

WHY DOES THE BIBLE MAKE GENDER DISTINCTIONS?

INTRODUCTION:

A. In my lifetime I have watched people messing with the rules of Bible gender distinctions that have been pretty much accepted for several thousand years. Even in Christian circles, people are trying to explain these differences away. Certainly there were abuses toward women that desperately needed to be fixed. But in many cases the cure was excessive. Protection of personal rights for women is a noble pursuit. Creating societal opportunities for women is a noble pursuit. But it is unnecessary to seek to erase inbuilt, God-ordained gender differences.

B. Gender differences are here to stay. Dobson discusses what one author calls *biological pre-determinants of gender-related behavior*.

Is this biological "predetermination" still operative in sophisticated, modern nations today? The evidence indicates that it is. After thirty years of feminist influence and affirmative-action programs, there are currently only seven female chief executive officers among the Fortune 500 corporations in the United States. That's right, 493 are males. Of the one hundred U.S. senators, only eleven are women. There have been forty-three presidents of the United States, all of them males. The national Organization for Women has pointed to these discrepancies to "prove" that patriarchy and discrimination prevail in the culture. The more likely explanation, however, is biochemical and anatomical. Men, in whose bodies surge ten to twenty times as much testosterone as in women, are more likely to reach for wealth, power, fame, and status because they are urged in that direction from within.... There are exceptions, of course, but the obvious tendencies are difficult to deny.

- Gregg Johnson cites anthropological studies of 250 cultures. *[M]ales dominate in almost all. Males are almost always the rule-makers, hunters, builders, fashioners of weapons, workers in metal, wood, or stone. Women are primary care givers and most involved in child rearing.... The data point to biological pre-determinants of gender-related behavior.*

- Feminist scholar, Sherry Ortner has observed virtually the same thing. She writes, *The universality of female subordination, the fact that it exists within every type of social and economic arrangement and in societies of every type of complexity, indicates to me that we are up against something very profound, very stubborn, something we cannot root out simply by rearranging a few tasks and roles in the social system, or even by reordering the whole economic structure.*

*I would flatly assert that we find women subordinate to men in every known society. The search for a genuinely egalitarian, let alone matriarchal, culture has proved fruitless. (Cited in Stu Weber, *Tender warrior*, Multnomah Books, Sisters, OR, 1993, 94)*

I suspect that Sherry doesn't like this state of affairs. I suspect she is going to do all that she can to change it. But I also suspect that she will find that she is fighting against characteristics that are hard-wired by God into every man and woman.

C. This summer we are doing sermons on "hot potato" subjects. This may be the most scalding one in the bunch. The Bible has some passages on gender issues that are scorned by liberal feminists, and hotly debated by evangelical Christians.

D. Let's check out what the Bible has to say on this huge cultural debate.

I. WHAT WERE THE GENDER DISTINCTIONS AT CREATION?

Genesis 1:27, *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

- Note that in this passage both genders are equally blessed and both are equally charged with administrating this planet that God put us on.

Genesis 2:15, *The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." 18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*

21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." 24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

NOTE: **Genesis 3:20**, *Adam named his wife Eve...*

A. The Creation design:

1. Egalitarian take:

- Helper = *ezer*. As "*ezer*," woman is a helper with no implication of subordination inasmuch as the same Hebrew word is used of God in the Old Testament fifteen of the nineteen times it appears
- "the one in front" = *knegdwo*. "*Knegdwo*" is used only in vv. 18 and 20 and the root word in its noun form signifies "a leader, ruler, prince, king or overseer. (CB paper, 7)

2. The egalitarians have the wrong take on "helper": *The term says more about the one needing help (the man) than it does about the one helping (the woman). It implies that man is incomplete. He needs help... "Helper" is a majestic term. And woman is a helper "suitable" or corresponding to the man. That's another way of saying she is no duplicate. Not the same. Not a clone... There is no redundancy here.... Adam did not need a buddy, a fishing partner, or another guy to race elephants with. Man needed woman. She is "the rest of the story." (Weber, 105)*

3. It is true that *ezer* is used of God as the great helper of man, and God certainly is not in subordination to man. But the relationship of the first man and woman is not determined simply by the usage of the word "helper."

