

# Does God *Really* Prefer Men?



Leslie  
& Gary  
Johnson

# **Does God *Really* Prefer Men?**

***A Comprehensive Examination  
Of Gender Equality  
In The Light of God's Word***

**Special Edition**

by Leslie and Gary Johnson

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Please Note: “Church,” by definition, describes a called out, sanctified, worldwide body of believers. This living, breathing organism is also referred to as the “Body of Christ” as well as His “Bride.” Recognizing this biblical definition-and desiring to honor she for whom Christ died-we have capitalized these words. When referring to a local assembly of Christians, however, we have accepted the commonly used term “church.”

“Pentecostal Movement” and “Pentecostalism” is known by many terms today: Spirit-filled, Full Gospel, Charismatic, Non-Denominational, etc. The denominations which fall under this title are many.

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This book is dedicated to every Christian woman who has  
dared to whisper, “Why not *me*, God?”

# Acknowledgment

First, we'd like to acknowledge the input of our two beautiful children - Jacob Israel and Sara Mishael. Whether pointing out exciting truths in the Word ("Hey, Dad! Mom! Look what I just read in I Corinthians! You've *got* to put this in the book!"), or patiently understanding whenever we were busy writing, Jacob and Sara's heartfelt participation made this book a true "family" production.

We also want to acknowledge just a few of the pioneers in today's modern movement for Christian biblical equality. The book *Why Not Women?* by Loren Cunningham and David Joel Hamilton literally changed our lives, bringing new insight and understanding of God's Word. And J. Lee Grady's book, *10 Lies the Church Tells Women*, as well as the organization Christians for Biblical Equality have been tremendous resources. And since our book's release in 2005, Pat Joyce, Gay Anderson and Barbara Collins - the indomitable Texas force behind the popular *God's Word To Women* website, [www.godswordtowomen.org](http://www.godswordtowomen.org) – have been a constant source of encouragement and strength for our family.

This Special Edition of *Does God Really Prefer Men?* has been edited and expounded to hopefully demonstrate the heart of God more fully.

# Table of Contents

Introduction	7
--------------	---

## *Section I*

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly An Honest Look at the Church: Her People, Her Progress and Her Prejudices	
---	--

Chapter 1 Come Let Us Reason Together	10
--	----

Chapter 2 The Path of the Righteous	27
--	----

Chapter 3 And the Truth Shall Set You Free	35
---	----

## *Section II*

Lost In Translation Rightly Dividing the Word of God	
---	--

Chapter 4 Principles of the Kingdom	50
--	----

Chapter 5 One Flesh	68
------------------------	----

Chapter 6 The Conclusion of the Matter	98
---	----

## *In Addition*

A Final Word to Ministers	119
---------------------------	-----

About the Authors	120
-------------------	-----

Gary's Testimony	121
------------------	-----

Endnotes	129
----------	-----

# Introduction

Some of the Church's greatest ministers still don't have the mind of Christ when it comes to Christian women. And while tradition and fear certainly hold some in bondage, for others, it is simply a matter of time as they seek the will of God in this important matter. After generations of hearing - and preaching - that God's way is for women to be "under" men in ministry, marriage and other important matters of life, it takes a real paradigm shift to believe anything different. But far from being angry or frustrated with Christian leaders who respond with, "Prove it!" to assertions that men and women are equal in the eyes of God, we applaud their determination to defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Praise God they are not swayed by every wind of doctrine! Heaven knows far too many Christians - not having a thorough knowledge of God's Word or any real discernment - have been led astray to follow doctrines of demons, myths and folklore. We rejoice that you say, "Prove it!" dear Christian, and are grateful for the opportunity to do so. All we ask is that you prayerfully consider the case we set before you.

"For if you cry for discernment,  
Lift your voice for understanding;  
If you seek her as silver,  
And search for her as for hidden treasures...  
Then you will discern righteousness and justice  
And equity and every good course."

Proverbs 2:3, 4, 9

## *Section I*

# The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

An Honest Look at the Church:  
Her People, Her Progress and Her Prejudices

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser:  
teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.”

Proverbs 9:9 KJV

# Chapter 1

## Come, Let Us Reason Together

### In Pursuit of Restoration

The issue of gender equality is *the* hot topic of debate in the Body of Christ today. And the most misunderstood. In fact, just mention the subject and most Christians in America believe you to be a proponent of homosexuality and gender confusion. Of course, biblical equality has nothing to do with these. But this tactic of our enemy – a basic PR ruse in which precious, cutting-edge truth is grouped together in the media with sin – has proven to be a very effective tool for him in the past. Why, just a few decades back he misrepresented the Pentecostal Movement using this same ploy. While it was still in its infancy, he lumped Pentecostals (Christians of many denominations who believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a separate event in the life of a Christian<sup>1</sup>) in with “snake-handlers” and “poison-drinkers,” his plan simple yet effective: group the godly with the ungodly to scare away the sincere. And for a while it worked, frightening many Christians away from the gifts of the Spirit.

But as the Church grew in maturity, learning to discern good from evil,<sup>2</sup> millions of Christians were able to distinguish between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and those weird, demonic aberrations. They at last stood against this “scheme[s] of the devil.”<sup>3</sup> And with the Pentecostal Movement now the fastest growing segment of Christianity throughout the world - with over 600 million adherents<sup>4</sup> - this particular plan of our enemy has ultimately failed. But make no mistake about it, the battle to re-establish the legitimacy of spiritual gifts was fierce. And many Pentecostal Christians who were on the forefront of this important movement

suffered misunderstanding, derision and even abuse...not only from the world, but also from other Christians.

Today, the Church is once again embroiled in combat, this time to re-establish the truth of gender equality. Because that's just what this is: Restoration, *not* Innovation. The early Church flowed in newly discovered parity, with women ministering right alongside men, as those courageous saints heeded Paul's charge to maintain the principles of God "without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality."<sup>5</sup> Phoebe was recognized by every church as a deacon,<sup>6</sup> and Junia as an apostle "outstanding among the apostles."<sup>7</sup> Women prophets are mentioned in the book of Acts<sup>8</sup> right alongside their male counterparts. And Paul obviously respected the call of God in the lives of Priscilla,<sup>9</sup> Clement, Eudia and Syntche,<sup>10</sup> commending these women as "fellow workers" in the Gospel, a significant title that he also used when referring to Timothy,<sup>11</sup> Luke,<sup>12</sup> Titus,<sup>13</sup> Apollos<sup>14</sup> and himself!

Clearly, early Church leaders took the revolutionary truth of Galatians 3:28 to heart, believing Paul when he wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Now, Paul was certainly not saying that differences didn't exist - there obviously *were* Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, male and female - but that in Christ no one has the upper hand based on these distinctions. So what happened? Why have we failed to "join in following [Paul's] example?"<sup>15</sup> Instead of maintaining equality between men and women in the Body of Christ, why has the greatest portion of the Church taken a different path, one of hierarchy, stereotypes and domination? How did we get *here* from *there*?

There has never been, nor will there ever be, anything like the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Into a world of racial hatred, ungodly social and economic division, and male superiority entered a freedom and equality this fallen world had never experienced. The blind could suddenly see. The lame could walk. And those typecast and bound by worldly partitions were set free. Of course these

blessings garnered the jealousy and hatred of our enemy. And just as the Philistines, driven by envy and resentment, stopped up the ancient wells of Abraham<sup>16</sup> - so Satan immediately began his war against the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ, determined to block these life-giving wells of truth and sound doctrine.

In fact, Paul warned the early Church, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock...I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things...”<sup>17</sup> Peter too sounded the alarm, “there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies...and because of them the way of truth will be maligned;”<sup>18</sup> And Jude pleaded, “...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed...”<sup>19</sup> One by one, the radical truths of the Gospel were attacked. And many of these foundational truths - racial harmony, the legitimacy of spiritual gifts, and now gender equality - are just now being restored to the Body of Christ.

We’ve got our work cut out for us, overcoming stereotypes, old mind-sets and confusion over scriptural interpretations, but we trust the Holy Spirit to bring discernment and clarity to this vital subject. In this book we’ll scrutinize the message of the Gospel as a whole, and then go into great detail to address disputed, and often misunderstood, passages in the Bible, doing our best to help unclog this ancient well which Satan has so successfully stopped up.

## **Cut off Our Nose Just to Spite Our Face**

Two-thirds of all Bible believing Christians are women.<sup>20</sup> And women have always been on the forefront of Christian missions with the ratio of women to men on the mission field as high as 2:1 in many areas during the early twentieth century. These courageous women of God have been beaten, imprisoned and many have made the ultimate sacrifice to become martyrs for the

faith. Yet today faithful, gifted women of God are routinely kept out of pastoral leadership and other positions of authority in the Body of Christ. Instead, these great instruments of God have only been placed in charge of the church bulletin, flower arrangements, and preparing the fellowship dinner.

Why can women only be Sunday School teachers and not preachers? Is there some weakness, some character flaw that handicaps a female child from the day she is born, making her incapable of strong and responsible leadership in the Body of Christ? Does the Word of God proclaim that women, based on their gender alone, are to be under the subordination and control of men? The answer to both of these questions is a resounding “no.” Yet these defective beliefs have become a mainstay in today’s Christianity, hideously hindering the spread of the Gospel. And that’s what this is really all about.

It’s frustrating enough for a Christian woman to be told from the pulpit that she is somehow inferior to men in the eyes of God, that the ground at the foot of the cross is not *really* level, as she had been led to believe. But the real rub here is that we Christians have become unwitting partners with our enemy to render the Body of Christ less productive and fruitful than it could be. Our inaccurate and doctrinally unsound teachings about women have served to paralyze the largest portion of the Church, holding back the progress of the Gospel in a way that the devil alone could never have accomplished.

Ephesians 4:13 compares the Church to a man striving for perfection and unity. But sadly, our inability to see women as Christ does has rendered this “man” paralyzed, unable to function wholly, with two-thirds of his body perversely restrained in a manner that God never intended. Recently, the founder of the world’s largest church has challenged Western pastors to involve women more in ministry. David Yonggi Cho leads the 763,000 member Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea. Over 30 years ago, his church was a “mere” 3,000 strong and Cho had become exhausted, trying to meet every need himself. Then he saw

in the Bible that the early Church had empowered women for ministry, among them Phoebe and many more.

Today, 400 of Cho's 600 associate pastors are women, as are 47,000 of his 50,000 cell group leaders. "For 5,000 years in Korea women had no voice at all," Cho says. "They were only to cater to the needs of men. Then Christianity came and set women free. Especially in the church, women are free in Korea. In ministry they are equal with men. They are licensed; they are ordained. They become deacons and elders, and they become cell leaders."<sup>21</sup>

Did Cho simply join a rising tide of feminism, choosing a popular cultural idea over scriptural truths? Nothing could be further from the truth! A conservative Confucian tradition, which for decades has admonished women to obey "three masters" - father, husband and son - has left women subordinate to men socially and economically throughout all of South Korea.<sup>22</sup> Yet the church in South Korea was able to see past these cultural beliefs and look right into the heart of God. And the resulting growth of Christianity has been mind-boggling with the church roughly doubling in size every decade from WWII to the early 1990's.<sup>23</sup> Talk about a successful "Each One Reach One" campaign! And Seoul, a city that didn't even have one single church 110 years ago, is now home to seven of the world's ten largest congregations.<sup>24</sup>

Another country, which has been traditionally hostile to women, is the People's Republic of China. Their maltreatment of women is legendary, typified in the 1,000 year horrific tradition of foot binding. This ghastly ritual was performed on little girls from ages 4 to 7, so crippling their feet that they would be forever dependent on their future husbands, unable to even leave the house without excruciating pain. Yet today, 40,000 of the 50,000 house churches in China are led by women.<sup>25</sup> And now this nation that had only 800,000 Christians in 1949, can boast 100 million believers today!<sup>26</sup> How remarkable that the Christians in these cultures - cultures which have historically oppressed and abused women - could look into the Word of God and see truths that we in

the West can barely recognize. And the result has been an unprecedented spread of the Gospel in these Asian nations.

It can be stated with absolute certainty that the Church in China, growing at the amazing rate of 7.7% annually,<sup>27</sup> and with an estimated one million new believers each month,<sup>28</sup> has taken the Great Commission to heart, using every available instrument - male and female - to complete this sacred task. Yet in the West, we have held back two-thirds of the Church's working force, not allowing them to operate fully in the gifts and callings that God has ordained. Is it any wonder that the growth rate of the Church in America - at an anorexic 0.7%<sup>29</sup> - pales terribly in comparison to these other nations?

There is nothing sadder or more embarrassing than a "has been," a famous athlete or actress whose glory days are far behind them, yet they're blind to the fact that no one wants their autograph any more. They have become irrelevant, absurd. In many ways, this is the threat now facing our glorious, courageous, society-shaping Church in America. This generation's reluctance to step into the light of equality for *all* Christians is threatening to relegate us to a place of insignificance:

- 80%-85% of our churches have plateaued, and/or declining.<sup>30</sup>
- Of the growing churches in America (the 15%-20%), less than 20% of that growth is from actually winning the lost.<sup>31</sup>
- In fact, half of all churches in 2002 didn't add even *one new member* through conversion!<sup>32</sup>
- Is it any wonder that North America is the only continent in the world in which Christianity is not growing?<sup>33</sup>

In Hebrews 13:7 we are told, "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and *considering the result of*

*their conduct, imitate their faith.*” (emphasis added) The Church in America is at a crossroads. We have before us the path of liberty and equality and the path of subordination and hierarchy. Before we decide which course to follow, the Word of God instructs us to look closely at the end result of these two beliefs, carefully examining the fruit of equality and the fruit of hierarchy. The freedom in Christ that is demonstrated in the underground church of China, and the liberty that is openly proclaimed in the churches of South Korea is bearing good fruit...and a lot of it.

On the other hand, the traditional, hierarchical structure which reigns in the vast majority of the churches in America is not faring so well in the fruit department. Our church growth is even less than the growth of our national population, forcing us to admit that we’re not winning the lost like we should. Heck, in America, we’re lucky if we’re even able to convert our own children, much less a lost and dying world!

## **The Danger of Tradition**

Many of the beliefs expressed by those advocating equality for men and women in the Body of Christ are new to countless Christians today. A lot of these viewpoints confront much of what you and I were raised to believe about Christianity, not because they are scripturally inaccurate, but simply because of our traditions. Mankind loves tradition. Our passion for the known, the comfortable, the oft-repeated is easily recognized. We can see it in our fireworks each Fourth of July, our turkey and dressing every Thanksgiving and in decorating the tree for Christmas. But the gentle and harmless affection that causes us to hold onto these cherished family customs is one thing. The unreasoning, vise-like grip with which we desperately cling to our religious traditions is quite another. “My granddaddy did it this way. My daddy did it this way. And if it was good enough for them, then it’s good enough for me!”

This sort of unthinking, passionate fanaticism is filled with danger. But don't take our word for it, just look at the Pharisees. No group of religious leaders had ever sought to honor and hold to their father's traditions like these gentlemen did. But in their zeal to maintain traditions of old, they completely cast aside the greater virtues of truth<sup>34</sup> and growth,<sup>35</sup> revelation<sup>36</sup> and enlightenment.<sup>37</sup> These Pharisees would only accept a repetition of what they had learned as little boys, and so they ended up crucifying the same God they claimed to worship. And if this present generation of Christians isn't very careful, we'll do the same to this new illumination about gender equality. Instead of restoring it to its rightful place in Christian beliefs, we'll nail it to a cross because it's different from what we learned as little children.

The Bible, and our own history, teaches us that passion for tradition has been the downfall of many sincere, religious people. It's a lot like those TV ads, the ones proudly touting the latest quick fix for insomnia, and only *very quietly* adding, "Possible side effects are hair loss, dry mouth, diarrhea, heart disease, kidney failure and high blood pressure." The Pharisees were quick to boast that they worked hard to maintain Israel's traditions of old, but the "side effects" were devastating: blind eyes<sup>38</sup>, deaf ears<sup>39</sup> and stiff necks,<sup>40</sup> just to name a few.

Think about it. Paul was constantly quoting the Old Testament to prove that Jesus was Savior both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. So why did the Pharisees continually resist Paul's teaching? Was this great apostle privy to some secret, sacred text, which they had never read? Of course not! These religious leaders had memorized whole books of the Old Testament, even wearing the Word of God on their forehead,<sup>41</sup> their hand, and having it mounted over their doorposts at homes. Yet love for their old traditions had given them eyes that "see not," ears that "hear not,"<sup>42</sup> and hearts no longer responsive to the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit.<sup>43</sup> Today's Christians are no less susceptible to the same devastating side effects of tradition. We can have the Word of God on our T-shirts, a big family Bible on our coffee table, and

memory verses plastered everywhere and yet - when it comes to women and the Church - still be blinded by tradition.

This generation must wake up to the very real dangers that we are facing. The perils of sin, apathy, and rebellion are preached against on a regular basis, while Christian rituals and traditions are granted a place of great honor. Yet their destructive powers are almost unparalleled. Tradition is to the Gospel what “kryptonite” is to Superman. Disease, demons, poverty and even death are defeated on a regular basis by this supernatural powerhouse, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But all one must do to render it weak, ineffectual and impotent is to simply choose tradition over revelation, old mind-set over new light, thus effectively “cancel[ing] out the word of God.”<sup>44</sup>

## **Cost of the Curse**

Where did our attitudes toward women come from in the first place? Why is it so universally accepted to rob women of equality with men? This is not the way it was in the Garden of Eden. The Word of God tells us that both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God<sup>45</sup> and that both of them were given the command to rule and subdue the earth:

“And God blessed *them*; and God said to *them*, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 1:28 (emphasis added)

This first man and first woman had a true partnership in marriage, walking in equality, love and mutual respect, just as God had designed. And both of them were expected to rule and subdue the earth, just as He had commanded. Many Christians protest, “But I was taught that women were created as ‘helpers’ for men, to

support and assist, while the men lead.” This is a common belief in Christianity today, but a close examination of the scripture quickly proves the gross error of this conviction.

Referring to Eve, God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”<sup>46</sup> The original Hebrew word for “helper” in this verse is *'ezer*, and this same word is used throughout the Old Testament to refer to God! Deuteronomy 33:26 declares, “There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to your help (*'ezer*), and through the skies in His majesty.” And Psalm 70:5 records that David sang, “But I am afflicted and needy; hasten to me, O God! Thou art my help (*'ezer*) and my deliverer; O Lord do not delay.” The Word of God states repeatedly that Jehovah is our *'ezer*, a powerful and consummate help for a desperately needy mankind. And this same God, knowing that Adam needed a companion who could provide strong and competent help, made Eve to be Adam’s *'ezer*. Therefore, no one can base their erroneous belief that Eve was created to be the sidekick and Adam the star, or Eve the secretary and Adam the CEO on *this* scripture...at least not without saying the same for God’s relationship with us!

Now Eve was not made more glorious than Adam any more than Adam was created better than Eve; the word which directly follows *'ezer* makes this abundantly clear. The Hebrew word *neged*, translated “suitable for him” in this verse, means “in front of oneself, straightforward, corresponding to, parallel.” Of all the animals that God had created, none could be found “corresponding to” Adam.<sup>47</sup> The lion had the lioness; the male bear had the she-bear; but Adam was all alone. And Adam didn’t need someone to rule over anyway; he already had the whole Garden of Eden, filled with birds, fish and every other creature for that purpose. No, Adam needed a companion, an equal, an *'ezer neged*...so God made Eve.

So how did the human race begin so majestically - with this first man and woman ruling and subduing the Garden together - and end up so pathetically - with men now ruling and subduing the

women? Two words: the fall. To rewrite Neil Armstrong's famous declaration, "One hideous step for man, one huge catastrophe for mankind!" Before the fall there was neither sin, disease, poverty, abuse, nor any subordination of women. Adam and Eve walked in integrity, equality and perfection. The effect of Eve's deception and Adam's rebellion was disastrous, twisting and marring God's perfect will into a vulgar reflection of that former glorious command. Just see how the beauty of Genesis 1:28 became the sorrow expressed in Genesis 3:16:

- "Be fruitful" became "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception." (NKJV)
- "Multiply" was now "In pain you shall bring forth children." (NKJV)
- "...subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" turned into, "and he [Adam] shall rule over you [Eve]." (NKJV)

Point for point, the perfect will of God for the relationship between men and women was disfigured and broken. Pastor Rebecca Craig, M.Div., has done a skillful job helping us to understand God's prophetic statement to Eve, "Yet your desire shall be for your husband...":

"Traditionally, the word 'desire' has been interpreted as a woman wanting her husband romantically in some fashion, while the husband has now been placed in a position to rule over her. However, there are a few problems with this interpretation.

First, do men not also desire their wives? In fact, who is it that usually has to feign the headache on more than one occasion? Is "desiring" one another in fact a bad thing? Much

less a ‘curse’? This doesn’t make much sense when one thinks about it, given that the pre-fall order by God was that men and women go forth and multiply. Desire for one's spouse should have been seen as a good thing!

Second, the word ‘desire’ (*tashuqah* in Hebrew) appears only one other time in the book of Genesis—in the story of Cain and Abel. There, sin is described as "desiring" to overtake Cain like a beast ready to devour, and his response to this "desire" should be to ‘rule’ over it, take control, don't let it do what it wants, what it DESIRES to do. Given the phrasing is almost identical between Genesis 3 and Genesis 4, and that these are the only places the Hebrew word *tashuqah* appears in all of Genesis (and most of the bible, for that matter, as Song of Solomon 7:14 is the only other use), it seems likely there is a connection between the two.

Thus, rather than a ‘sexual’ desire for her husband, Eve's "desire,” like sin's desire, is to rule and control her husband. Adam's response to this, naturally, is to act like a tyrant to keep her subdued, to keep her from doing that which she ‘desires’ to do... *‘and he shall rule over you.’* It is not necessarily a prescriptive curse, but a descriptive statement about the battle of the sexes that has now started. Given that what happened at the fall was the turning in on oneself, the sudden ‘I’ factor becoming far more important to both Adam and Eve rather than the ‘we’ factor and tending to one another and tending to the garden, this makes sense. The fall turned us in on ourselves, and our desire is now to each be able to control everything around us - including other people, especially those we are closest to. We have now, as both God and the serpent noted, ceased to see ourselves as a creature of God but rather as autonomous beings separate from God.

The two struggle for control, and as a result, neither lives for the best interest of the other - the very nature of sin itself.”<sup>48</sup>

Many results of the fall would soon follow, all wicked and degenerate, particularly when compared to the former glory of Eden. The equality and mutual respect that God had set in place in that glorious Garden had turned into “the law of the jungle.” The strong ruled, and just as the Lord had said, the men were now ruling over the physically weaker women. And though God had created marriage to be a sacred union between one man and one woman,<sup>49</sup> only six generations later we see that men had begun to marry multiple wives.

Women had ceased to be honored as “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,”<sup>50</sup> and were now good for only two things: babies and sex. In fact, the tragic fall of mankind had such a wicked and insidious effect over the whole earth that we can easily see the contempt even godly men soon had for women. Why, just look at “righteous” Lot, for example.<sup>51</sup> God sent two angels to visit the wicked city of Sodom before destroying it, and Lot, believing them to be mere men, insisted they stay the night at his house. The men of Sodom, filled with perverse lust, cried out for Lot to throw the two angels out to them. So what did Lot do, show the character of Christ and cry out, “Leave them alone. Take me instead!” No, he says, “Here, take my daughters!”

Two girls that had kept their virginity in the midst of a depraved and wicked city were being offered to a bunch of sexual perverts by their father. “Let me bring them out to you and do to them whatever you like,” Lot shouted.<sup>52</sup> What?! It was okay with Lot if this crowd raped and sodomized his daughters, just so long as they didn’t touch his guests?! There was definitely nothing righteous about this mind-set towards women, a fallen mind-set which had already taken deep root in the cursed ground of Earth.

And throughout the centuries, the plight of women has remained a cursed one. Women have traditionally held no value as humans, only as baby-producers and objects of sexual gratification for men. Daughters were not only unwanted, but millions, possibly billions, of little girls have been murdered since the fall, simply because they were little girls.

