

RUN WITH IT

**One-Page Insights to Launch Men and Women
Serving Shoulder to Shoulder for the Gospel**

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Leslie Neal Segraves, DMiss



**SHOULDER
to
SHOULDER**

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Foreword

Hi friends!

If you like to “run” with God’s message, you have come to the right place. If you like to multiply disciples, leaders, and churches, you have come to the right place. Welcome to Shoulder to Shoulder! As you read through this information, you will discover that we dig deeply into the Bible. It’s our starting point. Even the phrase “Shoulder to Shoulder” or “Serving Shoulder to Shoulder” comes from a biblical passage.

Several years ago, a verse from an Old Testament prophet deeply impacted us. Zephaniah shared a message from God, and in Zephaniah 3:9 God stated,

*“Then I will purify the lips of the peoples,
that all of them may call on the name of the LORD
and serve him shoulder to shoulder.”*

The Peoples. Purified Lips. The Name.

As we thought and prayed through this verse, we began to understand more of God’s heart. Like a flower unfolding, God’s proclamation grew in its significance to us when we saw several key phrases.

1. **The peoples** – God did not say “my people.” That would refer to the nation of Israel. Rather there is a global gathering “of the peoples,” the non-Jewish nations. God’s heart beats for ALL ethnic groups to be reconciled to their Maker.
2. **Purified lips** – You may wonder how purified lips reveals God’s character and God’s heart. Well, remember when the prophet Isaiah had a vision of God’s throne room. He heard the seraphim calling out “*Holy, Holy, Holy.*” God’s holiness describes, modifies, and amplifies all of God’s attributes. God has HOLY love. HOLY compassion. HOLY justice. You get the picture.

Overwhelmed by God’s holiness, Isaiah cried out, “*I am a man of unclean lips!*” In the presence of holiness, Isaiah’s own sinfulness became clear. At that point, the seraphim did *not* say, “No, Isaiah, you are not unclean! You may *feel* shame, but that’s not your true self. You have *never* been separated from God.” No, of course not! Instead, one seraph took a hot coal and purified Isaiah’s lips. Repentance and purity leads to greater understanding of God’s heart.

After this cleansing, Isaiah was able to hear the Triune God speaking, “*Who will go for us?*” Zephaniah 3:9 states that the purified lips/repentance of “the peoples” leads to two things: It causes them to *call* on the name of the Lord, and it causes them to *serve* him – like Isaiah.

3. **Call on the Name** – Previously the non-Jewish “nations” called on many other names of gods and deities. However, this prophetic utterance showed that the nations will instead call on the Name of the Most High God! “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given to people by which we must be saved*” (see Acts 4:12). With purified lips, the nations will know and call on God’s name.

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One more phrase is given in the passage.

4. **Shoulder to Shoulder = One Shoulder** – “They will serve him shoulder to shoulder” (with “one shoulder.”) Not only will the nations come to God for forgiveness and salvation, they will move out to serve. People side-by-side, with shoulders touching, are working in unity, moving toward the same goal. They literally “share a shoulder.” Side-by-side, as in the creation story, shows our shared origin as image bearers. “Shoulder to shoulder” indicates our shared purpose. These called and sent laborers now know “what” to do.

This “one shoulder” shows action and task. We are going in the same direction, pulling the same load, sharing the same burden.

We not only “share a shoulder” with one another, but also with Jesus. Matthew 11:30 says that his “yoke is easy,” and his “burden is light.” We enjoy the promise of God’s presence, knowing that God co-laborers with us as we co-labor with one another. Our service *to him* is also our service *with him*.



Our Goal

Shoulder to Shoulder (S2S) seeks to equip men and women in the Body of Christ to stand side-by-side in their identity as image-bearers, and to stand shoulder to shoulder as they extend God’s mission throughout the world.

God designed men and women to share dominion on the earth for His purposes.

Satan knows the strategic power of men and women propelled outward into God’s mission. Therefore, the enemy seeks to distract, distort, and disengage the team by turning their focus to tradition, rights, position, and power.

Shoulder to Shoulder seeks to release God’s laborers – men and women set free to LEAD and LOVE well for God’s global purposes.

For numerous reasons across the world and in every culture, men and women struggle to work together for the Gospel. One key solution starts with understanding Scripture. It should be clear from our shared origin, our shared fall, our shared redemption in Christ, our shared Holy Spirit indwelling, and our shared destiny that God intends for men and women to labor together in his mission in unity. However, some people use the Bible to limit God’s daughters. We will address those passages in the pages to come, and show that indeed, God wants both men and women to labor in the harvest.

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Jesus said that we reveal our love for him when we follow His commands. This RUN WITH IT resource will help you and your networks dig into Scripture to discover how God values and gifts his sons and daughters to have dominion on earth, which he commanded.

At S2S we seek to distill the biblical text so that you might run far and fast. As prophet Habakkuk said, “Write it on a scroll so they can run with it.” May you run for Jesus’ dream to redeem all nations!

You Can Trust the Bible!

Have no fear! Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but MY words will never pass away.” The Word of God is strong and sure, able to withstand any intellectual attack and any question formed within a three-pound human brain. Because God’s Word is unshakeable, we seek to



ground Shoulder to Shoulder thoroughly in Scripture. The Bible is the framework which God has given us to live. There is no firmer foundation, no better basis from which to understand God’s heart.

Allow us to present some amazing evidence to show the reliability and trustworthiness of the Bible. You can research this example further for yourself.

Amazing Proof in the Torah (You want to read this!)

The Torah are the first 5 books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). The word “TORaH” is a four-letter word spelled **Tau**, **Vav**, **Resh**, and **Khet** in Hebrew.

Did you know that if you locate the first letter **TAU** in the book of Genesis, then count over 50 letters you will find a **VAV**. Count 50 letters more and you find **RESH**. Count 50 letters more and you find **KHET**.

That spells **TORaH**! That is amazing right? Well, it keeps going!

The book of Exodus does *the same thing*. The 50th letters spells TORaH. Amazing! The first two books of the TORaH have the same intentional pattern. What could that indicate?

Now let’s skip over to Deuteronomy the fifth book of the Pentateuch. In Deuteronomy, things are a little different. Starting in verse 5, you find the first **KHET**, count 50 letters, find **RESH**, count 50, find **VAV**, count 50 and find **TAU**. You got it...that’s TORaH, *spelled backwards*! Yes, that is correct. The book of Deuteronomy does the same thing as Genesis, only backwards!

Guess what, back up one more book to Numbers and the same pattern repeats, spelling TORaH backwards, with 50-letter skips.

So now, you have the first two books spelling TORaH forwards, and the last two books spelling TORaH backwards. They are like mirror images. They seem to be pointing to the MIDDLE book of the Pentateuch, the 3rd book Leviticus. What could be located at the center of such an incredible story? What is worthy of such focus?

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Do you think Leviticus also spells out TORaH at 50-letter increments? It does NOT! It is actually a different number pattern that spells out a different word. So, get ready...

In Leviticus:

- Find the first **YODH**... count over SEVEN letters
- Find **HE**... count SEVEN letters
- Find **VAV**... count SEVEN letters more
- Find **HE**.

What does that spell? Y-H-W-H

Those four letters spell the name of GOD – Yah-He-Veh-He or YaHWeH.

Wow...

So, the first five books carry this pattern:

TORaH TORaH YHWH HaROT HaROT

What should we take away from this amazing symmetry?

The TORaH literally points forward and backwards to God! YHWH God Himself is the focus, the source, the foundation, the objective, the main point of the Scriptures!

Once again, you can trust the Bible. It is not just a random collection of stories. The teachings are intentional, the stories are written just like they need to be written, the laws are phrased with precision. The good and the bad and the miraculous show that God is the author of such beauty. We can trust God and his character.

So, we love the Bible, but *we worship God*. Since we love the Bible, we don't throw out the Old Testament or Paul. No one should think that they can pick and choose which verses are to be obeyed. But we do need to understand how to *apply* the Bible, because it can certainly be misapplied!

One Personal Crushing

When I (Chad) was in university, another student, a young woman, asked my opinion. In front of a group, she asked me, "I really feel like God is calling me to be a pastor or church leader. What do you think, Chad?"

So, there was my moment. Would I encourage her, build her up, and speak words of life to her? Or would I crush her dream?

I looked at her and sincerely said, "I can see that God really uses you and that you have great skills for ministry. But I just can't get past what Paul said in 1 Timothy 2. *'I don't permit a woman to teach or have authority.'*" So, I said, "I'm sorry but, I just don't see how you would qualify to be a pastor or church leader."

I totally spoke crushing words to her, in front of the group.

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Perhaps you have also been publicly crushed. Or maybe you have done the crushing— closing doors in the face of godly women.

I really wish I understood then what we have learned over the years. But no one ever explained things to me in a way that hit my heart in a good way. It always sounded like some sort of political agenda, or it pulled on my emotions too much. It never came across as a strong theological answer. It usually sounded like a rationalization to advance a social agenda. We can understand why people who truly love the Bible have been hesitant to encourage women to lead out in ministry. The perspective that encourages women to lead spiritually alongside men often comes with heavy cultural baggage, or clear situations of abuse/injustice, or mixed-motive agendas, or emotionally-reactive experiences, but not so often with theological insight.

Why So Few Personal Stories and Illustrations?

We know that personal illustrations connect powerfully to the heart. So, we have intentionally *not* included lots of stories. In over twenty years of ministry, we have hundreds of first-hand experiences, and we know believers from many nations whose testimonies reveal that God certainly uses both men and women as fruitful laborers. Because godly theology outweighs personal experience, we want this resource to focus on biblical cultures, biblical contexts, and biblical languages. We may share stories in a different format or location, but here we want to focus sharply on understanding and applying the biblical text.

Our motivation is fulfilling God’s mission and multiplying his laborers. In the process, we need to answer some of the difficult passages that seem to limit how God can use women.

In every section we will discuss cultural issues or bring out key words in Greek and Hebrew. We will introduce concepts that may be new to you, like “Hebrew parallelism” or “chiasm.” We get excited because these language clues help us understand the mind of the writer, and hopefully get us closer to the author’s original intent, as well as what the original audience understood.

Even now, we have already introduced the concepts of chiasm and Hebrew parallelism. Did you recognize it? The awesome TORaH example... is exactly that! Things at the beginning match the things at the end, often with a key point right in the middle.

We think this stuff is really fun!

Three Fears

To be honest, we have three big fears with the whole project:

1. That people will just accept what we say without thinking about it. This material requires thoughtful consideration. We want you to pray, think, ask Jesus. Do not just believe the information because we say it. We believe what we say is correct, but the Apostle Peter encourages everyone to *“prepare your minds for action.”*



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2. That people will think, “Oh, this is too hard. I need a degree in theology.” Or “I can’t trust my Bible unless I can read it in Greek! I’m just giving up!” Absolutely not. You can trust the Bible! We are just giving you some new tools to understand God’s heart and explain some of Paul’s confusing content. We want this study to encourage you, not deflate or discourage you.
3. That people will try and misuse this information to justify sinful behavior. The angels surrounding God’s throne in Isaiah 6 did not call out, “LOVE, LOVE, LOVE.” How did they describe God? What did they say? Exactly... “*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY.*” Everything that we promote should line up with God’s HOLY character.

So, please don’t use these materials to try and justify any action that goes against the character of the Most High, Life-giving, HOLY God.



Four Key Questions

Because we love to see disciples make disciples, we have included one of the fundamental parts of disciple-making movements – “the Four Questions.” Some principles and some questions transfer across cultures. These questions transcend culture and they help readers see that while we are not promoting Western or Eastern culture, we are seeking to understand and expand God’s kingdom culture.

The Four Questions show that whatever we read in the Bible should inform us about:

1. God’s character and nature.
2. The character and nature of people.
3. A step of practical obedience (We tell our children that “*delayed* obedience is *disobedience.*”)
4. An expectation of sharing this information. We anticipate that someone you know needs to hear this information. So, who can you tell?

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?

For You or NOT For You?

S2S seeks to encourage followers of Jesus who want to obey the Bible and figure out how men and women can work together in the Gospel. Our audience is:

- **FRONT-LINE DISCIPLE MAKERS/CHURCH PLANTERS.** You see the urgency of the Gospel and the need for more laborers. But you want solid theological answers for the difficult passages that seem to limit women. Welcome, brothers and sisters! This material is specifically for you. May it strengthen your faith and help you multiply the church in your context.
- **CURIOUS INDIVIDUAL FOLLOWERS** of Jesus who love the Bible and want ALL

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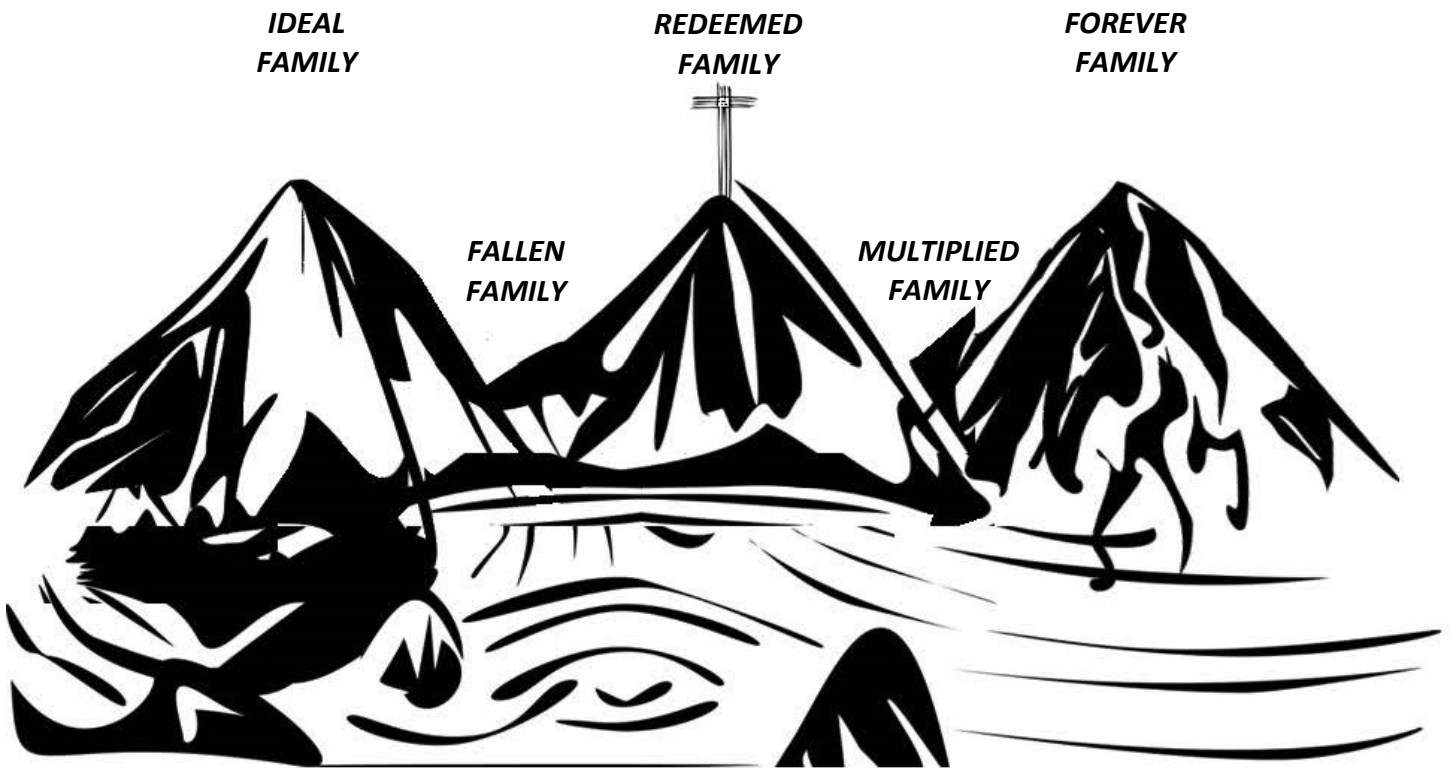
Jesus offers. You are not a radical feminist, or a power-seeking man, but you do want to see in the Bible how much God values you and can use you – including your leadership giftings.

