

I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN

Part Three

Tonight we are going to continue looking at the issue of women in ministry. When I first started all this, my only motive was to expose the idea that the Scripture is against women teaching or having any kind of “*authoritative*” ministry gifts as a lie. It wasn’t my intention to get into the whole realm of submission and authority *in the home*. As a matter of fact, that’s the last thing I wanted to do because I know whenever you start talking about who should be submitting to who in the home, you’re entering an area that’s filled with *emotional* land-minds. In most cases, people—particularly the men—will think you have crossed the line between teaching and *meddling*.

Unfortunately, I’ve come to realize (a little too late!) that it’s really not possible to deal with the subject of women in ministry without looking at the bigger issue of a woman’s rightful place in the home. The fact is, her place in the home is directly related to her place in the kingdom because how a sister moves in a particular gift she has been given by God will naturally affect what takes place in the home. But before we venture any further down that path, we need to take another look at what the Scripture says about spiritual gifts in general, and how this might apply to the sisters.

The reason this is necessary is because, first of all, there’s a lot of confusion regarding the whole subject of ministry. All true ministry is *the result* of receiving a *spiritual gift* from God. Yet, many of those who claim to be “*in the ministry*” have not been called or equipped spiritually by the Holy Spirit. Rather, they have been educated and trained by men—not by God; they have been ordained by men—not God; and they have been given positions of leadership in a Religious System that was built by men. Thus, they are “*ministering*” out of their own human strength and wisdom, and most people can’t tell the difference between the person who has been called and equipped by God, and the one who has *called himself* and been trained and equipped by men.

Because there is so much confusion regarding what the Bibles actually says about spiritual gifts, whenever the word “ministry” is mentioned, most of us usually think only in terms of apostles, or prophets, or preachers, or evangelists, or perhaps elders and deacons. But there are something like 26 different kinds of ministries mentioned in the New Testament, and every one of them is important. Every one of them is for today, and every one of them is *needed* for the growth and edification of the body of Christ, which is the Church. Many times, those who have been given one (or more) of these gifts fail to recognize them or relate to them as spiritual gifts because they are not one of the more popular ones. So a proper understanding of what the gifts are, and why they were given is essential.

Secondly, understanding what the Scripture *actually says* about spiritual gifts, as opposed to listening to what today’s preaches *claim* it says, will deliver us from some very unscriptural ideas that have been prevalent for centuries—one of which is the idea that women can’t have any authority.

So let’s start off by looking at First Corinthians. In chapter 12, the apostle Paul teaches on spiritual gifts. He explains that even though there are different kinds of gifts, administrations and operations of the Spirit: “...*it is the same God which worketh all in all*” (*vrs. 1-6*). Next he says:

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

I. Corinthians 12:7-11

The King James says the Spirit is given to “every man” to profit the rest of the body. Now, should we interpret the phrase “every man” in it’s most narrow and literal sense—or do we know instinctively that when Paul says spiritual gifts are given to every man, he means to every *one*, including women?

If Paul was talking about every one, not just men, then why doesn’t this come through in the reading of the passage? Well, it’s been said that the translators of the Authorized Version used the term “man” in a general sense (referring to *both* men and women), and also, in a more specific sense (referring just to men). If this is true, then every believer is must function as a *translator* as well as an *interpreter* of the Bible when they read it, since it’s *they* who must decide when the term “man” should be understood as men only, and when it should be understood as everyone.

This approach, it seems to me, breeds unnecessary confusion, especially when you realize that the English word “man” is not even in the Greek text, but was added. The Greek term Paul uses in this passage is “*hekastos*”, which means “each” or “every”. Whether it means specifically every male, or generally every *one* is determined by the context of the passage. The New King James translates this passage a little better because the first reference to “every man” is translated correctly as, “*to each one*”. But then it translates the second reference—which uses the same exact Greek word (*hekastos*)—as “to every man”.

