

## Should Women Be Pastors? (Part II)

**Galatians 3:27-29:** *27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.*



In Part I of this two-part series, we introduced several reasons why many Christians believe that women should be able to be pastors. Our scriptural considerations began with understanding what “equality in Christ” means in our theme text. We found that it is pointing to an immovable foundation for people of differing ethnicities, different social standings and both genders to stand firmly upon. While Christ does not change our heritage, social standing or gender privileges, he equally welcomes all of us. We also briefly examined the roles of a few prominent Old Testament women. Here we discovered that even though they were wise and chosen prophets of God, that did not open the door for them to be in any way related to the priesthood of Israel.

Let’s continue looking at the roles of a few women in the New Testament. Does the pattern change or does it stay the same?

One of the most important principles in understanding the teachings of Jesus is knowing what he based them on. The Old Testament gives us a clear view of humanity’s fall from God’s favor. The Law upheld the consequences of the fall, and then Jesus used them to establish how Christianity would operate. We will see that the New Testament grows out of the principles and experiences of the Old Testament.

**There are two major positions held within Christianity regarding the ordination of women as leaders within the church:**



**Egalitarians say:** men and women are equal in value and role, and women can be pastors or elders.



**Complementarians say:** the genders complement each other in that they are equal in value but not in role. They are *not* scripturally authorized to be pastors or elders.



In full disclosure, we agree with that last statement. But we want to fairly present the arguments, so we will continue down our list of egalitarian points. We covered the first in Part I and briefly started with the second point.



**Egalitarian Point 2: There were MANY women in leadership roles in both the Old and New Testaments:**

- **Priscilla:** She and her husband Aquila taught Apollos and traveled with Paul into great danger. The egalitarian point is that Priscilla was a courageous leader, and she was always named first before her husband.

**Acts 18:24-26:** *24 Now a Jew named Apollos... came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. 25 ...and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; 26 and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*

This is a powerful example because we know that Apollos stood out in an influential way as Christianity developed. But at the beginning of his Christian life, his understanding wasn't entirely correct. He received needed guidance from Priscilla and Aquila.

**Romans 16:3-4:** *3 Greet Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.*



Prisca is her formal name; Priscilla is the familiar, everyday form of her name. It's like Jonathan vs. Jon or Katherine vs. Kate. **See Bonus Material for additional information on Priscilla.**

She's mentioned more times than just these two examples, but in all of them:

- She's never mentioned without her husband, so they had a shared ministry as a team.
- While she did have spiritual maturity and influence, she never held a formal leadership title.



It's true she is listed first with her husband in four out of six references (**Acts 18:18, 26; Romans 16:3;** and **2 Timothy 4:19**), but that doesn't contradict the New Testament's teaching on church leadership. It does show how God uses gifted women in meaningful ways within the structure He established.

The fact that she's mentioned first shows that she was important, valuable and made a great contribution along with her husband.

For many women, this topic is painful because they love God, love Scripture and want to serve in all capacities. The complementarian view isn't a statement about value or ability, but about God's design for order in the church. This doesn't restrict women from teaching, leading, witnessing, counseling or serving in countless other ways.

**IMPORTANT POINT** The idea here is to understand God's perspective, direction and order, and then, lovingly and enthusiastically, flock towards where we can fit into that order. And it's not that one's better than another. We'll go through several scriptures that help us see that more and more clearly.

Let's go to another example:

- **Phoebe:** a faithful and responsible servant of the early church.

**Romans 16:1-2:** *1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a **servant** <1249 > of the church which is at Cenchrea; 2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.*

**Servant/Deacon:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1249 *diakonos*; attendant, i.e. (genitive case) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); specially, a Christian teacher and pastor (technically, a deacon or deaconess):—deacon, minister, servant



Many scholars believe she was the one who physically delivered Paul's letter to the Romans, a task that would have required maturity and courage. Obviously, Paul thought highly of her. An egalitarian would point out that *servant* (*diakonos*) is the same Greek word translated elsewhere as *deacon*. Paul used that same word to describe himself (**1 Corinthians 3:5**) and referring to official deacons in that role (**Philippians 1:1**, **1 Timothy 3:8-13** and others).



But, the word simply means “servant,” “minister” or “helper.” It's also used to describe government officials (**Romans 13:4**) and Christ himself (**Romans 15:8**). The word doesn't automatically mean “deacon” as an office. Context determines the meaning. In **Romans 16**, Paul is commending Phoebe's character and service, not assigning her an office.

*Was Phoebe a “deacon” holding an office?*



**No. The qualifications for deacons clearly included being male:**

**1 Timothy 3:8-13:** (KJV) *8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued... 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree...*

**See the Bonus Material for more.**

Again, Phoebe is called a *servant*—the same word elsewhere used for *deacon*—but the qualifications for deacons in **1 Timothy 3** describe men. Phoebe's role was one of trusted service and influence, not the formal office of deacon.