- **CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH LEADERS** who see the potential of women in your congregation. You deeply want to be consistent in your understanding and application of Scripture. We hope S2S serves you as you seek to unleash godly leaders in your context.
- **NOT THE ANGRY WOMAN OR MAN** who wants to use the Bible for your own purposes in a way that violates the holiness of God. S2S celebrates men. We celebrate women. We honor the holiness of God. We surrender to the authority of God to develop standards and boundaries because God knows the best path to human flourishing.
- **NOT THOSE AGAINST WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP** in the Church. S2S has chosen not to engage in debate that leads to accusation of other believers. If you are here for the purpose of accusation, we will not engage. If you are here to have Christ-like conversations, we honor that!

Now that we have shared some of our goals, our love of the Bible and Jesus, and some of our fears, we pray that you will thoroughly enjoy these materials. We pray that they will bless you, your family, your churches, your networks, your entire people group.

The prophet Isaiah said, *"The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the Word of God stands forever."* Now let's obey, and run with it.

Five Families Overview - Quick Visual Reference



Running fast and far together to complete the Great Commission requires relating with other people (not surprising!). Across the timeline of humanity, large general periods indicate how men and women relate with one another (and with God). We call these five general periods “families.”

When we refer to family, we include males and females of any age - single, widowed, or married. This includes YOU! The Bible speaks much about family - from the creation of the first family in Genesis to a grand Wedding in Heaven. The Apostle Paul prophetically prayed for the global family:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

Ephesians 3:14-17

Understanding the Five Families gives us a clear picture of God’s heart and intent, as well as people’s sin and need. The first family (Ideal) and the last family (Forever) demonstrate the bookends of God’s perfect plan for people at creation and into eternity future. The central (Redeemed) family focuses on the cross of Christ as the pivotal centerpiece of all history. These “up” times are shining pinnacles of God’s design and holiness. These mountaintops serve as the goals, the guides, the standards to keep in mind. The second (Fallen) and fourth (Multiplied) families reveal the struggle with the sin of our cultures and our need to complete Jesus’ commission. These “down” times show the valleys where men and women labor to overcome evil, deceit, and doubt.

As you seek to run with Jesus, even as we live in the present valley of sin and death, let us fix our eyes on God’s original intent, his glorious sacrifice, and life in his eternal presence.



THE **IDEAL** *FAMILY*

Fix the IDEAL Family firmly in mind.

God created the first man and women in God's image. This first family revealed God's intent and God's heart. This man and woman lived in sinless perfection, with the ability to choose right and wrong, honor and shame. They existed in perfect harmony with God, with each other, within themselves, and with the earth.

If you ever wonder how God originally intended family to live...

THIS IS IT!



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One Pagers

What is the ultimate goal?

Jesus' heart for the world! We must begin with the end (*telos*) in mind. While on earth, Jesus empowered his followers to do great deeds and to finish (*telos*) their task of making disciples of all nations with power by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). God promised this reality in Joel 2:28-29:

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy... Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”

Key Term

τέλος

telos = ultimate goal, destination, last

You can ride a bike with one pedal, but it sure is easier with two!

The “Five Families” offer a framework to understand how men/women can relate.

- **Ideal Family** - In the beginning God revealed his perfect plan. One man and one woman, side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder. Both holy, sinless, honorable, and blessed with a clear mandate to fill the earth and rule over it.
- **Fallen Family** - God’s enemy deceptively attacked the first man and woman. Sin entered the world and brought sickness, oppression, shame, fear and death. Every culture and every person now struggle under the burden of the fallen world. The Fall shattered God’s beautiful design for mutual sharing between man and woman.
- **Redeemed Family** - Jesus’ cross and resurrection brings life and hope to all men and women. Forgiven people can live beyond and above the normal, cultural expectations. In Christ, men and women can once again lead and love as co-regents of God’s kingdom and co-equal heirs who are gifted by the Holy Spirit.
- **Multiplied Family** - We are not content to just *be* blessed and gifted! Followers of Jesus are to *be a blessing* to the nations. Jesus instructed his followers to multiply disciples, fill every corner of earth, and help humanity flourish!
- **Forever Family** - God’s original intent will be realized and celebrated in eternity. Holy, honorable relationships.

God’s character is the ultimate foundation.

Godly categories guide this study.

- **God’s character** - Everything ultimately (*telos*) comes down to God’s nature and character. No other foundation will last. Every action, belief, and motive that lines up to God’s holy standard remains. All else will fade away.
- **God’s kingdom** - The kingdom was Jesus’ first and main message. God’s reign and rule shows God’s character demonstrated in every sphere of life. The world’s kingdoms will pass away; but God’s kingdom will last forever.
- **God’s mission** - God desires that all people know him in relationship and worship him in glory. Numerous unreached people groups remain beyond access to the name of Jesus. All people need the Good News of Jesus.
- **God’s laborers** - To accomplish God’s mission of demonstrating God’s kingdom, ALL of God’s laborers are needed. This resource seeks to equip and multiply God’s harvesters to engage all people, especially the least reached.

Solid foundations

The entire Bible is authoritative and is useful for teaching and correcting. We must understand male/female relationship in light of God’s character and kingdom as found in His Word. Desire for rights (women) or defense of position (men) is not the correct starting or ending point (*telos*).

The completion (*telos*) of God’s global mission should compel us to discover how to multiply and release laborers who reflect His character, kingdom, and mission.

Conclusion

In the end (*telos*), we pray the eyes of your heart will be enlightened, and God’s mission will be complete (*telos*)!

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Is God a male, female, both, or neither?

God is *neither* male nor female! Unlike the Canaanite deities from Old Testament days, and unlike certain Hindu, tribal, or ancestral deities that modern people worship, God is *above* gender. Christians do not believe that God is “an old man with a beard and ten fingers and ten toes.” Absolutely not! Neither does God consist of female body parts. Absolutely not! In John 4:24, Jesus made it clear when he explained, “*God is Spirit.*” When the Word became flesh, Jesus was certainly male. However, the eternal, Triune God is *neither* male nor female.

Key Term
Αββα Daddy, Papa

Why did Jesus call God “Abba”?

Jesus called God “Abba” (Father, Papa, Dad) to demonstrate the close, loving, family relationship God wanted to share with people. When Jesus came, the Jewish people revered the name of God so much that they would not write or even speak God’s name. The Jewish rabbis did *not* teach that God was approachable and near. What a contrast from the God who walked and talked with people in the garden of Genesis 2! By calling God “Abba,” Jesus did not seek to reveal God as masculine. Rather, he wanted people to know that God was close, loving, and relational.

Scripture describes God in both male and female terms because these are the metaphors and analogies that people understand. In Deuteronomy 32:18 notice God’s male and female actions. “*You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.*” While, God is *above* gender, the best traits of men/women reflect God!

Verses referring to God in masculine terms:

- Psalm 89:26 “*He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.’*”
- Isaiah 63:16 “*You are our Father...you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.*”

Verses referring to God in feminine terms:

- Isaiah 66:13 “*As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you.*”
- Matthew 23:37 “*How often have I longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.*”

Should we call God “Mother”?

While we do not personally refer to God as Mother, we don’t believe that God is “offended” by this. After all, the best qualities of dads and moms are reflections of God’s character. Also, when people call God “Father” he does not change and become *more male*; and if people call God “Mother,” again, he does not change and become *more female*. God remains spirit... *above* gender! Notice that in the examples above, God is directly called *Father* as a noun, but he is described as a *mother* through similes (“like” or “as”). While we understand that God is neither male nor female, we should respect the way Jesus chose to refer to God... as Father. Can you imagine Jesus saying, “the Father and I are one?” then later teaching the disciples to pray, “Our Mother, which art in heaven...”? That would certainly be confusing! Remember Jesus was also limited by language.

Conclusion

God wants to walk with people, to fellowship, to share our close and personal concerns. God used language to reveal himself, but language falls far short of conveying the power and love of God. Jesus demonstrated that although God is holy and set apart, God is also personal and near. Let us rejoice!

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?



Who is made in God’s image...male, female, or both?

BOTH male and female are made in God’s image. Created by God, men and women are NOT divine. However, God stamps us with the Creator’s imprint. Every human has inherent value - given as a gift from the Creator. We do not earn this value or worth. God doesn’t wait to stamp boys and girls at birth with his image. God’s image is deeply woven into the being of every child - from the moment of conception. Genesis 1:27 states,

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

The pinnacle of creation!

The crowning moment of God’s design was the creation of the man and woman. God said in Genesis 1:26, *“Let us make mankind in our image,”* (*tselem* = shadow, representative figure) *“in our likeness,”* (*demuth* = resemblance). No other portion of creation bears God’s image - only people. And what is the first indication that they represent God? Shared ruling power... *“so that they may rule over...”* Both man and woman are to rule creation - but *not* one another. God delighted in his image-bearing humans. After making people, God said, *“It is very good”* Gen 1:31.

How are people created in God’s image?

Does God have ten fingers and ten toes? No! As people made in God’s image, we are: spiritual, rational, creative, relational, caretakers of creation; we are able to love, to sacrifice, to choose. We can use power to steward the earth on behalf of God. Just as God knew when to stop creating on day seven, so the man and woman can also use control to stop, to rest, and to use restraint.

Good human attributes find their origin in God.

Both genders display actions which reflect God’s own character. God nurtures, protects, provides, and loves. Males can and should nurture, protect, provide and love. In the same way, females can and should nurture, protect, provide and love. When we see a dad lovingly change his child’s diaper or a mother gently rock her baby, we catch a glimpse of God’s nurture. When we see a dad jump into a lake to save his child, or a mom hold her child’s hand while crossing the street, we see God’s protection.

Genesis 5:1-2 also describes the origin of people:

“When God created mankind (adam) he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them and named them ‘mankind’ (adam) when they were created.”

In these verses, *adam* is not the man’s first name. Here *“adam”* is the joint identity of both the man and woman. Together, they are members of the human race, both bearers of God’s image.

Conclusion

God created both male and female in his image. Therefore, we should respect and value both as image-bearers. God wants His people to recognize the inherent value of all people. When we do, we honor the Creator!

Key Term

imago Dei

Latin for “image of God”

Key Term

adam - mankind, humankind

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Did God originally plan for BOTH men and women to lead?

Absolutely! God honored and blessed the first man and woman and gave them *both* five key commands. In the ideal perfection of sinless creation, we find God’s heart to bless humanity and establish a world-reaching mandate that leads to human flourishing. Consider God’s first words to people in Genesis 1:28:

“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’”

How do we know the command is for both of them and not just for the man? VERBS and PRONOUNS

Clearly God intended both male and female to share in these commands/blessings because God used five, *plural*, imperative Hebrew verbs. Also, notice that God used *plural* pronouns blessing ‘them’ and instructing ‘them.’ God designed a powerful and harmonious partnership between male and female from the beginning.

God used plural verbs and plural pronouns.

The First Five Commands

God did *not* repeat himself with five, identical verbs. Rather, these commands offer God’s clear, strategic blueprint for people. Since God spoke to *both* of them, men and women are *both* required to fulfill each of these commands.

- PARAH (to be fruitful)** - God instructed the first couple to ‘enjoy one another!’ and procreate people who reflect God’s image. No one is foolish enough to think only one gender can accomplish the task alone. Likewise, in the church, God intends both men and women to be fruit-producing, image-bearing, makers of disciples.
- RABAH (to multiply)** - This imperative means that men and women should spread God’s abundant life quickly to all nations (multiply rather than add)! While bearing fruit replicates life, *rabah* increases the speed.
- MALE (to fill full)** - It means to overflow, satisfy, and replenish. God intended that men and women leave no area of society untouched with God’s glory: education, business, entertainment, government, media, healthcare, etc. We are to influence and impact every area of culture based on giftedness, passion, and experience.
- KABASH (to subdue)** - This means to overcome or bring into subjection. *Kabash* does not mean simply clearing farmland or taming animals; God wants victory over every enemy. Jesus came to destroy the enemy’s work (1 John 3:8). Men and women together are to overcome the darkness and chaos and bring God’s light and peace.
- RADAH (to rule)** - God wants his people to rule and care for all creation. Ruling over the earth is not a task given to only one gender. In Genesis 1, God told ‘them’ to rule, but not over each other! God blessed humanity with leadership, and both are to exercise dominion as ambassadors of God’s reigning kingdom.

Conclusion

God blessed and commanded BOTH male and female. He did not limit leadership to men only. Rather BOTH received the powerful privileges and weighty instructions. The enemy wants to pervert each of these commands and destroy God’s team. But we are to reflect God’s heart for mutual collaboration.

Key Term

them

plural pronouns and plural verbs

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Were women created as the *helper* of men?

Yes, but probably not like you think! Genesis 2:20 states:

“The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

So what does *helper* and *suitable* mean?

Helper comes from the Hebrew word **EZER** (pronounced “ay-zer”). Ezer is used 21 times in the Old Testament. Now the vital question...

Key Term
עֵזֶר ezer

WHO is the primary *ezer* in the Bible? WHO is *most* commonly described as an *ezer*?

16 out of 21 times *ezer* refers... to GOD!

God is the one who provides “help” from enemies and rescues from death. God is the one who “helps” by displaying superior strength and military might, coming to the aid of the weaker party (Moses, David, Israel, etc.). Sixteen times God is the *ezer*. Three times *ezer* is used when Israel needs a powerful military rescue. Two times *ezer* is used in Genesis 2 in reference to the woman. See all of the OT references below. When the Hebrew audience heard the word *ezer*, they thought “strength to rescue” or “power to come to the aid” of a weaker ally.

EZER = STRENGTH

Clearly, the term *ezer* has nothing to do with domestic duties or a subservient position. Think about it... if you needed *help* with your math homework, would you seek someone who knows less than you? If someone attacked you, would you want *help* from someone weaker? No! You would choose someone with more power, skill, or ability than you.

Ezer describes God’s character. God is the rescuer, the protector, the defender, the helper. God gives valuable and vital strength to those who are weaker. God chooses to use the same word for women that He used for himself!