4. Check out these clues:

- God made Adam first.
- God made Eve out of Adam. He could have made her out of the dust just like Adam. But God chose to make her derivative from man.
- God gave Eve to Adam.
- Adam named Eve, both generically and personally. He made up the names "woman" and "Eve." The prerogative "to name" is an indication of leadership rank.
- God entrusted Adam with the prohibition about the Tree of Life.
- Despite the fact that Eve sinned first, when God came looking for them after the fall into sin, it was Adam God called out for, by name, and it was Adam that God censured for his lawbreaking.
- In the New Testament, when blame is assigned for the first sin, Adam is the named culprit, not Eve. (**I Corinthians 15:22**, *in Adam all die*, cf. **Romans 5:14**)

II. HOW DID THE FALL CHANGE THINGS?

Genesis 3:16, *To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. **Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.**"*

A. Egalitarian take: *The ruptured relationship between the man and the woman resulted in a hierarchical structure in Gen. 3:16. But to see this disruption of relationship between the man and woman as the permanent will of God and to treat the result as an abiding law is to misunderstand the text. (CB paper, 8)*

B. I disagree. There are multiple indications, before the entrance of sin, that God made Adam the leader of his wife. But something did change after the fall into sin: "*And he*

shall rule over you.” Created for the man, the woman was made subordinate to him from the very first; but the supremacy of the man was not intended to become a despotic rule, crushing the woman into a slave, which has been the rule in ancient and modern Heathenism, and even in [Islam] also, -- a rule which was first softened by the sin-destroying grace of the Gospel, and changed into a form more in harmony with the original relation, viz., that of a rule on the one hand, and subordination on the other, which have their roots in mutual esteem and love. (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand rapids, MI, 1976, Vol. I, 103)

- C. The phrase, *Your desire will be for your husband*, is a tough one.
 - It might mean that woman feels an affection attraction for her husband.
 - It might mean that woman covets her husband’s leadership role and seeks to usurp it.
 - Nobody knows for sure. Take your pick.
- D. However, the pain and “labor” of childbirth and the leadership abuse of males is pretty clear from the passage.

III. WHAT BIBLE PASSAGES GET THE MOST DEBATE?

A. **I Corinthians 11:3**, *Now I want you to realize that the **head** [kephale] of every man is Christ, and the **head** of the woman is man, and the **head** of Christ is God.*

1. The egalitarians say that the word, *kephale*, means “Source.” In other words, Adam was made first and then Eve was taken from him. Woman therefore is sourced in man. That’s all that *kephale* means. It has no implications for leadership or authority.
2. Now, there are two big problems with that view.
 - The theological problem: Since the word, *kephale/head* is used three times in this verse; one would expect it to mean the same thing throughout the verse. If it means that woman was sourced in man, then it must also mean that Christ was sourced in God the father. That would be heresy. Christ is a co-equal member of the Trinity, self-existent, eternal, uncreated, fully possessing every and all the attributes of deity. But *functionally*, Christ does the will of His father.
 - In His earthly ministry Jesus said things like, **John 6:38**, *For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do **the will** of him who sent me.*
 - When the Kingdom of God comes, it says this, **I Corinthians 15:24**, *Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.*
 - The vocabulary problem:
 - 1) Arndt and Gingrich’s authoritative *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* lists these meanings of the word, *kephale*:
 - Literal: *actually of the head of man or beast*
 - Figurative: a) *In the case of living beings, to denote superior rank.* B) *of things, “the uppermost part, extremity, end, point.*
 - 2) Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*:
 - *Kephale outside the NT: 1) As regards the history of the term kephale in its theological significance, the first significant point in secular usage is that it denotes what is first, supreme, or extreme.... It may be the prow of a ship... the head of a pillar... the top of a wall...the mouth of a river...but also its source... 2) But this leads us already to the second aspect, i.e., not merely what is first, or supreme, at the beginning or the end, but also what is “prominent,” “outstanding” or “determinative.” Thus man’s head is not just one member among others.... It is also the first and chief member which determines all the others. 3) Thirdly, kephale is used in*

secular speech for the “whole man.,” the “person.” In the kephale we meet the man.