As we look deeper into the Scriptures, we see the formal office of deacon was established for specific reasons with specific guidelines. And again, the point is you can serve; you can be a “deacon” in your attitude, actions and process, but that doesn't necessarily mean you are a deacon who holds the ultimate responsibility of that office. There's a difference.

- **Junia:** another New Testament example of living an outstanding life of Christian sacrifice.



**She's often considered the strongest egalitarian case for women in church authority:**

**Romans 16:7:** (NLT) *Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did.*

*Andronicus* is believed to be male and *Junia* is believed to be female.

The debate is over the phrase *highly respected among the apostles*, which, translated literally from the Greek, means “notable as apostles,” *episēmoi en tois apostolois*.



*So, was Junia well-known to the apostles, or was she an outstanding apostle herself?*

Grammatically, the phrase can mean either. The word *apostle* itself simply means “sent one,” “messenger,” or “one sent forth with orders.”

Barnabas is called an apostle, meaning a messenger in this broader sense (**Acts 14:14**); Epaphroditus is called an apostle/messenger (**Philippians 2:25**); and even Jesus is called an apostle (**Hebrews 3:1**). These were not among the 12 apostles of the Lamb (**Revelation 21:14**).



So, even if Junia were a “missionary-type apostle,” Scripture never presents her as holding the authoritative teaching or governing office Paul restricts in **1 Timothy chapters 2 and 3**. Instead, her life shows deep faithfulness, sacrifice and influence—a powerful example of gospel service, NOT church office.

So little is written about Junia. In fact, all that exists is this single commendation of her exemplary character. We understand her to be highly respected by those holding the office of apostle.

Notice Paul refers to Andronicus and Junia as *my fellow Jews*. Remember from Part I we learned that just because we are in Christ, our ethnicity, social status and gender do not change. He's saying, *These brethren come from the same background as me. The two of them were in prison with me. They experienced the same things I did, and they're highly respected for it.* Paul commends Andronicus and Junia for leading an admirable life of sacrifice.

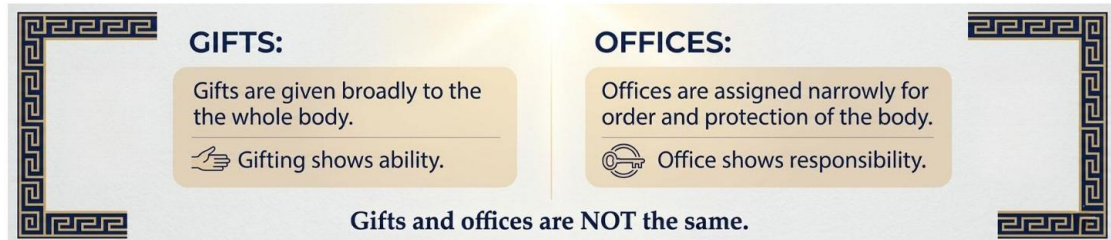


But this leads to the modern, egalitarian argument of competency. Women today are well-educated and lead companies, hospitals, universities and government agencies. They manage teams, budgets, crises and long-term strategy. Many are more educated or spiritually mature than the men in their congregations, and many have strong teaching gifts.

The question naturally arises: If a woman can lead at the highest levels of society, why can't she teach formally in church? And if God has clearly given her the gift of teaching, why wouldn't she use it as a pastor or elder?



Competency isn't the issue. Scripture honors gifted, wise women. The real question is how those gifts fit within God's design for church order.



God calls all Christians to use their gifts, but He assigns the governing and teaching authority of the church according to His design of office, not human capability.

And that's an important factor because, no matter who we are, we can always look at someone and say, *Well, this person is more competent than that person. This person is so much better at that. Why can't we stop and replace them with someone else?*

The bottom line here is, who do we serve?

We serve our God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, whose rules, guidance, principles and guardrails are we to be walking within? Those of our God and our Lord Jesus Christ. I can have all the opinions I want, but do they fit within those guidelines?

In the case of all of these women, they may have showed service, leadership, courage and faith, but that did NOT equate to the role of teaching in the church.

**Why? Teaching and leading the church was reserved for brothers:**

**1 Timothy 3:1-2:** *1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.*

The office of *overseer* (an elder or pastor), along with having a great character, is to be *able to teach*. The King James Version uses *apt to teach*, meaning to have the ability to teach. Teaching isn't a formal, spiritual gift given by God; it is a qualification.

**1 Timothy 3:4:** *He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity.*

To fairly present the egalitarian perspective, they would say:

- Paul used male examples as representing both genders. The Bible uses the phrase *sons of God*, such as in **Romans 8:14,19**, but we know it also includes daughters/females. Man is used generically to mean “person.”
- Paul uses male examples because that culture assumed a male head of the household, and Greek grammar defaults to masculine forms. So, they would say, Paul is describing a typical elder, not limiting the office only to men. *Husband of one wife* is interpreted as “faithful to one spouse,” not “must be male.”