However, the word following *helper* is *suitable*, which in Hebrew is **K’NEGEDU**. *K’negedu* comes from the root *neged*. *Neged* means “in front of”, “in sight of”, “opposite to”, “counterpart”. The *k’* adds the meaning “like, as, according to.” Therefore, *k’negedu* modifies *ezer*, revealing God’s perfect harmony.

Key Term
כְּנֶגְדּוֹ k’negedu

K’NEGEDU = EQUAL, LIKE A MIRROR

God intended, by the creation of woman, to make a “strength” or “power” that would “correspond” to the man—**equal strengths**. Nothing in the text indicates the woman is inferior, weaker, lesser, limited, or in any way carries less authority than the man. **God created the man and woman to be powerful counterparts with a worldwide mission!**

OT References for **EZER**

Passages referring to God - 16 times:

Exodus 18:14; Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29, Psalms 20:2, 33:20, 70:5, 89:19, 115:9, 10, 11; 121:1, 2; 124:8; 146:5; Hosea 13:9

Passages not referring to God - 5 times:

Genesis 2:18, 20; Isaiah 30:5; Ezekiel 12:14; Daniel 11:34

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?



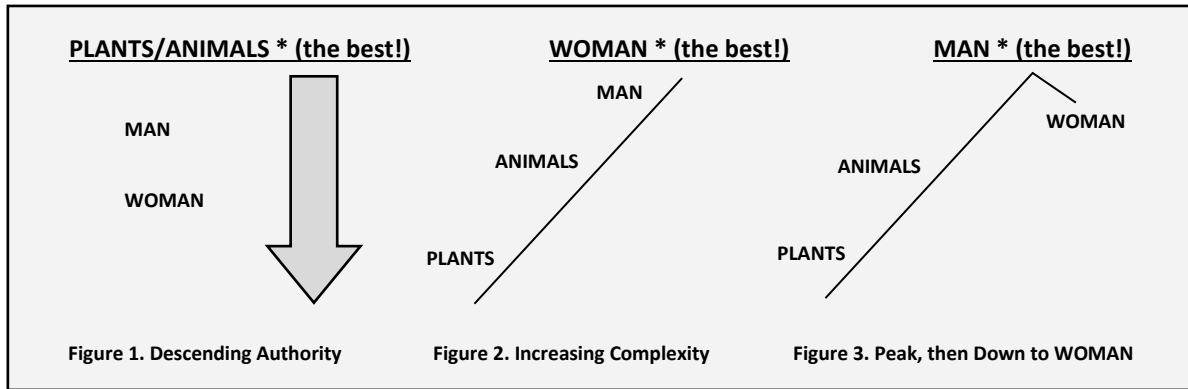
Does “created first” mean that men always lead?

No. The “created order” belief states, “Because God created the man first, he is therefore the ‘leader.’” But does the order of creation imply leadership? Or does God paint a different, beautiful purpose with the creation story? Let’s apply some logic to this “created order” theory.

Key Term

Hebrew Parallelism

Graphic Views of “Creation Order.” Do any of the following views display the intent of Genesis 1-2?



- **Figure 1** - Man came before women, but plants and animals (and dirt) were created prior to people. Does created order mean that plants/animals lead humans and have greater authority because they came first? No!
- **Figure 2** - Does created order mean that creation became more complex, more perfect (women are best)? No!
- **Figure 3** - Does created order mean that males are the highest pinnacle of creation? God later made man’s servant, women, similar but just a little lower, “equal but different”? No!

So what is the solution to the “created order” question?

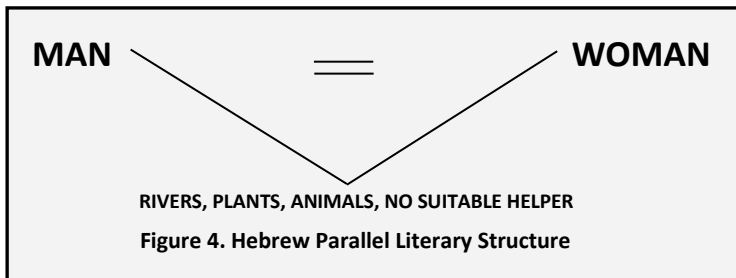


Figure 4. Hebrew Parallel Literary Structure

Hebrew parallelism - “first equals last.”

Hebrew parallelism repeats similar themes, equating the first to the last. In Genesis 2, God’s symmetrical order of creation showed the equality of male and female. Both blessed, both strong, both pure, both image bearers. Among all creation, no equal could be found. Through the creation of the woman, God provided for the need of the man - he was alone. The man celebrated the woman as his equal image bearer - calling her, “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.”

Conclusion

“First” is not always “leader.” In Genesis 2, the peak of creation (man) parallels the other peak of creation (woman). Both were created in God’s image, with shared blessings, commands, responsibilities. **The first woman came from man; now every man comes from a woman. What a powerful couple created to bless the world! Rather than reading “created first = leader/authority,” into the text, celebrate God’s powerful, mutual design!**

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



RUN WITH IT

One Pagers

THE **FALLEN** **FAMILY**

Sadly, today all of us live in a broken world, within the **FALLEN** Family. Genesis 3, the most tragic story in the Bible, describes the deceptions, the doubts, the sin, the punishments, the multiple shattered relationships (with God, others, self, and creation), and also God's search for the people. Now in every culture, men and women together share in the Fall, so far from God's perfect ideal. Is there hope to overcome in a world filled with guilt, shame, and fear?



Does God want pain, thorns, sweat, and male-only dominion?

Of course not. Then why did God say in Genesis 3:16-19:

“and he will rule over you...through painful toil you will eat from it... It will produce thorns and thistles for you...By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground.”

If God describes a situation, does that mean he wants it that way?

God created the world with perfection and unity (Gen. 1-2). Genesis 3 details the tragedy of the Fall. Sin marred God’s perfect world, and God’s image-bearers became ashamed, afraid, and sinful. The fallen world no longer represented God’s ideal.

Key Term
<p>יִמְשַׁל</p> <p>yimshal - he will rule</p>

PRESCRIBE OR DESCRIBE?

Did God state his desire for people, or the consequences of the Fall in Genesis 3?

In Genesis 3:14-19 God made many pronouncements, and now we have a choice to make. Do we believe that God was prescribing how he wanted the world to be, or was he describing the broken world? For example:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| • Thorns and thistles | Did God want thorns, or was he describing hardship? |
| • Food by the sweat of your brow | Did God want sweat, or was he describing difficulty? |
| • Pain in childbirth | Is God pleased with this pain, or was he describing a consequence? |
| • Woman will desire her husband | Is woman’s desire/turning (<i>t’suqah</i>) God’s plan, or result of the Fall? |
| • Man will rule over woman | Is man’s rule (<i>mashal</i>) God’s plan, or result of the Fall? |

If God desires human pain, thorns, and sweat then **people disobey when we seek to alleviate thorns, sweat, or pain!** Farmers should plant thorns, not remove them. We should increase sweat while working rather than trying to stay cool. And for women in childbirth (uh-oh!) - no pain-relieving medicines, no cool cloth, and no comforting words. Instead...God wants more pain! Does that sound right? Obviously not.

MASHAL = RULE

The five consequences of Genesis 3:14-19 show that something changed from God’s perfect design. Still, some Bible teachers claim the last two phrases, woman’s “desire for her husband” and man’s “rule over woman,” contain God’s plan that we should seek to live out. Again, these consequences are NOT God’s ideal. *T’suqah* indicates the woman will “turn” her gaze from God to man (see One Pager: *Should a Woman Desire Her Husband?*). Man “ruling” over woman changed God’s design of co-rule and co-dominion. In Genesis 1 and 2, neither was told to rule over the other, but God commanded both to have dominion over creation in Genesis 1:28. Ruling over each other resulted in many sinful actions and systems including pride/abuse, patriarchy/matriarchy, and machismo/feminism.

Conclusion

In Genesis 3, God described the consequences of a fallen world. **Female *t’suqah* and male *mashal* were not God’s plan for a harmonious and powerful world-changing family.** They indicated the horrendous tragedy that occurred at the Fall— the breakdown of God’s powerful, harmonious, and collaborative team.

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?



Should a woman *desire* her husband?

No. Not in the context of Genesis 3:16. God tells the woman:

*“Your **desire** will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”*

Why is this desire NOT a good thing? What does *desire* mean here?

Desire comes from the Hebrew word **T’SUQAH** (“tuh-soo-kah”).

This word is used only 3 times in the Old Testament: Gen. 3:16, Gen. 4:7, and Song of Solomon 7:10.

Key Term
תְּשׁוּקָה
<i>t’suqah</i>

T’SUQAH = DESIRE OR TURNING?

T’suqah = Desire

Almost every Bible translation and commentary today translates *t’suqah* as “desire.” This desire is usually understood as either *sensual desire* **for** their husbands or *controlling desire* **over** their husbands.

However, until 1528, no one translated *t’suqah* as “desire” or “lust” or “control.” No one! In 1528, a Dominican monk from Italy named Pagnino began to translate the Hebrew *t’suqah* as “desire” or “lust.” He leaned heavily on rabbinic tradition, which spoke of the sexual lusts of women. For more study, see the *Ten Curses of Eve* in the Jewish Talmud.

T’suqah = Turning

We must examine how the word was translated before 1528. Each of the 12 known ancient versions,* translated *t’suqah* as “turning.” Latin translated it “*conversio*,” and the Septuagint (Greek) translated it “*apostrophe*.” Both the Latin and Greek indicated the concept of turning, rather than desire or control.

Key Item
<i>apostrophe</i>
<i>apo</i> - from <i>strophe</i> - turn

Before the Fall, where was the woman focused? Where did she turn after the Fall? **The woman turned her allegiance and shifted her attentive focus from the Greater to the lesser in Genesis 3. She turned from God to a man.** Now in the fallen world, the woman will tend to forsake her focus on God and exchange it for devotion to a man - craving security, purpose, and safety from the wrong source. Obviously, such “turning” leads to numerous tragic consequences.

Conclusion

So much changed at the Fall! Not only did sin enter the world and break people’s fellowship with God, it also fractured the relationship between male and female. With the word *t’suqah*, God revealed a tendency of females due to the Fall. They would struggle to devote themselves to God - often preferring the smile of a man. **To this day all believers must battle to turn eyes, focus, and desires toward God, rather than turning toward the world.**



* 12 ancient versions that translated *t’suqah* as “turning”:

Greek Septuagint, Syriac Peshitta, Samaritan Pentateuch, Old Latin, Sahidic, Bohairic, Ethiopic, Arabic, Aquilla’s Greek, Symmachus’ Greek, Theodotion’s Greek, and the Latin Vulgate. These translated *t’suqah* as “turning” in 21 out of 28 references.

See additional research by:

Katherine Bushnell, Walter Kaiser

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?



Are Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures fallen?

Absolutely! From the time sin entered the world, *every* culture has been affected by the Fall. The Fallen Family infects every society with sin, disease, shame, death. Each one distorts God’s intent for people.

Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures are important to understand because they influenced world history, and these cultures are where the early Church began. The context of the original audience often gives us clues to understand the Bible.

Key Term

Biblical Cultures

Vital to understanding biblical context

Greek Society: How did the Greeks view women?

Poets, philosophers, government leaders, gods/goddesses & fictional characters show the common view of women.

- Greeks taught that women were created separately from men, as a punishment/curse from the gods.
- Aristotle taught that women were a “defective human specimen” a “deformed male” and a “monstrosity.”
- Meander wrote, “Women are an abominable caste, hated of all the gods.”
- The Chorus in Orestes sang, “Women were born to mar the lives of men.”
- Euripedes wrote, “Clever women are dangerous.”

Roman Society: How did the Romans view women?

Romans displaced the Greeks as the dominant society in the first century. They ruled Palestine when Jesus was born.

- Roman society adopted many Greek thoughts as their own. Their goddess of marriage was Juno. Her husband physically abused her and cheated on her. Juno was manipulative and undesirable.
- Venus was the Roman goddess of erotic love and the protector of prostitutes. She was beautiful and desirable. Society considered that visiting prostitutes was a good thing for men to do.
- Roman women had no individual name. Daughters took the feminine form of her dad’s name.
- Roman law allowed for “death by exposure” for any female born after the first daughter.
- Roman culture allowed upper class and wealthy women a few more rights than the Greeks, but still rare.

Jewish Society: How did the Jewish leaders view women?

Jewish leaders recorded the “official” standards in the Talmud (law interpretations) and Mishnah (rabbinic traditions).

- Eve, as a representative of all women, was “cursed with 10 curses.”
- “It is a disgrace to be the father of an undisciplined son, and the birth of a daughter is a loss.”
- Rabbis compared wives to a piece of meat. “A man may do whatever he pleases with his wife... Meat which comes from the slaughterhouse may be eaten salted, roasted, cooked, or seethed.”
- The Talmud states, “Let the words of Torah be burned up, but let them not be delivered to women.”
- A woman reached her spiritual destiny through sending her husband and son to the synagogue.

Conclusion

Every fallen culture has a similar list of poor and broken relationships. You can probably think of many examples in your own life. **Every society has drifted far from God’s Ideal Family. Into this sad, depressed, dark, unjust, sinful world... Jesus entered! Praise God! Jesus came and shined out with a new standard, a new honor, a new hope.**

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



RUN WITH IT

One Pagers

THE **REDEEMED** **FAMILY**

Thank you, Jesus! God saw humanity in our fallen state, separated from Him and far from His ideal plan for people. So God acted to bring us back to Himself. Jesus' miraculous birth, sinless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection prove God's love for people.

As men and women bought with the blood of Jesus, we have the *possibility* to live restored relationships (with God, others, self, and creation). In Christ, sin... overcome; death... defeated. We/You are so blessed. Joining God's REDEEMED Family is possible!

What more could there be?



How did Jesus treat women?

He treated them as valuable and trusted sisters. He loved, cherished, and honored them, which is NORMAL in God’s kingdom, but SHOCKING in Jewish culture. His blood overcame sin, and his resurrection defeated death and the Fallen world, establishing the REDEEMED Family.

Key Term

Redeemer

Jesus bought back God’s ideal

JESUS WAS RADICAL

John 4:1-42

Jesus spoke with Samaritan woman at the well, discussed theology with her, and revealed Himself as Messiah *for the first time*. He gave his *first* “I AM” statement to her. She became an evangelist to her village. Jesus crossed many barriers – Samaritan (ethnic), woman (gender), sinful (holiness), theology (tradition).

Luke 10:38-42

Mary sat at Jesus’ feet. Jewish culture prohibited women from learning the Torah. Mary took the position of a disciple when she sat at the Teacher’s feet. Disciples were expected to teach what they learn. Mary was essentially learning to become a teacher.

Luke 13:10-17

In synagogues, women were designated to sit in back. Jesus called the woman to come to him... to the FRONT. He healed her and called her “Daughter of Abraham.” “Son of Abraham” was a common term, but “Daughter of Abraham” was never used. Jesus showed that women have great worth and dignity.

John 11:17-27

Martha and Jesus had a deep theological talk at Lazarus’ death. Jesus did not tell His disciples that he was “the RESURRECTION and the LIFE,” but he shared this incredible truth to Martha! She answered with the same words of faith that Peter used, showing that the Father can reveal spiritual truth to women, as he can to men.

