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Are Women as Important as Men?

1 Timothy 2:11: (NASB) *A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.*



We live in an age and a country of great enlightenment, in which we are all very aware of the need to recognize the rights of all men and women alike. We have laws that specifically forbid discrimination against anyone based on race or gender. We know that it is right (though unfortunately not always practiced) to give a man and a woman equal pay for equal work. All of this enlightenment and yet, when we look at the Bible, it seems to undermine these principles. Well, does the Bible teach that women are equal to and as important as men?

We'll have a recurring theme throughout: **WJJD?** What Would Jesus Do? Or, more properly stated: **WDJD?** What Did Jesus Do? We believe Jesus laid a template out for how women should be treated.

How was the relationship between men and women altered as a result of sin?

Genesis 3:4-6: So, everyone is found guilty in some way and God responds with penalties for each (we will skip over the penalty for Satan). But notice that all of the rules for living were now changed. Adam and Eve were now to live under severe restrictions. They no longer enjoyed the freedoms of the garden.

 **Islam is the great liberator, Women's rights and roles in Islam, The Great Debate, www.youtube.com**

- Islam is my chosen path, and I get really frustrated when I read about how women are paradoxically on the front lines of a movement that represses them. Islam in no way represses anyone. Islam is in fact the ultimate liberator. The women's liberation movement of this country would have benefited enormously from the guidance in the Koran. But then if we had been following the Koran, the women's liberation movement wouldn't have been necessary!*

Eve was deceived but Adam made a choice. Let's review their penalties.

Genesis 3:16 Genesis 3:17-19

Curse on the man: Hard work required to provide. What naturally would bring forth good would now bring forth thorns and thistles.

Curse on the woman: Bearing children in pain *and* that her husband will rule (have dominion) over her. That wasn't part of the original design!

As a Christian, we want to be a part of God's plan. These are God's rules. So if we want to be a part of it, we have to follow those rules. We have a choice over our feelings about it and can choose to be happy in our respective roles.

WDJD? JESUS TAUGHT WOMEN: This text shows how he encouraged their learning!
Luke 10:38-42:

How could being "submissive" to one's husband be a sign of respect towards women?

 **Resolution for Gender Equality, United Nations, July 2, 2010**

The United Nations' *Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*, also known as *UN Women*, is an entity working for the empowerment of women and girls.

- You have adopted a landmark resolution. We have decided to establish UN Women. Now it is time that the United Nations lead this campaign so we can make a world better for all, where men and women can walk together.*

That is an important effort, but there are many scriptures that give women a status **subservient to men**: Colossians 3:18-19: (KJV) ¹⁸Wives, **submit <5293>** yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love (agape) your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Submit: Strong's #5293 hupotasso; to subordinate; reflexively, to obey

Can equality and submissiveness work together?



This idea of "being in submission" is not just for the husband /wife relationship: Ephesians 5:21-24: Jesus was a perfect example of submission to his Father. Our submissiveness should look like his, which is the opposite of Satan's attitude.

The Women's Suffrage Movement, Alice Stokes Paul

- Alice Stokes Paul dedicated her life to the notion of what she called, "ordinary equality." She came to the cause of women's suffrage when she saw Christoval Pankhurst heckled and forced off stage during a speech for women's right to vote. The Pankhurst's motto, "Deeds, not words," meant everything from speaking on street corners, participating in suffrage parades, to throwing rocks and ultimately even to being arrested. The deeds were extreme but insured that the suffrage message was heard. Alice was sent to English prisons three times for her participation in the movement. While in prison she went on a hunger strike and endured painful forced feedings.*

Hilary Swank, in the HBO movie (2004) *Iron Jawed Angels*, portrayed Paul during her struggle for passage of the 19th Amendment. For more on Alice Stokes Paul, see the **CQ Rewind Full Edition Bonus Material!**

WDJD - JESUS SPOKE TO FOREIGN WOMEN: (This was unheard of!) John 4:7-10: Jesus overrode the social norm and showed absolute respect for this woman. Did he undermine the thought of women being submissive? Not at all. He valued her as a person in a greater standard than the traditions of the day.