But every named *elder* or *overseer* in the New Testament is male!

Could we say only males are described because of the culture of that day? No. We looked at several proofs in Part I, including the Levitical priesthood set up by God. They were all unequivocally men.

Jesus consistently elevated women beyond the culture of his day, and yet he called 12 men to be the pillars of his church. When the first deacons were appointed in **Acts 6**, *seven men of good report* (character) were appointed. They were all men. We are given an obvious pattern established in ancient Israel that carries forward through Jesus and to the beginning of the gospel preaching of the apostles. This goes beyond culture.

**Let’s go further with the undeniable pattern:**

**Titus 1:5-6:** *5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.*

The Apostle Paul writes to Titus with the same character and qualifications of male elders.

**1 Peter 5:1-2, 5:** *1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ... 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight... according to the will of God... with eagerness... 5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.*

The Apostle Peter agrees with and confirms what Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus. Peter affirms the church is to have official male leaders.



**Why only men? The Apostle Paul gives two compelling reasons.**

**1. The man/woman relationship is a powerful picture of spirituality:**

**Ephesians 5:22-25:** *22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, he himself being the savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her.*

That same, pure concept of headship shown in Adam and Eve before sin entered is a picture of Christ and his church.

## RESPECTING HEADSHIP IS HOW WE HONOR JESUS

**Even Christ himself models headship, as he is always under the Father for eternity:**

**1 Corinthians 15:28:** *When all things are subjected to him, then the son himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.*

Headship is not about superiority. It's about reflecting order, the same arrangement Christ himself follows.

We have the example to follow. The male|female relationship is a picture of the sacredness of Christ and his church, and of how the church is supposed to work under the leadership and guidance of Christ.

### 2. Headship originated with creation, not culture.

**1 Timothy 2:12-13:** *12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. 13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.*

Headship is not subservience. It was the design from the beginning.

**Paul says the same thing in the following verses:**

**1 Corinthians 11:7-9:** *7 For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. 8 For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; 9 For indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.*

**Paul continues:**

**1 Timothy 2:14:** *And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.*

What began as this created design, this pure headship, was later distorted by sin. The fall shows the consequences of stepping outside God's design. God's original arrangement was good and balanced, not demeaning. Sin introduced struggle between man and woman, but it didn't erase God's order.



The structure God gives for the church reflects that original creation design, not the corrupted version that came after sin.

When we look at headship and our relationship to Christ, none of us thinks, *Well, that's demeaning!* Christ is our head. He guides and directs us.

The New Testament restores headship as sacrificial love and Christlike service.

This makes the admonition to Christian men to love their wives as Christ loves the church a huge responsibility! Christian women are to have respect for men as part of that picture. We follow a higher example.



**Establishing the scriptural role of women in the true church:**

*The examples of these New Testament female heroes of faith are inspiring. They served, put their lives on the line and were recognized for their faithfulness. With all of this in place, we see these women playing a vital role in leading by example. These women are showing us that leadership does NOT need to only come from pastors and elders; it can come from all who serve!*

**Rick**

That's such a powerful point. Wherever we stand in the realm of the body of Christ, we can lead by example. I can't tell you how many times the smallest example of the individual who doesn't have bunches of talents and tons of opportunities has been there, and it literally brings me to tears to watch their faithfulness. It spurs me to want to serve more fully.

With such powerful examples of faith in action, the concept is that every Christian—no matter who they are—can inspire and lead all of us!

**What about the gifts of the spirit? And does all of this mean that women are supposed to be shut down and exist in silence?**

Let's remember the extraordinary examples of the faithful women we have just reviewed. They have plainly displayed faith, courage and sacrifice in action for all of us to appreciate. Let's also remember that the gifts of the spirit were given to both men and women. The question is, do those gifts change any of the conclusions that the scriptures have already established?



Before we get too far into the gifts, one other egalitarian position worth mentioning is the Patriarchy Argument. It states that because the Bible reflects a patriarchal culture, some restrictions may be cultural, not eternal.

In the ancient world, women had limited legal rights, education and public voice. The reason, goes the argument, that women are not seen in leadership in church history is not because Scripture teaches male headship, but because patriarchal institutions like the Medieval Catholic Church suppressed and distorted women's voices and promoted male bias.

An example of putting women down is that of Pope Gregory I, who started the rumor that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute when there's no scripture to prove it. Early church councils were all-male, so the allegation is that men preserved stories about male leaders and minimized the contributions of women.



In response, the same early church that preserved Paul’s restrictions also preserved the stories of faithful women like Phoebe, Priscilla, Junia and Lydia. Paul’s teaching on headship goes back to God’s design for creation, not the culture of the time. So, while history has misrepresented women, Scripture itself consistently honors them.

As Christians, we need to recognize that the Bible is the Word of God. Up to this point, the Bible has plainly described the role of women NOT leading or governing the church.

