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EQUIPPING WOMEN AT CHARLOTTESVILLE
COMMUNITY CHURCH IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA,
FOR BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF COMPLEMENTARITY

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Maegan Ruth Pittinger

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EQUIPPING WOMEN AT CHARLOTTESVILLE
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This project is dedicated to my mom, who has faithfully instructed,
discipled, and pointed me to Jesus and His Word.

She has been the greatest example of what it is to love Christ
in both word and deed, for He has been and is her very life (Col 3:4).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------|--|
| ICC | International Critical Commentary |
| IVPNTC | InterVarsity Press New Testament Commentary |
| <i>JBMW</i> | <i>Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood</i> |
| <i>JETS</i> | <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i> |
| NAC | New American Commentary |
| NIBC | New International Bible Commentary |
| NICNT | New International Commentary on the New Testament |
| NIGTC | New International Greek Testament Commentary |
| PNTC | Pillar New Testament Commentary |
| <i>RBMW</i> | <i>Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism.</i> Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006 |
| <i>SBJT</i> | <i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i> |
| TNTC | Tyndale New Testament Commentaries |
| TOTC | Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries |
| <i>WTJ</i> | <i>Westminster Theological Journal</i> |

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PREFACE

I could not have completed this project without the encouragement, support, and prayers of a host of individuals.

To the elders at Charlottesville Community Church (Bill, Matt, Tim, and Jack), thank you for the time and space to finish this academic endeavor. I am grateful for your leadership, integrity, and faithfulness in upholding the truth of God’s Word. To the staff at CCC (Bill, Joseph, McKenzie), you all have been a means of encouragement, prayer, and support not only for this degree but in my ministry at CCC. You are not merely co-workers but dear friends. I am grateful to co-labor alongside you all for the sake of the gospel. To my women’s ministry leadership team (Libby, Larkin, and Maisie), each of you has called, texted, prayed, celebrated, and supported me throughout this process. It is one of my greatest joys to serve alongside you in training and serving the women at CCC. To my CCC family, “I thank my God in remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil 1:3–5).

To my doctoral professors and supervisors at SBTS, I am beyond grateful for each of you and the way you have faithfully led, instructed, and trained me for ministry. To Dr. Shane Parker, who encouraged me to remain in the leadership track and pursue what the Lord had gifted me with for the church. To Dr. Danny Bowen, who patiently walked through different proposal options and statistics and demonstrated what a deep love for the Lord and His Bride are in academics. To my most recent supervisor, Dr. Matthew Haste, I could not have completed this project without your guidance. You extended wisdom and encouragement and lavished me with grace, patience, and support.

I am extremely thankful for you. It has been an immense blessing to complete this project under your supervision.

To my editor, Jenn Stec, for not only expediting the process but also bringing great encouragement and joy to a tedious task. Thank you for using the gifts entrusted to you to bless so many doctoral students along the way. I truly could not have completed this without your guidance and expertise.

To my parents, who have loved and served the Lord and, in so doing, taught each of your children to do the same: you instilled in your children a hard work ethic and instructed us to obey the Lord no matter the cost. I could not have asked for two better parents. I love you both beyond words.

To my siblings, who faithfully serve the Lord in the ministry entrusted to them both locally and internationally, I love and admire each of you more than you will ever know. Each of you loves the Lord, His Word, and the church in a variety of ways, carefully stewarding the beautiful ways He has gifted each of you. It is one of my greatest joys to call you not only my family but the best of friends.

To my husband, Zach, you endured the most in the last part of this academic endeavor. You faithfully prayed for me, comforted me when tears flowed under the weight of the project, and cheered me on with great enthusiasm. You are a tangible expression of God's grace and redemptive work in my life. You are a vessel of great joy, laughter, and encouragement. I love you dearly.

Last, and certainly not least, my Lord and Savior, who called, equipped, and enabled me to complete what He entrusted to me: may He receive all the glory and honor due His name. He alone is worthy of my very life.

Maegan Ruth Pittinger

Charlottesville, Virginia

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“The role of women in the church is probably the most emotionally charged issue in American evangelicalism today.”¹ Although this statement was written in 2005, it is truer today than ever before. The concept of biblical womanhood is not new; it is quite literally “as old as the Garden.” The conversation, commentary, and controversy concerning gender roles and ministerial leadership are not new; however, in recent years, interest in the role of women in leadership within the local church has grown from a spark to a blaze.²

Can belief in complementarity co-exist with women serving in leadership roles in the local church? Do leadership roles exist within a framework of complementarity in which women can participate? If so, what are these roles, and are they necessary for the health of the church? What can church leaders do to provide space for women to serve in leadership capacities? This project seeks to answer these questions. Research shows that

¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 85.

² The #MeToo movement, which originally began in 2006, swept the nation in 2016, bringing to light countless acts of injustice and sexual abuse against women in Hollywood (and beyond). The #ChurchToo movement was launched not long after by Emily Joy Allison, who utilized Twitter to expose the sexual abuse within churches. Both movements, although primarily focused on sexual misconduct and abuse, aimed to empower women and expose a “patriarchal” reign both in Hollywood and within the church. The movement did not end there. #ChurchToo brought out a host of controversial issues concerning women and their role in the local church. In an article written by Emily Joy Allison after the hashtag creation of #ChurchToo went viral, she lists six points as to why the movement was started. Among these points, she states, “At the root of the #ChurchToo stories are patriarchy, male leadership coupled with female submission, purity culture, evangelical personality cult culture, lack of sex-positive and medically accurate sex education, homophobia, and white supremacy. Commit to dismantling these things and addressing these root causes in your faith community today.” See Emily Joy Allison, “#ChurchToo,” *Emily Joy Poet* (blog), <https://emilyjoypoetry.com/churchtoo>.

church pews are primarily filled by women.³ Women who are purposefully trained and equipped in leadership are likely to be less frustrated and more apt to fulfill their God-ordained role and calling than when such training is lacking. Knowing what God’s Word instructs not only enlightens a woman’s heart to her identity and purpose but beautifully guides her to the Rock who is higher than any wave and remains steadfast (Ps 61:1–2).

Context

Charlottesville Community Church (CCC) was established in August 2008 after a clear calling the Lord placed on the heart of the former lead pastor, Kyle Hoover, and current lead pastor, Bill Bray. Originally from Texas, both Kyle, along with his wife Christine, and Bill obeyed the call as the Lord clearly directed them to Charlottesville, Virginia. Two factors contributed to this decision. Charlottesville is a college town and home to the University of Virginia. After talking to others in the region, the needs of the city matched the calling and passion the Lord had entrusted to Kyle. The church began with ten individuals and now, sixteen years later, welcomes around 240 regularly.⁴

The development of women’s ministry began at CCC’s establishment and was created to be a three-prong ministry. Discipleship was the first prong to launch. Christine Hoover began discipling women and taking women in leadership through a six-week discipleship training in 2008. A more formal structure for discipleship was developed in 2009, including discipleship training for leaders that equipped them and gave them

³ According to an article provided by Pew Research Center, in an evangelical setting, women across the board are more religious than men, with an average weekly church attendance of 53 percent to 46 percent. The survey reveals “There are no countries where Christian men are significantly more likely than Christian women to attend services weekly.” This survey was conducted between the years of 2008–2015. According to a 2014 article, a staggering 60 percent of women to 47 percent of men claim that religion is extremely important in their lives. See Pew Research Center, “The Gender Gap in Religion around the World,” March 22, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2016/03/Religion-and-Gender-Full-Report.pdf>.

⁴ Like many churches, there was a sharp decline in attendance during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to COVID, CCC had a regular attendance of nearly 400 people. Those numbers were nearly cut in half due to several factors, including transience (people move away frequently after graduating college, grad school, med school, etc.) and due to the pandemic.

opportunities to disciple others. Three of these trained leaders formally began the women's ministry at CCC, which included formal training via discipleship and events as well as informal opportunities to serve and disciple, such as hospitality in providing meals for new moms.

The second prong to the ministry, events, was added in 2009–2010. Events included a day retreat in the Spring and an annual overnight retreat in the Fall. There were additional social events sprinkled into the church calendar for women. The third prong of the discipleship ministry was added in 2011, women's Bible study, which started with a study called "The Amazing Collection" and for several years, met as a group of ten to twelve women.⁵

The women's ministry team began to expand further in 2013–2014. The Bible study group moved to another church in the area and developed a team of teachers. In 2015–2016, another day option was included for Bible study, which met every other Saturday morning. In 2016, discipleship expanded beyond one-on-one discipleship to discipleship groups focused on the discussion and accountability of a particular issue or topic.

At the end of 2018, CCC added a new leadership position, Ministry Operations Director, to oversee the administrative component of the church office and oversee and direct the women's ministry.⁶ The intention of the church elders was to hire a woman who was called into ministry and gifted in administration and leadership. I was called to this role and joined the CCC staff full-time at the end of November 2018. I was able to observe what was taking place within the three-prong development of the women's ministry for nearly five months. This space and time for observation was intentional,

⁵ Charlottesville Community Church meets in a local school gymnasium every Sunday morning for worship at 10 a.m. Because we do not have a space of our own, we utilize other church spaces throughout the week for various conferences, Bible studies, events, etc.

