

Recap

A few weeks ago we talked about the fact that men and women are created spiritually equal, equal in essence, but with differing and complementary roles. Men and women together more perfectly reflect the image of God, and both men and women are needed to function together because each provides something lacking in the other. And together we all work to fulfill God's purposes that he births in our hearts.

Last week I exhorted men to take courage. Masculinity is the power to do good. It starts with a proper response to God; it is fulfilled through rightly inspired action. Men, if you missed my message last week please go back and listen to it – without question, the health of the family, the health of the church, and the health of our nation rests on your shoulders.

Part III: What is biblical femininity?

Biblical femininity is the power to nurture life. It is birthed out of a loving response to God, and functions in harmony with biblical male leadership. When it flows in God's proper order it will cause the home, the church and the world to thrive.

The world thinks the biblical position on womanhood is demeaning. But truly:

A. Jesus highly valued women in His life.

Women are everywhere in Jesus life...

- Jesus was born and raised by Mary.
 - And Mary's response to the Angel (Luke 1:38) when told of God's plan for her truly captures the essence of godly femininity: "Then Mary said, 'Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.'"
- At Mary's request Jesus performed his first public miracle.
- His most direct messianic claim was made to the Samaritan woman at the well
- Two of his best friends appeared to be Mary and Martha of Bethany.
- On his way to the cross, he stopped to comfort the women.
- He also showed His concern for the care of His mother while on the cross.
- Women were the first to find the empty tomb.
- Women were the first to see the risen Jesus and be the first evangelists to tell of the risen Christ.

Jesus, like no other man in history, **elevated women** to their proper place as equal heirs of the promises of God. **Remember that you are more than just your role** – you are a person of individual worth and value in Jesus eyes.

The start of Biblical femininity, just like biblical masculinity, is our relationship with Jesus. I want to look at a case study showing a very beautiful relationship with Jesus.

B. Responsive to the Lord - Mary of Bethany at Jesus feet

***We are first introduced to her as she is sitting at Jesus feet, learning from him.
Luke 10:38-42***

38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

Her Response to Trouble - John 11:20,28-32

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

[28] And after [Martha] had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." [29] When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.

[32] When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

Her Gift of Love - John 12:1-4,7-8

[3] Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ... 7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

We can see that Mary's walk involved great humility; she was always at Jesus feet. But more than as a show of reverence or an acknowledgement of her own shortcomings, but primarily as a sign of her deep, deep love of Jesus.

C. The character of a godly woman – gentle, quiet, modest

A key characteristic of godly femininity is quiet trust in God.

1 Peter 3:1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Remember what Sarah went through? Being taken into the harem of Pharaoh in Egypt and also into the home of Abimelech king of Gerar. Sarah apparently trusted God enough to take care of her when her man didn't trust God to take care of him.

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Men – take note: God takes note of how you are treating your wife. It's serious.

1 Tim 2:8 I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; ⁹ in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety¹ and moderation², not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

Important notes:

- Submission is a wife to HER husband, not women to men generally
- Submission does not include abuse. If you are experiencing physical abuse – seek help immediately. You can approach any of the elders to receive help.
- Verbal or emotional abuse should not be submitted to, this is sin.
- This doesn't imply not speaking or giving input, rather the heart posture
- A gentle spirit can speak with a gentle word.
- A husband should recognize and welcome the input of his wife knowing that God gave her to him for his benefit.

¹ [NT:127](#)* **aidoos** (aidoos) aidous, hee; a sense of shame, modesty: [1 Tim 2:9](#); reverence, [Heb 12:28](#)

² [NT:4997](#)* **soofrosunee**, soofrosunees, hee a. soundness of mind [Acts 26:25](#) b. self-control, sobriety

D. Biblical femininity has a view towards the home - Helpmate (Ezer kengdo)

Case Study - Proverbs 31 Woman

This is a composite sketch of this ideal woman's life – don't think you can do all of this in one day, or have to be like this all at once. This is a recounting of her life over a long period of time.

- “Her husband has full confidence in her”
- She works hard, both in and outside the home
- “She considers a field and buys it”
- “Out of her earnings she plants a vineyard”
- “She sees that her trading is profitable”
- “She extends her hands to the needy”
- “She has no fear for her household”
- “She can laugh at the days to come”

Prov 31:10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.

Virtuous can also be translated as strength with the attributes of activity, ability, valor, wealth, efficiency, endurance, capability, and energy. No woman can match everything perfectly with this model, but all can recognize their respective talents within the composite.

Note her **worth** – it cannot even be estimated. A man who gives a virtuous wife the ability to run his house will also be blessed. **Because she has the good of the husband and family in view.**

Note the **wide range of decision making responsibility** she has. But the point here is that because **she has earned her husbands' full trust already**, this woman at this point in her life can make big decisions on her own.

This is part of God's created order. The woman was made as a helpmate to the man with her primary area of influence being the family.

1 Tim 5:14 So I advise these younger widows to marry again, have children, and take care of their own homes.

The Greek word there is oikodespotein – which means to manage.