**T H I N K !**

What’s my decision? What am I going to do with the Word of God? Am I going to say the Word of God is contaminated by culture, or am I going to accept the Word of God, where the Old Testament to New Testament and everything in between all say the same thing? Am I going to embrace it or say, “No, I reject it because I don’t like it.”



**Egalitarian Point 3: God distributed spiritual gifts without regard to gender, and leadership should follow gifting!**

**When the spirit came upon the apostles at Pentecost, they began speaking in tongues. Peter quoted Joel:**

**Acts 2:17-18:** *17 AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS, God says, THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; 18 EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT and they shall prophesy.*

Peter emphasized that God would pour out His spirit on both sons and daughters, and that both men and women would prophesy. Egalitarians point to this and ask: If women could prophesy, why couldn’t they teach?



But Peter’s purpose in quoting Joel was not to redefine church leadership. He was showing that God’s spirit was being poured out in a powerful way—the beginning of the miraculous gifts that would help establish the early church. Pentecost was a demonstration of God’s power, not a statement about who should hold the teaching office. This distinction matters.

Peter quotes Joel saying the prophecy would be fulfilled *in the last days*, which were still future. So, why quote it? Because Pentecost was the *initial* evidence of what Joel foretold—a preview, not the complete fulfillment. Yes, the spirit came upon both men AND women, and yes, they both prophesied. But this moment was about God authenticating the new Christian movement through miraculous gifts, not about changing the structure of church leadership. There is nothing about this allowing women to teach within the church. This talks about contribution, not the office of teaching.

Pentecost introduced the New Testament gifts of the spirit, beginning with speaking in tongues.

**These gifts were powerful early church tools, but what does this tell us about teaching in the church? What's the correlation?**

**1 Corinthians 12:7-10:** *7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same spirit; 9 to another faith by the same spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one spirit, 10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.*

Notice that teaching or governing the church is not listed as a spiritual gift. *Able to teach* (*apt to teach* in the King James Version) we read earlier in **1 Timothy 3:1-2** is a qualification for elders, not a miraculous gift. Gifts were for building the early church, not for determining who holds the office of elder.

**Gifts had a place in the early church, but their use ended. How do we know? Paul told us:**

**1 Corinthians 13:8-10:** *8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.*

Paul says these gifts were temporary. Prophecy, tongues and miraculous knowledge would all *cease* when *the perfect*—the completed Word of God—arrived. These gifts helped establish the church before Scripture was fully written, but once God's Word was complete, Old Testament|New Testament, *the partial* gave way to the complete. Though the miraculous gifts ceased, the spirit still equips Christians—men and women alike—to serve, teach and encourage within the boundaries God designed.

**EQUAL GIFTING SHOWS EQUAL WORTH, BUT NOT IDENTICAL CALLING.**

As we go through these Scriptures, look for the threads that genuinely connect—and be willing to admit when a thread doesn't. Sometimes a point only carries us so far, and that's okay. The question then becomes, where do the other pieces fit? Let the Scriptures build the foundation and show us how it all fits together.



**Establishing the scriptural role of women in the true church:**

*As powerful as the gifts of the spirit were, they were not permanent and did not prepare anyone to become an elder in the church, as their purpose was simply to stimulate the international establishment of the early church.*

**Julie**

I know you grew up in a church environment that was opposed to women in the elder or pastor role. Could you be biased? Is this really just a matter of conscience like not eating meat offered to idols, where if you believe you are doing it or not doing it according to Scripture, then you should or should not do so?

## Rick's Response

I could be biased, but I've looked at the texts with the idea to learn what the the Scriptures are teaching, rather than me suggesting what I'd like to conclude. On this particular subject, there are so many texts from Genesis onto the New Testament that say this is a foundational relationship that God specifically, dynamically, intentionally put in place.

We've talked about these scriptures in the last two parts of the series. When I look at this, you can argue with it, but I don't believe I'm seeing it through a bias. I am looking at it from a perspective of what God's word is telling me, so I can tell others. To me, it's loud, clear and verifiable again and again.

### Egalitarian Point 4: Based on these reasonings, there are other points to consider:



- **Christians are redeemed from sin and death. Egalitarians would say the New Creation should have a new equality.**

**1 Corinthians 12:14-15, 40-41:** *14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot says, Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.*

We talked about this in Part I. Paul uses an important metaphor. The church is a body, and each faithful Christian is pictured as a different body part with a different function. God Himself places each member where He wants them, with gifts and roles suited to His purpose. No part should look at another and say, "Because I'm not that, I don't belong." That's simply not true. Every member has a place and a purpose.

Julie

Who am I to say, "Well, I should be (insert position here)..." if that's not what the Lord designed for me? For women contemplating this question, it ends up being an issue of humility.



Our equality in Christ is our foundation, but how God places us within His plan is in His mighty hands!

