



God's
WOMEN
Then and Now

*Grace
and Truth*

Deborah M. Gill
and Barbara Cavaness

Study Guide

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE



Welcome to the exciting study of the book *God's Women—Then and Now*. It is our prayer that through your personal study of the biblical basis for women in ministry and leadership you will be inspired to serve God with greater joy and confidence and be better equipped to encourage others to do the same.

For each chapter of the book you will find corresponding summary teachings, discovery-learning questions (designated: Q1, Q2, Q3, etc.), and reflection-discussion questions (designated: D1, D2, D3, etc.). This *Study Guide* may be used by an individual or with a group.

Note to Study Group Leaders

The book itself contains *Notes* (pp. 215-30); a *Glossary* with definitions of terms (pp. 231-233); a *Bibliography* (pp. 234-238); a *Subject Index* (pp. 239-244); and a *Scripture Index* (pp. 245-248).

Answers to the questions in this *Study Guide* follow the last chapter.

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UNIT ONE

A BIBLICAL APPROACH

CHAPTER 1

THE BIBLE AND WOMEN



It is common for people, including Christians, to differ in their views about women.

- D1. *How do people from various parts of your country, or levels in society, differ in their treatment of women?*
- D2. *What differences have you seen in views about women from one church to another?*
- D3. *What verses in the Bible have resulted in people having different views about women in ministry and leadership?*
- D4. *How did you come to your view?*

D5. *Where can you go to find God's view?*

God began to show in the Old Testament, and Jesus proved by His life in the New Testament, how much God valued women.

D6. *What examples can you remember?*

D7. *What do these examples teach us about how Christians should live today?*

CHAPTER 2

BIBLE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S QUESTIONS



Sometimes students of God's Word hold different views because they do Bible study in various ways. The New Testament gives an example of how the Early Church settled one of its first differences. In Acts 15, they were debating whether or not Gentiles needed to follow Jewish customs for God to accept them as true believers in Christ.

Q1. Compare how the different members of the Church made their points.

A. The believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees: Acts 15:1, 5

B. Peter, Paul, and Barnabas: Acts 15:7-12

James concluded the debate by showing that God's work among the Gentiles was a sign that He accepted them. The Jews had always used a few verses, while ignoring other verses, to argue against Gentiles. James looked at the question again, using more than the few "favorite" verses, and considered what God was doing among the Gentiles (Acts 15:15-18). Sometimes texts have to be looked at again as understanding of God's ways increases.

Two Questions

Two important questions can help people interpret a Bible passage. The first asks, "What was God saying through the writer of Scripture to the first hearers or readers of the passage—then and there?" The second asks, "What does this passage say to readers today—here and now?"

Before we can know what it means "here and now," we must know what it meant "then and there." Three keys will help focus attention on the original meaning. (a) "Literary context" refers to the important clues to the meaning of a passage from the verses before and after, the whole paragraph, section, and book. (b) "Historical context" refers to the clues from the time of the book's writing. (c) "Content" refers to the words and how they are used in sentences.

Q2. *What does Paul tell Christians to do in Romans 16:16?*

Q3. *How can most Christians ignore what Paul told them to do?*

Categories

Bible texts can be divided into several categories by their purpose. Category 1 = standards or timeless truths; category 2 = records of history; and category 3 = rules for people where they were. All the Bible is “God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Yet, not all passages apply equally to every situation.

Q4. *Look up and read the following verses and label the kind of meaning they express based on their category number.*

A. *Category 1: “Golden Rule,” Matthew 7:12*

B. *Category 2: Acts 16:11*

C. *Category 3: Leviticus 19:19*

Mistakes to Avoid

When a person makes up his or her mind on a subject and then uses only the passages that support their view, they may be misusing the Bible to try to prove their own ideas. We call this mistake “proof texting.” The way you can keep from making this kind of mistake is to (1) admit your own bias; (2) compare all verses on the same topic; and (3) change your thinking in light of God’s truth.

Q5. *By reading only passages such as Leviticus 11:6-8 from the Old Testament, what foods should a Christian refuse to eat?*

Q6. *What foods are Christians allowed to eat according to Mark 7:18-23 and Acts 10:10-15?*

Another kind of mistake can happen by taking a verse from one setting and using it in another setting. “Ignoring context” in this way may lead to reading a meaning into a text that is not there. The way you can keep from making this kind of mistake is to read verses within their setting, thinking about the verses before and after them.

Q7. *Read the instructions Jesus gave one person in Luke 18:22. Now read the context (verses 18-30). Why do you think Jesus did not require the same for all his followers?*

Conclusion

Looking at new passages and gaining better understanding may require the readers to change their former ideas. The help promised to believers for this task is the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Truth—who “will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).



UNIT TWO

OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATION

CHAPTER 3

CREATION AND THE FALL INTO SIN



Creation

Creation, a defining moment of the Bible, demonstrates God's ideal for men and women. Four characteristics of God's divine design are:

- *Equality.* Adam and Eve were created equally in God's image, and equal to each other in being and function.
- *Mutuality.* They were commanded to rule over the earth together in a shared way.
- *Unity.* They were to be as one flesh.
- *Intimacy.* They concealed nothing from each other.

Q1. Which of the four characteristics of creation (listed above) are described by each of the verses below?

- A. "God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).
- B. "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful, and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over [it]'" (Genesis 1:28).

- C. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).
- D. “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:25).

The Fall into Sin

The Bible makes it clear that the Fall into sin was not just the woman’s fault. Adam and Eve were together when the serpent tempted them. “She took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (verse 6). They both made the same choice to disobey God.

Both Adam and Eve were equally guilty; and both men and women suffer the problems caused by the first sin. Eve sinned because she was deceived (1 Timothy 2:14); but Adam was not deceived—he chose to break God’s command. The New Testament stresses the fact that Adam’s sin resulted in our all being sinners (Romans 5:12-19).

Results of Sin

Sin spoiled God’s ideals.

- Instead of celebrating how much alike they were (as Adam had done in Genesis 2:23), *they ignore their equality.*
- Instead of ruling together, *the sinful man tries to rule over the woman* (3:16).
- Instead of unity, *guilt hurts relationships*—both with God (3:8-10) and between people (3:12).
- Instead of intimacy, *sin brings shame* (3:10-11).

Q2. Read verses 3:14-19. Two times the text uses the word “cursed.” What two things were cursed by God?

A.

B.

Q3. Read verse 3:15 about how God will restore His plan and reverse the effects of the Fall. Whose seed will God use to crush the head of the serpent?

CHAPTER 4

MALENESS AND FEMALENESS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT



The Nature of God

- Q1. *Though Hebrew society revolved around men, what does Hosea 11:9 say God wanted His people to know about His nature?*
- Q2. *God's nature is above gender, because God is not human. How does Jesus describe God in John 4:24?*

Patriarchy or Equality?

In Old Testament times men had the power in society and controlled women and children. This system is called patriarchy. This way of men and women relating is not God's ideal, but one of the results of the Fall. God chose Israel, not approving of that culture, but working with those people to gradually get rid of their sins. Jesus is the highest example of God's goal to restore creation ideals.

- Q3. *Compare Old Testament law with Jesus' commands in the following verses.*

A. *Matthew 5:21-22*
Old Testament Laws

Jesus' Commands

B. *Matthew 5:27-28*
Old Testament Laws

Jesus' Commands

C. *Matthew 5:38-42*
Old Testament Laws

Jesus' Commands

D. *Matthew 5:43-48*
Old Testament Laws

Jesus' Commands

Roles of Women and Men in the Old Testament

In spite of their patriarchy, God used both men and women as leaders of His people in the Old Testament.

Q4. *Identify the names and roles of some of the women leaders in the Old Testament from the passages below.*

A. *Judges 4:4-6, 14*
Leader

Roles

B. *2 Kings 22:14-20*
Leader

Roles

C. *Proverbs 31:10-31*
Roles

Conclusion

God's nature is above maleness and femaleness. Old Testament images demonstrate that God's character includes aspects of both.