⁶ My title was updated in 2024 to reflect both areas of service: Director of Women's Ministry & Church Operations.

allowing me to get to know women at CCC who served in leadership roles and those who were attendees. The baton was officially passed to me in April 2019 and thus began an evaluation and reconfiguration of the women's ministry at CCC.

The CCC women's ministry is built on a theological structure, is biblically driven, and seeks to engage and equip women in the utilization of their spiritual gifts. As the women's ministry director, I am under the leadership of the main teaching pastor and elder. The women's ministry leadership team, Bible teachers, small group facilitators, women's discipleship groups, and the events team fall under my leadership. Those considered for leadership roles in women's ministry have shown signs of spiritual maturity and demonstrate a healthy walk with Christ.⁷

As a college town, the population of Charlottesville is extremely transient, which means our church membership is transient. Whether a woman is here for six months, two years, or a lifetime, the structure is intentionally set up to train and equip women in healthy biblical leadership and provide them with tools to lead well in their next endeavor. The hope of this project is to continually teach the foundational truths of biblical leadership as it pertains to complementarianism to form and shape their God-given role and gifts for a greater kingdom impact.

Rationale

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches ought to provide both vocational and volunteer leadership opportunities and training built on and around a complementarian framework.⁸ Both complementarian and egalitarian scholars state that

⁷ A biblical diagnostic tool is utilized as an assessment for the individual to see where they are spiritually. The tool is provided through the resource *Transforming the Heart* and examines the spiritual maturation of individuals using 1 John 2:12–14. See <https://transformingtheheart.org>.

⁸ This project will primarily look at the current state of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) pertaining to women and biblical leadership within the local church. This project will not look at other denominations or their particular practice of women in leadership; however, it will address views from both complementarians and egalitarians who make up other denominations. This project will look at exemplary and non-exemplary orthopraxis surrounding women in ministry, particularly women in leadership roles

men and women should serve in ministry, yet the opportunities are hardly equal.⁹ Opportunities for women to volunteer and serve are readily available in the nursery, children’s ministry, or a women’s event; however, the opportunity to fulfill a ministerial call in a leadership capacity within an SBC church is often lacking.¹⁰ SBC churches should not only build up and encourage females but should also provide a way to practically equip them to serve faithfully and effectively. If SBC churches boast a desire to maintain a complementarian framework without providing equal opportunity for women to “fulfill the ministry entrusted to them” (Col 4:17; 2 Tim 2:5) and without crossing doctrinal boundaries of elder/overseer/pastor, why are they shocked when women seek para-church ministry opportunities instead?¹¹ To quote author and Bible

within the local church. These examples may pull from other denominations, but the focus of this project is taking a look at the SBC and its current position on women and pastoral leadership.

For the sake of this project, I am primarily looking at the most recent issues pertaining to a woman’s role concerning “pastoral leadership”—whether it is permitted or forbidden for a woman to hold the title and position of a pastor. Pastor Mike Law proposed an amendment to the SBC constitution at the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in 2022, which “would clarify that the SBC only cooperates with churches that do not affirm, appoint, or employ a woman as a pastor of any kind.” See “Let’s Finish What We Started: A Call to Ratify the Law Amendment,” SBC Amendment, accessed August 15, 2024, sbcamendment.org. A motion made by Pastor Jared Cornutt in 2023 to amend the *Baptist Faith & Message* 2000 was approved by the SBC convention messengers in 2023. This amendment sought to change the language concerning a pastor in Article VI: “The Church” from “pastor” to “pastor/elder/overseer.” See *The Baptist Faith & Message* 2000, last modified July 14, 2023, <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#vi>.

⁹ I am not referring to equality in roles as it pertains to the office of pastor/elder/overseer. I am referring to the physical makeup of the church office staff, in which women are often allowed to serve as assistants, secretaries, and volunteers but are not offered many or any leadership and director roles. While the biblical office of pastor/elder should be rightly guarded, positions should be readily available that utilize the strength, gifting, and theological training of females called and equipped in leadership.

¹⁰ See a recent survey by Lifeway polling 1,001 American Evangelical and Black Protestant female churchgoers concerning the state of ministry to women. Lifeway Research, “State of Ministry to Women: Churchgoers Report,” last modified October 2023, <https://research.lifeway.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/State-of-Ministry-to-Women-Churchgoers-Report-for-Release.pdf>.

¹¹ One of my doctoral professors commented that para-church ministries often exist because that particular ministry is lacking or missing within the local church. If you look at the number of women’s ministries outside of the local church, one might pause and ask if that is true. For example, The Gospel Coalition Women (TGCW) provides cohorts, trainings, conferences, and more for women to attend so they are trained for their ministerial endeavors. The purpose of TGCW is for women to implement what they’ve learned back into their local church, but if opportunities to do so are non-existent, where else will they go? Another example is a ministry I’ve been involved with for nearly 10 years: Transforming the Heart Ministries (Fort Smith, AR). This ministry seeks to train and disciple women in the Word, so they may, in turn, train and equip others to do the same. This ministry exists separate from the local church, but greatly desires to come alongside the local church. If we miss opportunities to engage, promote, and provide space for ministries like these to thrive in the local church, we ultimately miss the flourishing that ensues when such ministries do exist. Ministries like this, and more, are not simply looking for a spare room in the

teacher Jen Wilkin, “If I wanted to preach, I would go down the street to the Methodist church.”¹² Women will continue to seek, and they will continue to serve. This is a moment for SBC churches to come alongside women to reexamine their practices. They should create positions in which women can vocationally serve, create space at the table to share insight, wisdom, and Scripture, and support equal footing with other believers who are co-laboring for the gospel.

The Scriptures mandate the necessity for sound doctrinal teaching. In his Pastoral Epistles, Paul instructs Timothy and Titus to be diligent students of the Word, teaching sound doctrine (2 Tim 2:15; Titus 2:1). The marching orders for the local church are in God’s Word. Sunday morning’s biblical instruction ought to permeate the extra-curricular heartbeat of women’s ministry within the church. Scripture can be handled accurately or inaccurately; however, true students of the Word, regardless of gender, must discipline themselves to study and accurately apply the Word to their lives. For women, this will clearly be displayed in how they both counsel and minister to other women in the church and in the home. Properly training women in the church requires a foundation in and continued emphasis on sound theological training. Before Paul provides Titus with the instruction on older women teaching younger women (2:3–5), he opens with an appeal to “know sound doctrine” (2:1). Sound doctrine must be the driving force behind “teaching what is good” (2:3).

There is no lack of sound exegetical teaching from the pulpit at CCC. In fact, our membership class carefully walks through both closed and open-handed doctrinal statements carefully.¹³ However, the need for further theological training pertaining to

church, but the support and investment of church leadership who see the necessity for women to grow and mature in their walk with Christ.

¹² Jen Wilkin, “Episode 44: A Generous Complementarianism,” May 16, 2019, in *Knowing Faith*, produced by Kyle Worley, podcast, 1:10:00, <https://www.trainingthechurch.com/episodes/a-generous-complementarianism>.

¹³ According to the CCC membership booklet, under “Statement of Faith” (p. 8) we define doctrinal issues in the following way:

women in leadership and biblical complementarity is evident. How does a woman biblically and practically apply the concepts she is learning on a Sunday morning or in a women’s Bible study? How is she being equipped to implement these truths in the current context in which she serves? In their attempt to safeguard against the erroneous notion that women have equal roles with men in ministry, sometimes SBC churches leave women drowning in a sea of cultural undercurrents of feminism. How can CCC equip women for leadership roles in the church without compromising a biblical complementarian view? The desire of this project was not only to instruct women in Scripture pertaining to leadership through the lens of complementarity but also to create further theological training opportunities throughout the year for women at CCC.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip women at Charlottesville Community Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, for biblical leadership within the framework of complementarity amid a cultural pull for equality in all ministerial roles.

Goals

The following four goals were established to measure the completion of this project.

1. The first goal was to assess the current understanding of women with respect to biblical leadership in the local church.
2. The second goal was to develop a one-day intensive course containing four lectures

(1) Close handed: In essential beliefs—we have unity (Eph 4:4–6);

(2) Open handed: In non-essential beliefs—we have liberty (Rom 14:1, 4, 12, 22);

(3) In all our beliefs—we show charity (1 Cor 13:2).

Concerning the church, the booklet reads, “The church is to be served by leaders called pastors or elders. Elders lead the church by looking after the spiritual health of the body and equipping believers for ministry. Elders are to be men of exemplary character, having healthy marriages and strong families, spiritual maturity, possessing an ability to teach the truths of the faith, and holding a good reputation with those outside of the church (1 Tim 3:1–7, Titus 1:5–9, 1 Pet 5:1–14). See p. 11.

Additional details pertaining to ecclesiastical leadership are also provided in the booklet: “Our church is elder-led. The elders (pastors) are meant to govern (make decisions), teach, correct, care for (shepherd) and oversee (lead and direct) the spiritual interests of the church.” See p. 16.

on women and biblical leadership in the local church that would educate and equip women at Charlottesville Community Church.

3. The third goal was to increase women's knowledge of biblical leadership by implementing a one-day intensive course among at least ten Charlottesville Community Church women.
4. The fourth goal was to assist the elders of Charlottesville Community Church in developing strategic next steps to increase the theological understanding of biblical womanhood, with an emphasis on women's roles in the local church, and to consider future training opportunities for women gifted in leadership seeking to utilize their gifts in the church.