NKJV -- But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Why would they translate *hekastos* as “to each one” in verse 7, then turn around and translate the same exact word in verse 11 as “to every man”, when it’s obvious that Paul is talking about everyone, both men and women, throughout this entire passage? Other versions, like the NIV, translate both clauses properly: “*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good...All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*”

Next, let’s look at what Paul says about spiritual gifts in Romans.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Romans 12:3

Here Paul warns the saints in Rome not to get proud over the various gifts they had received from God. Again, the King James says the Spirit has given a measure of faith to “every man”. Should we interpret the phrase “every man” in *this* passage in it’s most narrow and literal sense—or do we, once again, know that Paul meant every believer, male and female?

Just as in the Corinthian passage, the English word “man” is not in the Greek text. It’s been inserted. Two different Greek terms have been translated as, “to every man” in this passage. The first one is “*pas*”(Strong’s #3956), which means “all”, “any”, “every” and “the whole”. The second one is “*hekastos*”, which we have already looked at. Again, other versions like the NIV bring this thought out a little clearer.

NIV — For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

That Paul was talking about *all* believers—male and female—receiving spiritual gifts, which enables them to function as that particular part of the body of Christ God ordained them to be, becomes obvious as you continue reading this chapter.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office [ie: function]: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us [ie: us all], whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 12:4-8

There is no hint that in Paul’s view, some of these gifts were meant only for men, while others were meant only for women. Just as you have many individual members that form your body, and each member has a different *function*, so it is with Christ. Each believer is a part of the spiritual body of Christ, and each one has been given a *unique* function as part of that body. Later in this passage, Paul will explain that the spiritual gift we receive *determines* what our function will be in that body. These gifts are not given on the basis of race, social status, education, gender or anything else. They are given according to the faith we have received from God. God sees to it that every part of Christ’s body receives the amount of faith and grace that is necessary for it to function as that part of the body He has chosen it to be. He makes sure we have *what we need* to function. After explaining this, Paul lists some of these spiritual gifts:

- ~ *Prophecy*
- ~ *Ministry*
- ~ *Teaching*
- ~ *Exhorting*
- ~ *Giving*
- ~ *Ruling*
- ~ *Showing Mercy*

Once again, as with the other passages we have looked at, the English word “he” is not in the Greek text. It was added. Why they added “he” (singular) I’ll never know. If you look at a version which marks the words which have been added by the translators for clarity, you will notice that in the beginning of that passage they added plural phrases. When referring to the gifts, they inserted the phrase: “*let us use them*”. When referring to prophecy, they inserted the phrase: “*let us prophesy*”. When referring to ministry, they inserted the phrase: “*let us use it*” and also the word “*our*”. But then they turn around and insert “he” when talking about the rest of those gifts.

- ~ He that teaches is actually “*ho didasko*”—which means “the one teaching”.
- ~ He that exhorteth is actually “*ho parakale*”—which means “the one entreating”.
- ~ He that giveth is actually “*ho metadidomi*”—which means “the one sharing”.
- ~ He that ruleth is actually “*ho proistemi*”—which means “the one presiding”.
- ~ He that sheweth mercy is actually “*ho eleao*”—which means “the one being merciful”.

The point here is simply that in all of his teachings regarding gifts, Paul never uses Greek words that are restrictive towards women. God gives His gifts to “*the one*” He chooses. Now of particular interest in this list are the gifts are: ministry, teaching and ruling. All three of these involves “spiritual authority”. So if Paul really believed women should never have any “*authoritative*” ministry gifts, he would have certainly said *something* about it in these passages, since he is specifically teaching about spiritual gifts and correcting some of the wrong attitudes people were developing towards them.

The Greek word that is translated “ministry” in this passage is “*diakonia*”, and its primary meaning is “service”—service to the body of Christ. We find this term used in passages such as:

*I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to **the ministry** of the saints,)*

I. Corinthians 16:15

*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into **the ministry**;*

I. Timothy 1:12

*But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of **thy ministry**.*

II. Timothy 4:5

*I know thy works, and charity, **and service**, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*

Revelation 2:19

The kind of ministry Paul moved in, the kind of ministry Timothy was given, is available to anyone, man or woman, who is part of the body of Christ. It is available to anyone who has receives it from God.

