

# **The Role of Women and Men**

*2/24/10 – Olive Drive Church*

**There are many reasons why women hate the idea of male headship...**

1. The failure of men...
  - In the home... American Evangelical males have failed horrifically to be nail pierced servants of their wives.
  - In the church... The reason so many women cringe in fear of male authority is because they have experienced the pain and hardship of men who biblically should not be in leadership.
2. More than any other topic right now, we're going to swim against our culture.
3. The Genesis 3:16 problem...

<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said,  
“I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing;  
with pain you will give birth to children.  
Your desire will be for your husband,  
and he will rule over you.”

**-Genesis 3:16**

**Two questions that need to be answered when dealing with the issue of male headship:**

1. *Is it “according to the Bible?”*
  - Is your interpretation of the texts accurate and unbiased?
  - Does your view fall in line with the Gospel?
2. *Is it satisfying to the heart?*

**SUMMARY:**

*We believe the Bible teaches that God created men and women to be completely equal in essence, dignity, value, and human nature while being distinct in roles and function within the home and the church.*

**Three views on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood:**

<b>VIEW</b>	<b>Male/Female ESSENCE</b>	<b>Male/Female FUNCTION</b>
<b>Hierarchicalism</b> <i>Traditionalism/Chauvinism</i>	Distinct	Distinct
<b>Egalitarianism</b> <i>Secular Feminism</i>	Equal	Equal
<b>Complementarianism</b>	Equal	Distinct

What we will see is that *Hierarchicalism* breaks down because (a.) the Bible clearly teaches that there is equality in personhood between male/female (b.) the idea that there wouldn't be equality does not fall in line with the Gospel.

We'll also see that *Egalitarianism* breaks down because (a.) the Bible clearly teaches that there is distinction in the function or roles between men and women (b.) the idea that there is distinction in function between the sexes falls in line with the Gospel.

In the end, the *Complementarian* view is the best because it not only interprets the primary texts accurately, but it also satisfies the human heart because it falls in line with the Gospel, and when practiced in the home and the church, becomes a beautiful and effective way to live out the beauty of the Gospel for our own edification and ultimately for the glory of God.

**I. Biblical Evidence for the EQUALITY OF PERSONHOOD/ESSENCE between male and female in God's design**

*Genesis 1:26-27*

- Man and woman share the same nature.
- Man and woman are both created in the image of God.
- They are both commissioned to rule the earth.

*Galatians 3:28*

- God makes no gender distinction on who He will save and redeem.

*1 Corinthians 12:7-11*

- God distributes His spiritual gifts to the church without regard to gender.

### ***1Peter 3:7***

- Men and women are fellow heirs with Christ

These passages are just a few that make it clear that the Bible teaches that there is an equality of essence/personhood between men and women in God's design. This interpretation is exegetically sound, and falls in line completely with the Gospel.

## **II. Biblical evidence that God's design was for DISTINCTION OF FUNCTION/ROLES between men and women**

### ***Genesis 2 – Male Headship Prior to the Fall***

- Four things that support male headship in this chapter:
  1. The order of creation indicates God's design of male headship in the male/female relationship. (cf. 1Cor. 11:8; 1Tim. 2:13)
  2. God instructs Adam to not eat the fruit before Eve's creation. Implied in this is Adam's responsibility to teach and protect his wife from sinful rebellion to God's law. (Gen. 2:16-17)
  3. Eve was called Adam's helper. It is true that the same word is often used of God "helping" people, but it is also clear that Paul understands Eve's view of Helper to mean she is to have male headship. (cf. 1Cor. 11:8)
  4. Adam names Eve before and after the Fall (2:23, 3:20). Throughout the Bible, when someone is charged with naming someone it is a sign of authority.

### ***Genesis 3 – The Fall***

- The fall produces a perversion in the male/female relationship (vs. 7).
- "Desire" in vs. 16 is only used in Song. 7:10 and Gen. 4:7.
  - In Song. 7:10 it means an intense sexual desire for someone
  - In Gen. 3:16 and 4:7 it means "to devour" like a lion stalking it's prey.
- "Rule" in vs. 16 means "to rule over" or oppress. It isn't a positive thing.
- History has proven these tendencies in men and women to be true.

### ***1Corinthians 11:1-16***

- Paul links woman's submissive role in the church to God's created design
- The home cannot operate differently than the church since they are the same picture to God (i.e. the Bride of Christ)

### ***1Corinthians 14:34-36***

- Clearly this prohibition on woman speaking (and therefore teaching) is not absolute (1Cor. 11:5)
- This text is talking about honoring one's husband in public.

### ***1Timothy 2:8-15***

- Paul states that women are not to have authority over a man and should receive instruction with submissiveness
- The key word here is “authority” – what constitutes “authority?”
- Does male headship provide a covering of authority?

### ***Ephesians 5:22-23***

- There is a parallel between the headship of a man over his wife and the headship of Christ over His church.
- As a church submits to Christ, so a wife should submit to her husband.
- How does the church submit to Christ?

### ***1Peter 3:7***

- There are two things to be clear on here:
  1. The Woman is fully equal in essence
  2. Man bears a particular God-sanctioned responsibility to care for and lead his wife

### ***The Trinity***

- God is one in essence, and three in person (“person” here = function)
- The three persons of the God-head are absolutely equal in essence but distinct in function
- The distinction in function is best seen in Christ being subject to the Father (1Cor. 11:3) and the Spirit to the Son (Matt. 28).