The research methodology and tools used to achieve each of these goals are described in the following section.

Research Methodology

Successful completion of this project depended upon the completion of these four goals. The first goal was to assess the current understanding of women with respect to biblical leadership within the local church. This goal was measured by administering a Women in Biblical Leadership Assessment (WBLA) to fourteen women who are members of CCC.¹⁴ Each woman completed the WBLA before attending the teaching series to assess their current understanding of biblical leadership.¹⁵ This goal was considered successfully met when fourteen women who are members of CCC completed the WBLA and the results were analyzed, yielding a clearer assessment of their understanding of biblical leadership in the framework of complementarity.

The second goal was to develop a four-part teaching series for a one-day intensive pertaining to women and biblical leadership in the local church. The teaching series covered basic topics concerning biblical womanhood, such as the creation of

¹⁴ This tool was developed to specifically measure the participants' confidence and knowledge concerning gender roles and biblical leadership in the local church. When creating the tool, I referenced another ministry research project conducted by Christine Noel Sandra at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. I also received assistance from my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Matthew Haste, in the specificity of wording and the addition of open-ended questions for the post-assessment. See appendix 1 for more details.

¹⁵ See appendix 1 for the WBLA pre-assessment.

male/female, the good design of the created order, complementary roles established pre-fall, women in the local church, and women in ministry. This goal was evaluated in consultation with my immediate supervisor. He did not provide a formal evaluation of the curriculum but provided guidelines for the implementation of the curriculum and counsel for questions regarding leadership roles to be answered in alignment with CCC's conviction.

The third goal was to increase the knowledge of women with respect to biblical leadership by implementing the four-part teaching series among women at CCC. This goal was measured by utilizing the same WBLA from the first goal, which was then used to measure the change in doctrinal knowledge after the teaching series concluded. This goal was considered successfully met when the *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in the WBLA scores.

The fourth goal was to assist the CCC elders in developing strategic priorities to increase the theological understanding of biblical womanhood with an emphasis on women in leadership at CCC. The document consists of intentional next steps and future courses to further educate, train, and equip women at CCC for theological and ministerial endeavors. This goal was considered complete when a document was prepared and submitted to the CCC elders for future conversation and implementation.¹⁶

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

Certain terms used throughout this ministry project are defined below to aid the reader's understanding of the subject.

Complementarian. Males and females are created equal as image-bearers and in dignity, yet with a distinction in roles. According to *The Danvers Statement*, published by the Council of Manhood and Womanhood, "Both Adam and Eve were created in

¹⁶ See appendix 3 for the document emailed to the CCC elders.

God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart."¹⁷ As a result of the fall, sin distorted God's creation as it pertains to the roles of male and female.

Evangelical feminism. Evangelical feminism, another term for egalitarianism, can be seen as "a new path to an old problem."¹⁸ Egalitarianism claims that males and females are not only equal in creation, value, and dignity but also in relation to roles. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon Fee, editors of *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, state, "Egalitarianism recognizes patterns in authority in the family, church and society—it is not anarchistic—but rejects the notion that any office, ministry or opportunity should be denied anyone on the grounds of gender alone."¹⁹

Patriarchy. Patriarchy is a term used by egalitarians toward complementarianism to describe male supremacy, power, and domination over women and the subjugation of women to restrictions in ministry. Complementarian author and scholar Mary Kassian states, "According to feminists, patriarchy was the power of men that oppressed women and was responsible for their unhappiness."²⁰

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the accuracy of the pre- and post-series assessments was dependent upon the participants' willingness to be honest about their knowledge and understanding of women in leadership. To mitigate this limitation,

¹⁷ The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, *The Danvers Statement*, CBMW.org, last modified November 1988, <https://cbmw.org/about/danvers-statement/>.

¹⁸ Tim Challies, "Evangelical Feminism," *Tim Challies* (blog), February 12, 2007, <https://www.challies.com/book-reviews/evangelical-feminism/>.

¹⁹ Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 13.

²⁰ Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism within the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1992), 24.

the participants' responses to the WBLA were kept confidential. Second, the effectiveness of the training was limited by the consistency of attendance. To be considered for the data analysis of the efficacy of the training, the participants must have completed the pre-series assessment, attended all four lectures taught in the one-day intensive, and completed the post-series assessment.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project addressed biblical leadership from a strictly complementarian viewpoint. Evangelical feminism was studied and discussed, but the overall outcome in terms of foundational truth and application came from the viewpoint of complementarianism. Second, the project was confined to a four-part series delivered in a one-day intensive. Finally, the one-day intensive was open to all women at CCC (regular attenders and members), but the Women in Biblical Leadership Assessment was limited to women who are members of Charlottesville Community Church.

Conclusion

The type of training female congregants receive has a profound impact, either positive or negative, on how they understand their role in the church. The following chapters seek to biblically explain the God-ordained structure of the church while providing biblical guidance for women to carry out gifts of leadership, teaching, and serving within a complementarian framework. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the creation order from Genesis 1–3, considers what is permitted and prohibited for women in ecclesiastical structure according to 1 Timothy 2:9–15, and concludes with how women are commanded and commended to serve according to Titus 2:1, 3–5. Chapter 3 focuses on the historical, current, and practical issues pertaining to women in biblical leadership within the church. Chapter 4 describes the development and implementation of the curriculum provided in the one-day intensive. Chapter 5 evaluates the overall purpose and goals of the project.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN AND BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Speaking at the 2019 Biblical Manhood and Womanhood conference, Tom Schreiner stated, “We shouldn’t only be known for where we draw the lines for women in ministry, but also for encouraging women to minister, learn, and teach in appropriate contexts. We can lose the battle by being too lax and being too strict. And thus, we need the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures in every season of our lives.”¹ Certainly, we must answer vital questions, including what is permitted and prohibited when men and women gather together for worship² and what leadership roles a woman can hold in the local church. We must be dependent upon the Spirit to guide us into truth, discerning what is the will of God and how to rightly apply it to our lives. It is fair to say we live in a day where the pendulum swings widely between “too lax” and “too strict” concerning the role of women in leadership. There is always a pull to go with the culture, to do what is relevant, and to “change with the times.” Instead of a cultural or even a conventional swing, we must anchor ourselves to the boundaries placed in Scripture pertaining to women in biblical leadership while exhorting women to carry out God-given gifts of biblical leadership for His glory and the edification of His church.

The purpose of this project was to equip women at Charlottesville Community

¹ Thomas Schreiner, “Thoughts on Function, Office, and Other Things: Dr. Tom Schreiner on 1 Tim 2:12” (speech given at CBMW annual banquet at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, November 25, 2019), <https://cbmw.org/2019/11/25/thoughts-on-function-office-and-other-things-dr-tom-schreiner-on-1-timothy-212/>.

² I intend “worship” and “church gathering” to mean the local church coming together on a Sunday morning for worship. This would include the activities of preaching the Bible for morning worship. My church, CCC, does not have a Sunday evening nor Wednesday evening worship service.

Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, for biblical leadership within the framework of complementarity amid a cultural pull for equality in all ministerial roles. The purpose was not to further emphasize one component of ministry or one gender over another but to look at the overall well-being of the church. A woman's role in the local church is merely one piece, albeit a necessary one. When new situations arise within any denomination or para-church ministry, new questions are sure to follow. This should not drive us to fear or make room for a power struggle but instead should humble us before the Word to re-examine and rightly divide the Word.

This chapter seeks to (1) provide an overview of Genesis 1–3 and the framework of biblical complementarity while stating necessary differentiations between complementarians and egalitarians as it pertains to gender roles; (2) look closely at 1 Timothy 2:9–15 as it pertains to permission and prohibition of a woman's leadership role in the local church; and (3) identify the gifts women bring to the body of Christ and how their leadership skills can be used in right alignment within complementarity (Titus 2). Through this, it will be demonstrated that the ecclesiastical structure of the church, including a woman's role in the local church, is firmly established in the creation order providing what is prohibited and permissible for her as it pertains to leadership roles in the church.

Seeking Freedom in the Forbidden: Genesis 1–3 Overview

To fully grasp the role and function of a woman concerning biblical leadership, one must go back to the very beginning. Complementarians and egalitarians will agree that the theological crux of gender roles lies in Genesis 1–3. Their conclusions, however, are starkly different. Raymond Ortlund Jr., a complementarian, states, “Why go all the way back to the first three chapters of the Bible, if our concern is with manhood and womanhood today? Because as Genesis 1–3 go, so goes the whole Bible debate. One way or the other, all the additional Biblical texts on manhood and womanhood must be

interpreted consistently with these chapters. They lay the very foundation of Biblical manhood and womanhood.”³ Richard Hess, an egalitarian, agrees with Ortlund concerning the relevance of Genesis 1–3 on our understanding of male/manhood and female/womanhood: “The accounts of the creation, the Garden of Eden and the Fall in Genesis 1–3 may contain more doctrinal teaching concerning the nature of humanity as male and female, as well as the state of the fallen world, than any other single text in the Bible.”⁴ However, their conclusions could not be more different. Ortlund continues, “My purpose in this essay is to demonstrate from Genesis 1–3 that both *male-female equality* and *male headship*, properly defined, were instituted by God at creation and remain permanent, beneficent aspects of human existence.”⁵ In contrast, Hess concludes, “In short, both unity and gender diversity are clear themes in the creation accounts. God created the woman and the man to be one in unity and love. There is neither explicit nor implicit mention of any authority or leadership role of the man over the woman, except as the sad result of their sin in the Fall and their ensuing judgments.”⁶

Before man’s rebellion . . . before sin entered and man was at enmity with God and one another . . . before roles were attacked, reversed, ignored, and abandoned . . . and before accusation and animosity dominated a denomination, a church, a family. . . How did God create male and female? What roles did he prescribe for each of them before the fall? Did He prescribe roles before the fall or are roles a result of the fall? I maintain that the answers to the above questions are within the first three chapters of Genesis and lay the theological foundation for the function and practice of women in the church as

³ Raymond Ortlund Jr., “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship (Genesis 1–3),” in *RBMW*, 95.