Q5. *With what female images does the Old Testament picture God in the following passages?*

A. *Isaiah 42:14*
Word picture

B. *Isaiah 66:13*
Word picture

C. *Psalm 22:9*
Word picture



UNIT THREE

NEW TESTAMENT FOUNDATION

CHAPTER 5

GRECO-ROMAN, JEWISH, AND CHRISTIAN CONTEXTS



The writings of the Greeks and Romans show their negative views about women. During the period between the Old and New Testaments these pagans even influenced the Jews to think the same way. A culture that holds an opinion that women are inferior may use it to justify devaluing and mistreating them.

Though gender stereotypes were widespread among Greeks, Romans, and Jews, still there were women who played powerful roles.

Greco-Roman Context

From early times, Greeks taught that women were in all ways inferior to men. Parents often abandoned female babies outdoors to die or to be collected by strangers and brought up as slaves or prostitutes. Women could not participate in the official religion, but many found opportunities in the mystery religions and cults.

D1. How does your culture compare with that of the ancient Greeks?

Roman society held similar views of women. Women remained completely under the control of the male head of the extended family. Men held the power of life and death over their wives, children, and servants. In most cases women were expected to remain indoors and not be involved in public affairs.

D2. *How does your culture compare with that of the ancient Romans?*

Judaism and Its Literature

The original religion of the Hebrews changed into Judaism after the Old Testament. As Judaism developed, its regulations became more and more male-biased. Its theological basis became more like the philosophies of the Greeks and Romans and less like the ideals of the God of the Bible. The writings of the Jews after the Old Testament record this low view of women.

- A Jewish rabbi wrote, “Who speaks much with a woman draws down misfortune on himself ... and finally earns hell” (Mishnah Aboth 1,5).
- A text from the Apocrypha [books written after, and excluded from, the Old Testament] says, “Any iniquity is small compared to a woman’s iniquity” (Sirach 25:19).
- Philo [a first-century Jewish philosopher] wrote, “Woman is more accustomed to be deceived than man” (*On Genesis* I.33:20).
- Josephus [a first-century Jewish historian] wrote, “A woman is inferior to her husband in all things” (*Against Apion* 2.25).

D3. *How do the views of these authors contrast with God’s creation ideal and His choosing of women leaders? (See Study Guide Chapters 3 and 4.)*

Early Church Fathers, Reformation and Later Interpreters

Some Christian writers after the New Testament have also been strongly influenced by this negative view. So strong is its influence that in many settings it is considered the traditional Christian perspective.

- Augustine wrote, “[Woman] is not the image of God” (*De Trinitate* 7.10).
- Thomas Aquinas wrote, “Woman is defective and misbegotten” (*Summa Theologica*, vol. I, Q.92, Art. 2:489).
- C. I. Scofield wrote, “The entrance of sin, which is disorder, makes necessary a headship, and it is vested in man” (Comments on Genesis 3:14, *Scofield Reference Bible*, 1917 ed.).

D4. *How do these Christian writers compare with the ancient Greeks and Romans?*

Evangelical Revival Movements

Around the turn of the last century (in the early 1900s), evangelicals gave equal opportunities for service in ministry to men and women. Why? Those early evangelicals believed that the Holy Spirit equipped women and men equally for ministry. They also believed that Jesus Christ was coming back soon and that every voice was needed to spread the news. Women were pioneer pastors and missionaries around the world.

D5. *These Christians broke from the traditional views about women because they had experienced a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a burden for lost souls, and an urgency in light of Jesus' soon return. What shapes your view of women in ministry and leadership?*

Conclusion

Some of the negative attitudes about women are still present in 21st-century Christian culture. It is most important to note, however, that they do not come from Scripture but from sources outside the Bible.

CHAPTER 6

JESUS' TREATMENT OF WOMEN



Nowhere in the Gospels do we see Jesus treating women as inferior beings. Instead, Jesus treated women as equal to men even when it meant breaking social customs to do so.

His Ministry Practice

Jesus ministered to male and female alike in His preaching, miracles, healing, deliverance, and raising the dead.

Q1. Compare Jesus' ministry in the following verses. What do they teach us?

A. Matthew 8:14-15 and Mark 10:46-52

B. Mark 3:1-5 and Luke 13:10-17

C. Luke 7:11-17 and Luke 8:40-42, 49-56

In that time and place most men did not even speak with women, but Jesus was different.

Q2. How did Jesus go beyond His culture's limits to minister to these women?

A. Luke 8:43-48 (See also Leviticus 15:19-32.)

B. Matthew 15:21-28

C. *John 8:2-11*

Q3. *Jesus spoke some of His greatest truths to women or about women.*

A. *To whom did Jesus first reveal that He was the Messiah (John 4:7-42)?*

B. *Who was Jesus' example of giving (Mark 12:43-44)?*

C. *Who first heard the truth about resurrection life? (John 11:25-26)?*

In Jesus' day Jewish girls could not go to school to learn to read and write. Some rabbis said it was evil to teach girls.

Q4. *Who were Jesus' students and followers in these passages?*

A. *Luke 10:38-42*

B. *Mark 15:40-41 and Luke 8:1-3*

His Teaching Manner

Jesus' teaching applies equally to women and to men. He often told two parables, one after the other, so that both men and women would receive the message.

Q5. *Compare Jesus' teaching in the following stories. Who were the main characters?*

A. *His teaching about the growth of the kingdom of God (Luke 13:19-21).*

B. *His teaching about lost sinners (Luke 15:3-10).*

C. *His teaching about prayer (Luke 18:1-14).*

Jesus often taught by giving two examples, one male and one female.

Q6. *What examples did Jesus use in these teachings?*

A. *Matthew 21:31-32*

B. *Luke 11:29-32*

C. *Matthew 24:40-41*

His Doctrinal Content

Jesus made it a point to include women in His teaching. Forty-five times in the Gospels He spoke using pairs such as “men and women,” “husbands and wives,” or “sons and daughters.” No instructions in Jesus’ theology apply only to women or only to men.

Q7. *How did Jesus include women in these verses?*

A. *Luke 12:53*

B. *Matthew 10:35-37*

In all the gospel records, there is no teaching or preaching that belittles women. When a woman praised Jesus’ mother for giving Him birth and nursing Him (womanly duties), Jesus corrected the woman’s values.

Q8. *What did Jesus say was even more important than having children (Luke 11:27-28)?*

In Jesus' time many taught that a man could divorce his wife for any and every reason. Jesus protected the rights of women.

Q9. *What was the only reason Jesus allowed for divorce (Matthew 19:3-9)?*

Conclusion

The Good News of the gospel is that there is freedom and equality for *all* people in Christ's kingdom! Jesus included women among those who proclaim the gospel.

Q10. *Who was the first person Jesus sent to testify of His resurrection (John 20:11-18; see also Matthew 28:1-10)?*

Women were also present in the Upper Room when the Holy Spirit was sent to give them power to witness (Acts 1:14-15).

Q11. *How many of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered for witness (Acts 2:4, see also 1:8)?*

Questions to Think About and Discuss

D1. *If Jesus came to where you live, in what ways would His treatment of women differ from that of most men in your community?*

... in the church?

D2. *How do Jesus' teachings about the value and role of women compare with the beliefs of other religions where you live?*

... among those who are non-religious?

D3. *If you can, describe a woman you know who has been called and anointed for ministry.*

D4. *What is Jesus calling you to do?*

CHAPTER 7

WOMEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: THEOLOGICAL TEXTS



As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this *Study Guide*, there are different categories of Bible texts. Every verse is inspired, but not all passages apply equally. In this book, all the New Testament passages about women are divided into three categories: (1) *theological statements* that teach “the way things ought to be;” (2) *historical statements* that describe “the way things were;” and (3) *contextual corrective statements* that deal with “local problems that needed correction.”

In this chapter we look at the first category of texts. These theological statements teach what the Early Church considered to be normative roles for women.

Acts 2:17-18

The Day of Pentecost was the birthday of the Church. It changed everything. People witnessed supernatural signs and wonders that marked a most significant event on God’s timeline (Acts 2:2-3, 17-20). Peter proclaimed that what happened on that day fulfilled both the promise of Jesus (Acts 1:8) and of Old Testament prophecy.

Q1. Read the passage above in its context (that is, with the verses surrounding it), then answer the questions below.

