust in the Lord. Submission requires that wives place the outcome in the Lord's hands, which results in peace rather than fear. However, submission has the condition of doing what is not contrary to the Word of God. To do *what is right* is to do that which is good or that which is right in the sense of right in the sense of fulfilling Christian moral law.

In verse 7, the wife is referred to in two ways: 1) a weaker vessel, who should have her husband's understanding (knowledge), and 2) a co-inheritor of the grace of life, requiring that her husband honor and respect her. Popular explanations of the meaning of the term *weaker vessel* include emotional or physical weakness. However, the context of the passage does not support these views. The context of verses 1-6 is a wife's submission to her husband. Therefore, the

meaning of weaker vessel has to be in relationship to submission. She is weaker in rank. The Apostle does not use the term *weaker person*, but uses *vessel* in a figurative sense.

A vessel, when used metaphorically in the Scriptures, is something that is created by God and intended for His use (Jer. 18:4; Rom. 9:21). In reference to persons, the term *vessel* refers to the entire being, not only the body (Acts 9:15; 2 Cor. 4:7).

The use of the adjective *weaker* used with the word *vessel*, is a comparative to the unspecified stronger vessel, or her husband. Although some would say both are weak, she being the weaker. The wife is in a secondary, or weaker, role. But in her relationship to Christ, as a possessor of eternal life, she is equal. The *weaker vessel* is in reference to her function; the phrase *fellow heir* refers to her position in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:28).

An account is told of a young seminary student who came to one of his professors, seeking his advice for a troubled marriage. The student complained that his wife was not submission to him. He expected that the professor would give him some concrete ideas of how he could get his wife to do what he wanted. Instead, the professor merely asked the student one question, "Are you granting her honor?"

A wife is to be honored by her mate. This is so important that if he does not honor her, his prayer life will be hindered. She is equal to her husband in created essence and has become equal to him in her position in Christ, but she is unequal in function. Her God-given role is weaker, but it is of great value to the Lord. In His infinite love, God created woman as a counterpart for man. Not to compete, but to complement. She is not to replace him or dominate him, but do what she does best—be a woman! Her femininity, linked with godliness, is her greatest asset.

* * *

Study Guide in Preparation for Lesson 8

Pray that the Holy Spirit would guide you as you study and apply His Word.

1. Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Why do you think he mentioned women in verse 11 before he finished the qualifications for deacons?
2. Why do you think there are qualifications for wives of deacons but not for wives of elders?
3. Read Acts 6:1-7. Why do you think the Disciples chose men rather than women to be in charge of the task of serving tables?
4. Read Romans 16:1-2. What are some arguments for and against Phoebe holding the official office of deaconess?
5. What have you personally learned from these passages?

LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

The role of deacon is clearly specified in 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12, and 13. However, the issue of the existence of the office of deaconess has been strongly debated. In verses 8 and 9 of 1 Timothy 3, the qualifications for deacons are listed. In order for the deacons to be eligible for office, they must be *men of dignity, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not fond of sordid gain, and holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.*

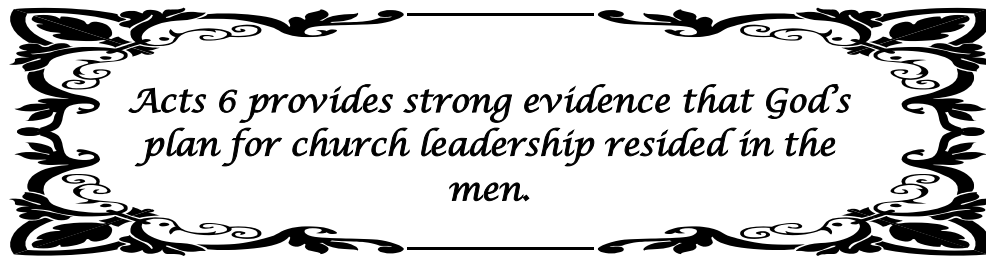
In verse 11, the word, *likewise* is used to introduce a separate group, closely associated with deacons, whose qualifications are listed along with those of the deacons. The word, *women*, in this verse has been taken by some to refer to the deaconesses. Since the meaning of the Greek word for *women* can only be determined by the context, the most likely possibilities are: 1) women who assist the deacons, 2) wives of the deacons, or 3) deaconesses. However, in this passage there is no modifying word or phrase to refer to specific women. Since verse 11 is in the middle of a passage listing the qualifications for deacons, it would be unusual for Paul to be referring to women in the church in a general way. If Paul were teaching about the office of deaconess, why would he use the word *women* rather than the feminine form of *deacons*? Or, if deacons could be either men or women, why refer to the women in verse 11 with similar qualifications? Similarly, the repetition of the word *deacons* in verse 12 implies that the women in verse 11 were something other than deacons.