- “In the Greece of 200 B.C., for example, the murder of female infants was so common that among 6,000 families living in Delphi no more than 1 percent had two daughters.”<sup>53</sup>
- The practice of allowing unwanted daughters to die by exposure was so wide-spread in ancient Rome, that Romulus was forced to pass a law mandating each family to keep their firstborn daughter. It was legally and socially acceptable to murder all other baby girls by exposure.<sup>54</sup>
- “In India...young girls were murdered as a matter of course. When demographic statistics were first collected in the nineteenth century, it was discovered that in some villages, no girl babies were found at all; in a total of thirty others, there were 343 boys to 54 girls...”<sup>55</sup>
- “A missionary (and naturalist) observer in [China in] the late nineteenth century interviewed 40 women over the age of 50 who reported having borne 183 sons and 175 daughters, of whom 126 sons but only 53 daughters survived to age 10; by their account, the women had destroyed 78 of their daughters.”<sup>56</sup>
- Prenatal sex-determination has resulted in the abortion of millions of baby girls in China, largely due to the “one child” policy of the Chinese government. In September 1997, the World Health Organization issued a report claiming that “more than 50 million women were estimated to be ‘missing’ in China because of the institutionalized killing and neglect of girls...”<sup>57</sup>
- A report in Bombay in 1984 on abortions after prenatal sex determination stated that 7,999 of the 8,000 abortions were performed on girl babies.<sup>58</sup>

The contempt and brutality that women and young girls have suffered since the fall of mankind is nearly incomprehensible. It’s

been an all-out war on females, just as the Lord declared: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed ...”<sup>59</sup> Notice that hostility was specifically put between the *woman* and Satan. Why? Because it was through a woman that the Savior of all mankind would come: the Father sent his Son, by way of the Holy Spirit, into the womb of a young woman. For this reason Satan has - from the beginning - done all he could to destroy, belittle or at the very least, relegate women to place of insignificance. And the devastating casualties of his war on women continue to stack up:

- 4 million women each year are sold as slaves.<sup>60</sup>
- Approximately 2 million girls are subjected to female genital mutilation each year. In Djibouti and Somalia, 98% of girls are mutilated.<sup>61</sup>
- In 1995, India reported 7,300 “dowry deaths.” The parents of girls in this country must pay a dowry to their daughter’s new husband. A ‘dowry death’ is when the husband, or his family, murders the new bride so that he is then free to marry again, hopefully getting a better dowry.<sup>62</sup>
- Of 130 million children not in school in developing countries, nearly two-thirds are girls.<sup>63</sup>
- Every year 7,000 Nepali girls are trafficked to India as sex slaves.
- 14,000 Russian women are killed each year by their husbands or other family members.
- Gender violence causes more death and disability among women aged 15 to 44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents or war.<sup>64</sup>

But there’s good news: Jesus broke every curse by becoming a curse for us.<sup>65</sup> The perfect Lamb of God bore our reproach, forever lifting every curse and damnation off men and women of God. Why should we believe that the precious blood of Jesus is

powerful enough to save our souls, heal our bodies, redeem us from a life of poverty...but too weak and ineffectual to restore women to their rightful place of equality with men? Of course nothing could be further from the truth. The good news of Jesus not only saves lost souls, but transforms and converts whole cultures as well!

Naturally, it is those societies traditionally hostile to the Gospel of Jesus Christ that still demonstrate the most vicious brutality towards women today. In Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other nations opposed to Christianity, women are forced to live out the degradation of Genesis 3:16 on a daily basis.

Many Muslim women are required to remain completely veiled in public, forbidden to drive cars or travel unless accompanied by a male relative, and must also endure a life of polygamy should their husband so desire. As expected, female doctors are quite rare, yet many of these women are not allowed to be treated by male physicians. And Muslim women and girls who violate any of these appalling rules are often beaten or executed as a matter of law. In fact, a favorite form of “disciplining” women in many of these nations is to throw acid on them. In contrast, the Gospel-soaked West, with our great Christian heritage, is known the world over for guaranteeing equality to women in the workplace and in society as a whole.

How ironic that much of the Church in the West is now teaching that Genesis 3:16 is the perfect will of God, and that the men have been chosen to dominate and control the women! Dear Saints, the fact that we are allowing worldly, fallen mind-sets to shape Church doctrine has brought the progress of the Church in the West to a screeching halt. We have permitted this principle of the fall to trick us into sidelining two-thirds of the soldiers in God’s Army, and the devastating result is that the lost are not being won to Christ. We must dig deep into the Word of God, being willing to have eyes that see and ears that hear.<sup>66</sup> Let us dare to pray, “Not my will, but thine be done”<sup>67</sup> regarding women and the Church.

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## ***Does God Really Prefer Men?***

**Corrie ten Boom** suffered for Christ in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. Four members of this courageous Dutch family gave their lives for hiding Jews, but Corrie came home from Ravensbruck, the infamous German death camp where 96,000 other women -including her sister Betsie - were killed. Corrie's message was powerful: "There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still" and "God will give us the love to forgive our enemies." At age



53, Corrie ten Boom began a world-wide ministry which took her into more than 60 countries over the next 33 years. Corrie preached the Gospel wherever she went, declaring that "Jesus is Victor!"<sup>68</sup>



**Catherine Booth** and husband William founded The Salvation Army in 1865. Catherine was a gifted preacher and a remarkable woman of God, having read the entire Bible cover-to-cover eight times by the age of 12! Her first booklet challenged: "'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3: 28). If this passage does not teach that in the privileges, duties, and responsibilities of Christ's kingdom, all

differences of nation, caste, and sex are abolished, we should like to know what it does teach, and wherefore it was written."

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## **Chapter 2**

### **The Path of the Righteous**

#### **This Isn't the First Mistake We've Made**

“Hey, I’m the last person to stifle the move of God,” you may be saying. “I gladly forsake old traditionalism. But this position on women is a long-held belief of the Church. Could so many Christians have been so wrong?” Our response is a gentle, yet firm “yes.” It sure wouldn’t be the first time. One blatant example of a false doctrine, passionately held by countless Christians for hundreds of years, was the belief that forced slavery was the perfect will of God for His Church. This horribly flawed doctrine had a powerful influence on the Church for over four centuries as 10 million Africans lost their freedom, their identity, and often their very lives.

Had myriads of Christians simply been complicit in this crime against humanity through their silence, refusing to rise up in defense of the defenseless, it would have been despicable enough. But it was much worse. Multiplied thousands of Christians were actually slave owners, profiting financially from the misery of these enslaved Africans. And though almost inconceivable to you and me, it is a well-documented fact that many of these Christians (preachers included) were horribly abusive to the men, women and children they held in captivity.<sup>69</sup>

How could so many Christians have been so deceived? How could they have believed that a whole race of people - because of their dark skin color - were divinely appointed to a lower lot in life, forever under the control and domination of a lighter-complected people? It sounds like something out of a science fiction horror novel, absolutely absurd and impossible to justify. But justify they

did, using the words of Apostle Paul<sup>70</sup> and Simon Peter<sup>71</sup> to preserve their inhumane way of life.

Many foolish Christians even used the “Great Commission” to defend the horrors of slavery. While shiploads of captive humans were divided and parceled out to their new owners - sons tearfully separated from their fathers, daughters forced from the arms of pleading mothers, and husbands forever separated from their wives - deluded saints would view these tragic scenes and rationalize that it was for their good because these pagans were soon to hear the Gospel.<sup>72</sup> Yet nowhere in our Lord’s command to “go ye therefore and teach all nations”<sup>73</sup> did Jesus ever indicate that we were to abuse and oppress precious lost souls in the process!

Cultural and religious traditions obviously had a powerful stronghold on many Americans at this time. Indeed, even after the Great Revival of the mid-1700’s swept through our young nation, bringing the revelation that forced slavery was breaking the commandments of Christ, untold thousands of Christians still refused to accept this new insight into the scriptures. Instead, they stubbornly continued to write books and preach sermons quoting the Bible to justify this odious sin.<sup>74</sup> Sadly, history teaches us that it took a civil war to finally end the institution of slavery in America.

You see, we have definitely been wrong before. Or shall we also mention the 1,000 years that Christians believed to confess and earnestly repent of their sins was not enough? “You must also suffer,” church leaders taught, “Either in this life or in purgatory!”<sup>75</sup> It was a common teaching (another wrong one) that this was a place of torment where souls of Christians went before being allowed to enter heaven. It was believed that the degree of your suffering on earth, and the length of your stay in purgatory, was dependent on the scale and magnitude of your sins. Lots of sin? Then you’re in for lots of suffering. Just a little bit of sin? Just a little bit of suffering. Then, around 1095 AD, Church leaders came up with a really ingenious plan for these poor Christians: ‘To

circumvent your impending torment, all you must do is perform a great deed for the church or make a generous financial donation.’<sup>76</sup> How clever. It was even preached that by giving money to the Church these Christians could get *someone else* out of purgatory! This went on throughout all of Christendom until a monk named Martin Luther wrote his famous *95 Theses* in 1517 AD, thus beginning the Protestant Reformation.

Dear Saints, our beloved Church is not made up of four walls and a ceiling. It’s composed of people - fallible though sincere, frequently mistaken though zealous, often choosing the comfort of tradition and culture over the challenge of truth. And so our history - though arguably noble and valiant quite often - has also been marked with wrong beliefs, shameful sins and ungodly traditions.

The Church of yesterday was embarrassingly slow to realize that black Africans were as significant and loved by God as white Europeans. And the Church of today has done the same thing when it comes to realizing that God has given women the same rights and responsibilities He’s placed upon men. Nowadays the Church’s prejudice of choice seems to be gender, and on this basis alone, we are often guilty of actively subverting the call of God in the lives of millions of His dear children. And just as those naïve and uneducated Christians blindly accepted the heretical teachings of purgatory and indulgences, many Christians today are guilty of automatically accepting every old tradition passed down to them about women and the Church.

## **It’s Time to Grow Up**

Proverbs 4:18 is a favorite verse, quoted often: “But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.” But the Church has often failed to appreciate the full weight of this scripture, that our progressing into greater light means we are frequently coming out of great darkness! Satan’s success at stopping up the ancient wells of the

Gospel tragically affected the Church, and the world, on many fronts. The Body of Christ, called to be the “light of the world,”<sup>77</sup> walked in areas of darkness for many years, and how great was that darkness!<sup>78</sup>

Unfortunately, much of the last 2,000 years has been spent playing catch-up, simply trying to regain lost ground. But the Holy Spirit has patiently and faithfully high-lighted critical areas of truth throughout these twenty centuries, bringing the Church closer and closer to that “full day,”<sup>79</sup> spoken about in Proverbs. He has continued to move us from “faith to faith,”<sup>80</sup> from “strength to strength,”<sup>81</sup> and from “glory to glory,”<sup>82</sup> all the while prodding us to grow up.

- “but speaking the truth in love, *we are to grow up* in all aspects into Him...” emphasis added (Ephesians 4:15)
- “long for the pure milk of the word, *that by it you may grow...*” emphasis added (I Peter 2:2)
- “but *grow in the grace and knowledge* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” emphasis added (II Peter 3:18)
- “until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, *to a mature man...*” emphasis added (Ephesians 4:13)

Yes, the Bible has made it abundantly clear that we are expected to grow up, to progress and move into greater and greater light. In fact, the consequences of refusing to move forward with the Holy Spirit are grave. We run the very real danger of becoming not only irrelevant, but bizarre, our impeded growth evident to everyone but us. Why, just look at the Amish. At one time, they were a very relevant branch of Christianity, taking a courageous stand for their belief about water baptism during the Reformation. They suffered much persecution, from Protestants and Catholics alike, because they believed that water baptism was not for infants, but only for adults who had confessed their faith in Christ. This

scripturally sound conviction, along with their belief that Christians were to remain separate from the larger society, resulted in many of these godly men and women being martyred as heretics. But these precious saints went from cutting-edge Christianity to settling in, refusing to change or grow one bit for over 500 years. As a result, they've turned into an oddity, a Christian side-show, renowned more for their out-dated transportation and peculiar clothing than soul-winning.

If the Body of Christ is to be relevant in this world, well able to preach the delivering Gospel of Jesus Christ, we must continue to grow, not only restoring the Church to her former glory, but moving on into maturity. And even though we have certainly made our share of missteps, and sometimes seemed to go two steps forward only to stagger three steps back, we would submit that the Church's ultimate progress is undeniable.

- **Error:** 405 AD saw the Bible translated into Latin Vulgate, a language spoken only by the educated members of the priesthood. Soon after, the Bible was declared too holy to be read by the common man and all other translations became illegal.

**Truth:** In the 1380's AD, John Wycliff, at great personal risk, dared to translate the Bible into English, the language of the common man. He recruited traveling preachers to spread God's Word. Wycliffe's Bibles, and later his bones, were burned by the Pope, but other courageous men of God would soon take up the cause. Men like William Tyndale, who's smuggled New Testaments began to circulate England. And so the Word of God was finally returned to the people of God after nearly 1,000 years of absence.

- **Error:** Church fathers such as Justin Martyr,<sup>83</sup> Iranaeus,<sup>84</sup> and Tertullian<sup>85</sup> recorded the gifts of the Holy Spirit<sup>86</sup> being evident in the early Church. But while there is documentation of sporadic and occasional manifestations of these same gifts

throughout church history, for the most part they lay tragically dormant for over 1600 years.

**Truth:** In 1906 God brought the Gifts of the Holy Spirit back to a desperately hungry Church. An African-American minister by the name of William J. Seymour, the son of two former slaves, was the humble yet courageous leader of what history now calls the Azusa Street Revival.

- **Error:** The history of our Church is sadly marked with anti-Semitism. Although this makes no sense at all - our Lord is Jewish, as were his 12 disciples and the vast majority of those first precious converts to Christianity - the truth cannot be denied. St. Augustine (430 AD) decided that Jews, for their own good and the good of society, must be relegated to the position of slaves. The Crusaders (1099 AD) were guilty of herding Jews into the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem, locking the door and setting it afire. And all the while they marched around the blaze singing, “Christ, we adore Thee.”<sup>87</sup> Even Martin Luther, whose courageous stand for justification by faith changed the course of Church history, fell into this grievous sin. Becoming very angry at the Jews when he couldn’t win them to Christianity, his writings became filled with despicable anti-Semitism: “First set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom...”<sup>88</sup>

**Truth:** Today, Evangelical Christians are famous for their friendship and loyalty to the nation of Israel.

- **Error:** As noted earlier, most Christians not only accepted forced slavery for nearly 400 years, but many participated in and profited from this hateful crime.

**Truth:** Great Christian reformers of the 1700 and 1800's were used by God to eventually remove this sin from the soil of America.

In other words, we make a mistake (and some of these have proven to be whoppers!), realize the error of our ways, and repent. Obviously, just because the Church is walking in a tradition that is many years old does not automatically mean that it is correct or that it lines up with the Word of God.

Now you may argue that those Christians who are teaching men have been given authority over women are quite sincere. And we would certainly agree with you. But we must point out that sincerity, while a fine virtue, does not really carry much weight when it comes to defining truth. Each one of those horrendous error we previously listed was propagated by very sincere Christians. In fact, the history of our beloved Church has been sadly tarnished by sincere - *but sincerely wrong* - church doctrine. We've just listed a few of them, not even going into the Salem Witch Trials, or the violent racism and bigotry present in churches all across the South in the 1950s and 60s.

So how do we rightly divide the Word of God?<sup>89</sup> This is the \$64,000.00 question! Because not one hungry Christian wants to miss a transition, when God reveals mysteries not understood by previous generations;<sup>90</sup> yet no God-fearing saint desires to be pushed into gross error either. So how are we to know the truth?

First and foremost, we must pray to increase in "real knowledge and all discernment."<sup>91</sup> "Zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge"<sup>92</sup> will land a person in *real* hot water *real* fast! But knowledge alone is not enough. Remember the Pharisees? They were full of knowledge, having memorized whole books from the Word of God. But they were completely devoid of any spiritual discernment, and so they ended up rejecting the Word when He "became flesh, and dwelt among"<sup>93</sup> them. The Apostle Paul, who knew all too well the dangers of head knowledge not

mixed with spiritual discernment, was in constant prayer for the saints to be filled with *both*.<sup>94</sup>

Secondly, realize that the Word of God does not conflict with itself. Therefore, any scripture that *seems* to clash with the “balance” of God’s Word must be studied very closely, and read within its context. For example, Jesus said to his disciples, “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”<sup>95</sup> Now anyone could, using this scripture alone, build a case for never again praying in public. In fact, both Christians and non-Christians have done so. But they’ve made a big mistake. Why? Because this interpretation is not in keeping with the “balance” of the Word. Why, Jesus Himself prayed out loud!<sup>96</sup> And a study of this verse within its context quickly reveals our Lord was addressing a particular, troubling situation, not making a blanket statement regarding prayer. The Pharisees, quite famous for standing in the middle of the street and praying loudly, were doing so only for attention. Jesus was simply exposing their wrong motives and warning his disciples against falling into this deadly “look at me, aren’t I religious?” trap. In just the same way, any scripture concerning women, which *seems* to conflict with other scripture or with the message of the Gospel in general, must be carefully scrutinized. We must discover if it’s a blanket statement that applies to all women everywhere, or if the Holy Spirit was merely addressing a particular problem in a particular time and place.

Finally, we must be willing to change. If the Lord reveals to us that we have been wrong, then He will also give us the grace and humility to repent and move into newly revealed truth.

## Chapter 3

# And the Truth Shall Set You Free

### The Irony of It All

The depths of discrimination against women in the Body of Christ today can seem overwhelming. It goes way beyond simple prejudice. It has become institutionalized injustice, taught in seminaries nationwide and duplicated in the majority of America's churches. In fact, the belief that God has called men to dominate and control women is so universally accepted as "divine truth" among Christians in the West that to even question it can cause conflict among church friends and brand you a "trouble-maker" or perhaps even a "heretic." Why, gender equality is no more popular among Christian leaders today than Martin Luther's *95 Theses* was in 1517 AD. Oh, sure, it's celebrated *now*, but it very nearly got the man killed *back then*! But every great move of God has been met with enormous resistance. Change is never easy, even for sincere Christians.

The pastor of a lively, growing, non-denominational church recently told us there was no way women could ever be equal to men. He felt that women were probably quicker to hear from God, but that in the end their emotional instability and proclivity towards deception basically negated any strengths they had. He said that while he certainly approves of women in *certain* ministry positions, he only wants men on the front-lines of battle with him. (In other words, the women are perfectly capable of passing out food to the homeless and clothes to the needy, but cannot be trusted in any vital, decision-making roles in his church.) This is a well-educated, sincere minister of the Gospel. And, sadly, his

opinion is not atypical of preachers today, but is the prevailing belief in American Christianity.

The fact that most Christians today are profoundly unaware of church history, and the important role women have played in it, has gone a long way in allowing the myth of female-inferiority to flourish. We are truly being “destroyed for lack of knowledge.”<sup>97</sup> And the tragic result? Too many Sunday morning services more closely resemble a meeting of “The He-Man Woman-Haters Club” than a gathering of New Testament Believers. But the irony of this pro-male/ anti-female mind-set becoming so pervasive, particularly in Pentecostal churches, cannot be left unchallenged. The heritage of today’s Assemblies of God, Church of God In Christ, Non-Denominational and Charismatic churches - with their roots in the Pentecostal/Holiness Movement of the eighteen and nineteen hundreds - is one of racial and gender equality. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, after lying practically dormant for nearly 1600 years, began to flow once again like a mighty life-giving river through a dry and thirsty land. And on the forefront of this torrent were strong and courageous women of God.

- **Maria Woodworth-Etter**-Born in 1844, she began her evangelistic ministry in the 1880s. Her meetings, which attracted crowds as large as 25,000, were marked by hundreds coming to Christ, dramatic healings, prophesy and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Before Smith Wigglesworth, before A.A. Allen, before Jack Coe and many other Pentecostal pioneers came onto the scene, Maria Woodworth-Etter was being used mightily of God. Maria had preached coast-to-coast at least three times by 1894. In 1918, at the age of 74, she founded and pastored a church, which is today known as Lakeview Christian Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. She also wrote several books recounting the marvelous miracles and wonders that took place in her ministry. Stanley Smith, a member of the famous Cambridge Seven missionary group, was so influenced by the writings of this great woman that his testimonial was reprinted

in one of her books. “It is a book I value next to the Bible,” he wrote. “I venture to think that this ministry is unparalleled in the history of the Church.”<sup>98</sup>

- **Agnes Ozman**-Charles F. Parham (1873-1929), founder of two bible schools and many Apostolic Faith churches, is considered by many to be the father of the modern Pentecostal movement. Having studied the Word of God, Parham began teaching that the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues had not died out centuries earlier as was commonly believed, but was available to the Church today. But it was one of his students, a young woman named Agnes Ozman that actually experienced what Parham had been teaching, even before Parham himself! At a New Year’s Eve watch night service, in the early hours of January 1, 1901, Agnes asked Parham to lay hands on her so she could receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues. Soon afterward, the remaining students also spoke in unknown languages and later Parham himself as well. Agnes’s experience was a red-letter day in the modern Pentecostal movement. She went on to work as a city missionary in Omaha and later married Pentecostal preacher Philemon LaBerge. The two traveled about the country holding meetings wherever possible.
- **The Women of Azusa Street**-William J. Seymore, has become well-known as the leader of the Azusa Street Revival. The son of two former slaves, Seymore seemed the unlikely ambassador of the Pentecostal message; he was not a gifted speaker, lacked social skills, had almost no formal education, and to top it all off, was blind in one eye. But Seymore’s leadership was not the only remarkable feature of the Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street. Gifted women leaders and extraordinary interracial meetings also characterized this great move of God. A 1906 Azusa staff photo shows blacks and whites, men and women-all in leadership. **Lucy Farrow**, who prayed for people

to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit, later took the Pentecostal message to Liberia. **Jennie Evans Moore** ministered at the Mission both before and after her marriage to Seymore in 1908. **Florence Crawford** assisted with publishing *The Apostolic Faith*, a newsletter sponsored by the mission. She later founded the Apostolic Faith organization with headquarters in Portland, Oregon, which is one of the earliest Pentecostal denominations in the country.<sup>99</sup> In fact, at one point, at least six of Azusa's twelve-member credentials committee members (or elders) were women.

The fact that the Holy Spirit has chosen women to impact the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ is undeniable. We've just listed a few, but the history of the Charismatic Movement, as well as other Christian denominations, is filled with the contributions of gifted and powerful women of God. Women like Phoebe Palmer, known as "The Mother of the Holiness Movement," who began her ministry in 1835 with her Tuesday Meetings. These prominent and influential meetings continued for 39 years in New York City, where Phoebe lived with her husband, a physician. Hundreds of Methodist preachers were profoundly affected by this woman's ministry and teachings to promote holiness. The great success of Phoebe's meetings even encouraged other women to follow her example; as a result, dozens of ministries led by women sprang up throughout North America, bringing Christians of many denominations under the leadership of godly women.<sup>100</sup>

Another influential Christian minister was Catherine Booth, who along with her husband, William, founded The Salvation Army in London, England in 1864.<sup>101</sup> Catherine was a gifted preacher and took a leading role in their ministry. In fact, all women officers enjoyed the same rights as men. The Booths endured much persecution, one of the main complaints being that William Booth was guilty of elevating women to men's status. Booth, who had initially rejected the idea of women preachers,

completely changed his mind and wrote that “the best men in my Army are the women.”<sup>102</sup>

Many early American Revivalists also recognized the value of freeing up women to minister alongside men, resulting in great anointing and much success in their ministries. Charles Finney, the Billy Graham of his time, invited women to pray in public meetings, angering many Church leaders. A.B. Simpson, founder of the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA) included women in all levels of leadership. Women not only served as pastors, teachers and evangelists, but four of the CMA’s first eight vice presidents were women.<sup>103</sup> Dwight L. Moody, eager for women to preach, opened the Northfield training seminary for young women in 1879. And the Church of the Nazarene and other holiness churches that sprang up in the late 1800s also ordained women. And don’t forget John and Charles Wesley, founders of the Methodist Church. These great men of God were so influenced by the teachings of their godly mother - who preached to more than 200 people every week in prayer meetings - that John Wesley would proclaim, “Since God uses women in the conversion of sinners, who am I that I should withstand God?” In fact, the Wesleys were among the first to use women to lead small groups called “classes” - which, coincidentally, is where all of us got Sunday School from - causing their revival to spread like wildfire.<sup>104</sup>

Ironically, the branch of Christian ministry that seemed to appeal to women the most was the perilous world of foreign missions; in fact, women missionaries outnumbered the men in many areas two to one. For example, twice as many women as men dared to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Chinese. One of the best known is Southern Baptist missionary Lottie Moon, who ministered in China for nearly 40 years. Lottie suffered with the Chinese through years of famine, literally starving at times as her health failed.<sup>105</sup> Women missionaries not only won the lost, but also started hospitals, schools and universities. In fact, women were such a force in Christian missions that many of today’s famous women’s colleges were actually founded to prepare these

soldiers for the mission field, colleges like Radcliffe, Wellesley, and Smith.<sup>106</sup>

## **Dishonorable Discharge**

The eighteen and early nineteen hundreds was a time of extraordinary growth and change in our young nation. And Christian women not only helped usher in great moves of God, but were also the catalysts for tremendous social reform. At this time women had no voice in government, little or no control over their own property and no legal protection for themselves or their children. Prosecutions for rape were extremely rare and the state-regulated “age of consent” for little girls to legally have sex with adult men was as low as seven years of age. Then God rallied together housewives, daughters and old women, turning them into a formidable army for righteous change in this nation.