Luke 11:27-28

A woman stated the traditional rabbinic blessing, “*Blessed is the woman who gave you birth and nursed you.*” Jesus corrected this belief by stating that true “blessedness” comes through hearing and obeying God’s Word. ANYONE can be blessed, not just women who care for their sons!

Jesus honored women, highlighting those in the center of four major life events.

- **Jesus’ birth** - Mary carried, gave birth, and cared for him.
- **Jesus’ anointing for burial** - A woman anointed his body with valuable perfume. She will always be remembered.
- **Jesus’ death** - The women faithfully remained nearby; they observed and grieved.
- **Jesus’ resurrection** - Women came to honor Jesus’ dead body. Jesus gave Mary M. the resurrection message!

Conclusion

Jesus did *not* show the superiority of women over men. Instead, he restored women to their rightful place alongside men. Jesus revealed a new kingdom ethic – built on the character of God. **Jesus brought the possibility of restored, REDEEMED family by his death/resurrection.**

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Why did Jesus choose 12 men and 0 women?

TO FULFILL A SYMBOL! The reason Jesus chose “males” is the same reason he chose “Jews,” and the same reason he chose “twelve”... **to represent the New Israel!** To fulfill this “type” he *could not* pick slaves, or women, or Gentiles. No other arrangement would convey the same meaning to his audience. So, Jesus intentionally selected 12 Jewish males to lead on a miracle-filled, wilderness journey of divine healing, mountain-top teaching, and conquering of demonic forces. Generations earlier, God himself had guided the 12 tribes of Israel through 40 years of wandering and miracles. **By his choice, Jesus pointed to new Israel, AND he symbolically revealed his own divinity, by placing HIMSELF as the leader of the new Israel, giving new commands, and establishing a new covenant in his own blood!**

Key Term

“The Twelve”

Points to Disciples or Tribes ... or Jesus?

Spirit-filled servants not dominating leaders

Having 12 male disciples should not prohibit women today from serving Jesus based on God’s giftings! Jesus never called The Twelve “pastors” or even “leaders.” He did call them friends and servants, and he rebuked them for being like Gentiles in their struggle for power (Mark 10:42-45). The Twelve were known as apostles, but so were Paul, Silas, Barnabas, Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7). See the One-Pager, *Can you show me a good Bible example of a woman leading?* But something crucial occurred 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection. Something happened to alter history, to change forever the way that God related to people! What was it?

On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter quoted the prophet Joel when he stated in Acts 2:17-18:

*“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.
¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”*

Once the Holy Spirit indwelt believers, there was no need to keep “The Twelve” symbol going. The Eleven added one more disciple to replace Judas *before Pentecost*. But later, they did *not* replace James (Acts 12:1-2) or others as they died. A new chapter dawned, and the early Church had a bigger vision than “twelve, Jewish, male” disciples!

Disciples of ALL nations, Priesthood of ALL believers

Initially, Jesus came to the Jewish nation and all disciples were Jewish. But the Great Commission and Pentecost changed it all! Disciples are now from ALL nations, to ALL nations as the Holy Spirit empowers the Church. Previously, the priesthood was limited to Levitical males; now in Christ, all believers are priests (1 Peter 2:4-5).

“The Twelve” symbolism is fulfilled. Let us now disciple all nations, since we are “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation!”

Conclusion

Jesus chose 12 Jewish males to fulfill a symbol, pointing to the new Israel... and to Jesus as the Leader (God)! Now, post-Pentecost, it is a new day. Now the Holy Spirit indwells all believers. Now no one should be disqualified from serving Jesus - whether slave or free, Jew or Gentile, male or female.

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Where did Jesus point to find the ideal marriage?

To “the beginning!” Where in the Hebrew Bible would you turn to find a good example of marriage? Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Leah/ Rachel/Bilhah/Zilpah, David and Bathsheba, Solomon and his 700? Where should WE look in Scripture to find the ideal marriage? When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees about Moses allowing divorce, Jesus took a strong stand. Matthew 19:4-8 states:

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate...”

Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.”

Two times, Jesus revealed his point of reference. Anything after “the beginning” reflects the fallen culture, the sinful world. Jesus pointed to the first marriage before the Fall as the model for God’s design for marriage. We must study and meditate on the significance of God’s design and commission of the first man and woman. We must keep this blessed and strong alliance firmly in mind because so many other voices call out, tempting us to conform.

Culture screams loudly

Perhaps your culture goes back centuries or even millennia. The ways men and women relate in your society may be so engrained that, apart from God’s direct intervention, *nothing* about your culture will *ever* change. Or, perhaps media or entertainment or “elite intellectuals” challenge and attack everything your culture previously believed regarding men and women. Perhaps your culture is suddenly undergoing a radical shift, even to the point of denying that men are men, and women are women. Apart from God’s intervention, the moral fabric of your society seems to be ripping apart. Whether you come from a society that seems like unthinking concrete, pulling you backward, OR from a culture that has lost its solid foundation, “progressively” moving forward into absurdity, only God can guide you. When culture screams “This is the way!” to whom will you listen?

The teaching points of Jesus

- God is a greater Authority than Moses.
- God created humans as male and female.
- God’s plan aims for unity and oneness.
- Men are to leave their father and mother.
- The Creator’s original plan came first, and it still stands true.
- Every culture will be weighed against God’s standards.
- Certain practices like divorce exist because of sin, not God’s design.
- The text does not say that women must leave their parents.

Conclusion

Like Jesus, keep your eyes on God’s original intent. Male and female — side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder, united in purpose. God desires for men and women to love and lead together as equal strengths. Together they are to demonstrate God’s peace, power, honor, harmony, and holiness.

Key Term

Reference Point

Jesus looked to “the beginning!”

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Did Jewish men thank God for not making them a woman?

Yes, they did! Every day, Jewish men prayed the *Beraka*. *Beraka* means “Blessed.” These were the words:

- Blessed be He who did not make me a Gentile;*
- Blessed be He who did not make me a woman;*
- Blessed be He who did not make me an uneducated man (or a slave).*

- T. Berakhot 7.16-18

Key Term
Beraka
Blessed

The Gospel transforms culture!

Paul understood traditional Jewish prayers. Every day, he knew that Jewish men woke and thanked God that they were not born as women, Gentiles, or slaves. Paul also knew the reality of the Gospel of Jesus, and how Christ can transform everything. In response to the *Beraka* tradition and the active Judaizers, Paul wrote in Galatians 3:26-29:

- ²⁶ *So in Christ Jesus you are all **sons** of God through faith,*
- ²⁷ *for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*
- ²⁸ ***There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***
- ²⁹ *If you **belong** to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and **heirs** according to the promise.*

Belonging as permanent heirs

Jewish culture separated and ranked people based on ethnicity, social status, or gender. Clearly being a Jewish, free, male was the top tier. However, Gentiles could become Jews, and slaves could gain their freedom. But women could never become men (not even with modern medicine/technology). The *Beraka* set women in a system of continual discrimination. But Paul’s prophetic reframing of the *Beraka* showed Christ opened the door for *all* to be blessed.

IN CHRIST - SONS, UNITED, BELONG, HEIRS!

“Sons” inherit fully!

Key words in this passage include “sons... belong... heirs... in Christ.” The Greek word in 3:26 is not “children” but “sons” (*υιοι*). This clarification is important because in the cultural context where Paul ministered, only sons received a full inheritance. Paul taught that regardless of a person’s situation at birth or life circumstances, faith in Christ placed believers into the blessed category of “son.” With sonship comes the promise of full inheritance.

What did you inherit in Christ?

Consider, how does spiritual inheritance differ from one Christian to another? Does ethnicity, social status, education, financial level, or gender affect what we inherit in Christ? Scripture says, “NO!” We all receive forgiveness, salvation, the Holy Spirit, access to God, spiritual gifts, and heavenly citizenship.

Conclusion

Paul flipped the Jewish prayer on its head — the *Beraka* was no longer in effect! No longer were free, Jewish males the *only* blessed ones. No longer would a person’s physical or cultural status limit their entry or full participation in the Church. **Now in Christ, all belong, all are sons, all inherit, all are Beraka...blessed!**

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?



Can you show me a good Bible example of a woman leading?

Yes, many! In the Bible we find many examples of female leaders. Let's keep it simple and focus on one passage, Ephesians 4:11-12.

*"So Christ himself gave the **apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to EQUIP his people for works of service.**"*

Key Term
Five-fold ministry
Ephesians 4:11-12

APEPT

The Equipper Gifts - people who equip others for ministry

The Apostle Paul lists a series of five equipping jobs in the church, given by Jesus for the purpose of building others up. These gifted people lead, train, teach, and prepare the Body of Christ to impact the world. Do any women in the Bible qualify as equippers? **Yes, many!**

- **A—Apostles** Junia (Romans 16:7) Paul calls her, "outstanding among the apostles." Apostles are people sent as missionaries (like Paul, Silas, and Barnabas - not only the Twelve)
- **P—Prophets** Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9), Anna (Luke 2:36), Miriam (Exodus 15:20), also see Joel 2:28, Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), wife of Isaiah (Isaiah 8:3)
- **E—Evangelists** Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary mother of James (Matt. 28:8-10, Luke 24:9-10, and John 20:17-18), Samaritan woman (John 4:39)
- **P—Pastors** No males and no females are called "pastor" in the Bible; rather they are called shepherds, whose job it is to nurture the church. The job of "senior pastor" did not exist in the 1st Century church. Female house church leaders included: Phoebe, Chloe, and Nympha.
- **T—Teachers** Priscilla (Acts 18:24)

These outstanding women were commended and praised. They are remembered and honored by the nation of Israel, Jesus, Paul, or the early Church. They are recorded as servants of God (rather than as wives/mothers). They are leaders who were sent, heard from God and spoke, shared the Gospel, shepherded, and instructed.

Nothing in the passages above indicates that God was displeased with these women in their service. NOTHING! No biblical command instructs these godly women to be quiet. Importantly, God did not discourage or stop them.

Other women commended as leaders in the biblical account (and today)

- Eve - Commissioned by God along with her husband Adam to fill the earth and have dominion over it. (Gen. 1-2)
- Miriam - Led worship among the Israelites in the wilderness. (Exo. 15:20)
- Lydia - Opened Europe to the Gospel. Her household was the first church plant in Europe. (Acts 16)
- Phoebe - Called a *deacon* and *prostatís*, a term to describe the highest form of servant leadership. (Rom. 16:1-2)
- Great Commission Women - *Every woman today* who believes Jesus intends for her to obey Matthew 28:19-20.

God is pleased with women who join in his mission to serve and equip other ministers. Men and women, serving shoulder-to-shoulder, was God's original design. Why would anyone discredit or limit servants of God? What kind of person would want to limit God's harvest force?

Conclusion

God is consistent. If we find ONE example of a godly woman leading in Scripture, and God approves them, then God must approve of godly women leading.

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?



Does the Holy Spirit give gifts based on gender?

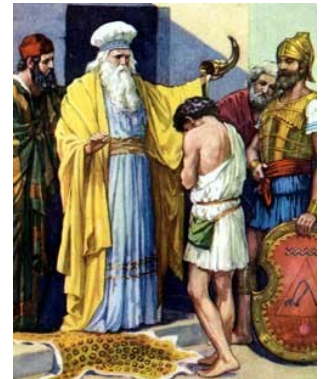
NO! Worldly-minded people may look at a person’s appearance or intellect to find a leader. But God looks deeper than skin and brains. People may consider a person’s age or strength, popularity, power, or bank account. The Lord, however, knows a person’s character.

1 Samuel 16:7 states:

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look on his [David’s oldest brother] appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.’”

The Holy Spirit is God. He chooses. He gifts.

Do not be confused about Who bestows spiritual gifts! A person with a spiritual gift receives that gift from GOD. God chooses which believer receives which gift to build the Church and complete his global mission. God gives gifts to whomever he sees fit.



Lists of spiritual gifts: Functions and People

The New Testament offers a few lists of spiritual gifts. Romans 12 lists seven gifts. 1 Corinthians 12 lists eleven gifts, and 1 Peter 4 mentions two gifts. These lists include specific functions or actions that the Holy Spirit empowers, not just natural human ability. In addition to spiritually empowered *actions*, another list in Ephesians 4:11-12 includes *people* who are the “gifts” to the Church. While some consider this list as “offices” rather than “gifts,” the text says, “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles...” The list in Ephesians 4 reveals that the job of these gifted people is to equip the ministers (the whole Church). The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are tasked with equipping the Body of Christ. See the One-Pager, “Can you show me a good Bible example of a woman leading?” Whether gifted for spiritual function or spiritual equipping for ministry, the Holy Spirit determines it all!

Charismata = God’s gracious gifts

God’s grace (the Greek word *charis*) originates and overflows from God’s generous, overflowing character. God graciously gifts his Church with his favor, his blessings, and his empowering presence. Both men and women receive God’s grace, not based on our biology. We all receive spiritual gifts (grace) to build up and mature the Body of Christ.

The Bible offers no “male spiritual gift list” nor “female spiritual gift list.”

Conclusion

Because God looks at the heart, all believers should exercise their God-given spiritual gifts for the benefit and building up of the Body of Christ. May we not dishonor the Holy Spirit by quenching or grieving or denying God’s daughters and sons from using their spiritual gifts. May we also consider the heart!

Key Term

χάρις

charis = grace; *charismata* = grace gifts

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



RUN WITH IT

One Pagers

THE **MULTIPLIED** **FAMILY**

You are BLESSED to *BE* a BLESSING!

We who are redeemed no longer live for ourselves, but for the One who died and rose again. God's heart for all nations, seen from Genesis 1 through Revelation, compels Jesus' followers not only to "BE disciples" but also to "MAKE disciples" and "fill the earth." God's mission inspires his followers to reflect God's holy character, rather than sinful/shameful culture. God's mission requires all-hands-on-deck, godly males and females using their God-given gifts. Getting back to God's intent... we are a family that MULTIPLIES!



Isn't man the "head" of the woman?

Yes, but probably not how you think! We need to dig into the Greek context of Paul's first century audience to see how they understood the word "head" (*kephale*). Let's look at 1 Corinthians 11:3.

*"Now I want you to realize that the **head** of every man is Christ, and the **head** of the woman is man, and the **head** of Christ is God."*

Key Term

κεφαλη

kephale = head

Context matters!

Paul was not speaking to people in 21st century U.S., China, or Zimbabwe. We need to understand how 1st century Greek-speakers thought about Paul's word choice. What did *they* think of when Paul used *kephale* three times? Jesus is certainly King of Kings and Lords of Lords. We are not doubting Jesus' authority! But does the Greek word *kephale* mean "Master, Leader, Authority" or something else in this context to the Corinthian church?

KEPHALE = HEAD

Kephale... does it mean "physical head", "boss", or "source" in this passage?