- Kephale in the NT: Commenting on I Corinthians 11:1-16: [T]o the direct subjection of the man to Christ corresponds the fact that the man is [the image and glory of God-v.8] [Image and glory] have here the sense of image and reflection.... The same point emerges from v.8f, where the being of woman as [glory], and indirectly of man as [image and glory], is explained by the fact that the origin and *raison d’etre* of woman are to be found in man.

Not merely as a Christian, nor historically, but ontologically and by nature woman lives of man and for him.

[Kephale] implies one who stands over another in the sense of being the ground of his being.

My conclusion about Kittel: Kephale speaks of authority, ground of being, and purpose. Note in verse 9 where it says that *woman was created for man*, the cultural application in the following verse ties this to the implication of authority: *For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. (I Corinthians 11:10)*

I Corinthians 14:33, *As in all the congregations of the saints, 34, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. 35 If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.*

- Observations:
 - Note the “outside” support for this instruction:
 - Universal practice of the churches (*As in all the congregations of the saints*) [Note: the paragraphing is disputed here. See attached footnote for discussion.]
 - Based on the Old Testament Law (*as the Law says*). This may refer to **Genesis 3:16** (*He will rule over you*) or the whole creation narrative which describes gender roles, or the whole tenor of the Pentateuch.
 - **Verse 37**, *If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command.*
- The debate: The egalitarians argue that 1) This only applies to a local outbreak of extreme Christian feminists; and 2) This is only a prohibition of women seeking to dominate men.
 - However, 1) It is arbitrary to make this only locally applicable. The language is too universal for that; and 2) The passage addresses both the exercise of authority and teaching. To limit the passage to only prohibiting domineering behavior is an unwarranted reading-into the text.
- The passage simply says that God has designed that church leadership and formal teaching is a role he has reserved for spiritually qualified males.
 - *If the relevant texts are read in the context of the times in which they were written, it will be discovered that in his day, far from being a male chauvinist, Paul was a foremost champion of women’s rights. He would have been regarded by his contemporaries as distinctly “avant garde.”* (J. O. Sanders, *Paul the Leader*, 161)
-

Galatians 3:28, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

- Egalitarian take: *The subordination of women as a result of the fall is overturned by redemption in Christ.* (CB paper, 8). Feminist advocate, Paul Jewett calls this verse, *The Magna Carta of Humanity.*

- ❑ Remember, there are plenty of indications in the creation narrative to show that God made Adam the leader before sin entered the world.
- ❑ Furthermore, the egalitarians are taking this Galatians verse out of context. We have to remember that Galatians was written to a predominately Gentile readership. Up until the time of Jesus, Gentiles were pretty much on the outside, looking in as far as salvation was concerned. Women were also marginalized by God's Jewish male "chosen."
 - In the Jerusalem temple, there was a Court of the Gentiles and between it and the inner recesses of the temple was a marble wall, 4.5 feet tall. On it were tablets inscribed in Greek and Latin, warning Gentiles not to proceed, on pain of death. (Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1978, 46)
 - Each morning in the Jewish synagogues, the Jewish men would pray in thanks to God that they had not been created a Gentile, a slave or a woman.
 - We have to pay attention to the argument of Galatians 3. Verses 6-9 reassure these Gentile Christians that the promises of Abraham are for them in fulfillment of the "all nations will be blessed" promise given to Abraham back in Genesis 12:3. Because of their faith, they are also counted among the "Children of Abraham." Verse 14 restates this great truth of Gentile inclusion: *He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*
 - The last paragraph begins with, *You are all sons of God*, and ends with, *you are Abraham's seed.*
 - Sandwiched between those great affirmations is our verse in question: *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* In context it is plain that this is saying nothing about functional equality, i.e., the erasure of God-ordained role assignments for the genders. It is all about the liberating truth that *the ground is level at the foot of the Cross.* It means that God's salvation is wide open to anyone who approaches Him in simple faith, regardless of one's race, or gender, or social status.