- A. What Old Testament prophet is Peter quoting?
- B. The Day of Pentecost was the sign of the beginning of a new period on God’s timeline. What is the Bible’s name for this period?
- C. According to Peter’s sermon, who equips all categories of people for ministry?
- D. According to Peter’s sermon, what categories of people does God equip for ministry?

1 Corinthians 7:4-5, 7

Just as some of Jesus' teachings replaced old laws and traditional Jewish ideals with Christ's higher ones, so also Paul's teaching does the same thing. He stated a new standard above the old one, marking a new norm for Christ's followers, a timeless truth meant to apply from his day on. Christian marriage is a relationship of mutuality and authority shared between husband and wife.

- Q2. Read the passage above in its context (that is, the entire chapter), then answer the questions below.
- A. According to verse 4, in Christian marriage, who has authority over a husband's body?
 - B. The apostle Paul was not married. According to verses 7-8, does Paul value or devalue singleness?
 - C. How many times in this chapter, when Paul addresses marital issues, does he apply the same standards to each spouse (compare verses 2, 3, 4, 10-11, 12-13, 14, 15, 16, 28, 32-34)?

1 Corinthians 11:11-12

This passage teaches the interdependence of male and female. It also shows that creation order does not indicate man is superior to woman. This passage is normative, underscoring the same ideals seen in Genesis—both male and female come from God and share His image. The interdependence of this passage mirrors the equality, mutuality, and unity of the Old Testament creation account. (See *Study Guide*, Chapter 3.)

In some languages, the word "head" means "authority." But in Greek, the word used for "head" in this chapter probably does not indicate "authority," but "source."

- Q3. Read the passage above in its context (that is, the entire chapter). Compare verse 3, with verses 8-9, then answer the questions below.
- A. Who was the source of the first woman?
 - B. Who is the source of every man?
 - C. Who is the source of Christ?

Q4. Re-read verses 11-12, which conclude the issues Paul raises in verses 7-9, then answer the questions below.

A. According to verse 12, even though the first woman came from man, where did every man after Adam come from?

B. Who is the true source of all things?

The original language (Greek) of the passage, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, is unclear at several points. Scholars have struggled to understand some of its contents: for example, references to “head coverings,” “angels,” “head,” “hair,” “nature,” and “authority.” In light of all of Paul’s writings, we do not see this passage as teaching a male hierarchy over women, but that verse 10 is best translated, “a woman ought to have authority over her own head.”

1 Corinthians 12-14

Spiritual gifts are God’s gracious enablement to help the people of God as individuals in various, unique ways to do the work of God, both in the world and in the church, more effectively than they could on their own. There are three places in the New Testament where spiritual gifts are discussed in detail. Gifts in all three lists share these elements in common: they are freely given by God to all kinds of people not on the basis of human merit; they are not a reason for boasting, but are for the purpose of serving others; and all are to be operated in love.

This first passage teaches about the nine *supernatural gifts* of the Spirit. It talks about spontaneous supernatural endowments given by God to meet needs as they arise.

Q5. Read the chapters above, then answer the questions below.

A. According to 12:11, who chooses which gifts to give to which persons?

B. According to 12:18, who places the parts of the body of Christ (that is, spiritually-gifted people) where He wants them to be?

C. Is there any evidence in Scripture that gender has a bearing on the giving of spiritual gifts or the placement of gifted persons and leaders in the body of Christ?

Romans 12:3-8

This passage discusses the six *motivational gifts*. These gifts are the reason certain Christians have zeal for one ministry rather than another. They are the God-given inner inclinations that influence why individuals think and act the way they do—the very core of what motivates a person. The purpose of these gifts is that we may serve God with great joy.

Q6. Read the passage above in its context (the verses surrounding it), then answer the questions below.

A. List the six motivational gifts and reflect on which of them God has given you.

B. What advice does Paul give to people with your gift(s)?

Ephesians 4:4-16

This passage discusses the *equipping gifts*. The way God gives grace to meet the Church's needs with these gifts is through the people God sends as their leaders. These leaders' work is to equip the members of the Body for ministry, so that the Church might grow in unity, orthodoxy, and maturity—growing into complete Christ-likeness.

Q7. Read the passage above in its context (the verses surrounding it), then answer the questions below.

A. List the equipping gifts.

B. Name some men and women you know who have equipping gifts.

God gives all kinds of spiritual gifts (from all three categories) to men and to women, without regard for gender. When God gives gifts, He wants them to be used.

Galatians 3:26-29

This passage is God's promise of equality for all people. In Christ, we do not lose our identities, but the importance of those differences as a basis of discrimination is wiped out.

Q8. Read the passage above in its context (the verses surrounding it), then answer the questions below.

A. According to verse 26, in Christ, who qualifies to be full-fledged heirs of God?

B. Only men could fully participate in the sign of the old covenant, that is, circumcision. What is the sign of the new covenant?

C. In Galatians 3:28, Paul lists three pairs and explains that Christians are no longer to be regarded by these identities alone. What three kinds of distinctions do they represent which no longer count in Christ?

Ephesians 5:21

This passage is God's command of mutual submission for the Christian home. Wives are to submit to their husbands, but they are not the only ones instructed to submit.

Q9. Read the passage above in its context (Ephesians 5:15-6:20), then answer the questions below.

A. According to verse 21, what is the basis of Christians' submission to one another?

B. From verses 25-33, list all the ways a Christian husband is to submit to his wife.

Q10. Verse 23 uses the word "head," which means "source" not "authority," just as in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12 (explained above).

A. How is Christ the head of the Church; that is, as her source, what does Christ provide to the Church? (See verses 25-33; list other blessings He provides.)

B. How, then, is the husband to be head of his wife; that is, as her source, what does the husband provide to his wife? (Think of Christ's example and list blessings a husband could provide.)

The Greek (the original language of the New Testament) term for love is *agape*, self-giving love. *Agape* is what one does for another person, not what they get out of the other. A wife married to a husband who loves like this finds it much easier to fulfill her part of the command to mutual submission. Ephesians 5:21 brings strong correction to the abuses of patriarchy, harsh parenting, and tyrannical slave masters.

1 Peter 2:5, 9 (and Revelation 1:5b-6)

These verses explain that the Church is a new nation of priests. All God's people now serve in what was once a role limited to males from a certain family in a certain tribe. No longer is a human go-between necessary for people to communicate with God.

Q11. *According to 1 Timothy 2:5, who is the only go-between needed?*

CHAPTER 8

WOMEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: HISTORICAL TEXTS



The focus of this chapter is the historical record of the way things were in the first-century church (“category two” texts). The texts of this chapter simply describe the kinds of things women did in the earliest church—“the way things were.”

Matthew 28:9-10

Mark 16: 7, 9-11

Luke 24:10-11

John 20:14-18

Q1. *The four texts above, from each of the Gospels, record how women were commissioned and testified of the Resurrection.*

A. *List by name all the women who witnessed and testified of the Resurrection.*

B. *According to John 20:14-18, name the first person Jesus sent to proclaim the good news of His resurrection.*

Acts 9:36 and 21:8-9

Q2. *Read Acts 9:36-42 and answer the following questions.*

A. *Describe the ministry of Tabitha.*

B. *How do we know that her ministry was important? (Give two reasons from the text.)*

Q3. Read Acts 21:8-9. What does the biblical recognition of Philip's four daughters show about the gender and marital status of ministers in the New Testament?

1 Corinthians 11:4-5

Traditions about women's clothing vary from one culture to another. (This text represents one culture's historical context.)

Q4. According to this passage, in what ways were women ministering in public worship services during New Testament times?

Philippians 4:2-3

By including Euodia and Syntyche among his co-workers, Paul identifies them as ministers. Some people believe these women hosted and led congregations in their homes (as pastors of house churches).

Romans 16:1-7, 12-13, 15

This chapter lists ten esteemed women (as well as men), who served in a variety of roles: deacon/minister, teacher, church leader, apostle, and diligent workers with Paul in the cause of Christ. Phoebe, Priscilla, and Junia receive special mention.

Q5. List the names of the women greeted by Paul in this chapter.

Phoebe. Verses 1-2 are Phoebe's recommendation as Paul's letter-carrier of the Epistle to the Romans. She is identified (in verse 1) by the Greek title *diakonos*, which actually means "minister," and refers to the leader of a congregation, not just a helper. In verse 2 she is described by the Greek title that means "leader, ruler, commander, or overseer" from the verb meaning "to rule, order, command, or be put in charge over." This term was used for significant church leaders.