The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founded in 1874, was just one mighty branch of this army. The unregulated sell of alcohol was wreaking havoc not just on families, but on whole communities as well. Women began dropping to their knees in local saloons in pray-ins, demanding that the sale of liquor be stopped. In three months these women had driven liquor out of 250 communities and for the first time began to get a real sense of what they could achieve together. The list of WCTU’s accomplishments is truly astounding. These Christian women proposed, supported and helped establish:

- A woman’s right to vote
- Protection of women and children at home and work
- Shelters for abused women and children
- The eight-hour work day
- Founding of kindergartens
- Federal aid for education
- Stiffer penalties for sexual crimes against girls and women

- Prison reform
- The pure food and drug act

And this is the short list!<sup>107</sup> Strong, capable Christian women also led the move to abolish slavery in America, women like Abigail Adams,<sup>108</sup> Susan B. Anthony<sup>109</sup> and Sojourner Truth.<sup>110</sup>

So what happened? How did women get demoted from mighty generals to lowly privates in our Lord's Army? With such an honorable history, why are Christian women today told they are overly-emotional, easily deceived and not equal to men in God's eyes? Much of the Church's recent backward mobility can be directly traced to the rise of radical, liberal feminism. American Feminists of the 60s and 70s embraced not only equal rights for women, but homosexuality and abortion as well. And Christians in the West who were still marching to the beat of "It's a Man's World" cried out, "See! I told you! All that woman stuff is of the devil!"

Instead of *acting* in maturity - discerning between the good of gender equality and the evils of homosexuality and abortion - much of the Church in America allowed itself to be goaded into *reacting*. We threw the baby out with the bath water, as our leaders began formulating doctrines of male domination and female subjugation mostly because these ideas directly opposed what was being propagated by America's radical feminists. "If they go *left*, we'll go *right*! If they say *black*, we'll say *white*!" seemed to be our mantra.

But reacting in fear to the evil around us never bodes well for a people called to walk by faith. As the radical feminists have grown more influential, respected and even feared in political and social arenas, at least one Christian denomination seems fed up and determined to do something about it all. In an obvious attempt to counter this influence and "save the family,"<sup>111</sup> the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has stooped to strong-arming their women into behaving in a more submissive and genteel manner. The now-famous 1998 SBC "Family Amendment" instructed

Southern Baptist wives to “submit graciously” to their husbands, stating it was their responsibility to respect him and serve as his helper.

We, of course, have no doubts about the sincerity of Southern Baptist brothers and sisters. They have seen the depravity of the world around us, the perversions which are regularly passed off as “normal,” and have reacted. But their answer to the problems we face is neither doctrinally sound - nor has it even been proven successful by their own adherents. In 1999 the Associated Press reported Baptists “are more likely to get a divorce than atheists and agnostics.” Citing a recently released survey by the Christian research group, Barna, the AP reported that 29% of all adult Baptists had been divorced - a rate which was higher than the national average (then at 24%) and even higher than the rate for atheists and agnostics (at 21%)!<sup>112</sup>

In 2000 the Southern Baptist Convention went even further in their misguided crusade to put women in their place, amending their *Baptist Faith and Message* to say that women are never qualified to serve as pastors. All SBC missionaries, professors and pastors have been forced to sign a letter agreeing with this revised statement. Those refusing were made an example of. Ron Hankins and his wife Lydia Barrow-Hankins are just two of the many casualties of this foolish war the SBC is waging against its women. These ministers started churches in Japan for 22 years with the support of the SBC and Japanese Baptists. But when they refused to sign the revised *Baptist Faith and Message*, which stated that women are not qualified to be pastors, the Southern Baptist Convention promptly withdrew financial support for these missionaries.<sup>113</sup>

Another culprit responsible for robbing women of their rightful place in the Body of Christ is the influence of American culture on Church doctrine. And America’s Southern Baptists are yet again a perfect example. The strongly-held, proud traditions of the South - in which men are men and every good woman knows her place - has undeniably crept into church doctrine.

But Pentecostal Christians certainly can't cast any stones at their Baptist brothers. The influence of southern culture on the SBC is no more disquieting than what happened to the Azusa Street Revival. Barely one generation out of slavery, God brought blacks, whites, Hispanics, Asians, and newly-arrived European immigrants together to worship under the same roof. In one service alone, there were 20 different nationalities represented<sup>114</sup> - a truly remarkable period of unity for the Church. But it proved to be short-lived. Most of the visiting white ministers, after receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit as black hands were laid upon them, returned to their segregated all-white churches in which blacks were not even allowed to enter. Many continued to preach under the power of the Holy Spirit, but only to whites. Pressure from their denominations and communities proved too much for these men to stand against.

Tragically, even the regular members of Azusa eventually gave way to the racist culture around them. The congregation split in two; the white members eventually becoming the Assemblies of God (the largest *white* Pentecostal denomination in the world) and the black congregants the Church of God in Christ (the largest *black* Pentecostal denomination in America).<sup>115</sup> Did this prove that the astonishing interracial meetings on Azusa Street were not really the will of God after all? Did God ultimately prefer to keep his children separate, grouping them according to skin color and nationality? Of course not! But the pressures of cultural bias and misguided denominational doctrine proved too strong a force for most of these Christians to defy. In just the same way, many ministers today will readily admit the influence that godly women have had on their lives, but cultural bias and denominational doctrine are once again proving too strong a force for most to defy.

## Heeding the Call

Yet even in the face of overwhelming conformity, more and more Christians are daring to examine the role of women in the Body of Christ today. We have heard the voices of great men and women of God from our past and present...voices of courage, voices of change.

### **William Booth**

*Along with his wife, Catherine,  
founded The Salvation Army.*

- “What is woman’s work if not to preach?”
- “If our ministry ceased to exist today, it would have amply justified its past career, because it has once again brought to light that chosen instrument of the Kingdom of Heaven, female ministry, and allowed a demonstration of its usefulness, its power, its divine right.”<sup>116</sup>

### **Maria Woodworth-Etter**

*Early American evangelist.*

- “God is calling the Marys and the Marthas today all over our land to work in various places in the vineyard of the Lord; God grant that they may respond and say, ‘Lord, here am I. Send me.’”<sup>117</sup>

### **Dr. David Yonggi Cho**

*Pastor of 763,000-member Yoido Full  
Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea.*

- “All their churches are so little! And all of them are holding back their women, not allowing them to do what God calls them to do. I’ve told them to release their women, but they

insist that's not the problem. They ask me, 'What's the key to your church?' I tell them again, 'Release your women,' but they just don't hear me!"<sup>118</sup>

### **Loren Cunningham**

*Along with his wife, Darlene, founded Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in 1960. It is now one of the largest interdenominational and international Christian ministries, based in over 800 locations, in more than 135 countries.*

- "When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, his friend came out from the tomb alive but still bound up in the burial shroud...Multiplied thousands of women today are alive in Jesus but still tied up by the burial shroud of human tradition - tradition that says they are second-class citizens - and cultural ideas that tell them they cannot carry out the highest callings of God's kingdom. It has been two thousand years since Jesus came to proclaim liberty to the captives. It's time to set the women free. It's high time!"<sup>119</sup>

### **J. Lee Grady**

*Editor of Charisma magazine and author of two best-selling books on gender equality in the Church..*

- "How many millions of people will slip into hell because we wouldn't let women do their part to reach them? For the sake of this great harvest we must set the women free to preach and to lead."<sup>120</sup>

Thankfully, many women today are refusing to listen to the voice of our enemy as he accuses them of being overly-emotional, easily deceived and not equal to men in God's eyes. Women pastors, teachers, preachers and evangelists - some famous, some known and loved only by the precious souls they have converted and disciple - continue to carry out the Great Commission. They have turned a deaf ear to the accusing voice of our enemy, instead

listening to the voices of past and present Christian reformers...and the souls these women have brought to salvation will be forever grateful:

- Recently, a 20-year old young woman from Mongolia had been studying the Bible with 50 others in another part of China. After she disappeared without a word, her Christian friends feared the worst. Suddenly, eleven months later, they got an urgent message from their friend in Mongolia, “I need help. Send some pastors.” When questioned as to these strange events, this young woman of God explained that while studying the scriptures, the strong conviction to win the lost had overwhelmed her, and she had hurried home to preach the Gospel. In the eleven months she had been “missing,” she had led 4,300 people to the Lord and they were now meeting in 60 different locations!<sup>121</sup>
- A 12-year-old girl in Vietnam recently accepted Christ as her Savior. She immediately began sharing her new faith with friends, inviting 34 other children to her own evangelistic party. Upon hearing the good news of Jesus Christ, every one of the children accepted Him as their Savior! Suddenly, the secret police burst into the party and began beating and kicking this young evangelist in the head. She was dragged off to prison where she stayed for seven days. Ordered to sign a paper renouncing Christ, she refused. Because of her faith, this young girl was disowned by her parents and thrown out of her home. She could no longer attend school either, but had to begin working in the fields to make her own living. This precious young saint has lost everything for the Gospel: parents, home, and education. But no one has been able to take away what is clearly most valuable to her: Jesus! She says she will be more careful now, but she continues to tell other children about this Savior for whom she has sacrificed so much.

These are only two examples. Powerful, anointed women of God are impacting the world with the Gospel today. Christian women of every denomination are changing lives as Bible teachers, preachers, missionaries and more. In fact, beloved evangelist, Billy Graham, has declared many times over that the best preacher in his family is daughter Anne Graham Lotz. And the majority of these women are also devoted wives, mothers and grandmothers.

Which of these ministers would you stop? Which of these women would you call overly-emotional? Easily deceived? Not equal to men in God's eyes? Not one, of course. In fact, many preachers would be overjoyed if a woman like this young lady from Mongolia were to spring up in their congregation. Yet, how likely is this to happen when their women are consistently belittled, patronized and pigeon-holed?

So many of the great women of God we read about in Church history came to the forefront in times of revival. A great hunger to win souls coursed its way through America, England, Wales and other nations, in what historians have called the 1st and 2nd Great Awakenings. Suddenly, the desire to bring in the harvest was greater than the desire to maintain status quo Christianity. As a result, women were released from the prison of inactivity and nonparticipation that had held them captive for decades.

But as each period of revival began to wane, the cruel shackles were put back on; a passion to win the lost replaced with a passion to police the found. Right now, revival is sweeping across Asia, Africa, England, Australia and other nations, great and small. And the blessed result is that once again women are being released from Church prison. While in America we plead with God to remember our land. But, dear Christian, we must do our part. We must release the women!

## *Section II*

# Lost in Translation

Rightly Dividing the Word of God

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a  
workman that needeth not to be ashamed,  
rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15 KJV

# **Chapter 4**

## **Principles of the Kingdom**

### **Through the Looking Glass**

Those of us “translated” from the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of God<sup>122</sup> thirty, twenty or even ten years ago have, over time, become somewhat adjusted to the culture and expectations of Christianity. But even veteran Christians can probably still recall the shock of realizing that, suddenly, all the rules had changed. What used to be up was down, what had always been good was bad and what we’d believed to be right we were discovering to be very, very wrong!

“While in Rome, do as the Romans”? Well, while in the world we had most certainly acted in concert with the rest of the world. But as our hearts turned to Christ, we traded allegiances, switched Kingdoms, and found ourselves faced with the somewhat daunting task of learning how to operate under a whole new system, and live according to a very different set of rules. For example:

- What do worldly people do to get money? Scrape, save, hoard, stockpile and accumulate every penny until they have gathered enough to meet their needs. But what are the rules pertaining to money in the Kingdom of God? We must sow to reap and plant to harvest. As Christians we became privy to the economy-changing truth that “God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”<sup>123</sup>
- And what does the world teach its people to do when they’ve been mistreated? It’s called “revenge.” This Dark Kingdom has many sayings to teach proper protocol for just such an

occasion: “Payback is hell” and “Revenge is sweet” immediately come to mind. But what are we citizens of the Heavenly realm expected to do when wronged? Bless those who curse, pray for those who spitefully use, and always do good to those who hate us.<sup>124</sup>

- And what about ambition? How do people in the Kingdom of Darkness make it to the top of their many ladders? Climb over, step on top of, and squash anyone that gets in their way. But that sort of behavior would earn any “King’s kid” a sound thrashing from the Father! So what must we do to make it to the top? Take the low seat,<sup>125</sup> prefer one another,<sup>126</sup> esteem others better than ourselves and never seek vain glory<sup>127</sup> ...because anyone wanting to be first in *this* Kingdom must actively strive to be last.

Could any two worlds be more diverse, more directly opposed to one another? You could almost say “take everything you learned while you were lost, turn it completely inside-out and upside-down, and then you’ll begin to walk rightly!” New saints eventually become accustomed to the rules of God’s strange and wonderful Kingdom, but at first it can be quite off-putting and the source of much confusion.

But God has promised that we are not wasting our time becoming adjusted to these new and exciting beliefs. In fact, the principles of *His* Kingdom are the only ones destined to last. Hebrews 12:26-28 makes this guarantee, assuring us that we have received a Kingdom - and therefore Kingdom principles - which cannot be shaken. It goes on to point out that only by these unshakable patterns of thought and behaviors are we even able to offer acceptable service to God.

How sad to see a person striving desperately to serve their Lord, yet not doing it according to the rules and guidelines He Himself has set up. These dear souls are fated for a life of frustration and disappointment for the Bible says their service, ultimately, is unacceptable.<sup>128</sup> We, however, can wisely avoid this

waste of time and effort by seeking to incorporate every principle of the Heavenly Kingdom into our journey here on earth; the result of this noble effort will be lives that truly glorify God. With this in mind, let us examine a few key principles of God's Kingdom that might just shed some light on the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the Body of Christ.

## **Principle # 1**

### **Sons in the House**

Nothing is more fundamental to the nature of mankind than establishing a "pecking order." Be it on the playground or in the boardroom, "chief" is always distinguished from "little Indian." Now this human instinct, in and of itself, may not necessarily be evil. But the qualifications for leadership and authority are definitely different in each Kingdom. The Kingdom of Darkness divides its people, assigning jobs and responsibilities, according to (1) race and nationality, (2) social, educational and economic status and (3) gender. But the Apostle Paul made it abundantly clear that this worldly way of thinking was not acceptable for those pledging loyalty to Christ and His Kingdom. He very deliberately and systematically tore down any rationalization the Church might have for judging Christians according to these fleshly differences.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

Now, as noted in chapter one, Paul was certainly not saying that once a man or woman becomes born again they are suddenly androgynous, lacking any sort of gender peculiarities. If this was his thought, then "there is neither Jew nor Gentile" would mean that upon conversion each person lost their racial characteristics, skin color and nationality...and of course we know this is not true

at all. No, this powerful verse simply proves that in God's Kingdom no one is given the upper hand based on fleshly divisions. In the Kingdom of God, a man born into slavery is on equal footing with that of an earthly king; Gentiles, so long despised by the Jews, are now brothers to those chosen descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and every born-again woman is equal to every born-again man. Such is the even-handedness and equality displayed in God's Kingdom.

Today, no discerning church would allow a person to enter their congregation and arrogantly state, "I am a Jew, superior to you Gentiles; therefore, you must submit!" And any pastor worth his salt will chastise Christians who begin to feel superior because of great wealth or elevated social standing. So, why are Christian men taught that they are *over* Christian women? This "you must submit because I am a man" teaching says to the world and Christians alike that God - not swayed by race, social or economic standing - *is* somehow impressed by our genitalia; that our gender carries greater weight than our devotion, passion and dedication to Him and His Divine Kingdom. But this old mind-set makes absolutely no sense, and is a direct violation of Paul's clear teaching in this important letter to the Galatians. And worst of all, it paints a biased and unjust picture of a very unbiased and just God.

Yes, Galatians 3:28 makes an amazing statement, forbidding the Church to judge and pigeonhole its members by sex, race or social and economic opportunity...but pulled out of context, this powerful verse can leave us with as many questions as answers: "Just what principle of God's Kingdom trumps this old, worldly way of doing business? What could possibly give a slave the same access to God as a king? What enables a Gentile to come boldly to the throne of grace, just the same as a Jew? And what could suddenly elevate women, so long despised and ill-treated by the world, to the status of a man?" The answer to each of these questions is the same: the all important Kingdom Principle of "sonship."

“For *you are all* sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For *all of you* who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; *for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” (emphasis added) Galatians 3:26-28

First, we must understand the importance of sonship, the privileges that come with it, and how it is attained. According to the Old Covenant, firstborn sons received a double portion of their father’s inheritance,<sup>129</sup> younger sons shared the leftovers and daughters were usually cared for by their husbands.<sup>130</sup> And of course this Law of God applied to both earth-bound *and* heavenly possessions. Our God has always had great wealth and riches to give - salvation and spiritual power, just to name two. The problem was, not one of us was qualified to receive it. We were “children of wrath,”<sup>131</sup> entitled only to punishment and retribution, not the riches of heaven.

So did God somehow circumvent that Law that we might receive His goodness? Of course not, Psalms 89:34 says, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that has gone out of My lips.” No, God *fulfilled* the Law by adopting us into His family. That way, each born-again Christian is *legally* entitled to the inheritance. But this was no ordinary adoption. The Scripture clearly states that each of us, regardless of gender, received “the adoption *as sons* (emphasis added).”<sup>132</sup>

“Why ‘as sons,’” you may wonder. “Why is this so important?” Because only sons received the inheritance. Galatians 4:6 very clearly states that “*because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father (emphasis added).” Each born-again Christian receives the adoption “as sons,” making them legally eligible to receive all God has for them. And this sonship of ours is no more affected by our

gender than by our race or economic status. It is simply our legal, spiritual position as born-again children of God.

But just wait, it gets even better. According to the Law, the firstborn son, as “the beginning of [the Father’s] strength,”<sup>133</sup> always received a double portion. Now Jesus is clearly the “firstborn among many brethren,”<sup>134</sup> legally qualifying Him to receive *twice* as much as the rest of us, right? Well, not exactly. The Bible states that we are “joint heirs,”<sup>135</sup> with Christ - equal inheritors, co-receivers. But how in the world is this possible? We are at liberty to receive what Christ receives for one reason alone: We have “put on” our Lord and Savior.

A remarkable spiritual truth, this powerful concept was first demonstrated in the Old Testament. How did young Jacob get his nearly-blind father to give him the blessing that legally belonged to his older brother? He *smelled* like Esau, *dressed* like Esau, and even covered his arms so he’d *feel* like Esau when Isaac touched him.<sup>136</sup> In other words, he *clothed himself* with Esau to receive the blessing of the firstborn.<sup>137</sup>

As Christians, we have done the same. “Little Christs” (for this is the literal translation of “Christian”), we are covered head-to-toe with Jesus as with a mighty spiritual garment, and legally qualified to be “joint-heirs.”<sup>138</sup> This powerful, life-changing truth is confirmed in believer’s baptism: “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed [*enduo* in the Greek, meaning “to sink into clothing, put on, clothe one’s self”] yourselves with Christ.”<sup>139</sup> The message is clear: In the natural you may be dripping from head to toe with water, young Christian, but in the Spirit you are soaked through and through with the Firstborn!

Tragically, Christians who try to subjugate and suppress women by pointing to the Old Covenant have failed to even understand its purpose. It was never God’s intention to leave out the women, any more than it was His desire to leave out the Gentiles. The function of the Old was simply to foreshadow the New, and point to the coming Messiah.<sup>140</sup> Through the rules and regulations of the Old Covenant, we are made to understand that

Jesus (the *first and only* begotten Son of God) stood alone as rightful heir to all of heaven's riches. But God graciously adopted us "as sons" (giving us the right to inherit) and "clothed" us with the Firstborn, granting us unlimited legal access to all the treasures of heaven. Clearly, it is only "in Christ",<sup>141</sup> that any of us qualify for anything! And what priceless riches we have inherited: Salvation,<sup>142</sup> eternal life,<sup>143</sup> an inalterable covenant,<sup>144</sup> the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit,<sup>145</sup> and freedom from dead religion<sup>146</sup> just to name a few!

Yes, sonship - granted to each Christian without regard to skin color, nationality, social standing, education or gender - has become the great equalizer of us all. God knew exactly what He was doing when He made all Christians spiritual sons. All too familiar with fallen man's tendency to judge by outward appearance and worldly attributes, the Almighty, in one fell swoop, made null and void any rationalization we might have to operate this way in the Church. "But I still don't understand how a woman can be a son," you might say. Yet how is this any more bizarre than a man being a member of the Bride of Christ? At times it can be difficult for all of us to wrap our finite, fleshly minds around spiritual concepts. But we must try. Our "God is a Spirit"<sup>147</sup> and to understand how He operates, availing ourselves of everything He has to offer, we must look beyond the carnal ways of this Worldly Kingdom and begin to understand His ways in the Spirit. And in the Spirit, each born again Christian is a son:

- "...God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, *that we might receive the adoption as sons.*" (emphasis added) Galatians 4:4b,5
- "He predestined us to adoption *as sons* through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will." (emphasis added) Ephesians 1:5
- "For *all* who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (emphasis added) Romans 8:14

- “...*you are all* sons of light and sons of day.” (emphasis added) I Thessalonians 5:5a
- “He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and *he will be My son.*” (emphasis added) Revelation 21:7

This Worldly Kingdom, unable to grasp spiritual concepts, will always segregate its people by natural attributes and fleshly qualities - carefully inspecting skin color, education, social standing and gender. But we in the Body of Christ are forbidden to do so. Sadly, there will probably always be some Christians who judge others based on these differences; carnal souls who desire to peel back the robes of Christ that now cover us and inquire, “Are you black or white?”; “Are you rich or poor?”; “Are you educated or unlearned?”; “Are you a man or a woman?” But we do not have to be *those Christians*.

No, our pecking order - for lack of a better phrase - is not decided by race, nationality, gender, or social and economic opportunity in the Kingdom of God. This is a *spiritual* Kingdom and the Holy Spirit is in charge, passing out gifts and callings as He sees fit. It is *these* which determine the authority of each person in God’s Kingdom. And apparently, He doesn’t stop to check gender before distribution! Just look at the disciples gathered together in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost. All 120 of them - men *and* women - were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other tongues, boldly proclaiming “the mighty deeds of God.”<sup>148</sup> And in Romans 16:7 we see yet again the Holy Spirit’s unwillingness to be prejudiced by gender. Here Paul is commending the woman Junia, called to the high office of an Apostle, as being “outstanding among the apostles.” And while some might consider femininity a disadvantage and women to be less capable, less qualified to bear the burdens of front-line ministry, the Holy Spirit apparently disagrees. Otherwise, why would He have placed upon Phoebe the responsibilities of a deacon?<sup>149</sup>

No, the Holy Spirit, not saddled with having to crucify daily an old carnal nature and worldly way of thinking, never hesitated in calling women to positions of great authority in the Body of Christ. But this even-handed way of distributing gifts is nothing new for Him. Why, He called Deborah to be one of Israel's greatest judges, and this under the Old Covenant that God had with them!<sup>150</sup> We in the Kingdom of God must remember that regardless of each person's natural inclinations, traditions and religious comfort-zones, the Holy Spirit is in charge. And He simply cannot be swayed by our gender any more than He can be influenced by our skin color or bought by our money.<sup>151</sup>

The Apostle Paul lists many of the Holy Spirit's gifts in I Corinthians chapter twelve, speaking of miracles, healings, prophesy, discernment and much more - but nowhere does it state that these gifts are divided and distributed according to gender. And Ephesians 4, verses 11 and 12 speak of the callings of the Holy Spirit - apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher and evangelist - but again, it doesn't state that any of these are given, or withheld, on the basis of gender. And the fruit of the Holy Spirit, listed in Galatians,<sup>152</sup> is also not divided by gender. Obviously, the *gifts*, the *callings* and the *fruit* of the Holy Spirit are no more gender-specific than they are race specific! In Christ, can a Gentile show forth the fruits of love, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost? Of course. In Christ, can a slave flow in the gifts of miracles and healings? Of course. And in Christ, can a woman be an apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher or evangelist? Of course. They were during Paul's time and they are today, whether the Church in America realizes it or not.