Ephesians 5:21, *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery-- but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband*

- ❑ Last night I did a wedding for a young Christian couple. Here are some excerpts from the vows they made to each other. He said, *As head of our home, I will devote myself to loving you and serving your needs.* She said, *God has declared that the best way I can serve Christ and minister to Him, is to submit my life to you; to be the help-mate God created me to be...*
- ❑ There may well have been people in the audience last night to whom those words like fingernails on a chalkboard.
- ❑ Witness the line drawn between the framers of two gender-related manifestoes: *Men, Women and Biblical Equality* and the other, *The Danvers Statement* from the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. *MW&BE* was published prominently in a major Christian periodical [*Leadership Journal*] and lists the signatures of well over 100 prominent and respected conservative Christian leaders in America. They reject any notion of gender role distinction in the church or the home. Here is what they say about the husband/wife relationship: *In the Christian home, husband and wife are to defer to each other in seeking to fulfill each other's preferences, desires and aspirations.... In*

*case of decisional deadlock , they should seek resolution through biblical methods of conflict resolution rather than by one spouse imposing a decision upon the other. [NOTE: Rather inflammatory language in the last sentence! As if the essence of male leadership is the **imposition** of a decision upon one's wife.]*

- ❑ The *Danvers Statement* was also published prominently in a national Christian magazine [*Christianity Today*.] It rebuts the other egalitarian document and sets forth a traditional understanding of the biblical texts that define gender roles in the home and the church.
- ❑ The intensity of the debate is also seen in the lengthy study paper on gender roles that was published by the Conservative Baptist denomination. Rather than adopt a resolution on this issue, they chose to submit the three major positions and their arguments to the local church constituency. Each congregation was encouraged to read and discuss the issues and make their own choice of position.
- ❑ It is unfortunately unrealistic of the egalitarians to eliminate male leadership in the home. Every civilization, every organization, no matter how small, needs an understanding of authority. Imagine what it would be like at work if several CEO's each held equal authority. It would create confusion and probably chaos.
- ❑ I have served half my ministry years as an associate pastor and half as a lead pastor. I know what it is like to loyally support my senior pastor and I know what it is like to bear the responsibility of lead pastor, despite the fact that many times I would like to off-load that responsibility.
- ❑ I have learned that a good and wise leader...
 - Doesn't make all the decisions. He knows how to delegate.
 - Is committed to the personal development, dignity and success of his followers.
 - Builds strong relationships of loyalty and trust.
 - Doesn't care who gets the credit.
 - Often sacrifices his own agenda and personal preferences for the good of the whole.

I Timothy 2:11, *A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one **deceived**; it was the woman who was **deceived** and became a sinner. 15 But women will be saved through childbearing-- if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.*

- ❑ Once again the appeal for this command is to the creation narrative of Genesis 1-3. Two points are argued: 1) Man is in charge because man was created first; 2) Man is charge because the woman was the one who was deceived and was the first to sin.
- ❑ The egalitarians also argue here that these words apply only to a local outbreak of extreme Christian feminism in the Ephesian church and/or that Paul was expressing a personal opinion. Notice, however, that the support for his position is back to the great seminal truths of the creation narrative.
- ❑ It takes considerable gymnastics to avoid the conclusion that God has ordained that the public teaching of the church is to be done by spiritually qualified males.

I Peter 3:1, *Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. 7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

NOTE especially here the sweet qualifiers on the exercise of male authority.

