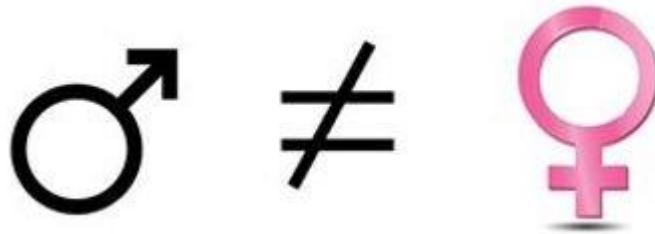


MEN AND WOMEN ARE NOT EQUAL



Introduction

We are living in a time when men and women are considered “equal,” but what does that expression mean? Does it mean that men and women are not different? Does it mean that men and women are physically, mentally, and emotionally equal? Does it mean that men and women should have the same roles in society? Perhaps it means that men and women should have equal authority in their marriages?

A breakdown in the godly roles of men and women has caused an increase in divorce and a destruction of the traditional family. The secular beliefs regarding men and women should be of little concern to us as Christians. This lesson will concentrate on what God has to say about the roles of men and women.

God creates a helper.

We should notice that when God created the world, he said that man should rule over all the creatures of the earth (Genesis 1:26). However, there was no need for authority between man and woman. Perhaps, in a perfect world there would be no need for anyone to be in charge because there would be no disagreement. Apparently, everyone would work in harmony and there would be no need to exert authority. Consequently, God created Eve to be a

helper to Adam with no specific instructions for anyone to be in charge. The story of God creating a helper for Adam is found in Genesis 2:18:

”The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”

Just for general knowledge, I checked 15 Bible versions and they all used the terms “help,” “helper,” or “helpmate” in Genesis 2:18. We generally equate a helper as being a person of lesser ability and authority. If you had a severe disease, would you go to a doctor or would you seek out a physician’s assistant (one who helps or assists the doctor)? If you were going to remodel your bathroom, would you prefer a plumber or a plumber’s helper? However, it is important to realize that a helper is not always inferior in ability or one with lesser authority.

The best way to understand the word "helper" is to break it down into three aspects. These aspects are:

1. Authority - The term "helper" has nothing to do with authority or importance. An employer, for example, may help an employee to do a certain job.
2. Ability - The term "helper" has nothing to do with ability. A helper may be more intelligent, more skilled, and harder working than the person he is helping. Being a helper is not about one person being better than the other. A helper may be far greater than the person being helped. Psalm 118:7 states that "The Lord is with me; he is my helper." We, of course, often pray and ask the Lord to help us.
3. Responsibility - The most defining aspect of the term "helper" is responsibility. All helpers, by definition, give assistance or aid to another. In other words, the helper is always the one serving the beneficiary. The apostle Paul explains this aspect in the relationship of Adam and Eve:
1 Corinthians 11:8.....”For man did not come from woman, but

woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.“

A need for authority

Authority became necessary when sin entered the world. God now had to establish a structure of authority since people would disagree with each other. God wanted to make sure there is no confusion about the godly role of men and women. God also wanted to assure there is harmony in the marital relationship. I am sure God was looking ahead to the creation of children who should have only one parent in authority. This need for authority is reflected in 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.’”

Both Adam and Eve were punished for their sin, but it is important to remember that Eve not only sinned, but she caused another to sin. As Jesus said in Luke 17:1, "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come." This need for authority is reflected in the following New Testament Scriptures:

1. 1 Corinthians 11:3.....”Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”
2. 1 Timothy 2:13-14.....“For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.”
3. Remember that Jesus taught a very basic principle regarding authority when he said, "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other" (Luke 16:13).

Responsibility of the man

After original sin, God made man the gender of authority. God gave the husband the responsibility of working the fields and providing for his wife. If a man truly loves his wife, he will honor her and treat her in a Christian manner. We read in Ephesians 5:25-26:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

In marriage, the natural order of things is for the man to have authority and rule over the woman. However, men are to rule wisely. Men are called to love their wives as Christ loved the church and as a person loves their own body, since God considers them one flesh. Most Christian men will at least agree with this concept even if they have trouble living it.

