

# The Bible's Attitude Towards Women

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, everyone. Well, Bill cornered me with the following. We need to hear more from women, as the balance we have is no balance at all, and Proverbs 11.1 forbids it. So please consider the idea of speaking at Learners Exchange on the issue of women.

I have already detected that you are afraid of no one, so you will not be breaking down in tears during the question time. A few confessions.

First, I looked up Proverbs 11.1 which says, The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.

I suspected he was referring to the representation of women speakers in this group. However, just in case I misread him, I got down on my knees, readjusted my bathroom scale.

I don't know how Bill was so astute. Second, it is a mega topic that has been hotly debated over thousands of years, compressed into an hour, thimble-sized, totally inadequate blip in the spectrum of time.

[ 1 : 24 ] No one seemed to want to touch it, and he figured I looked gullible. Again, demonstrating how astute he is. I wanted to suggest changing the topic to something like Intrigue and Coalition in Ottawa, a topic far less turbulent.

And then third, there is the possibility of me breaking down in tears in question period. Just thought I'd add that, if anyone wanted to test Bill's theory.

Some of you do not know me, and so I ask your indulgence in giving a short bio. The reason is not because I particularly like to talk about myself, but I think it may be helpful to glimpse how my background has influenced my outlook and presuppositions.

It's impossible to approach a subject in a purely academic manner. Character, background, personality, experiences, home, and cultural influence tinge how we see things and conclusions that we draw.

A well-known theologian, particularly in this circle, put it well when he wrote, We may find that we have prejudices that need to be exposed and corrected.

[ 2 : 50 ] For after all, we are children of our culture and have in our minds, inevitably, stereotypes of male and female roles, which may or may not be biblical.

That was Dr. Packer in Honouring the Written Word of God. In my family, I was sandwiched between two brothers and after I was grown, left home, I was blessed with a sister.

As Bill mentioned in the introduction, my upbringing was divided between Jamaica and Canada. My father's background was Missionary Alliance. My mother was raised Brethren.

Although we did attend an Alliance Church for years, growing up, the Brethren influence was strongest and most lasting, particularly when I married someone steeped in the Brethren traditions.

Briefly, the primary Brethren teaching on the subject of women is that women are to be silent in the church services, apart from congregational singing.

[ 4 : 00 ] They are not to participate audibly in Bible studies, prayer meetings, or missionary meetings, even if conducted in a home. When I was in my early twenties, I used to enjoy going to the beach with my aunt.

One day we were there and decided that it would be fun to invite some friends along the next time. So we invited a few friends and a few more friends and a few more friends and it ended up that just about everyone from the church went to picnic at the beach with us.

We were sitting around. We'd had a swim and playing on the beach and set the campfire going in the evening. And one of the elders from the church said, it would be a good time to, you know, share meaningful verses or reflections, you know, on a spiritual nature.

Give out a little chorus or hymn. Of course, this is for men only. The women will be expected to be silent. So even at a casual beach picnic, sitting around a campfire, women were to be excluded from sharing testimonies in a mixed gender group.

That's just the way it was. Different assemblies had different views on women wearing a head covering in church. For the most part, I attended assemblies that just require that during church services.

[ 5 : 34 ] However, others that I attended felt women should wear it all the time in the church building and or prior to leaving home, including times of working and serving in the kitchen, teaching Sunday school, and even cleaning.

Women were strongly discouraged from working in secular jobs outside the home. Unmarried women could work until they marry and then they were encouraged, dare I say expected, to resign and stay at home and look after their family.

Admittedly, there was comfort in this setting. Often I would listen to the men discourse on a difficult passage and they would urge one another to study and explore the meaning of a scripture.

And I would sit back comfortably knowing I did not have to answer the tough questions. The unfortunate downside of that is often women, including myself, felt anesthetized, unengaged, unchallenged.

As you can imagine, coming from this background, I was conflicted about teaching or preaching to a mixed group. To help you understand how this was resolved, I'll share a personal story.

[ 6 : 56 ] About ten years ago, on a very snowy, wintry day in northern British Columbia, I was driving four children to school. The roads were thick with ice and covered with snow and highly dangerous.

Kind of like today. Just over halfway there, my van started to fishtail across the road. I thought I had regained control when the front right tire just tipped over the edge of the shoulder and the vehicle flipped over a couple of times and ended up at the bottom of a 30-foot embankment.

Well, we survived. Unfortunately, no one was hurt apart from a few bruises. But the result of this accident was that I lost my nerve in driving on snowy roads and I became housebound for the rest of the winter.

Wandering around the house, looking for reading material, I came across a dusty, thick book about biblical doctrine by A. A. Hodge.

Just to prove to myself that it must be the most boring book in the world, I opened it with skepticism and to my amazement, I discovered I could not close it until I'd read every last word.

