

Biblical Womanhood: What Scripture Says About Women's Roles in Life, Family, and Ministry

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[0 : 00] I'm looking at the subject of biblical womanhood. So how women should serve, the different roles they have, what the Bible says about women.

! And I've got to say I am somewhat hampered speaking on this subject because I'm not a woman myself. So I want to pay due regard to the women that are here.

I can only speak what the Bible says. I can't speak from experience about what a woman is or a woman should do. But we can see that from the Word of God, what the Bible talks to us about, the power and the dignity of true femininity and a biblical perspective on women's roles in ministry and service.

So that's the topic here tonight. And to start off, you can see the notes here. And for those online that might want to catch them, we can send you the link later. But we've got in front of us quite a few pages.

So I'm just going to touch on the main themes. And so the first theme really is God's design. God's design. And God's given women a unique calling and contribution to His plan.

[1 : 09] And there are distinct boundaries though. He set this blueprint for us that brings Him glory and creates order in His creation. Of course, God loves women and He's created them in His image.

So we have this scripture here, Genesis 1, 26 through 27. And God said, And so God's created a male and a female, Adam and Eve.

He's assigned them significant roles in His redemptive plan. And there's purposeful distinctions between a man and a woman. As much as the world these days would try to blur that or say you can somehow switch from one to the other.

But God's given us a male and a female, only two genders. And they've got purposeful distinctions. And women are an integral part of God's creation work.

They've been designed to complement and complete the human experience alongside men. And in this world it's increasingly at odds with God's design. People don't care about God's design.

[2 : 32] But scripture gives us timeless principles. So God's design. And that is that women and men are created in God's image.

And so we ought to reflect God's image. You think about the attributes of God. Intelligence, creativity, speech, moral nature, spirit, authority over creation.

And so we've been given that wonderful design. God's creation. God's image. So women have inherent dignity and value. And equal footing with men before God.

This is not about some lack of equality. There is an equality. God's word does not prioritise one gender over another. In terms of worth, there's a foundational equality.

Male and female together are bearers of God's image. Both of us, male and female, bearers of God's image. It's clear though that there is a distinction. You see, while we are equal in essence, women are designed with unique characteristics.

[3 : 35] So you could see, for example, generally speaking, with women, there's tenderness, nurturing, a relational sensitivity. And then on the men's side, men's traits are more like strength, leadership orientation.

Men and women reflect aspects of God's character differently. Just like the stars in their glory differ from each other. And so, for example, a woman's capacity to nurture mirrors God's compassion.

While a man's protective instinct echoes God's role as a shield created in God's image. And then also, we've been designed. And the woman specifically is designed as helper.

In Genesis 2.18 it reads, And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him and help me for him. And it reads on, And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon

Adam, and he slept.

And he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman and brought her unto the man.

[4 : 44] And I was reading one article that says, We've gone from Adam's rib to women's lip. But no, it started off as, Obviously, the woman came from Adam's side from a rib.

And it reflects that kind of equality again. It's from Adam. They are complementary. And so, Eve was created as Adam's helpmate.

And there's a Hebrew word there. It denotes a corresponding partner, not a servant. So, a helper, but not in a demeaning way, but more as a partner.

A complementary helper. And the word also is noble, often used of God himself as a helper to his people.

So, the woman's role is one of strength and significance, not subservience. And the word also suggests that she's a counterpart. So, again, that they're allied. They're complementary.

[5 : 45] They're equal in essence, yet distinct in function. So, the woman's designed to stand alongside man as his complement. And so, what are the implications of that?

Women are intended to support and complement men, particularly in marriage and family, not to lead independently or usurp authority. Paul relates that in 1 Corinthians 11, 3, verses 7 through 10 as well, where he describes the headship order.

And he says, But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. So, you've got this kind of corresponding headship.

And the woman's creation from a man's rib symbolises her closeness and unity with man, not her inferiority. She is bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, Genesis 2, 23.

So, there's this mutual service within God's order. A wife supports her husband's leadership by managing the home, by nurturing the children. And her role as a helper enables him to fulfil his responsibilities.

[6 : 49] So, there's this harmonious partnership that God has designed, that glorifies God, because the woman is designed as helper. Next one. Obviously, there's differences between a man and a woman.

Men, as much as some would try to disregard that, or speak against such a thing, but clearly, men and women are different.

It's just plain obvious. And it's a basic truth. But yet, it's a truth that needs to be restated within the church and society today. Men and women are different.

We see that in all those categories there. And it's not just some kind of social construct. It's a divine reality. It's woven into the fabric of creation. So, the first one there.