Now last week I talked about the fact that men are given the **primary** responsibility for the **spiritual leadership of the family**. As Eph 6:4 says: “Fathers, bring [up your

children] with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.” **So while men are to take the initiative to lead the family, the wife may have charge over the affairs of running the household, and practical instruction of the children.**

I want to emphasize the high calling of being a wife and mother. This is something so demeaned in our culture today, and I want to challenge us all to think biblically in this area, for in fact to demean being a wife and a mother is demeaning the very heart of God and his created order. Feminists would have you think that being a home manager is akin to slavery or bondage. You should be out pursuing your own dreams, your own career. Others want to tell you that women can do it all. Have a fulltime career and be a fulltime mom. **Both of these options fall short of God’s best.**

Susanna Wesley, the incomparably brilliant and well-educated mother of sons who shook two continents for Christ wrote, “I am content to fill a little space if God be glorified.” She expressed her commitment with these words:

“No one can, without renouncing the world, in the most literal sense, observe my method; and there are few, if any, that would entirely devote above twenty years of the prime of life in hopes to save the souls of their children, which they think may be saved without so much ado; for that was my principal intention, however unskillfully and unsuccessfully managed.”

The biblical wife and mother are committed to the management of her family. She utilizes all of her God-given talents and abilities in this most worthy pursuit of making a home, raising and teaching her children, and supporting her husband's godly pursuits. Her husband recognizes her worth and gives her great freedom, responsibility, and honor. It is a high and worthy calling.

What about women who *want* to work outside the home?

Women today have many career opportunities that they did not have in the past. It is now true that women can do just about anything a man can do.

Men and women, do not take opportunity as evidence of God’s direction. But prayerfully and biblically weigh the cost to you and your children for how you choose to live your life. Will your choices be based on culture, circumstances, or scripture?

I would advise you to consider that there are **seasons of life** and you need to be patient and obey God’s calling in each season. Seasons will come later, in which you will have all the time in the world to pursue other interests.

E. Women are created to serve in the church

As we discussed previously, **women are equal with men spiritually in every way. This includes all of the spiritual gifts, ability to serve, administrate and teach.** There are times in your life when serving your family is your primary act of worship.

The only thing that the Bible says is strictly for men is positions of ordained authority, and the doctrinal teaching of men.

1 Tim 2:11 Women should learn quietly and submissively. 12 I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Let them listen quietly. 13 For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve. 14 And it was not Adam who was deceived by Satan. The woman was deceived, and sin was the result. 15 But women will be saved through childbearing, assuming they continue to live in faith, love, holiness, and modesty.

Key points:

- Women should learn – no restrictions there
- Silence refers to teaching, not a general rule
- Authority and teaching of doctrine is reserved for male leadership
- This is based on the created order, not cultural or time-bound
 - Eve's deception is NOT a general statement about women being more easily deceived.
- Saved through childbirth probably refers to the promise of Jesus made in Gen 3:15 being fulfilled, that Jesus would be born of a woman.

But the participation of women in the church is vital to having a healthy church, which properly reflects the image of God to the world. **As God calls and the seasons of life allow, there are multitudes of ways women can serve.**

Consider just some of the women in the bible:

- Miriam (prophetess and assistant to Moses)
- Deborah (Judge)
- Esther (queen who saved her people)
- Huldah, Anna, Daughters of Philip (Prophetesses)
- Phoebe (Servant of the Church)
- Tryphena and Tryphosa, Persis (Laborers for the Lord)
- Junia (well known among the apostles)
- Priscilla (Teacher w/her husband)

In Paul's epistles, in particular in his salutations and greetings, women are

mentioned personally 16 times compared to 18 for men. The point is that women were and are an extremely integral part of the health of the church.

Together, Priscilla and Aquila explained the way of God to Apollos. And Apollos eventually became a very influential figure in the early church. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he mentions Apollos in the same group as himself and Peter – possibly indicating that Apollos had reached apostolic status. Thus the joint ministry of Priscilla and Aquila had a far-ranging impact on the growth of the church.

Paul says in 1 Cor 16:19 that Aquila and Priscilla were hosting and presumably leading a church that met in their house. So Priscilla had a very important role with her husband in the service of the early church. She and her husband provide a wonderful example of how to serve together, with Priscilla in submission to her husband able to be involved in the instruction of a future apostle.

Some examples of ways women can serve in the church

- Teaching other women is mandated in (Titus 2:4-5)
- The gifted woman teacher could author study materials
- Teaching of youth and children
- Personal evangelism
- Outreach and Care ministries (pregnancy center, homeless, sick, ...)
- Administrative functions of ministry (where would we be without April?)
- Intercessory prayer
- Giving testimony, and use of spiritual gifts in worship service
- Worship team and music ministry
- Drama or visual presentations

F. Final thoughts

Ladies, you are precious to Jesus. He wants you to be fulfilled in him and find your calling in him. God has designed you to be a vital and important part of the church. Don't allow the world's lies to tell you otherwise.

Allow Jesus to lift up your hearts. Sit at His feet the way Mary did and listen to Him.

- Enjoy Him as the lover of your soul,
- Receive from Him your spiritual direction as your future eternal husband.
- Be empowered by Him to act on His behalf.

There is so much to say in this area, but it is very important that we align our lives to God's word. That is the only way we can find His peace and see His spirit working in our homes, our church and our world. Let's embrace God's plan for us.