Paul states that the women are to be *dignified, not malicious gossips, temperate, and faithful in all things* (3:11). In other words, these women are to be women worthy of respect, not spreading rumors, manifesting self-restraint, and faithful in every area of their lives. These qualifications parallel those of the deacons in verse 8 and 9. Following the listing of qualifications for the deacon and his wife, Paul then addresses the deacon's role in his home (3:12).

The office of deacon in the New Testament is an authoritative position, which is closely associated to that of elder. For a woman to hold the office of a deaconess, which would put her in a position of authority over men, would be in violation of Paul's injunction in 1 Timothy 2:12. It appears that this office is restricted to men. When Paul mentions deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8 and 12, it refers to men. However, wives could assist their deacon-husbands since the office of deacon, unlike that of elder, was not a teaching or governing office in the church and only referred to one aspect of the ministry—service. There are also instances where women are called deaconesses but do not hold a place on the deacon board. They serve the church, but they do not hold an official position. They are merely given the title.

Acts 6 provides strong evidence that God's plan for church leadership resided in the men. When the widows of the Hellenistic Jews were being slighted in the serving of food, seven godly men (not women) were chosen to oversee the administration of caring for these widows. If the office of deaconess were to be established, this would have been the perfect time to inaugurate it. Although women are praised for their support (Joanna and Susanna in Luke 8:3) and for deeds of kindness and charity (Dorcas in Acts 9:36), it is the men who were to supervise these acts in the church.

Rather than being in evidence in the early church, the first mention of women as deacons appears in the Teaching of the Apostles in 230 A.D. in reference to the eastern churches.⁹ The existence of woman apostles and deaconesses on the basis of a word form or definition is insufficient documentation.



Some claim that Phoebe held the office of deaconess in the church at Cenchreae, arguing the service that she performed was official (Rom. 16:1). However, Romans 16 is a chapter of greetings, not church order. It is more likely that Phoebe is a "servant." She is noted as a patroness or protectress of the Apostle Paul, which probably means helping others and providing her resources.

In addition, the occurrence of the name *Junias* in Romans 16:7 has caused some discussion. Some argue that *Junias* is a feminine form and refers to a woman named Junia, providing proof that there were woman apostles in the early church. However, it is more likely that Junias is a shortened form of Judianus, a masculine name. Junias is called a fellow-prisoner with Paul, but is designated as being outstanding among (or "well known by") the apostles.

* * *

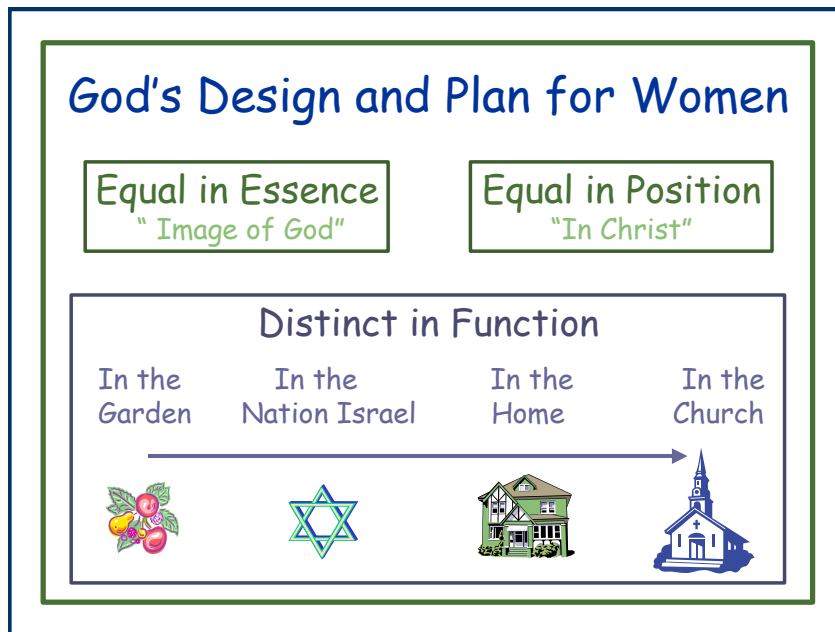
Study Guide in Preparation for Lesson 9

1. What have you learned from this study? How has God used what you have learned in your life?
2. Write a brief summary of what you understand the Bible to teach regarding the role of women.
3. List several practical ways that you can apply what you have learned to your life.