Paul shifts the picture to the heavens in **verses 40 and 41**. Just as there is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars—and even star differs from star in glory—there are differences in the heavenly realm as well. Those differences don't diminish value; they display God's design.

So should any of us look at another and say, "I should have a higher glory than that one"? Of course not. The beauty of God's grace is that He gives us any place in His plan at all. We don't deserve it. It is only through His grace, through His son Jesus, that we can even have these conversations and stand in the hope He provides.

That's why humility is essential for both genders. Recognizing God's placement, God's design and God's grace keeps our hearts in the right posture.



- **Egalitarians say Christian women “learning in silence” contradicts every aspect of freedom in Christ.**

**1 Timothy 2:11:** (NLT) *Women should learn **quietly** <2271> and submissively.*

**Silent:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2271 *hesuchia*; feminine of 2272; (as noun) stillness, i.e. desistance from bustle or language

The King James Version Translates this as “silent” 3 times, and “quietness” 1 time

Thayer's Greek English Lexicon: 1) quietness 1a) description of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officiously meddle with the affairs of others 2) silence

Let's read two other scriptures that are not about women that use that same word. The various forms of *silence* used in the New Testament carry the thought of “sober and reverent behavior.”



**This is NOT “silence” and is NOT derogatory:**

**1 Thessalonians 4:11-12:** *11 And to make it your ambition to lead a **quiet life** <2270> and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, 12 so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need. (This is for men and women.)*

This applies to both men and women. In other words, attend to your business. Do what's in front of you, just as you've been commanded. Live up to the standards of high morality within the world, so that you can be a representative of Christ. Be contributory, rather than a leech on somebody else's life. It is a standard of reverence and sober behavior.

**2 Thessalonians 3:11-13:** *11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in **quiet fashion** <2271> and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.*

Again, this applies to both men and women. To work in *quiet fashion* is not to be a busybody or an instigator, but to have sober and reverent behavior.

So, when **1 Timothy 2:11** says *women should learn quietly*, it means with sober and reverent behavior, not that they are to be silenced. They are to be reverent before God, just like men are required to be.



Along these lines, we get a lot of questions about Paul's admonition in **1 Corinthians 14:34:** *The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.*

This is a different circumstance from the admonition in **1 Timothy 2:11**. **For more on this, please see the Bonus Material.**



- **The egalitarian asks, why keep any woman from using her teaching gift if it is from God?**

The point here is that in many churches, women already lead much of the ministry—children’s work, prayer, counseling, hospitality and missionary work. Many congregations would struggle without their leadership. So, some ask, if women already do most of the ministry, why not recognize it formally?



We are each to use whatever abilities we have to glorify God according to His Word and in ways that would be pleasing to Him.

Instead of asking why women can’t do everything, the better question is how each of us can use the gifts God has given us in the ways He designed. Many women have strong teaching gifts, and the issue is using them within the boundaries God established. When we honor His order, everyone can serve fully, fruitfully and to His glory. This is what every Christian wants.

We can be the example. It doesn't matter—man, woman, old or young—we can be an example of what a transformed life looks like.

**Here’s how women can do that:**

**Titus 2:3-5:** *3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.*

We could read this Scripture and interpret it that women can’t work outside the home and have to be a quiet little mouse, just saying, “Yes, Dear. No, Dear. Right away, Dear.” That certainly does not fit in with today's culture. But that’s not what the texts are saying.

Let’s break this down into pieces.

*Older women*—those who have experience, those who have lived according to Christ—with your experience, wisdom and knowledge, with what you have learned and gone through with trials and tribulations, be reverent and teach *what is good*—scripturally valuable things to encourage the young women. Encourage them toward what? Toward being sensible. Toward being pure. Toward being a good worker.

What if you have a job outside the home? Then strive to be the best worker you can be. So, it's saying: pour out your wisdom gained from a lifetime of experience to those who are younger, showing them what a life lived after Christ looks like.



You owe it to the younger ones to share with them so they may live their lives with your example, so *that the word of God will not be dishonored*.

Put the highlights of these texts in place, and all of a sudden it's not, "You have to be quiet and stay at home." Instead, Paul's words reflect the privilege women have to influence generations in ways men may not have.



**Realize that our living the gospel can influence generations:**

**2 Timothy 1:5:** *For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you (Timothy) as well.*

Paul saw a powerful faith in Timothy and attributes it to his grandmother and mother. This tells us that Lois and Eunice took their faith with profound seriousness and passed it on from generation to generation. Because those two women were utterly faithful in this way, Paul was able to trust Timothy and turn much of his work over to him. Paul was nearing the end of his life at this point.

Those women were instrumental in building the character of young Timothy to be able to take that huge responsibility. That's what we mean by looking at those Titus texts through different eyes. Women can have a positive, powerful effect that will last past their own lifetime. This is a God-honoring way women can teach!