Men and women are different physically. The woman is a life-bearer. And she's equipped with child-bearing capacity. And with the distinct genetic XX chromosomes.

[7 : 45] She's distinct with hormones and physical traits, as in the notes there. And these differences, they're not arbitrary, but there's a purpose to them. A woman is a life-bearer.

Men, conversely, are generally larger, stronger, suited for protective and providing roles. 1 Peter 3.7 talks about women as the weaker vessel.

It's about the physical distinction. Obviously, it's plain obvious in sports, for example, that men are, generally speaking, more physically capable.

And so, there's a physical distinction. Also, we see there's a mental and an emotional distinction too. We know that women can exhibit strengths in verbal ability, emotional memory, relational processing, and all these skills are vital for nurturing and community building, whereas men tend to excel in leadership-oriented decision-making.

And even the world notes these kind of tendencies, but we're not guided necessarily by that, but by Scripture. That is our authority. For example, we see Proverbs 31 portrays a woman who's so very capable in so many capacities.

[9 : 02] And we could unpack Proverbs 31, how she uses her emotional intelligence, she blesses her household. And then, on the man's side, we've got 1 Timothy 3, 4, where a man is expected to rule his house well, implying a directive capacity.

So, you see the women, the men, different mentally, emotionally. And then, in purpose too, we see that women are meant to serve as partners and nurturers, and women not as leaders over men.

The man is meant to take the lead in the home and the church. The woman's role is to submit to the man's headship. And of course, we see today the cultural confusion everywhere, isn't it?

Because the world today, worldly values, worldly wisdom would deny all of this. And so, we've got all this confusion, this confusion of modern, worldly culture. Because of the apostasy of the hour, men and women in the world, they rejected the Bible, rejected Bible truth.

And no wonder there's so much confusion now. Men are trying to be like women in dress and manner, while women are demanding the right to be like man, to dress like man, to do the same work as man, to play the same sports as man, to fight in armies like man.

[10:15] They want equal pay for equal work, demanding a man's place in the home, church and state. And so, there's this rebellion really at the heart of it, at the foundation of it, this rebellion in society.

And it's causing all kinds of problems, and in churches too, with women demanding leadership roles. Now, it's all very well for the culture to say one thing, but we've got to go with God's design. What does the scripture say? That must be our guide and our direction. And of course, the church must resist this confusion that's going on by reaffirming God's design.

Men and women are not interchangeable. Their difference is a gift, not a limitation. For example, a woman's nurturing role in raising children that's so critical in society.

But now, you know, children are farmed off to childcare, and there's not the same values anymore. And man's leadership in the church, these are all distinct callings, and the Bible's very clear about that.

[11:13] We're going to unpack some of that, as much as some might think, well, this is very controversial, and well, that's against equality, and all that kind of talk. But we've got to go with what does the scripture say?

What does the Bible tell us? So that's what matters. What are the biblical principles? And so that's what we want to take a look at. What does the Bible say? God's ordained distinct roles.

Women are called to submission, to modesty, to homemaking, and that's their primary sphere of influence. Women are called to be helpers, to be submissive wives, diligent homemakers, modest in conduct, and it all reflects God's design for the family, the family unit.

God's the designer of the family, and the principle here is not an oppressive thing, but it's liberating when a woman realises what her calling is, that it aligns with God's creation and his wisdom, and it gives women a sphere of profound impact.

It's meaningful, and it makes sense, and it makes the family work when things are working this way. And we see God's design flows from the order of creation, as we talked about, man and then woman.

[12:23] It's affirmed then in the New Testament, we've got scriptures like these in Ephesians 5, talking about how the wives are to submit to their own husbands, and it tells how the husband is the head of the wife, and let the wives be subject to their own husbands, and then Titus 2 talks about how the older women are to teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

So it's all about God's order here, the order of creation, and then the order in the home, and it mirrors really the relationship between Christ and his church, this divine order.

It reflects that in the home as well, in human relationships. So there's an order that happened. Of course, the Lord made the man, then he made the woman. It says there in Genesis 2.18, it is not good for the man to be alone.

I will make and help me for him. So a woman was created as that helper for man, establishing her supportive role under that male leadership, the male headship.

And it wasn't some secondary status, but it was a primary purpose. Eve addressed that need in Adam, and it completed God's plan for humanity, for the family unit.

[13:42] And so we see the sequence of creation is that Adam was formed first, then Eve, 1 Timothy 2.13. So a woman's purpose is tied to that assisting of her husband, and she can glorify God through that and through her unique femininity.