Q6. *After commending Phoebe to the Romans, what two requests does Paul ask of them on her behalf?*

Priscilla. Four out of the six times Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned in the New Testament, the wife's name precedes her husband's (Acts 18:1-3, 18, 24; Romans 16:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; and 2 Timothy 4:19). This is unusual, but intentional. Both writers (Luke and Paul) were so impressed with Priscilla's ministry and leadership, that after getting to know this couple, they named Priscilla first.

Q7. *From reading these passages above (in their literary context), what clues can you uncover that impressed Luke and Paul about Priscilla's ministry?*

Junia. This person (mentioned in verse 7) is considered foremost among the apostles. Because many Christian scholars have been unwilling to admit that there could have ever been an apostle—the highest office in the Early Church—who was female, they made her name into a man's name. But there was no doubt among the ancient readers and writers that Junia was a woman.

Q8. *What three things does Paul tell us about Andronicus and Junia?*

1 Timothy 3:11

In the Pastoral Epistles there is recognition of both male and female leadership in the service of the church. Where leadership qualifications are listed, there are statements which apply equally to men and women, some which relate specifically to male candidates, and some which relate specifically to women.

Although translations vary, it is very likely that 1 Timothy 3:11 represents qualifications for female deacons.

Q9. *Compare the qualifications for all deacons (verses 8-10), with the specific qualifications for female deacons (verse 11), and male deacons (verse 12). (Verse 13 describes the rewards of good deacons, male and female.) List what is required of each category:*

A. *All Deacons*

B. *Female Deacons*

C. *Male Deacons*

Titus 2:3 (and 1 Timothy 5:2)

As 1 Timothy 3:11 seems to address female deacons, Titus 2:3 and 1 Timothy 5:2 seem to address women elders. This is sometimes unclear in translations, since the same Greek word may be translated “woman elder” or “old woman.” Most versions choose the latter translation. Another Greek word may be translated, either as “[male] elder” or “old man.” Yet, most translations choose “[male] elder.” Thus, these translations indicate male church leadership but cover the hints of female leaders.



UNIT FOUR

SPECIFIC ISSUES IN LOCAL CHURCHES

CHAPTER 9

THE SITUATION IN CORINTH



We have considered Jesus' high regard for women and the New Testament's positive theology and glowing history of women's leadership in ministry. We look now, at two passages which have appeared to some to limit women's ministry and leadership: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; and 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

In-depth study of the literary and historical context of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 uncovers isolated issues that troubled this specific local congregation. Knowing the kind of problem that Paul was dealing with in Corinth clarifies what this passage meant to the original readers. Only when one sees what it meant "then and there" can the text be applied to the "here and now."

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

"Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church."

Insights from Context

Literary Context. One principle of biblical interpretation is *internal consistency*. That means the Bible agrees with itself, authors don't contradict themselves. When, in the Bible, students locate what appears to be a contradiction, they must look further, keeping both the big picture of the whole Bible and the details of an individual passage in view at the same time.

Q1. Read 1 Corinthians 11:5. What did Paul permit women to do in the same congregation, in this same letter three chapters earlier?

Q2. Read 1 Corinthians 14:28 and 30 and answer the questions below.

A. What two other groups did Paul command to be silent in church services, in the same chapter as our text?

B. Under what circumstances, are those other groups to be silent?

Q3. Read 1 Corinthians 14:33. What is the "timeless truth" or guiding principle, behind these instructions?

Historical Context. Insights from the time and place of a text's writing are helpful for interpretation. The east-coast seaport of Corinth was Cenchreae.

Q4. Read Romans 16:1-2. What is the name of the church leader who lived in Cenchreae?

No doubt, the Corinthian Christians knew very well this female pastor of their sister church in Cenchrea, and knew how much Paul admired her ministry and leadership (Romans 16:1-2). Paul did not want Phoebe to be silent in the church service.

Under what kind of circumstances, then, did Paul want women to be silent in the church?

Interpretations

Interpretation 1: Some people think Paul only allowed women to serve in certain parts or kinds of services. These people would prohibit women's leadership, and limit their ministry to home groups, or perhaps among women or children.

- But, the verses above show that Paul permitted women to pray, prophesy, and pastor. Furthermore, almost all church services were held in homes. Scholars think that as hosts of the congregation that met in their homes, these women were probably the leaders of these house churches.

Q5. Read the following passages, and then name the six New Testament women who were probably pastors of house churches and the cities in which their congregations were located.

A. Acts 12:12-17

B. Philemon 2

C. Colossians 4:15

D. Acts 16:14-15

E. Romans 16:1

F. Acts 18:19, 26; 1 Corinthians 16:19; and Romans 16:3-5

Interpretation 2: Some people think that Paul was silencing the disruptive shouting of pagan women who had recently become Christians. Hysterical shouting and wailing of women was a valued part of the meetings in some ancient pagan religions. It is thought that these women were excited about participating in Christian worship but did not yet know how to behave properly in church services. So they acted the way women were supposed to act in pagan religions and cults.

- This is a possible interpretation, yet it does not take into view the many Jewish Christian converts in Corinth who understood proper behavior in a religious setting.

Interpretation 3: Some people think that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are not the words of Paul, but words of his opponents that he quoted in order to refute them. We know that Paul wrote this letter in

response to oral and written reports of problems in the congregation in Corinth. A number of times in 1 Corinthians Paul refers to a negative report and then responds to it with his corrective teaching.

This interpretation considers 1 Corinthians 14:33b to be setting up Paul's quotation of the opponents: "[as you claim is true] in all the congregations of the Lord's people." Verses 34-35 are considered the actual quotation of the opponents. The verses following 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 (that is, verses 36-40), are seen as Paul's response to his opponents.

- ✦ This is a possible interpretation, yet 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 do not have as clear evidence of quotation as other passages in 1 Corinthians such as 5:1; 7:1, 25; 8:1, 4; 12:1; and 16:1.

Interpretation 4: Some people think that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are not the words of Paul but words a later scribe added.

- ✦ There is some possible support for this interpretation among ancient manuscripts. Yet since it does away with the verses rather than seeking to deal with them in the context, we continue our search for a better interpretation.

Interpretation 5: The strongest, most likely, interpretation is that the apostle Paul was not prohibiting women's vocal participation in worship or ministry that contributed to the church service. Instead, he was silencing continual talking that interrupted the church service.

- ✦ The Greek verb used in this verse for "to speak" (*laleo*) frequently had the negative connotation of "noisy jabber" or "chatter," that is, disruptive talking.
- ✦ The Greek tense of this verb (progressive/present) emphasizes on-going action. Paul is saying in verse 34, "women are not allowed to *keep on talking*," and in verse 35, "it is disgraceful for a woman to *continually chatter* in church."
- ✦ Three times in 1 Corinthians 14 Paul instructs categories of people to be silent in certain situations. In verse 28, tongues speakers must be silent if there is no interpreter present. In verse 30, prophets must be silent if another prophet has a revelation. In verse 34, women must be silent if they are continually chattering in church.
- ✦ In the first-century world most women were not allowed to get an education, and were forbidden participation in most religions. Therefore, they would have many more questions than men in a Christian service. The surprising thing, in that historical context, is that Paul *wanted* them to learn about spiritual things! He just wanted them to ask their husbands at home, so they wouldn't disrupt the church service.

Conclusion

And what is the application of this text to readers today? Believers must limit the exercise of their own freedom for the good of others. The building up of the body of Christ is to be a main concern of the members of His Body. That is why in the worship service all things must be done in a fitting and orderly way.

D1. Consider how often the apostle Paul emphasizes the same timeless truth. Read the following passages in 1 Corinthians and describe each situation and how Paul instructs Christians to limit the exercise of their own freedom for the sake of others.

A. 6:1-20 (especially 7b and 12)

B. 7:3-38 (especially 10-12)

C. 8:1-13 (especially 9, 12, 13)

D. 9:1-27 (especially 12, 15, 19)

E. 10:20-33 (especially 23-24)

F. 11:33-34

D2. In the spiritual gifts passages (chapters 12-14) locate the places where Paul urges the body of Christ to care for all its parts, to operate the gifts in love, and to do all things to edify others.