Another interesting gift or function on that list is *teaching*. The English word teach expresses exactly what the Greek word *didasko* implies. It's what Jesus did all through the gospels, and it's what Paul did all throughout his ministry. This gift, like all the others, is available to *anyone*.

Ruling is another gift. As I said earlier, the Greek term here is *proistemi*, which means "to preside over". It's interesting to see the *context* this word is used in. We find it in the following passages:

*Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that **ruleth** well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to **rule** his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)*

I. Timothy 3:3-5

*Let the elders that **rule** well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

I. Timothy 5:17

*And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are **over you** in the Lord, and admonish you;*

I. Thessalonians 5:12

It cannot honestly be denied that ruling, teaching and ministering involves moving is a measure of "spiritual authority". Therefore, I say again, since Paul makes it clear that anyone can receive these gifts, what this means is that women *can* have an "authoritative" ministry gift. Now, keeping all this in mind, let's go back to First Corinthians and see what else Paul has to say about spiritual gifts.

*Now ye are the body of Christ, and **members in particular**. And God hath set some in the church, **first apostles**, secondarily prophets, **thirdly teachers**, **after that miracles**, **then gifts of healings**, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? **But covet earnestly the best gifts**: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

I. Corinthians 12:27-28

Paul says *we* are the body of Christ, and each one (male and female) are members in particular. In this body, through the giving of a particular spiritual gift, God has established certain functions. Then he gives a list of these functions.

- ~ *Apostles*
- ~ *Prophets*
- ~ *Teachers*
- ~ *Miracle Workers*
- ~ *Healers*
- ~ *Helpers*
- ~ *Governments*
- ~ *Speakers of Different Tongues*

Third on this list of gifts is what many people refer to as “the office” of teacher. There are several forms of the Greek word that means teach—*didaskalos*, *didasko*, *didaktikos*—but they are basically the same word. The word for teaching is *didasko*; the word for teachers is *didaskalos*. In all its various forms, the basic meaning is the idea of systematic teaching or training. There is no difference between the *teaching gift* in Romans 12, and the *gift of teachers* in this passage. It’s the same word and it means the same thing! One who has been given the gift of teaching by the Holy Spirit, usually ends up being a teacher in the body of Christ—and again, this gift is available to everyone. In Ephesians, Paul gives another list of gifts.

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Ephesians 4:7-11

Once again, this list of functions are “gifts”. They are gifts just like the functions in Paul’s other lists are gifts. Notice the similarities between the various lists:

<p><u>Ephesians 5:2-5</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ <i>Apostles</i> ~ <i>Prophets</i> ~ <i>Teachers</i> ~ <i>Pastors</i> ~ <i>Evangelists</i> 	<p><u>Romans 12:6-8</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ <i>Ministry</i> ~ <i>Prophecy</i> ~ <i>Teaching</i> ~ <i>Ruling</i> ~ <i>Giving</i> ~ <i>Exhortation</i> ~ <i>Showing Mercy</i> 	<p><u>I. Cor. 12:28</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ <i>Apostles</i> ~ <i>Prophets</i> ~ <i>Teachers</i> ~ <i>Miracle Workers</i> ~ <i>Healers</i> ~ <i>Helpers</i> ~ <i>Governments</i> ~ <i>Tongues</i> 	<p><u>I. Cor. 12:8-10</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ <i>Wisdom</i> ~ <i>Prophecy</i> ~ <i>Knowledge</i> ~ <i>Miracles</i> ~ <i>Healing</i> ~ <i>Faith</i> ~ <i>Discernment</i> ~ <i>Tongues</i> ~ <i>Interpretation</i>
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Notice that apostles are mentioned in **2** of these lists; prophets and/or the ministry of prophecy is mentioned in **3** of the lists; teachers and/or the ministry of teaching is mentioned in **3** of the lists; miracle workers and/or the gift of miracles is listed in **2** of the lists; healers and/or the gift of healing in **2** of the lists; and tongues is mentioned in **2** of the lists. In other words, all these gifts are interconnected. But more importantly, you will never see Paul imposing the kind of *artificial* divisions on these gifts that modern ministers have imposed upon them. He makes it very clear in Romans 12—when he likens the body of Christ to the individual parts of a human body—that: (1) *every* true believer is given some kind of a spiritual gift, which will enable them to function as that part of the body they were ordained to be; and (2) each of these gifts are just as necessary as all the others.