**Rick**

I could talk to you for hours about what my grandmother taught me as a Christian when I was a kid. The things that she taught me. The attitude that she had. The difficulties she conquered and faced throughout her life—and her life was never easy. Those lessons have stuck with me and helped to make me who I am. That's the power of this generational perspective of using what God has given us. Use it where you can.

**Recognize that God's will is rarely accomplished by using the best, or even the brightest:**

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29:** *26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God.*



Bloom where God has planted you! Grow in grace and knowledge of His truth and do things His way with honor, respect and reverence. Let the blessing He has given to you shine out. In other words, let's be receptive to what we have been given, so that we can play the role that our Father and our Lord Jesus are saying: *Follow and be faithful in this way, and see what can happen.*

## Julie's Thoughts

Before we close, I want to share my personal feelings on the topic. In my career, I worked as a Vice President in the insurance industry handling multi-million-dollar accounts. I led teams, gave executive presentations and managed complex risk strategies. So, when people raise the competency argument—that gifted, capable women should naturally step into pastoral roles—I get it. But at the end of the day, I trust that God's design for church order is wise, even when under today's modern microscope it seems like an ancient relic.

I've had to evaluate my role here on this podcast. I study hard and contribute to our weekly conversations. Does this conflict with women not teaching in a church setting? No, because this isn't the office Paul describes. My role here isn't a loophole. I'm not functioning as an elder or governing a congregation. I'm serving within the authority, privilege and oversight of two male elders. A female perspective is really important—over 65 percent of our audience is female—and this is a way to use my gifts faithfully and joyfully within the structure Scripture gives us.

This isn't about what I DON'T get to do. Look at this privilege I have! There are so many opportunities for service and witnessing about the gospel message! I want to align with the picture of Christ as the head of the church. Men and women serve together, each according to, and honoring, God's design. Find the work you are to do!

Just to add to that, Julie was invited to participate. She didn't say, "Hey, I can do this!" We said, "Why don't you try this?" In fact, when we asked if she would be willing to come on air, her first reaction was no!

But the point is that when we put our talents and abilities together in the context of doing it God's way, according to His will and His word, we can come up with something that can actually be a blessing. And if we keep it His way, that's where the greatest blessing comes.



### **Establishing the scriptural role of women in the true church:**

*Equality in Christ means we are ALL equally lifted out of sin and death and redeemed. It does not change our ethnicity, our social standing or our gender roles. For women to not be able to preach and to therefore be looked at as second class citizens is a grave error. Instead, let us ALL rejoice in whatever opportunities our God gives us in accordance with His Holy Word and run the race together, all as one body!*

Run the race together as one body. If I'm not a hand and I'm a foot, run. If I'm not an eye but I'm an ear, still run the race together.

Whatever role we are given according to Scripture, take that role. Bring it before the Father and say, "Lord, show me what to do with what You've given me in accordance with Your word." Watch, pray, and follow and see how you can be blessed.

**So, should women be pastors?  
For Rick, Jonathan, Julie and Christian Questions...  
...Think about it!**

*All scriptures cited are from the NASB1995 translation unless otherwise noted.*



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### **Bonus Material and Study Questions**

#### **BIBLE Q&A**

#### **Why did Paul say women weren't allowed to speak in church?**

**1 Corinthians 14:34-35** is an often-misunderstood passage:

*34 The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. 35 If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.*

At first glance, this sounds like a universal command for women never to speak in church. But the context of this chapter shows something very different. The church at Corinth was in a very disorderly condition. The entire chapter is about chaotic worship services, with people interrupting and talking over each other and speaking in tongues without an interpreter.

Their meetings were often confused and unprofitable. The Apostle Paul is providing some very necessary regulations so that all things might be done “properly and in order” (**1 Corinthians 14:40**).

The issue was disruption, not gender. Paul had already affirmed women speaking in church. Earlier in the same letter, Paul gave instructions for women praying and prophesying in the assembly (**1 Corinthians 11:5**), so he can’t be commanding absolute silence here.

Paul uses the same word for *silence* (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #4601 *sigāō*) when correcting men in the same chapter 14.

Paul tells three groups to “be silent” (*sigāō*):

- Those speaking in tongues without an interpreter (verse 28).
- Those prophesying who were talking over each other (verse 30).
- Women who were contributing to the disorder (verse 34).

In all three cases, “silence” meant: stop interrupting, stop contributing to the confusion, listen instead of speaking out of turn. Paul called for order. This was situational, addressing a specific problem of disorder in Corinth’s worship services. It was not a universal command for women to be silent.

What were the women doing? Most scholars agree on one of two possibilities:

- asking disruptive questions during the service
- challenging prophetic messages in a way that added to the chaos

Paul’s solution was simple: Let the service be orderly. Save the questions for home.

In summary, **1 Corinthians 14** is not addressing eldership, teaching office, church governance or creation order. It is addressing disorderly worship, and Paul applies the same standard to everyone: If your contribution disrupts the service, be silent.