CHAPTER 10

THE SITUATION IN EPHESUS



Some Christians think that 1 Timothy 2:11-12 prohibits the teaching ministry and leadership of women over men at any time and in any place. Others think that this passage, like 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, deals with an isolated issue specific to one local congregation.

Since not all Christians agree, how can the student of the Bible be sure which interpretation is correct? Here we see the importance of the right starting point. Everyone brings to Scripture a personal background that influences their interpretation. These views are called “presuppositions.”

People who have made up their minds that women cannot lead or have influence over men see these verses as supporting their view. They select the two passages addressing isolated issues (1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12) as their foundation. They read the rest of the Bible in light of these two texts, in spite of the fact that these passages deal with local problems, specific to a certain time and place. When they make these passages their foundation, they disregard the mass of evidence of a far more normative nature: God’s ideal, the nature of God relative to gender, Jesus’ life and teaching, New Testament theology, and first-century church history. Such powerful support for women in ministry and leadership must not be disregarded.

The right approach to Scripture is to start at the *beginning* and examine *all* the evidence. This is the journey we have taken together in this book and *Study Guide*. It is this hermeneutical method that has helped us distinguish between timeless truths about God’s women—“the way things ought to be”—and contextual statements that deal with “local problems that needed correction.”

1 Timothy 2:11-12

“A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be quiet.”

Insights from Context

Historical Context. Paul founded the church in Ephesus with a brief first visit (Acts 18), and returned some time later for a two-and-one-half year stay to grow the church (Acts 19).

Q1. Read Acts 18:19-21. When Paul left his baby congregation, who did he leave in Ephesus to pastor it?

Q2. Read Acts 18:24-26. Who did God use to teach “the way of God more adequately” to the learned, fervent, bold Jewish-Christian teacher, Apollos?

Q3. Read Romans 16:3-4. Who else was grateful for the brave and noteworthy spiritual leadership of the former pastors of this congregation?

Literary Context. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul is combating a heresy in both Crete (where Titus ministered) and in Ephesus (where Timothy ministered). In 1 Timothy Paul corrects the false teaching which had focused its efforts on women (1 Timothy 2:9-10; 5:3-16; compare 2 Timothy 3:6). In the context of our passage, Paul is addressing a curious cluster of issues. Though these topics seem disjointed to a modern reader, they are all part of the theological error Paul is correcting.

Cultural Context. What kinds of heresies were known to be in first-century Ephesus? Ephesus was home to the Diana cult. Her temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. She was the goddess of fertility, the Great Mother of Asia. In addition, sexually unrestrained worship was part of the mystery cults. Some scholars also see evidences of an early form of Gnosticism. This teaching distorted both Jewish and Christian doctrine, and claimed that material things are evil, only spirit could be good.

These three kinds of contexts show Paul’s intent in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 was not to limit women’s leadership in the church, but to refute false doctrine and reaffirm orthodoxy. Though the precise nature of the heresies is not certain, it does seem clear that this passage was meant to silence them.

Keys to Interpretation

First Key. The Greek tense of the verb “permit/allow” (progressive/present) emphasizes on-going action. Paul is not saying, “I never have or never will permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man.” (The Ephesians knew that, from Priscilla’s leadership among them.) The sense of the tense in this verse is “at the present time I am not permitting . . .”

Second Key. The rare Greek verb used, *authenteo*, may indicate something more than “to have authority over.” It seems that Paul’s prohibition is limited to a woman’s abusive domination over a man. Jesus taught that no follower of Christ is to dominate another (Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:25-27).

Third Key. The uncommon grammatical structure in this verse may be revealing the actual theological content that Paul is correcting—a backwards version of creation, that Adam allegedly came from Eve and was enlightened by her. The verses following the correction (verses 13-15) seem to reaffirm orthodox Christian doctrine and practice.

Fourth Key. Several times in 1 Timothy Paul identifies by name men who were false teachers and those who had deserted him. Perhaps, in this passage, he refers to “a woman” because he was hoping to restore her. By not using her name, it would be easier for her after she had repented. Paul seems to

believe that she would be restored, for, even before silencing her error, Paul gave the solution to the problem—she must learn (1 Timothy 2:11).

Q4. Read 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:17; 4:14-15 and answer these questions.

A. List by name three of the false teachers Paul identified in these verses?

B. Among false teachers identified by Paul in 1 and 2 Timothy, how does the number of male teachers compare to female teachers?

Conclusion

Paul silenced a woman teaching in Ephesus not because she was female, but because she was teaching false doctrine. The problem addressed in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 was not a matter of gender, but of deception.

When a woman has her theology straight and has something to offer—as Priscilla did—she, too, can share in a teaching ministry and have authority in the church.

Paul's approach to the problems in ancient Ephesus applies anywhere in the world and for all time. Putting things right in the church requires determined discipleship. Paul's correctives are:

- (a) Emphasize character over clothing.
- (b) Assert biblical doctrine over popular teaching.
- (c) Replace loose morals with Christian virtues.
- (d) Make sure that believers are grounded in the Faith before permitting them to teach it.

D1. Read the passage once more within its literary context, 1 Timothy 2:9-15. Discuss the timeless nature of Paul's correctives.

D2. Describe times when you have seen the need for these correctives in your circle of influence.



UNIT FIVE

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR TODAY

CHAPTER 11

HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIPS



Being a student of Scripture includes both correct interpretation of truth and correct application of those truths to one's life context. This chapter and those following it focus on how a Christian can live out what the Bible teaches.

Who's in charge?

Old Testament. God created Adam and Eve and gave them shared rulership in the Garden of Eden. God emphasized their oneness—equality in being and in function. A man was to leave his parents and be joined with his wife and become “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). With the coming of sin into the world, however, also came the abuse of women by men. The powerful exploited the powerless. Men acted like they were in charge. Sadly, the Old Testament records how even the people of God strayed from God's one-man-one-woman principle.

D1. Read Genesis 26:34; 28:8-9; 29-30; 1 Kings 11:3. Describe the kinds of problems that result from a man taking more than one wife.

New Testament Era. Jewish marriage norms included the full power of fathers over their daughters. Up to the age of 12 and one-half, a girl could not refuse any marriage decided by her father. Marriage contracts transferred a girl from her father's control to her husband's. Divorce could be a man's choice, but not a woman's. Men were not to speak to women in public—even their wife or mother. Non-Jews were no better. Unwanted female babies were abandoned. Those collected were raised by houses of prostitution. Some men taught that women were not even human.

Up until Jesus' time, things went from bad to worse. Men continued to behave like they were in charge. The husband as master or owner of his wife contradicts the equality God intended between husbands and wives, and gives wives the status of servant or property. Such inferior status and treatment of a woman by a man is at odds with the biblical view. Though the Bible demonstrates that at times even God's people were not faithful to God's plan, that is no excuse to abandon it. God's Word consistently calls God's people back to His ideals. Christian believers are called to resist the sins of patriarchy and work to change them in the world.

D2. Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; 11:11; Ephesians 5:21. According to Paul, how are Christian couples to relate to each other?

Q1. Read 1 Timothy 3:2-4 and 1 Timothy 5:14. According to these 1 Timothy texts, who is supposed to manage the household: the husband or the wife?

“Who's in charge?” is the wrong question for Christians to ask! If the husband is “giving himself up” for the wife (Ephesians 5:25), and the wife is honoring and respecting her husband (Ephesians 5:33), they will be working together to guide the household. Neither will be striving for control. Christian marriage is to be marked by mutual submission and love.

Who's responsible to God?

Is it true that God always works through the husband as priest of his family? No. Some people teach that the man bears all responsibility for his family, and that his wife and children are under his spiritual authority. Some even teach that if the man (as husband or father) tells a member of his family to sin, they must be obedient to him, as God will not hold them guilty, since they were obedient.

The Bible, however, teaches that God holds *both* husbands and wives accountable to him. Only *one Person* qualifies to go between an individual and God, and that is Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, all believers have direct access to God. Scripture teaches that we all function as priests, regardless of gender (1 Peter 2:5, 9 and Revelation 1: 5, 16).