For single women, we could see how that could extend to perhaps serving in the church and the community, again, in ways that honour male headship as well. In Titus 2, it talks about the way that they can help others, other women, that mentoring role.

And it's like the symphony where really you've got the man as somewhat of a conductor and then the violinist, the woman, is playing that vital, complementary role. Both of them are essential and their functions are different, but harmony is the result.

So you've got order and purpose when these things fit according to the biblical plan. So looking further into marriage, for example, as we touched on Ephesians 5, it talks about submission in marriage where there's this voluntary act of obedience to God's design.

It's not some mark of inferiority where the woman's under the thumb or that kind of attitude, but it's more of that submission to Christ, of the church to Christ.

[15:01] It's that relationship of love and trust, not coercion. And it's got this sense of like a military order where there's setting things into a logical fashion as you would set an army into ranks and such.

And so that's the kind of picture of it. And a godly wife honours her husband's leadership, just like the church ought to submit to Christ. It's not some blind obedience, of course.

Wives are not to follow sinful demands. We must obey God rather than men if there's any conflict there. But it's a willing partnership under God's authority.

So for example, we see in 1 Peter 3.6 that Sarah called Abraham Lord in the sense of she submitted to him. It was a sign of respect that she showed.

Whereas on the contrast to that, you've got modern feminism, which equates submission with weakness. But no, the Bible shows us that submission is actually strength under control.

[16:05] It's like Christ was submitted to the Father. A wife's submission can be a powerful testimony too. In 1 Peter 3.1 it talks about the witness of the wife winning an unbelieving husband without a word, just through her testimony.

It's a powerful thing when a woman follows the biblical plan. Another aspect is the virtue and the homemaking of the woman.

In Proverbs 31 the question is asked, who can find a virtuous woman for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. And then Titus 2, it tells how the older women teach the younger women as we talked about in those different qualities there too.

So the virtuous woman, we see that she's industrious, she's managing resources, she's modest as well, so she's prioritising character over appearance, she's devoted to her family ensuring their well-being, and then we've got all the other qualities that's listed in Titus 2 as well.

[17:18] It's got this whole picture of godly womanhood, and women are called to this, to prioritise their home life, to raise children, God providing them, to maintain a godly testimony.

So this is God's plan, it's a beautiful picture of how the family should function, of how a husband and wife should function, and a wife, a mother, it's a high calling.

Proverbs 31 says that her children and her husband are going to praise her, and so there's a sense where there'll be an acknowledgement. This is a praiseworthy thing, and it can involve teaching children.

2 Timothy 1 verse 5 talks about how Timothy was taught the scripture, and it can include managing the finances of the home perhaps, or creating that home that reflects God's peace.

So a woman should be a keeper at home, this sense of being a homemaker, a home builder, and so there's a value to that, something that's very precious, whereas we see in contrast to that modern thinking, modern society, worldly wise thinking, devalues that, it devalues homemaking, and pushes women into these competitive roles, and of course every family's got to make their decision about these things, but the Bible does elevate homemaking as this kind of ministry that shapes generations, it's building those children as they're brought up by godly parenting, and they can honour God's word, and think about a mother's influence on a child, it's just something very precious about that, something very valuable about that, like the influence of the mother on Timothy, and 2 Timothy 3 15, and that has got a ripple effect down through history, doesn't it, we see the virtue and the homemaking of a mother, of the woman, following on we see also modesty, and appearance is very precious truth as well, 1 Timothy 2 9 talks about how the woman in like manner adorned themselves in modest apparel,!

[19:20] with shamefacedness, which means a sense of propriety, it means not having an ostentatious display of the day, not kind of showing off, but having sobriety, so soberness, we see that there's a wonderful picture there, and we think of today, you think how often the world just

emphasises the outward appearance, doesn't it, and dress and such, to draw attention to themselves, or to display flesh and such, rather than instead to honour God, which is what it ought to be, and so this is not some legalistic thing, it's not dictating specific styles, but it's about the intent, the intent of modesty, to have that intent, that a woman choose simple clothing over flashy trends, and reflects humility and reverence, as Peter puts it in 1 Peter 3, 3 to 4, who's adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, but that hidden man of the heart, think of the world today, they're just obsessed with image, aren't they, and modesty stands out as counter-cultural, and it's a witness, it challenges that lie, that worth lies in appearance too, rather the true beauty is that quiet spirit, precious to