⁹ Roman Catholic church historian, Aime Georges Martimort, demonstrates through painstaking analysis of all available literature that "during all the time when the institution of deaconesses was a living institution, both the discipline and the liturgy of the churches insisted upon a very clear distinction between deacons and deaconesses."

FINDING OUR NICHE

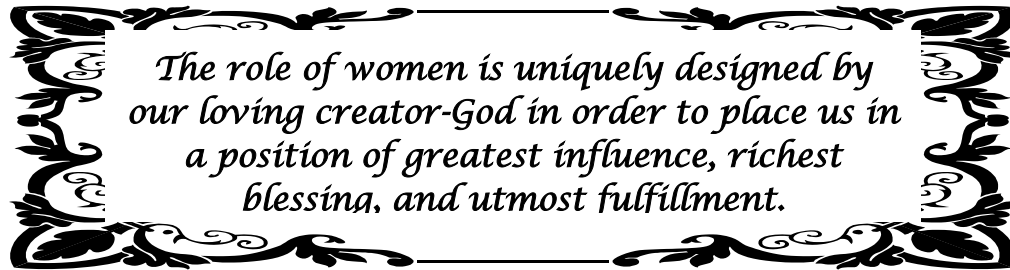
The Bible attests to the fact that women were created in the image of God equal in essence with men and are also considered equal in their position in Christ. However, equality in essence or status before God does not eliminate the biblical hierarchical relationships in the home or in the church. These are mutually exclusive aspects within God's plan. As men in the Old Testament were selected as leaders, priests, and kings in Israel, so men are designated as the leaders of the church and as having authority in the home. God's design and plan for women was initiated in the Garden of Eden and is woven into the chronicles of history, despite changes in culture or the influence of false teachers. His plan is perfect and is not thwarted by any conflict or opposition.



God has blessed women with a multi-faceted role involving infinite possibilities for serving Him. His plan is perfect. If we feel rejected or stifled, perhaps we are failing to understand that He formulated our role with His infinite wisdom, motivated by His love for us. Or, maybe we are taking matters into our own hands instead of trusting Him for our lives. We must be sure there is not bitterness or resentment in our lives. We have so much for which to be thankful. God has designed a role for women that encompasses both protection and blessing. But understanding and accepting that role is essential.

Women are admonished to learn the Word of God. The older women are exhorted to train younger women. Women are to be involved in the teaching and training of children. However, they are not permitted to teach men or be in authority over them. In the early church, women had important ministerial roles as widows and deacon's wives, where they were under the authority of the church leaders as they cared for the needs of women. In fact, every woman who is a believer has a spiritual gift sovereignly given by God. Women are to minister to others by the use of their spiritual gifts in helping to build up the body of Christ. There are many opportunities for women to serve the Lord.

A great deal of ambiguity results when the doctrines of gender equality in both essence and position in Christ are confused with roles or functions in the church and in the home. Who we are as women is not the issue in this discussion. What we do is. We must not use our own interpretation of Galatians 3:28 or 1 Tim. 2:12 (or a few isolated incidences like Deborah as a judge) to formulate a doctrine which gives women authority to teach men or preach in the pulpit. We must be careful that a biblical exception is not used to justify a ministry and attempt to make it the norm in modern-day Christianity. We must look at the verses in their context as well as consider the overall teaching of Scripture on the subject.



Some women seek to justify the fact that they are pastoring a church or teaching men by saying that they have been anointed or called by God. The issue is that God would not call someone to do something that is contrary to His Word. The answer is found in the Word of God, not in someone's experience.

Others use the example of a growing church or Bible study in an attempt to prove that God is blessing a woman who is teaching men. Apparent success in ministry and even the fact that men are growing spiritually are not valid criteria. Nor is giftedness or a well-prepared message proof of God's blessing. God will always bless the teaching of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit can use the Scriptures in the lives of those who are willing to listen and obey, regardless of the messenger. The issue is not spiritual gifts, ability, or spiritual maturity, but rather the role of women as designed by God.

Some have asked whether women are permitted to teach men in a Bible college or seminary or at a conference. Of course, Paul does not specifically address this in the first century. Some argue that since these are not church settings, it is permitted. It is regrettable that some in the Christian community are basing their view of the role of women on the dictates and examples of a secular society rather than on biblical principles. But another issue must also be addressed. Since the Scripture teaches that men are designated to be the leaders of the church, it seems apparent that it is the men who must train them. Future leaders of the church need godly men as their examples and as role models for ministry.