Q2. Read Genesis 17:16-17; Judges 13:3; Luke 1:13; Luke 1:26; Matthew 1:20-21. Does God reveal His plan to the husband or to the wife? Back up your answer with Bible verses.

Q3. Read Acts 5:1-11; Genesis 3:8-24. Which partner, in a couple, does God hold spiritually responsible?

What about divorce?

The “one-flesh” pattern means both partners are to be faithful to their marriage vows. Genesis teaches spouses to “leave” their parents, “cleave” to each other, and become “one flesh.” And what God joins together in marriage, no one is to separate through divorce. Marriage is a commitment that is to be ended only by the death of a spouse.

In the Old Testament a man could divorce his wife for certain causes. By the New Testament era, the rabbis had made it still easier for a man to divorce his wife, leaving women vulnerable.

Q4. Read Matthew 5:31-32; and 19:3-1. What are the only circumstances under which Jesus permits divorce?

Q5. Read 1 Corinthians 7:10-16. Under what additional circumstance does Paul permit divorce?

Although divorce is not God’s will, many people experience its pain. God is gracious to all His children and can bring good even out of such a situation (Romans 3:23, 24; 8:28).

How should husbands and wives relate in the church?

The mutual submission of Ephesians 5:21 is the believer’s standard both in the home and in the church. Paul gave instructions for Christian living to every believer (Ephesians 4:17-5:20). Then he proceeded to describe how Spirit-filled Christians would treat each other if they were married to each other (5:21-33).

The New Testament makes it clear that the Holy Spirit gifts individuals as He pleases. Whoever receives a gift is responsible before God to use it in the Lord’s service. A loving husband who celebrates God’s gifts to his wife frees her to be all she can be for Jesus.

D3. What if a wife’s gifts in certain areas surpass her husband’s? Should he limit her ministry? Should she limit her leadership so as not to threaten him?

CHAPTER 12

AUTHORITY, POWER, AND LEADERSHIP



Where does authority come from—is it given, earned, or seized? What is the difference between power and authority? What about women, do they have authority and power? Is it proper for women to lead? What does biblically-based leadership look like?

Using Scripture and the study of patterns of social groups, this chapter examines the biblical view of authority, power, and leadership and how it affects women in the church.

Definitions

Authority. Authority refers to the *influence* of certain persons over others. It is the right or power to enforce rules or give orders.

Power. Power refers to the capacity to *control* the behavior of others. Forcing others is a wrongful use of power. The proper use of power comes when others willingly choose to follow.

Leadership. Leadership refers to the ability to *guide, direct, or influence* people. Thus, leaders are men or women who have authority (that is, the proper use of power) and use it effectively.

The Biblical View

God, “the Almighty,” has all power in heaven and earth. Thus, God has the absolute capacity to control all human behavior; yet He limits His use of power. God gives people “free will,” that is, the freedom to choose. God lovingly leads those who choose to follow Him.

Q1. Read Luke 1:51-53; 1 Corinthians 15:24; and John 19:11. Where do power and authority come from according to the Bible?

Q2. Read Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2. How should believers relate to those in authority over them? (Give four answers.)

Q3. Read Acts 5:29. Should Christians obey commands that break God's laws?

D1. What about women, biblically speaking—is it proper for them to lead?

(Review what you have learned from the Old and New Testaments about how God placed women in power; how God equipped women to influence people; how God gave them responsibility and supernatural gifts to lead His people.)

Biblical Models of Leadership

The King as God Wanted Him to Be. When God's people asked for a king, God told Samuel to warn them about what kings do (1 Samuel 8-9, especially 8:10-22). The power given to a king is more than many men can handle. God allowed His people to have kings, but His desire was for kings to *behave like Him*. When they did not, God sent his Old Testament preachers, the prophets, to speak harsh words against them (Jeremiah 22; Ezekiel 22:6-7).

Q4. Read Proverbs 31:1-9; Jeremiah 22:3, 4. On whose behalf did God want kings to use their power?

A Shepherd Like God. Jeremiah 3:15 describes the servant-leadership of shepherds after God's own heart—whether they be men or women. This biblical image changes the metaphor of leadership from rulership to *servanthood*.

D2. Read John 10:1-16. Discuss the kind of shepherd Jesus models for leaders. List the actions he takes on behalf of the sheep.

The Life and Teachings of Jesus. Throughout his life, Jesus taught that the essence of leadership, authority, and power is not domination but *service*.

D3. Read Mark 10:35-45. Contrast James' and John's desire as leaders with Jesus' teaching about leadership.

Q5. Read John 13:4-16. How did Jesus demonstrate servant-leadership?

Three Lies About Leadership

The root of the three lies about leadership is a false belief about power: that the amount of power always stays the same, it never increases or decreases. On the contrary, the amount of power in a group, institution, or church can increase or decrease. Power can grow when competition is replaced with cooperation and empowerment. Christian leaders must not be threatened by any other leader. Followers of Christ should empower others.

Lie Number 1: Leadership is the struggle for power. Believing this lie can make leaders feel insecure and tempt them to hurt other leaders.

Lie Number 2: Leadership is one-sided. This lie holds that a person either leads or is led; he is either powerful or powerless; she either controls or is controlled.

Lie Number 3: Leadership uses force to make people do things against their will. This lie says that leaders are only obeyed out of fear of punishment or hope of reward.

The Truth About Leadership

First, leadership must be viewed not as a struggle for personal power, but as an opportunity to empower others. Jesus taught that anyone who is not an opponent should be considered a partner (Mark 9:38-40). The combining of talents results in greater gains for God.

Second, healthy leadership is not one-sided but mutual. Every member brings something to the team. Leaders who follow Christ involve as many as possible in getting the good news of Jesus out to the world.

Third, biblical leadership is not about the use of force but about freely sharing one's gifts. God's way is "Not by ability, not by force, but by His Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6, *New Living Translation*).

Q6. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. Is leadership in the body of Christ to be held by one person or shared by many?

Biblical leadership is based not on status but on humility and service. The ladder-climbing leader focuses on getting power and privileges for self. Instead of seeing Christian leadership as a ladder to climb, see it as a circle of influence. Some circles are inside other circles, many overlap, all are in Christ. The greater the sphere of one's influence, the more people to whom that leader is a servant (Mark 9:35).

D4. Read Luke 22:24-30. Discuss the two models of leadership: the selfish and the Christlike.

Conclusion

These two uses of power originate with Satan and with Jesus. Christ's awesome demonstration of absolute authority through suffering and death is meant to do away with our human concept of power. And God's wisdom in choosing those put down by society to proclaim His most important message is meant to radically transform our image of leadership in ministry. Indeed, as Paul says, both the message (of the Cross) and its God-appointed messengers (often those who are low and despised in the world) are a stumbling block and foolishness to those who are perishing. Yet, we who are being saved can see in God's choice of message and messengers both the wisdom and power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18)!

CHAPTER 13

GOD'S WOMEN NOW



How do the present practices in the church compare with the biblical theological position? Do biblical patterns still apply? Is that which was normative for the Early Church also normative for us today?

Forming a Personal Theology

Accurate theology begins with Scripture. Three defining moments in biblical history reveal God's plan for the interdependence of women and men. (1) Creation: God showed His ideals as He created the first man and first woman in His own image, as equal partners in ruling and subduing the earth. The Fall into sin marred God's ideal. (2) Christ: Jesus Christ restored God's ideal, teaching and modeling it to others. (3) Pentecost: On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit empowered both male and female disciples for ministry.

GOD'S IDEAL SEEN IN CREATION	GOD'S IDEAL MARRED BY SIN	NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY RESTORES GOD'S IDEAL
Equality	Equality ignored	Equality restored in Christ and by the Holy Spirit Galatians 3:26-29; Acts 2:17-18
Mutuality	Subordination imposed	Mutuality Reestablished 1 Corinthians 7:4; Ephesians 5:21
Unity	Unity severed	Unity Reinforced 1 Corinthians 11:11-12
Intimacy	Intimacy thwarted	Intimacy Encouraged 1 Corinthians 7:5

Accurate theology brings Scripture to bear on life experience. Just as there are defining moments in Scripture, there are also defining moments in one's life that influence the development of a personal theology. One's framework of values and perspectives is shaped and conditioned by one's culture. Such a change may take place in a short time, as in Paul's experience on the road to Damascus and the three days following (Acts 9:1-19). Or in other cases, the shift can be a process that takes place over a longer period of time, as in Peter's acceptance of the Gentile believers (Acts 10:9-35; 11:1-18; 15:7-11; Galatians 2:11-16).