All of this may feel very strange to us - confronting deeply rooted traditions and old ways of thinking - but we're in excellent company when it comes to overcoming stubborn mindsets. You remember how much resistance the Holy Spirit ran into when first speaking to Peter about the Gentiles, don't you? So entrenched were his prejudices that it took *three supernatural visions* to

convince this man of God to lay aside his bias and obey. But at least Peter had the grace and discernment to eventually get there.

This is our challenge today. Having clearly seen in the scripture that each born-again Christian is a “son” of God, clothed in Christ Jesus, we must resist our impulse to categorize saints by fleshly divisions. And acknowledging that the gifting, calling, and anointing of the Holy Spirit is no more gender-specific than race-specific, let us declare with Peter, “What am I, that I can withstand God?”<sup>153</sup>

## **Principle #2**

### **Not Many Mighty, Not Many Noble**

Now while there is some truth to the saying, “Everybody roots for the underdog,” generally speaking, the Kingdom of this World does no such thing. Otherwise, women’s magazines would be plastered with pictures of frumpy, unattractive old ladies. And men’s magazines would be filled with biographies of middle-aged, balding, stuck-in-a-career-rut losers. Of course we know this is not true at all. Everybody loves a winner. The pages of *Esquire*, *Cosmopolitan*, even *People* and *Us* are filled with pictures of the world’s most beautiful and talented women - and if that wasn’t enough, their slightest little imperfections have been air-brushed out! Sports magazines are overflowing with buff, young athletes at the peak of their game and *Fortune 500* extols the virtues of the latest and greatest multimillionaire CEOs. Yes, indeed, everyone loves a winner.

How great is it that God has a real soft spot for the losers? For example, while the world valued the first born son in each family, God overwhelmingly chose the youngest: Picking young mama’s boy Jacob over dad’s favorite, the older and stronger Esau; and passing up all of Jesse’s older boys - tall, strong warriors - to settle upon young David out in the sheepfold. And who did He chose to deliver that all-important message, “Let my people go!”?

An articulate, self-assured ambassador? No, God choose a man who had lost all confidence in his calling and was burdened with a debilitating speech impediment! In fact, the Bible is full of God picking the runt of each litter. Seems He likes to show off His marvelous power, and how better to do this than pick the unlikeliest candidate and then do great things through them? This is a key principle of God's Kingdom and one that we must fully comprehend:

“For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are...”

I Corinthians 1:26-28

The beauty of this principle is in its simplicity: Pick the foolish, the base, the weak and the despised, do something great, and then God gets the glory! Of course this is not at all how the Kingdom of this World operates. It's more like gym class. You remember the coach choosing two captains and then letting these kids build their own teams, don't you? Who always got picked first? Why, the strongest, the most athletic, and the most popular kids in school, of course. Oh, the dread of being the last one chosen and having to stand there listening to these two kids arguing over which one got stuck with you! But God made it very clear that the qualifications for *His team* are quite different. Sizing up each candidate, God deliberately choose the weakest, the most fragile, declaring with a smile, “I pick *him* first.” Then He singled out the least popular, saying, “I'll take *her* next.” And right down the line He went, choosing the unlovely, the unlikely, and the unwise of all humanity. With the grace that He alone could bear,

God declared “I want *you* on my team!” And what is His purpose in all this? To make absolutely sure “that no man should boast before God.”<sup>154</sup> For those who truly understand their own limitations, their own baseness will always brag in God alone.<sup>155</sup>

This is how God operates. But, we’re so used to the ways of this Worldly Kingdom - where the strong, the noble, the self-sufficient receive all the accolades - that we fail to understand what we perceive as *disqualifying* us from a great call of God actually *qualifies* us. We struggle desperately to reveal only our strengths and abilities; while ironically, it’s our limitations, our weaknesses which position us for a mighty move of the Spirit. Just look at Sarah. At a time when giving birth to a son was the primary purpose for a woman’s life, this wife of Abraham was a complete and utter failure. And after years of dashed hopes and bitter tears, this elderly woman had finally resigned herself to a life of unfruitfulness and dysfunction...and then along comes God, bringing a promise about a baby.

Too wonderful for her sad old heart to believe, Sarah laughed. But she ultimately dared to dream the impossible, holding fast to the faithfulness of God.<sup>156</sup> And so Sarah’s weakness - her inability to produce a child - became a stage upon which God could display His great strength. And a son was born to a barren, old woman! In much the same way many Christian women, after years of frustration and disappointment, have resigned themselves to second-class citizenship in the Body of Christ and very limited input in their own marriages. But then along comes God bringing a promise: “You are a ‘son,’ my daughter. You are clothed with the Firstborn, and in My Kingdom there is no gender hierarchy.” Almost too wonderful to believe, many have laughed. But Christian women everywhere, daring to trust in the faithfulness of God, are now pregnant with expectation and hope. And so the weakness of millions has become a stage upon which God will soon display His marvelous strength.

And what of the base and despised? The history of our own nation has proven that God mightily redeems what the world

foolishly considers worthless. Less than 150 years ago thousands of African-Americans in this country were legally owned by whites. These men, women and children were not only denied the education and opportunities that free whites had access to, but were robbed of their basic human rights as well. But even after slavery ended in 1865, the battle against these children of God was far from over. In the 1870s, segregationists, claiming that blacks were inferior to whites, enacted “Jim Crow” laws in many states. They made it illegal for blacks and whites to go to school together, drink from the same water fountain or even sit together on the bus. These bigots even went so far as to produce so-called “scientific evidence” of white superiority, further humiliating God’s people of color. And when black Americans dared to confront these immoral laws, violence, never far from the surface, often erupted. In North Carolina a black student was spit upon in the face while the surrounding mob sang “We don’t want her, you can have her, she’s too black for me!” Rocks were thrown at black students in Tennessee, and one school in which a single five-year-old black girl had registered was rocked by dynamite.<sup>157</sup> Satan was waging an all-out war on African-Americans. And tragically, the Church was often guilty of facilitating these attacks, either by agreeing with those racist views or simply ignoring the plight of their brothers in need.

Persecuted, disrespected, devalued, repressed, and cast aside - black Americans struggled to find their identity and value in a nation that afforded them almost none. Only recently (1954) were the racist “Jim Crow” laws finally struck down. Yet today - barely fifty years later - some of the most highly-respected, influential and anointed preachers of the Gospel are African Americans, ministering to every class and every race in this country. But just a few generations back, blacks were often beaten or tortured when discovered reading the Word of God for themselves. God has indeed chosen what the world considers foolish to shame the wise, the weak to shame the strong, and the base and despised to shame the noble!

Our Lord has such a brilliant sense of humor. Isn't it wonderful that Satan's zeal to persecute and destroy actually comes back to bite him in the butt? This rebellious archangel is actually *killing himself* by the sword of his own persecution. Having aggrieved, debased and devalued Americans of color, Satan has actually positioned them to be used mightily by God. But this is not the first time our enemy has fallen into this trap.<sup>1</sup> I Corinthians 2:8 says that if Satan and his cohorts had been able to see the *end result* of Christ's crucifixion - that mankind could once again be put in right standing with God, receiving not only eternal life in heaven, but a fruitful and fulfilling life here on earth - he never would have crucified the Lord of glory.<sup>1</sup> But hatred blinded Lucifer to the end result of his own actions. And obviously not one to learn from his mistakes, he keeps repeating history. What he did to African-Americans, he has done to women. And now, having been cast aside as weak and worthless, today's women are positioned for greatness. So, woman of God, if you have been disqualified because of weakness, called a fool because God wants you in a position of leadership, or despised for your gender...rejoice! God has chosen the weak, called the foolish and highly exalted the despised, so that He alone will receive the glory.

### **Principle #3**

### **You Have Not Because You Ask Not**

"Well, if women really *are* 'sons of God' and the Lord *does* choose what the world considers weak, base and foolish - why are more Church leaders not women?" First of all, timing is everything in this Kingdom. God has set his Bride not only on a path of restoration - unstopping the ancient wells of our foundational truths - but on a pathway to maturity. As detailed in chapter two, many of the Church's ancient wells have now been unstopped:

- Withheld from the Church for almost 1000 years, the Word of God was finally restored to His people in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> Century.
- And after lying dormant for nearly 1600 years, the gifts of the Spirit were also restored to the Body of Christ, beginning in the early days of the 20th Century.
- And in this 21st Century, the pure and undefiled love of Christ is finally nailing the coffin shut on hatred (anti-Semitism) and racism in the heart of Believers.

And today, as the Church moves on into maturity, we are witnessing the Spirit of God move in the lives of Christian women in a way that has not been seen for many years. But there's no reason to pat ourselves on the back yet. Just because Christendom has acknowledged the ministries of some women does not mean that all of God's women have been set free to accomplish His will for their lives. Thank God there are bold Christian women daring to fulfill their destiny; but, tragically, the percentage of Christian women actually walking in the fullness of their callings is minuscule.

But the timing is right for women of God everywhere to step out of the shadows and into His marvelous light. The truth of sonship, which surpasses all our fleshly differences, has begun to be manifest in the Body of Christ. And God's women - long despised, devalued and over-looked - are now positioned for greatness. Yet there is still another of God's principles that Christian women must understand if they are to walk in the fullness of Christ: You have not because you ask not. God is all about choice. For example, salvation is freely offered to every human being on earth, yet only those *choosing* to accept this gracious gift can be saved. The same principle of choosing is always present when it comes to women and their role in the Body of Christ. God's women can accept the role that Christian tradition has carved out for them, or they can decide to press in declaring, "I will accept nothing less than *all* God has for me!"

Every woman of God today stands at a crossroad and must choose which path to follow. One option is to be a “daughter of Rebekah,” trying to fulfill the will of God through manipulation and deceit. Having married Isaac and become pregnant with twins, Rebekah sought God when the children within her struggled. As a result, the Lord gave this woman an extraordinary revelation: “The elder shall serve the younger.”<sup>158</sup> After clearly hearing from God, did Rebekah then approach her husband with this news? No. Perhaps she felt her input would not be heeded, but in choosing this path, Rebekah never even gave the Holy Spirit an opportunity to work on her behalf. Instead, this woman used manipulation and lies to try and fulfill God’s mandate, setting in motion a series of events with far-reaching, disastrous consequences.

This is a treacherous and self-destructive snare that many of today’s Christian women fall into. Having been robbed of their rightful voice in the Body of Christ, yet having clearly heard from God, many have stooped to manipulation to fulfill His will. And what are the bitter results of this course? Heartache, distrust and a terrible example for others. After Rebekah showed Jacob how to get the blessing from his father - using trickery and deceit - their older son Esau became so enraged that Jacob had to run away in fear for his life. As a result, Rebekah never again laid eyes on her favorite son. And what of Isaac, duped and betrayed by the very woman who swore to honor him? Was he ever able to trust his wife again? We just don’t know. And of course Jacob would have to eventually crucify the terrible character flaw of manipulation, which had been perfected with the help of his beloved mother.

Yes, women of God today can settle for being a “daughter of Rebekah,” and bear all the bitter consequences this choice brings with it...or choose to become a bold and courageous “daughter of Zelophehad.” We are introduced to these five remarkable women in Numbers 27. Zelophehad, from the tribe of Manasseh, died having borne only daughters; no sons to receive his inheritance and no sons to keep his name alive. But these five women - Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah - were not content to be left out.

Refusing to give up in despair, cry on one another's shoulder, bemoan their misfortune or curse their bad luck, these women demonstrated an almost incomprehensible strength and boldness. These five ladies had the gall to appear before Moses (the high leader of more than six million Israelites), Eleazar (God's priest), the princes of Israel *and* the entire congregation, and make a request no woman had ever dared utter: "Give us a possession among the men." Without a doubt, you could have heard a pin drop in the Tabernacle that day! And surely more than a few mouths flew open in shock. But Moses, knowing all too well that you can never put our God in a box, wisely made inquiry of the Lord. And guess what God said? "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right."<sup>159</sup> These five remarkable women, because they dared to ask, were given all that their father had possessed.

In the Church today, women - as "sons of God" and clothed with the Christ Jesus - have been made eligible to receive every gift and high calling of God. These same women - after generations of being marginalized, devalued and belittled - are now positioned for greatness. All that remains is for women of God to rise up and say, "Give us a possession among the men!"

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## ***Does God Really Prefer Men?***

Young American missionary, **Darlene Deibler Rose**, survived four years in a notorious Japanese prison camp set deep in the jungles of New Guinea. Her husband and fellow missionary, Russell Deibler, perished along with many others. But Darlene not only survived, she returned to New Guinea a few years after the war ended, continuing her courageous work among the unreached natives of that land. Her autobiography, *Evidence Not Seen*, is not only a tribute to the faithfulness of God, but to the unshakeable faith of this extraordinary woman.<sup>160</sup>



**Gladys Aylward** held tightly to her dream of becoming a missionary in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds: financial hardship, rejection from a missionary agency, resistance from local authorities and two wars! Working as a lowly parlor maid, she saved every penny for two years, acquiring just enough money for a rail trip to China. She served for many years in this strange and beloved land, winning innumerable hearts to Christ, and becoming a much loved and respected figure in the process. In 1940 she led

almost 100 orphans to safety, crossing mountains and the Yellow River to keep them from enemy soldiers.

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## Chapter 5

### One Flesh

#### A Rose by Any Other Name

Everyone loves the sleepy little town of Mayberry. In this hamlet of by-gone days, Sheriff Andy Taylor rarely ran into the dangerous underbelly of society. No, his days were usually filled with jaywalkers, moon-shiners and the hilarious deeds of his renowned Deputy, Barney Fife. But occasionally, real criminals did come into town. Of course our good-natured but competent sheriff always caught the bad guys and locked ‘em up. Now as jails went, none topped Mayberry County Jail. Decorated with flowers and Aunt Bea’s homemade doilies, Sheriff Taylor made sure his prisoners were not only well cared for, but had all the comforts of home. Those scoundrels were served hot, delicious home-cooked meals, and sometimes Andy would even sing to them, strumming along on his guitar. But no matter how well they ate or how much they were entertained, those outlaws were *still in jail!*

Now, if forced to choose between the brutality of an Alcatraz and the hominess of Mayberry, any criminal in his right mind would pick Mayberry. But every prison, no matter how charming, is still a prison. And each prisoner, regardless of treatment, has still been denied their freedom. This is exactly what the Church has taught husbands to do to their wives today: lock them away behind beautifully decorated and well-kept bars. Oh, it’s quite lovely in there, having been adorned with such words such as “servant leader” and “high priest of the home.” But Christian wives have still been locked out of the decision-making process and forced to serve out a life sentence their Righteous Judge never did hand down.

The battle has grown intense. And husbands need more than Stepford wives today. They need women of God, confident of their position in Christ Jesus, who are free to crawl down into the trenches and do battle with the enemy alongside them. How many times have we heard, regarding marriage, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”<sup>161</sup> Yet have we ever really examined this scripture? What does it mean to be “yoked together” anyway? Paul was referring to an instrument that binds two great animals together, under the control of one master. Yoking two animals of unequal strength is counterproductive and harmful to both creatures. But to harness two great beasts together is to accomplish much. Both submitting to the same Master. Both pulling in the same direction. Both working with all their might. How ironic that with one breath we have preached the wisdom of these words and with the next we distorted this same scripture, declaring that one creature is to be master over the other!

Were it not so dangerous - yielding such far-reaching and disastrous results - it'd be funny. In the name of “proper order” Christian wives have been urged to quit pulling their weight, release themselves from God’s yoke, and climb into the back of the wagon with the children! But this is no laughing matter. This disengagement of wives and overburdening of husbands has come about for several reasons, and we will examine each one closely.

## **A Flawed Definition of “Headship”**

In the fifth chapter of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul uses allegory and comparison to give us the perfect picture of Christian marriage. The problem is, in many churches, this rather lengthy discourse appears to have gone through some sort of theological “chop shop” - where thoughts and directives have been tragically broken down and cruelly separated - so that the original beauty of

Paul's words is barely even discernable. "The husband is the head of the wife" has been pulled out, alienated from the rest of the dialogue, leaving many Christians perfectly comfortable defining "headship" for themselves. They've read those eight little words as if they were a complete sentence, a whole thought, when nothing could be further from the truth. It's only when we allow Paul to finish his sentence that we discover *God's definition* of headship.

"For the husband is the head of the wife, *as Christ also is the head of the Church*, He Himself being the Savior of the body."  
[emphasis added] Ephesians 5:23

The husband is the head of the wife *in the same manner* that Christ is the head of the Church! In other words, Christ's relationship with His Church is our blueprint for Christian marriage. What does God expect from a Christian husband? Examine *Christ* and we'll find out. What are the duties of a Christian wife? Examine the *Church* and we'll learn. Too often we ignore the sum of Paul's teaching here in Ephesians, pulling a few words out of context instead, and then flipping through the pages of Webster's Collegiate in a desperate search for headship. And yet all the while, God's Word has defined it for us.

But others have understood the Christ/Church relationship to be our model for Christian marriage. For these dear souls, the failure to grasp equality between husband and wife is really a secondary issue, no more than a symptom. Their *real problem* is failing to understand what Christ did for the Church! Contrary to popular opinion, biblical headship has nothing to do with subjugating a loved one into a position of indignity and humiliation. In fact, the only ones Christ dominated - subjugated, took control of - were the devil and his cronies! He *empowered* His Bride. Therefore, *biblical* headship can only be expressed by lifting up a person of lower status to equality and honor, truly

becoming their savior. Just look what Christ - head of the Church, Savior of the Body - did for us:

## **Jesus**

Raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven.  
(Ephesians 1:20)

Holy, harmless, undefiled.  
(Hebrews 7:26)

Far above all rule, authority, power and dominion. All things put in subjection under his feet.  
(Ephesians 1:21, 22)

Knew that his Father was always attentive to His prayers, and whatever He asked for was done.  
(John 11:41, 42)

## **Church**

When we were dead in our trespasses and sins, God raised us up with Jesus and seated us with him in heavenly places.(Eph.2:5,6)

Made glorious, holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:27)

Given the keys to the Kingdom. Whatever we bind on earth is bound in heaven. Whatever we loose on earth is loosed in heaven. And if two agree on earth touching anything, it shall be done for them!  
(Matthew 18:18,19)

Whatever we ask for, in the name of Jesus, the Father has promised to give.  
(John 16:23)

Position, righteousness, power and prayer - what Jesus has *earned*, the Church has been *given*! And because of this we have been commanded to do the works of Christ. Jesus went about healing all manner of sickness and disease. The Church is ordered to do the same. Jesus preached. The Church preaches. Jesus cast out devils. The Church is to cast out devils. Jesus made disciples. The Church's great commission is to go and make disciples all mankind. The Apostle John summed it up perfectly: As Jesus is, so "are we in this world!"<sup>162</sup>

Jesus has always had myriads and myriads of angels to serve Him. What He longed for was a Bride - a companion, flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone - one who could walk beside Him in righteousness, holiness and equality. So He that "knew no sin" became sin "that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."<sup>163</sup> Lifting us up, placing us in a position of authority and sway cost Jesus everything. But because of His sacrificial love, we are now qualified to sit with Him in heavenly places and we, as well, are ministered to by angels.<sup>164</sup>

Why, too often the Church's biggest problem is not the devil at all...but our failure to comprehend just who we are and what we are capable of in Christ! Is it any wonder most Christian women today are blind to their potential as well? The kingdom principle of "first the natural, then the spiritual"<sup>165</sup> has never been more painfully evident. Natural wives throughout the Kingdom - unaware of their possibilities, ignorant of their power and oblivious to their high status - are merely reflecting the identity crisis, which has crippled the Church for eons.

But there is good news on the horizon. Many preachers have begun provoking the Bride of Christ, demanding we realize who we are and live up to our high calling. And at the same time, natural wives throughout the Kingdom are being challenged to live up to *their* potential as well, accepting their God-given rights and responsibilities.

No, biblical headship has nothing to do with forcing a loved one into a place of dishonor and degradation. That's called

“victory in warfare” and is reserved for our enemy! Headship, as patterned by Christ, involves lifting a person of inferior rank up to a place of equality and honor. As a result of the fall, husbands have obtained greater deference and respect in this wicked world. It is up to them, therefore, to resolutely honor their wives, following the example of Christ and grant them equality. And wives? They are to learn their roles and responsibilities from what God expects of the Church. What if we said to Jesus, “You’re the big, strong Man. You do it! We’re too delicate and fragile to preach, teach, and convert the lost.” Why, that would be ridiculous, right? In fact, it’s in *this same letter* that Paul makes it abundantly clear just what Jesus expects from His Bride, and that’s “*to grow up in all aspects into Him* (emphasis added).”<sup>166</sup>

Yes, the Church, our model for Christian wives, is commanded to grow up in *all aspects* into Christ...yet natural wives are treated like children, unable to bear the burdens of life and discern God’s mind in important matters?! Surely, we can agree there’s something wrong with this picture. Christian wives must come into a place of maturity, fulfilling their duties as gifted and able soldiers of God - no longer abandoning their posts and heaping every burden onto the shoulders of their husbands.

Now, the only other place in scripture that uses this particular phrase - a man being “the head” of a woman - is found in I Corinthians 11. In this setting, the Apostle Paul is responding to various questions the saints at Corinth had posed to him in a letter.<sup>167</sup> And the topic Paul addresses is *not* “Should women preach?” but rather “How should women dress *when they preach?*”<sup>168</sup> In responding to their queries, Paul makes several significant statements in rapid-fire succession. First, he addresses the importance of being culturally sensitive. (In that day and age, a woman was thought to have dishonored her husband, appearing to flaunt her beauty and sexuality, if she didn’t cover her hair.) And then he touches on the story of creation to make two more important points: 1) the interdependence between men and women

and 2) the right of women to make their own choices about headwear.

The interdependence of the sexes is summed up beautifully in verses 8 and 9: “Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. [Remember, Eve came out of Adam.] Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. [But remember, Eve was fashioned in the image of God because Adam needed an “*ezer neged*”, a strong helper that corresponded to him.]”<sup>169</sup> These verses do not allow arrogance or condescension between men and women, but force us to recognize our dependence upon one another.

And then Paul makes his next point, which is that women have the right to judge for themselves: “For this cause ought the woman to have power [“*exousia*” in the original Greek, meaning “power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases”<sup>170</sup>] on her head because of the angels.” This is a powerful verse, obviously referring to Paul’s earlier statement in the same letter: “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?”<sup>171</sup> Now some modern translations have added the words “sign of” to verse 10, so that it reads like this: “For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.”<sup>172</sup> But these words are not in the original manuscript, the King James Version being much more accurate here.

Now of course there is still much confusion over Paul’s reference to the angels. Failing to remember that what we call I Corinthians was actually a *letter* - with no verses and chapters separating Paul’s words - we’ve come up with some pretty wacky notions about the whole angel reference. The most popular goes like this: Angels look upon the long hair of women as submission and are reminded to submit to God. But this is just grasping at straws. We have to look at Paul’s reference *within the context* of his entire letter if we’re to properly understand it. Say, for example, your aunt penned you a rather long letter, stating on page one: “My dishwasher is on the fritz again. I’ve got to call a

repairman.” And then, after chatting about your cousins and her new cat, on page five said, “I’m not buying any expensive gifts for Christmas this year but, because of the dishwasher, will be making homemade candy and cookies for the entire family.” After reading this letter, would you say, “Because of the dishwasher...because of the dishwasher...what in the world did Aunt Sue mean by this? Does she have a new dishwasher that actually *makes* homemade candy and cookies?!” Why, of course not. Even if her letter was so long that by the time you got to page five you had already forgotten what she said about the dishwasher, you’d just go back and look it up.

This is exactly what we must do about Paul’s statement regarding the angels. We see that Paul had been chiding this particular church for not judging in-house matters themselves, but for running to the courts whenever a dispute arose. He said, referring to events that will take place after the return of Christ, “Do you not know that we shall judge the angels? How much more matters of this life?”<sup>173</sup> So when he gets to the subject of headwear, just a few pages later, he says that women should be able to decide for themselves “because of the angels.” And in verse 13 he states plainly: “Judge for yourselves.”