Role of the woman

The challenge for men is getting them to live up to their role of authority. The problem with many women, on the other hand, is getting them to first acknowledge their godly role. For this reason it is necessary to spend more time on the role of women. I don't understand why many women become offended when they are considered by the Bible to be a helper to their husband. These

same women often have jobs where they are helpers to their bosses. Perhaps these women volunteer at a charity and are helpers there. Can women be happy being helpers on a girls' soccer team, or must they all be coaches? You see, being a helper should not be stigmatized as a bad thing, but today's society dictates that a woman is second rate if she is not an equal leader in her family.

Some women complain that their husbands try to rule over them, but that is exactly what God instructs men to do. The idea of men ruling over women, as mentioned previously, was created in Genesis, but the concept is carried on throughout the Bible. The New Testament explains and reaffirms God's plan for the man to rule over the woman as stated in Geneses. The apostle Paul explains this concept to the church in Ephesus.

1. Ephesians 5:22-24: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."

a. The wife is told to submit to her husband not just in certain areas, but in everything. By now you are probably wondering, What if the husband is a drunken womanizer? What if the husband does not follow God's commandments? The context here, of course, is that a godly husband would not ask the woman to sin. In such a case, the woman would obey God over her husband, just as Adam should have obeyed God instead of his wife. Everyone must remember that God has authority over both the wife and her husband. More will be taught about how to make a marriage work in the next lesson on marriage and divorce.

b. There is a big difference between a husband asking his wife to sin, and a husband asking his wife to do something she does not want to do. In fact, doing something you do not want to do is the very essence of obedience and submission.

c. Few Christian women will admit that they are to be submissive to their husbands the same way that the church submits to Christ. After all, anyone who does not submit to Christ is condemned to hell. Many wives have made their marriage a living hell because they do not want their husbands to rule over them.

i. Proverbs 14:.....”The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.”

ii. Proverbs 21:19.....”Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.”

iii. Proverbs 27:15-16.....“A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.”

2. Many Christian women blame the messenger when their real issue is with God. How many Christian women will admit that God says their husband should rule over them? How many women are comfortable with being like Sarah, who called her husband “master”?

The chicken or the egg

The cycle of love and authority is not an endless cycle. Many women do not yield authority to their husbands because they feel their husbands should first treat them with more love by honoring their daily requests. Many husbands do not feel their wives really love and respect them because their wives often challenge their authority by arguing or not following their husbands’ guidance. So where do we start? We only need to understand the Scriptures we just read in Ephesians, chapter 5, to understand where to start.

Christ took the church as his bride in a similar fashion that a man takes a woman to be his bride. The actual marriage ceremony is a covenant of love. The act of yielding to authority comes as part of this covenant. In a similar way, Christ offers his love and protection to all mankind. However, God offers salvation only to those who are willing to accept his authority.

1. Can you imagine members of a church praying to God and saying they will obey him only if he does what they want him to do?
2. In another example, can you imagine stating a new job and saying to your boss that you will acknowledge his authority only if you agree with most of his decisions? Would that attitude not make every difference of opinion an argument? Instead, you would most likely figure that if the boss makes enough bad decisions, he will eventually see that your opinions are valuable and listen to you in the future. Why should a woman treat her husband with any less respect or with any less submission?

Roles of men and women in the church

Now let's turn from marriage to a woman's role in the church. In the church, it appears that God also wants the man to have the authority instead of the woman. Jesus had 12 disciples. None of the disciples were women. Many Christian women today would have had to criticize Jesus for being sexist. Christ had a glass ceiling for women. Even after the crucifixion, another man named Mathias replaced Judas. Titus and Timothy were also male authority figures in the church, along with Paul.