[ 8 : 21 ] It was the beginning of a spiritual renewal and journey. It became my quest to investigate and discover what God's truth to me is and share it if required.

Today, you're part of my journey. Further encouragement came more recently from the previously mentioned book by Dr. Packer regarding a passage I will speak about shortly, 1 Timothy 2.

He said, I think it is an open question whether in our day Paul would have regarded what happened to Eve in the Garden of Eden as sufficient reason for forbidding a woman to teach from the Bible.

When you teach from the Bible, in any situation, what in effect you are saying to people is, look, I'm trying to show you what it says.

No claim to personal authority with regard to the substance of the message is being made. Thank you, Dr. Packer. As previously noted, the role of women in leadership is one of the most controversial topics facing evangelical churches today.

[ 9 : 40 ] It is a vitally important issue as it affects membership, governance and evangelization in the church and throughout the world.

Confusion and opposing views on the topic have led to schism, rancor and dissension in the evangelical community. The complex and multifaceted nature of the subject has evoked emotional and determined response.

Complementarians, otherwise known as traditionalists or patriarchalists, dismiss women in positions of leadership because they believe they do not submit to scripture's clear teaching regarding leadership in the home and church.

On the other hand, egalitarians, some label as liberals, tend to encourage gifted women to exercise their gifts in ministry and leadership in the church.

People feel strongly about the subject of women in leadership. This past July, in the UK newspaper, The Telegraph, it was reported, and I quote, Officials have disclosed that 230 of the 880 bishops in the worldwide communion are staying away from the Lambeth Conference.

[ 11 : 02 ] Many of those who are attending say they will be unable to take part in any services led by the female head of the Anglican Church in America because of their opposition to women bishops.

End quote. Before I comment on contemporary issues, however, I think we need to acknowledge and realize that in the beginning, it was God who created Eve.

Apart from unconsciously donating a spare rib, Adam was not involved in the process. He did not suggest the model, template, or even what he desired.

And we can safely assume that God did not do it capriciously. When we consider the nature of God, one God, three persons, we are reminded that God is relational.

He chose not to allow Adam to be alone or independent. His plan meant that Adam needed more than spot or rover, in our case, trooper.

[ 12 : 11 ] Since Eve, there has been a resounding silence about women, with a few notable exceptions. In history, including scripture, they are often unheard, shrouded, unnamed, veiled, unseen, but their existence is real and irrefutable.

They have been fulfilling the most important role that God imposed on humankind, producing the human race. I must be cautious, though, because the topic is so broad that it would be an injustice to sum up the role, character, and function of women in a pithy three-point essay.

There are as many viewpoints on the subject as there are people in this room, and it's unlikely that there is total agreement between any two people.

We all have unique experiences, biases, presuppositions that influence our views and conclusions. Even the title Bill chose is a minefield laden with booby traps.

The Bible's attitude about women? The tendency is to pull out the proof texts and pit one against the other. The Bible can say anything we want if we do hermeneutical gymnastics.

[ 13 : 32 ] A flip here and there and before you know it, we throw our arms high and wait for applause for our brilliance and creativity. Often, our misunderstanding of sola scriptura leads to a lack of vigilance and a false sense of security.

Oh, as long as we use the Bible, we should be safe, right? Speaking of biblical truth, I must say that I thought this group was primarily Christian.

But you know, not one person greeted me today with a holy kiss or washed my feet. Isn't it scriptural? It is not just the custom, but actually a command from Paul for Christians in the church to greet one another with a holy kiss.

Did Jesus Christ not direct his disciples to wash one another's feet? There are certain verses that we pull out and use as a scriptural pattern when convenient.

Others we ignore or discard as being irrelevant. Egalitarians and complementarians alike use scripture to prove their viewpoint.

[ 14 : 46 ] And yet they can be at extreme ends of the debate. Both attest to the authority of scripture and yet reach opposite conclusions.

If theologians and scholars can't come to a firm conclusion after in-depth study and research, how can we be assured our reading and understanding is correct?

Let's take an example and look at 1 Timothy 2. In verses 11 and 12 it says, A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.

I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man. She must be silent. My brethren up-bringing and teachers would say that is perfectly clear.

Women are to be silent. Literally. What other explanation is there? Silent is silent. Although Timothy and Paul knew the individuals involved, their identity is not now available.

[ 15 : 59 ] It would be presumptuous to speculate if it involved one or all of the women in the assembly. We cannot know if they were wives of men in the church or women that converted and joined the church, separately from unbelieving husbands.

It is beyond the scope of our exercise today to consider all possible scenarios. Therefore, for our purposes, we will include all adult Christian women in the church, regardless of marital status.

It is helpful to recognize the genre or type of communication Paul utilizes, as this assists appreciation and understanding of his message.

It is a personal letter between two individuals. It has advice, comments, and answers to specific issues and concerns pertinent to a particular situation.