Addressing cultural sensitivity, touching on the story of creation and then bringing in an earlier reference to the angels, our misunderstanding of these verses in chapter eleven has been the source of confusion for years. But we’re beginning to get it. One sentence, however, still misconstrued by many, is this statement of Paul’s:

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”<sup>174</sup>

Now most traditionalists use this verse to bolster their view that men are superior to women by exerting that “head” here means “boss/ruler/chief.” But in the excellent book *Why Not*

*Women?*, David Joel Hamilton makes a most convincing argument that this “head” does not mean “authority/leader” at all, but rather “source/origin,” like the head-waters of a river. He goes into great detail discussing the original Greek word (*kephale*) and the Greek translation of Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures (the *Septuagint*), and all of this is very interesting from a scholarly point of view. But his most compelling argument by far is that scripture simply does not support this old school interpretation of “head.” Unfortunately, the “authority/leader” of every man *is not* Christ.<sup>175</sup>

All we have to do is turn on the television, sign on the internet or flip through the radio to witness for ourselves what Hebrews 2:8 states plainly: “all things” are *not yet* “subjected to Him.” It is a tragic fact that many millions of souls are still yielding themselves as servants of sin, rather than servants of righteousness,<sup>176</sup> and are not allowing Christ to be their leader at all. The Bible does, however, reinforce the idea of Christ being the “source/origin” of every man. In fact, Paul documented this truth in this same letter stating: There is “one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.”<sup>177</sup> And who could forget John 1:3, which explicitly states that Christ is the source of all life? “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”<sup>178</sup>

After proving that Christ is not yet the “authority/leader” of every man, but *is* indeed the “source/origin” of all life, Hamilton drives his point home by reminding us of the unity, harmony and mutual submission of the Godhead: The Father praises the Son and works through the Spirit; the Son yields to the Father and promotes the Spirit, and the Spirit points to the Son and does what the Father says. So while we see that Jesus voluntarily yielded to the will of His Father during the years of His earthly ministry, to state that God is His “authority/leader” is to rob Him of His exalted position and all-consuming power.

In fact, Jesus made no bones about His equality with God. “The Father loves the Son,” He said, “and has given all things into His hand...”<sup>179</sup> For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has

given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.”<sup>180</sup> Christ’s claim of equality was not “robbery,”<sup>181</sup> but simply His position from time eternal: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”<sup>182</sup> And while some of us may lack understanding about Christ’s position within the Holy Trinity, the Jewish leaders of that day heard Jesus’ claims of equality loud and clear. In fact, this is one of the main reasons they were so determined to kill him: “For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, *making Himself equal with God* (emphasis added).”<sup>183</sup> No, there is no hierarchy within the Godhead - no President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer - as our carnal minds would conceive. The early Church understood this, teaching that:

“‘head’ must be understood as ‘source’ rather than ‘boss’ lest one arrive at a faulty understanding of the Trinity.”  
Athanasius, Fourth-Century Church Father<sup>184</sup>

In their passion to defend a hierarchical view of marriage, many today have inadvertently misrepresented the nature of the Godhead, insisting that “head” in I Corinthians 11:3 means “authority/leader.” But, as we’ve seen, the *balance* of the Word does not support this view. And neither does an exhaustive study of the original Greek and its usage in scripture. It requires a great deal of humility to admit we’ve been wrong. But to concede that “head” means “source/origin” in regards to Christ and “all men,” and “source/origin” when it comes to Father and Son, and yet *passionately insist* that it somehow means “authority/leader” in regards to men and women is downright ridiculous. This would require an impossible-to-defend leap of faith and break every rule of education, grammar and common sense!

## Ask the Architect

In the early days of the automobile, a tall, gaunt stranger in a Ford stopped to help a new motorist stranded along the road. Appreciating this act of kindness, but doubting the man's ability, the frustrated new owner eventually did step aside, allowing the stranger access to his brand new car. To the owner's delight, the man proved himself quite the expert, fixing the broken automobile on the spot. With all the new technology, "How in the world could that man have handled my problem with such ease?" the motorist wondered shortly after. "Why, don't you know who that was?" his friend responded. "That was Henry Ford himself, architect and builder of your fancy new machine!"

Without a doubt, no one could fix a Ford like the gentleman who designed it. In just the same way, no one can repair the institution of marriage like the God who created it. A September 2004 report by The Barna Group, America's premiere Christian polling institute, reveals that the divorce rate for born-again Christians (which has now climbed to 35%) is *identical* to that of the world!<sup>185</sup> This devastating news should serve as a wake-up call for the Body of Christ, underscoring our state of confusion, frustration, and inability to repair what has apparently broken down. Dear Saints, we must now step aside, allowing the Architect and Builder of marriage to restore His priceless creation.

The popular question "What Would Jesus Do?" is always appropriate when seeking the mind of God on a matter. How did Jesus respond when confronted with the issue of divorce? He immediately pointed *back* to creation, *back* to the perfect marriage, *back* before the fall of mankind.

"Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'? Consequently, they are no longer two, but one

flesh. What therefore God has joined together [literally ‘yoked together’ in the original Greek<sup>186</sup>], let no man separate.”  
- Matthew 19:4b, 5, 6

As Christ Himself made clear, that first undefiled marriage is our example, our goal, our ultimate ambition. And the Word of God clearly states this first husband and wife dwelt in such harmony, such oneness, they even shared the same name! “He created them male and female, and He blessed them and *named them Adam* in the day when they were created (emphasis added).” Keep in mind that this first human was made in the likeness of God, after His own image. And it’s only natural that our God (who is Three, yet One) would create an Adam that was two, yet one. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost created man in His image: Adam the man and Adam the woman. And like their Creator, this man and woman were each distinct in personality and expression, yet unified in purpose and function.

“Then God said, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let *them* rule...And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”  
Genesis 1: 26a, 27 (emphasis added)

The process of Adam’s creation is unique and quite revealing. “God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”<sup>187</sup> And then God set about proving to this man that nothing else on the earth could “correspond” to him. A bear corresponded to a bear. A lion corresponded to a lion...only an Adam could possibly correspond to an Adam. So God put him to sleep, reached into his side and pulled out a rib. And out of this rib, He fashioned a woman. The inevitable result of this action? Only *together* did they now form the image of God. Husband would

never again be complete without wife, and wife was woefully undone without husband.

Not that singles are somehow unfinished or less than marrieds. Far from it! Each individual person - man, woman and child - is made whole in Christ Jesus. But marriage is unique in two ways. First, it represents the likeness of God Himself, a Triune Being who has three separate and distinct personalities, yet is one in purpose and principle. Secondly, the account of creation is a picture, a prophecy, of Christ and His Church. For before husband and wife became separate beings, they were united in one body. The woman was *inside* the man, waiting to be pulled out and fashioned. So it was with the Church, Ephesians reveals. “He chose us *in Him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love (emphasis added).”<sup>188</sup> It was after the crucifixion that God reached inside of Christ and pulled out the Church!

This first husband and wife, made in the image of their Triune God and foreshadowing Christ and His Church, were placed over the garden. Both of them given dominion and rule. And having learned from the best - as Father, Son and Holy Ghost modeled unity, harmony and mutual submission - husband and wife were indeed “one.” Our childish competition for God’s affection - with one spouse claiming a closer, more intimate relationship with God than the other - did not yet exist. In fact, scripture indicates that only *after* the fall did the man claim sole ownership of the name which both he and the woman had shared in the garden: “*Now* the man called his wife’s name Eve (emphasis added)”<sup>189</sup> the Bible records. And with this seemingly innocent command, it had begun. The husband was beginning to rule over his wife, even renaming her as one might a pet, child or slave. But this was a bitter result of the fall, not the way God created marriage to function.

It’s an ingenuous and unique institution, this covenant of marriage, this holy and sacred “yoking together” of husband and wife. And when operating according to God’s precepts, will meet

the needs of both spouses in a way that no other relationship can. In a fully functional Christian marriage, both spouses will:

- Have the Christ-like virtue of humility firmly engrained into their character.
- Be exalted, honored and lifted up - a legitimate need within each human being, which is reflective of our heavenly Father's DNA within us.
- And have a best friend for life, mirroring the ministry of the wonderful Holy Spirit.

Let us quickly examine each of these important points. First, no other relationship compares to marriage when it comes to perfecting humility in both husband and wife. Why, where else do we have the opportunity to “die daily”<sup>190</sup> except in our own homes? And the glorious benefit for households in which both spouses have resisted self-indulgence and put down self-will? Why, these dear saints have invoked the favor of God, because He resists the proud and gives grace to the humble!<sup>191</sup> “But I thought I was supposed to ‘be a man’, standing up for my rights,” confused husbands declare. “Give us chapter and verse,” we respond. The Gospel is clear: Prefer one another, honor one another,<sup>192</sup> and submit one to another.<sup>193</sup> In fact, Paul prefaces his whole discourse about husbands being the “head” of their wives with these exact words: “And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”<sup>194</sup>

Did we really believe that the basic tenets of Christianity - humility, meekness and exalting someone else's needs above our own - were to be applied everywhere *except* for our marriages?! Come on, now! If your wife wants you to worship Buddha, stop supporting missions or in some other way compromise the Gospel of Jesus Christ... well then by all means, take a stand, brother. But this isn't the cause of contention in most Christian marriages. Quite often it is simply a struggle of wants and desires. Like our childhood game of “king of the hill,” the biggest bully usually wins, be it husband or wife. This may well be how the Church

describes a Christian marriage today, but this sort self-promotion and self-will demonstrates anything *but* Christianity in marriage.

Secondly, each spouse's need to be lifted up, honored and respected is very real. It's not sin or pride, but a reflection of God's nature within us. Where we often mess up, though, is in *how* we get this need met. Jesus never said it was wrong to sit in the "high seat" - He simply said, "*Don't put yourself there!*"<sup>195</sup> Proverbs 27:2 puts it this way, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."<sup>196</sup> Each spouse's need for honor and exaltation is not wicked - it's when it crosses over into *self*-honor and *self*-exaltation that sin enters in.

And last but not least, Christian marriage is to be a camaraderie, a vital life-giving friendship. Not a hierarchy in which one spouse rules over the other. We had *that relationship* with our parents! Ecclesiastes describes the "I got your back" of Christian marriage perfectly: "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up...And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him."<sup>197</sup> In fact, it is this same chapter in Ecclesiastes which is most often quoted by pastors at Christian weddings: "A threefold cord is not quickly broken."<sup>198</sup>

And they are correct. Christian marriage, this unique threefold relationship - husband, wife and their God - is nearly indestructible when functioning according to God's precepts. The valleys are filled and the mountains are brought low, preparing the way of the Lord.<sup>199</sup> Husbands, these high "mountains" in a corrupt world, must realize the fall of mankind has placed them in a position that God never created them to assume. And wives, these lowly "valleys," have to step up their game, realizing who they are in Christ Jesus and bearing the responsibility of equal partnership in Christian marriage.

Certainly men and women are different, bringing diverse qualities and viewpoints to marriage. But this is by design. We can

easily see the value of these gender differences when it comes to our children. Why, every study reinforces what God has known all along: It takes both Mom and Dad to produce well-rounded, productive and happy children. Dear Christian, gender differences exist so that husbands and wives can complement, balance and complete one another...not foolishly dominate or compete with each other.

## **Here We Go Again**

God has *always* made a distinction between the master/servant relationship and that of a husband and wife, Old Testament and New:

“And it will come about in that day,” declares the Lord,  
“That you will call Me Ishi [my Husband] and will no  
longer call Me Baali [my Master].”  
Hosea 2:16

“But I thought a godly wife called her husband ‘lord’!” many Christians declare. This belief, based on I Peter 3, so permeates Christian teaching today that wisdom commands we take a moment and study it closely. Now the rule for “rightly dividing” I Peter, or any other book of the Bible for that matter, is to begin by asking several key questions: 1) Who is the author? 2) When was it written? 3) Who was it written to? 4) And what were the circumstances at the time that it was penned? Discovering the answers to these questions is an important first step for any student of the Word, and is critical for a comprehensive understanding of I Peter.

Now this particular letter was written by Peter himself around 63 AD and was addressed to the saints in Rome on the eve of Nero’s horrific persecution of those Christians. History tells us that Rome caught fire in the summer of 64, destroying nearly three-quarters of that city and killing many of its citizens. And Nero, the

Roman emperor, was so despised that rumors soon surfaced blaming him for the fire. To squash these - and hopefully lift his approval ratings - Nero said the Christians did it. And the ferocity with which this wicked man began to attack Christians in Rome is nearly incomprehensible. These saints were not just murdered; their torture became official state-sponsored sport. They were sown into the skin of wild animals and given to the dogs to tear apart. They were crucified, beheaded and used as exhibits in Nero's circus. And as evening drew near, became human candles - set aflame while still alive - to light the emperor's parties.

Having been warned by the Holy Spirit of these approaching persecutions, Peter took quill to parchment addressing these dear saints...very much aware that many of his readers would never make it through the decade. Their only hope was in the life to come. "Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ"<sup>200</sup> Peter urged. In fact, this whole letter is an instruction manual for suffering saints, and could well be entitled: *How to Get Through Hell With Your Faith Intact*. And to this end, Peter succeeded. Christians, much maligned before Nero's persecution, actually won the sympathy of many Romans during it. As a result, many souls came to Christ through these nightmarish years. Nero eventually killed himself in the summer of 68, but not before Peter was crucified upside down and the Apostle Paul was beheaded.

Now that we understand the setting of this particular letter, let's take a look at the letter itself. In it, Peter specifically addresses three groups of suffering souls: 1) Christians, 2) abused servants, and 3) wives married to disobedient husbands. And to each of these Peter holds up the example of Christ, reminding them that when "reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously."<sup>201</sup> In fact, it is immediately after speaking about the cruelty of the crucifixion that Peter turns his attention to wives: "*In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be*

won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior (emphasis added).”<sup>202</sup> These wives were instructed to submit to disobedient husbands *in the same way* that Christ submitted to those who crucified Him! Servants were given the same command about cruel and perverse masters; and Christians were told to submit to rulers, even though these rulers would soon begin the systematic extermination of these same Christians.

Now please don’t misunderstand; there is a time for Christians to stand up for their rights. Paul demonstrated this in his encounter with a Roman centurion. Having been stretched out and prepared for torture, Paul turned to the jailer and said, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?” frightening the Roman commander who suddenly understood that he had violated the law.<sup>203</sup> And another time, Paul and Silas had been beaten and forced to spend the night in prison. And when the chief magistrate came the next day to release them, Paul boldly declared, “They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now they are sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.”<sup>204</sup>

But, dear Saints, these precious Christians in Rome had no rights. The king himself declared war on all Christians; servants and slaves were routinely abused and even murdered at their master’s whim, and wives were considered the “property” of their husbands with absolutely no rights at all. No, the only option open to these saints was to submit to unrighteousness and hope in God.

Tragically, the important and potentially life-saving instructions found in this letter - a letter specifically addressed to people with no legal recourse or rights - has been misunderstood and misappropriated for decades. Abusive slave masters often quoted I Peter 2 to keep their Christian slaves in line, and too many preachers today quote I Peter 3 to keep Christian women in line.

But this was never Peter’s intention. He was not *advocating* any of these bitter circumstances, but was simply issuing

instructions to the unfortunate saints who found themselves in the midst of them. To women much like those in most Arab nations today, Peter spoke of Sarah. He reminded them that even when Abraham disobeyed God (remember, he sold his wife *twice* out of fear for his own life!), God ultimately saw her plight and rescued her.

Dear Christian, we must not pull two or three verses completely out of context, foolishly holding up disobedient husbands and wives without rights as the gold-standard for Christian marriage. In fact, turning to Christian husbands in the very next verse, Peter makes it abundantly clear that wives (though physically weaker) are *not* second-class citizens in God's Kingdom. "Husbands, you had better honor them as *fellow heirs* of God's grace or He won't even answer your prayers!" he pointedly warns.<sup>205</sup>

Church, we in America have been blessed with a society that acknowledges equal rights for women. And wise women will always follow the example of Paul, availing themselves of their rights as citizens, refusing to submit to abuse by husbands or anyone else. For the sake of their children, for the sake of their safety, and for the sake of the Gospel, women of discernment will never allow scripture taken out of out of context to imprison them in violent and cruel marriages.

In fact, scripture plainly demonstrates that submission - for the sake of submission alone - is never a prudent course for wives to follow. Not once are they commanded to "obey" their husbands. While servants are ordered to obey masters and children told to obey parents, this word is conspicuously absent when it comes to the husband/wife relationship. As peers, rather than underlings, wives are admonished to use discernment, submitting to their husbands as it is "fitting in the Lord."<sup>206</sup> In other words, if it gives glory to God and lines up with scripture, do it...but if it doesn't, don't.

This has always been God's litmus test regarding submission, be it Old Testament or New. Why, just look at Abigail, a woman

“of good understanding”<sup>207</sup> that found herself married to an evil fool named Nabal. When David had extended a hand of friendship to this man, asking for his assistance, Nabal stupidly rebuffed Israel’s future king, his lack of discernment painfully obvious as he snorted, “Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse?” Furious, David ordered his men to grab their swords. And every male in that household would have been destroyed had it not been for the wisdom - and what some today might call “rebellion” - of Abigail.

Knowing that her husband’s wishes were not at all “fitting in the Lord,” she saddled a donkey and went out to David herself, bringing bread, wine, cake and raisins. “Please do not pay attention to this worthless man,” she pleaded. “Nabal is his name and folly is with him.” She begged David to forgive the insult, assuring him that God Himself would take revenge on Nabal. David allowed her to go in peace, and the very next morning Nabal had a heart attack and died! And how did God deal with Abigail, this woman of wisdom and understanding who had deliberately gone against her foolish husband’s wishes? Why, she became *Mrs.* David and later moved into a palace!

Saints, our popular religious mantra - “as long as I submit to my husband I’m covered” - has absolutely no scriptural basis. What if Abigail had forsaken her responsibilities, trying to hide behind this kind of ridiculous rhetoric? What if she, like so many wives today, had said, “Well, even if my husband misses God, I’m still covered because I’m in submission.” This woman would have been sorely mistaken...and the blood of her household would have been on her hands as well.

Where in the world did we come up with this dangerous idea anyway? The “I was just following orders” defense didn’t work for the Nazis after WWII and it won’t get foolish wives off the hook either. To place the wishes of a husband above the wishes of God is idolatry. Every Christian’s first allegiance must be to God.<sup>208</sup> We will not stand before our spouses on the Day of Judgment nor give account to them for the deeds done in the body. It is to God we will answer. It is God we must obey.

Of course the perfect will of God for husband and wife, demonstrated in the Garden before the fall, is mutual submission and mutual exaltation. And it was to this that Christ pointed when asked about divorce. Now, more than ever, it is critical that we extract our marriages from under the curse and build them upon a solid, biblical foundation. Our infatuation with 1950's nostalgia - desiring to turn back the clock to *Leave It to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best* - can't fix anything. They're our favorite shows, too. But we don't live on a studio lot, Christians! The safety and protection we yearn for in regards to our families will only come from instituting the principles of God. The Lord never intended for one person to rule and dictate the direction of any family. *Both* husband and wife were given dominion over the garden and *both* were commanded to rule. Remember, in the "abundance of counselors there is victory"<sup>209</sup> and only a "fool" delights in "revealing his own mind."<sup>210</sup>

To insure good success and accomplish all that God has called them to, each Christian family must be able to discern the specific will of God for their lives. Where do we live? What jobs do we pursue? What church should we attend? How do we handle this crisis? All critical questions that must be answered by their God. And as things stand today, with husbands issuing the final word, there's a pretty good chance many Christian families will miss God completely too many times. Why? Because, according to the Word, the will of God is to be confirmed by the testimony of at least *two witnesses*.<sup>211</sup>

In small, everyday, unimportant matters - what's for supper, what color should the new car be, where should we go on vacation - dying to self and preferring one another is the only option for both spouses. But when it comes to important family matters, both of these witnesses (husband and wife) should be free to present their case. In an environment of mutual respect and honor, each spouse should lay out exactly what they feel the will of God is, using scripture to back it up. This common sense approach usually ends any argument. But should husband and wife reach an

impasse, disagreeing in vital, potentially life-changing situations, we suggest the “three-day rule.”<sup>212</sup> For three days put aside your opinion. Put aside your feelings. And put aside your food. Seek God earnestly as you both fast and pray.

We’ve discovered that when both husband and wife lay down their bias, and become unified in seeking the face of God, even sticky situations are quickly resolved. And quite often, rather than one spouse being *completely right* and the other *completely wrong*, the will of God often turns out to be a compromise of both. However, if after all of this, husband and wife still find themselves at a stalemate, they must seek counseling. Just make sure the counselor is a wise person, filled with the Spirit of God, able to discern the mind of God and willing to weigh both viewpoints equally.

Yes, Satan would love nothing better than to keep our marriages under the curse, the Christ within wives completely disregarded. And just as religious tradition has historically blinded the eyes of many Christians to the work of the Holy Spirit and the equality of the races, tradition has certainly done its part to keep women irrelevant, immaterial and without a voice. But there are at least two more traps that we must guard against. One has entangled many a good husband and the other, wives.

First, husbands must be alert for the spirit of arrogance and control. This wicked spirit is evident whenever someone constructs a wall between God and others, and then stands there, declaring they are the only doorway back to the Father. Judaisers followed Paul from town to town attempting to do this to the Gentiles, saying that new believers must go *through the Law* to reach Jesus. Some pastors today are guilty of doing it their congregation, declaring the saints must go *through them* to reach the boundless supplies of heaven. And Christian husbands have been taught to do it to their wives on a regular basis, believing their wives actually go *through them* to get to God. Sadly, many sincere - but sincerely wrong - saints have been deceived by this wicked spirit. Church, we must remember the words of Paul, that it’s good to be sought

after in a commendable fashion but to always be on guard against people who “shut you out” just so you have to go *through them* to get to God.<sup>213</sup>

But the biggest roadblock to building a sound marriage has got to be the overwhelming carnal desire of Christian wives to crown an earthly king. This is the same trap that Israel fell into, time and time again. Their passion to be like other nations - having an earthly king rule over them and fight their battles for them - was, ultimately, a rejection of their God. And just like Israel, many foolish wives today have enthroned their husbands, placing them in an exalted position that was created for God alone. Israel was warned that bitter consequences that would soon follow should they continue down this foolhardy path: “He’ll take your sons, your daughters and your servants, collecting for himself the best of your fields, your vineyards, your olive trees and a tenth of all your flock. And, ultimately, you yourselves will become his servants!”<sup>214</sup> And just like Israel, many Christian wives, determined to have a man to rule over them and fight their battles for them, have discovered that bitter consequences accompany this course: “My husband won’t listen to anything I have to say! He treats me like I’m no more than a servant or a maid!”

But, dear wife, why should he pay attention to you? After you’ve spent years making sure he is high and lifted up, why should your husband now humble himself to consider the wishes of a subordinate, an inferior, someone that’s not a “king” like he? *Of course* he’s more comfortable sharing his heart and exposing hidden weaknesses with other men! It only makes sense...the king would never confide in the baker, the butler or the chambermaid. His confidence, quite naturally, would be in a peer, an equal, another king. How sad that Christian wives, in their zeal to crown an earthly king, have undermined their own happiness and sabotaged the sacred intimacy of the husband/wife relationship.

God eventually did set up a system for Israel regarding kingship, but it was never His perfect will for that nation. He may have *allowed* a fallible, imperfect man to sit upon the throne, but it

was created to hold a just, righteous and perfect God. Can God be glorified in a marriage in which the husband has been crowned king? Probably so...if he's a *good* king. But why run that risk? Because even while there were a few good kings throughout the history of Israel, there were many, many wicked kings and even cases of good kings gone bad. But none of this was God's original plan. For example, it was never His desire for Israel to go into captivity, yet this was always the result of bad kings on the throne. Why should any family run that risk - spiritual, emotional and financial bondage - just because an imperfect, fallible, all-too-human king sits upon God's throne?

And what would make a husband want to be king of the castle, anyway? Not wisdom, that's for sure. Several years before God gave Israel a king in his wrath, a wise man tried to reason with a group of Israelites who were feverishly seeking a natural man to rule over them:

“Once the trees went forth to anoint a king over them,  
And they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us!’  
But the olive tree said to them, ‘Shall I leave my fatness with  
Which God and men are honored, and go to wave over the trees?’  
Then the trees said to the fig tree, ‘You come, reign over us!’  
But the fig tree said, ‘Shall I leave my sweetness and  
My good fruit, to go and wave over the trees?’  
Then the trees said to the vine, ‘You come reign over us!’  
But the vine said to them, ‘Shall I leave my new wine,  
Which cheers God and men and go to wave over the trees?’”<sup>215</sup>

Olive tree, fig tree and vine all wisely rejected the foolish request, not willing to leave their good characteristics just to go “wave over the other trees.” In this parable, which so perfectly captures the nature of fallen mankind, those trees did eventually find someone willing to be crowned king: A prickly bramble bush!