⁴ Richard Hess, “Equality with and without Innocence: Genesis 1–3,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 79.

⁵ Ortlund, “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship (Genesis 1–3),” 95.

⁶ Hess, “Equality with and without Innocence: Genesis 1–3,” 95.

prescribed in the New Testament and for the church today.

In Genesis 1, God speaks the universe into being and describes every component as “good.” Bible teacher and author Kathleen Nielson proclaims, “His word is the action; we can’t miss the insistent repetition of ‘And God said’ or ‘Then God said’ (v 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29). His words not only narrate; they create.”⁷ In Genesis 1:26–28, we discover the creation of man by the Godhead:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.”

Several key components within these verses aid in understanding the creation of male and female. The first is that man is made in the image or likeness of God. Wayne Grudem states, “The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God.”⁸ This crucial fact sets man apart from the rest of creation and can be said of nothing else in all creation. To be created in God’s image does not mean man is an exact representation, for there is no one like God (1 Chr 17:20; Ps 86:8; Jer. 10:6), but man is patterned or fashioned after Him.⁹

Another key component concerning the creation of man is that God created both “male and female.” There is an atrocious amount of controversy and false teaching concerning the identity of males and females today. The world claims one can self-determine one’s sexual orientation and identity. However, Scripture is abundantly clear there are only two genders, male and female, and God determined that before sin entered

⁷ Kathleen Nielson, *Women and God: Hard Questions, Beautiful Truth* (Charlotte: Good Book, 2018), 21.

⁸ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 442.

⁹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 442.

the world. Nielson adds, “Genesis 1 (and the rest of the Scriptures) tells us that human gender is not an arbitrary, or self-determined, or socially-determined part of our identity; it is our identity as male or female according to God’s good design of our biological sex.”¹⁰ One must grasp that attempts to redefine the identity of man and woman are attempts to undermine God’s creation and ultimately who He is as Creator. If there is any divergence from this biblical truth, the function and role of men and women becomes arbitrary.

While man’s creation is declared in Genesis 1, the outworking of that declaration is discovered in Genesis 2. Grudem writes, “The creation of man as male and female shows God’s image in (1) harmonious interpersonal relationships, (2) equality in personhood and importance, and (3) difference in role and authority.”¹¹ The man, Adam, was created first from the dust of the ground and given life from the very breath of God (Gen 2:17). The woman, Eve, was created second, formed from the rib of the man, and then brought to him (Gen 2:21–22). It is important to note the creation order as it distinguishes the man and woman’s God-ordained roles, but it does not imply the woman was created inferior to the man in personhood and dignity. Complementarianism considers men and women as created equal in the image of God yet distinct in roles. Ortlund states,

So, was Eve Adam’s equal? Yes and no. She was his spiritual equal and, unlike the animals, “suitable for him.” But she was not his equal in that she was his “helper.” God did not create man and woman in an undifferentiated way, and their maleness and femaleness identify their respective roles. A man, just by virtue of his manhood, is called to lead for God. A woman, just by virtue of her womanhood, is called to help for God.¹²

The distinction in roles by no means diminishes their personhood or equality as image-

¹⁰ Nielson, *Women and God*, 27.

¹¹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 454.

¹² Ortlund, “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship (Genesis 1–3),” 102.

bearers. We must be diligent in educating and training women to know the Word of God concerning both biblical womanhood and gender roles with respect to the local church. If not, our churches will continue to be filled with those who may profess complementarianism yet attempt to hold places of ministry that take the form and shape of egalitarianism. Evangelical churches are called and privileged to theologially equip the whole church, both men and women, to understand their God-ordained roles as they pertain to biblical leadership in the local church.¹³ The overall mission and purpose of the church will suffer if both men and women are not adequately instructed concerning a complementarian partnership.¹⁴

Roles Established Pre-Fall

Complementarians hold to the creation of boundaries and roles pre-fall. Egalitarians hold to roles post-fall. The line drawn here will ultimately determine doctrinal practice within the church. What are the key indicators in Scripture demonstrating that God predetermined roles before the fall? Complementarians would hold that the order of creation explains the order of gender roles. God created Adam first and Eve second. This order establishes the man in a specific leadership role over his family and, ultimately, in a specific office for the local church. Grudem writes, “The fact

¹³ For the sake of this paper, I will primarily focus on biblical leadership as it pertains to the gathered assembly or congregation on a Sunday morning. It seems clearer to me, concerning the role of men and women in the church, and more concrete examples from Scripture will be used throughout the chapter. However, I believe both “camps” (egalitarian and complementarian) can agree there are gray areas concerning leadership and roles for women in ministry, e.g., helping to co-teach a community group or Sunday school class, teaching in a seminary setting, teaching a mixed audience outside of a Sunday morning gathering, etc. As for these gray areas, I believe this is worked out in local churches as they apply their personal convictions of Scripture. My plan is to teach in accordance with my church’s (CCC) views on what is permissible and what is prohibited in these gray areas. In this paper, I will not articulate and settle every dispute.

¹⁴ See the paper written by a team of elders (men only) and leaders (men and women comprised this team) concerning the role of women in the local church and ministry. It is a helpful resource and example of a church working out this important doctrine while providing helpful thought to gray areas that concern leadership roles for women within the local church from a complementarian framework. See Village Church, “The Role of Women at The Village Church,” accessed August 15, 2024, https://www.thevillagechurch.net/content/externalsite/about/The%20Role%20of%20Women_Full%20Version.pdf.

that we are correct in seeing a purpose of God in creating Adam first, and that this purpose reflects an abiding distinction in the roles God has given to men and women, is supported in 1 Timothy 2:13, where Paul uses the fact that ‘Adam was formed first, then Eve’ as a reason for restricting some distinct governing and teaching roles in the church to men.”¹⁵

In the created order, we see that God gives Adam the authority to name the animals. Moses is intentional in highlighting God’s placement of Adam in a role with the authority to name. The notion of “naming” warrants authority like that of a parent naming a child. According to pastor and author Greg Gilbert, “Even in modern culture, we recognize that naming something is an act of authority When Adam named the animals, he acted as their king. He carried out the authority and dominion God had given him over the cosmos and its inhabitants.”¹⁶

This authority to name does not end with the animals. Adam also names Eve. This by no means makes Eve inferior or equal to animals; rather, it sheds further insight into God’s goodness in ordaining structure with the creation of Adam first, then Eve. Eve’s naming by Adam does not diminish their equality as image bearers but provides a clear indication of role distinction. When Adam refers to her as “Woman” (Gen 2:23) and then “Eve” (Gen 3:20), he is functioning in the role God provided prior to the fall. Adam’s authority is not a by-product of sin, although it is certainly distorted because of it. Adam’s authority, given by God, is further expressed in his naming of Eve.

Furthermore, Eve was created as Adam’s “helper.”¹⁷ Her primary role was to

¹⁵ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 461.

¹⁶ Greg Gilbert, “The Notion of Authority in God’s Created Order,” Crossway, April 2, 2022, <https://www.crossway.org/articles/the-notion-of-authority-in-gods-created-order/>.

¹⁷ Egalitarian scholars and complementarian scholars agree that *ezer*, translated “helper,” is often used in reference to God in the Old Testament. Egalitarians agree with complementarians that it is not a term used to denote inferiority or subjugation; however, egalitarians maintain that because it is a name used to describe God, it brings about equality, if not superiority, to Adam. Complementarians believe the term itself does not indicate inferiority, equality, or superiority. The word *kenegdo* is significant, for Eve was created as a helper complementing or corresponding to Adam. She was fit, in particular, for him as his

complement her husband as he led, including submitting to his authority. God’s design and creation of man was intentional and intimate. Being equally created in His image and dignity did not mean their roles and functions were and are interchangeable. To step outside of the created order is to step outside of the Creator’s governing plan and will. The deception that a woman is equal in role negates her function and purpose for existence: to glorify God. Her created order is His merciful covering on her life.