## **III. Biblical examples of the DISTINCTION OF FUNCTION/ROLES between women and men**

### ***1. Male Leadership in Israel***

- From the garden on, God called out men and held them responsible for religious leadership
- Adam, Noah, Abraham, 12 sons of Jacob as the 12 tribes of Israel, Moses, Joshua, male priestly order of the Levites, kings, prophets, Ezra, Nehemiah

### ***2. Male Leadership with Christ***

- Jesus was clearly not scared to attack the customs, cultural norms, or traditions of the day that ran contrary to the Kingdom of God. He often attacked the humanly fabricated restrictions put on people (Matt. 15:3-9, 23:1-36 just to name a few)
- Evidence of this can be seen when he took women with Him during His travels.
- Though He could have, Jesus did not choose any women to be among the Twelve.

### 3. *Male Leadership in the Church*

- As observed above, the Bible restricts women from certain places of leadership and instruction in the church
- *1Cor. 11:1-16; 14:34-36*, and *1Tim. 2:8-15* consistently require that the church's ultimate human spiritual leadership be gender-specific not based on ability but on God's designation
- This is further evidenced in the qualification for eldership passages in *1Tim. 3:2* and *Titus 1:6* where an elder must be the "HUSBAND of one wife" or a "one woman MAN."

### 4. *Male Leadership in the Home*

- Discussed above
- *1Peter 3:1-7* furthers this by saying even if your husband is disobedient, submit that he might be won.

## IV. Objections to Complementarianism

1. What about examples of women leaders in the Bible? You only used examples of men when there seems to be several examples of women leaders in both the OT and the NT.

*It is true that there are several examples of women playing significant roles within the leadership of Israel and the church throughout the Bible. There are two things to consider however...*

*1.) Most of the examples of female leadership appear in positions that are not the highest religious authority. That is to say that there are examples of women prophetesses, and female teachers in the OT and NT, but where are there any women priests, women heads of tribes of Israel, women kings (Athaliah wrongly usurped the throne), women apostles (Junia of Rom 16 is highly disputed), or women elders in the church? The point is that in every instance of the highest religious authority of the day, the Bible gives a clear and consistent picture of male leadership.*

*2.) What about Deborah (Judges 4-5)? Given the state of Israel at the time, most do not see the judges as illustrating God's ideal for His people. Quite probably then, Deborah's judgment is not an illustration of female leadership but an illustration of just how far from God's design Israel had strayed. At the very least, it is difficult to accept Deborah's position as normative in light of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary.*

2. What about "mutual submission?" Doesn't the NT clearly teach that for those who have been redeemed by Christ, there should be mutual submission between each of us?

*Absolutely, the Bible teaches that we should walk in mutual submission to one another (cf. Eph. 5:21). However, this does not negate male headship. The male submits to his wife by loving her like Christ loves the Church regardless of how he feels or how she acts. The wife submits to her husband by willingly submitting to her husband's headship through respect and obedience. This is Biblical mutual submission.*

3. What about the cultural argument? Wasn't Paul dealing with specific issues that arose in the particular local churches he was addressing (i.e. the lack of educated women in Corinth, the immature women in Ephesus, the Artemis worshippers, etc.) rather than making universal claims?

*Three things to consider here:*

- 1.) It is a shaky ground to begin to interpret the epistles through the lens that the instructions the NT writers left for us were only specific to a particular church at a particular time. That being said, there are certainly things that were left in the epistles that were directed to specific churches (i.e. many of the greeting passages, farewell passages). Further, there are certainly cultural issues being addressed that have no direct correlation to the present day (i.e. wearing veils in 1Cor. 11).*
- 2.) Paul was not making simply a cultural argument for male headship because for there to be complete equality in role/function would be to do away with manhood and womanhood. This would not only violate what is clearly taught about God's design for men and women, but it would also distort the reflection of the image of God in us (because we would not be able to reflect the complementarian nature of the Trinity), and it would distort the Gospel (because it would elevate role/function to the same level as personhood/essence... i.e. our identity would be equally wrapped up in what we DO along with who we ARE in light of the redemption of Christ)*
- 3.) Even if there was a valid argument from culture, in light of the disintegration of marriages in our church, in our city, in our country, and in the world, in light of the abandonment of men from their families in just about every corner of our culture, in light of the brokenness of the family throughout America and the utter pain and hardship that so many children face because of their parents abandonment, are we really at a place culturally to abandon the challenge to men to lead their families?*
- 4.) You cannot break down the male leadership of the church without abandoning headship within the home. If you are going to argue from culture for passages like 1Tim. 2:8-15, then you need to similarly argue from culture for passages like Eph. 5:22-23. Many people who argue in this camp will argue for a separation between your life in the church, and your life in the home (cf. Craig Keener) while others will simply argue that there should be no headship within the home either.*

## V. Final Conclusions:

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

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood.
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order and find an echo in every human heart.
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall and was not a result of sin.
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationship between men and women.

In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by either domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by either usurpation or slave-like servility.

In the church, sin inclines men towards either a worldly love of power or a shirking of spiritual responsibility, and sin inclines women to either resist limitations on their roles or neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women. Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community of the church.
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing distortions introduced by the Fall.

In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership.

In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men.

7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission – domestic, religious, or civil – ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.

8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries. Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelicalism, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world.
10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, churches, and the culture at large.