The most common use of *kephale* was a literal, physical head. For example, Jesus wore a crown of thorns on his *kephale*. But with figurative definitions, options abound!* What happens if we presume that *kephale* figuratively means "boss, authority, or superior." When we substitute the word "authority," for *kephale*, 1 Cor. 11:3 reads:

*"Now I want you to realize that the **authority** of every man is Christ, and the **authority** of the woman is man, and the **authority** of Christ is God."*

1. Does Christ currently rule in every man? (Currently do all men follow Jesus as Lord?) 2. Is every man the authority of every woman (In marriage? The Church? At what age do sons begin to rule over their moms?) 3. Is God the authority of Christ for eternity? Is the Trinity ranked in a hierarchy of differing authority? (Careful! This understanding was ruled as a heresy in the 4th century). "Authority" as a figurative definition poses some obvious difficulties.

However, another figurative definition yields a different understanding that fits the overall context much better. When we substitute "where something comes/flows from" or "source" for head/*kephale* the verse reads:

*"Now I want you to realize that the **source** of every man is Christ, and the **source** of the woman is man, and the **source** of Christ is God."*

Ranked by chronology, not authority

Christ	is the source of	Man
The Man	is the source of	A Woman
God	is the source of	Christ

Conclusion

Does "source" flow logically? Yes. Does it make sense theologically? Yes. Does it fit 1st century Greek? Absolutely. **Paul's audience knew man was created first chronologically, then "a woman" originated from the man, and finally Christ came from God (John 6:41-42). Therefore, no one is independent, and "everything comes from God" (1 Cor. 11:11-12)! Kephale rarely means "authority," but "source" makes perfect sense.**

* Dictionaries

No ancient dictionary offered "boss/superior" as a possible definition of *kephale*. The 1843 & 1967 *Greek-English Lexicon* by Liddell, Scott, Jones listed **48** figurative definitions, **ZERO** were "superior rank." Schlier's *Theological Dictionary* gave **27** options, and **NONE** conveyed the idea of "authority." At long last, in 1976 Bauer's *Greek English Lexicon* listed "superior rank" as the 2nd definition of *kephale*. To illustrate, Bauer used two supporting Greek examples, but neither example point toward "superior rank" for 1st century use.

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Did Aristotle say that women were defective?

Yes, he did. Aristotle believed that males were superior, and females were inferior. Warning: This next bit of information might shock you. Aristotle based his belief that men were complete/preferred because they could produce semen, while women could not. Because of this ability/lack of ability, Aristotle considered men superior and women as “defective males.” In his multiple, influential volumes of writings he stated:

“The female is as it were a deformed male.”

*“A boy resembles a woman in physique, and a woman is an infertile male... lacking the power to concoct semen...because of the coldness of its nature.” **

Aristotle’s “Scientific Thoughts”

Around 350 B.C. the philosopher Aristotle wrote many scientific books. One he entitled, *On the Generation of Animals*. In it, he described how animals reproduce, specifically humans. He observed that the physical head of a human contained a variety of fluid-like substances—from the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. He reasoned that the physical head of men also generated and contained fluid called semen which contained “tiny, fully formed humans.” He thought semen traveled down the spinal column, out of the man’s body, and into the woman’s body.

In Aristotle’s view, A MAN’S PHYSICAL HEAD WAS THE SOURCE OF LIFE!

Men could produce sperm and women could not - therefore, women were deficient, defective, and deformed. While men generated the seed of life, women were simply the “dirt” that received the seed. Aristotle taught that women gave nothing to the child except a place for life to grow.

KEPHALE = HEAD = SOURCE OF LIFE

Who cares what Aristotle thought?

Aristotle influenced Western civilization for centuries! He promoted male superiority and female inferiority. He taught a man’s head was where life began. The Apostle Paul wrote his letters to Greek audiences who would share the same worldview as Aristotle. When Paul used the word *kephale* (head), he knew his audience would think of “the place where life originates” or “the source of life and nourishment” or “where something comes from” or “beginning point.” (See *Isn’t man the “head” of the woman?*). Context matters. Paul in Colossians 2:19 explained the effect of disconnection with the *kephale*... a loss of growth (not a loss of vision, leadership or direction). **“They have lost connection with the head (kephale), from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.”** Paul’s audience did not think *kephale* meant “boss of the department” or “authority” or “leader.” If Paul wanted to speak of authority, he would have chosen the common Greek word for authority—*exousia*.

Conclusion

Aristotle shaped culture. When Paul used the word *kephale* (head), his first century Greek audience would likely share Aristotle’s view and think of body imagery. Again, *kephale* rarely meant “authority.” But “origin of life, growth, and nourishment” makes perfect sense.

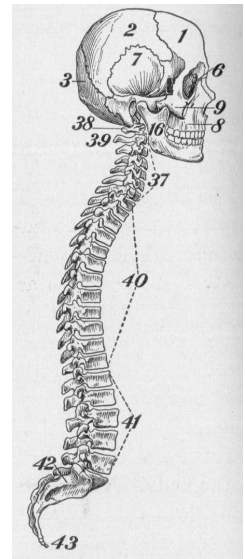
* Aristotle Sources

The Generation of Animals 2.3 (737a) and 1.20 (728a)

Key Term

κεφαλη

kephale = head



4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Does *head* (Hebrew “*rosh*”) translate to “*kephale*” in Greek?

YES! ...and HARDLY EVER! This *Run With It* is technical, but don't lose heart! A treasure is buried within! The LXX/Septuagint is the earliest translation of Old Testament Hebrew into Greek. LXX is Latin for 70, and it represents the 70 (or 72) scholars who completed the work in the 2nd century BC. The LXX gives us a glimpse into the meaning and use of numerous Greek words during the 1st century AD. For example, let's consider “head” and the Hebrew *rosh* and Greek *kephale*.

Key Term

Septuagint
LXX = Greek translation of Old Testament

רֹאשׁ *Rosh Hashanah = Head of the Year = New Year*

How often did the LXX translate Hebrew *rosh* to Greek *kephale*?

The Old Testament text used the word *rosh* a total of 419 times. These can be divided into two distinct categories.

- Physical Head** - When the OT Hebrew *rosh* referred to physical head, LXX chose *kephale* **226 out of 239** times.
- Figurative Head** - *Rosh* was also translated *figuratively* **180** times by LXX translators. We need to examine what word LXX translators used when *rosh* was used figuratively. Did the Greek translators use *kephale* figuratively to mean ruler/leader, or did they choose another word?

Figurative *ROSH = KEPHALE* only 5% of the time (8 out of 180)

Breakdown of the 180 times *rosh* was translated figuratively into Greek.

When <i>ROSH</i> meant	LXX translated it as...	# times
1. ruler, commander, leader	<i>archon</i>	109
2. captain, leader, chief, prince	<i>archegos</i>	10
3. authority, magistrate, officer	<i>arche</i>	9
4. to be a leader, to rule, have dominion	<i>hegeomai</i>	9
5. first, foremost	<i>protos</i>	6
6. father or chief of a race, patriarch	<i>patriarches</i>	3
7. commander	<i>chiliarches</i>	3
8. chief of a tribe	<i>archephules</i>	2
9. head of a family	<i>archipatriotes</i>	1
10. verb; ruler, be ruler of	<i>archo</i>	1
11. great, mighty, important	<i>megas, megale, mega</i>	1
12. take the lead, go first, lead the way	<i>proegeomai</i>	1
13. firstborn, first in rank	<i>prototokos</i>	1
?? <i>rosh</i> ??	not translated	6
14. manuscript with variant readings	<i>kephale</i>	6
used in “head-tail” metaphor	<i>kephale</i>	4
leader, top, prominent	<i>kephale</i>	8*

The LXX Figurative *ROSH* Summary

- LXX used 14 different words when OT *rosh* referred to leader or chief.
- LXX chose *archon* 109 times (61%)
- LXX chose *kephale* 18 out of 180 times.
 - ⇒ 6 uses come from a single variant text.
 - ⇒ 4 uses preserve a “head-tail” metaphor.
 - ⇒ * The remaining 8 out of 180 (5%) include the following – 2 Samuel 22:44; Psalm 18:43; Isaiah 7:8-9; Jeremiah 31:7; and Lamentations 1:5.

Conclusion

YES! *rosh* = Physical head = *kephale*. **But Greek translators who intended to indicate a “leader with authority,” HARDLY EVER used *kephale* as the most appropriate Greek word.** The amazing Greek language had many options to show leadership or command. (See the One-Pager, *Isn't man the “head” of the woman?*).

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Are women the “glory of man”? 1 Cor. 11:7

YES, and ALSO women are the image and glory of God! Do not fall for the wrong thought that women are only the glory of man. It all comes down to one little conjunction “*de*”! In 1 Corinthians 11:7, Paul stated:

“A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.”

Key Term

δε = de

also, and, but, moreover, now

Paul knew Scripture taught BOTH male and female are made in God’s image.

Not only does Genesis 1:27 state clearly that both are made in God’s image, Paul stated that the destiny of brothers and sisters is to be conformed to the image of Christ (Col. 3:9-10). Shared image is the origin and the destiny of both!

Conjunction *de* is not simply a contrast.

Did Paul want to show a contrast and the deficiency of women in this passage? Did he want to teach that man is the image and glory of God, but woman is *only* the glory of man? Not at all! The little conjunction “*de*” can be used as a contrast, and translated “*but.*” But, “*de*” can **also** be used in a continuative sense, and be translated “and, moreover, in addition.” Check it out for yourself on www.BlueLetterBible.org. In this sense, Paul expressed that not only is a man the image and glory of God, **a woman is also all that, plus she is also the glory of man!** In Paul’s day, this thought challenged Corinthian culture since they did not celebrate wives as “glory.” Paul was doubly-blessing the women!

Reading two verses more, we encounter another potentially confusing situation.

1 Corinthians 11:8-9 states:

“For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.”

Paul spoke here of origin and the reason God created woman.

11:8 simply states the historical fact that the first woman came from the first man. In 11:9 Paul was NOT showing that women were created for the pleasure of, for the possession of, or for the use of man. No!

Once again, it comes down to a little Greek word “*dia*” which has a variety of meanings. Check out the online link www.BlueLetterBible.org. The meaning of *dia* that makes the most sense is “because of” or “for the sake of.” Why is this? “Because of” the first man’s aloneness, the woman was created. “For the sake of” eliminating his aloneness, the woman was made. *Dia* can also carry the meaning of “through,” and once again, the first woman was made *through* the first man, and not vice versa.

Key Term

διά = dia

for, because of, on account of, for the sake of

Preposition *dia* shows the woman rescued the lonely man!

Conclusion

1 Corinthians 11:7-9 has simple answers where some have sought to show male superiority. **Both male and female are made in God’s image; you know it, and Paul knew it. *De* can mean “also.” *Dia* can mean “because of.”** Understanding these prepositions clears up any confusion.

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Was Paul a *restrictor* or a *releaser* of women?

A releaser! Paul passionately wanted the entire world to know Jesus. As the Church’s most fruitful missionary, he wanted more laborers. As an on-fire evangelist, Paul desired to INCREASE Good News going out. As a spirit-led equipper, he refused to dishonor and quench the Holy Spirit’s gifting in any believer. As a brilliant thinker and strategist, Paul would *not* foolishly “sit down half the football team.” As a heavily-persecuted future martyr, he rejoiced when the Gospel advanced, even from those with bad motives who “stir up trouble” for him. While wearing prison chains, Paul concluded in Philippians 1:17-18:

“But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”

As a trained theological writer, Paul used his words carefully to praise workers, honor laborers, close the door on false teachers, and open doors for the godly. Paul wanted MORE reliable and multiplying teachers! (See One-Pager, *Does “The 2-2-2 Principle” open wide the door?*)

What words did Paul use when speaking of male or female ministers?

In his writings, Paul identified 39 people who work in ministry. He mentioned 22 men and 17 women in IDENTICAL ways. He called them either *synergos* (co-workers) or *kopiao* (laborers), using the same words to refer to his male and his female co-workers.

Romans 16:3

*“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my **co-workers** (synergos) in Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 16:12

*“Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who **work hard** (kopiosas) in the Lord.*

*Salute the beloved Persis, who has **worked very hard** (ekopiasin) in the Lord.”*

Philippians 4:3

*“Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my **co-workers** (synergon), whose names are in the book of life.”*

Phoebe... only a *helper*, or much more?

Paul described the *deaconas* Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2) with a word most commonly used to describe a magnanimous leader, like Caesar. Because of her *significant* influence, Paul described her as a *prostatis*. Other definitions for this word include: champion, benefactor, patron. Paul publicly honored her service to himself and the Cenchreae church.

Conclusion

Paul did *not* hate or limit women. He honored, encouraged, and trusted them. He used the same words to describe them as he did male ministers. We cannot wait to meet Paul in person!

Female colleagues and friends mentioned positively by Paul

Aphia (Phlm. 1:2), Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11), Claudia (2 Tim. 4:21), Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5), Euodia (Php. 4:2-3), Julia (Rom. 16:15), Junia (Rom. 16:7), Lois (2 Tim. 1:5), Mary (Rom. 16:6), Nereus’ sister (Rom. 16:15), Nympha (Col. 4:15), Persis (Rom. 16:12), Phoebe (Rom. 16:1-2), Priscilla (Rom. 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19, Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 26), Rufus’ mother (Rom. 16:13), Syntyche (Phil. 4:2-3), Tryphena (Rom. 16:12), Tryphosa (Rom. 16:12). Plus, Lydia is mentioned in Acts 16:13-15, 40.

Key Term

συνεργός

syn = same, *ergos* = energy co-worker

Key Term

ΚΟΠΙᾶΩ

kopiao = laborers

Key Term

προστάτις

prostatis = great help, benefactor

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Does “The 2-2-2 Principle” open the door for women teachers?

Absolutely wide open! In his last letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul demonstrated his passion and his speed for increasing the spread of the Good News. He gave Timothy clear instructions about HOW the multiplication should take place, and WHO can do it. Because the advice comes from 2 Timothy 2:2, we call it... **The 2-2-2 Principle:**

Key Term
ἄνθρωπος
<i>anthropos</i> = human

*“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable **people** (anthropos) who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

Many translations of the Bible say, “entrust to reliable men...”. However, Paul used a Greek word that clearly included both men and women. At first glance, this verse may not seem directly related to men and women laboring shoulder-to-shoulder. However, consider what Paul COULD have said. He could have specified “males” (*aner*) as the only reliable and qualified teachers. The use of *aner* would clearly demonstrate Paul intended for only men to be Bible teachers. Instead, Paul used the neuter word *anthropos* which means “humans” or “people.” If Paul wanted to close the door for women, he missed a big opportunity here! By calling out reliable and qualified *anthropos*... the original audience would clearly understand good teaching must be passed to others - men and women - who could faithfully pass it on. This verse opens the door for godly women teachers!* Though false teachers abounded in Ephesus (both male and female), Paul wanted faithful people to multiply Good News (See the One-Pager, *Can a woman teach with godly authority?* to understand how often Paul referred to false teachers in his first letter to Timothy.)

So, WHO qualifies to teach based on this open door? Godly men and women. May Paul’s **2-2-2 Principle** inspire you!

Anthropos showed Paul wanted MORE Gospel spreaders!

Multiplication to four generations

So, HOW should these godly *anthropos* spread the Gospel? While Paul opened the door for all godly teachers, both male and female, he also explained the multi-generational plan. In 2-2-2 we also see four distinct generations.