Yet in spite of all this, modern preachers divide the gifts into categories of importance, into degrees of spiritual authority, and into classes of male and female gifts! I wonder what goes through their minds when they read Romans 12? What do they think Paul was talking about? Are your kidneys *more important* to you than your heart? Are your feet *more important* to you than your hands? Are your teeth *more important* to you than your tongue? Don't you consider every part of *your* body to be vital and necessary? You bet you do. No normal person wants to have *any part* of their body cut out or cut off.

Well, that's the way Jesus feels about His spiritual body. He hasn't just give gifts to certain people who are special. And neither has He only given gifts to men. He has given all believers—both men and women, young and old—gifts so each and every one of them will have *something* to contribute to the rest of the body; so each and every one of them will *have a place* in the body. Every one of the gifts in Paul's lists, every one of those functions, is just as necessary and just as important as the others, if the body is going to maintain spiritual health and continue growing. Religious leaders who claim certain of these gifts are “offices” which carry more spiritual authority and are absolutely necessary, while the rest are just “functions” which carry no authority and are not really necessary, are perverting Paul's teaching on the gifts. All these divisions are the product of man's religious pride and his desire to *control* others.

Even during the Early Church, people who had received spiritual gifts tried to establish an artificial division between what they considered to be important and non-important gifts. Even during the first century they succeeded in establishing *religious hierarchies* based on certain gifts. While Paul was still alive, certain “gifted ones” in the congregations had started viewing themselves as better than those around them, and as having more spiritual authority than those around them, based on the kind of gift they had received. That's why you find Paul and Peter making the following kinds of statements:

*For **who maketh thee to differ from another?** and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, **why dost thou glory**, as if thou hadst not received it?*

I. Corinthians 4:7

*For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that **there are contentions among you**. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*

I. Corinthians 1:11-13

*Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. **Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.***

II. Corinthians 1:23-24

*The **elders** which are among you **I exhort**, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.***

I. Peter 5:1-3

The Religious System's view of ministry is completely upside down and backwards. Practically all of today's Christians—whether they are part of the clergy or the laity—have accepted as God's perfect will, the very thing Paul and Peter condemned! And it's not only the apostles who had to deal with this problem. Jesus had to deal with the same thing in His own disciples. At various times they would manifest that same wicked desire to be a "lord" over God's heritage. On those occasions, He would say things like:

***But be not ye called Rabbi:** for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. **Neither be ye called masters:** for one is your Master, even Christ. **But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.** And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

Matthew 23:8-12

*But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. **But it shall not be so among you:** but whosoever will be great among you, **let him be your minister;** And whosoever will be chief among you, **let him be your servant:***

Matthew 20:25-27

What do people think when they read Paul's warning to the Corinthians about not to be puffed up because of their gifts. Isn't it obvious that when he says: "*who maketh thee to differ from one another?*" he's warning them not to exalt themselves based on the kind of gift they have? Isn't it clear that he was saying none of the gifts they had received made them any better than anyone else, or more important than others?

When you read what Paul taught about spiritual gifts with a mind that has been washed clean of all the error and self-righteousness of man, it becomes clear that he was *utterly opposed* to the attitude that says—"the body of Christ needs *my* gift because they can't grow spiritually or stay out of deception without it; but they can get along just fine without *your* gift". He was against that whole concept because he had been poisoned by it his entire life. That was the attitude Saul, the Pharisee. Once he was redeemed, the Holy Spirit showed him that this whole attitude was wicked and came from a desire to control others. So when he taught about spiritual gifts, he made sure to include statements that contradicted that attitude. One example is the passage

in Ephesians chapter four. Most of today's religious leaders are *very quick* to quote Ephesians 4:7-11 to us. After explaining how these five gifts are special gifts which give them great authority, and after reminding us that they have been given one of these gifts, they then explain that the purpose of these gifts is to bring you and me (the laity) to spiritual maturity and they refer us to Ephesians 4:12.