Paul speaks

The Apostle Paul's message is not about the exclusion of women as teachers. Neither is Paul's message about women wearing coverings on their heads or being quiet in church. Instead, Paul frequently explains that the context of his message is authority, and the basis for his teaching is the word of God.

1. 1 Corinthians 14:33-38....."As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. 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. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? 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. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.”

a. We read in this Scripture that women should remain silent in the churches as the law states. Notice that the word “law” is capitalized. This word refers to scriptural law as opposed to laws of custom added by the religious leaders. I believe the law in the Scripture that Paul is referring to is the law in Genesis that requires a woman to be submissive to her husband. Paul even uses the word submission to clarify his point.

b. Paul states that the silence of women is practiced in all the Christian congregations. This statement by Paul denies any claims by some scholars of a newfound freedom for women during the worship service. Women sitting and learning in quiet submission was the proper norm, and Paul was addressing women who were not conforming.

c. Since Paul mentions the asking of questions, it seems as if people often shouted out questions during the sermons. Perhaps these women were arrogant or disrespectful in public. It seems obvious that questions and comments should be handled in an organized and respectful manner. From a pragmatic viewpoint, by having only the husbands speak out, the number of interruptions would have been drastically reduced.

d. Women are told to ask their husbands questions at home rather than be disgraceful by publicly taking a lead role in the religious matters of their family. Paul did not address unmarried women so it seems that Paul was not objecting to women asking questions. Instead, Paul was primarily addressing the idea of wives publicly disregarding the marital leadership of their husbands.

e. Paul uses verses 36-38 to show any doubters that his teaching comes from God. Paul then questions these doubters: Who do these people think they are that they can disagree with Him? Who are we to disagree with Paul?

2. 1 Timothy 2:11-15.....“A woman should learn in quietness and

full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.”

a. The context of this Scripture is also that women should be silent and submissive during worship.

b. Paul makes an anecdotal comment about women teaching. This context is about women in the crowd trying to instruct others while someone is (preaching) teaching. After all, how can the women “learn in quietness and full submission” unless someone is teaching them?

c. Paul does not say a woman should never teach. What Paul does say is that he personally does not allow a woman to teach. Paul seems to make this statement as a suggestion rather than as a command. Paul’s explanation that follows emphasizes that in some cases teaching by a woman is in conflict with her being submissive to men. Furthermore, Paul probably did not need to have women teach (like we do today) because he was very selective in training and handpicking his teachers. We must remember that the people of his time did not have the New Testament as a guide. Therefore, very few people (especially women) were qualified to teach.

d. Paul’s mention of Eve being the sinner is not to imply that Adam was not also a sinner. God specifically accused Adam of sinning and punished him. What Paul probably meant was that Eve sinned first by tempting Adam. As Christ taught: “Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19).

e. Paul’s comment about women being saved through childbirth is often questioned. Paul is not saying women are saved by bearing children. After all, verse 15 says, “if they continue in faith,” so these women were already saved. What the verse is saying is that despite the sorrow and pain that comes with childbirth, these

women will still persevere in their faith because properly performing the role of a mother will only strengthen their faith.

3. Read 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. This Scripture teaches that it is improper for a man to pray while wearing a hat. The Scripture also teaches that a woman should have her head covered.

a. Some people may read through these verses quickly and conclude that a woman's prayer covering is her hair. What the Scripture actually says is that a woman not wearing a covering while praying should be just as shameful as a woman having her head shaved. A woman's long hair is a natural God-given covering that sets her apart from a man. In only this respect is a woman's hair a covering.

b. Contrary to popular belief, this Scripture teaches that hair and hair covering are not a matter of custom. We know this because Paul ties the purpose of this practice to the relationships between God and Jesus; Christ and man; and man and woman. Only if these relationships would change could we logically conclude that the practice of head covering should change.

c. Paul ends the Scripture by stating that this teaching regarding hair and prayer coverings is practiced in all the churches. I find it interesting that in my whole life, I only once remember seeing a man wearing a hat in a worship service. However, it is now commonplace for a woman to pray with her head uncovered. If this Scripture is obsolete, why do men obey it? I really do not know of any scriptural basis for Christian women no longer wearing prayer coverings when they pray.