- **First generation** - Paul himself, said “the things” to Timothy.
- **Second generation** - Timothy is the “you” who “heard me say” those “things.”
- **Third generation** - “Reliable people” (*anthropos*) who are “qualified to teach” should be “entrusted,” so that...
- **Fourth generation** - “Others” are taught by those qualified teachers.

Multiplying generations shows transferrable DNA.

Conclusion

The 2-2-2 Principle displays Paul’s heart to multiply the Good News. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul opened up biblical teaching to all godly teachers, and he laid out a plan for Gospel multiplication. Are you a leader like Paul who sought to multiply the Gospel, or do you use Paul to try to limit the Good News teachers? Let’s be like Paul!

* Additional notes on *anthropos*

Anthropos CAN also mean “male,” but in those cases it is used in a passages connected with a woman (*gune*) (See Matt. 19:5, 1 Cor. 7:1, Eph 5:31). When *anthropos* stands alone, not in the context of a wife or woman, it carries the standard, neuter meaning of “human being” or “person.” 2 Tim. 2:2 is not about *gune*. So here, *anthropos* is neuter and means “people.”

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?



Doesn't the Bible say that men have authority over women?

No, it doesn't. The primary word used in the New Testament for authority is *exousia*. It means "power of choice and decision, power of ability, power of influence, power of rule or government." Let's look at one key passage that has caused some confusion, 1 Cor. 11:10.

*"For this reason, and because of the angels/messengers, the woman ought to have [a sign of] **authority on her own head.**"*

The passage is not about angels!

The word *angelous* can mean "angel" or "spy" (see James 2:25). In 11:10, if Paul meant "angels," then NO ONE knows what Paul was talking about! Probably, Paul was telling the church to be above reproach because antagonistic "spies" were entering the church to find fault with the church. Disorderly or immodest conduct would result in a bad report.

The passage is not about hats!

In many cultures, women wear hats, shawls, dupattas, or other head coverings. In the Corinthian context, hair and head coverings carried a cultural meaning. The words "a sign of" are not present in the Greek. The Greek text says, "the woman ought to have *authority on (exousia epi) her own head.*" A Christian woman has the authority to decide how to keep her hair or head covering in a modest way that gives the church a good reputation.

Exousia Epi

Exousia is used 103 times in the NT, it only occurs 14 times with the preposition *epe* (on/over).* In all of the Gospel passages using *exousia* related to Jesus, Jesus demonstrated his authority *over* nature, *over* sickness, *over* demons, etc. Similarly, the women of Corinth should exercise authority *on* their own heads. The women have the authority to determine how to honor Jesus culturally *when* they pray or prophesy in the church (1 Cor. 11:5).

EXOUSIA = AUTHORITY

Who does NOT have authority?

The only other time *exousia* is used in the NT with reference to men and women is in the context of marriage in 1 Corinthians 7. Paul does an amazing thing. He gives authority to both husband and wife - over each other's bodies!

*"The wife **does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband.**
In the same way, the husband **does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.**"*

What! Paul says both husband and wife have authority over *the other's body*. Interestingly, throughout the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 7, Paul shows the mutual duties and mirrored responsibilities of both husband and wife.

Conclusion

Jesus has ALL authority in heaven and on earth (*exousia epi*). Jesus gives his men and women disciples authority to make disciples of all nations. Jesus shares power, and we should too! **In Scripture, the word *exousia* is never used to express men's authority over women!**

* 14 Uses of Exousia Epi (authority on)

Matt. 9:6, Matt. 28:18, Mark 2:10, Luke 5:24, Luke 9:1, Luke 10:19, Acts 26:17, 1 Cor. 10:11, Rev. 2:26, Rev. 6:8, Rev. 11:6, Rev. 13:7, Rev. 14:18, Rev. 16:9.

Key Term

ἐξουσία

exousia = authority

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Is the Trinity ranked in a hierarchy? Are men and women?

NO, absolutely not! The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, perfect in every way, do NOT differ in levels of authority, power, or will. The Trinity is NOT a ranked hierarchy. Instead, the Triune Godhead shares mutually and perfectly in attributes and actions. See John 14:16, 23, and 26.

Key Term

perichoresis

*“I will ask the **Father**, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of Truth...Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and **we will come to them and make our home with them...**But the Advocate, the **Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

The Arian heresy resurfaces in modern times

In the 4th century, Arius a priest of Alexandria, Egypt promoted the belief that God the Father *created* Jesus the Son. Arius stated, “There was a time when he (Jesus) was not.” To ensure this poor theology did not pollute the Christian faith, the church gathered in the Council of Nicea (325AD) and Constantinople (381AD) to clarify Trinitarian doctrine.* Today some evangelical theologians and leaders have partially slipped into Arius’ belief system. While they correctly believe Jesus is eternal, they promote that *the Father and Son have differing levels of authority*. “The Father commands, the Son obeys,” they say. This view parallels Arius’ focus on the supremacy of the Father. They mistakenly take the limitations of Jesus’ incarnation and read them back into the eternal Trinity. This poor theology of the Trinity then leads many of them to justify a fixed hierarchy between men and women - “equal but different.”

PERICHORESIS = ROTATING AROUND or MUTUAL INDWELLING

What does this crazy word mean?

One word the early Church used to battle the Arian heresy and clarify Trinitarian relationships was *perichoresis* (*peri* = around, *choresis* = rotating, also *mutual indwelling*). *Perichoresis* means **no Person of the Trinity works independently from the other Persons**. When the Son acts, the Father and the Spirit act as well. When the Father acts, Jesus and the Spirit act. When the Spirit acts, the Father and Jesus act. Jesus said, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” Jesus described Pentecost as when the Spirit came to indwell believers. At that same time, the Father and Son also come to “*make our home with them.*” Every divine action including Creation, the Cross, and Pentecost involves all three Persons of the Trinity.

Perichoresis also means that any character trait or attitude we see in one Person of the Trinity must be true for the other Persons. So if we see Jesus loving, healing, or forgiving; we know the same is true of the Father and Spirit. **Like-wise, when Jesus humbly yields and submits, then we know that the Father and Spirit also humbly submit and yield.**

Conclusion

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit eternally share power and authority, with “none greater or lesser.” God is NOT ranked in a fixed, eternal hierarchy. Neither should men and women be ranked in a fixed hierarchy.

* Early Church Creeds and the Trinity

Nicaean-Constantinopolitan - “*Begotten of the Father before all ages...Very God of Very God...one essence with the Father*”

Athanasian “*None before or after, none greater or lesser*”

Also research further - Cappadocian Fathers

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



What difference does a period make in 1 Corinthians 14:33?

A lot! The original Greek manuscript had no punctuation - no commas, question marks, quotations, or periods. This linguistic detail may sound minor, but it can make a huge difference in translation and the meaning of a passage. For example, in 1 Corinthians 14:33, the period can change the meaning of Paul’s instruction to the church:

Key Term
No punctuation
Translators must choose

*“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.
As in all the congregations of the Lord’s people, women should remain silent in the churches.”*

OR

*“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.
Women should remain silent in the churches.”*

Does Paul want all “women silent,” or all “congregations peaceful”?

Since no period (.) existed in the original, translators must choose where each one goes. Different Bible translations put the period in different places. In this verse, the phrase “As in all the congregations of the saints” links either to the previous section or to the following section. A period after “peace” means in all congregations women should remain silent. But a period after “people,” means that in all congregations God is a God of order and peace. The period makes a huge difference! But how can we know which is correct?

How we can know...

1. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul was silencing three groups: tongues speakers, prophets, and women, and he was releasing three groups: women, prophets, and tongue-speakers. (See the One-Pager *Is there a CHIASM in 1 Corinthians 14, and who is silenced?*) In this strict chiasm structure, Paul reminded the church in Corinth FOUR times of his main point - The Church must be strengthened (14:26), peaceful (14:33), not ignorant (14:37-38), and orderly (14:40). Therefore, “as in all the congregations” clearly links with universal instructions intended to describe the characteristics of every church. All congregations should be marked by God’s peace and order.
2. Aside from the logic of biblical grammar, in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul instructed women HOW to conduct themselves WHEN they prayed and prophesied. Paul certainly did not forget what he wrote a few chapters earlier! Paul was not out of his mind, telling women the proper etiquette for speaking in public worship, then soon after, commanding all women to be silent in every congregation.
3. In your heart, do you believe that God intends for *all* women for *all* time in *every* congregation in *every* nation and *every* generation to be silent? If so, women should NEVER sing solos, give testimonies, pray aloud, teach children, make announcements, and certainly never preach. Be consistent!

Paul emphasized “orderly worship” 4 times.

Conclusion

Paul emphasized orderly worship throughout the passage. When 1 Corinthians 14 is seen as a chiasm broken up by FOUR reminders to conduct peaceful worship, Paul’s point is clear. The period should be placed after “people,” not after “peace.” All churches should demonstrate God’s peace and order.

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Is there a **CHIASM** in 1 Corinthians 14, and who is silenced?

Yes, and it's beautifully complex! The linguistic structure named after the Greek letter *chi* "X" shows symmetry of concepts (i.e. ABBA or ABCBA or ABCCBA). Paul addressed confusion and disorder in the church of Corinth. Observe Paul's structure of 1 Corinthians 14:34-40.

Key Term
chiasm
A-B-C-C-B-A



Hand—A
 Elbow—B
 Shoulder—C
 Shoulder—C
 Elbow—B
 Hand—A

- 14:26 Introduces main point – “All things to strengthen the church”
- 14:28 Tongues *silenced* **A**
- 14:30 Prophets *silenced* **B**
- 14:33 Re-iterates main point – “God is not for confusion, but peace”
- 14:34 Women *silenced* **C**
- 14:36 Women *free to speak* **C**
- 14:37-38 Re-iterates main point – “Lord’s commands, don’t be ignorant”
- 14:39 Prophets *free to speak* **B**
- 14:39 Tongues *free to speak* **A**
- 14:40 Concludes with main point – “All things in an orderly manner”

PAUL REPEATS THE MAIN IDEA 4X... ORDERLY WORSHIP.

Paul silenced three groups — correcting the Spirituals

The church in Corinth had many problems, and Paul brought correction to each faction. First he addressed those known as Spirituals, who promoted freedom for anyone to speak at any time. This freedom caused great confusion and disorder. Paul gave rules for the proper time and limits of tongues, prophecy, and certain women speaking. Paul used the same word for them all — *sigato*. Because they caused disruption, Paul told all three groups to “be quiet!”

Paul freed three groups — correcting the Ascetics

On the other side, the Ascetics wanted to restrict any bit of freedom. They wanted to stop tongues, restrict all prophecy, and they thought that women speaking was shameful! So Paul brought strong correction to the Ascetics. He freed up women in v.36, by saying to the Ascetics, “What! Did God’s word originate with you? What! Are you only people it has reached?” He then freed up prophets and tongues speakers to complete the chiasm in v.39.

Structure powerfully demonstrates the overall intent

Paul saw the disorder in the church of Corinth and introduced an organized system. Tongue speakers (both men and women) had limits, prophets (both men and women) had limits, and inquisitive, disruptive women had limits. The framework holding it all together was God’s intent — a strong, peaceful, knowledgeable, and orderly church.

Conclusion

Paul structured this chiasm to help display unity and peace in the church of Corinth. Paul corrected the chaos caused by two main groups — Spiritual indulgers and Ascetic legalists. Paul first corrected the expressive Spirituals by limiting tongues, prophets, and inquisitive women. Then he corrected the Ascetics by setting free the same three groups.

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?



Is it “disgraceful” for a woman to speak in church?

No, it’s not! God does not consider the voices of his daughters in the Church shameful! This teaching grieves his heart. Where does the idea come from? In his pastoral letter to Corinth, Paul the church planter, corrects a dysfunctional church. Let’s dig into 1 Corinthians 14:34-40.

Key Term

Corinthian Slogans

Spirituals ————— Ascetics

- ³⁴ *Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.*
- ³⁵ *If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.*
- ³⁶ *Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?*
- ³⁷ *If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. ³⁸ But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.”*

PAUL REPEATED AND CORRECTED CORINTHIAN SLOGANS



Two hyper-polarizing groups in Corinth — Spirituals and Ascetics

Within the church of Corinth, two groups pushed their extreme perspectives. Paul repeatedly corrected both groups. **The Spirituals** wanted to indulge in everything - eating food sacrificed to idols, no limits on sexual practices, appetites without restriction, total freedom of tongues, total freedom of dress and hair regardless of modesty or proper custom. On the other hand, **the Ascetics** wanted to restrict anything that looked like freedom - no eating idol food, no sexual relations, no marriage, no tongues, no prophecy, no women speakers. (See *One-Pager on Chiasm in 1 Cor. 14*).

Who said what?

In his letters to the church in Corinth, Paul often used direct quotes *by the Corinthians*, and then he corrected those statements. For example, the Corinthians said, “I follow Paul. I follow Cephas.” or “The stomach for food.” or “Everything is permissible for me.” or “A man should not touch a woman.” Greek has no punctuation, so readers must understand the context in order not to confuse Paul’s corrective words with ungodly Corinthian slogans.

We can be confident that the phrase “*it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church*” is NOT God’s view. It is NOT Paul’s instruction. This phrase was a Corinthian Ascetic argument to which Paul brought sharp correction!

How did Paul correct this terrible “disgraceful/shameful/improper” slogan?

Paul used a Greek symbol (ὦ) which, when used to answer a question, shows emphatic opposition - “What?!” “No way!” “Nonsense!” The letter is not a word, but more a grunt of disapproval. Paul challenged the slogan in 11:36, “Did the Gospel start with you? Did it finish with you?” Did these Ascetics think they were the Alpha and Omega? Were they God? Essentially, Paul said, “Who are you to limit ALL women and say a woman’s voice is *disgraceful!*” Note that Paul used ὦ twice to correct the legalistic Corinthians.

γάρ	ἔστιν	γυναικὶ	λαλεῖν	ἐν	ἐκκλησίᾳ.
¹ for	² it is	for a woman	to speak	in	a church.
36	ὦ	ἀφ’ ὑμῶν	ὁ λόγος	τοῦ θεοῦ	ἐξῆλθεν,
	Or	from you	the word	- of God	went forth,
ὦ	εἰς	ὑμᾶς	μόνους	κατήχησεν;	37
	or	to you	only	did it reach?	If

Conclusion

Paul challenged both indulgent & legalistic Corinthians. Paul’s correction freed women to speak, sing, pray, prophesy, and speak in tongues like any other person in the Body of Christ - with order and respect for others. May we not teach a Corinthian slogan as God’s plan!

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?

Are women more easily deceived than men?

Sometimes...but sometimes not! Consider, who began Buddhism? Buddha. Islam? Mohammed. Mormonism? Joseph Smith. Those three men have influenced the spiritual destinies of 2+ billion people. Both men and women can be deceived and can lead others astray! It's not just a girl thing. It's not just a boy thing. Deception is a human thing!