Order always matters, especially to God. In fact, it is one of His characteristics (1 Cor 14:33). Genesis 2 reveals God’s intended order—God, man, woman, and animals—whereas Genesis 3 reveals sin’s distortion of that order—serpent, woman, man. In light of this, another indicator of distinction is the serpent tempting Eve rather than coming directly to Adam. It is abundantly clear in Genesis 2:15–18 that God commands Adam not to partake of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve is nowhere to be found as she is not yet created. However, instead of tempting the one God placed in authority and commanded not to partake, the serpent tempts the woman instead. In doing so, God’s created order has been reversed. The enemy works from the bottom up to bring distortion and corruption to what God intended. According to complementarian author Denny Burk, “In all of these ways [concerning the created order, authority, naming, temptation of Eve, etc.], Genesis 2 establishes Adam’s leadership role with his wife. This ordering appears before sin entered the world, and is thus part of God’s good creation to be embraced as the norm for all marriages [including role distinction in the church]. . . . Though well-meaning people today may deny it, Scripture teaches equal

helper. Again, not an indication of superiority, or for some egalitarian scholars taking *kenegdo* to mean “in front of,” but instead Eve was created as Adam’s helper, equal to Adam in personhood, “and one who differed from him, but who differed from him in ways that would exactly complement who Adam was” (p.119). For further instruction regarding ‘*ezer kenegdo*,’ see Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 117–21.

value isn't undermined by unequal roles."¹⁸

One of the primary indicators of the created order is the redemptive work of Christ thousands of years later. Christ did not rewrite creation through His redemption. He reestablished what He participated in with creation (Col 1:15–17). According to Grudem, “The redemption of Christ is aimed at *removing* the results of sin and of the fall in every way: ‘The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil’ (1 John 3:8).”¹⁹ Jesus came to reverse the works of sin and to reestablish the works of His Father. The reestablishment aligns with Genesis 1–2 in Christ’s bearing and becoming the curse (Gal 3:13) that Adam and Eve chose in Genesis 3.

Grudem provides four other indications that there were distinctions in man and woman’s roles pre-fall: (1) God names the human race after the man and not the woman; (2) God confronts Adam after the fall and not Eve; (3) Adam is the representative of the human race, not Eve; (4) the curse did not usher in new roles due to their sin, but distorted what God had already established.²⁰ Why is this significant and necessary as it pertains to the theological development of women in the church and a firm foundation concerning biblical leadership in the church? The proper understanding of the creation order and God’s plan before sin entered instructs the outworking of a woman’s ministerial endeavor. The end of this chapter will examine where it is permissible for women to serve in the local church, but first, it is necessary to establish biblically where a woman is prohibited from serving. Much like the garden and the prohibition of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the prohibition on the woman was not to harm, demean, or devalue but to protect, provide, and bring life.

¹⁸ Denny Burk, “5 Evidences of Complementarian Gender Roles in Genesis 1–2,” *The Gospel Coalition* (blog), March 5, 2014, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-evidences-of-complementarian-gender-roles-in-genesis-1-2/>.

¹⁹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 464.

²⁰ For a more in-depth study on the nine indications that distinct roles were established pre-fall, see Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 460–65.

Fascination for the Forbidden

Sin entered the world as a result of man's pride, self-love, and, ultimately, unbelief. Adam and Eve demonstrated in Genesis 3 what is in the heart of every man as a result of the fall; namely, man loves himself more than he loves God. It is important to understand that new roles were not established as a result of the fall. Grudem states, "In the punishments God gave to Adam and Eve, he did not introduce new roles or functions, but simply introduced pain and distortion into the functions they previously had."²¹ Due to sin's perversion of their relationship, Adam would misuse his authority, and Eve would no longer willingly submit to his leadership.²² According to the translation of the Hebrew word for "desire," Eve will seek to usurp Adam's authority.²³ Grudem continues, "It is much more appropriate to the context of the curse to understand this as an aggressive desire against her husband, one that would bring her into conflict with him."²⁴

The same conflict in the garden as a result of sin is the same conflict we see today. There is nothing new under the sun (Eccl 1:9), and the Enemy continues to seek opportunities to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). At the root of this conflict for most women, is an unwillingness to bow to those placed in authority over us, whether that is a husband, pastor, father, or ultimately the Lord. Concerning the curse in Genesis 3:16, Ortlund beautifully articulates the needed union between male headship and female submission:

²¹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 463.

²² Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 464

²³ There is much debate pertaining to the translation of the Hebrew term for "desire" (*teshuqah*). Some scholars have translated it to mean a sexual desire for her husband. Others have interpreted it to mean she is oppressed and now the "willing slave of man." More recently, an interpretation provided by Wendy Alsup states the term reflects "an idolatrous longing for something from the man that the woman was created to receive from God alone." Wendy Alsup, "Problems with a New Reading of an Old Verse," *The Gospel Coalition* (blog), September 17, 2012, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/problems-with-a-new-reading-of-an-old-verse/>.

However, most complementarian scholars interpret the phrase "her desire is for him" to mean a desire to usurp or rule over him. She longs for his place of headship authority and will seek to overtake him in this area. See the following article for more interpretation concerning "desire": Susan T. Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire?," *WTJ* 37 (1974/75): 376–83.

²⁴ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth* (2012), 39.

But however Genesis 3:16 should be interpreted, nothing can change the fact that God created male headship as one aspect of our pre-fallen perfection. Therefore, while many women today need release from male dominations, the liberating alternative is not female rivalry or autonomy but male headship wedded to female help. Christian redemption does not redefine creation; it restores creation, so that wives learn godly submission and husbands learn godly headship.²⁵

The notion that a woman, by taking her proper place as a helper, is inferior to a man negates the purpose for which they were created and given breath. If a woman wants to serve and honor Christ, she will do so in the role established for her before sin entered the world. The lie women continue to believe today is that to be important, they must be in charge. The lie men continue to believe today is that women gifted in leadership are seeking to usurp their authority. If future pastors, missionaries, counselors, and lay leaders are not biblically instructed on how to minister to and alongside the women in their church, the church is missing its call to properly train and equip them. If the women in the pews are merely taught what they cannot do without guided, biblical instruction for where they can serve, the church is missing its call to properly train and equip them as well.

If we look to man or culture for answers, we will be sorely disappointed and confused. He is not the “God of the culture.” He is the Creator God. He does not change as the culture does but calls us unto Himself to be firmly rooted, established, and built up in what He has created and ordained. He does not order and then reorder with what is considered contemporary on earth. He orders and designs according to His nature, and this was established in creation from the beginning.

**Blessing in the Boundary: A Comprehensive Look at
Paul’s Appeal to Women in 1 Timothy 2:9–15
Regarding Proper Church Activities**

There are several debated passages in Scripture pertaining to the role of women in ministry. Because this project is primarily looking at a woman’s role in the

²⁵ Ortlund, “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship (Genesis 1–3),” 109.

local church as it concerns biblical leadership, I will focus my attention on what is permissible and prohibited per the instruction in 1 Timothy 2:9–15.²⁶ The passage in 1 Timothy 2 may be one of the most controversial passages concerning women in the church, yet the importance of rightly dividing the text is as crucial now as it has ever been. The outside pressures on the church, and at times from within the church, continue to seek equality between men and women regardless of distinction in role and function.

There is a real, strong temptation to look away from complementarity and move towards an egalitarian approach. I wholeheartedly understand when Schreiner, embarking on a deep dive into 1 Timothy 2:9–15, states,

When I first began studying this issue in earnest, I wanted to believe that Scripture places no limitations on women in ministry and that every ministry position is open to them. As a student, I read many articles on the question, hoping that I could be convinced exegetically that all ministry offices should be opened to women. Upon reading the articles, though, I remained unconvinced intellectually and exegetically that the *new* interpretations of the controversial passages were plausible.²⁷

These controversial passages include 1 Timothy 2:9–15 and 1 Corinthians 11:1–16 and describe examples such as Deborah, Huldah, and Philip’s daughters. Schreiner continues, “Indeed, reading the egalitarian interpretations persuaded me that the complementarian view was true, since the former involved unlikely interpretations of the ‘problem’ passages. I remember saying to a friend who is a New Testament scholar, ‘I would like to believe the position you hold. But it seems as if you have to leap over the evidence of the text to espouse such a leap.’” His friend responded, “Tom, you are right. Take that leap. Take that leap.”²⁸

²⁶ For the sake of this project, I will not look at the qualifications of elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3. As it pertains to the question of women serving as deaconesses in the church, please see Thomas R. Schreiner, “The Valuable Ministries of Women in the Context of Male Leadership: A Survey of Old and New Testament Examples and Teaching,” in *RBMW*.

²⁷ Thomas R. Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 164.

²⁸ Schreiner, *2 Timothy* 2, 86.

Many influential leaders and authors who once firmly held to the doctrine of complementarianism have taken the leap to egalitarianism, and many have followed.²⁹ However, as with any leap, one must land. To answer this exegetical question in mid-air has tremendous bearing on where one lands, that is, one's orthopraxy. You cannot separate doctrinal truth from biblical practice, as we will see in the examples provided in chapter 3. For this section, we will look at the historical and literary context of Paul's instruction to Timothy and the church in Ephesus.