Many people are dismissive of Paul by saying he was a sexist. People in the early church also tried to ignore Paul. He, however, is not the only person in the New Testament who taught the submission of women. Peter not only defends Paul in one Scripture, but he also makes his own statements regarding the submission of women in another Scripture.

1. 2 Peter 3:16....."His letters contain some things that are hard to

understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

a. Peter makes it clear that he agrees with Paul’s teaching.

b. Peter also makes it very clear that people who distort the teaching of Paul will only hurt themselves.

2. 1 Peter 3:1-6.....”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, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 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. 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, 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.”

a. Peter makes a point that Sarah proved her submissiveness to Abraham by calling him her “master.”

b. Peter makes an interesting observation that women have the power to influence their husbands by their submissive and reverent actions.

c. Peter also emphasizes the need for women to be modest in their dress. Most Christian women will agree that the inner self is spiritually more important than how a woman dresses, but how many women actually obey this teaching by Peter?

Most of the Scriptures so far have addressed women as wives or as members of the church, but the following Scripture deals specifically with the qualifications of authoritative positions in the church such as overseers and deacons. Paul emphasizes that a person of authority in the church must not only be saved, but he must be respected and above reproach.

1. 1 Timothy 3:1-13....."Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus."

a. We need to notice that women are not even considered as overseers or deacons because Paul mentions only husbands and men. This mention of only men holding positions of authority in the church is in agreement with all other teachings of Paul. This message is also taught throughout the Bible.

b. The qualities of deacon wives are addressed in verse 11. One should take notice that a man cannot be a deacon unless his wife also qualifies as a deacon's wife.

In order to best understand women's role in the church, we need to separate the ideas of service and authority. Is the woman performing a service in the church, or does she have a position of

authority? Does the woman hold her position because no man will fulfill his obligation or because the woman was selected over a qualified man? When we make decisions, such as the ordination of women and positions of service within the church, we must ask ourselves if our opinion agrees with human logic, or does it agree with the Holy Scriptures. Perhaps it is not the ordination that is important, but how the woman will use her ordination that is important.

False Teaching

Why then, if Scripture teaches the submission of women and that women should not have authority over men, are there so many women pastors in today's Christian churches? The widespread practice of women teachers can be the result of a scarcity of willing and able male teachers. Scarcity can be a justification for many things. I was told by a Mormon that they once had more than one wife because of the scarcity of Mormon men in Utah. Ultimately, the embracing of women having authority over men is due to a lack of understanding and a doctrine of false teaching. Let's take a look at some of these false teachings.

1. Some scholars say the teaching in Acts 2: 17 justifies the acceptance of women preachers. This Scripture reads: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy." The claim is that the word "prophesy" in this verse actually means to preach. This misinterpretation is at odds with at least 10 major Bible translations because prophesying is not the same as teaching.
2. Another false teaching is the quotation of Galatians 3:28, which is often taken out of context. This Scripture states there is "neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The context of this whole chapter is about salvation being available to everyone. Nowhere does this Scripture refer to leadership, authority, or preaching.

3. Many Christians claim that women were leaders in the early church. This claim is incorrect, and there are no records of the church accepting women as Christian pastors until at least 1,600 years after the time of Christ. Furthermore, if women were allowed to be overseers in the early church, why do the Catholic Church and many Protestant denominations still object to the ordination of women ministers?