IV. WHERE IS THE RIGHT BALANCE?

A. The Three Evangelical Camps

1. Egalitarian: The belief in the equality of all people [French = equality]

2. Moderate: Hold that only the office of Elder is reserved to males. All other church leadership and teaching ministries are freely open to both genders.
 3. Hierarchical: Pertaining to one person being ranked above another person.
- B. The Biblical Mandate:
1. First of all, whether we like the answer or not, the most important issue is, "What does God's Word say?"
 2. I like the way Stu Weber says it: *Every major tenant [sic] of our faith is a matter of revelation not explanation.... Whether it is the nature of our salvation or the nature of our homes, we take it by faith, trusting and obeying.* (Stu Weber, *Tender warrior*, Multnomah Books, Sisters, OR, 1993, 88)
 3. Dick Staub interviews David Brooks, author of *Bobos in Paradise, In... Montana I ran across a Rabbi ...what sort of Judaism do you practice? Is it orthodox, conservative, or reform? He said, well, it's "flexidoxy." Because on the one hand he wants flexibility and freedom...but on the other hand he wanted traditional orthodoxy and ritual. And I found that in all the different religions I looked at. On the one hand people have a longing for the rituals, the old fashioned traditions of the religion. On the other hand they want to disagree with certain parts of the religion they might not like. They want to pick and choose. They want individual freedom.*
 4. Here's how Jill Briscoe does it: *I accept headship as a biblical concept. I also accept equality as another biblical concept. And just as I cannot bring predestination and free will together, I cannot bring headship and equality together, but I embrace them both. And sometimes I model submission to my husband as head, and sometimes I model equality with my husband. Just as sometimes, if I'm in trouble, I'm a Calvinist. And if I'm talking to someone on the plane, I'm an Arminian, because I'm going to lead him to Christ, and I believe he's got a free will. At that moment, I cannot reconcile both predestination and free will. And so my husband, in his headship, makes sure I'm equal, but it's no fewer headships for that.* (CT Interview, "Ministering Women," *Christianity Today*, April 8, 1996, 16)
 5. She makes it unnecessarily hard. We're talking about two different things here: personhood and roles. In personhood, men and women are absolutely equal. In roles, God has made man to be the leader and woman to be the follower. It's the same thing at the place you work. You are just as valuable a person as your boss. But in terms of roles, your boss has the rank and you don't.
 6. Functional subordination does not equal inferiority. Jesus subordinated Himself to His Father and made himself a servant per Philippians 2. But He was never inferior. He was subordinate in role, but equal in personhood. Note that the wife's submissive role in I Peter 3 is specifically modeled after the submission Jesus exhibited when He went to the Cross.
- C. The "Judgment Call"
1. On almost every practical life issue, God leaves the picture unfinished. He lays down the big rules and leaves it up to us to figure out the thousands of little rules.
 2. So a church committed to playing fair with the Bible on gender issues has some judgment calls to make. These are situations without any specific "chapter and verse" directions in the Bible:
 - How much of up-front public worship functions is open to women?
 - What about women teaching adults seminars and classes in the church?
 - Can women teach mixed gender teen classes?
 - What about single missionary women teaching and preaching on the mission field when there are no qualified male missionaries available?
- D. The Appropriate "Tone"
1. Humility:. Compassionate leadership, not authoritarianism. Men and the church need to go out of their way to affirm that the biblical gender distinctions have nothing to do with intelligence or giftedness or spiritual responsiveness.

2. Men need to realize that they are also under authority and that ought to temper the male soul.
 - Masters and slaves
 - Elders and the congregation
 - Man has a head even as he is a head. When he violates his headship, his head turns down the screws on him. That's the meaning of *lest your prayers be hindered*.
3. Kindness and discretion:
 - Jill Briscoe: *I was the speaker on the last day of a convention for 3,000 young people. I introduced my subject and opened the Scriptures and read them and began to explain them. At that point, a pastor stood up and told me, "Stop, in the name of the Lord!" and said that I was out of order.... He then took his young people out, and several other people followed. The good thing was that 3,000 rather bored kids suddenly became very attentive.* (CT Interview, "Ministering Women," *Christianity Today*, April 8, 1996, 17)
 - Anne Graham Lotz: One of the invitations I accepted was an opportunity to address approximately 1,000 pastors and church leaders. But when I stood up to speak, some of the men in the audience rose, reversed their chairs, and turned their backs to me. (CT Interview, "Ministering Women," *Christianity Today*, April 8, 1996, 17)
4. In the days of Jesus, *at every synagogue service Jewish men prayed, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast not made me a woman." Women sat in a separate section, were not counted in quorums, and were rarely taught the Torah.* (Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1995, 153)
5. **Dorothy Sayers, *Perhaps it is no wonder that the women were first at the Cradle and last at the Cross. They had never known a man like this Man—there had never been such another. A prophet and teacher who never nagged at them, who never flattered or coaxed or patronized; who never made arch jokes about them, never treated them either as 'The women, God help us!' or 'The ladies, God bless them!'...***
There is no act, no sermon, no parable in the whole Gospel that borrows its pungency from female perversity; nobody could possibly guess from the words of Jesus that there was anything "funny" about woman's nature. (Quoted in Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1995, 153)