Historical and Cultural Context of 1 Timothy 2

To properly understand and interpret a text, one must grasp both the historical and cultural context in which and for whom a particular passage, command, or exhortation is written. Context always matters and aids in rightly informing the audience's response. Pastor David Schrock sheds light on faithful interpretation and contextual integrity: "Faithful interpreters must consider the grammar and history found at the textual level; they must also attend to the place any passage stands in covenantal history; and they must explain how this individual passage contributes to the whole of the Bible and is itself informed by the rest of Scripture."³⁰ In 1 Timothy, Paul writes his protégé, Timothy, concerning doctrinal matters within the church, particularly leadership roles and conduct in the church.³¹ First and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon are said to be

²⁹ A few of these examples are further expounded upon in chapter 3. For the sake of the project, more recent examples and individuals seeking to walk away from or "recover from" the doctrine of complementarity are used. The examples provided in chapter 3 do not represent an exhaustive list but are intentionally used to shed light on the current tension of women once holding to complementarity as it pertained to women in leadership and those who continue to lead within the framework of complementarity.

³⁰ See David Schrock, "The Three Most Important Words I Learned in Seminary: "Textual, Epochal, Canonical," *9Marks Journal* (March 2020): 128–34 (p. 129), <https://www.9marks.org/article/the-three-most-important-words-i-learned-in-seminary-textual-epochal-canonical/>.

³¹ The authorship is debated among scholars. In all three Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), Paul states that he is the author of each letter. However, some scholars debate the genuineness of this appeal because it does not fit within the account provided in Acts. All scholars agree you will not find Paul "preaching in Crete and leaving Titus there (Titus 1:5). Nor does his leaving Timothy at Ephesus

different from other letters as each is privately written to an individual as opposed to publicly written to the entire church. However, each bears instruction to the church, especially 1 Timothy, which is said to concern “ecclesiastical order.”³² This was a private, personal letter with public ecclesiastical instruction.

First Timothy and Titus are said to have been written between AD 62 and 66. Scholars believe it was written while Paul was in Macedonia (1 Tim 1:3). Timothy was located in Ephesus and is presumed to have remained there when Paul was writing 2 Timothy.³³ According to theologian Ralph Earle, the epistles are called “pastoral” because “they are addressed to pastors of churches to outline their pastoral duties. These responsibilities were twofold: to defend sound doctrine and maintain sound discipline.”³⁴ Paul’s purpose for the first epistle to Timothy is disputed. Some commentators, like Gordon Fee, believe it was a response to the dangers of false teaching that had crept into the church.³⁵ While confirming that false teaching was an issue, as 1 Timothy 1:3 highlights, others believe that false teaching may have been the event prompting the epistle, but orderly conduct within the church among leaders was Paul’s overarching purpose.³⁶ The nature of the letter’s purpose matters as it pertains to the observation and interpretations of 1 Timothy 2:9–15. If not carefully examined, the instruction for women within the church is only highlighted by false teaching rather than being conducive to the

fit into the Acts account.” (Ralph Earle, *1 & 2 Timothy*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 341. Some scholars assume Paul was put to death at the end of his Roman imprisonment, while others believe he was released from his first Roman imprisonment and made further journeys. The former scholars conclude he could not have written the epistles if put to death, while the latter agree the release led to some of his final writings, including the Pastoral Epistles.

³² William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, rev. ed., Daily Study Bible Series (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1975), 2.

³³ Earle, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 344.

³⁴ Earle, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 344.

³⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *1 and Timothy, Titus*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 7.

³⁶ Fee, *1 and Timothy, Titus*, 7.

prescribed and permissible roles for men and women within the church in spite of false teaching. Roles are prescribed whether false teaching is the occasion or not.

If this letter, along with 2 Timothy and Titus, are in fact written by a ‘shepherd’ to a ‘shepherd’³⁷ with instructions on how to shepherd the flock, or church, entrusted to them, what benefit does it have for a woman in ministry? How is a pastor defined, and what can a woman learn from this letter if pastoral leadership is out of the question for her? Are these mere rules or is Paul prescribing protective roles? Is pastoral leadership a gift or an office? I will seek to answer questions like this and more with the use of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 and by cross-referencing Titus 2:1, 3–5.

For Such a Time as This or Then?

One of the widely debated subjects concerning 1 Timothy 2 is whether the church order is circumstantial or if Paul’s directives are perpetually conclusive. Concerning the nature of the text, egalitarians land on the structure and order being circumstantial, while complementarians agree these are marching orders for the church even today yet must be interpreted in light of the text’s context.³⁸ Schreiner states, “Caution should be exercised in explaining the nature of 1 Timothy. Even though the presence of heresy looms large, it does not follow that the false teaching explains every feature of the letter. Paul probably included some material for general purposes that did not address the deviant teaching directly.”³⁹ In fact, Paul expounds on his reasons for writing in chapter 3: “I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth” (3:14–15). Although

³⁷ Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018).

³⁸ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 166–67.

³⁹ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 167.

false teaching was present, the order and conduct of the church (“household of God”) was also forefront in Paul’s mind.

In his commentary on 1 Timothy, Robert Yarbrough summarizes three positions toward women in Scripture:

Critical Feminist: The Bible is traditionalist. Its patriarchalism oppresses women; the Bible is wrong.

Evangelical Feminist: The Bible is feminist. Its egalitarianism liberates women; the Bible is right.

Evangelical Traditionalist: The Bible is traditionalist. Its advocacy of loving leadership lets women thrive; the Bible is right.⁴⁰

In the Critical Feminist position, the doctrine and ideology of 1 Timothy 2 are viewed as patriarchal with an agenda that demeans women. The motive is to reject Paul’s teaching altogether. For the sake of this project, we will not spend time looking at feminist hermeneutics, although their position certainly influences the middle position and the response of the third.

The Evangelical Feminist position, often termed egalitarianism, sees 1 Timothy 2 and its instruction to women as situational and not to be viewed as a permanent order. In his commentary, Yarbrough addresses arguments by theologian I. Howard Marshall, a proponent for the Evangelical Feminist position. Regarding 1 Timothy 2:9–15, Yarbrough contends, “Interpreters who are sympathetic to the ministry of women in teaching and church leadership today claim that the passage does not give a blanket condemnation of these activities, and argue that it is dealing with an unusual ecclesiastical situation that required unusual measures and/or that the teaching reflects a particular culture situation and therefore should not be universalized.”⁴¹ While there may be agreement between the three positions for “women in teaching and church leadership

⁴⁰ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 137.

⁴¹ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 141. Yarbrough is responding to I. Howard Marshall with P. H. Towner, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 438–39.

today,” the conclusion is vastly different. Yarbrough explains that the Evangelical Feminist’s position “breaks with (1) historic church practice (and biblical precedent) at the point of pressing for ordination of women to the pastoral office, and (2) classic exegesis of the passage that understands it as binding on the church in the world at all times and places, not simply reflective of cultural conditions that make the passage irrelevant or the church today.”⁴²

The third view, Evangelical Traditionalist, is often called complementarianism and views the passage not in light of cultural trends⁴³ but can “credibly claim to be in line with the church’s own reading of 1 Timothy 2 through the centuries.”⁴⁴ This view does not seek to prevent the flourishing of women in the church nor discourage their involvement in areas of ministry permissible to them. However, according to Schreiner, “The complementarian position seems unloving and discriminatory to many, and the general atmosphere of our society encourages people to liberate themselves from traditional views.”⁴⁵ Our Western society applauds and commends new thoughts and positions that resound liberation and bravery, while those who hold to traditional convictions are discarded. Those who hold to complementarianism, Schreiner explains, “may be thought of as contentious, narrow, and perhaps even psychologically hampered. These latter qualities are doubtless true of some who support the complementarian view, and yet it does not follow that the complementarian view is thereby falsified. The truth or falsity of both views (egalitarian and complementarian) must be established by an intensive exegesis of the biblical text.”⁴⁶

⁴² Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 141.

⁴³ Yarbrough describes the middle view (egalitarian hermeneutics) as “indebted to the mood of the age in the West (and by its influence worldwide) than to the history, language, theology, and ecclesiology in the Pastoral Epistles.” Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 142.

⁴⁴ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 143.

⁴⁵ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 164–65.

⁴⁶ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 165.

While the scope of this project does not allow for an extensive exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15, I will seek to unpack this passage in light of a complementarian view and compare and contrast this to an egalitarian hermeneutic.⁴⁷ This will provide a foundation for the examples (provided in chapter 3) of those in ministerial leadership roles holding to a complementarian framework and those who reject or have abandoned prior support of a complementarian view.

Paul’s Appeal to Women in Public Worship: Matters of Adornment and Authority

One’s conclusion regarding Paul’s instructions for the church in 1 Timothy 2:9–15 depends on whether one interprets these instructions as circumstantial to Timothy’s context or as a permanent charge to the “household of God.” The egalitarian hermeneutic strongly argues that this set of verses pertains to false teachings that have crept into the church; therefore, this passage should be studied and interpreted as circumstantial.⁴⁸ The complementarian view agrees that Paul addresses false teaching in 1 Timothy but that this instruction does not constitute the entirety of the book, as Paul also

⁴⁷ For an in-depth look at 1 Timothy 2:9–15, please see Köstenberger and Schreiner, *Women in the Church*. This resource, nearly 400 pages in length, provides an exhaustive look at this text using a complementarian hermeneutical approach. I could not possibly do this text justice in such a short amount of space. To understand such a complicated passage, I highly recommend this book.