Marriage, as God originally designed it, just might require more humility from husbands than they're accustomed to and more

responsibility from wives than they're comfortable with. But whoever said God was aiming for our comfort zone? It is the challenge of faith that God requires, not the ease of natural and worldly inclinations.

## **A Question of Royalty**

The first few years of married life can be quite the roller-coaster ride. We're up, up, up with passion and excitement and then down, down, down with radical change, adjustment and compromise. This holy struggle for "two" to become "one" is a challenge in the best of circumstances, but we in the West have made the difficult nearly impossible. You see, while women in many other parts of the world grow up in social and economic bondage, only to discover freedom and equality as Christians, our young women often have quite a different experience. Having come of age in a nation which treats them with deference and respect, America's women have been encouraged from their youth to succeed in school and make their voice heard in important matters of political, social, and economic concern. "You can do all things through Christ!" their preachers encouraged, rallying the troops. "What is impossible with man is possible with God! Remember, you have been given the mind of Christ!" Imagine the shock of growing up with all this liberty, encouragement and support ...only to lose it with "I do."

Not long after marching down the aisle, Christian brides all across America wake up, scratch their heads and wonder, "Just what *did* they put in my wedding punch? How could I have been so intelligent and capable *before* marriage...and over-emotional and incompetent *after*?" Frustrated, bewildered and confused, they are assaulted daily with illogical and inconsistent reasoning: "Dear Sister, the Master and Creator of the Universe values your input and urges you to reason with Him in prayer...however, your

husband is too high and lofty to grant you a say in important matters.”

“What?!” these Christian women sputter in confusion. “*God* can humble Himself to consider my petitions, but my husband can’t?!”

“Yes, that’s right,” says the Church, without batting an eye. “Now, remember, you have the mind of Christ. Of course, that *still* doesn’t mean you can make good decisions. *That* is for your husband alone!”

As this absurdity thunders from the pulpit, the radio and the bookstore, our young woman eventually hum a new song - “once I was free, but now I am bound, once I was bright but no longer am I sound” - or they just get out. To have known great freedom, only to lose it, is almost certainly more painful than never to have experienced it at all.

Let us quickly examine one of the most destructive beliefs in Christianity today regarding the sacred institution of marriage. This is a teaching which, at first glance, appears to be quite scriptural. It’s got a bunch of biblical words in it and advocates zealously claim they can trace it all the way back to the Old Testament. A closer inspection, however, swiftly reveals the many holes in this popular theory. What is this flawed belief? That God has designated the husband alone to be prophet, priest and king of the home.

The Word of God clearly states, regarding *each and every Christian*:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession.”

I Peter 2:9

And indeed, our standing as prophet, priest and king *is* traced back to the Old Testament. Because of mankind’s fall, the broken communication between God and His image, and our continuous rebellion, God instituted all three of these anointed offices and

used them to communicate a type, a shadow of the Christ to come. The priest sacrificed the blood of bulls and sheep to atone for the sins of God's people. The prophet heard the voice of God and boldly proclaimed His words to the nation. And the king reigned and ruled over the population, establishing order and assuring justice for all citizens of the realm. And when Jesus came He fulfilled every one of these offices: sacrificing His own innocent blood as our Great High Priest, preaching the good news of the Gospel throughout the land as God's Prophet, and now reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the Kingdom of our God.

Fulfilling each of these holy offices, Christ has reconciled the world to Himself and has now given the Church the "ministry of reconciliation."<sup>216</sup> Because of this, in Christ, we are *all* priests, offering daily the sacrifice of praise. In Christ, we *all* come as prophets, boldly proclaiming the good news of the Gospel. And in Christ, we *all* have dominion over the powers of darkness in this present life and will reign with Jesus in the life to come.

Now, which one of these blood-bought positions would you take from women and reserve for the men alone? To do so would fly in the face of Christ's redemptive work and oppose the exalted position that God has given to each and every Christian today. And how could one gender possibly be more qualified to fill any of these positions anyway? The Bible makes it abundantly clear: there are *no physical requirements* for our status in Christ Jesus. In fact, Jesus Himself didn't meet the "physical requirements"! Having clearly descended from the tribe of Judah and not Levi, His standing as High Priest was based wholly on the "indestructible life" that dwelt within Him.<sup>217</sup> And yet we would go *beyond Christ*, now imposing physical criteria to meet a spiritual position? No, dear Saints, our standing is also based solely on the "indestructible life" that dwells within us!

"Okay, I understand my position as 'prophet, priest and king'," Christian wives now confess. "But everyone keeps saying my husband is 'high priest' of the home!" Yes, this is the latest take on the whole "men are better than women" argument and the

development of this new doctrine is quite interesting. Just a few years ago certain Christian leaders declared the husband to be “prophet, priest and king of the home.” And for a while, everyone bought it. Then, much like the child that cried, “The emperor has no clothes on!” someone finally said, “Wait a minute, I thought the birthright of *every* Christian was to be ‘prophet, priest, and king’! Why is it that *husbands* are so special?”

“Oh, I know the answer to *that one*!” someone finally countered. “We’re *all* prophets, priests and kings, of course...the husband is simply ‘*high* priest of the home’!” And just like before, the Church has swallowed it hook, line and sinker. But scripture does not support this theory any more than it did the first. Under the Old Covenant, “high priest” was an auspicious office, bearing great privileges and weighty responsibilities...for these men alone were allowed into the Holy of Holies to sacrifice and intercede for the sins of a nation. Yes. Real, live, flesh-and-blood men most definitely served as “high priests” under the Old Covenant, but Jesus is the only one scripture calls “High Priest” in Christianity. Having spilled His own precious blood to atone for the sins of all mankind, our great High Priest “abides forever hold[ing] His priesthood permanently.”<sup>218</sup> Not husbands, not wives, not pastors, not apostles...just Jesus. Sharing an unbridled, intimate love with His Father and “always live[ing] to make intercession,”<sup>219</sup> Jesus both enjoys the privileges and has faithfully fulfilled the duties of our great High Priest.

Yet the Bible plainly calls Jesus our “forerunner,” leading every Christian behind the veil, where we too are given the responsibility of intercession and the intimacy of a loving relationship with our Father. Dear friends, we have once again made assumptions that are not supported by scripture, manufacturing an elevated spiritual position for husbands that simply does not exist. To declare the husband “high priest” of the home is to suggest that he alone is allowed into the “Holy of Holies” and that he alone bears the responsibility of intercession for the family. Yet nothing could be further from the truth! Paul

plainly declared that a believing wife “sanctifies” an unbelieving husband just like a believing husband “sanctifies” an unbelieving wife. In other words, whichever spouse happens to be born-again is the spiritual authority in the household, making the children “holy,” set apart for God.<sup>220</sup>

As Jesus Himself pointed out, the will of God is for husband and wife to dwell as “one flesh,” living a life of mutual submission, honor and exaltation. In so doing we not only give God glory, but wreak holy havoc upon the plans of our enemy, who seems to favor the “divide and conquer” strategy. Once he has successfully turned husband against wife and wife against husband, he is free to move on to the next family. “My work is done here!” he smirks. “They’ll do a beautiful job of destroying one another now!”

Christianity’s dirty little secret of spousal abuse by husbands and Prozac popping by wives is only two of the extreme results born of this inequity which thunders from the pulpit. After years of hearing that she is *less* than her husband, somehow *not really complete* in Christ Jesus, the valuable gifts and callings that God has placed within this wife will lay dormant for a lifetime. And like a favored child that can’t help but feel arrogant toward his siblings, this deluded husband walks in unintended conceit, provoking the resistance of God in his life.

Dear Christian, we must not allow this to take place one minute longer! Let us cast off the religious bias that comes so naturally and be noble-minded Bereans,<sup>221</sup> refusing to accept anything less than God’s perfect will for Christian marriage.

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## *Does God Really Prefer Men?*



“It was like entering the mouth of a dragon,” **Huldah Buntain** says of her journey down India’s Hooghly River in 1954 with husband and fellow missionary, Mark. “The murky water resembled sewage flowing down a

wide gutter, only this current contained dead dogs and cows and even the skeletal remains of a human body.” Widowed since 1989, Huldah runs the vast ministry she and her husband began half a century ago. The Calcutta Ministry now includes more than 800 churches, an educational system, Bible colleges, a hospital, a nurse’s training center and a teacher’s college.

Born Isabella Baumfree in 1797, she was one of 13 children born to slave parents. Her mother endowed within her a deep, unwavering Christian faith that carried her through many trials in her life. In 1843, Isabella changed her name to **Sojourner Truth** and walked through Long Island and Connecticut preaching, “God’s truth and plan for salvation.” She was a powerful preacher and influential Christian activist, even meeting with President Abraham Lincoln in the White House.

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## Chapter 6

# The Conclusion of the Matter

### Confusion

The message of gender equality in the Body of Christ can be quite frightening to the untrained eye. In fact, it shook us up pretty good when *we* were first confronted with it! Never were two Christians more convinced that proper order for the family was as follows: husband, wife, son, daughter, dog, cat, fish. But the Holy Ghost would not leave us alone. Daily, He confronted us with scriptural inconsistencies in our way of thinking. And there was simply no getting around the fact that in heaven - where God's will is *uncontested* - men and women are equal. And remember, it was Jesus who prayed we do God's will *on earth* "as it is heaven"!<sup>222</sup>

So while the call for gender equality in the Body of Christ may *seem* similar to the feminist agenda and the radical left, don't you believe it. Homosexuality is a sin from which those in bondage need to be freed. Abortion is murder. And women are not superior to men; they are their equals. This lines up perfectly with the basic tenets of Christianity and should not be a radical departure for most saints. Sadly, however, it is. But so was the realization that slavery was a sin, that the Word of God should be available to the masses, and that forgiveness could not be purchased with money.

Of course, the devil knows it's relatively easy to keep us Christians away from truth that challenges our natural bias anyway. Sprinkling a little heresy into the mix usually does the job quite nicely, the ensuing confusion granting us the perfect excuse to avoid the matter completely. It's much like an Arkansas farmer we heard about a few years back. Deciding he'd lost too many watermelons to thieves sneaking over his fence at night, he finally

posted a sign which read: ‘*BEWARE! One if These Watermelons Is Poisoned!*’ Convinced his money crop was now safe, the farmer was soon resting soundly again. The thieves, however, were not to be outdone. That poor farmer was horrified the morning he was confronted with a hand-painted sign of their own which read: ‘*Now TWO of These Watermelons Are Poisoned!*’ Those thieves - not sure if the farmer was bluffing or serious - had crawled over that fence one last time and poisoned *just one watermelon*. As a result, that poor man couldn’t *give* a melon away much less sell one. Perfectly good fruit, left untouched because of one tainted watermelon!

That’s exactly what the devil has done, thrown in just enough poison to dissuade us from the truth. It worked on millions as snake-handlers and poison-drinkers kept them from legitimate gifts of the Spirit. Lasciviousness has scared many away from grace. And now that homosexuality has become accepted as just another lifestyle in America, the churches in the West can’t run fast enough from scripturally sound, biblically accurate gender equality! Saints, we must not allow perfectly good Truth to die on the vine just because Satan has sown some poison into the field.

Without a doubt, men and women are different in many ways. But the Word of God does not support what seems to be the general consensus among Christians in America, which is that masculine traits are inherently good while feminine ones are evil. If truth be told, there are strengths and weaknesses inherent to both genders. But spiritually, there are no gender lines, which is why the characteristics that count are as at home in women as they are in men.

- ***Courage*** - After all the men had run away in fear, only the women and young John stood by their Savior as He died on Mt. Calvary. In fact, the Bible is replete with stories of courageous women. Women like Esther, who was willing to say “If I perish, I perish,” to save her people and Rahab who defied a king and hid the Jewish spies.

- **Wisdom** - While the Bible never indicates either gender is born with a greater capacity for wisdom, it is interesting that wisdom itself is personified as a woman. And of course the Bible is full of stories regaling the wisdom of godly women- Ruth, Naomi, Hannah, Abigail, just to name a few.
- **Discernment** - And while today's Christian leaders would most likely declare this particular household "out of order," God didn't seem to have a problem with the Shunammite woman having greater discernment than her husband. In fact, He rewarded her with a son, which was the desire of her heart!<sup>223</sup>
- **The Ability to Lead** - Even under the Old Covenant, before the curse was broken, Deborah was one of Israel's greatest judges. And afterward, the Church abounded with competent, godly women leaders like Priscilla, Phoebe, Chloe, and many more.

The Word of God clearly demonstrates that these important virtues are not instinctive to one gender and alien to another, and neither is the ability to recognize the voice of God. When eight-year-old Josiah became king of Judah, he inherited a mess. Idol worship thrived while the house of God stood in ruins. After finding the lost book of God's commandments, Josiah told Hilkiah the priest, "Go, inquire of the Lord for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the Lord that burns against us."<sup>224</sup> And to whom did Hilkiah turn when he needed a sure word from God? To a woman named Huldah, a prophetess married to a "keeper of the wardrobe."<sup>225</sup> In fact, the Bible is replete with women who heard clearly from God and relayed His words accurately. Women like the four daughters of Phillip, prophetesses every one.<sup>226</sup>

Before casting anyone aside based on superficial differences such as race, economics or gender, we'd be wise to remember that God never judges by outward appearance. After rejecting disobedient Saul, the Lord sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint a

new king for Israel. Commanded to go the house of Jesse, God assured this prophet that he had “selected a king for [Himself]” among Jesse’s sons. You know the story. The oldest boy walked in, tall and good-looking, and Samuel was sure that this was the Lord’s anointed. But God said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”<sup>227</sup>

God still looks at the heart, Church. Watching ESPN is not a qualifier for preaching the Gospel, nor is a penis a requirement for hearing the voice of God. It’s a reproductive tool, not a spiritual antenna attune to the heavenlies. God will call, equip and put women to work as quickly as He will men. Women are not overlooked based of their gender, but neither are they given a free ride because of it. Ananias was not the only one who keeled over dead for lying to the Holy Ghost. His wife, Sapphira, met this fate as well!<sup>228</sup>

We serve a God of justice, righteousness and equality. And to portray Him as playing favorites among His children based on their physical differences is fraudulent and incorrect. He does not prefer white over black, rich over poor or men over women. And the Church in America must grow up and stop acting like a little boy’s club where everyone’s afraid of getting “girl germs.”

## **Distortion**

In Peter’s second letter to the churches scattered throughout the Roman Empire, he issued a grave warning: “Some things that Paul writes are ‘hard to understand,’” he cautioned. “As a result, the ‘untaught’ and ‘unstable’ have distorted these and other scriptures.”<sup>229</sup> Peter’s admonition clearly separates those who “distort” the Word of God into two very different categories.

One, “the untaught,” speaks of the ignorant. Far from harboring wicked hearts, this first group is made up of those who distort the scriptures only because they are ill-informed and just

don't know any better. And try as we might, none of us can completely avoid this category. It is simply a part of growing up. We often hold passionately to certain views for *years* before God enlightens our understanding, bringing revelation and discernment, enabling us to grow.

The others however, "the unstable," are a much more sinister lot. These perverse souls have "forsaken the right way" and "gone astray."<sup>230</sup> Two very different groups acting out of two very different impulses...but both are *producing the same results*: A distortion of the scriptures. Because of this, no one gets a pass based on their sincerity. And no one doctrine is beyond examination. If it is true, the light of God's Word will simply reinforce it. And if it's found to be false? Then all of Christendom will benefit from the scrutiny!

Bearing this in mind, and to round out of the subject of gender equality in the Body of Christ, we must address two more controversial passages. The first is found in 1 Corinthians 14: 34, 35:

"Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church."

Admittedly, the meaning of these two verses *seems* clear-cut and unambiguous at first glance. But anything more than a perfunctory once-over reveals four major problems in our traditional understanding of these two verses.

First, there is no way that Paul was issuing an across-the-board rule that all women must be silent in church. To do so would not only contradict his other letters, but this letter as well. Remember, he had just addressed the subject of appropriate headwear for women as they pray and prophesy in church; and while prayer at times can be silent, prophesy never is. And women

are definitely included in these other instructions he issued to the entire church body at Corinth.

- “But if *all* prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by *all*, he is called to account by *all* (emphasis added).” I Corinthians 14:24
- “When you assemble, *each one* has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation (emphasis added).” I Corinthians 14: 26b

To argue that Paul, in one breath, would command women to “Prophecy, sing, teach, give a revelation, a tongue and an interpretation” and then with the next say, “Shut up and sit down” is ludicrous. No, the balance of God’s Word definitely does not support an across-the-board rule for all women to be silent in church. Next, Paul never taught that women were to be under the Law. In fact, he said the Law was “becoming obsolete,” “growing old,” and was “ready to disappear.”<sup>231</sup> and he was certainly less than flattering about those who stubbornly clung to it, referring to them as “dogs,” “evil workers” and “false circumcision.”<sup>232</sup> Clearly teaching that Christ was the mediator of a “better covenant...established upon better promises,”<sup>233</sup> Paul never once commanded Christians to stay under the Law. Now he certainly *taught* out of the Old Covenant, but he used it to point to the New, not to keep Christians in bondage.<sup>234</sup>

Are we to believe that this mighty man of God, who wrote such a great portion of the New Testament, suddenly had a change of heart? Or that he cared so little about women he felt they *alone* should be left in bondage and captivity to the Law? Of course not! Those who accuse Paul of being a woman-hater lack knowledge of the scripture and discernment of the truth.

In fact, God’s choice of Paul was an absolute stroke of genius. It was Paul who was taught the scriptures at the “feet of Gamaliel,”<sup>235</sup> - a rare Pharisee who bucked the system and taught his own daughter the Word of God.<sup>236</sup> It was Paul who, from the

beginning, seemed to view women the same as men, throwing *both sexes* into prison! Far from regarding women as not worth his time, Paul seemed to realize - even before his conversion - that females could preach the Gospel just as well as males! And after his new birth experience? Why, this powerful Apostle was unwavering in his fair and unprejudiced application of the Gospel. And he warned that we had better be as well: "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to *maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality* (emphasis added)." <sup>237</sup>

Thirdly, nowhere in the Old Testament does it even say that women are to be silent in meetings. And, last but not least, if Paul were really telling married women to be quiet and ask their husbands at home, what about women who weren't married? Are we to believe they had no questions, were too frightened to speak up, or that Paul didn't feel their inquiries warranted an answer? No, with *four* major problems found in our traditional understanding of only *two* verses, wisdom demands a closer examination of these scriptures.

But according to many Greek scholars, our dilemma is easily resolved. They argue that all these inconsistencies disappear when you properly translate the next verse (verse 36) and read the three together. Now bear in mind that what we call I Corinthians is actually a letter Paul wrote to the saints at Corinth. It was intended to address appalling problems that Chloe had reported to him, <sup>238</sup> and to answer questions these saints had asked of Paul in a previous correspondence. <sup>239</sup> And apparently quite disturbed by both communications, Paul's disgust and exasperation is witnessed by his words and his frequent use of a small but powerful Greek symbol,  $\Upsilon$  <sup>240</sup> which is pronounced "ay." <sup>241</sup> Scholars refer to this as an "expletive of disassociation" and it was used to "express disapproval of existing situations." <sup>242</sup>

The closest equivalent to  $\Upsilon$  in English would be "What?" or "Nonsense!" or "No Way!" <sup>243</sup> So determined was Paul to express

his shock and distress - and correct these ungodly behaviors - that he used this powerful symbol no less than 49 times in this one letter alone! This sounds like an awful lot of correction to be sure, but these were folks making an awful lot of mistakes. Suing each other in court, questioning Paul's right to receive tithes and offerings, getting drunk at the Lord's Supper, and one guy was even sleeping with his step-mother, just to name a few! Paul addressed each of his concerns with both eloquence and passion.

- Or ¶ (What?) Do you now know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? (I Corinthians 6:19)
- ¶ (What?) Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? (I Corinthians 6:2)
- Or ¶ (Nonsense!) Is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living? (I Corinthians 9:6)
- ¶ (No Way!) Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? (I Corinthians 9:7)
- Or ¶ (What?) Do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? (I Corinthians 11:22)

Unfortunately, translators have not always interpreted Paul's ¶, most likely because it conveys "more emotional than intellectual content."<sup>244</sup> But its presence is vitally important. Since the original Greek manuscript had no punctuation at all - no commas, no periods and certainly no quotation marks - the presence or absence of this powerful little symbol is often helpful in determining exactly when Paul was communicating his own ideas and when he was quoting someone else's words and then expressing disagreement. And many Greek scholars today feel the two ¶'s that Paul placed in verse 36 proves the need for quotation marks around verses 34 and 35. They contend that failing to do so has made these two verses appear to be Paul's own words, when his use of this Greek symbol seems to indicate something entirely

different. They believe that Paul was quoting the Corinthian's own words back to them - either from the letter they had sent him or from Chloe's report - and expressing his disdain for their unbiblical belief. But you judge for yourselves. Watch the inconsistencies fade away and Paul's meaning become clear when we read this section of the letter as many of today's Greek scholars now interpret it:

“Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.’ ¶ (Nonsense!) Was it from you that the Word of God first went forth? Or ¶ (What?) has it come to you only?”

I Corinthians 14:34, 35, 36<sup>245</sup>

The vast majority of the Bible has been properly translated and can be taken at face value. But there are times when clear contradictions force us to examine the original text. I Corinthians 14 has provided us with just such an opportunity. Probing a little deeper than usual, we are certain not to distort the scriptures because we're “untaught,” ill-informed, and just don't know any better.

### **And Misunderstandings, Oh My!**

And in the spirit of saving the best for last, we've finally arrived at I Timothy 2. Paul had a problem in Ephesus. Heresies, myths, and endless genealogies were distorting the Word of God in this strategically important church, which he himself had founded. Generating “mere speculation rather than furthering”<sup>246</sup> the Gospel, Paul knew this nonsense had to stop. So what was his strategy for

handling this crisis of misinformation among the saints? It was simple and to the point: conquer a lie with the truth, defeat ignorance with education and destroy conjecture with the facts. In a word: Instruction. Pressing on to Macedonia, Paul left his spiritual son, Timothy, at Ephesus. And Timothy's job was just that, to instruct the saints and set things in order. Wanting to remind this young pastor of his important charge, Paul sat down and wrote the letter that we call I Timothy. And without a doubt, the overpowering theme of this letter - instruction, teaching, and education of the saints - is evident from beginning to end:

- The objective of instruction, made clear from the get-go: “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” I Timothy 1:5
- Who stood in need of instruction was also clarified right away. Because while some apparently wanted to correct mistakes by implementing the law, Paul made it clear the law was for the ungodly. “What the righteous need is instruction,” he insisted.<sup>247</sup> I Timothy 1:6-10; 4:1-7
- And Timothy's educational tools were also spelled out plainly: “Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.” I Timothy 4:13
- The eternal consequences of separating a lie from the truth were made obvious: “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.” I Timothy 4: 16
- And the true character of those who turn away from proper instruction was exposed once and for all: “If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words...he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction...” I Timothy 6:3a,4,5a

Yes, Paul stressed the importance of knowledge, instruction and truth throughout this entire letter to the young pastor, yet without once heaping condemnation upon the confused saints at Ephesus. Frustrated over their mixture of truth and mythology, sound doctrine and heresy, many ministers might have written scathing letters of blame and rebuke. But Paul sent words of encouragement, hope and clear direction. In fact, probably more than any other Apostle of that day, Paul understood the patient heart of God towards “the ignorant and misguided.”<sup>248</sup> And where did this extraordinary insight of his come from? Why, Paul himself had once been an enemy of God *due solely to ignorance and unbelief!*

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, *because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;*”  
I Timothy 1:12-13 (emphasis added)

“*Because I acted ignorantly in unbelief,*” Paul says, deliberately making his lack of knowledge and faith the centerpiece of his conversion in this letter to Timothy. And why did Paul put so much emphasis on his former state of ignorance and skepticism? Because the best educators teach by example. Holding up his own life as a picture of God’s heart toward the ignorant and unbelieving, Paul tells Timothy:

“And the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. *And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the*

*foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.”*

I Timothy 1:14-16 (emphasis added)

Paul wanted Timothy to understand that God never discards a person due to ignorance and unbelief. That, in point of fact, this pitiful state provokes the mercy of God more than the judgment. Why? Because ignorance has nothing to do with the state of a person's heart. This is why the Bible never places blame for the fall of mankind on Eve's shoulders. She was deceived, tricked, fooled, out of ignorance.