God, so modesty in appearance is a very wonderful aspect of biblical womanhood, let's go back to examine what happened in the garden, the fall of man and woman and its impact, so we see Eve's sin, in 1 Timothy 2 14, says Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression, so Adam's sin was disobedience, the woman's sin was deception, it says that as the serpent beguiled Eve, so she got conned by the serpent through his subtlety, it talks about the sense where Eve was beguiled, she was deceived, and we see as in the notes there, the different impacts from the fall, and what happened in the garden of Eden when Adam took the fruit following Eve's deception, that Eve really, she usurped Adam's authority, she made this independent decision, bypassing the order that God established, so she ate of it first, and she dialogued with the devil, so she entertained this deception, instead of running away from the temptation, she distanced herself from

God's compassionate nature, she mishandled God's word, changing what he had said, and making errors there in what she recounted, and she followed lust and pride, she saw the fruit, and it appealed to her, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and we see in consequence to what happened with the fall, that women's susceptibility to deception, 1 Timothy 2.14 talks about the deception there, and that has an impact too, this is not obviously a universal flaw, but the historical reality is that Eve was deceived, and this led to all of this disaster, so her sin was not merely eating the fruit, but she really stepped outside of her God-given role, and caused all of this drama and disharmony to creation, but we see in Galatians 3.28 that the gospel restores God's original design, that in Christ there's neither male nor female, there's a sense where God kind of counteracts all of that, the fall, that we can be the people of God that he's wanting us to be, but because of the fall there's consequences, there's consequences for ministry, for service, we see of course when Adam and

Eve fell, death came, and the spiritual death is that separation from God, that we were dead in trespasses and sins, and so the falls caused this separation from communion with God, and it affects both men's and women's service, we see the corrupted nature that came from the fall, fallen thoughts and emotions, and we know the Bible says that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, so women, like men now, they've got to contend with this sin, this distortion of their calling, and then another consequence was the woman's influence, women retain significant influence, Eve on Adam, husbands are influenced by their wives, but they must use that wisely, as in Proverbs 14.1, as we read there, it says, every wise woman buildeth her home, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands, so there's a great potential to build, or a potential to tear down, and so we need to exercise wisdom, for example,

Abigail saved lives through her wisdom, as she counseled David, and we see that Eve's suggestion led to sin, so it can be for the positive like Abigail, or for the negative like Eve, so an influence, it's very important to understand that, and have that discernment in exercising influence.

[24 : 26] So moving on, thinking about the issue of women in ministry, now this is where it can get perhaps controversial for some, because some think, well there's really no issue here, but the Bible's very clear about how women are to serve, how women can minister, and we see of course the biblical restrictions and biblical guidelines about God's order, biblical order, about the roles of a woman, the roles of a man, and of course we ought to come under God's headship, it's like this chain of command, so as you see in this picture here, some like to picture it like this, where you've got the head of the man is Christ, and the head of the wife is the man, and then they've got the children underneath, as you can see like pictured here with four different umbrellas, if you like, so you've got Christ as the overarching umbrella, his headship, over the husband, and the husband is meant to protect, to lead, to provide, then you've got the wife, her role is to comfort, to teach, to nurture, and then you've got the children there underneath the parents, that they are to love and

obey their parents, that's the ideal godly kind of structure there, and where we see that headship principle in the home, it's God's order, and that's how it's meant to work, how it's meant to be, and so women are vital to the church, but they're restricted from authoritative teaching or leadership roles, there's scriptures that tell us that, which we'll come to, and it's not a diminishment of their worth, but it's because of this divine structure that reflects the headship of

Christ, so what are those restrictions, those limitations, so the Bible talks about that women are not to exercise authority over men, it tells us there in 1 Timothy 2:11, let the women learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Interesting, the word silence here does not mean absolute silence, so it's not saying that they can't say anything, but it's rather a state of stillness, of peace, of calm, of receptivity, so this word where it says learn in silence, the word silence here, it's elsewhere translated, and I know it's been said, which is true, that often the King James Bible is its own interpreter, so where it says silence, the like word, the same word in 1 Timothy 2:2, is translated with a different word, peaceable, so it's got this sense of there's a peaceableness, there's a calmness here, so that women are to learn in that state of calmness, of peaceableness, that receptivity as they come and receive the word and learn and come under teaching, that they are to exercise this kind of stillness, this peacefulness, that they come in quietness to hear the word of God, so that's the sense of it here, and Paul grounds all of this in the creation order,