*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: **Till we all come** in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*
Ephesians 4:12-14

As they look down at us from their pulpits and tell us how much we need them, many times you can actually see the pride on their faces. And one thing you will notice is that they almost never go on to quote the next few verses of that passage, where Paul says:

*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom **the whole body** fitly joined together and compacted by that which **every joint supplieth**, according to the effectual working **in the measure of every part**, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Ephesians 4:15-16

This gives what Paul said in the previous verses some balance. The gifts he lists here are not just for the quote, perfecting the saints; he says they are for the purpose of *equipping* the saints to minister. And the ministry the saints are to be equipped to do is stated in verse 16—*causing the growth of the body* (ie: “maketh increase of the body”). I like the way the NKJV translates this passage:

*...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together **by what every joint supplies**, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, **causes growth of the body** for the edifying of itself in love.*

Every true believer is given a measure of *faith*—not the kind of faith that justifies them but the faith that's required to move in whatever *gift* they have received. That gift enables them to *be* (ie: function as) the particular part of the body God ordained them to be. Not only is the body “*joined and knit together*” by the functioning of every part, the functioning of every part is what *produces* spiritual growth!

What Paul is teaching in this *entire* passage is just the opposite of what modern preachers tell us he is teaching. They say God called *them* to produce the spiritual growth of the body. Paul said God called them to *equip you* to produce the spiritual growth of the body. They say God called *them* to bring unity and cohesion to the body. Paul said God called them to *equip you* to bring unity and cohesion to the body.

They are promoting a top-down hierarchy where spiritual growth, life, unity and cohesion must come to the body *through* them. Paul promotes a bottom-up flow of the Spirit, where everyone receives these things directly from the Head, Jesus Christ, and then shares them with the rest of the body. The two concepts are not only radically different, they are absolutely opposed to each other.

It's really quite ironic. The whole reason Paul wrote about spiritual gifts in the first place was to correct this perverted view of ministry, which was beginning to develop among the churches. Yet the very words he penned, which were meant to stop this error, have been turned upside down and are being used today to justify and that very error!

A lot of this has to do with the condition of the *heart*. When we come to the Scripture to learn what it says about spiritual gifts, we have a choice as to how we will approach it. We can come to the Bible presuming that it supports the concept of a religious hierarchy, and then force everything we read into *that* framework; or we can come to it with an open mind and try to let the Scripture speak the truth to us. The person who *wants to see* a religious hierarchy in Paul's writings will see it *regardless* of what Paul actually wrote.

The same is true regarding the issue of women in ministry, as it relates to Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts. We can come to the Bible presuming women can't function in certain gifts and force everything we read into *that* framework; or we can come to the Scripture with an open mind and let the Scripture speak the truth to us. Those who *want to see* ministry limitations according to gender in Paul's writings will see it regardless of what Paul actually wrote.

The same is true regarding the whole issue of submission and authority in the home. We can come to the Bible with the assumption that the man is in charge and has all the authority to make the decisions, and then force everything we read into *that* matrix; or we can come to the Scripture with an open mind and let the Scripture speak the truth to us. Those who *want to see* a Patriarchal Hierarchy in Paul's writings will see it regardless of what Paul actually wrote.

There are two basic positions regarding the whole women under submission issue:

Complementarian One view is the Complementarian view. In this view, male and female were created by God as equal in *some* respects (but not all respects). One of the areas where they were not created equal in is the realm of authority. The male was given the responsibility of loving authority over the female, and the female was to offer willing and submissive assistance to the man—thus, the term *Complementarian*. Eve's role was designed to *complement* (or assist) the role and duty of Adam. Women are created to be "helpers" of men. But they are to help from a position of subordination—under the leadership and the authority of the man—not as equals.