Analysis of the historical, contextual, and linguistic nuances of Paul's letter is valuable in re-evaluating assumptions and reconsidering presuppositions.

[ 17 : 15 ] Investigation of the chapter, particularly verses 9 to 15, reveals many anomalies and questionable translations in historical, biblical versions.

Paul writes this letter because of his concern about a serious problem in the church in Ephesus. He encourages Timothy to stop the false teachers who are promoting controversy and leading many into error.

He even accuses them of being demonic and misusing the law for nefarious purposes. He calls them liars, legalistic, dogmatic, misleading, and materialistic.

Paul returns to this theme often in the letter. The reason for Paul's concern, he explains, is that true Christianity is evidenced by love, a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith.

Christians are encouraged to live peaceful, quiet, and holy lives. This is the lifestyle that reflects the condition of an inward, godly spirit.

[ 18 : 35 ] And that pleases God and should be the goal of every Christian. Although Paul seemingly changes topic in verse 9, he links the topic of women with his previous comments on prayer, saying, in the same way.

So now the purpose of prayer, which is exhibiting a lifestyle and attitude that pleases God, becomes inclusive. With women he describes as devout, pious women who fear and serve God, in other words, Christian women.

This seems to suggest that besides prayer, there are additional appropriate ways for Christian women to demonstrate their faith and testimony by dressing modestly, practicing good deeds, learning in quietness, and being submissive.

The Greek word translated silent, in verse 12, actually appears three times within chapter 2. In verses 2 and 11, it is translated as quietness.

In verse 12, the same word is translated silent. Other possible meanings include stillness, tranquility, desisting from bustle, or respect, as in honouring a teacher.

[ 20 : 03 ] The inconsistent translation of this word leads to some confusion. In verse 1 and 2, it says, I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, be made for everyone, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives.

Verse 11 says, a woman should learn in quietness. Verse 12, I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man, she must be silent.

To be consistent would require changing verse 2 to read that all Christians are to live peaceful and silent lives. Verse 11 would read, a woman should learn in silence.

Are silent believers what Paul truly advocated? It might be more consistent to understand this word as quietness, tranquility, calmness.

It seems unreasonable to imagine that Paul would use one meaning in the previous paragraph and a substantially different meaning just a few sentences later.

[ 21 : 21 ] Another example when Paul uses the same words, we find in 1 Peter 3 verse 4, a gentle and quiet spirit.

Not a gentle and silent spirit. And another is 2 Thessalonians 3, where he says, For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule, if a man will not work, he shall not eat.

We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy, they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

Here the same word is translated, settle down. To substitute the word silent in these cases would distort the meaning.

Therefore, the sense of Paul's intended message is a quiet and tranquil attitude, not silence. It is improbable that Paul encourages women to study, be active in ministry, and even leadership, and then immediately commands their silence.

[ 22 : 31 ] It seems incongruous and irrational. When Paul writes that women are not to teach, to whom is he referring? Paul uses the same phrase in verse 12.

Do not permit a woman to teach, as he did in the previous chapter 1 verse 3, where he said, I command certain men not to teach.

The difference is gender and imperative. If these instructions were universal and perpetual, then would it not mean that certain men are not to teach?

On the other hand, if the instruction were that certain men were not to teach for a specific reason, i.e. false doctrine, would it not follow that a woman or certain women receive the same directive for a specific reason or the same purpose?

And what exactly does he mean when he says women are not to have authority or assert authority over a man?

[ 23 : 47 ] This term is unique and actually is the only time it's used in scripture here. So there's no frame of reference for biblical comparison.

Greek literature has offered some possible meanings of the word. It could mean strongly dominate, be autocratic, master, or even murder.

It is unlikely that all of the women in the church were aggressively dominating or domineering the men. Hence, a more credible scenario is that either one or a couple of women were intense, dominant, and domineering, occasioning Paul's firm prohibition specifically to her or them.

The subsequent illustration from creation appears baffling if read literally and out of context. Traditionalists point out that this demonstrates that the foregoing teaching is not cultural and proof that the hierarchy model was established right at the beginning and is transcultural.

A simple reading of the passage suggests that it is the common sense of these verses. God created Adam first, then Eve. She was to be his helper, but instead she became the first sinner, and therefore women must be submissive and silent because they were gullible, weak, and succumb to sin.

[ 25 : 25 ] John Calvin's comment almost 500 years ago was, quote, women who by nature, that is by the ordinary law of God, is formed to obey.

For the government of women has always been regarded by all wise persons as a monstrous thing. And therefore, so to speak, it will be a mingling of heaven and earth if women usurp the right to teach.

Accordingly, he bids them to be quiet, that is, keep within their own rank. However, contemporary social scientific analysis and research, and I've looked it up, have reached a different conclusion.

Research indicates that the ability to detect deception is not linked to gender in any significant way.