4. A most convincing theory about permitting women to be preachers is based on the fact that God promised that we are all part of a royal priesthood. Supposedly, since we are all priests, it is acceptable for all men and women to be pastors. First Peter 2:9 quotes the Old Testament promise: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God."

a. The way to understand this Scripture is to realize that being part of a priesthood does not make one a priest anymore than being part of God's kingdom makes one a king. The priesthood mentioned in this Scripture refers to the body of holy believers that has accepted the one who came as prophet, priest, and king. These believers belonged to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. No man or woman could ever function as a priest again because Jesus ushered in a new priesthood by being a living sacrifice for the atonement of sins. This priesthood has to do with the availability of salvation, and not the right for everyone to be a priest.

b. Although earlier, in verse 5 of Acts, chapter 2, Peter talks about making sacrifices to God. Peter is not talking about atoning sacrifices that a priest would make. Peter is instead referring to deeds of unselfish obedience. Neither is Peter implying that anyone should hold the formal position of pastor. If Peter were talking about everyone being pastors, this teaching would conflict with Paul, who set a list of qualifications for both overseers (pastors) and deacons in his first letter to Timothy.

c. We can further understand this concept in Hebrews 7:23-25. This Scripture teaches that Christ is our permanent priest and that he is

always available to intercede for us.

d. Finally, we should recognize that the word “priest” is masculine. Although history records many priestesses in ancient pagan religions of Greece and Rome, the idea of a priestess is foreign to both the New and the Old Testaments. By contrast, the word “prophetess” is used eight times in the Bible.

Good news for women

So far, this lesson has concentrated on what a woman should NOT do. We will now concentrate both on things a woman is allowed to do and on things a woman should do. A woman's natural God-given strengths should be obvious to everyone. Women are generally more nurturing, more compassionate, and more caring than men. Women are expected to be bold and vibrant. Women should be treated with equal worth to men. Unlike Muhammad, Jesus did not marry a nine-year-old girl, and he did not consider a woman as only one-fourth of a man. Jesus respects women. Here are a few examples of the kindness Jesus showed toward women and the fact that women were not afraid to approach Jesus.

1. There was the woman with a bleeding issue who interrupted Jesus in Matthew 9:20.

2. There was the persistent Canaanite woman with the sickly daughter who interrupted Jesus in Matthew 15:22.

3. There was also the persistent Geek woman with the daughter possessed by demons in Matthew 7:26.

4. A final example is a woman in Luke 11:27-28. In this example, a woman in the crowd boldly calls out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.”

5. Mary Magdalene, Martha, Mary the wife of Clopas, Joanna, Susanna, and many other women were followers of Jesus, as told in the four Gospels.

In none of these cases did Jesus tell these women to stay at home in silence. In the case of the Canaanite woman, Jesus was more concerned that she was a Gentile than the fact that she was a

woman. These women were certainly not timid or afraid to speak out about important issues.

Paul also realized the value of helpful women. Contrary to his critics, Paul was not a sexist. Paul's letters mention some very important women servants or helpers in the early church such as Phoebe, Priscilla, Aquila, Euodia, and Syntyche. Despite the claims of many atheists and radical feminists, Christian women have the freedom to do many things.

1. A woman is free to spread the gospel. In Philippians 4:2-3, Paul tells of two loyal women, Euodia and Syntyche, who were at his side helping him spread the gospel. Therefore, women may always have a supporting role such as being helpers or aides like the women who helped Paul.

2. A woman can, in fact, teach as long as she does not appear to threaten the authority of her husband or lord her authority over adult Christian men. In Titus 2:4, we read that women are specifically instructed by Paul to teach younger women about being good Christians.

3. In Acts 16:14-15, we see the role of hospitality that a woman can perform.

4. It is perfectly acceptable for a woman to work outside the home or be successful in business. Acts 17:12 mentions Christian women who were prominent in the community.

5. Titus 1:3-6 tells us a woman should not have a timid spirit. Instead, she should have a spirit of power, love, and discipline like the women Lois and Eunice.

6. Being a prophetess or a person of special supernatural gifts would be a calling direct from God and should certainly not be restricted. Luke 2:36 tells us about the prophetess Anna, who foretold the ministry of Jesus.