V. SO HOW DOES THIS PLAY OUT AT HOME AND CHURCH?

A. Spiritual Gifts in the Church

1. I suspect that the Holy Spirit distributes all the varieties of spiritual gifts today without respect to gender. Some people might wonder about the gift of pastor/teacher. But there have always been a lot of women engaged in a wide variety of teaching ministries in the church. Pastoring means spiritual shepherding, and there are many women in this and most churches doing a wonderful job at shepherding in people's lives.
2. Women constitute usually the majority of the volunteer ranks of any church and work all across the spiritual gifts arena.

B. Teaching and Leadership in the Church

1. The commands and examples in the New Testament lead to the conviction that God wants qualified men to handle the primary teaching ministry of adults in the local church.
2. We have already interacted with two primary texts that say this (I Corinthians 14 and I Timothy 2).
3. Additionally, all New Testament examples of the office of apostle and the office of elder pertain to males. Therefore we defend the Bible value that men lead in

the public teaching of Scripture and theology and in the spiritual oversight of the congregation as a whole.

4. On the other hand, the Bible calls for the dedicated teaching ministry of mentor women to younger women. Titus 2:4 describes the ministry of such godly, mature women: *...they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.*
5. **J. I. Packer** wrote an article in 1991 protesting the ordination of women to church eldership. I have the Letters to the Editor that scorched the pages of *Christianity Today* in the following issue. Listen to this sampling of comments:
 - *Packer tried hard to be gentle and pastoral, but he failed.*
 - *I couldn't help but hearing "separate but equal" throughout the article. Isn't that the theological platform on which the Dutch Reformed Church built apartheid in South Africa?*
 - *Let me see if I've got this straight: anatomy qualifies men for ordination and disqualifies women.... I don't understand his logic, but then I didn't go to Oxford.*
 - *Can Professor Packer be serious?*
 - *He sounds more like John Wayne than an "Oxford man."*

C. Leadership in the Home

1. The Bible is very clear that husbands and wives have distinct roles.
 - The husband is called to loving, sacrificial leadership. The pattern is the leadership of Christ to the church.
 - The wife is called to respectful submission to her husband's leadership.
2. **Ephesians 5** says it eloquently. So does **I Peter 3**. Check out also **Colossians 3:18-19**.
3. It's a shame that the Southern Baptists have been so vilified in their revision to their *Baptist Faith and Message*. All they are doing is restating the clear biblical teaching of at least four diverse texts. They even threw in the appropriate caveat about husband love to temper male headship. Here's what they adopted: *A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband, even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ.* One dissenting Baptist pastor complains that it *...had in it some barbs that were intended to hammer women about subservience.* ("Submission Rejected," *Christianity Today*, December 6, 1999) Another Baptist pastor calls the revision, *a crime.* ("Culture Clash," *Christianity Today*, July 10, 2000, 20

CONCLUSION:

- A. Robert Lewis wrote a book you would do well to read if you wish to pursue this subject: *Rocking the Roles*. In it he tells a story about a dinner evening he and his wife spent with another couple. The other woman as Robert, *"If the ideal husband, the ideal wife, the Easter Bunny, and Santa Claus were all standing on a street corner together, who would cross the street first."*

It was an obvious setup with a twist I knew I would enjoy. So I said, "I don't know. Which one?"

"The ideal wife would cross first," she laughed. "All the rest are figments of your imagination!"(Robert Lewis and William Hendricks, *Rocking the Roles*, NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO, 1991, 67)
- B. Friends, much of the flack the church has gotten for its position on gender issues is unfortunately deserved. Far too often our churches and our husbands have exercised male leadership without the heartbeat and the compassion of Jesus Christ. Men, it is now our job to make sure that we carry out our leadership responsibilities with the attractiveness of the heart of Christ!

Timothy G. Walton
Snohomish Community Church
July 13, 2003