Women are not any less accurate at detecting deceptions than men. If anything, women have a slight edge over men.

[ 26 : 47 ] That's a quote by William Webb. Studies have proven that generally women are strong guardians of ethical and moral teaching and example in the home, workplace, and church.

And Dr. N.T. Wright suggests that in this passage, Paul is demonstrating why it is important for women to devote themselves to spiritual learning and development.

Eve was untaught about spiritual matters. Consequently, she was more easily deceived. It was because of her naivety and gullibility that she succumbed to temptation.

One recently developed method that reflects promising scholarship is Dr. William Webb's Redemptive Movement Hermeneutics.

His system of deciphering the cultural from transcultural is enlightening and logical. He says that the goal is to discover the redemptive spirit behind scripture, to identify the movement, progression, and development of God's plan.

[ 28 : 06 ] He says, a redemptive movement hermeneutic understand scripture to embody a multi-level ethic.

By multi-level ethic, not everything within scripture reflects the same level of ethical development.

It includes a balanced perspective, a cultural-transcultural assessment, and looks for the spirit of the text.

He illustrates the framework using an XYZ model to demonstrate the redemptive movement.

X represents the original culture. Y is the biblical teaching, and then moves into include our culture.

[ 29 : 05 ] And Z is the ultimate ethic. So, in our case, regarding the text on women, we see that X, original culture, is a strong patriarchy with many abuses.

Y, the bible had a moderated view, fewer abuses and signs of progressive teaching.

Our culture, it is secular with significantly improved status of women and emphasis on individual rights, autonomy, and self-fulfillment.

Z is the ultimate ethic, complementarian, egalitarian, and interdependence, mutuality, and servant-like attitude in relationships.

Is that your idea of heaven too? Webb has developed a comprehensive grid to test if there is redemptive movement in a passage.

[ 30 : 18 ] The first five criterion are preliminary movement, seed ideas, breakouts, purpose-intent statements, and five basis in fall or curse.

I won't go into a lot of detail, but I'll briefly explain what these mean. The preliminary absolute movement is determined by asking two pertinent questions.

One, has scripture modified the original cultural norms? Two, if so, is the movement an absolute movement?

That is, was society pushed to the maximum and no further development is needed? Or, is it a preliminary movement?

That is, society was pushed as far as possible at that time without creating more damage than good, but with the potential for further future development.

[ 31 : 36 ] Seed ideas. As the term implies, there is a germ of cultural change, but it is not fully developed. So, within the scripture are there signs of theoretical or potential movement in the future?

Breakouts. Breakouts. In scripture we see examples of radical and actual redemptive movement regarding the role of women.

Deborah was a political and military leader of the Israelites. Priscilla ministered, taught publicly, and founded the church in Corinth with her husband.

And we have purpose and intent statements. For example, women that are married in Corinthians, women married to unbelieving husbands are instructed to obey them.

And the purpose is spelled out. It is, so they will be won over without words. 5. Basis in Fall or Curse.

[ 32 : 48 ] I briefly commented on this earlier regarding the passage in Timothy, and I'll leave it there for now, but Webb develops it much more fully in his book. So, we see the signs in some Old Testament narratives, in Jesus' attitude toward women, and the early church is described in the New Testament, that demonstrate a culturally progressive liberation.

On the whole, the biblical material is headed toward an elevation of women in status and rights. For example, improved rights for female slaves and concubines.

They couldn't be sold outside of Israel. No bodily punishment for a wife. There is no biblical allowance for physical abuse, unlike pagan cultures of the biblical era or other religions that even continue to this present day.

Inheritance rights were increased, albeit limited. Women can initiate divorce and greater rights in divorce cases.

There is fairer treatment of women suspected of adultery in the Old Testament, compared to other cultures. And eventually, the early church moved toward even greater equality.

- [ 34 : 09 ] Husbands are encouraged, dare I say commanded, to change their attitudes and behaviour towards their wives. Unlike the prevailing culture, New Testament husbands are commanded to love their wives and their wives and treat them with respect and dignity.

Eckhart Otto studied family law in Deuteronomy and concluded that family laws in the book of Deuteronomy had a progressive and protective attitude in the legal status of women.

We can see this progression in how Jesus Christ set the standard of elevation and expectation in women that he dealt with. A side note.

The fact that none of his disciples was female could be a matter of pragmatics. The speculation and distortion about his relationships with women have been blown out of proportion with publications like *The Da Vinci Code*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Holy Blood and Holy Grail*.

One possible reason women were not included in the travels and work of the disciples was to eliminate any sign of impropriety.

- [ 35 : 31 ] Typical of that period, we learned that travelling by women, except for such conventional purposes as visiting family and attending certain religious feasts, was considered deviant behaviour, usually with sexually illicit overtones.

Jesus acknowledges the role played by women in his ministry. One of the most notable examples is his interaction with Mary and Martha.