So far, we can see that submitting is not a demeaning act. We are all to submit to one another in Christ. Is there a specific kind of honor that comes with this submission from a wife?

1 Peter 3:7: (KJV) *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the **weaker** <772> vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

"Honour," meaning value; by analogy, esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself:

Weaker: Strong's #772 strengthless (in various applications, literal, figurative and moral)

Being a submissive wife is an offering of free will because of the wife's love for God. It is the wife's choice to honor God by submitting to her husband. 2 Corinthians 9:7

But we don't believe it is God's intention in any relationship for one person to dominate over the other. Women today take on a lot of responsibility outside the home, so it is a balance. Christian submission is *not* being empty-headed and dominated by another. One partner is not "better than" the other. Husbands should treat their wives as something of great esteem, as one would treat something that is of great value, yet fragile. How did Jesus treat us? He gave his life for us.

1 Corinthians 12:21-23: This principle is exhibited in the above text - it does *not* mention men and women, but does use the same two words to explain relationships within the body of Christ.

The above comparisons speak volumes: eyes to hands - both have obvious value, yet the eye directs the hand. Head to feet - both have obvious value, yet the head directs the feet.

Romans 16:1-2: What a testimony of respect for this sister in Christ! Was Phoebe a *deacon* in the church? For some thoughts on that, see **CQ Rewind Full Edition Bonus Material!**



The Women's Suffrage Movement, Alice Stokes Paul

- She traveled to Washington D.C. to work on an amendment to the Constitution to give women the right to vote. Her counterpart in this work was Lucy Burns, a feisty young American lawyer whom she met in an English police station. In less than three months, the two organized a procession of over 8,000 men and women to march in Washington D.C. in support of the women's vote. The procession attracted a huge crowd. As the marchers turned onto Pennsylvania Avenue, onlookers crowded the streets, preventing the parade from advancing. Hecklers tore up the marchers' banners, and shouted at them to go home. Police did little to control the mounting chaos. The next morning, the parade, the riot and more importantly, women's suffrage, were front page news across the country.*



What is the role of a true Christian woman?

Woman's roles: Participate in the spreading of the Gospel, assist the brotherhood, and hold positions of responsibility.

WDJD? JESUS HAD WOMEN FOLLOW HIM: Luke 8:1-3: Jesus loved and respected women. He wanted to bring all back to his Father, male and female.

Women's roles: Be equally-esteemed followers of Jesus and provide for the needs of others.

James 3:13: Husbands are not to be a domineering overlords but instead are to use the meekness of God's wisdom in their lives.



The Great Debate: Women's Rights and Roles in Islam

- The Islamic dress of the woman...now to many Western-educated people, this is a sign of our oppression. This isn't so with a Muslim woman who has an understanding of Islam. This to us is our badge of honor. This is my right. This is my human right to be able to wear this. This identifies me as being a Muslim. In this country, I do not have the freedom to dress the way I would like to. In this country, if I go out with the face veil, we take a lot of problems. When I used to cover my face, I walked into a bank once to cash a check. I walked into the bank and the guard hit the gun at his hips.*

Unfortunately we live in a country where radical Muslim extremists have created suspicion and this side is all most of us are shown.

God's created relationship between men and women

Genesis 2:20-25: God knew ahead of time that no helper would be found, so He created man and women in this context to accentuate the interconnected relationship that was to be between man and women.

So Eve was created as a "helper" for Adam. What does that really mean?

- A helper as in one less experienced? An apprentice, maybe?
- A helper as in one with less authority?
- A helper as in one who is inferior?

Helpmate: Strongs #5828 ezer (ay'-zer); help, succour, one who helps

Look how this exact same word is used:

Psalms 121:1,2: ¹*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my **help <5828>**.*
²*My **help <5828>** cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.*

So who is the helper? The Lord. This is a "helper" with the greatest honor and respect possible. It puts a whole different light on the actual created equality of men and women. They were created absolutely equal in God's sight. God's original intent for his created man and woman had no indications of a relationship built around dominance of one over the other, but rather it was to be based on equality, mutual respect and was, in fact, complimentary.