Adam was first formed, then Eve, and the fall, so Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression, so these aren't cultural arguments, but timeless truths about order and susceptibility, so in your notes here, I'll just read that through, so it's saying here that women cannot serve as pastors, elders, or teachers of men in the church assembly, because this really applies to authoritative roles, it's clear from scriptures like this one, that they're not to preach from the pulpit, or lead mixed Bible studies, it doesn't apply of course to informal sharing of the faith, so for example in John 4, the Samaritan woman, she went into the city, and she shared her testimony, she pointed people to the Saviour, and so John 4, the Samaritan woman, shows us, yeah, that's okay, it's not limiting women from such things as that, but it's talking about a usurping of authority, see that there in verse 12, where it's implying a domineering control, which women are to avoid over men in that spiritual context, of course, outside of the church, it's not necessarily so, it could be in secular authority, a woman can be a senior to a man in a workplace or such, and we see

Deborah for example, but in the church order of things, we see that this is the direction, it's what the scriptures tell us, so we've got to take the scripture as read.

[29:06] Paul addresses then also disorder in Corinth, we see another example of silence in the church gatherings is 1 Corinthians 14:34 through 35, it says, let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience as saith the law, and if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church, so again, this is an interesting one, Paul's addressing disorder in the context, we know Corinth, the Corinthians had all kinds of disorder, and he's trying to correct that, to bring order back, to maintain order, and this word silence is a different word from the 1 Timothy one, it's a different word which means a cessation of speech, so in the context we know, in the context talking about disruptive chatter, you see verse 35 there, there's some disruption where they're asking their husbands things, but Paul's directing them rather to refrain from speaking, to keep quiet, and ask your husbands later at home, and it uses quite a strong word here, of shame as well, he says it's a shame for women to speak in the church, and this is quite a strong word, it means it's disgraceful, it's shameful, it's a strong condemnation, it's not just inappropriate, it's actually something that's a shameful thing, so you see here, very strong kind of direction, and you know, some would argue about that, but I'll try to explain why

I still think it's relevant, so we see the context it is of a public worship setting, and it's a call to women to defer to male authority, now of course women may sing and pray silently, or they may testify in submissive ways, but not lead or preach, it's really the sense of it, and if they've got questions, don't ask them during the meeting, ask them later at home, it's about maintaining order, now all of this was counter-cultural in Corinth because women vocally participated in pagan worship, so they were used to yelling out and such things, whereas Paul wanted to correct that and bring order back into the church, that things would be done decently and in order.

Following on from that, well, what are women permitted to do? What are some things women are able to do? And the Bible tells us many, many things, it's not really a very tight restriction on women, there's manifold things, manifold ways that women have got roles to serve, to be able to minister, and so for example we've got here in Titus 2, again I've read it before, there's that mentoring role, that we can see that they can teach younger women, an older woman can mentor the younger women in godliness and family life and pass on wisdom and faith, so it's a proactive thing where they can shape the next generation isn't it?

And imagine an older woman teaching a younger woman, a younger wife, how to pray for her husbands, how to manage a home, and so older women have got wonderful capacity there to influence younger women, younger wives, so there's a great value to that in mentoring.

Another way that women can serve is service in the sense of various kinds of giving and acting, as Dorcas it tells us there of this woman Dorcas in Acts 9, 36 through 39, that she was full of good works and alms deeds, so she was a generous person, she was giving, which she did, and it says that she was showing the coats and the garments that she made, so we see that Dorcas here is a great picture of a woman serving, we can see women can serve through teaching other women, raising children, acts of charity, as for example, Dorcas here making coats and garments, so creating things, crafts and practical things, helping the needy in practical ways, and so Dorcas was providing clothing for others, for the poor, she was showing practical ministry, and think about that, women, there's lots of ways you could perhaps use such skills that you might have, women can also host missionaries, for example, like Lydia in

[33 : 30] Acts 16, 15, care for the sick, all of these things, there's lots of scope, wide scope of ministry. Some examples of some godly women, we've seen Proverbs 31, as we've read, we see that she's a model of diligence, of submission, tells that the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, and her strength is in that home-centred kind of service, a godly woman can serve in the home, and we see 1 Samuel chapter 1, talks about Hannah, praying and depending on God, in verses 10 through 11, and God blessed her with Samuel, and she impacted Israel through her quiet faith, Hannah's faith, her prayerfulness, and we see Luke 1, of course, Mary, accepted God's will to bear Christ, behold the handmaid of the Lord, she said, behold, I'm going to be your servant, Lord, the handmaid of the Lord, and then she brought forth the Saviour, so again, a great demonstration with Mary, of her submission, and of her willingness to obey God and accept his will, so we see all of those different examples, there's many more we could say, how women have got lots of capacity, through quiet faith and service, but not through public speaking in the sense of public preaching, not through pulpits, but rather through reaching out through homes and hearts, and being an example of godly testimony.