I have studied the book of Esther for many years, wrote a twelve-week Bible study on the book, and taught it numerous times as a course in Bible colleges. But when my husband was preaching through the Bible at the church where he was the pastor, I did not preach on Esther. The issue is not whether women know more on a given topic or could do a better job teaching or preaching. The issue is God's design and plan for women.

The headship of man began in the Garden of Eden prior to the fall, was evident in the nation Israel, was recognized by Christ during His earthly ministry, and continues in the church today. God's design and plan for women has not changed with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Men and women are equal in essence, having been created in the image of God, and they are equal in their position in Christ. But the function of women in the church and in the home is distinct and unique. It is not secondary or unimportant. It is certainly not inferior. The role of women is uniquely designed by our loving creator-God in order to place us in a position of greatest influence, richest blessing, and utmost fulfillment. To say nothing of contentment! What a privilege to be a woman!

APPENDIX A

THE DANVERS STATEMENT¹⁰

The Biblical Roles of Men and Women

Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

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.
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.
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin.
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women.
 - 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.
 - 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.
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. Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community.
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
 - 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.
 - 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.
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.
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. 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.

¹⁰ The Danvers Statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in Danvers, Mass., in December, 1987. It was subscribed to by the Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches on July 18, 1998.

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.

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;
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.

APPENDIX B

THE HEADSHIP OF ADAM

THE HEADSHIP OF ADAM

Scripture	Description
Genesis 1:26, 27	Generic term “man” used for Adam and Eve
Genesis 2:7	Adam “formed first” (1 Tim. 2:13)
Genesis 2:7	Adam formed “of dust” from the ground”
Genesis 2:8, 15	Adam placed in the garden to “cultivate it and keep it”
Genesis 2:17	Adam not to eat of “tree of knowledge of good and evil”
Genesis 2:17	Adam warned of spiritual and physical death
Genesis 2:18	“not good for the man [Adam] to be alone”
Genesis 2:18	Adam given “a helper suitable for him”
Genesis 2:21, 22	Adam’s rib “fashioned into a woman”
Genesis 2:22	God brought the woman “to the man”
Genesis 2:24	Man to “leave father and mother,” “cleave to wife”
Genesis 3:9	The Lord God called to Adam, “Where are you”?
Genesis 3:22	“man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil”
Genesis 3:23	Lord God drove man “out of the garden” of Eden

The authority and headship of man was designated by God prior to the Fall. Man and woman were created equal in essence; both were blessed by God. But their roles have been distinct from the beginning.

APPENDIX C

HOW TO DETERMINE GOD'S WILL

1. Some general principles.

- a. God's first priority for everyone is to accept Christ as Savior (2 Pet. 3:9).
- b. For believers, God's first objective that they be controlled, or filled, by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:17-18; 1 John 1:9). There is no power for knowing or doing the will of God apart from the Spirit of God (Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:32).
- c. The Word of God reveals the will of God. One reason for the 176 verses in Psalm 119 is to teach us to discover God's will from God's Word (Isa. 55:8-9). Satan is the great counterfeiter who tries to deceive believers (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:9).
- d. Prayer reveals God's will, "If anyone lacks wisdom . . .ask" (Jam. 1:5).
- e. Faith is essential to pleasing God and discovering His will (Heb. 11:6). The examples of people in Hebrews 11 detail a variety of ways people trusted God. Thus, a key element to determining the will of God is the degree you are willing to trust God for His will (Pro. 3:5-6).
- f. Submission to God is essential, "Not my will but Thine . . ." (Luke 22:42).
- g. The providential leading of God can indicate the will of God (Acts 10). But remember circumstances and even peace can be rationalized.
- h. A decision to marry must be the mutual leading of the Lord (Gen. 24:8)
- i. Counsel of godly people is important (Pro. 19:20).

2. Questions to test decisions and actions.

- a. Does it glorify God (Matt. 6:1-6; Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31)?
- b. Does it help believers grow in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1-3; 8:7-13; Rom. 14)?
- c. Does it win a hearing for the gospel (1 Cor. 9:19-23; 5:9-11)?
- d. Does it help me grow spiritually? (Phil. 3:5-6, 13; 1 Cor. 9:24-29).