**Egalitarian Point 1:** Men and women are equal in value and equal in access to ministry roles.

**Complementarian Answer to Point 1:** Men and women are equal in value and dignity, but God assigned different roles in the home and the church based on what was established in Genesis, not cultural bias.

**Egalitarian Point 2:** There were MANY women in leadership roles in both the Old and New Testaments.

**Complementarian Answer to Point 2:** Scripture highlights many faithful women, but none were appointed to the governing, authoritative teaching office over God's people. Leadership qualities in women were distinct from elder-level authority.

**Egalitarian Point 3:** God distributed spiritual gifts without regard to gender, and leadership should follow gifting.

**Complementarian Answer to Point 3:** Spiritual gifts are given to both men and women, but gifts do not determine church office; God assigns the teaching-authority role (elder/overseer) according to His created design, not according to gifting alone.

**Egalitarian Point 4a:** Christians are redeemed from sin and death. The New Creation should have a new equality.

**Complementarian Answer to Point 4a:** Redemption restores our relationship with God, not our roles; the New Creation renews the heart but does not erase the creation order God established before the fall.

**Egalitarian Point 4b:** Women told to learn in silence must be cultural.

**Complementarian Answer to Point 4b:** Instructions about teaching and authority are grounded in the Genesis account, not culture, which means they apply universally, not only to first-century situations.

**Egalitarian Point 4c:** Why keep a woman from using her teaching gift if it is from God?

**Complementarian Answer to Point 4c:** Women aren't restricted from teaching. There are many biblically affirmed avenues of ministry that honor God's design and protect the beauty of the headship picture of Christ and his church.

### The New Testament accounts of Priscilla:

**Acts 18:1-4:** *1 After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, 3 and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. 4 And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.*

**Acts 18:18-28:** *18 Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. 19 They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, 21 but taking leave of them and saying, I will return to you again if God wills, he set sail from Ephesus. 22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch. 23 And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. 24 Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; 26 and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. 27 And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, 28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*

**Romans 16:1-5:** *1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; 2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well. 3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; 5 also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.*

**1 Corinthians 16:15-20:** *15 Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), 16 that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. 17 I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. 18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men. 19 The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.*

**2 Timothy 4:16-22:** *16 At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. 17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus remained at*

Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. 21 Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren. 22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

**The New Testament mention of Phoebe:**

**Romans 16:1-2:** 1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; 2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

**The New Testament mention of Junia:**

**Romans 16:7:** (NLT) Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did.

**\*Uses of “servant/deacon” in the New Testament:**

**Servant:** Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #1249 *diakonos*; probably from an obsolete word (to run on errands; compare 1377); an attendant, i.e. (genitive case) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); specially, a Christian teacher and pastor (technically, a deacon or deaconess)

The King James Version translates this as “minister” 20 times, “servant” 8 times, and “deacon” 3 times

Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon: 1) one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master, a servant, attendant, minister 1a) the servant of a king

- 1b) a deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use
- 1c) a waiter, one who serves food and drink

**All uses in the King James Version:**

**Matthew 20:26:** But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your *minister* <1249>.

**Matthew 22:13:** Then said the king to the *servants* <1249>, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**Matthew 23:11:** But he that is greatest among you shall be your *servant* <1249>.

**Mark 9:35:** And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and *servant* <1249> of all.

**Mark 10:43:** But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your *minister* <1249>.

**John 2:5:** His mother saith unto the *servants* <1249>, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

**John 2:9:** When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the *servants* <1249> which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom.

**John 12:26:** *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my **servant <1249>** be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

**Romans 13:4:** *For he is the **minister <1249>** of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the **minister <1249>** of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

**Romans 15:8:** *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a **minister <1249>** of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.*

**Romans 16:1:** *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a **servant <1249>** of the church which is at Cenchrea.*

**Romans 16:27:** *To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. Written to the Romans from Corinthus, and sent by Phebe **servant <1249>** of the church at Cenchrea.*

**1 Corinthians 3:5:** *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but **ministers <1249>** by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?*

**2 Corinthians 3:6:** *Who also hath made us able **ministers <1249>** of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

**2 Corinthians 6:4:** *But in all things approving ourselves as the **ministers <1249>** of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.*

**2 Corinthians 11:15:** *Therefore it is no great thing if his **ministers <1249>** also be transformed as the **ministers <1249>** of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

**2 Corinthians 11:23:** *Are they **ministers <1249>** of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

**Galatians 2:17:** *But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the **minister <1249>** of sin? God forbid.*

**Ephesians 3:7:** *Whereof I was made a **minister <1249>**, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power.*

**Ephesians 6:21:** *But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful **minister <1249>** in the Lord, shall make known to you all things.*