Martha, worried about the physical well-being of the Master, bustled around concerned with housewifely duties. Mary, on the other hand, sat at his feet to learn spiritual truths.

He publicly commended Mary for choosing the most profitable use of her time. And that was pretty revolutionary in those days.

Some other astonishing and distinct examples show us his thinking and attitude. For example, his interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well.

- [ 36 : 40 ] His concern that his mother, Mary, understand his mission several times, beginning when he was just 12, and again when he began his public ministry.

Mary Magdalene, we heard recently in Mark 8, where she anointed him with costly perfume. Mary Magdalene, we heard the woman, and in a deep emotional demonstration of adoration and worship, washed his feet with her tears.

He used this as a teaching tool and example of the attitude his followers should have. There's the woman taken in adultery. Unlike the scribes and priests with their rigid religious condemnation, he displayed fair and equitable treatment and mercy.

Jesus endorsed educational and spiritual development in women. He encouraged them to devote time and attention to it. I cannot find any example where he suggested it was a waste of time for a woman to develop, teach, lead, or minister in spiritual matters.

In writing to the churches, Paul continues the trend, suggesting a forward-evolving movement. A holistic overview of how Paul deals with women indicates that he appreciates and encourages them to teach and minister the gospel.

- [ 38 : 09 ] He calls them fellow laborers, and he recognizes at least one woman as a deacon. Paul makes the unprecedented declaration that husbands do not have authority over their own bodies.

The wife does. In 1 Corinthians 7, he not only endorses, but promotes the idea of mutual submission. So we see that in New Testament and early church times, women played a vital and important role in its development and support.



It's an interesting twist. As the church developed post-diaspora, it became progressively hierarchical. More structured, and male dominance increased.

At the time of the great revivals, for example, often instigated by praying women, there was a resurgence of women having roles of leadership.

However, repetition of the historical pattern emerged, and as these new revival movements became more formalized and institutional, women became relegated to a passive, subordinate role again.

[ 39 : 23 ] Sometimes there is peer pressure and legalism at work to keep women from being active in teaching and ministry. Recently, there was a well-known case in the Southern Baptist Convention in the United States.

I'm not sure if you're familiar with Sherry Cluda, who was educated at a seminary, subsequently hired to teach Hebrew, and then several years later dismissed from her position because of gender.

The seminary defended their decision by citing the clear teaching of Scripture, that she should not instruct men, even in non-theological topics such as the language.

Many disagreed, but they were silenced, and this educated woman was forced to move on. With an understanding of the redemptive movement behind the issue of women, and the strong possibility they can be equipped and eligible for roles of leadership, even some traditionalists acknowledge that there are trajectories seemingly present in Scripture, although they often refuse to fully accept the underlying message or spirit behind those trajectories.

Egalitarians, on the other hand, view Galatians 3.28 as foundational. They refute the idea that women should have different, and especially subservient, roles and functions to men.

[ 40 : 54 ] They declare that Paul's teaching about equality means sameness. Opportunities for both genders are equivalent and identical.

They are convinced that F.F. Bruce had it right when he stated that Paul states the basic principle, and if restrictions are found elsewhere, they are to be understood in relation to Galatians 3.28, and not vice versa.

Some of them suggest that Paul, in Galatians, advocates a genderless equality. They accuse opponents of misogyny and misunderstanding.

Again, I believe we need to proceed with caution and balance. Dr. Jeffert Scorrey, the first female leader of an Anglican province, commented in reference to the ordination of women bishops.

The other one, the Elizabethan settlement was about keeping together people who have vastly different opinions, and people were ready to die and kill each other then.

[ 42 : 05 ] This is a slightly lower level of hostility. This militant language and attitude is alarming and revealing. N.T. Wright cautions that we should not flatten out the male-female distinction, not by affirming both as equally important, but by effectively turning women into men.

This wrong thinking has invaded even some evangelical churches. Movement, progression, and development are part of God's plan.

It seems obvious, but we take it for granted and do not appreciate humanity's advancement and improvements until a historian points out the past and compares it to our present.

Do we need a fresh view of Scripture and identify the redemptive movement and redemptive spirit embedded in it regarding women?

Scripture's clear teaching is that we are to live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness, pleasing God our Saviour.