3. Some reminders.

- a. Maintain a transformed mind regarding your decision (Rom. 12:2), rather than being persuaded by others to conform to the world.
- b. Don't trust your own understanding (Pro. 3:5-6).
- c. Love God. Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" (John 21:15-17). The greatest commandment is to love God (Matt 22:34-40)? Isn't Jesus speaking of the primary motive for doing the will of God. Love for God is the greatest test in knowing His will. Glorifying God is the greatest motive, "Whatever you do . . . do for the glory of God" (Col. 3:17)

**To know God is our greatest blessing.
To do God's will is our highest privilege.**

**"A man's heart is right when he wills what God wills."
Thomas Aquinas (Psalm 37:4)**

APPENDIX D

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

An important aspect of the Christian's spiritual life is the understanding and use of one's spiritual gift. In addition to enabling a believer to live the Christian life to the fullest expression, the use of spiritual gifts has a direct impact on the body of Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit in the believer falls into two categories: the work of the Holy Spirit **within and to** the believer, and the Holy Spirit's work **outward from** the believer, ministering to and affecting the lives of others, (unbelievers toward salvation, and believers toward spiritual growth (1 Peter 4:10).

Understanding one's spiritual gifts and functioning in them affects spiritual growth, service to the Lord, worship, and spiritual effectiveness. The growth of the church and its ministries of outreach and edification are directly related to the employment of the individual church member's function and utilization of his or her spiritual gift (Eph. 4:11-12).

A. What Is A Spiritual Gift?

- 1. Definition.** A believer's spiritual gift is a God-given, special ability for spiritual service in the body of Christ, the church. It does not necessitate holding an official office in a church. Although a believer benefits from the use of a spiritual gift, it is not primarily given for self-edification, but for the edification of others. The term "spiritual gift," comes from two Greek words, *pneumatikon* or "things pertaining to the spirit (1 Cor. 12:1) and *karisma* "a gift of grace, a free gift" (1 Cor. 12:4). It is not a natural ability.
- 2. Source and power.** Spiritual gifts are sovereignly given by God's grace to every believer at the point of salvation and are undeserved (1 Cor 12:11). Every believer has at least one spiritual gift but all believers do not have the same gift (1 Cor. 12:29-30). The operation of them is entirely due to the work of God the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. While the believer functions on the human level, it is God operating within, on a spiritual level (Phil. 2:12-13). The phrase, "covet earnestly the greater gifts" (1 Cor 12:31), is an exhortation to improve and develop one's spiritual gift through use. The gifts can develop in efficiency with use and as the believer grows in spiritual maturity.
- 3. Function and Context.** There may be various methods for the employment of the same spiritual gift, for example, evangelism or teaching (1 Cor 12:5). A spiritual gift is not exclusively designed for a specific location or for a particular age group. There are also varieties of effects of ministry as God works (1 Cor 12:6).
- 4. Purpose of Gifts.** Spiritual gifts are given for the mutual benefit to the body of Christ—"for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). The emphasis of gifts is continually on spiritual growth and unity in the body of Christ. The context of the function of spiritual gifts is always love (1 Cor. 13). The ultimate goal in the use of a spiritual gift is that God would be glorified (1 Pet. 4:11).
- 5. Varieties of Gifts.** In the body of Christ, there are a variety of gifts, ministries and effects (1 Cor 12:4-6). There are four references to spiritual gifts in the New Testament: Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4:10-11, and 1 Corinthians 12-14. 1 Corinthians 12 documents the giving of spiritual gifts; chapter 13 emphasizes the motivation for their use; and chapter 14 discusses the regulation of spiritual gifts. Mark 16:17-18 appears in a passage that is not found in two of the most trustworthy manuscripts of the New Testament.

B. What Are The Various Spiritual Gifts?

- 1. Types of gifts.** According to Peter, there are two classifications of spiritual gifts: serving and speaking (1 Pet 4:10-11).