furthermore, on that scope, the blessed scope of women's ministry, we see really the primary sphere is the home, it tells us there, 1 Timothy 2.15, that she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety, and of course we know it tells us in Proverbs, train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. So, now this word here, where the woman shall be saved, it's a salvation in the context of purpose, in the sense that she's got fruitfulness there, that the childbearing is a blessed ministry of its own, of bearing children, godly children, of managing the home, and it's really, it's a primary purpose for the godly woman, God blessing her with children, to be able to have that influence on the next generation, it can shape eternity, can't it?

The impact we can have, and women can have on their children, and so, in the sense here, to be saved, it's not got the sense of an eternal salvation, but more the sense of a fulfilment of God's purpose for her.

It's God's purpose for women that they can have that wonderful ministry in the sphere of the home, it's a wonderful impact, wonderful influence they can exercise, and so a woman's obedience in this sphere, in the sphere of the home, it glorifies God, and it counters the false curse, we see how Lois and Eunice, they nurtured Timothy's faith, and it was that home-based teaching, so that's a blessed thing, the home is really a ministry hub for the woman, for the mother, to exercise those gifts, and raise up children like Samuel, like Timothy, and that causes for a lot of skill, a lot of capacity, doesn't it, that a woman has to exercise patience and prayer and the scriptures and all of those giftings.

[36 : 56] Now, looking then also, how can a woman serve or minister within the church? Again, despite the limitations, which we'll talk on again later, but we see that women have a great

opportunity within the church to minister, teaching women and children, as we've again touched on, so I won't repeat that, but we see that they can shape future generations by teaching younger women and children, so this could be practical skills, how to love their husbands, spiritual truths to lead their children to Christ.

Women can also serve in witnessing, like we talked about, the Samaritan woman, we see the service of the women as they came to the tomb, they came to minister to Christ at the tomb, and we see Phoebe is named as one who was called a servant, a servant, in a non-authoritative sense, she served the church, she was a servant of the church, so think how, you know, we could think of serving, of women who could serve, maybe a woman might be able to tell others about Christ, deliver some aid to the poor, and reach out as part of the church's ministry without usurping authority, we see that women also were used to support in Christ's ministry, women followed Christ, they ministered to him, the women stood at the cross, it was largely the women that stood at the cross to the last, isn't it, and then we see women in Acts 1, that they prayed in the upper room, and so women sustained Christ's ministry, they were faithful in crisis, they participated in prayer, and they were steadfast in their support, some other model kind of exemplary women, we see Lydia, she was the first convert in Philippi, she hosted the church, so she showed hospitality, turning her home into a ministry hub, and she provided a space for worship there in Acts 16, Phoebe, again, a servant of the church, she was likely one who delivered the letter of Romans, she actually physically delivered the letter of Romans, she was a courier who was trusted, so she had a practical job to do there, and then we see Priscilla as well, she worked alongside her husband, Aquila, she supported church planting, was a complimentary ministry, and she helped Aquila, teaching Apollos, obviously privately, and helping him to come to the truth, and they think of others there listed, and there's manifold women we could name, but they're specifically listed in Romans 16, of these women it says of them that they labour in the Lord, so they were recognised for their contribution as well.

So moving on, and this is probably where it gets a bit, again, controversial, because many disregard all of these restrictions, they don't think it's applicable for today, or they use modern culture, or argument, but let's have a look at what does the Bible actually say, as far as these limitations for women's ministry, what are the restrictions?

And we see that 1 Timothy 2, as we talked about, Paul says, let the women learn in silence with all subjection, I suffer not a woman to teach.

[40 : 13] What does that all mean? We see in the context, Paul talks about the order of creation, Adam first, then Eve, so it establishes that male headship before the fall.

We see that Eve was deceived, the woman has a different make-up than the man, she was designed with a different role in life, that of a wife and a mother, and so her make-up is geared perfectly for that, she's not designed for leadership.

And we see how the devil deceived Eve, she had allowed herself to get in this position of decision making, which she wasn't supposed to occupy. So God's word really, it does tell us very clearly, it actually forbids a woman to do authoritative teaching, so pulpit preaching or ministering to a mixed Bible class, whereas it says in the same book of a pastor, an elder, a bishop, interchangeable words, that they are to be the husband of one wife, 1 Timothy 3 verses 2 and 12.

