

# Family Matters

## Biblical Femininity



### Women In The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Society:

- women were treated as inferior to men (low status)
- no legal rights/untrustworthy witnesses in court (unjust, oppressive)  
“A man could legally divorce his wife if she burned his dinner.”

### The Effects Of The Modern Feminist Movement:

- 1912 Suffrage Movement (right to vote/education)
- 1963 The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan  
Questioned whether there was more to life than mother's role  
Strong women, power, and self-actualization  
Resulted in disillusionment/dissatisfaction/“what is woman”?
- “Feminism” is seen as liberation (women's rights/inequality)
- Biblical view of a Woman is seen as demeaning, inferior, limiting

### How Has This Filtered Down Into The Church?

- The Egalitarian view (equality – minimizes uniqueness/differences)  
(Gal. 3:28/Eph. 5:21 -v- 1 Cor. 11:3,7,9; Eph. 5:22,24)  
Positional equality (“in Christ”) not functional equivalence.  
Example from the Trinity (equal in being/submissive in role)
  - Evangelical feminists embrace the feminist ideal to abolish gender-based roles and challenge the idea that female subordination was ordained by God.
  - They reject the conceptualization of God as male (“He” masculine pronoun, God as Father)  
(Is. 49:15; Ps. 22:9,10; Ps. 123:2)
  - They hold that Jesus was a feminist  
(Luke 10:38-42 – women should prefer theology over domestic chores/Mary –v- Martha)
  - They argue that male headship and female subordination is part of the curse. They believe woman is no longer to be subjugated under male headship (no categories/differences).
- Liberation Theology
  - Liberal Christian feminists who use a “hermeneutic of suspicion” in Biblical interpretation remove anything offensive because of their view that Biblical male authors covered up the true role of women.
- Women lead - men are passive/absent
  - Women ordained as pastors/elders
  - Women dominating church affairs (1 Timothy 2:11-14)

- Gender-neutral or unisex Bibles (inclusive language)

### Positive:

- serves as an indictment against abuse and oppression of women
- calls attention to the invaluable role women play in church
- it rightly points out men's failure to lovingly lead their wives

### Negative:

- False premise that female subordination is a result of the Fall.
  - Male headship is clearly established in the creation account before the Fall. (Genesis 2)
    - \* man created first
    - \* woman created from man as a helper to man (Gen. 2:18) (1 Timothy 2:12-14; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9)
    - \* God first instructed Adam about moral responsibility (Gen. 2:16,17)
    - \* Adam named Eve "woman" (Gen. 2:23)
    - \* Adam was held solely responsible for the Fall (Gen. 3:9,17; Rom. 5:12,19)
  - Sin effects Man/Woman relationship in that established order (Gen. 3:16)

### The Effects Of The Fall:

- Women taking on a role not given by God/men's failure to lead Genesis 3:6
- Woman's wrongful desire to usurp authority over her husband Genesis 3:16 "desire to conquer" (and man's abusive power)
- Loss of distinction between male/female Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Corinthians 11:14,15
- Sexual Perversion - Romans 1:26
- Isaiah 3:12 Woman ruling was God's judgment on a sinning nation.

### The New Testament And Women:

- Jesus showed love, compassion, and respect to women and included them in his teaching and illustrations. (Jn. 2; 4; Elk. 8:1-3; 10:13-38; 15:8-10; Matt. 10:34-; 13:33; 22:1,2; 24:41; Mk. 5:25-)
- Jesus revealed himself after the resurrection to women (Jn. 20:1-18).
- In Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; and 1 Peter 3:1; wives are given the responsibility to voluntarily submit to their husbands.
  - "Submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts." John Piper
  - "a disposition to yield to the husband's authority and an inclination to follow his leadership."

- A woman must never follow a man's lead into sin.

- Women filled a vital role in the early Church.

Acts 1:12-14; 9:36-42; 16:13-15; 17:1-4,10-12; 18:1,2,18,24-28; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 16:19; Phil. 4:3; 2 Tim. 1:5; 4:19

### Definition: "Femininity"

"having qualities or characteristics traditionally ascribed to women – as sensitivity, delicacy, or prettiness"

### Biblical Passages Which Define Desired Character Of A Woman:

*John Piper: "Wimpy theology makes wimpy women."*

**Genesis 2:18** Helper (responder, follower)

**Proverbs 31:10-31**

10 Virtuous (moral excellence/noble character -Ruth 3:11; Prov. 12:4)

11 Trustworthy (honesty, integrity, reliability, loyalty)

13 Hard Worker/Diligent/Provides/Joyful/Balanced

15,17 Self-disciplined/Healthy/Stamina/Endurance (1 Cor. 6:19,20)

16,18 Economical/Frugal/a good steward/not wasteful/Content

20 Unselfish/Hospitipal/Thinks of others/Compassionate/Generous

(Acts 9:36 "full of good works and acts of charity.")

21,27 Prepared/plans ahead/responsible for a well-managed home

25 Honorable/Dignified/Respected/Integrity/good reputation (23,31)

26 Prudent/Wise/Kind/Controls her tongue

(Bad example of Miriam – Numbers 12:1-15)

28,29 Loved/Loving

30 God-fearing

\* She sets an example for her children in the management of her home.

**Proverbs 14:1** "A wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down."

- criticism and how a woman responds to her husbands can either build up or tear down what she longs to have.

**Proverbs 11:16** "kindhearted" (gracious)

**Proverbs 19:14** "prudent"

**Ephesians 5:33** "The wife must respect her husband."

- a wife's obedience or call to respect is not conditional on her husband's obedience or worthiness of respect.

**1 Timothy 2:9,10**

Modesty/Decency/Propriety

Good deeds appropriate for Christian women

**1 Timothy 3:11** (Deacon's wives) "women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers, but temperate and trustworthy in everything."

**1 Timothy 5:9,10,14**

Faithful to marriage/husband

Good reputation (raising children/hospitality/service)

**Titus 2:4-5** "Train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husband..."

- priority of women is their children and their home

- ways we can "leave" our home or be distracted (being idle and not industrious) (computer/phone/email/magazines)

**1 Peter 3:1-6**

Submissive/obedient to husband (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5)

Exemplary behavior (purity/reverence)

Modest in dress

Internal beauty (gentle/quiet spirit)

\* "do not give way to fear"

**1 Peter 3:7**

Needing a husband's strength, respect, and understanding/consideration

**2 Timothy 1:5** "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and I am persuaded, now lives in you also." (generational faith)

**Proverbs 1:8** "do not forsake your mother's teaching.."

**Acts 18:26** Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos

**Acts 9:36** Tabitha (Dorcas) "always doing good & helping the poor."

**Specific Commands Regarding Position Of Authority:**

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

1 Corinthians 14:34,35

1 Timothy 2:11-15