- [ 43 : 20 ] To demand the right of leadership without this attitude reveals pride and a self-promoting attitude. The very attitude that Christ demonstrated is adversative to a Christian ethos.
- Whether male or female, it is our duty and highest honour to excel in our calling for Christ. Let's close with prayer.
- Lord, our prayer today is that you will sharpen awareness and deepen perception.
- Help us to cherish your wonderful creation. Appreciate your mercy. Revel in your grace. Glory in your presence.
- Acknowledge your guidance. Rest in your care. And thank you for your spirit that sharpens awareness and deepens perception.
- [ 44 : 22 ] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. I feel like I have touched on the question of God. I don't believe anywhere in Scripture does good, timely counsel from anyone, is to be rejected.
- And if you look at the case of Abigail, she must have broken many, I'm guessing, many cultural norms, what she did, how she spoke to her king.
- All of that was totally acceptable to David. It changed his spirit of that moment. She was a sort of a paraclete at that time.
- [ 45 : 37 ] Deborah is another one that we can look at with amazement, the authority and the wisdom that she had. In Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman.
- Isn't it? Yeah, that's right. Personified as a woman. Chapter 31 in Proverbs, I've always seen as a picture of the church, and that's female as well.
- No one else has ever interpreted it that way. They just say that's the activity of a perfect woman. But if you look, I think if you look very carefully, you'll see all sorts of symbols in there, which seems to suggest a community, not just a family, but a church, I think, in worship.
- And so, I think there was a problem back in those days. And women like to talk when they get together and this type of thing. It may have been disturbing. That's as far as I go with it. But women are very much...
- I mean, Jesus confessed some of the most important things to women. I am the resurrection. I am the... I am the one who was talking like that to Mary and to Martha. And he didn't talk to any of his disciples that particular way that it's recorded anyway.
- [ 47 : 09 ] Women, I think, in the Bible, are very highly held. I don't know what Plymouth Brethren were up to to make that sense. It makes no sense to me at all. I witnessed that. I witnessed that in that Brethren church.
- They had a very literalist interpretation of Scripture. But I hear from what you're saying that you have picked up and recognized the redemptive spirit, that movement in Scripture.
- You can pick out examples. When you talk about women and you're talking about spiritual things or you're talking about the Bible, you pick those up because it's there.
- It's not manufactured. It's there. And God has put it in there for a purpose so that we can see the progression and keep moving with it. We see it down through the ages. And I don't believe we're at Zed yet. I don't know if that is actually meant for within this timeframe.
- But there's that movement, that hope that we are moving towards Zed. We're moving towards that perfect time, you know, when there will be total equality.
- [ 48 : 30 ] There won't be barriers or restrictions. I think St. John's doesn't allow women to preach from the pulpit. I think they can preach a bit further down on the steps.

I don't think, I've never seen a woman up there preaching. Does that change the words? I don't know. Do you think the message would be different where she's standing?

There are some wonderful voices out there. Now yours have been added to it. And Maxine Hancock said, I'd love to preach something from the pulpit, but it wouldn't happen here. So there is that sort of fear.

Well, we're heading towards Zed. So maybe one day, who knows? Although I doubt it here. Yeah, I totally agree. Harvey. I just wanted to comment. You didn't highlight for me, and thank you very much, and you can tell me if I've heard you correctly.

The biblical attitude towards males is, I think, more shocking, more revolutionary than its attitude towards females. The male finds it very difficult, in most cultures, to be gentle, to be meek, to be low, to be assert, to be quiet in the presence of one's teaching.

[ 49 : 49 ] These all go against everything that men learn. It just does. So if you get that right, then I think you can do good exegesis on, quote, women in the Bible.

So I think that mutual submission stuff is very, should be more emphasized. And Christ, neither male nor female. Get that right, I think, and what you say comes into real focus, and it is reinforced then. Do you have any comment on that?

I think that's very true, but those instructions to be gentle and meek and submissive are to all Christians.

It's a Christian, male and female, and absolutely, men in the culture and the background, the history, is that men are to be aggressive, and therefore for them to take a step back. But we have the ultimate example in Jesus Christ, who had all power and authority, and yet he made himself lower than the angels, the lowest. He brought himself down.

And I think if we didn't have that view, I think that must be very strong for men. Because if he can do it, then anybody can.

[ 51 : 17 ] Women are put into that position often by force. And so you have an idea that women find it easier for them to be able to do it.

And they find it easier. But in reality, that may not be true. It may not be true that women find it easier, but they have been more accustomed and more conditioned to it.

I don't know if that's... You should talk for some time about Mary. At Advent, talk for some time about Mary. The mother of the Lord. This season is all about her, really. The God, the scriptures say, look at Mary.

Yeah. She is phenomenal when we think about what she knew, and yet the attitude that she displayed. I think that's very personal, especially at this season.

Hi. Hi. Thank you very much for many of your helpful observations, which I appreciate very much. At this point, I'd like to ask, why didn't Mary go on becoming an apostle?

[ 52 : 30 ] In Acts 1, one apostle was missing. And why wouldn't she be an apostle instead of Jude?

Yeah. That's a good question. I appreciate that. And I think for me, the answer is that each of us have our role.

Priscilla had a role that she must go ahead, and she taught Apollo. She taught men. And that was her role. That was what she could do. She had that ability.

Mary's role was to deliver the Savior. And I think we have to be careful that just because we can, doesn't mean we should.