WDJD? JESUS TREATED WOMEN AS RESPECTFULLY AS MEN: Luke 13:10-16: Did you know that the phrase *daughter of Abraham* is not found anywhere else in the Scriptures? This was a name of respect from Jesus. The Pharisees consistently called themselves *sons of Abraham*. Jesus was making a proclamation as to how important women were in the Jewish culture. She was not "less than" them. She had a right to be healed on the Sabbath the same way anyone who needed to be rescued on the Sabbath had the right.

But let's consider something - is Jesus going against the punishment of the curse by doing all of this?

What are women not supposed to do according to the New Testament?



1918 Wilson's support, The Women's Suffrage Movement, Alice Stokes Paul

- In January of 1918, President Wilson publicly announced his support of women's suffrage and, the House of Representatives immediately endorsed the Women's Suffrage Amendment. It took several more months of open air meetings, demonstrations and forceful lobbying by the NWP (National Women's Party) to convince the Senate to pass the amendment. The 19th Amendment*



became law on August 26, 1920. "I never doubted that 'equal rights' was the right direction. Most reforms and most problems are complicated. But to me, there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality."

Let's look at the context of our theme scripture: 1 Timothy 2:11-15: Her sense of value can be found not in teaching the church but in teaching children.

The Apostle Paul is making very bold statements! In the Christian community today, there are a lot of women in the positions of teaching. Was this a cultural thing or something we should still abide by in this age of equality?

1 Timothy 3:1-2: This is discussed in strictly male terms. Was this just cultural? Why wouldn't women be in a position to teach? Didn't they know enough? Weren't they trustworthy? Before answering, let's look in on Jesus' example...

WDJD? WOMEN CONTINUED WITH JESUS THROUGH THE WHOLE CRUCIFIXION EXPERIENCE: Luke 23:27-28

Matthew 27:55-56: It is interesting how Jesus continually acknowledged the women, even here near the end and in the midst of his great trial and pain. He loved, acknowledged and appreciated them.

There is a *very specific* reason we must adhere to women not teaching in the church, even though we believe in equal rights: Ephesians 5:22-28: There is a principle set forth in Christianity: The husband is head of the wife, as Christ is head of the church. This gives us a very clear picture to fulfill. This is a deeply spiritual relationship. Husbands are subjected to Christ, above and beyond anything they want. God's will is above everything.

Agape love is a selfless love that gives without expecting in return. This is how a husband is to love his wife. This is how Jesus loves us - selflessly, willing to give all for our best benefit. With a husband like that, is it hard to submit? When both have the best interests of the other at heart, life is good! Our adhering to the scriptural principle of submissiveness of women in the church that includes teaching and in the marriage relationship is actually showing our total devotion to Christ. We are being asked to show our devotion to Christ by acting this way.

Are we picking and choosing which parts of the New Testament to follow?

1 Corinthians 14:31-35: *Your women/silence/shame for women to speak*: We believe that the harshness of this particular text was cultural. Corinth was a Greek society, one of the deepest seats of idolatry and immorality. The treatment of women was different from the Hebrews and the Roman society. The Greek Christian women were incredibly disruptive and did not know how to behave in public. The Apostle had to help them restart nearly everything, to get them to a level of spiritual behavior where they could grow as a body and have a positive effect on one another, rather than a negative effect. **More on the cultural circumstance in the CQ Rewind Full Edition Bonus Material!**

All other admonitions towards the behavior of women are general: Colossians 3:18-19

WDJD? JESUS APPEARED FIRST TO A WOMAN AFTER HIS RESURRECTION: John 20:14-16: Jesus obviously respected women, yet did not call any women to be Apostles...Why? Because Jesus honored women within the context of the curse and punishment of Genesis, that the men would rule over them. The adjustment he makes is that he lifted their status to be as equal to men as possible, supplying them dignity but still honoring the "thus saith the LORD." Women were not appropriate for that role at that time. Different but equal...

Philippians 4:1-3 Galatians 3:28-29: There is one call and one reward. We all have the same opportunity, just in different roles. It is a privilege to be a part of it! Let's take the scriptural principles and privilege and apply them. It requires that we live differently from the people around us.

***Are women as important as men?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Kathy!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***