- D1. Discuss your “starting point” regarding women in ministry and leadership and, in light of your studying in this book, where you are in the “process” of forming a personal theology.

Either Women or Men May Lead

A biblical theology regarding men and women, affirming that either may lead, holds significance for the present. How can one pray, “Lord, send out workers into Your harvest field” (see Matthew 9:38), and yet hold the position that half the workers God calls should be sent away?

Interdependence is God’s plan.

- D2. Summarize the biblical support for this truth. (You may want to refresh your memory by reviewing Chapters 7 and 8.)

Barriers against women’s leadership are either cultural or organizational, but not theological.

- D3. In your personal experience, how have you seen God go beyond cultural or organizational barriers to use whomever He wills?

Response to Difficult Passages

No matter where the discussion about the role of God’s women begins, it seems to find its way to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12. Every person should be able to explain what they believe God is saying in these texts. We believe that the meanings of these passages and their applications for all time are: (a) *No one should disrupt the worship service;* and (b) *People, whether male or female, must learn right doctrine before they are allowed to teach others.*

- D4. Discuss what you think are the strongest evidences to support these interpretations.

Dealing with Differences

Although the body of Christ is characterized by its diversity, it is to be known for its unity. Recognizing that others, even within the Church, may hold a different view, we must determine to relate to them in a Christian manner. That's not always easy, but like Jesus, we are to be "full of *grace and truth*" (John 1:14,17)—seasoning our conversations with grace (Colossians 4:6) while "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

In spite of differences of opinions others may hold, God's women can live out a biblical theology of women in ministry and leadership by:

- (a) Showing respect.
- (b) Not being closed-minded.
- (c) Letting love rule.
- (d) Entering doors that are open.
- (e) Letting God open new doors through you.

Conclusion

Through this study we have traced God's ideal for women through the span of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. God's intent was egalitarianism (that all people are equal) from the beginning. Sin's result has been hierarchy since the Fall. Christ's sacrificial death brought redemption and opened the way back towards God's ideal. Pentecost provided the Spirit's empowerment to equip women and men to serve as equals. And that is where we are today. Though challenges continue, the fulfillment of the promise is in process. And you are helping to bring it to pass. But one day, when we see Christ and are like Him, we will be restored back to His full image again. The curse will be ended; mistreatment will be finished; and all God's people will serve the Lord in complete harmony.

CREATION	FALL	REDEMPTION	PENTECOST	PERFECTION
Genesis 1-2	Genesis 3	Genesis 12 until Christ's coming	Acts 2 until Christ's return	Revelation 21
Egalitarianism— God's intent	Hierarchy— Sin's result	Tension— God's plan unfolding	Promise— Fulfillment in process	Egalitarianism— Glorified like Him

D5. *In light of the above summary of God's big picture for women, discuss how you will commit yourself and encourage others, whether male or female, to serve God fully as He desires.*

D6. Review the stories on pp. 203 and 207-209 of the book, *God's Women—Then and Now*, of two contemporary women using their gifts in ministry and leadership. Now, share the story of someone you know who is a role model to you.

ANSWER KEY TO STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

D1		Discuss or reflect on your personal experiences.
D2		Discuss or reflect on your personal experiences.
D3		For example, verses like Galatians 3:26-29, Acts 2:18-19, or passages about great female leaders of the Bible result in a view of equality. Verses like 1 Corinthians 12:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-12, or Ephesians 5:22 are seen as limiting women's ministry and leadership.
D4		Discuss or reflect on your personal experiences.
D5		The Bible.
D6		In the Old Testament, for example, God raised up women as leaders in religion, society, and the home. In the New Testament, Jesus treated women as equal to men.
D7		Even in social and cultural settings where women are not valued, God values them and thus we should too!

Chapter 2

Q1	A	The law and customs of Moses required circumcision; and believers who were Pharisees felt Christians needed to be circumcised, too.
	B	God chose that the Gentiles should hear the gospel. God showed He accepted them by giving them the Holy Spirit. He did not discriminate, but purified their hearts by faith. He saved the Gentiles by grace—in the same way He saved the apostles.
Q2		Greet one another with a holy kiss.
Q3		Kissing as a greeting was part of Paul's culture, but perhaps not a part of all cultures. The principle of the passage is that Christians should greet one another, though not necessarily with a kiss.
Q4	A	Standards or timeless truths.
	B	Records of history.
	C	Rules for people where they were.
Q5		Rabbits and pigs.
Q6		All foods.
Q7		Though the ruler seems to have already known and followed all of God's commands, still money was an idol to him. Jesus called this rich man to give up what was most precious to him in order to inherit the greatest treasure—eternal life.

Chapter 3

Q1	A	Equality.
	B	Mutuality.
	C	Unity.
	D	Intimacy.
Q2	A	The serpent.
	B	The ground.
Q3		The woman's seed.

Chapter 4

Q1		God is not a man, nor is He a human being.
Q2		God is spirit.
Q3	A	OT: "You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment." JC: Anyone who is angry with a brother or sister, or calls them a fool, is in danger of hell.
	B	OT: "You shall not commit adultery." JC: "Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."
	C	OT: "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth." JC: Don't resist an evil person—give them even more than what they ask for. Turn the other cheek.
	D	OT: "Love your neighbor, and hate your enemy." JC: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
Q4	A	Deborah: prophet, wife, leader, judge, military advisor.
	B	Huldah: prophet, wife, counselor of the king.
	C	The valiant woman or wife of noble character is an excellent homemaker who makes her own clothes and raises her own food. She is also a successful businesswoman who buys and sells and makes a profit. She is a generous, wise, strong, and hardworking manager who is well prepared for the future. She fears the Lord, is blessed by her children, and is praised by her husband.
Q5	A	A woman in childbirth.
	B	A mother comforting her child.
	C	A midwife.

Chapter 5

D1		Discuss or reflect on your culture.
D2		Discuss or reflect on your culture.
D3		These views are exactly the opposite of God's creation ideal and His choice in the Old Testament to use women as leaders in religion, society, and the home.
D4		These statements resemble the ancient Greek and Roman view that women are inferior to men.
D5		Discuss or reflect on what has shaped your view.

Chapter 6

Q1	A	Jesus healed both women and men (Peter's mother-in-law and Bartimaeus).
	B	Jesus healed both a man and a woman on the Sabbath (a man with a shriveled hand and a crippled woman).
	C	Jesus raised both a male and a female from the dead (a widow's son and Jairus' daughter [and healed the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years]).
Q2	A	Rejecting the culture's teaching about uncleanness, Jesus let an unclean woman touch Him and be healed.
	B	Rejecting the culture's idea that God's blessings were only for the Jews, Jesus delivered the demonized daughter of a Gentile woman.
	C	Rejecting the culture's tradition about adultery, Jesus did not condemn the woman caught in adultery.
Q3	A	The Samaritan woman at the well.
	B	The poor widow at the Temple.
	C	Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus.
Q4	A	Mary and Martha.
	B	Mary Magdalene; Mary the Mother of James the younger and of Joseph; and Salome; and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases [including Mary (called Magdalene)]; Joanna, the wife of Chuza; Susanna; and many others.
Q5	A	A man who planted mustard seed and a woman who mixed yeast in dough.
	B	A man who lost a sheep; a woman who lost a coin; a father whose son left him.
	C	A persistent widow; and a Pharisee and a tax collector.
Q6	A	Tax collectors and prostitutes.
	B	One male and one female witness: Jonah and the Queen of the South.
	C	Two men in the field, two women grinding with a hand mill.
Q7	A	When He prophesied about family relationships, He made specific mention of mother, daughter, mother-in-law, and daughter-in-law.