Egalitarian The opposing view is the "Egalitarian" view. In this view, God created male and female as equal in *all* respects. Sin introduced into the original order many manifestations of disorder and corrupted relationships, the chief of which became a hierarchy in the relationship between the man and the woman. Paul's statement about there being no "male or female" in Christ (*Gal. 3:28*) shows that in Christ, the false and sinful basis of male/female hierarchy has been abolished, so that there is no more legitimate distinction between the two in God's kingdom. Full male/female equality is restored, dignity is given back to women, and servant attitudes are called for in both men and women alike.

Another name for the Complementarian view is *Patriarchal Hierarchy*. It refers to the hierarchy in the relationship of the male and female. the male (ie: the Patriarch) is the absolute master and the women is the servant. Patriarchal Hierarchy says the man has been given the authority by God to rule the home, and the women is required to submit to that rule, even if it's unjust and cruel.

It's ironic that so many men who have left the Religious System precisely because they saw how wrong it was to have a *Clerical Hierarchy* between them and *their* Head (Jesus), don't see anything wrong with imposing a *Patriarchal Hierarchy* between the female believer and *her* Head (Jesus).

The Patriarchal system, which is the system that existed in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament, has not only denied multitudes of women the opportunity to serve God with the gifts He Himself has given them, it has also been the *source* for the untold misery and abuse of women down through the centuries—and the Bible has been one of the main justifications for that system.

Let me say right here that there is a big difference between having God *create* a situation, or *establish* a certain type of social order as His perfect will, and having Him *work within* a certain situation or social order that has been created by man or by sin. While the curse of male/female tension and rivalry came from God, it's obvious that this was not His original design. Rather, it was the result of our rebellion against His good plan for us.

Three are other social conditions which did not come from God, which were never His will—like for instance, slavery. God did not establish the institution of slavery, even as part of the curse. Slavery came from the wickedness of man's heart. Yet neither did the Lord abolish slavery when He brought Israel out of Egypt and made them His own peculiar nation. Instead, He worked *within* the social order that had already become part and parcel of the Hebrew experience and established laws regarding slaves that were much better than the laws of the surrounding nations.

The same thing can be said of bigamy. We know from creation, and also from the teaching of Jesus (*Matt. 19:8*), that it was never God's intention for a man to have more than one wife. Yet many men had plural wives throughout the Old Testament. God did not outlaw bigamy. He established laws concerning these wives. In the New Testament, bigamy was no longer a common practice. In the Greek and Roman cultures, having *one* wife who was chaste and faithful was the ideal cultural norm. But the point is, under the Old Covenant, God didn't abolish that part of the social order; He worked *within* it.

Regarding slavery, when you come to the New Testament, you find the same kind of situation. God didn't tell the leaders of the Early Church to go on a religious crusade against the institution of slavery. In fact, when you look at what Paul and Peter wrote about slaves, it might appear at first like they were actually condoning the whole institution.

Exhort servants [slaves] to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Titus 2:9-10

*Let as many servants [slaves] as are under the yoke **count their own masters worthy of all honour**, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.*

I. Timothy 6:1

*Servants [slaves], **obey in all things your masters according to the flesh**; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:*

Colossians 3:22

*Servants [slaves], **be subject to your masters with all fear**; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.*

I. Peter 2:18

Does the Christian faith endorse slavery, or what? Why isn't there a single instance in the entire New Testament where slavery is *denounced* as evil. Why isn't there a single place where the apostles call for the abolition of such a foul and degrading institution?

The reason is because God was doing the same thing *through* the apostles that He Himself had done all throughout the Old Testament—which was to work within the current social order. This is the *key* to understanding those passages in the New Testament where it *seems like* Paul is condoning the whole Patriarchal system. When he said there is neither male or female in Christ, he wasn't just having a strange philosophical impulse, he really meant it. But when dealing with the place of women, he didn't try to change or dismantle the whole existing social order. Rather, he gave admonitions and instructions that would *transform* the relationships of men and women *within* those established structures.