Some people read 1 Timothy 2 and believe the Bible teaches women should *never* teach. They believe Paul issued a UNIVERSAL ban on women teaching for *all cultures* and *all time*. Why? Because Eve was deceived, all women are more easily deceived. 1 Timothy 2:14 states:

“For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”

Ephesus and the Cult of Artemis

To understand biblical passages, it is always important to understand the context. In the first century, Ephesus was a sensuous, immoral, knowledge-seeking (pre-Gnostic) metropolitan area. Much of its economy was based on occult activity (see Acts 19:23-41). The goddess Artemis (Diana) was worshipped in Ephesus. Her gold-covered temple, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, took 120 years to build. It could be seen from the sea.



Artemis was a powerful fertility goddess, often pictured with two-dozen bare breasts (or pouches of magic “potions”). She was known as the Great Mother of Asia. The cult of Artemis worshipped her cosmic power over life and over demonic spirits. Ephesus also celebrated Mother Eve (linking her with Artemis) as being **created prior** to Adam. They considered gaining secret knowledge was **good** since people could now have **enlightenment**. In this knowledge-loving, power-seeking city, false teaching abounded inside and outside the church. Timothy labored to guide this church into truth.

What false teaching was Paul correcting in Ephesus?

In the face of heretical cultural fables, Paul instructed Timothy with key doctrines:

- The first woman did **not** precede the first man. **Man was created first - not woman.**
- The woman was **not** enlightened with knowledge (of good and evil). **She was deceived.**
- This knowledge gained by Eve was **not** good. Instead, **she became a sinner.**

Paul was answering Ephesian heresies of the Artemis cult.

Conclusion

Some Christian teachers seek to limit women teaching the Bible because they claim women are more easily deceived. This interpretation misses Paul's point. Rather, Paul was correcting the false doctrines of the cult of Artemis. He was not setting up created order as proof that only men should teach and have authority.

Key Term

Artemis

Mother Goddess of Ephesus

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Can a woman teach with godly authority?

YES, but not with ungodly authority! God wants humble, godly teachers of truth to flourish. But in the pagan city of Ephesus, false teachers abounded in the church. Paul instructed Timothy to stop them. In 1 Timothy, Paul repeatedly mentioned the false teachers of myths and genealogies and used neuter pronouns to describe them - *certain people, these, some, they*. These neuter pronouns show that false teachers were both male and female. (See 1:3-7, 4:7, 5:15, 6:3, 6:9, 6:17-18, 6:20). Paul wanted all false teaching to cease immediately! Specifically, in 1 Timothy 2:11-12, Paul focused on a specific style of authority/false teaching:

“A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.

I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.”

A quiet, learning, and teachable woman

Two points we must acknowledge before we jump into the unique word used for *authority* in this passage:

1. Note initially, Paul shifted from plural “women” (2:9) to singular “woman” (2:11-15a) before shifting back to plural “women” (2:15b). This chiasm of plural/single/plural highlights a key point. If Paul intended to convey a universal prohibition, why not keep “women” plural throughout the passage? This is a clue that Paul does NOT intend to silence the teaching/authority of all women for all time, but a certain type of false teacher in Ephesus.
2. Paul’s imperative is to *instruct* “a woman.” He commands that this particular woman “learn” in the position of a teachable student. Paul advocated for the rehabilitation of any false teacher, not the silencing of all women.

Authenteo... one-time only

Paul used this abnormal word for authority ONLY ONCE in all of his writings. Since Paul and other writers used *exousia* (authority) 105 times in the New Testament, something unique must exist about this situation. This special word, found twice in Apocryphal references, was actually linked to “murderous” child sacrifice (See the Wisdom of Solomon 12:6), or to calling oneself “the origin” (See 3 Maccabees 2:28-29). The main point is, *authenteo* was not a common, normal word for authority. (See One-Pager, *Are women more easily deceived than men?*) Some believe women of Artemis could call down curses on men - perhaps this woman sought to follow their example?

Good or bad *authenteo*?

So, what type of authority was Paul disallowing? We have two options. Either: 1. Paul was stopping normal, good authority exercised by godly women, or 2. Paul was prohibiting a type of usurping, self-focused, murderous authority of women over men. The choice should be clear. Paul did not permit self-promoting, arrogant teachers of falsehoods.

Paul used authenteo to highlight the false teaching of Ephesus, and show that no one should “lord over” another person.

Conclusion

All false teachers should be quiet, stop teaching lies, and learn correct information. Paul did not allow false teachers to usurp authority and dominate believers, and neither should the Church today. Godly teachers, male or female, should step up in humility.

Key Term

ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΟ

authenteo = “authority” (Good or Bad?)

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?



Does Paul limit who can lead the church?

Yes he does! Very clearly Paul laid out the qualifications for leaders in the church. He described *episcopos* (overseers), *deaconos* (deacons), and *presbuteros* (elders). Such responsibility does not suit everyone. It requires high moral character. Let's examine the requirements found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Key Term
τις
<i>tis</i> = whoever, anyone

¹"Here is a trustworthy saying: **WHOEVER** aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. ²Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to **his** wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴**He** must manage **his** own family well and see that **his** children obey **him**, and **he** must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. ⁵(If **ANYONE** does not know how to manage **his** own family, how can **he** take care of God's church?) ⁶**He** must not be a recent convert, or **he** may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷**He** must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that **he** will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."

TIS = WHOEVER, ANYONE (neuter gender)

Only two pronouns - *tis* and *tis*

In these seven verses, Paul uses only two pronouns for leaders, and they are both NEUTER (3:1 *tis* = whoever, and 3:5 *tis* = anyone). By using *tis*, Paul opens up leadership to both men and women. He does NOT restrict leadership to only men in this passage. If Paul had used the word *aner* (male) that would clearly indicate that he intended only men in leadership, but he used *tis* (*anyone, whoever*). Note that EVERY pronoun or possessive pronoun (12 in English) refers back to the neuter *tis*. With no neuter pronoun in English, it becomes awkward to say "that person" or "his/her" so most translations use "he, him, and his" for simplicity. Sadly, that translation decision obscures the open door Paul offers for *godly* and *gifted* male or female leaders. Whether male or female, all must have *outstanding* character.

Faithful = "one woman-man"

The phrase translated "faithful to his wife" or "husband of one wife" actually says "*mias gunaikos andra*." That is, Paul prohibits promiscuity and requires holiness that a "one-woman man" would demonstrate. In the Ephesian culture, men had multiple options for immoral relationships. Women did not have the same options as men, and their faithfulness was expected. Let us be clear that *purity* and *faithfulness* are two main qualifiers for leadership. Requiring marriage with children is obviously not required, since neither Jesus nor Paul would qualify (as childless bachelors). Again, the main point is purity and faithfulness in sexual conduct. Perhaps today, God would disqualify leaders (either male or female) who look at pornography since that indicates an affair of the heart.

Conclusion

Paul intentionally used the neuter *tis* to open leadership in the church to qualified believers. Paul wanted MORE laborers serving in the harvest field, not fewer. Jesus said to pray for more laborers. Paul opened the door.

* Additional Leadership Notes

Paul also addressed both men and women as potential deacons in I Timothy 3:8-13. Later in Titus, when Paul listed qualifications for elders, he used the same word (*tis*), and again, all the pronouns that follow referred to the neuter *tis*.

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
3. What command should I OBEY ?
4. With whom can I SHARE this?



When it comes to men and women, who submits to whom?

In the church and in the home... both men and women should submit to **ONE ANOTHER!** Christians have a great opportunity to reflect Jesus' heart and attitude of humility and service. If we seek to "rule over" other people, we look like the world. The world cannot understand mutual submission. Paul instructed believers in Ephesians 5:21:

Key Term

ὑποτάσσω

hypotasso = Submit

"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

The "Hinge Verse" - Ephesians 5:21

5:21 is significant because it serves as the "hinge verse" in a massively long Pauline sentence. The verse connects and concludes Paul's command to "be filled with the spirit," and at the same time it begins a new section called the "household code." The following verses work out what "submitting to one another" means practically, illustrated ultimately by Jesus and the Church. In Christ, everyone should submit to one another, since we follow Jesus' example.

Should husband/wife submission only go "one way"? NO!

Who does Paul command?

In Ephesians 5:21-33, 0 (ZERO) imperative commands are given to women, while three commands are given to men. Husbands are told to "love" in 5:25, 5:28, 5:33. In the rest of the household code (through 6:9), men are given two more commands (five total), children have two, and slaves are given one, with zero commands for women. The verbs addressing wives are either: 1. Not present in Greek but are inferred by "ellipsis" from a previous verse. The text literally says, "wives to your husbands as to the Lord" (5:22) and "wives to your husbands" (5:24). Or 2. The verb in 5:33 is a very "soft" subjunctive, middle/passive verb, and translates "should/ought to respect."

What about the word head "kephale" in this passage?

Certainly, Jesus is King of kings, but in this passage, Paul described him as the Savior, rather than Lord of lords. Jesus humbly gives, serves, sacrifices, and saves. *Kephale* is the place where life, blessing, and nourishing care comes from. (See the One-Pager, *Isn't man the "head" of the woman?*)

Should I mutually submit to other brothers and sisters in Christ? **Yes.**

Should I submit to my own wife/husband, whom I love the most? **Of course, yes!**

Conclusion

Submit to one another...that was the example of Christ. That is also the goal of husbands and wives (brothers/sisters). Did Jesus limit himself, deny himself, humble himself, put his Bride's needs ahead of his own? Yes!

When men and women exemplify mutual submission as in Ephesians 5, the world will take note. We become a humble, harmonious, darkness-shaking model of Jesus!

Chiasm of Ephesians 4-6

- 4:1-6 Paul a prisoner
- 4:7-16 Jesus gives gifts/equipping
- 4:17-32 Relating to gentiles/neighbors
- 5:1-20 Relating as loved and holy children
- 5:21-23 Submitting to one another
- 5:24 Wives to husbands
- 5:25 Husbands to wives
- 5:25 Christ to church
- 5:26-27 Church to Christ
- 5:28 He who loves His wife Loves himself
- 5:29 Church to Christ
- 5:29 Christ to church
- 5:33 Husbands to wives
- 5:33 Wives to husbands
- 6:1-4 Relating as obedient children
- 6:5-9 Relating to slaves
- 6:10-17 Jesus gives armor/protection
- 6:18-20 Paul an ambassador in chains

Husband/Wife is the CENTERPIECE, the pinnacle, of an amazing chiasm!

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?

Does the Bible ever mention “roles” for males/females?

No! No Bible verse exists that distinguishes *roles* between men and women. The Bible never states, “leadership is male” or “cooking is female.” By true definition, *roles* are interchangeable. Multiple people can do the job. Often cultural context determines whether a job is held by a man or woman. But when it comes to Christian leadership, some people have changed the definition of *role*, describing leadership as fixed, permanent, and based on gender.

Key Term

Role

What people do...

Sample “role” questions for men and women:

Whose role is baking?	Whose role is being a chef at a restaurant?	Whose role is disciplining children?
Whose role is flying airplanes?	Whose role is working in a factory?	Whose role is sewing clothes?
Whose role is teaching children?	Whose role is defending helpless people?	Whose role is farming/gardening?
Whose role is making the bed?	Whose role is governing a city, state, or nation?	Whose role is weaving baskets?
Whose role is cutting lawn grass?	Whose role is news broadcasting?	Whose role is praying?
Whose role is changing diapers?	Whose role is managing finances?	Whose role is witnessing the Gospel?

A brief history of “role subordination”

Most all ancient Church Fathers believed men were over women. Every biblical commentary before the 1960’s stated, “Men were first and superior. Females were secondary and inferior.” But in the 1960’s in the West, the Women’s Rights Movement gained traction, and women gained a stronger voice. Theologians realized the “superior/inferior” vocabulary needed revising because of culture. Certain theologians wondered how they could maintain male dominance, but say it nicely. Then in 1977, the book *The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Women*. gave hierarchical Christians new terminology... “Men and women are *equal* in **essence**, but *different* in **role**.” The author said that women were NOT subordinate in *nature* or *being*, but they WERE subordinate in *role*, *function*, and *authority*. Voila! Soon, theologians *identified* roles, *ranked* roles, and *closed* certain roles to women. They made female role subordination *permanent*, and many based it on the Trinity to gain support.

The Triune God is eternally unequal (subordinated)? What?!

The author also claimed men/women were “different,” meaning “unequal.” To defend his position, he based “role subordination” of male/female within the Trinity! He ranked the work of Father, Son, and Spirit, claiming the Triune Godhead was *eternally unequal* in authority, power, and will. Some current, well-known Bible teachers also claim that the “commanding Father” and “submissive Son” (which we see in the incarnation) extends into eternity. Beware the Bible teacher who distorts the Trinity to defend their position of permanent male dominance and female submission.

God differentiates male and female by biology, not by work.

Conclusion

Leave the Trinity alone! “Roles” are a terrible way to speak with theological accuracy. Men and women are certainly equal in essence, and they are certainly differentiated by gender/biology, not by God’s ability to gift them as he desires. God created both male and female to share dominion of the world (Gen. 1:28)!

4 Crucial Questions

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How should men and women treat each other?

As you want to be treated! Jesus gave us the Golden Rule:

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31).

Jesus valued mutuality in relationships! But, you may wonder, is this standard ever mentioned again in the New Testament? Absolutely, dozens of times. Below are 24 examples, but there are many more!

Key Term

ἀλλήλους

allelois = one another, each other

	One Another Concepts	Reference
1.	Love one another	John 13:34
2.	Forgive one another	Ephesians 4:32
3.	Accept one another	Romans 15:7
4.	Bear with one another	Ephesians 4:2
5.	Be devoted to + Honor one another	Romans 12:10
6.	Greet one another	2 Corinthians 13:12
7.	Be hospitable to one another	1 Peter 4:9
8.	Be kind and compassionate to one another	Ephesians 4:32
9.	Don't grumble against one another	James 5:9
10.	Do not slander one another	James 4:11
11.	Serve one another	Galatians 5:13
12.	Carry one another's burdens	Galatians 6:2
13.	Build up one another	1 Thessalonians 5:11
14.	Encourage one another daily	Hebrews 3:13
15.	Comfort one another	1 Thessalonians 4:18
16.	Stop passing judgment on one another	Romans 14:13
17.	Stimulate one another to love and good deeds	Hebrews 10:24
19.	Instruct one another	Romans 15:14
20.	Do not lie to one another	Colossians 3:9
21.	Teach and admonish one another	Colossians 3:16
22.	Confess your sins + pray for one another	James 5:16
23.	Live in harmony with one another	Romans 12:16
24.	Submit to one another	Ephesians 5:21

Greek *allelois*, translated “one another” or “each other,” carries the meaning of reciprocal action, equivalent attitude, or a back-and-forth situation.

The “One Another” principles are best seen in Trinitarian relationships, since the three Persons function in absolute, perfect harmony. While men and women cannot come close to the Trinity, we must try. Jesus said,

*“I in them and you in me - so that they may be brought to **complete unity**. Then the world will know.”*
(John 17:23)

Men and women who live in unity and display the one another principles will “let the world know!” This profound relationship model is a humble weapon in God’s kingdom!

These directives are not masculine or feminine. They are given to all disciples of Christ!