**Philippians 1:1:** *Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and **deacons <1249>**.*

**Colossians 1:7:** *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful **minister <1249>** of Christ.*

**Colossians 1:23:** *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a **minister <1249>**.*

**Colossians 1:25:** *Whereof I am made a **minister <1249>**, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God.*

**Colossians 4:7:** *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful **minister** <1249> and fellowservant in the Lord.*

**1 Thessalonians 3:2:** *And sent Timotheus, our brother, and **minister** <1249> of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith.*

**1 Timothy 3:8:** *Likewise must the **deacons** <1249> be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.*

**1 Timothy 3:12:** *Let the **deacons** <1249> be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.*

**1 Timothy 4:6:** *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good **minister** <1249> of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.*

New Testament definition of *apostle*:

**Apostle:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #652 *apostolos*; from 649; a delegate; specially, an ambassador of the Gospel; officially a commissioner of Christ ["apostle"] with miraculous powers

The King James Version Translates this as "apostle" 78 times, "messenger" 2 times, and "he that is sent" 1 time

Thayer's Greek English Lexicon: 1) a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders  
1a) specifically applied to the twelve apostles of Christ  
1b) in a broader sense applied to other eminent Christian teachers  
1b1) of Barnabas 1b2) of Timothy and Silvanus

The New Testament words for *silent*:

**Silent:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2271 *hesuchia*; feminine of 2272; (as noun) stillness, i.e. desistance from bustle or language

The King James Version Translates this as "silence" 3 times, and "quietness" 1 time

Thayer's Greek English Lexicon: 1) quietness 1a) description of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officiously meddle with the affairs of others 2) silence

**All uses in the King James Version:**

**Acts 22:2:** *(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more **silence** <2271>: and he saith)*

**2 Thessalonians 3:12:** *Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with **quietness** <2271> they work, and eat their own bread.*

**1 Timothy 2:11-12:** *11 Let the woman learn in **silence** <2271> with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in **silence** <2271>.*

**Silent:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2272 *hésuchios*; a prolonged form of a compound probably of a derivative of the base of 1476 and perhaps 2192; properly, keeping one's seat (sedentary), i.e. (by implication) still (undisturbed, undisturbing)

The King James Version Translates this as “quiet” 1 time, and “peaceable” 1 time

Thayer's Greek English Lexicon: 1) quiet, tranquil

**Both uses in the King James Version:**

**1 Timothy 2:2:** *For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable <2272> life in all godliness and honesty.*

**1 Peter 3:4:** *But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet <2272> spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

**Silent:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2270 *hesuchazo*; from the same as 2272; to keep still (intransitively), i.e. refrain from labor, meddlesomeness or speech

The King James Version Translates this as “hold (one's) peace” 2 times, “rest” 1 time, “cease” 1 time, and “be quiet” 1 time

Thayer's Greek English Lexicon: 1) to keep quiet 1a) to rest, cease from labour 1b) to lead a quiet life, said of those who are not running hither and thither, but stay at home and mind their business 1c) to be silent, i.e. to say nothing, hold one's peace

**All uses in the King James Version:**

**Luke 14:4:** *And they held their peace <2270>. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go.*

**Luke 23:56:** *And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested <2270> the sabbath day according to the commandment.*

**Acts 11:18:** *When they heard these things, they held their peace <2270>, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

**Acts 21:14:** *And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased <2270>, saying, The will of the Lord be done.*

**1 Thessalonians 4:11:** *And that ye study to be quiet <2270>, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.*

# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep. 1439: Should Women be Pastors? (Part II)

See:



<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1439-should-women-be-pastors-part-ii/>

1. How does the New Testament's treatment of Priscilla and Aquila show both shared ministry and God-designed order in the early church?
2. What does Priscilla being listed first in four of six passages reveal about her influence, and why does this not equate to holding a formal leadership office?
3. How does Phoebe's description as a *diakonos* in Romans 16 help us distinguish between spiritual service and the formal office of deacon?
4. Why is context essential when interpreting the word *diakonos*, and how does 1 Timothy 3 clarify the qualifications for the office of deacon?
5. What does Junia's commendation in Romans 16:7 teach us about faithful service, and why does the phrase *episēmoi en tois apostolois* not imply she held governing authority?
6. How do we address the modern argument of competency, and why does Scripture place office-based authority in God's design rather than human capability?
7. What pattern do we see in the New Testament regarding who is appointed as elders and overseers? How does this pattern connect back to the Old Testament priesthood?
8. How do Paul and Peter consistently affirm male eldership? What theological reasons do they give for this structure?
9. How does the relationship between Christ and the church in Ephesians 5 help us understand the spiritual symbolism behind headship?
10. Why does Paul root his teaching on church order in creation (1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 11), and how does this show that headship is not cultural?
11. What does Pentecost demonstrate about the distribution of spiritual gifts, and why does this not redefine who holds the teaching office in the church?
12. How does 1 Corinthians 12's body metaphor help us appreciate God's placement of each believer? Why is humility essential when considering our roles in the church?