7. The attributes of a good wife are expressed in 1 Timothy 5:9-10. A good wife is faithful, brings up her children properly, shows good

hospitality, helps others, and does other good deeds.

More good news is that, by nature, God has given the woman power to influence the man. We only need to look at the story of creation to understand the persuasive power of women. If we need further examples, we can look at Samson and Delilah or David and Bathsheba. We can also look at Caesar and his wife. Perhaps we should look at Herod, who killed John the Baptist at the request of the daughter of Herodias. Women can also have a positive influence. For example, we can read how Ester had influence over King Xerxes. There are many such stories in the Bible.

Summary

We have studied Scriptures from the Bible regarding the relationships between husbands and wives. The Bible is very clear that a husband is to love his wife as he loves God. God's desire is that a husband is to love his wife unselfishly and to fully consider his wife's opinion with the same respect as he honors his own opinion.

Sometimes, however, there is a disagreement in the marriage and a decision needs to be made. God does not want two masters in a marriage, and he has designated man as the gender of authority. In his wisdom, God gave the husband authority to rule over his wife.

The message to the wife is specifically one of submitting to the husband. It is assumed that this submission is done out of love and also out of respect for God's commands. Moreover, a woman should not force her husband to fight for his authority any more than a woman would put conditions on Christ's authority.

Regardless of good or evil influence, God has given men the power of authority, which seems to balance the persuasive power of women. Moreover, perhaps God has given women the power of

persuasion so men will not abuse their power of authority.

God's challenge to both the husband and the wife is that they love each other. This is nothing new since the Golden Rule teaches that we all should love each other as we love ourselves. Therefore, we should understand that God's plan for a happy marriage is for the husband and wife to work together out of love and not out of a slave/master relationship. God's plan does not give men and women equal authority, but it does give them equal importance. Both the husband and the wife should remember to pray about important decisions since God is the authority over both the husband and the wife.

"In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God" (1 Corinthians 11:11-12).

God has designed each sex with certain attributes to be used in godly ways. It is important that each person be at peace with the strengths and weaknesses they have as a result of their gender. It should be no surprise that unbelievers want it all. Christians should only want what God has ordained for them.

The Bible is not clear about all aspects of a woman's role in the church, but one teaching stands out above all others. Like marriage, God has ordained that the man has authority over the woman. No matter what the culture of the times, there is no teaching in all of Scripture that permits women to flaunt their authority over men in the church.

However, there is no indication that women are called to the same degree of submissiveness in the secular world. Scriptures dealing with the submission of women in the church seem to be in the

context of associating with fellow Christians. Similarly, Paul frequently had one set of rules within the body of believers, but these rules are different in the secular world. For example, Paul preached against lawsuits, but allowed suits against unbelievers. In a similar fashion, Paul taught not to associate with believing flagrant sinners, but he allowed association with unbelieving sinners in the secular world.

Finally, when considering any roles of men and women, we must put modern-day secular practices out of our mind and look at what the Bible teaches us. Moreover, we need to pray and be open to the Holy Spirit.

Review

1. Discuss God's punishment to Adam and Eve for their original sin.
2. Is it fair for God to assign authority based on sex? Explain.
3. Did the apostle Paul teach something different about the relationship between men and women than what God stated in the Old Testament?
4. Discuss the difference between service and authority. Give examples of how these scriptural roles of men and women can be used in the everyday life of a marriage and of the church.
5. Give examples of godly women in the Old Testament.
6. Discuss at least four women in the Bible who had influence over men.
7. Does the Bible teach anywhere that God's commands regarding submission of women is no longer in effect today?
8. In what ways are God's roles regarding women better for today's Christian women than the feminist secular view?
9. Men – How do you expect your wives to be submissive?
10. Women – How do you want to show submission? In what ways do you want men to show leadership?
11. Anyone – Do you think it is better to have two people have equal authority, or perhaps take turns in authority?

12. How can people use the biblical information in this lesson to better their marriage?