We can see this in the case of slaves. Paul never comes right out and says slavery is evil. And you never find him telling Christian slave owners (or even hinting to them) that they should *free* their slaves. Rather, he admonishes slave owners to raise the standard of treatment of their slaves.

*And masters, **treat your slaves in the same way**. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.*

Ephesians 6:9

*[Paul says] I appeal to you [**Philemon**] for my son Onesimus [**Philemon's runaway slave**], who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. But I did not want to do anything **without your consent**, so that any favor you do **will be spontaneous and not forced**. Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good—**no longer as a slave, but better***

than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.

Philemon 1:10-18

In the first instance, Paul tells masters to treat their slaves the same way he just told the slaves to treat their masters. This was a radical statement for that time, but it wasn't so radical that it threatened the whole social order. Through Paul's words, the relationship between the (Christian) master and slave is elevated above the common cultural norm, and it is set on a different path.

In the second passage, rather than telling the Christian slave-owner Philemon that slavery was wicked, that the whole institution should be abolished, and that he should free all his slaves, Paul simply asks him to treat his run-away (now-Christian) slave who is being returned to him, as a "*dear brother*". Thus a transformation process would begin between the slave and the master *within* the current cultural context, without disrupting the entire social order of that time.

I'm going to continue looking at this whole concept next week, and examine some of the verses of Scripture that anti-women-ministers use in that light. But before I end tonight, I want to look at a very common interpretation of the passage that is so often used to justify and perpetuate the Patriarchal system.

Someone sent me a book the other day, written by a Messianic Jew named Eliyahu ben David, called, "Holy Order Restored". The message of this book was that the Patriarchal system, which was the foundation of the Hebrew culture, is the ultimate divine order, established by God. And this guy is telling everyone to come back to that kind of order. The book wasn't written particularly against women, but he certainly manifests the kind of attitude I am trying to expose as wrong. Under the subtitle: "*God's Order Expressed In Marriage*" Mr. ben David writes:

"Now let us examine the intended relationship of man and woman in marriage. What we have already seen is that the woman was viewed as part of the man's own body. **As one cherishes his own body so a man should love and cherish his wife. This is fundamental.** We have also seen that God created man first, in His own image; meaning reflecting the glory—the character and authority of God—on earth. We should also remember that God's intention in creating the woman for Adam was so that she could be "a helper suited to him." (Gen. 1:27,2:7,18) Modern feminists may object to these facts. However, where humans disagree with God's Word it is they who need to change—not God. The Bible is clear and consistent, both in its statement of the facts and in its interpretation of them. I have merely repeated what the inspired Scripture already says: '*A man...is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man, for man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake*' (1 Corinthians 11:7-9 NAS).

The foregoing verses reveal a fundamental difference between the respective roles of men and women in God's Order. While men and women are equal in nature as humans **they are not equal as to purpose and authority.** As God's glory on earth, **men are to express God's character** and authority of Fatherhood—God's headship authority as noted above. **Their focus needs to be on their Lord and their life and purpose should be in Him** as their Head. **The married woman, on the other hand, glorifies God in so far as she is a helper suited to her husband in carrying out his God-appointed mission.**

The man is her head and **she fulfills her purpose**, thus glorifying God, **by submitting herself to her husband. She derives her life and purpose through him** (1 Timothy 2:9-15). Paul makes God's natural order of authority unmistakably clear; 'the head of every man is Messiah, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Messiah is God.' Note carefully that **the divine order** among men and women in creation **is an expression and natural extension of the patriarchal order** already existent in the relationship of God and His Son. Although equal as to nature with Father God Messiah, the Son, submits Himself willingly to the Father as His Head—deriving His purpose and sense of fulfillment from serving and submitting to His Father. This order then extends to man, **who is to make pleasing Messiah, man's Head, his first concern**. From there the woman is to follow Messiah's example and submit to her husband as her God-appointed head. [*ie: that her first concern is to please her 'head', who is her husband*] In this God-ordained order the very image of God is expressed on earth to God's glory (I. Corinthians 11:3, Philipians 2, John 1:1, Ephesians 5:22-33)."