⁴⁸ Scholars who hold to the middle view, including Linda L. Belleville, argue that the context of Paul’s instruction to women is in light of false teaching and, therefore, could not apply to the church at large today. Belleville states, “In getting a handle on 1 Timothy 2:12, we must be clear about where the verse sits in the letter as a whole. Paul begins by instructing his stand-in, Timothy, to stay put in Ephesus so that he can command certain persons ‘not to teach false doctrines any longer’ (1:3). That false teaching is Paul’s overriding concern can be seen from the fact that he bypasses normal letter-writing conventions (such as a thanksgiving section and closing greetings) and gets right down to business (cf. Galatians).” Linda Belleville, “Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1 Timothy 2:11–15,” in Pierce, Groothuis, and Fee, *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 205–6. In light of this, Belleville argues the “lack of details about leadership roles and absence of offices steer us away from viewing church order as the primary matter” (206).

Complementarian scholar Tom Schreiner emphasizes, “Caution should be exercised in explaining the nature of 1 Timothy. Even though the presence of heresy looms large, it does not follow that the false teaching explains every feature of the letter. . . . We could easily fall into the error of overemphasizing the ad hoc character of 1 Timothy.” Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 167.

Belleville quotes Gordon Fee in favor of her middle-view interpretation of 1 Timothy 2, described in chapter 12, “Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1 Timothy 2:11–15,” of *Discovering Biblical Equality*. Schreiner’s warning is detailed in his description of the third view in chapter 4, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” in *Women in the Church*.

directs attention to roles and conduct for those who make up the church. This includes, as scholars agree, the setting of public worship, in which each hermeneutical approach comes to different conclusions regarding the instructions for men and women.

According to commentators Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., “Two features of this section deserve comment at the outset. First, the context for Paul’s appeal was not the world or the home front but the worship life of the church. Paul was providing instructions for praying and teaching within the confines of the local congregations.”⁴⁹ The instructions provided to the women of the church could certainly be applied to the home front as well. Lea and Griffin continue, “Second, Paul’s advice was generally for men and women, but the responsibility of wives and mothers were also in Paul’s mind. It is recognized that the women in 2:15 must be wives, but the references in 2:8–9 are for men and women.”⁵⁰ The distinction between the audience in 2:8–9 and that of 2:15 is important as it unfolds Paul’s ongoing counsel to women and their conduct in 2:11–12.

At the forefront of Paul’s mind was the advancement of the gospel, the unity of the body, and the holy conduct of men and women in the church, all for the glory and praise of the Father. In 2:8, Paul appeals to the men, and in 2:9–15 appeals to the women. In both, Paul seeks to “show behavior that was holy, teachable, and peaceable.”⁵¹ Lea and Griffin summarize Paul’s appeal to women: “In vv. 9–10 he described the moral behavior of the women, and in vv. 11–12 he outlined their proper church activity. He gave reason for his appeal in vv. 13–14, and he delivered a promise to obedient women in v. 15.”⁵² We will now look to Paul’s appeal to women in more depth and seek not only to explain the

⁴⁹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, Timothy, Titus*, NAC 34 (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 93.

⁵⁰ Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, 93.

⁵¹ Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, 94.

⁵² Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, 94.

gracious inclusion of women but also draw out ministerial involvement within the boundaries of complementarian hermeneutics.⁵³ I will provide a brief overview of verses 9–10, followed by a deeper look at verses 11–12 as they specifically pertain to church activities for women, and then conclude the section with a brief overview of verses 13–15.

Paul’s Appeal to the Moral Behavior of Women in the Church: 1 Timothy 2:9–10

In verses 9–15, Paul directs his attention to women regarding their modest, moral, and holy conduct in public worship. In verse 9, Paul states, “Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire.” According to theologian Ralph Earle, the definite article used in verse 8 addressing men and the lack of a definite article when addressing women “may suggest that the apostle was laying down the pattern that public worship should be conducted by the men. Now he proceeds to tell how women should conduct themselves in church services.”⁵⁴ Gordon Fee agrees, noting that Paul writes “without the definite article, implying a broader context than merely wives.”⁵⁵ Schreiner states, “The text is ambiguous regarding the connection between vv. 8 and 9.”⁵⁶ The use of the term “likewise,” according to Schreiner, “is a loose transition and does not indicate that the exact same activities are in mind (cf. 1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:3, 6).”⁵⁷

Thus, Schreiner continues, “In v. 8, Paul considers the problem men have when gathered for public worship (anger and disputing in prayer), while in vv. 9–15, he

⁵³ This project will primarily focus on 1 Timothy 2:11–12 and Paul’s appeal to women’s activity in the local church. A shorter amount of time will be spent on Paul’s instruction in 2:9–10 and 13–15.

⁵⁴ Earle, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 360.

⁵⁵ Fee, *1 and Timothy, Titus*, 71

⁵⁶ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 176.

⁵⁷ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 176.

addresses two issues that have cropped up with the women in public gatherings (adornment and teaching men).”⁵⁸ Paul appeals to the *whole* household of God, addressing issues among the men and issues among the women. It is important to note the setting of public worship, as this context is relevant to the continued instruction for women in verses 11–15. Schreiner states, “The public nature of the praying in v. 8 holds significance for vv. 9–15, which are also directed to public assemblies. We see this clearly in vv. 11–12, where women are prohibited from teaching and exercising authority over men.”⁵⁹

Paul’s appeal indicates that the woman’s outward adornment is ultimately a reflection of the inward nature of her heart. We see the same appeal from Peter in 1 Peter 3:3–4: “Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.” Peter’s address to wives in this passage mirrors Paul’s appeal to women in the church. This instruction set them apart from the culture in which they resided. The matter at hand was not merely modest dress but the proper adornment of one’s heart before the Lord, displayed through good works and not “gold or pearls or costly attire” (2:9). Yarbrough states, “Deeds trump decoration ‘for women who profess to worship God’ (2:10). Paul wants the women consumed with concern, not for fancy trappings, but for ‘good deeds.’”⁶⁰

Paul’s Appeal to Church Activity for Women in the Church: 1 Timothy 2:11–12

There are a few things concerning women and ministerial roles on which

⁵⁸ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 176–77.

⁵⁹ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 175.

⁶⁰ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 167.

complementarians and egalitarians agree. First, men and women are created equal in dignity before God. Second, men and women should serve the body of Christ in ministry. Third, 1 Timothy 2:11–12 are among some of the most hotly debated verses concerning a woman’s role in ministry.⁶¹ As we have seen, the conclusions these two groups reach are vastly different. However, the diligence required to understand 1 Timothy 2:11–12 in light of a woman’s role in the church ought to be commended. I truly believe that most of my egalitarian counterparts have a deep love for the Lord and a desire to serve Him, although I wholeheartedly disagree with their analysis and application of this text.

Paul offers several activities for a woman in the household of God in verses 11–12.⁶² Paul commands women “to learn,” but what does he mean by learning “quietly with all submissiveness?” Is this type of learning different from how men are called to learn? He reminds women of what is not permitted, namely, “teaching and exercising authority over men.” Were these instructions given for the culture at that time, or are they marching orders for the church today? What exactly is meant by “exercising authority”? Are women unable to teach at all? This section attempts to answer these questions as they pertain to women’s activities in ministry and the church.

Our focus shifts primarily to the leadership qualities Paul expresses in verse 12: “teaching and exercising authority.” Two qualities of pastoral leadership specifically pertaining to the office of elder/overseer/pastor are the ability to teach (1 Tim 3) and the ability to exercise authority. What does a church do with a woman who is called to ministry and gifted in leadership and teaching? Do these same instructions apply to her

⁶¹ Egalitarian advocate Linda L. Belleville refers to 1 Timothy 2:11–15 as the “center of the tempest” as the “battle over woman leaders in the church continues to rage unabated in evangelical circles.” Belleville, “Teaching and Usurping Authority,” 205. Complementarians such as Denny Burk state, “Without a question, 1 Timothy 2:12 is the most contested verse in the wider debate among evangelicals about women in ministry.” Denny Burk, “New and Old Departures in the Translation of *Ἀυθεντεῖν*,” in Köstenberger and Schreiner, *Women in the Church*, 279.

⁶² The teaching found in 1 Timothy 2:11–12 is similar to Paul’s instruction in 1 Corinthians 14:33–35, another hotly debated passage of Scripture regarding women in the church. We will not look at that passage in this project but certainly want to note the parallel instruction provided.

church-wide, or is she permitted to utilize these gifts in other ways within the church? Are these instructions provided for one's role and office or giftings and contribution?

We turn to verses 11–12 to study what is permissible and impermissible for a woman in the local church. Paul shifts from the plural “women” to “woman,” further emphasizing this concerns all women in the church and not merely wives.⁶³ Paul commands a woman to learn (v. 11) but does not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over men (v. 12). She is to learn “quietly”⁶⁴ and “with all submissiveness,”⁶⁵ which ties into the impermissible activities of verse 12. According to George W. Knight, “Paul applies this concern to the functions of teaching and exercising authority by specifically not permitting women to do either in reference to men. This prohibition is made even more clear by a return to the demand for silence (v. 12b).”⁶⁶ If women are commanded to learn, should women not be permitted to teach? As we will see in the next section, Paul instructs women to teach and for women to know (learn) sound doctrine in Titus 2:1, 3–5. In this passage, Paul is not encouraging a woman to learn so she can teach men. The audience matters because, as we have already seen in the Genesis 1–3 overview, the creation order matters. Paul elaborates on this in 2:13.