So clearly for a pastor they have to be a husband of one wife that obviously excludes women by definition. And some would argue well that's a bit restrictive, well it's God's church not ours and he sets the rules, it's not the culture or our opinions or the modern trends that set the rules, it's God's word.

It follows on 1 Corinthians 14 again as we talked on how it tells how women are to keep silence, they're not to speak out as teachers or disruptors. So you could see how that could apply to preaching, leading, taking a leading role.

[41 : 54] It tells us in 1 Timothy 2 verse 8 that it is the men who are meant to lead, to exercise authority, to lead in prayer. Women should not really be in a position where they're exercising authority, so you could extrapolate that as limits.

Of course a woman can testify and we're not against that, you know, there might be opportunity for a woman to come and bring a testimony to share something that she wanted to tell of a testimony of sorts, but not to teach authoritatively.

There's that clear distinction. And some would say with all these things, well, oh, that's ancient culture, that's the context of the day, that's not necessarily required of us.

But we see that Paul says of his instructions in the context of 1 Corinthians 14, he calls them commandments of the Lord. And he says that you that are spiritual, you better, you know, follow these guidelines, these instructions in 1 Corinthians 14.

So it's very clear, you could see that, and also that it's binding on all the churches. We see of 1 Corinthians that it was to all the churches, whereas some would say, well, okay, they would try to discount this or throw it out the window.

[43 : 09] But we see, really, there's a consistency here, right through the Old Testament, right then through the New Testament where Christ only appointed males to apostleship.

And the standards for pastors apply strictly to men. In 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, it's very clear, husband of one wife, rule his own house well.

How can a woman pastor rule his own house well? It doesn't compute. And so these rules, they're timeless, really. It's God's instructions. It's God set the rules because it makes sense.

It just makes plain sense that it ought to be a man who is the pastor, who is the preacher, who is the one who guides the church.

It would be quite unworkable, I think, for a woman to take that leading role and to not fall into all kinds of difficulties. Timothy gives, really, general instructions about proper church order.

[44 : 10] And he says that they should be obeyed by all churches. These are standards that really are timeless. And it says that God has forbidden women from taking authority over men.

And we see in 1 Timothy 6, 14, these instructions are to be kept until Christ's coming. That's when the instructions expire. For the meantime, they're universal and they are timeless.

Now, some would then argue, well, what about this or about that? They would argue, for example, the daughters of Philip, they prophesied. It doesn't say what context they prophesied in. It's likely it was happening privately or among women, but not in church assemblies.

So there's no statement here that they were preaching in church assemblies. Whereas in the context in Acts 21, it talks about Agabus. He was a male prophet who then, he did deliver an authoritative message.

And then some would say, well, what about Deborah, about Miriam, these Old Testament leaders? Deborah led due to male weakness in Judges 4, verses 4 to 9.

[45 : 13] It wasn't the norm. It's certainly not the norm for church order. So she judged Israel, but she did it in private. And it was a period in Israel's history where God couldn't find a man to do his will.

And so, bless her, Deborah stepped up and she was a brave, willing woman who filled the gap. But we see the situation where people try that to enforce that in the church situation, it causes much harm.

And we see, really, it weakens male leadership too. It's really out of order. And then we see Miriam as another example. In Exodus 15, 20, she's called a prophetess.

She publicly led a chorus of women with timbrels, like tambourines and dancing. And when the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, but her leadership was confined only to working with the women.

women. And, in fact, Miriam wasn't a very good leader in some aspects where she spoke disparagingly of Moses and she was smitten with leprosy.

[46 : 14] So, she's not a good example anyway, but we see that Miriam was really confined her service to working with the women. And then some would argue, well, what about such and such a pastor, a woman pastor or a woman preacher and such?

God may bless despite disobedience. Rewards depend on adherence to scripture. So, it tells us that a man is not crowned except he strives lawfully.

Just because there's some measure of success or there might seem to be some aspects that God still can bless, that the success doesn't necessarily mean divine approval because they're acting contrary to really some clear Bible guidelines.

Just some encouragement and warnings. And all of this, we know that God loves and he values women. We know that Christ loves the church. We see Mary bore Christ.

We see that women are a critical, vital part of the church. They are ambassadors of Christ. Women and men, they both have equality and worth. And we see those examples we talked about of women serving, of women at the tomb, at the cross, and then the faithful women servants.

[47 : 28] In the book of Romans 2, we see God has got a high regard for women. So this is not to demean women or to put them down. It's just finding what are the biblical roles?

What is the biblical scope for women to serve? And if we can just get that right, we'll avoid the rebellion of this world today. We know the modern trends. So the modern trends are women preachers are really quite commonplace these days in many quarters.