- 2. Permanent gifts.** Permanent gifts continue today for the building up of the body of Christ, the church. Although there is much discussion as to the listing of the gifts, it can generally be concluded that the following gifts are operative today:
- a. Teaching** - the supernatural ability to understand, explain, and apply spiritual truth (Rom 12:7, 1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11). It is characterized by a desire to study the Word of God. It is not unrelated to the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. It is not qualified by a superior knowledge of the bible. It is not associated with the prophetic gift in which the believer was simply a mouthpiece from the Lord.
 - b. Ministering** – associated with the gift of helps or serving others (Rom 12:7, 1 Cor 12:28).
 - c. Administration** - the gift is twofold: 1) influential leadership (governing) (1 Cor 12:28), or 2) wise guidance (counseling) (Rom 12:8). The person who is an influential leader is a good manager of people. The second type of administrative gift is manifest by a leader who gives direction or vision to a ministry.
 - d. Evangelism** - the effective preaching of the gospel to the unsaved (Eph 4:11).
 - e. Pastor-Teacher** - the gift of shepherding, leading, providing for, and protecting the flock of God (Eph 4:11; 1 Thes. 2:7-12).
 - f. Exhortation** – an ability to encourage, comfort, and admonish believers (Rom 12:8). Barnabas is an example as he encouraged believers in Acts 11:22-23.
 - g. Giving** - different from simply being generous, it is the efficient use of funds to the highest possible good (Rom 12:8). Barnabas' gift was an example to other believers in Acts 4:36-37.
 - h. Showing mercy** - a ministry to the sick and afflicted, or helping those in need (Rom 12:8). Dorcas is an example of showing kindness and charity in Acts 9:36.
 - i. Helps** – a willingness or readiness to help (1 Cor. 12:28).
 - j. Faith** - an unusual ability to believe God (1 Cor 12:8-10).
- 3. Temporary gifts.** The gifts of apostle and prophet were foundational to the beginning of the church (Eph. 2:20). Temporary gifts were used for the planting of churches at the beginning of the church age, before the completion of the canon of Scripture and the cessation of direct revelation. New Testament books were to be written by an apostle or with his authority (e.g. the Gospels of Mark and Luke). The early church considered the canon of Scripture to be closed. However, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Mormon churches, as well as the Moonies, do not consider the Bible to be the final authority. The Bible must be studied with a normal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation.
- a. Apostle** – the ability to speak authoritatively in matters of faith and practice due to intimate knowledge of Christ's teaching and direct revelation through the Holy Spirit. It was a foundational gift for the church. An apostle had to be a witness of the risen Christ (Acts 1:2, 3; 1 Cor. 15:8). Specifically there were twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, but others were considered to be apostles of the church (Acts 14:14). The Scripture does not teach that the gift of apostle is transferred to others. One of the qualifications for inclusion into the canon of Scripture is that the book be written by either an apostle or a close acquaintance of an Apostle (e.g. Luke).
 - b. Prophecy** – the capacity to receive and proclaim truth directly revealed by God (1 Cor. 14:29-32) as well as the ability to understand mysteries (1 Cor. 13:2). The prophet's ministry of foretelling the future required one hundred per cent accuracy. The prophet was also involved in teaching or exhorting the Word of God. Prophetic teaching always corresponded to and was in agreement with the written Word of God. In 1 Corinthians 13:8, Paul states that the gift of prophecy will be done away. According to God's standards, the prophet's ministry of foretelling the future required one hundred per cent accuracy (Deut. 18:20-22). Prophets were also involved in teaching or exhorting the Word of God. Prophetic teaching always corresponded to and was in agreement with the written Word of God.

- c. **Wisdom** – a special faculty for receiving, knowing, and presenting the wisdom of God that was characteristic of apostles and prophets (1 Cor. 2:6-12).
- d. **Knowledge** – an ability to correctly understand and exhibit the wisdom of God as revealed by the apostles 1 Cor. 2:12).
- e. **Healings** – the ability miraculously any and all diseases, instantaneously, completely, and permanently as a confirmation of the messenger and message of God (Acts 9:34). Paul could not or did not use the gift on Epaphroditus (Phil 2:27), on Timothy (1 Tim 5:23), or on Trophimus (2 Tim 4:20). Evidently the need for the gift ceased. In 2 Corinthians 12:8-9, Paul prayed repeatedly for healing and he was not healed.
- f. **Miracles** – the ability to perform works of power (Acts 9:40; 14:3) as proof of genuine apostleship (2 Cor. 12:12).
- g. **Distinguishing spirits** – the capacity to discern between that which is done in the power of the Holy Spirit or an evil spirit. Affirmed that direct revelation was from God and exposed that which was false (Acts 13:10).
- h. **Tongues** – the supernatural ability to speak in a known, unlearned language that is recognized by others. This is evidenced in Acts 2:6-11, where fifteen different languages were spoken. Apart from three specific references in the book of Acts (2:4-11; 10:46; 19:6), the practice of tongues is found only in the Corinthian church, where many spiritual and theological problems existed. In 1 Corinthians 14, the Apostle addressed the misuse of the gift of tongues. It was to be used strictly and required the use of a translator in order to benefit to the church. The Bible never uses tongues as a measure or means of spirituality. Nor is it the one unifying spiritual gift for all of the body of Christ. All believers do not have the same spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:30). Paul considered tongues to be the least important of the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:28).
 - 1) Tongues was a sign to unbelieving Israel of God's impending judgment, such as the invasion by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. (Isa. 28:11) and by the Romans in 70 A.D (1 Cor 14:21, which quotes Isaiah 28:11).
 - 2) Tongues was given to validate the Apostles as messengers of the Word of God (Heb. 2:3-4).
 - 3) The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the gift of tongues would cease or stop (1 Cor. 13:8).
 - a) Historical evidence reveals that tongues stopped after the first century.
 - b) Tongues is not mentioned after 1 Corinthians (where it occurs 21 times) in reference to either the Holy Spirit or spiritual gifts.
 - c) Contemporary evidence. The linguist William J. Samarin, in his book, *Tongues of Men and Angels*, reports on research conducted in various parts of the world. None of the recordings of those who claimed to be speaking in tongues contained any of the structure or patterns that constitute a language.
 - 4) Misuse causes division and disharmony (1 Cor. 14:4-11, 14-20)
 - 5) The Bible never uses tongues as a measure or means of spirituality.
 - 6) All believers do not have the same gift (1 Cor. 12:30)
 - 7) Tongues not to be use in church service without an interpreter (1 Cor. 14:27-28).
- i. **Interpretation** – the ability and requirement to translate a previously unlearned language in a church meeting.