Women maybe can stand in the pulpit. Does that mean we should? I think we have to be very careful that we fulfill the role that God has designed for us.

[ 53 : 38 ] And I think that that was not Mary's role. I think Mary's role was not teaching or preaching, but to deliver the Savior for us.

I have preached in a pulpit on Skid Road. And I felt like I had an eternal role towards the people on Skid Road, which isn't threatening.

And people who really didn't believe in women preaching, I'd say, well, God wouldn't give me the sermon unless I was supposed to share it.

And if you really feel that way, please don't attend. So, yeah. But right now I don't feel like that's my role at that point.

Well, then we can come into the whole question of the sovereignty of God and will we be in a position to speak to people that we shouldn't be speaking to.

[ 54 : 44 ] If we believe in God being sovereign, he will bring us into situations that we are to be in. And if we are to share the gospel, then that is what we're to do at that time.

So, that's a whole other question there. Was there another question? Yes? Again, I appreciate the observations you've collected, but not so much the hermeneutics and the system into which you are putting these observations.

To give an example, in 1 Timothy 2, Paul does not refer to cultural issues. He is referring to Genesis 2.

And from his point of view, it's not an issue because of sinfulness that women have to be silent. It's an issue of being thus created. Is that clear? In 1 Timothy 2. He refers to Genesis 2 and not 3.

It's not an issue of cultural questions. So, you would suggest it's in the order of creation? That that is primary? Yes. And I think we can see that in Genesis 2 as well. It's a man is created first.

[ 56 : 14 ] He has the addressee of God speaking. He has implicitly to talk to his wife. And she is taken out of him and brought to him by God and designed to be a helper.

Which he apparently failed. Mm-hmm. Well, there's a couple of comments in Webb's book. The first comment regarding the order of creation, actually animals were created before men.

And therefore, should they have dominion over men because they were created first. But we realize that that's not necessarily true. We see many examples throughout Scripture where the firstborn took a back seat to the secondborn or further down the road.

So, I think that there is enough precedent in Scripture that we have to be careful about using that as the sole means of determining what the rule is.

Of course. If women were created from a spare rib of men, men were created from dirt.

[ 57 : 45 ] So, I won't add any more comment on that. But, you know, I think we have to be very careful about reading so literally and so critically.

We're taking our thinking and putting it into Scripture. And I think we have to be very careful. What is Scripture actually saying? And do we see a movement through there that shows us where we are to be?

So, I think it's broader than, you know, the example of one or two instances. And that is what I discovered in Dr. Webb's writing.

I would recommend it to anyone. The title, you can tell he's not afraid of controversy. It's called Slaves, Women and Homosexuals.

Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis. And it's actually so well thought out and researched and designed that I have given a totally inadequate rant.

[ 58 : 55 ] rendition of what he has developed. But I think if you read it, you may find that it would be helpful in pointing out a lot of old presuppositions and stereotypes that we have.

Just a comment. Yes? Did you read anything about Bruce Waltke? Yes. At all? Yes, I did. I just remember a lecture a long, long time ago that he did at Regent where his premise was that men and women were equal in the sight of God, but they had different roles.

And it just kind of made sense to me and I can't remember any of the details. But, you know, he's very convincing and he did a kind of exegetical look at why that was so.

Because it's so much an issue that we struggle with in the church. Yes. Yeah. He would definitely be considered an egalitarian in his view.

Yeah. I've read several of his publications, plus I've been in one of his classes. So, yeah, I found him very interesting. He is not an egalitarian.

[ 60 : 15 ] He is not? No, I wouldn't say so. Read his book on Old Testament theology from 2007 on Genesis 2. He sees the order of creation as followed it.

And he compares the two. The New Testament at this point is leading in our view of creation law. And he shouldn't read the two passages against each other.

But then you have the other view that all things in Christ are new. I mean, which, you know... And there are people who say that the order in terms of the woman, and desire for the man and being submissive to the man, actually God brought that in after the fall.

And, you know, after they had sinned, he told them the woman will be subservient. Yes. Okay? That's what he's doing. There is that. But I was just thinking, my family goes to a...

They are all in the Plymouth Brethren Assemblies where women don't speak, where I wouldn't be speaking now if I were there. But... I hear you, sister. And I've been in the church for a long time and have seen women and others struggle with this issue.

[ 61 : 36 ] And it really hasn't... And burning out because of it, really. The order that we have, in a way, will probably never change. But I think the idea of we are all created and given gifts by God and have our different roles and to do the best we can in them.

I'm thinking in terms of St. John's, there is a sort of a male hierarchy of speaking in the platform, but there are a lot of very strong, gifted women here who are developing and using the gifts that God has given them to the full in whatever role they are given.

So I really like this idea of thinking we have... I believe we're equal but different. Have different roles before God and do the best we can in them.

And society and even within the church, I don't think it will ever change until we get to heaven, really. Right. It's my... Yeah. You know, but do what you can in the role that God has given you now.