Holy Order Restored
Eliyahu ben David (pgs. 49-50)

This man's idea of divine order—though he properly quotes the Scripture—is the most *selfish* thing I've ever seen. Yet this is the common interpretation of that passage. I want to look for just a minute at the idea he expresses here. He says the focus of the *man* should be on the Lord. The man's life and purpose should be in Jesus, who is his Head. On the other hand, since the woman “derives her life and purpose through” the man, and since she “fulfills her purpose by submitting herself to her husband”, her focus is *not* to be on the Lord, but rather, on helping the husband *carry out his* God-appointed mission.

Again, he says the Son submits Himself willingly to the Father as His Head—deriving His purpose and sense of fulfillment from serving and submitting to the Father. This order then extends to man, who is to make pleasing Messiah (his Head) his *first* concern. From there the woman is to follow Messiah's example and submit to her husband as her God-appointed head. Submitting to her husband as her God-appointed head means that *her* first concern should not be to please the Lord Jesus, but rather, her first concern should be to please her “head” (ie: the husband). Anyone who thinks this interpretation of what Paul was teaching is correct, has been deceived. This in fact is an extremely *selfish perversion* of what Paul's view of husbands and wives. Turn with me to Ephesians and you will see what Paul's actually taught.

*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; **Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.** Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. **Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.***
Ephesians 5:20-27

I'm not going to deal with what Paul says regarding wives submitting at this point because I am going to deal with it this next week. Right now, I just want to show you what Paul said about the husband loving his wife. Please think about how Paul *describes* the love Jesus has for the Church.

He said Jesus “*gave himself*” for the Church. He said that the focus of Jesus is not on getting the Church to submit to Him just because this is God’s divine order, but so *we* can be sanctified and cleansed by Him. The focus of Jesus is on washing the Church with the water by His Word. His focus is on bringing the Church to the place where it will be “a glorious church”.

Yes, in order for all this to be accomplished, we must submit to the Lord so He can do that work in us. But the Lord is not asking us to submit so we can *help Him carry out His mission*. He is asking us to submit to Him for *our own* benefit. Jesus continually gives of Himself *for us*. It’s our good, our perfection, our glory (in Him) that He is focused on; not His own.

Now I ask you: does the attitude Mr. ben David displays *correctly* represent the attitude Jesus has towards the Church; or is it a totally self ish attitude? You see, in his twisted little mind, the only purpose for the woman is to help the man achieve *his own* goals and *his own* desires. Oh, he may say the man should provide for the woman and protect the woman, but in his heart, he believes the woman is *primarily* there to *serve* him. She is really only there for *his* good.

Friends, this is not the picture Paul is presenting in his teaching of the proper relationship between a man and his wife! Paul is tell men to have the same kind of love for their wives that Jesus has for the Church. When it comes to His relationship with His people, everything Jesus does is *for them*. Everything Jesus does is for *their* good. Everything He does is to build them up and bring them to glory.

I tell you truly, if Jesus was the type of “husband” Mr. ben David obviously is, and portrays Jesus to be, nobody would pay any attention to the Lord. How would you like it if the next time you had a need, and you fell on your face to ask Jesus for help, the answer you got back was: “*Hey, what about my need? Don’t you know I created you to help me achieve the things I want to get done?*” I guarantee you, that would be the last prayer you ever prayed to Him.

How many men are really concerned about seeing their wives come forth in Christ? How many men, instead of demanding that the women *serve them* and *help them* fulfill *their* desires, are willing to deny themselves and lay down their lives—their own goals, their own hobbies, their own pleasures—so that the wife (one they are supposed to be caring for and protecting) might truly come forth in life?

The sad fact is, most men are just like Mr. ben David—selfish and self righteous. They twist the Scripture and make it say just the opposite of what it actually says. Instead of laying down *their* lives for their wives so that she might come forth in resurrection life (as Jesus did for us), most men beat their wives over the head with a Bible and demand that the wife lay down her life for them.

We can all thank God the Lord Jesus does not treat *us* like that!!