Conclusion

“One Another” principles are spiritual weapons. The practical application of these principles may look different in various cultures. This simple type of earth-shaking relationship will challenge the foundation of every world religion. Pick up your “One Another” weapons and learn to use them!

4 Crucial Questions

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What about these 10+ common objections?

1. Adam named Eve, so he is in charge.

There were two namings. The first naming came in the joy of Gen. 2:23. The man described their similarity in the world’s first poem (“bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh”), ending his search for a similar partner. There is NO indication that the man was in charge of her, but he was amazed and thrilled! The second time the man named the woman was in Gen. 3:20. In this story, they were *not* unified, and they were *not* sinless. He called her by her biological function (“Mother of all the living”). At that time, in the post-Fall world, he was ruling over her.

2. Eve took Adam’s family name.

Actually, both were called “adam” = humankind. See Gen. 5:1-2. “Adam” was not always a proper name. In some cultures today, the woman takes the man’s last name. In many Asian cultures, the woman keeps her last name in marriage, and the children take the dad’s name.

3. Eve sewed the fig leaves.

Not in the text. People who claim Eve sewed the fig leaves are reading their worldview into the text.

4. The first man got in trouble for “listening” to his wife.

God simply spoke facts (Gen 3:17). Listening does not indicate disobedience. Eating from the forbidden tree was the disobedience. God also told Abraham to listen to his wife (Gen 21:12).

5. Man was created first and is therefore the leader.

Man was created before the woman, but what was created before the man? Animals, plants, dirt.

6. Women are more easily deceived.

Do you know any foolish men? We do. Do you know any foolish women? We do. Was it a man or woman that started Buddhism, Islam, Marxism/Communism, Mormonism? In fact, it was men that started those ideologies which impact literally billions of people. The enemy can deceive either gender. Trust godly women’s brains, hearts, and intuition!

7. Women should stay at home.

Where is that in the Bible? It’s not there. God instructed both male and female to “rule the earth.” Paul instructed women to manage their homes well (1 Tim. 5:14). In Titus 2:4-5 Paul contrasted “lazy/idle” (1:12) with “busy/working” at home. He never tells women to stay there. Can you think of a Bible woman who worked outside the home? We can!

8. No female pastors are named in the Bible.

Neither is one male pastor named. The word *pastor* is only used **one** time in the NT in Ephesians 4:11. There were no “senior pastors”, “executive pastors”, “teaching pastors” or other modern options in the early Church.

9. Men are the “Prophet, Priest, and King” of the home.

Rest easy, brothers. Jesus IS all three, but the Bible NEVER says that responsibility is yours. In the Old/New Testaments, those duties were *never* combined into one person. Only Jesus can fulfill all three!

10. A women in the pulpit is: “a slippery slope to accepting immorality in the church,” or, “like a camel putting its nose under the tent, soon the whole camel is inside.”

Being a woman is NOT a sin, nor are women like camels! Accept what is good and holy. Reject dishonorable, shameful sin. Understand what qualifies a person to lead in the church... righteous living and growing, maturing faith.

11. A marriage without a leader is: “like a ship without a captain”, “an army without a general”, “a two-headed monster”!

The analogy may be true for ships or armies, but they are not accurate pictures of marriage. Both can lead and follow at different times based on their strengths, like good friends do. Two hearts/minds working in unity is a powerful model!

Key Term
Objections... often conceal a secondary agenda.

Many common objections have simple answers.

Conclusion

Keep in mind God’s character, God’s kingdom, and God’s mission. He wants to multiply His laborers.

4 Crucial Questions
1. What does this teach us about GOD ?
2. What does this teach us about PEOPLE ?
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RUN WITH IT

One Pagers

THE **FOREVER** *FAMILY*

Finally, when the Great Commission is completed and evil is eternally defeated, Christ and his Bride (the whole Church) will live in God's holy, sinless presence.

With Jesus, we will experience the FOREVER Family.

Once again, God's image bearers exist in perfect harmony with God, with each other, and with all of creation. This final family reveals what it looks like for God's name to be hallowed, God's kingdom to come, God's will to be done. THIS IS IT!

How will Jesus (the Groom) marry the Church (the Bride)?

With perfect wholeness, holiness, and unity! The Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be the most awe-inspiring and glorious celebration in the history of the universe! The Lamb of God and the Church will be united in marriage. Currently, the whole Body of Christ is betrothed to Jesus, but in Revelation 19, we get a glimpse of the wedding celebration.

Key Term

אֶחָד and εἷς

echad (Heb.) eis (Gk.) = one, complete unity

⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

*“Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the **wedding of the Lamb** has come, and his bride has made herself ready.*

⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.”

*(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.) ⁹ Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the **wedding supper of the Lamb!**”*

Engaged for how long?

Consider this personal question... If you are married, how long were you engaged? If you are not yet married, how long do you expect your engagement to last? 1 week, 6 months, 2 years? Now think about Jesus. This most patient and powerful Groom has been betrothed to his Beloved for nearly 2,000 years! And he is still waiting!

The Bride... ready and righteous

Revelation 19:7 says, *“his bride has made herself ready.”* In the Forever Family, the Bride has completed her task, just like her Groom (John 17:4). Jesus fulfilled his promise. He went away to prepare a place, then he returned (John 14). The Bride likewise, fulfilled her promise and “made ready” the Church by completing the Great Commission, announcing God’s kingdom to all nations. The entire record of her good deeds is evident in her wedding dress. Rev. 19:8 says, *“Fine linen was given to her to wear (linen stands for the **righteous acts of God’s holy people**)”* The Bride literally wears good deeds as a garment. Jesus will see and remember EVERY righteous action of his Bride for eternity!

Becoming “ONE”

The entire Church (composed of both men and women) will unite as the Bride for Jesus. We will fulfill his prayer for unity in John 17:23. We will become “one” as Jesus and the Father are “one.” Though there is great mystery in the consummation of the Marriage of the Lamb, we can be certain that Jesus’ prayer for unity will be fulfilled. Gen. 2:23 says that the man and woman became *“one (echad) flesh.”* The same word is used in Deut. 6:4 (The Shema): *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”* (echad in Hebrew, AND eis in Septuagint LXX). Going further, Jesus prayed for *“complete unity”* and oneness in the Church (εἷς ἐν/eis en see John 17:21). Jesus used the same word for unity in the Church as the Shema. Unity does not mean *identical sameness* nor *singularity*. It means united!

Jesus wants the Church to be “one.” We will be “one”!

Conclusion

The only marriage in heaven takes place between Jesus and the Church (Eph. 5:31-32, Luke 20:27-40). Humans do not *become* God, yet somehow Jesus’ prayer for unity will come to pass. **What a marvelous mystery that still waits to unfold!** (Great word study: *echad, mia, en, eis* <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1520/niv/mgnt/0-1/>)

4 Crucial Questions

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Who labored to reach the goal?

The WHOLE Church labored, both male and female! Someday, God’s initial commands to people (Gen. 1:28) and Christ’s final commission to the Church (Matt. 28:19-20) will be complete. At that time, we will all gather around God’s throne and celebrate crossing the finish line together as the whole Body of Christ.

Key Term

πάντα τὰ ἔθνη

panta ta ethne = ALL nations, tribes, peoples

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to OUR GOD, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” Revelation 7:9-10

This “great multitude” from every nation and from every generation, including both men and women, will raise their praise to “OUR GOD.” All nations can claim Jesus as their own Lord. His salvation extends to all nations!

There Is a Finish Line

In the Forever Family, the Church has done her job and reached the nations. Now the goal has been reached, the finish line has been crossed, the race is over. Nobody runs a race without a finish line. Jesus did not want us to run aimlessly in circles. He gave us a powerful message, a firm direction, and a clear end goal.

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” Matthew 24:14

Everyone Shares

“But only men are in heaven...” or “But only men are represented in Revelation 7:9-10...” or “But only men labored in the Great Commission...” or “But only men completed the Great Commission...” argues not a single, thinking, Bible-loving theologian! All people are needed to do their part to share the Good News.

Let’s review the situation. Men and women enjoyed a shared **creation** and **identity** as image bearers. They shared the same **blessings** and **responsibilities** (Gen. 1:28). Later they shared in the **Fall** and the **consequences** of sin. Later (praise Jesus!) both men and women shared in **salvation** since Jesus died for the sin of all. Additionally, God’s **spiritual gifts** were given to both male and female. God’s indwelling **Spirit** was poured out on both at Pentecost and up to today. Finally, because of their shared **labor** in the shared **task** of the Great Commission, both will enjoy a shared **inheritance**.

Practically speaking, some women will never be reached by a male evangelist, no matter how much he wants to share. Certain men will never be reached by Gospel-sharing females. Consider the beauty that God made *the family* to reach *the world*! Think “whole families, whole communities, whole world”! Whether married, widowed or single, male or female, young or old—all the redeemed are one family!

Reaching ALL THE NATIONS requires ALL THE CHURCH.

Conclusion

Looking “back” at the finished Great Commission from the other side of eternity, reveals that **the whole Church needs as many godly laborers as possible** to get the job done. (Great topical study on “the Great Commissions”: [Matt. 28:18-20](#), [Mark 16:15](#), [Luke 24:47](#), [John 20:21](#), [Acts 1:8](#))

4 Crucial Questions

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Will God give eternal rewards based on gender?

Not at all! In certain non-Christian religions, their god(s) certainly give out “heavenly” blessings based on whether a person is male or female.

Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Mormons all greatly favor men over women in the distribution of eternal bliss. Men can receive vast eternal rewards, but women: Cannot escape the cycle of reincarnation, May

receive unequal rewards, May exist for the sexual pleasure of men, May be eternally pregnant. Not so with Christian theology! Both men and women inherit based on God’s grace and wisdom, not based on our human biology.

Key Term

δοῦλε

doulos = slave, servant

*“Well done, my good **servant!**” his master replied.*

“Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.” Luke 19:17

Old Testament inheritance laws... and then Jesus

In the Old Testament, inheritance laws favored the first-born (primo-geniture) and males (patriarchy). Second-born or third-born sons and any females inherited significantly less. The first-born son received greater blessing, honor, and wealth. How do we know that this perspective does NOT reflect God’s eternal reward system? Because Jesus came and clarified. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), Jesus explained to all of his hearers, both male and female, who will receive “rewards” (for righteous actions, serving, praying, fasting, giving, withstanding persecution, etc.) and who has already received their reward (those “seen” and publicly acknowledged). Jesus taught that God sees things done in the secret place (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18) which parallels 1 Samuel 16:7, *“People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”*

Jesus dramatically challenged the common perception of blessing. In Luke 11:27, a woman cried out, *“Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.”* This typical blessing revealed how Jewish women could be honored, by having a great son or husband. Jesus, however responded with eternal truth. *“Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it.”* (Luke 11:28). Who can hear? Who can obey? Who can be blessed? Anyone! Rewards and blessing are based on obedience, which can be done by men or women. We are potentially equal inheritors!

Your Current Perspective

*“Well done, good and faithful **servant.**”* (Matt 25:21) When you hear God’s praise for his obedient servants, who comes to mind? Do you envision that only men will hear this commendation? Would God place a good and faithful woman in charge of five or ten cities (Luke 19)? In your mind, where do you see women located in heaven? Are they huddled in the back corner? Are they pushing themselves to the front? Are they running around serving the men for eternity? Or are they recognized and rewarded by Jesus based on their level of faithful obedience? Selah.

God gives rewards based on obedience, not biology.

Conclusion

Fix the FOREVER Family in your vision. Jesus knows the heart of his Bride. He knows your heart of obedience since his eyes, *“range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him”* (2 Chron. 16:9). **Men and women, standing in God’s presence, will be blessed based on humbly hearing and faithfully obeying.**

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
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God knew when to stop...do we?

Hope so, but we shall see! The Genesis creation story reveals that God produced good work for six days, and on the seventh day he rested. After originating light, time, space, life, and humanity, God was not tired from his labor. Rather, he ceased the creation process. In his ceasing, God again set the standard, he knew when to stop.

Key Term

שַׁבָּת

Shabbat = Sabbath = 7th = Cease Work

*² By the **seventh** day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the **seventh** day he **rested** from all his work. ³ Then God blessed the **seventh** day and made it holy, because on it he **rested** from all the work of creating that he had done.” Genesis 2:2-3*

Multiple good reasons to enjoy rest... God’s people are so blessed!

1. Physical rest - God modelled the Sabbath rest, and people made in God’s image are blessed when we follow a pattern of regular weekly rest. The need for physical rest shows our daily dependence on God who sustains us.
2. Spiritual rest - Jesus understood that people are weary and burdened. So he called people to *“Come to me... and I will give you rest,”* so they can *“find rest for their souls.”* (Matthew 11:28-30) Also, Jesus identified himself... *“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath!”* (Luke 6:5) He is the Master of rest, of knowing when to stop.
3. Eternal rest - The Forever Family will enjoy the eternal heavenly rest in Hebrews 4. This is the promised *“Sabbath -rest for the people of God”* (Hebrews 4:9). Entering this rest is entering God’s presence. He is our rest!

Why did God “cease work”?

In Genesis 1:31 God called his creation “very good” and ceased work on the seventh day. Consider why God stopped at that point... Had God run out of ideas? Had God’s creativity been exhausted? Not at all. Rather, it was the right point to stop because ceasing at that point lined up with God’s exact purpose and intent.

Specifically on the male/female issue, the right “stopping point” should also line up with God’s original purpose and ultimate intent. God created male and female. STOP. God created them as a *spiritually-gifted, image-bearing, world-changing team* to demonstrate God’s heart for all people. STOP. Missing God’s standard on men and women carries weighty consequences. Some choices, policies, and theologies limit God’s laborers. Some actions limit God’s harvest. Some actions and attitudes build ungodly pride or elevate human culture over God’s kingdom standards.

Do you stop too short? Do you go too far? Do you rightly reflect God’s character and commands?

- Are you a door-opener for males only, but limit what God can do through godly women? (**TOO SHORT!**)
- Are you a door-opener for ungodly sinful relationships? (**TOO FAR!**)
- Are you a door-opener for multiplying *godly* men and women, encouraging them and building them up to look more like Jesus? (**GOOD!**)

Stopping “too short” is sin. Stopping “too long” is sin.

Conclusion

God knew when to create and when to STOP. He created, blessed, and commissioned two genders, then he stopped. He did not make male and female identical or interchangeable. It takes wisdom to stand strong against culture. God expects us to stop where he stops.

4 Crucial Questions

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We pray that you have grown to love Jesus more through these brief insights. We pray that you have seen God's original design and intent with the **IDEAL FAMILY**. We pray that you have identified and grieved with the **FALLEN FAMILY**. We pray that you have been covered with Jesus' blood and joined the **REDEEMED FAMILY**. We pray that you are now inspired to launch godly men and women laborers into the harvest field as the **MULTIPLIED FAMILY**. And we pray for Jesus' return soon, as we look forward to celebrating with you in the **FOREVER FAMILY**.

May Jesus reward you with his presence, with every spiritual blessing, and with much lasting fruit as you walk humbly and serve Him shoulder-to-shoulder as brothers and sisters for the Gospel.

Now... RUN WITH IT!



**SHOULDER
to
SHOULDER**