Occasional reports of various signs and wonders (including speaking in tongues) in a foreign country where the gospel has not yet been preached may be an act of God, but are not an evidence of ongoing use of temporary gifts in the church today. Most who hold to the existence of temporary gifts today appear to redefine the gifts rather than hold to the biblical explanation of those gifts. Some other possible explanations for claims of the existence of temporary gifts today include:

1. Psychological or emotional (self-hypnosis, sense of belonging, escapism)
2. Demonic influence (believers) or indwelling (unbelievers) (Acts 16:16-18; Matt. 7:22-23)

C. How Can Your Spiritual Gift Be Determined?

- 1. Study the Scriptures.** Know the biblical context for the use of the gifts. Consider if you may have one of the gifts listed above. The operation of your gift must be consistent with God's Word.
- 2. Pray about the discovery of your gift.** This implies a willingness to accept whatever gift God has given you and to use your gift in any area in which the Lord may design for you, recognizing that it is not limited to use within the church building. What are you doing that you enjoy? What are you doing that is effective?
- 3. Consult with other believers** who know you and your abilities to function with your gift. Also talk with other believers who are functioning with the same spiritual gift you believe God has given to you. Learn how they have used their gift (2 Tim 1:6; 1 Cor 12:7).
- 4. Look for an opportunity to respond to a need.** In Acts 6:5, there was a need for serving; in Acts 8, there was a need for evangelism; in Acts 12, there was a need for hospitality, etc.
- 5. Begin to develop and use your gift.** Make the necessary preparations. Teach a Sunday school class, witness to an unbeliever, encourage a friend, exercise hospitality, visit the lonely or sick
- 6. Recognize the blessing.** Note how God seems to bless others in the utilization of your gift. They get more out of Bible study, people come to Christ, guests respond to your hospitality, believers are strengthened in their faith, purpose, and order are given to projects or meetings.
- 7. Realize the benefit.** There is spiritual growth in your life because of the utilization of your gift (Eph 4:13, 15-16). "I get more out of it than they do!"
- 8. Observe the unity and growth in the body of Christ.** Encourage others to use their spiritual gifts.

APPENDIX E

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Use Scripture to document your answers.

Genesis 1—3. Some argue that a woman is inferior because she was created second and as a helper to Adam. How would you encourage a young Christian woman who attends a church where this view is taught? How would you address this issue with church leaders?

1 Corinthians 11:3-16. In a city in central Russia, an elderly woman approached a woman visiting her church for the first time. She shook her finger at the woman and loudly scolded her for not wearing a head covering. She pointed to her Bible, saying that it says women are to wear head coverings. She implied that woman who does not wear a head covering is disobeying God. What would you say to the elderly woman? What would you say to the visitor?

1 Corinthians 14:34, 35. A godly woman who has ministered in many ways in her church was recently told to keep quiet when she spoke during a church meeting. Quoting 1 Corinthians 14:35, a male leader said that women are to be silent in church and are not to express their opinions. How would you respond to this man if you were the woman?

1 Timothy 2:9-15. The leaders of a church have asked a woman to preach on Sunday mornings, stating she knows the Bible better than the men. What are the issues involved in this matter? What might be some creative, biblical solutions?

Titus 2:3-5. Some say that this passage limits the subjects that women can teach to those which pertain to home and family. How would you address this problem? How is the context of sound doctrine important in ministering to other women?