There's many churches that have women preachers, women pastors, or other names such as that. But really, it's part of the apostasy of the end time.

It's not a biblical order. In Isaiah 3, verse 12, God talks about women ruling over people as a judgment. It's a sign of judgment. And why are churches imitating the culture of the world?

We should be following the biblical standard. And here's some statistics here. It's quite amazing, really. 30% of mainline congregations have a female senior pastor.

[48 : 31] So 3 out of 10 churches have got a female senior pastor running the show. And then we've got 55% of Protestant pastors said their churches would allow women to serve as senior pastors.

So over half. And then 73% of evangelicals, so people in churches like ours or, you know, generally Bible preaching churches, they approve of women preaching.

73%. And some say this. 27% of pastors are women. And there's increasing numbers of women going through theology schools, training specifically to be a pastor.

These are trends that really reflect the rebellion of our day. It's going contrary to the Word of God. That's the problem. And when we go contrary to the Word of God, then that's a real issue. And we see that really it stems from feminism, from cultural Marxism.

And feminists hate the Bible. They hate biblical order. They hate biblical principles. Feminists hate motherhood, marriage, love, family relationships.

[49 : 38] We see all the mess that the world is in today as feminists have this destructive way. But God is in the building business. You see in the notes there, what does God build?

He builds motherhood, marriage, love, and family relationships. God's about building those things, whereas feminists want to destroy and demolish all of that.

And destroy really the godly order of the home, human life, faith in God, they're against all of that. And it's interesting, really, when you look back in history too, a lot of the false movements of today, you've got Mary Baker Eddy, you've got Ellen White, you've got some of the various leading lights of the Pentecostal movement.

Often the false movements of today come because women have stepped out of the right role and they've rejected God's plan. And they've started many of these false movements.

And what do we see today in modern culture? Women's dominance weakens men. We've got societies that are vulnerable to conquest today. Men are increasingly weaker.

[50 : 49] And we see female power and male weakness. It's all about disrupting God's order. And it harms the church and culture. We see there's a decline in strong male leadership due to cultural conformity rather than adherence to biblical principles.

So there's churches around us that are pastored by women and really it's got a fundamental weakness to it. They can't really serve biblically because they're in disobedience.

And there's also a diminished view of male leadership in the family. Think of the fatherlessness that abounds these days where male leadership is discounted and fathers and husbands are discounted.

And so these are all worldly trends. It's the world. It's the way of the world. It's worldly culture. It's worldly trends. And they've emasculated and feminised the church.

So in some quarters even like the songs they sing it's sappy. It's emotional. It's sensual. And it's not to demean that there may be some aspects of feminine worship that is good but we see this trend that's downwards.

[52 : 01] It's a trend that's turning away from really the church of God as the onward Christian soldiers you know marching as to war.

That's gone. Now it's all sappy and love songs to Jesus in this kind of sappy feminised way which can be really demeaning and it can take away it can take away from really the church of God is meant to be a strong godly force to be reckoned with but we're seeing this cultural conformity and men have become spiritually passive too that they're just sitting not really engaged not really serving or active in the context that God wants men to rise up but there shouldn't be a need for a

Deborah to step in.

There should be men who are rising up to fill these areas of ministry that God designates for men. Coming to a close we think of godly womanhood and there's a call to that there's a wonderful blessing women there's a call for you and it tells how there can be that hidden woman of the heart that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit it says in the sight of God that it's of great price it tells how a wise woman buildeth her house but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands so there's a calling here for women a calling to embrace that and it's at the heart of the church to nurture faith and stability find those roles that wide scope that women can serve rather than focusing on those areas that are really limited and restricted for men to serve there's a whole scope outside of that that women can serve and I urge you to that women today to find that place to serve embrace that calling that you have as a mother as a wife as a home builder a home maker rather than seeking authority women want to rather seek for prayer for service to raise godly children and these are roles that will be blessed of God because they're in accord with God's order and plan so women have got a vital significant

God ordained role within biblical boundaries there's just being respectful hey the Bible sets some limitations and the ministry of women it complements men's leadership and creates that unified body that glorifies God so women here tonight embrace your design you've been blessed to be a woman to have that wonderful role to serve faithfully in that sphere whether it be as a wife a mother a mentor to serve as Phoebe did and we see that in contrast to that this culture of rebellion let's rather praise those women who will humbly serve in their biblical roles and know that they're in accord with God's plan it's a beautiful plan and we can strengthen God's church as a result of that God's ■