Not even created when God commanded Adam to not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Eve was wholly dependent on her husbands educating her to God's wishes. And obviously, he didn't do such a great job. Made in the image of God, walking in perfection and harmony with her Creator and apparently pure of heart, had Eve been taught correctly she could have easily triumphed over the subtle serpent when he came a' calling. But lack of education was her undoing, woefully evident as she misquoted the command of God.<sup>249</sup> Paul refers to this situation with Adam and Eve in that same letter, stressing that women must be instructed in the truth because poor education in the things of God is the breeding ground for deception.

“Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved [saved, kept safe and sound, rescued from danger or destruction<sup>250</sup>] through the bearing of children [childbearing] if they continue in

faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.” I  
Timothy 2: 11-15

The New American Standard chose the term “exercise authority” in that first verse and King James uses the more familiar “usurp authority,” both English translations of the Greek word *authenteo*. But none of our popular translations really expresses the malevolence this word carries. Used just this one time in the entire Bible, *authenteo*’s primary definition is “one who with his own hands kills another or himself.”

Eve’s ignorance led to her deception, which opened the door to rebellion that lay in the heart of Adam; a catastrophic series of events culminating in the fall of mankind...but all beginning with ignorance. No wonder Paul was so adamant about the importance of proper instruction, urging young Timothy to be “constantly nourished on the words of faith” and “sound doctrine.”<sup>251</sup> He knew from personal experience, and Eve’s tragic example, that no amount of sincerity negates the damning effects of ignorance.

But, of course, there is always hope in God! Complete restoration and salvation is ours through the birth of Christ, thus the reference to childbearing in regards to Eve. In fact, it was God Himself that prophesied to the serpent that mankind’s salvation would come through the anointed offspring of this woman: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed [Jesus]; and He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.”<sup>252</sup>

Unfortunately, these four verses which offer such common sense direction for the uneducated and words of hope for everyone, are probably the most misunderstood in the entire Bible. Our lack of discernment and understanding has brought about some of the Church’s most ridiculous doctrines to date. Based solely on the misreading of these scriptures, we have concluded that: 1) women are never supposed to teach men, 2) Paul never tolerated women in a place of authority, 3) women are more easily deceived than men, 4) men are superior to women because they were created first and

5) females somehow get saved or grow in salvation by simply becoming pregnant and having babies. We stress that each of these false doctrines come from these four verses alone because not one of them is supported by the balance of God's Word.

Paul had absolutely no problem with women who were proficient in the Word of God teaching men. Priscilla, along with her husband Aquilla, had taught Apollos "the way of God more accurately."<sup>253</sup> And Timothy himself (the recipient of this very letter) had learned his faith not from his father, but from his mother and grandmother!<sup>254</sup> And Paul never said women couldn't serve in a place of authority, either. Wise women served in places of authority throughout Jewish history: Esther the Queen, Deborah the Judge, Huldah the prophetess just to name a few. And Paul himself happily commended the woman Junia as being "outstanding among the Apostles,"<sup>255</sup> the place of highest authority among New Testament believers. And of course there was Priscilla, Chloe and Phoebe just to name a few more. No, the problem was not *women* in authority, but *ignorance* in authority. Therein lies the danger.

And what in the world made us conclude that because Eve was deceived all women are therefore prone to deception? Was Abigail more easily deceived than Nabal? Did the Shunamite woman not display greater discernment and spiritual insight than her husband? And who in Jericho was able to recognize the hand of God, the woman Rahab or the male king who sat upon the throne? No, deception is born from lack of knowledge, and for the Church to declare it gender based is irrational and not at all supported by the Word of God.

But baseless as these three doctrines are, the order of creation argument and the baby thing definitely vie for first place in absurdity. The creation argument goes like this: because man was formed first, he has pre-eminence. But, Church, this is just foolishness. If order of creation *did* determine rank, then cattle are superior to men, trees superior to cattle and water superior to them all. Why? Because that was the order of creation. In fact, this

theory is so full of holes that had it been a ship it would have sunk eons ago. God created in *ascending* order of complexity and beauty, not *descending*. He went from water to trees to cattle to His crowning achievement, mankind. How ironic that the only ones who could biblically defend order of creation determining rank would be those alleging women to be superior, not men! Pointing to the Genesis account, they could claim Eve was God's ultimate accomplishment, because in the economy of God the latter is always greater than the former,<sup>256</sup> and we serve a God of increase<sup>257</sup> ...but of course these poor souls would be misguided as well. Eve was created out of the same "stuff" Adam was, so that both were in the image of God.

Now the last faulty conclusion that we have drawn from these four verses is that getting pregnant either brings about salvation or causes women to grow in regards to salvation. But, dear Saints, the biological process of childbirth cannot possibly bring about the spiritual salvation of anyone. Having two children ourselves, we can attest to the fact that this is a wonderful and life-changing experience...but what in the world does it have to do with being born again? If getting knocked up and having babies brought about spiritual rebirth, why should we preach abstinence to the unmarried? And if this interpretation of scripture is correct, then it looks like infertile women just hit double-jeopardy - they can't have a baby *and* they're going to hell! No, Paul was simply making reference to the promised salvation and restoration, which is offered to each of us because of the birth of Christ, a promise which God Himself made in Genesis 3.

Dear Saints, Paul was not schizophrenic. The same Apostle who declared that in Christ there was neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female<sup>258</sup> did not turn right around and tell Timothy that intelligent, capable women could never teach or have authority over men. Paul was attacking ignorance, lack of knowledge and unbelief, not women. And to that end, he wrote this letter to Timothy, reminding him to 1) educate the ignorant, 2) sit down those teaching ungodly doctrines until such a time as they

have been trained, and 3) place men and women of sound character in positions of leadership. Yes, men *and* women. In fact, *immediately* after those famous words about instruction, deception and the hope of restoration, Paul describes overseers and deacons.

“Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.”

I Timothy 3:8-11

Of course some insist Paul was describing the *wives* of deacons here, but there is no scriptural evidence to back this claim up. There is however, plenty of evidence to verify that women frequently served in key leadership positions in the early Church. The Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Bailey, who has spent 40 years as a Presbyterian professor of New Testament in Egypt, Lebanon, Jerusalem and Cyprus, affirms that the first mention of women as deacons is found in Romans 16:1-2, where Paul writes, “I commend to you our sister, Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchrea.” Dr. Bailey notes that “Phoebe is called a *deacon* (*diakonos*) not a *deaconess*.” He goes on to say, “For centuries scholars have observed the official nature of Phoebe’s position. Regarding this verse, John Calvin wrote, ‘He begins by commending Phoebe... first on account of her office, because she exercised a very honourable and holy ministry in the Church.’” And Phoebe’s title of “deacon” was not some honorary label - full of fluff but lacking substance - but was the same Greek word used to describe Timothy,<sup>259</sup> Apollos, and Paul himself.<sup>260</sup> Dr. Bailey goes on, “Furthermore, Phoebe is called a *prostatis* over/to many. This word was applied to the leader of worship in a Graeco-Roman

temple as well as to a governor, a chieftain, and the leader of a democracy.”<sup>261</sup>

No, the balance of God’s Word demonstrates that women served in recognized positions of leadership and authority in the early Church. And in this letter to Timothy, Paul was making sure he chose men *and* women of unquestionable character to lead.

And before we close out this section on 1 Timothy, it’s worth noting two more interesting points. First, even though divorce (for unscriptural reasons) was rampant at this time, and polygamy was still practiced by some, Paul made sure men who served as overseers and deacons were only married to one wife.<sup>262</sup> Why? “For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”<sup>263</sup> In other words, their lifestyle would be emulated and copied by the congregation, and Paul understood the original design of marriage to be one man and one woman, forsaking all others and becoming one flesh. It’s also noteworthy that Paul said an overseer or bishop must “manage his own household well, keeping his children under control,”<sup>264</sup> and deacons were also to be “good managers of their children and their own household”<sup>265</sup> - but not once did he say they were to have their wives under control or be good managers of their spouses, even though many preachers today seem to think so!

## **Where Have All The Reformers Gone To?**

Throughout the history of our beloved Church, there have been times - critical times - when the stage was set for reformation. When the saints had become discontent with status quo Christianity and spiritual unrest could no longer be silenced with religious rhetoric. Then, and only then, did God raise up men and women of valor to accomplish his divine purpose. Men like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale who risked life and limb to return the Word of God to His people. Men like Martin Luther, the

former monk who brought the Church back to justification by faith alone. And men and women who cried out against the mid-Atlantic slave trade which had flourished for more than 400 years.

But please don't conclude that reformation is only found in history books. There have been powerful movements of God in modern times as well. The 20th century witnessed a mighty return of the gifts of the Spirit. And in the last few decades, this very generation has had ring-side seats to the total reformation of worship. Yes, throughout its nearly 2,000 year history the Church has quite literally grown in leaps and bounds, experiencing radical growth spurts after years of apparent stagnation. Much like a teenager that shoots up three inches over the summer, reformation always brings phenomenal periods of increase and development. And the stage is now set for at least one more reformation: the complete restoration of biblical gender equality.

Noting our admiration for the reformers *and* our reluctance to take a stand beside them, Revivalist Charles Spurgeon once challenged Christians to imagine what would have happened had Luther, Calvin and their compatriots said to themselves, "The world is out of order; but if we try to set it right we shall only make a great row, and get ourselves into disgrace. Let us go to our chambers, put on our night-caps, and sleep over the bad times, and perhaps when we wake up things will have grown better."<sup>266</sup> Dear Christian, taking a stand for gender equality in the Body of Christ today will cost you something. But is it not better to risk unpopularity among your peers than disapproval from your God?

We offer no disrespect to the powerful and anointed ministers of the Gospel who adamantly preach women are to be under men in all matters of importance. Why, many of these Christians have labored for years, winning countless souls to Christ. Yet the Church cannot afford to automatically assume *everything* they espouse is straight from heaven. It is entirely possible to have clarity and insight in one matter...and be woefully blind in another. Why, Martin Luther - the father of the Protestant Reformation - urged Christians of his day to burn down the homes

of Jews!<sup>267</sup> What a foolish and hateful belief. And yet his stand on justification by faith alone *really did change the course of church history*.

Too wise to throw the baby out with the bath water, we have overlooked Luther's shortcomings, as with all heroes of the faith. Combing the scriptures, we have held to that which is true, and disregarded that which didn't line up with the Word. Noble Bereans, we have allowed the Bible to be our guidepost, not the popularity of any preacher. We must display the same wisdom with our Christian leaders today, granting them honor and respect for years of service, yet unapologetically examining the scriptures to determine the legitimacy of each and every doctrine they preach.

Biblical gender equality *will* be restored to the Body of Christ before Jesus returns. Women of God will take their place in pulpits because "the Lord gives the command; the women who proclaim the good tidings are a great host."<sup>268</sup> Wives will once again stand *beside* their husbands as Christian marriage is restored to its original, glorious state. And the Church will again preach a Gospel that is not contaminated by racial bias, social preference or sexism. These matters are without question, because our Lord is coming back for a Church without spot or blemish, mature, and abounding in every good work.

There is only one issue yet to be resolved: Will you be among the millions, or do you have the courage and discontent to take your place beside the thirty? You see, millions of Israelites *eventually* honored David as king, but only *thirty* stood with him when he took to the caves. As this powerful wave of equality sweeps through the Church, millions of Christians will eventually recognize the legitimacy of this reformation, rejoicing in the freedom that it brings. But the ability to recognize God's hand *before* coronation is what earns one the status of "mighty man." Do you have the courage, discernment and valor of a reformer? Will you, dear Saint, be a "mighty man"? We urge you - no, God urges you - take up the cause of gender equality in the Body of Christ

that His Kingdom may come and His will be done *on earth as it is  
in heaven!*

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## ***Does God Really Prefer Men?***

At the age of 33, Southern Baptist missionary **Lottie Moon** dared to go behind the iron curtain of communist China, bringing the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ with her. Lottie often made personal sacrifices to meet the needs of the people she ministered to. And when famine struck, Lottie gave her food to others, literally starving at times. After suffering the devastating effects of malnutrition, this saint died on the trip back to America at the age of 72. Lottie had spent nearly 40 years on the mission field of China.



**Mother Theresa** ministered for over 50 years to the “poorest of the poor” in the streets of Calcutta, India. Taking the words of Christ to heart - “as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye

have done it unto Me” – Mother Theresa saw Jesus in the poor and diseased face of every man, woman and child in India. Her devotion to the poor won her respect throughout the world and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

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## A Final Word to Ministers

God has called, gifted, and anointed women in the Body of Christ just the same as men. So how do we get God's women up to speed? After decades of deferring all decision-making to the men, how can Christian women now become able ministers of the Gospel? These three steps are vital:

1. Their minds must be renewed by the Word of God.
2. They must begin to confess the Word over their own lives.
3. And they must step out in faith.

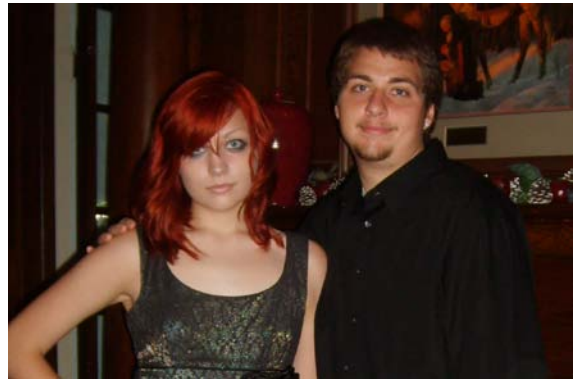
Only after the Word of God takes root, confession lines up with scripture, and they are encouraged to walk by faith will the Church again see strong manifestation in Christian women. And remember, don't ever underestimate the value of your own words. Gideon had to *hear* what God thought about him<sup>269</sup> and *hear* that he was greatly feared by Israel's enemy<sup>270</sup> before he found courage to do battle. Women of God are just the same. They must *hear* how much their Father values them and *hear* that the devil is deathly afraid of them before they can accomplish God's will.

Will mistakes be made? It's probably inevitable. The Word of God says that discernment belongs to those who have "exercised" their spiritual senses through use.<sup>271</sup> And most Christian women have not had the opportunity to do so. Can a person suddenly aroused from a 15 year coma sprint down the hall? Of course not. Their muscles have atrophied from years of disuse. So, too, has discernment and judgment in many women of God. But just as that coma victim can *eventually* regain all his strength and even run marathons, so too will godly women because of your tutelage, patience and perseverance!

## About the Authors



Gary and Leslie Johnson count it their great privilege to have been involved in Christian ministry for almost two decades. With The Salvation Army for six of those years, Gary & Leslie labored in Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas in various avenues of ministry: inner-city youth, unwed mothers, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, homeless shelters and more. They also worked as House Parents for the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village for almost 7 years, parenting abused and neglected adolescents. And for several years they were House Parents and House Parent Supervisors at a therapeutic home for adolescents in Boca Raton, Florida. They were also privileged to serve for a year as House Parents for Christian ex-offenders as Gary shared the Gospel (as a volunteer chaplain) in prisons all over Mississippi, including Parchman Penitentiary's "death-row." Most recently, Gary and Leslie founded and operated a non-profit Christian Community Center of their own called *The Lighthouse*. The Johnsons presently reside in Mississippi.



Children , Sara & Jacob

# Gary's Testimony

By Leslie Johnson

*How God took a life once damaged by abuse, alcohol, drugs and violence – and used it all for His glory!*

## **The Beginning: Life in the Delta**



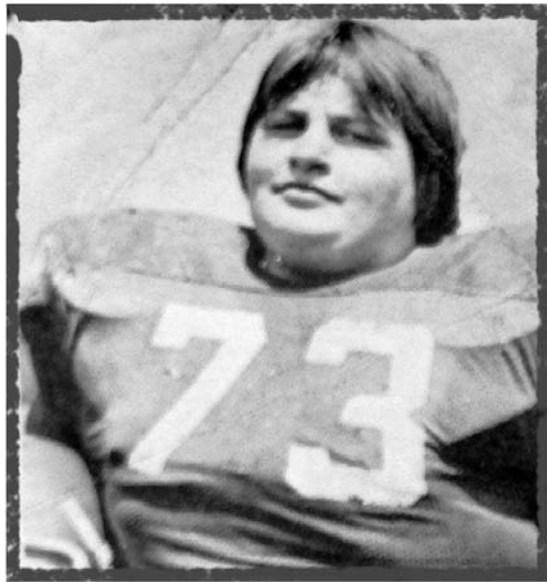
Gary Johnson was born in 1961 and raised in the Mississippi/Arkansas Delta during the height of the Civil Right's Movement - poverty, racism and violence as much a part of his life as hunting deer and trapping 'coon. Complicating matters further, Gary, his brother Billy, and four of their cousins were all abused by their maternal Grandmother. All the parents were completely unaware that Grandma - who had been exposed to and participated in the practices of witchcraft much of her life - regularly tied the young kids up, threw them into closets, and terrorized them as they lay down for naps. One of her favorite methods was to put quarters on their eyelids - telling them they'd die if they opened their eyes - and then stand outside the bedroom window dressed in waders, holding an ax and scream.

The unsuspecting parents were, of course, devastated when they found out what had been happening. In fact, Gary's dad - the son of a very violent father from the mountains of Kentucky and a Native American mother from the Cherokee tribe - was going to kill Grandma. But Gary's mother pleaded with him to quickly move their young family to avoid any bloodshed. Gary's dad

heeded her words and so V.O. and Frances Johnson and their two young boys resettled 200 miles away in a small town called Lake Village, Arkansas.

For a while the family ran a store, living in a trailer park, always struggling to make ends meet, and this is where Gary discovered the confusing world of Christian denominationalism. He laughs and says, "We were whichever bus got their first - I was Baptist one week, Pentecostal the next and the following week I'd be Catholic." And while he certainly noticed all the differences from one denomination to the next, Gary felt they had one message in common: "God was unapproachable and distant, and definitely not very happy with me!"

Gary and his family soon moved to the woods - driving into Lake Village for school and work - but very much at home in the outdoors. Gary - who eventually reached the height of 6 foot 4 1/2 inches and weighed in at 320 pounds - loved sports, football in particular. And when he wasn't at school or practice, he was busy chopping wood, hunting and trapping. In fact, the family's existence was very much like something out of a Daniel Boone movie - no hot water, getting up when the moon was high to run the dogs and hunt raccoon. And Gary actually earned spending money by selling the skins of bobcats, raccoons and minks.



The after-effects of childhood abuse were also very much a part of Gary's life.

Though by nature Gary was jovial and playful, he never hesitated to resort to his fists whenever he felt threatened. This only worsened after Gary started drinking at 12 and doing drugs when he was 16. And when he was old enough to get into bars, he soon discovered that many drunks try to prove their manhood by taking

on the biggest guy in the bar. And, invariably, that was Gary. He's been in more fights than he can remember and had guns pulled on him more often than he can count - remember, this was the Delta 25 years ago and *everybody* had at least two shotguns in their trucks and many carried pistols in their glove boxes. Someone even pulled the trigger once, with the gun pointed right at Gary's temple, but miraculously it never fired. During all this hard living, violence and confusion, Gary always had a tender heart towards God...he just thought God didn't love him. Many are the nights he'd pull his truck over to the side of the road and, with tears streaming down his face, scream out, "Don't forget me, God! Please, don't forget me!"

Having graduated from High School in 1979, Gary originally planned on working a year or two before fulfilling his dream of going to college and playing football. But time passed quickly and his dream of playing college ball along with it, increasing Gary's bitterness, frustration and anger. And then one of his friends suggested they head out towards New Mexico and West Texas, where he had some connections, and make good money working on oil rigs. But their timing couldn't have been worse - the rigs had just begun capping off wells, and there were no jobs to be found. Gary's friend soon returned to Arkansas, but Gary decided to stay and found work in a factory. But before too long, he had hooked up with a drug runner and was hired as a bodyguard, accompanying him on regular runs from New Mexico into Mexico and back again. He also worked protection for the drug runner's father, who was apparently involved in some shady business dealings. Like something right out of *The Soprano's*, Gary would accompany this man to bars and strip clubs where he would meet with his "business partners."

Gary's drinking and drug abuse escalated. He lived in a tiny little trailer, mattress on the floor, and kept two mayonnaise jars beside his bed. The one on the right was filled with "speed" to get him going. And the one on the left was full of "downers" so he could rest at night. And in between, he drank and *drank hard*,

being particularly fond of Southern Comfort. In fact, he overdosed after drinking a fifth at a party one night. Someone said, "Nobody can down a fifth of Southern Comfort!" And Gary stupidly responded, "Oh, yeah?" and killed it. Unfortunately, he had already spent the evening drinking, smoking weed and popping pills. And he has no idea how he made it back from the party to his trailer. He only remembers laying on his back - completely paralyzed - drowning in his own vomit. He was unable to turn to the side and unable to call for help. But, just like the gun that didn't go off, Gary awoke the next morning to find himself rolled over onto on his side.

And like the drinking and drugs, Gary's violence was rapidly increasing. Gary says, "All my dreams were gone. And I found myself in the underbelly of society. It wasn't that I was particularly brave. I just didn't care. I was scared, angry and always in 'attack mode'." He had become explosive. And after he smashed a car windshield and tried to pull a Mexican gang member out through the hole while the car was driving off, the drug runner Gary worked for said he was beginning to draw too much attention. He fired him, gave him a couple hundred dollars and urged Gary to return to Arkansas before he got himself killed. A few days later, Gary headed back to the Delta.

## **Salvation: Jesus Is Calling**

Gary had only been gone 6 months, and nothing had changed in Lake Village. But everything had changed in him. He got a job and tried to go back to the same routine of working, hanging out and partying - but he was miserable and couldn't hide it. He had only been back a couple of weeks when two of his old friends picked him up for a "good time". They were all getting drunk, smoking reefer and were headed to an open-air concert in Memphis. Gary was angry the whole day, stepping on blankets

and picking fights as other patrons were trying to listen to Pat Benatar and the other bands. And after a day of misery and confrontation, Gary and his friends finally headed back that night, but not before stocking up for the ride home: a fifth of Crown Royal, 2 or 3 cases of beer, and a few bags of weed.

Gary says, "I remember it clearly. I was so mad. I hated everyone, especially myself." And then one of Gary's best friends, Ajax, turned to him in the car and made an astounding statement, "Gary, I don't know why I'm telling you this, but Jesus *loves* you, man!" These simple words of Ajax (Alex Reginelli, an Italian Catholic friend) penetrated the hard, angry heart of Gary Johnson like nothing before. And boy, did that make Gary mad! "Ajax, you better shut the \*\*\*\* up!" Gary shouted back. But it was too late; those life-changing words from the deep, gruff voice of Gary's friend were sinking in for the first time in his life. Gary says of that night, "When Ajax said 'Jesus loves you, man,' *thick* conviction hit that car!" Now remember, Ajax had a joint in one hand and Crown Royal in the other - but the same God who used a donkey to talk to Balaam, used an Ajax to talk to Gary! Ajax turned back around and they rode in peace for a while. But before too long, he did it again. Turning around, looking right into Gary's eyes as he sat in the back seat, Ajax said once again, "Gary, man, I don't know why I'm telling you this...but Jesus *loves* you!"

That was it. Gary exploded, "You better pull this \$&!!\$#& car over and let me out right now!!" There were other friends following them, and Gary rode with them for a while before returning to the car with Ajax further down the road. The next day, Ajax and his other friend came over and they all started partying again - drinking beer and smoking dope. And about 10 o'clock that night, Ajax did it again. He said, "Now Gary, I don't know why I'm telling you this - but Jesus *loves* you, man!" Gary shouted, "That's it!!!! You had better not say another word to me about Him - if He loves me, He's gonna have to tell me himself!!!!" And Gary reached over and cranked up the acid rock radio station as loud as it would go...and the radio went completely

silent. Everyone's hair stood on end as the presence of God filled that room and the gentle melody and words of Kris Kristofferson's *Why Me Lord?* suddenly began to flow through the airwaves of Memphis' famous acid rock radio station:

Lord help me Jesus I've wasted it...  
So help me Jesus, You know what I am  
Now that I know that I've needed you...  
So help me Jesus my soul's in Your hands

Try me Lord, if You think there's a way  
I can ever repay, all I've taken from You  
Maybe Lord, I can show someone else  
What I've been through myself  
On my way back to You

Gary fell on his face, weeping and repenting and giving his heart to Jesus for the first time in his life. He says it didn't feel like he was there very long, but the next thing he knew it was noon the following day and he looked up from the floor to see Ajax just sitting there watching him. "Ajax, what am I supposed to do now?" Gary said.

"I heard you're supposed to tell somebody," replied Ajax.