1 Peter 3:2 and Ephesians 5:22. A wife wants to have a 50/50 relationship with her husband. What are some potential problems with this? Why do you think a woman would be unwilling to submit to her husband? How would you encourage this wife to follow God's plan for marriage?

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER WHEN RESOLVING CONFLICTS

1. It must be done prayerfully and privately, in a spirit of humility (Phil. 2:3-4).
2. Seek counsel rather than just complaining to someone else. Telling others without confronting the offender is gossip (Matt. 18:15-17)
3. When talking with a church leader about an interpretation of Scripture, it is preferable to go with another man (your husband or a man who has authority and respect in the church) (Acts 18:26).
4. The discussion must be in accordance with sound doctrine. A woman's feelings may have been hurt, but the greater issue is whether the conduct or words of the each person are biblical (Titus 2:1).
5. It must have a goal of unity in the church, with love not divisiveness (Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:14).
6. It must seek to glorify Jesus Christ (2 Thes. 1:12; 1 Pet. 4:16).
7. It requires forgiveness (Eph. 4:32).

APPENDIX F

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Objectives of the Study. It is always a blessing for women to be able to study the Word of God together. As women grow together in the Lord, they will also be encouraged to pray for one another. This study is designed as a 9-week Bible study for women. Although one can complete the study individually, the study will be enhanced by the guidance of a teacher, group discussion, fellowship and prayer. Some may wish to use this study for a Sunday school class.

Planning for the Study. Share your burden to teach this study with at least one other woman and pray together with her for God's direction. You may have friends, neighbors, or co-workers who would like to take part in a weekly Bible Study, perhaps meeting in your home. If you would like to conduct this study with women in your church, it is wise to seek permission of the pastor or leaders in your church. Pray that the Lord would direct hearts regarding the use of this study for women.

Participants in the Study. Begin to pray that the Lord would direct you to those whom the Lord would want to come to your group. Ask women if they would be willing to commit to a nine-week Bible study on *God's Design and Plan for Women*. Encourage the women you ask to invite their friends to attend also. If there is a need for childcare, pray for someone who would be willing to care for the children in order for young mothers to study.

Personal Preparation. As a teacher, you are encouraged to complete each section in the study before you teach that portion. Looking up all Bible references will increase your understanding of the topic and prepare you to answer questions the women may ask. Prayerfully ask the Lord to give you both insight into the Bible passage and wisdom to personally apply what you learn.

Lesson Plans. It is best to write a lesson plan for each session, stating your objectives for that day and allotting the proper amount of time to each portion (for example, fellowship time, prayer, review and homework, reading of Scripture, discussion of passage, etc.). Starting the lesson on time will encourage latecomers to arrive earlier next week. Your schedule should include time for the women to discuss the questions that they have completed. Time should also be allowed for any questions that the women might have as they go through the study. Try to keep the discussion on the topic, encouraging the women to ask unrelated questions at the close of the lesson.

Building Relationships. If possible, a weekly phone call by the teacher to each of the women in the study will encourage them in their personal study. It is important to encourage each woman to read the Scripture portion and Bible study notes as well as complete all the questions prior to the weekly study. This is also a time when personal issues can be discussed. Ask if they have any prayer requests. When possible, pray with them over the phone. This is an important time in building relationships with the women in your study. Pray for the women in your group on a daily basis.

Weekly Bible Study. It is helpful to have someone guide the study and discussion each week. If the guide is also the hostess of the group, it is nice to have at least one woman arrive early to help with the preparations for the study. This guide can be the same person each week or women in the group may wish to take turns to give every one an opportunity to guide the study. If it is not possible for each woman to have a copy of the study, a portion of the study could be

read to the class each week, taking time to answer questions either orally as a group or personally writing the answers. It is important to answer each question in order to achieve the maximum benefit from the study. Each question could then be discussed, giving a least one woman (other than the guide) a chance to comment each time. This is the part of the lesson where the women will come to understand how the Word of God can be used to change their lives.

Other Suggestions for a Group Study

1. Consult a Bible dictionary or commentary, if possible, for further definitions and explanations. However, it is best to complete the study personally first.
2. Memorize each of the assigned verses and seek to apply them to your life.
3. Draw a picture of the portion of the Scripture that you are studying.
4. Summarize what you have learned about the Lord Jesus Christ from your study.
5. On the last day of the study, ask the women to put on a drama portraying women in the Bible. Ask them a week in advance to select several Bible characters in order to give them a chance to prepare.

* * *

How wonderful it would be if every woman who completed this study would then invite others to join her in a study of *God's Design and Plan for Women*. Ask the Lord if He would like you to lead a study group. May you be richly blessed as you study the Word of God!