Yeah. I would agree with you. I think St. John's has a good balance and biblical view. We see women in roles of ministry and they're strong and do a good job.

[ 62 : 50 ] And so, you know, I think it would be a waste and a shame if they didn't have those opportunities. However, a woman bishop, I would seriously have a problem with that too.

Wow. And yet, probably mostly because of my background, but the ultimate leadership would be a man.

But after all, what you have said, and the progressive redemption, and it would go on to that. Because we're not at Zed. And I think that there will be a time when there will be no difference.

There will be no marriage or giving in marriage or, you know, there will be the ultimate. But I don't believe that we have reached that.

And I don't think we will within... Not within my lifetime. You know, I'm not there. I'm not there. I'm not there. I'm not there. Okay. Well, you might be right about that.

[ 64 : 02 ] But, you know, when I look back at Genesis, and I've heard that you were speaking about the woman being the helper, but that is a translated word.

And, you know, I've heard that being described as that being the translation. And the actual, old, you know, language would have been that it was, that she was to be a complete, you know, she and the man were to complete each other.

Not one being subservient to the other, but being equal. And then it was when Eve, listen to the servant, and the serpent, and this is the thing that God said that you will now, because of that, be subservient to a man.

But I can see that in that perfect union, a man and a woman not being subservient to each other, or being subservient to each other, but doing that by choice.

Not by one is better than the other, or one is higher than the other, or one is this. I mean, I find this conversation. I grew up unchurched, and no, you know, not in a religious family of any kind.

[ 65 : 21 ] It was just the answer opposite. But there definitely was a difference in, you know, as a patriarchal, completely patriarchal family.

So, I mean, to me, this, like, even this kind of conversation about, it's shocking. I find it so annoying, because I guess, I wasn't caught up by the Bible in my hands.

And so, I have a lot of problems with a lot of these things in my life. I mean, I don't agree with not having women ministers. I just think it's ridiculous. So, I don't even know what I thought of this, but I just needed to say something.

I think your point regarding Eve was created as a helper, and I think that's a very good point, which I didn't go into. But what does that actually mean?

Well, what does that mean? Now, when we look at the command and the commission that God gives Adam and Eve to populate the earth, to create humankind, could Adam do that on his own?

[ 66 : 33 ] No. No. He was dependent on having a helper, and she is dependent on having him. There's a mutuality there.

So, when we say helper, what does that actually mean? It means that she is the completion, not helper as in a subservient slave attitude, but a helper as in, here is the commission.

Create humankind, go out, have children, and you have to do it together. Because that's the way I've created you. That's the way I've designed it. And that's what I was touching on when I said that we must remember that it's God that created women.

It was God that created Eve. It wasn't just, okay, if Adam needs a little bit of company, we'll make a, you know, a superior rover to her for him.

It's actually a compliment. You know, it's a, it's a, you know, hardly you look. Listen, there's a hint of, correct me if I'm wrong, we sometimes will do our exegesis and have these kind of conversations through a prism of fear.

[ 67 : 48 ] If there is a greater, I'm afraid that the greater will exploit me. Therefore, I want a greater equality. That's a bad model of exegesis. Angels don't live in fear of an archangel exploiting them.

They experience condescending love from the greater. Yeah. But, so I, I'm fearful of a certain kind of feminism that wants equality because that'll get us over the problem of exploitation.

It won't. Equals exploit one another all the time. So, I, I, you know, be careful. That's true. That's a very good point. Yeah. Do I have time?

Oh dear. That's a controversy, but, um, even within the God himself, um, although they're equal in substance, there is a hierarchy because Christ is subject to God, the Father.

Yeah. And, um, I think this is kind of what my brother was saying here. There is a role to be played by the husband. Um, it's not a superior role in one way, but, uh, nevertheless, there's a responsibility that the husband has for his wife, that the wife doesn't have for the husband.

[ 69 : 15 ] In decision making and so on, although they are to discuss things and, uh, act together, the final decision. And this also plays out in the church.

That's why it's pretty clear that the men of the leadership role, the elders of the church. That doesn't stop women from, uh, preaching.

Uh, there's many missionaries, maybe Slycer from the city that, uh, Isabel was from. She was a wonderful teacher. She was known as the, uh, White Queen of, uh, Zanzibar.

And, as you know, the Scottish Pile of Dots is a teacher that teaches a wonderful missionary. And there's been so many missionaries, uh, down through the ages of the women.

So I don't have any objection to women teaching, but I'm trying to reserve the authority over men. Thank you, sir. Thank you, sir. Because of the tendency. Phew.

[ 70 : 16 ] I did need that endorsement. I'm not walking out. I'm just stopping. No, actually. I'm playing in the kitchen for you. I understand that we have, uh, Sunday school children coming in here, so.

Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

Thank you. Thank you.