So they hopped in Gary's truck and drove up town where they saw two girls they had partied with many times before. Gary pulled over and excitedly told them what Jesus had just done for him. And the girls said, "Hey! That's great! What time are you going to be at the club?"

Gary said, "Uh, I don't think I can go to clubs anymore...Ajax, can I?"

And Ajax - somehow the expert on salvation through all of this - assured Gary that, no, he couldn't go to the clubs any more. Then Ajax said, "Hey, I know one girl who's a Christian. Let's go see ask her what to do now."

And this is how Gary and Ajax learned that a former hippie was coming to Lake Village to speak and give his testimony. This young man had been a rock musician for 10 years with many famous groups and was now an evangelist with a remarkable testimony of his own. So that night, Gary, Ajax and several other friends piled into a little, old church where they learned about salvation, grace and the amazing love of Jesus.

It's at this point, people always ask, "Whatever happened to Ajax?" Well, Ajax and several other friends of Gary's all got saved over the course of just a few days. In fact, the Spirit of God swept through that little town, bringing many former drug users, drug runners, violent and miserable men and women to salvation in Christ!

The young evangelist recognized his important part in this tremendous move of God and decided to stay and start a church. And guess who named it? Why, Ajax, of course! "We all have 'faith' and this is 'fellowship'...let's just call it 'Faith Fellowship'" he said matter-of-factly. And so Faith Fellowship – a Full Gospel, thriving church - was born in Lake Village, Arkansas more than 20 years ago. The evangelist eventually moved on and God brought in another pastor who is doing a wonderful job, even as we speak.

Well, needless to say, Gary's life was never the same. He soon received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and recognized his call into full-time ministry. He moved to northeast Mississippi where he enjoyed traveling with and sharing his testimony with the young evangelist in churches, camps and even schools across the South. He also became involved in the work of the Salvation Army where his remarkable gift of ministering to people in crises situations really flowed. In fact, it was prophesied several times that Gary would see "arms with tracks running up and down them" and minister to alcoholics, addicts and many others in bondage in the under-belly of society. And the Lord spoke more than once that He had made Gary "a big man" for this purpose - that he could walk into these places and immediately get people's attention and even respect because of his size. (Remember, Gary stands 6 foot 4

1/2 inches and is a mountain of a man...but his mom is 5'3" and his dad was 5'7"!)

The word of the Lord has come true many times over. A few years later, he married a young woman who had recently returned to Christ after years spent in sin - that's me! - and we began our life together. It has been 24 remarkable years of marriage and I have never ceased to be amazed at the gifts of God that flow through Gary. He can speak into a situation and within three minutes get to the heart of what has kept a person bound for years. Why? Because it is the *anointing* that breaks the yoke (Isaiah 10:27). And God has sent this anointing into inner-city projects, to death-row inmates, alcoholics, addicts, and "at risk" adolescents to break the yoke of bondage, depravity and sin upon their lives.

And what of Ajax? Well, he married a very sweet lady named Phyllis and they had two wonderful boys. Having stayed in Lake Village, Ajax and Phyllis were active members of Faith Fellowship. And having faithfully run his race, Ajax went home to be with Jesus last year. And remember the Grandmother that abused Gary and her other young grandchildren? She fully repented several years back and even attended a Christian crusade with me, Gary and the kids in 2002. She went on to heaven a few years ago, too; but before she passed away, it was a beautiful demonstration of God's grace and forgiveness to watch Gary at her bedside, singing some of her favorite hymns and holding her hand gently.

I want to leave you with this: Jesus loves you, man. His love is real and life-changing and is available to you today. If you are not presently a Jesus-follower, we urge you to be restored to God by submitting your life to Christ. He really does love you!

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# End Notes

## Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> I Corinthians 12.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 5:14.

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 6:11.

<sup>4</sup> Rojas, Jason. "Regent School of Divinity to Host Azusa Street Lectures." August 26, 2004. [http://www.regent.edu/news/lectures\\_azusastreet.html](http://www.regent.edu/news/lectures_azusastreet.html). "...in the years following the first Azusa Street meeting in 1906, the adherents to the movement grew at an astonishing rate of one million per year. By the centennial in 2006, the number of Pentecostals and Charismatics will be more than 600 million worldwide."

<sup>5</sup> I Timothy 5:21.

<sup>6</sup> Romans 16:1 The word translated "servant" in this verse is actually *diakonos* in the Greek, and indicates a "deacon" or servant-leader of a church. This is the same Greek word Paul used to describe Timothy in I Timothy 4:6, Apollos in I Corinthians 3:5, and himself in Colossians 1:25.

<sup>7</sup> Romans 16:7.

<sup>8</sup> Acts 21:9,10.

<sup>9</sup> Romans 16:3.

<sup>10</sup> Philippians 4:2,3.

<sup>11</sup> Romans 16:21, I Thessalonians 3:2 NASB.

<sup>12</sup> Philemon 1:24.

<sup>13</sup> II Corinthians 8:23.

<sup>14</sup> I Corinthians 3:9.

<sup>15</sup> Philippians 3:17.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 26:12-18.

<sup>17</sup> Acts 20:28a,29,30a.

<sup>18</sup> 2 Peter 2:1a, 2b.

<sup>19</sup> Jude 1:3b,4a.

<sup>20</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing, 2000. p.15.

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<sup>22</sup> Choe, Sang-Hun / AP. "Confucian Values Clash With Modern Korea-Women's groups battle age-old patriarchal stamp on family." *AsianWeek.com*. [http://www.asianweek.com/2001\\_10\\_19/news\\_koreanwomen.html](http://www.asianweek.com/2001_10_19/news_koreanwomen.html).

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- <sup>26</sup> 26 WorldServe Ministries. *The China Challenge*. Summer 1999, p.3.  
<http://www.worldserve.org/>.
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- <sup>28</sup> WorldServe Ministries. *The China Challenge*. Summer 1999, p.3.  
<http://www.worldserve.org/>.
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- <sup>30</sup> Great Lakes Church Planting: A Ministry of Great Lakes Baptist Conference.  
[http://www.weplantchurches.com/fact\\_sheet.html](http://www.weplantchurches.com/fact_sheet.html).
- <sup>31</sup> The Barna Group, in a statement regarding their book *Grow Your Church From the Outside In*, "More than 80% of the registered growth in protestant churches is biological and transfer growth- very little of the growth comes from penetrating the ranks of the unchurched."  
<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Resource&resourceID=53>.
- <sup>32</sup> Outreach, Inc. "Four Laws of Effective Outreach," quoting George Barna, American Profile.
- <sup>33</sup> Gallup, George. Church In the World Today.
- <sup>34</sup> Psalms 119:30 KJV.
- <sup>35</sup> I Peter 2:2.
- <sup>36</sup> Ephesians 1:17.
- <sup>37</sup> Ephesians 1:18.
- <sup>38</sup> Mark 8:18.
- <sup>39</sup> Mark 8:18.
- <sup>40</sup> Nehemiah 9:29.
- <sup>41</sup> The Priest's turban had a plate strapped to it bearing the inscription "Holy to the Lord" (Exodus 28:36) and male Jews often wore phylacteries on their forehead, small leather boxes that carried scriptures inside.
- <sup>42</sup> Romans 11:8.
- <sup>43</sup> Acts 28:27.
- <sup>44</sup> Mark 7:13 The Good News Translation.
- <sup>45</sup> Genesis 1:27.
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- <sup>47</sup> Genesis 2:20.
- <sup>48</sup> Craig, Rebecca, M.Div. <http://www.suite101.com/content/a-new-view-of-eves-curse-a72460>
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- <sup>59</sup> Genesis 3:15a
- <sup>60</sup> Kelly, Shari M. "The Worldwide Suffering of Women." *Mutuality*. Winter 2002. Volume 9, Issue 3. p. 5.
- <sup>61</sup> Kelly, Shari M. "The Worldwide Suffering of Women." *Mutuality*. Winter 2002. Volume 9, Issue 3. p.7; quoting UNICEF statistics as compiled by Kay Radar
- <sup>62</sup> Kelly, Shari M. "The Worldwide Suffering of Women." *Mutuality*. Winter 2002, Volume 9, Issue 3. p. 6.
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- <sup>64</sup> McVicker, Gwen and Idelette. *Discovering God's Heart for Suffering Women*. Vision Publication, 2001.
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<sup>67</sup> Luke 22:42 KJV.

## Chapter 2

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<sup>70</sup> Ephesians 6:5-8, Colossians 3:22, Colossians 4:1, I Timothy 6:1,2, Titus 2:9.

<sup>71</sup> I Peter 2:18.

<sup>72</sup> Raboteau, Albert J. *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South*. Oxford University Press. 1978, page 96, 97.

<sup>73</sup> Matthew 28:19 KJV.

<sup>74</sup> Reverend Ebenezer W. Warren. b.1820. *Nellie Norton; or Southern Slavery and the Bible. A Scriptural Refutation of the Principle Arguments Upon Which the Abolitionists Rely. A Vindication of Southern Slavery From the Old and New Testaments*. Macon, Ga.: Burke, Boykin & Company, 1864. Thornton Stringfellow, D.D.; *Scriptural and Statistical Views in Favor of Slavery*. (Richmond, Va.: J. W. Randolph, 1856). William A. Smith, D.D. and Thomas O. Summers; *Lectures on the Philosophy and Practice of Slavery As Exhibited in the Institution of Domestic Slavery in The United States; With the Duties of Masters to Slaves*. (Nashville: Stevenson and Evans, 1856). (Just to name a few!)

<sup>75</sup> This, of course, is not an exact quote, but a paraphrased summation of Church doctrine.

<sup>76</sup> This, of course, is not an exact quote, but a paraphrased summation of Church doctrine.

<sup>77</sup> Matthew 5:14.

<sup>78</sup> Matthew 6:23.

<sup>79</sup> Proverbs 4:18.

<sup>80</sup> Romans 1:17.

<sup>81</sup> Psalms 84:7.

<sup>82</sup> II Corinthians 3:18.

<sup>83</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew* (written around 150 AD). Chapter LXXXII: "For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time." Chapter LXXXVIII: "Now, it is possible to see amongst us women and men

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who possess gifts of the Spirit of God.” (Roberts-Donaldson English translation).

<sup>84</sup> Iranaeus, *Iranaeus Against Heresies* (written around 180 AD), Book V, Chapter 6: “For this reason does the apostle declare, “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,” (6) terming those persons “perfect” who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God...” (Roberts-Donaldson English translation).

<sup>85</sup> Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullian, *Against Marcion* (written around 207AD). Book V, Chapter 8 .

<sup>86</sup> I Corinthians 12.

<sup>87</sup> Hagee, Dr. John. “Battle for Jerusalem.” *WorldNetDaily Exclusive Commentary*. August 2, 2002. [http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=28499](http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=28499). Gerrish, Jim. “The Sickness of Anti-Semitism.”

[http://www.churchisraelforum.com/the\\_sickness\\_of\\_anti\\_semitism.htm](http://www.churchisraelforum.com/the_sickness_of_anti_semitism.htm).

<sup>88</sup> Martin Luther: *The Jews and Their Lies* (1543 AD).

<sup>89</sup> II Timothy 2:15.

<sup>90</sup> Matthew 13:11, Luke 8:10; I Corinthians 4:1.

<sup>91</sup> Philippians 1:9, but also Colossians 1:9,10, Ephesians 1:17.

<sup>92</sup> Romans 10:2.

<sup>93</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>94</sup> Colossians 1:9.

<sup>95</sup> Matthew 6:6.

<sup>96</sup> John 11:41-42.

## Chapter 3

<sup>97</sup> Hosea 4:6.

<sup>98</sup> 96 Wayne E. Warner, “Maria Woodworth-Etter: A Powerful Voice in the Pentecostal Vanguard.” *Enrichment Journal*. 1999. Assemblies of God USA. [http://www.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/199901/086\\_woodsworth\\_etter.cfm](http://www.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/199901/086_woodsworth_etter.cfm). Joyce Lee and Glenn Gohr, “Women In The Pentecostal Movement.”

*Enrichment Journal*. Fall 1999. <http://www.ag.org/wim/history/index.cfm>.

<sup>99</sup> Joyce Lee and Glenn Gohr, “Women In The Pentecostal Movement.” *Enrichment Journal*. Fall 1999. <http://www.ag.org/wim/history/index.cfm>.

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<sup>100</sup> Richard M. Riss. "Who's Who Among Women of the Word." *Christianity.ca* (Canada's Christian Community Online).

<http://www.christianity.ca/church/history/2004/01.000.html>.

<sup>101</sup> In 1864 the couple founded the Christian Mission in London's East End which later developed into The Salvation Army.

<sup>102</sup> Catherine Booth. <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Wbooth.htm>.

<sup>103</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing. 2000. p.25.

<sup>104</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing. 2000.p.25.

<sup>105</sup> Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives-Lottie (Charlotte) Moon. [http://www.sbhla.org/bio\\_moon.htm](http://www.sbhla.org/bio_moon.htm).

<sup>106</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing. 2000.p.26.

<sup>107</sup> Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Early History. <http://www.wctu.org/earlyhistory.html>.

<sup>108</sup> Wife of America's first Vice President-patriot, abolitionist and early feminist. She urged her husband, "...remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands.... If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.susanbanthonyhouse.org/biography.html>.

<sup>110</sup> A former slave, this courageous woman became a leader in the Woman's Suffrage Movement, the movement to abolish slavery and was a traveling Christian evangelist. Her life's journey took her from picking cotton to influencing President Abraham Lincoln.

<sup>111</sup> Morris Chapman, SBC Executive Committee's president and chief executive officer, urged Southern Baptists at the SBC 2000 annual meeting to "save the family" and created the SBC Committee on Family Life by executive appointment.

<sup>112</sup> The Associated Press 12/30/99 1:31 AM Eastern. Christine Wicker. "Dumbfounded by Divorce" *Dallas Morning News*. both quoting The Barna Group.

<sup>113</sup> Hannah Lodwick, "Four Couples Recognized for Opposing Southern Baptist Position on Women." Associated Baptist Press, August 12, 2003.

<sup>114</sup> Rick Joyner, "Azusa Street: The Fire that Could Not Die." *International Revival Network*, 1996. Morning Star Publications. <http://www.openheaven.com/library/history/azusa.htm>.

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<sup>115</sup> “A Glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven: The Azusa Street Revival.” *This Far by Faith*. <[http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/journey\\_3/p\\_9.html](http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/journey_3/p_9.html)>.

<sup>116</sup> William Booth. “Women Preachers.” adapted Colin Melbourne. Rev.

William Booth’s *Heathen England*, 1878. *Born Again Christian Info*.

<http://www.born-again-christian.infoboath.women.preachers.htm>.

<sup>117</sup> David G. Roebuck. “Loose the Women.” *ChristianityToday.com*.

<http://www.ctlibrary.com/ch/1998/58/58h038.html>.

<sup>118</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing, 2000. p. 67,68.

<sup>119</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing, 2000. p. 27.

<sup>120</sup> “Church’s Lies To Women Exposed.” *Charisma Now*. December 13, 2002 edition. <http://www.charismamag.com/>.

<sup>121</sup> WorldServe Ministries, *The China Challenge*, Summer 1999, p. 3 (names not given for the protection of these Christians). <http://www.worldserve.org/>.

## Chapter 4

<sup>122</sup> Colossians 1:13.

<sup>123</sup> Galatians 6:7.

<sup>124</sup> Matthew 5:44.

<sup>125</sup> Luke 1:52, 20:46, James 1:9.

<sup>126</sup> Romans 12:10.

<sup>127</sup> Philippians 2:3.

<sup>128</sup> I Corinthians 3:12-15.

<sup>129</sup> Deuteronomy 21:15-17.

<sup>130</sup> “Heir” bible study, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia- Bible Definitions.

<sup>131</sup> Ephesians 2:3.

<sup>132</sup> Galatians 4:5.

<sup>133</sup> Deuteronomy 21:17.

<sup>134</sup> Romans 8:29.

<sup>135</sup> Romans 8:17 KJV.

<sup>136</sup> Genesis 27.

<sup>137</sup> We first heard this wonderful analogy from Bible teacher and Professor Pat Hayes a few years ago.

<sup>138</sup> Romans 8:17 KJV.

<sup>139</sup> Galatians 3:27.

<sup>140</sup> Hebrews 10:1.

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- <sup>141</sup> Romans 8:2; 12:5, I Corinthians 1:30, 15:22.  
<sup>142</sup> Hebrews 1:14.  
<sup>143</sup> Titus 3:7.  
<sup>144</sup> Psalms 89:34, Hebrews 6:17.  
<sup>145</sup> Galatians 4:6.  
<sup>146</sup> Galatians 4:30-5:1.  
<sup>147</sup> John 4:24.  
<sup>148</sup> Acts 2:4,11.  
<sup>149</sup> Romans 16:1.  
<sup>150</sup> Judges 4:4.  
<sup>151</sup> Acts 8:18-21.  
<sup>152</sup> Galatians 5:22,23.  
<sup>153</sup> Acts 11:17 paraphrase.  
<sup>154</sup> I Corinthians 1:29.  
<sup>155</sup> I Corinthians 1:31.  
<sup>156</sup> Hebrews 11:11.  
<sup>157</sup> William H. Tucker, *The Funding of Scientific Racism-Wickliffe Draper and the Pioneer Fund*. Chapter 3. University of Illinois Press.  
<http://www.press.uillinois.edu/epub/books/tucker/ch3.html>.  
<sup>158</sup> Genesis 25:23c KJV.  
<sup>159</sup> Numbers 27:7 KJV.

## Chapter 5

- <sup>160</sup> [www.darlenerose.org](http://www.darlenerose.org)  
<sup>161</sup> II Corinthians 6:14 NKJV.  
<sup>162</sup> I John 4:17.  
<sup>163</sup> II Corinthians 5:21.  
<sup>164</sup> Hebrews 1:14.  
<sup>165</sup> I Corinthians 15:46, paraphrase.  
<sup>166</sup> Ephesians 4:15 emphasis added.  
<sup>167</sup> I Corinthians 7:1.  
<sup>168</sup> I Corinthians 11:4,5.  
<sup>169</sup> I Corinthians 11; 8, 9 New Revised Standard Version.  
<sup>170</sup> Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, number 1849.  
<sup>171</sup> I Corinthians 6: 3 KJV.  
<sup>172</sup> New International Version  
<sup>173</sup> I Corinthians 6:3.  
<sup>174</sup> I Corinthians 11:3 KJV.  
<sup>175</sup> Romans 6:16.

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- <sup>176</sup> Romans 6:16.  
<sup>177</sup> I Corinthians 8:6.  
<sup>178</sup> John 1:3 KJV.  
<sup>179</sup> John 3:35.  
<sup>180</sup> John 5:22,23a.  
<sup>181</sup> Philippians 2:6.  
<sup>182</sup> John 1:1.  
<sup>183</sup> John 5:18.  
<sup>184</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing. 2000. p. 170-Hamilton's source: Catherine Clark Kroeger, "An Illustration of the Greek Notion of 'Head' as 'Source.'" *Priscilla Papers*. 1.3 (August 1987).  
<sup>185</sup> 186 The Barna Group. "Born Again Christians Just As Likely to Divorce As Are Non-Christians." September 8, 2004.  
<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=170> .  
<sup>186</sup> Strong's #4801; transliteration: suzeugnumi  
<sup>187</sup> Genesis 2:7 KJV.  
<sup>188</sup> Ephesians 1:4 emphasis added.  
<sup>189</sup> Genesis 3:20a emphasis added.  
<sup>190</sup> I Corinthians 15:31.  
<sup>191</sup> I Peter 5:5.  
<sup>192</sup> Romans 12:10.  
<sup>193</sup> I Peter 5:5.  
<sup>194</sup> Ephesians 5:21.  
<sup>195</sup> Luke 1:52.  
<sup>196</sup> KJV.  
<sup>197</sup> Ecclesiastes 4:9,10, 12a.  
<sup>198</sup> Ecclesiastes 4:12b KJV.  
<sup>199</sup> Luke 3:4,5.  
<sup>200</sup> I Peter 1:13b.  
<sup>201</sup> I Peter 2:23.  
<sup>202</sup> I Peter 3:1,2.  
<sup>203</sup> Acts 22:25-30.  
<sup>204</sup> Acts 16: 37.  
<sup>205</sup> I Peter 3:7, paraphrased.  
<sup>206</sup> Colossian 3:18.  
<sup>207</sup> I Samuel 25:3 KJV."  
<sup>208</sup> Acts 5:29.  
<sup>209</sup> Proverbs 11:14.

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<sup>210</sup> Proverbs 18:2.  
<sup>211</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:1.  
<sup>212</sup> Esther 4:16.  
<sup>213</sup> Galatians 4:17, 18.  
<sup>214</sup> I Samuel 8, paraphrased.  
<sup>215</sup> Judges 9:8-13.  
<sup>216</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18.  
<sup>217</sup> Hebrews 7:16.  
<sup>218</sup> Hebrews 7:24.  
<sup>219</sup> Hebrews 7:25.  
<sup>220</sup> I Corinthians 7:14.  
<sup>221</sup> Acts 17:10, 11.

## Chapter 6

<sup>222</sup> Matthew 6:10.  
<sup>223</sup> 2 Kings 4.  
<sup>224</sup> 2 Kings 22:13a,b.  
<sup>225</sup> 2 Kings 22:14.  
<sup>226</sup> Acts 21:9.  
<sup>227</sup> 1 Samuel 16:7.  
<sup>228</sup> Acts 5.  
<sup>229</sup> 2 Peter 3:16, quote within a paraphrase.  
<sup>230</sup> 2 Peter 2:14,15 KJV.  
<sup>231</sup> Hebrews 8:13.  
<sup>232</sup> Philippians 3:2.  
<sup>233</sup> Hebrews 8:6 KJV.  
<sup>234</sup> Hebrews 8:6; Hebrews 10:1, Galatians 5:4, Galatians 3:13.  
<sup>235</sup> Acts 22:3 KJV.  
<sup>236</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing. 2000. p. 106.  
<sup>237</sup> I Timothy 5:21.  
<sup>238</sup> I Corinthians 1:11.  
<sup>239</sup> I Corinthians 7:1.  
<sup>240</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/tmp\\_dir/words/2/1102543604-1236.html](http://www.blueletterbible.org/tmp_dir/words/2/1102543604-1236.html).  
<sup>241</sup> Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2228.  
<sup>242</sup> Gilbert Bilezikian. *Beyond Sex Roles*. Baker Books, a Division of Baker Publishing Group. Copyright 1985. p.286.  
<sup>243</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing. 2000. p.190.

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<sup>244</sup> 246 Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing. 2000. p.190.

<sup>245</sup> Cunningham, Loren and Hamilton, David Joel. *Why Not Women?* Seattle, Washington. YWAM Publishing. 2000. p.190. Using the USB third edition of the Greek New Testament. Thayer, Joseph H. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: Baker Book House Co,1977. p.275.

<sup>246</sup> I Timothy 1:4.

<sup>247</sup> Paraphrase.

<sup>248</sup> Hebrews 5:2.

<sup>249</sup> Genesis 2: 16, 17; 3: 2, 3.

<sup>250</sup> 252 Strong's Exhaustive Concordance; #4982, "sozo."

<sup>251</sup> I Timothy 4:6.

<sup>252</sup> Genesis 3:15.

<sup>253</sup> Acts 18:26.

<sup>254</sup> II Timothy 1:5.

<sup>255</sup> Romans 16:7.

<sup>256</sup> Haggai 2:9.

<sup>257</sup> Isaiah 9:7.

<sup>258</sup> Galatians 3:28.

<sup>259</sup> I Timothy 4:6.

<sup>260</sup> I Corinthians 3:5.

<sup>261</sup> Kenneth E. Bailey. "Women in the New Testament, A Middle Eastern Cultural View." *Theology Matters*. Vol. 6, no 1. Jan/Feb 2000le

<sup>262</sup> John Gill's Exposition of the Bible, notes on 1Timothy 3:12.

<sup>263</sup> I Timothy 3:13.

<sup>264</sup> 1 Timothy 3:4.

<sup>265</sup> 1 Timothy 3:12.

<sup>266</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon on Standing Firm in the Faith, by Charles H. Spurgeon Sermons, 1888 p.83-84.

<sup>267</sup> Martin Luther: The Jews and Their Lies (1543 AD).

<sup>268</sup> Psalms 68:11.

## **A Final Word to Ministers**

<sup>269</sup> Judges 6:12.

<sup>270</sup> Judges 7:14, 15.

<sup>271</sup> Hebrews 5:14 KJV