	B	When He explained the cost of discipleship, He specifically mentioned the cost to the relationship of a daughter with her mother and a daughter-in-law with a mother-in-law.
Q8		Hearing the word of God and obeying it.
Q9		Sexual immorality.
Q10		Mary Magdalene.
Q11		All of them, including the women.
D1		Contrast how men in your community treat women with how Jesus treated women in the Gospels. ... in your church.
D2		Contrast the beliefs held by religions where you live (such as Islam, Hinduism, etc.) with Jesus' teachings about the role and value of women. ... among the non-religious.
D3		Share with the group.
D4		Reflect on what you think Jesus' call on your life is.

Chapter 7

Q1	A	Joel (Acts 2:16).
	B	The Day of the Lord (Acts 2:20).
	C	God's Spirit (Acts 2:17, 18).
	D	Sons and daughters; young men and old men; servants, both men and women.
Q2	A	His wife does.
	B	Paul values singleness as a gift from God.
	C	Ten times.
Q3	A	The first man (Adam).
	B	Christ.
	C	God.
Q4	A	A woman (his mother).
	B	God.
Q5	A	The same (Holy) Spirit.
	B	God.
	C	No, there is no evidence.
Q6	A	Prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, and showing mercy. Share about your gifts.
	B	"If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."
Q7	A	Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

	B	Discuss some people you know who are gifted as equippers.
Q8	A	All believers.
	B	Water baptism.
	C	Ethnic differences (“neither Jew nor Gentile”), social differences (“neither slave nor free”), and gender differences (“neither male nor female”).
Q9	A	“Out of reverence for Christ.”
	B	A husband is to give himself up for his wife (that is, to put her needs before his own—this is the definition of agape love). A husband is to treat his wife with as much care as he has for his own body. A husband is to leave his parents for the sake of his wife. A husband is to love his wife as he loves himself.
Q10	A	Salvation (He is the Savior of the Church). He makes her holy. He feeds and cares for her.
	B	A husband provides a home, food, and clothing for his wife. A Christian husband also provides love, care, encouragement, respect, and companionship. He helps her to grow spiritually, to develop her spiritual gifts, and become all she can be for Jesus. He brings his wife great joy.
Q11		Christ Jesus.

Chapter 8

Q1	A	The women: Mary Magdalene; “the other Mary” (the mother of James), Salome; Joanna; and others with them.
	B	Mary Magdalene.
Q2	A	Doing good, helping the poor, and making clothing for them.
	B	People mourned her death greatly and God raised her from the dead.
Q3		Among those God used were women and unmarried persons.
Q4		Women prayed and prophesied in New Testament times.
Q5		Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary, Junia, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus’ mother, Julia, Nereus’ sister.
Q6		To receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of His people and to give her any help she may need.
Q7		Priscilla (and Aquila) invited the great evangelist, Apollos, to their home and “explained to him the way of God more adequately.” They were Paul’s co-workers, who had risked their lives for him. Not only Paul, but all the churches of the Gentiles, were grateful to them. They hosted a church in their home (in more than one city).
Q8		They were Christian Jews who had been in prison with Paul, they were outstanding among the apostles, and they were believers before he was.

Q9	A	“Worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.”
	B	“Worthy of respect, not malicious talkers, but temperate and trustworthy in everything.”
	C	“Must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.”

Chapter 9

Q1		To pray and prophesy.
Q2	A	Tongues speakers and prophets.
	B	If there is no interpreter, the tongues speaker is to be silent. If a revelation comes to another, the first prophet should stop speaking.
Q3		“God is not a God of disorder but of peace.”
Q4		Phoebe.
Q5	A	Mary, the mother of John (Mark), in Jerusalem
	B	Apphia, our sister, (along with Archippus), perhaps in Colossae (based on the similarity of greetings in the two letters, to Philemon and to the church in Colossae).
	C	Nympha in Laodicea.
	D	Lydia (from Thyatira) in Philippi.
	E	Phoebe in Cenchreae.
	F	Priscilla (with her husband Aquila) in Ephesus and Rome.
D1	A	It is better for a believer to be wronged or defrauded (cheated) than to do so to another. Even though believers can do anything, they choose not to be controlled by things that are not beneficial.
	B	Christian husbands and wives submit their bodies to their spouses. Christians married to unbelievers remain married for the sake of their spouses and children.
	C	Christians did not eat food offered to idols so as not to cause their brothers or sisters to stumble.
	D	The apostle Paul could have demanded the churches support him, but he worked to pay his own bills. Paul sacrificed his own rights in order to win others to Christ.
	E	Christians don't seek their own good, but the good of others.
	F	When eating the Lord's Supper, Christians wait for one another; and if they are hungry they don't fill up at church, but eat at home.
D2		1 Corinthians 12:15-26; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 Corinthians 12:7 and 14:1-19.

Chapter 10

Q1		Priscilla and Aquila.
Q2		Priscilla and Aquila.
Q3		All the churches of the Gentiles.
Q4	A	Hymenaeus, Alexander, and Philetus.
	B	Three to one.
D1		Though not a prohibition of women's participation in the church, this passage in its context is a condemnation of false teaching in general, whether by men or women. The apostle's cure is timeless in its application. Emphasize character over clothing. Assert biblical doctrine over popular theology. Replace loose morals with Christian virtues. And make sure that believers are grounded in the Faith before permitting them to teach it. Paul's approach to the problems in ancient Ephesus applies anywhere in the world today. Putting things right in the church requires determined discipleship.
D2		Discuss or reflect on your personal experiences.

Chapter 11

D1		When a man takes more than one wife there can be jealousy and competition between the wives and their children resulting in favoritism and rejection. Solomon's 700 wives "turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God."
D2		Christian spouses are to fulfill their marital duties to one another. They are not to act independently from one another. Christian couples are to submit to one another.
Q1		1 Timothy 3:2-4 is addressed to husbands and 5:14 to wives (in this case, widows who remarry). Both husbands and wives are to manage their homes well.
Q2		God reveals His plans to both husbands and wives. In Genesis 17:16-17 God spoke to Abraham; in Judges 13:3 to the wife of Manoah; in Luke 1:13 to Zechariah; in Luke 1:26 to Mary; and in Matthew 1:20 to Joseph
Q3		God holds both partners spiritually responsible. In Acts 5:1-11 both Ananias and Sapphira were held accountable for lying to the Holy Spirit. In Genesis 3:8-24 both Adam and Eve were put out of the garden.
Q4		The only circumstances under which Jesus permitted divorce was sexual immorality.
Q5		Paul permits divorce if an unbeliever leaves a believing spouse.

D3	<p>A loving husband who celebrates God's gifts to his wife frees her to be all she can be for Jesus.</p> <p>A husband married to a woman in ministry should be her most enthusiastic admirer and supporter. He should not limit her ministry.</p> <p>She should not limit her leadership, but be humbly obedient to the Lord.</p>
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Chapter 12

Q1	From God, the Father above.
Q2	Be subject to governing authorities. Fulfill financial responsibilities. Pray and be thankful for leaders.
Q3	No. "We must obey God rather than human beings."
D1	Summarize what you learned in Chapters 4, 6-8.
Q4	God wanted kings to use their power on behalf of the poor, the powerless, those who cannot speak for themselves, those who are destitute, victims, foreigners, the fatherless, the widows, and the innocent.
D2	The kind of shepherd Jesus models opens the gate, calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. He goes on ahead of them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice. He leads them to food and water. He lays down his life for the sheep. He faithfully guards and protects his sheep.
D3	James and John wanted positions of honor. Jesus calls leaders to service, sacrifice, and suffering.
Q5	Jesus demonstrated servant-leadership by taking the basin and towel and washing His disciples' feet.
Q6	Shared by many.
D4	Explain in your own words the difference between leading in a selfish way and in a Christ-like way.

Chapter 13

D1	Recall your first experience with a woman leader and how you felt. Discuss any changes in your attitudes that have taken place as you have studied this book.
D2	Discuss the meaning—for men and women working together—of such passages as Acts 2:17-18; 1 Corinthians 11:4-5, 11-12; Ephesians 5:21; Romans 16; and 1 Peter 2:5, 9.
D3	Share with the group or reflect on your personal experience.
D4	Review the summary pages in Chapters 9 and 10 for evidences.
D5	List specific actions you plan to take in the coming days.
D6	Describe a woman leader who has influenced your life.

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