⁶³ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 184.

⁶⁴ Scholars debate the meaning of the term “quietly.” Some understand it to mean “in silence” while other interpret it to refer to the woman's demeanor and teachability. According to Schreiner,

The use of the same word in 1 Timothy 2:2 supports this thesis (women are to learn peaceable and with a quiet demeanor) for there the context clearly implies not absolute silence but rather a gentle and quiet demeanor. The parallel text in 1 Peter 3:4 also inclines us in the same direction, since the ‘gentle and quiet spirit’ of the wife in the home scarcely means absolute silence. In addition, if Paul wanted to communicate absolute silence, he could have used the noun *σιγή* (“silence”) rather than *ἡσυχία* (“quietness”). (Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 186)

⁶⁵ For further explanation of the Greek term “submission” and Paul's instruction in 2:11, see George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 139. Knight explains that the use of the Greek term “submission” in this context is not that of wives to husbands but is used “more broadly, the norm for the relationship of women to men in authority functions within the church” (139). Paul's concern is that the commendation to learn would lead women to “overturn their role in relation to the authority role that men are to exercise in the church (see 1 Corinthians 14:33 where Paul expresses the same concern). Therefore, he adds to qualifications: quietly and with all submissiveness” (139). Schreiner's explanation for “all submission” also provides further clarity; see Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 186–88.

⁶⁶ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 138.

The command for women to learn was a cultural shift from what they would have known by example in Judaism. Paul does not reflect the tradition of his Jewish roots; he is calling women to learn that they might grow and mature in their walk with Christ. According to Lea and Griffin, “Paul’s command that the women ‘learn’ reflects Christian practice which differed from the customs of Judaism. Judaism would enforce physical silence on women without concern for their growth in knowledge.”⁶⁷ This command to learn does not automatically necessitate that the woman also teach. However, she is not permitted to teach in all settings. Egalitarians hold that the ban on women teachers resulted from their lack of education and/or the influence of the false teachers on the people in the church at Ephesus.⁶⁸ However, if Paul’s intent in encouraging women to learn was for the result of teaching, would he not perhaps have stated in verse 12 that women were not permitted to teach unless they were first adequately trained and educated?

The two descriptors Paul uses when describing how women are to learn are “quietly” and “with all submissiveness.” Egalitarians and complementarians agree that Paul approves the women’s learning. However, egalitarians believe it is for the sake of teaching and exercising authority, whereas complementarians believe it is for the sake of growing in their maturation in Christ. Schreiner comments, “Even though egalitarians rightly detect a commendation of women learning in v. 11, their exegesis obscures the thrust of the command by abstracting the imperative verb from the rest of the sentence. Paul does not merely say, ‘Women must learn!’”⁶⁹ The exclusion of the imperative verb, “quietly and with all submission,” alters the application of the text altogether. Schreiner continues, “The command focuses not on women learning but on the *manner* and *mode*

⁶⁷ Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, 97.

⁶⁸ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 185.

⁶⁹ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 185.

of their learning, that is, quietly and with all submissiveness. . . Paul undoubtedly commends women to learn, and yet his central concern is the manner in which they learn.”⁷⁰

The permission to learn does not mitigate the prohibition to “teach and exercise authority over man.” The peaceable demeanor and submissive spirit undergird her permission to learn. To what and/or whom is she to submit? A plethora of explanations are offered as to whom she is to be submissive to; however, the permission of v. 11, paralleling the prohibition of v. 12, aids in how to answer and apply both the permissible and impermissible. Schreiner gives one of the clearest explanations:

To what should women submit? It has been suggested that women are to be submissive to God, the congregations in general, sound teaching, the contemporary social structure, or the women’s teachers. We are aided in answering this question by the parallels between vv. 11 and 12. Verses 11 and 12 constitute an inclusion; permission for the women “to learn” is contrasted with the proscription for them “to teach,” while “all submissiveness” is paired with “not to exercise authority over a man.” The submission in view, then, is likely to men, since v. 12 suggests that the submissions of all women to all men is not in view, for not all men taught and had authority when the church gathered. Thus, we should not separate submissions to what is taught from submission to those who taught it. Women were—with entire submissiveness—to learn from the men (pastors and elders) who had authority in the church and manifested that authority through their teaching. The δέ introducing v. 12 is a development marker that clarifies more precisely the command in v. 11. The two verses are closely tied together and perhaps in chiasm. At the very least, we find an *inclusio* here, with the phrase ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ (“quietly”) introducing v. 11 and concluding v. 12. “Women should learn quietly” (ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μαθάνετω, v. 11) but are not permitted “to teach” (διδάσκειν, v. 12). They are to learn “in all submission” (ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ, v.11) but are not “to exercise authority over a man” (αὐθεντεῖν ἄνδρός, v. 12). . . Verse 12 follows on the heels of v. 11 and clarifies its meaning.⁷¹

It must also be understood that the instruction to learn “with all submission” to those who had authority in the church (pastors, elders) does not remove the forbidden activity of women in verse 12 to “teach and exercise authority over men” even if an elder or pastor grants permission.⁷² As will be demonstrated in the examples in chapter 3, one’s

⁷⁰ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 185.

⁷¹ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 187–88.

⁷² See Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 103–5.

interpretation of authority and charge impacts one's application to rightly obey or disobey God's created order. Elders and pastors did not ordain what was permissible and impermissible; therefore, they must ultimately submit to God and His plan for the church. The Lord will never approve that which He clearly disapproved from the beginning.

Egalitarians lean heavily on the current circumstances in Ephesus, in particular, the false teaching that had crept into the church. Their determination that a temporary ban on women being permitted to teach is founded on believing that women were uneducated and influenced by false teaching. Therefore, if they rightly learn and are educated, they too can teach and direct others away from the influence of false teaching. For egalitarians, educating women today aids in lifting the ban for what they deem to be temporary in 1 Timothy 2:11–12.⁷³ A new day equates to a new role and a desire to unburden women from any hierarchal claim to rule over them. However, that is not the intended purpose of Paul's instruction in 2:12. Again, the creation order, rightly designed by the Creator for our good and His glory, does not change with the times. The prohibition on women in 2:12 rightly mirrors that which was established pre-fall. The very claim of egalitarians that complementarians merely rule by a hierarchal reign miss altogether a crucial theological reality that hierarchy existed—beautifully so—at the time of creation. Commentator and theologian Kenneth Mathews expresses, “This role relationship of leader and follower is indicated directly and implicitly. First, the participant structure of Genesis 2–3 shows implicitly the hierarchy of creation: God, the man, woman, and animal (serpent). But this was reversed in the fall: the woman listens to the serpent, the man listens to the woman, and no one listens to God.”⁷⁴ We must return to listening to the One who rightly ordered His creation and His church.

The leadership qualities of “teaching” and “exercising authority” in 2:12 make

⁷³ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 186.

⁷⁴ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 220.

this one of the most highly debated texts concerning gender roles with respect to biblical leadership in the local church. A great deal of the debate centers around “teaching” and “authority”; however, one’s interpretation of the verb phrase “I do not permit” must first be rightly divided. Egalitarians maintain this is not a permanent regulation regarding a woman’s role in the church but an instruction for a specific time in a specific set of circumstances; it was not binding on the future church. Egalitarian scholars believe the verb phrase “I do not permit” is a present active indicative, translating to “I am not permitting” with a singular object: “a woman.”⁷⁵ Fee also translates verse 12 as “I am not permitting,” implying “specific instructions to this situation.”⁷⁶ Egalitarian scholar Gilbert Bilezikian weighs in on the matter, “Scholars have already noted that the present tense of Paul’s ‘I do not permit’ has the force of ‘I do not permit now a woman to teach.’ Presently, these women would have to learn by sitting quietly and receptively under authorized teachers.”⁷⁷ Bilezikian continues to explain that a woman’s growth in her walk with Christ and education removes the hindrance to teach “just as other women served as prophets in the church.”⁷⁸ Egalitarians often use the example of female prophets to strengthen their argument for equality in roles.⁷⁹ Schreiner states that some “also claim that the intrinsic meaning of ἐπιτρέπω demonstrates its temporary nature, for the verb never indicates elsewhere a universally applicable command. Indeed . . . some even

⁷⁵ Linda Belleville, *1 Timothy*, in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, vol. 17, *1 Timothy*, *2 Timothy*, *Titus*, *Hebrews*, ed. Phillip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 54.

⁷⁶ Fee, *1 and Timothy*, *Titus*, 72.

⁷⁷ Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 137. Wayne Grudem elaborates on Bilezikian’s position, citing the first use of the argument stated by Don Williams, *The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church* (N.p.: Harmon Press, 2010), 112. Grudem also points to Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 240. See also Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 300.

⁷⁸ Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 137.

⁷⁹ For the sake of this project, I will not expound heavily upon the argument of prophecy. See the following resource for an explanation of this argument from a complementarian framework: article by Schreiner, “Review of Two Views on Women in Ministry, edited by James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg,” *JBMW* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 24–30; see also Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 193–94.

capitalize on the indicative form and state that the only imperative in the text is in v. 11.”⁸⁰

Does the present indicative form of the verb indicate temporary or permanent instruction for women and biblical leadership in the church? Egalitarians would argue for the former, that Paul’s use of the present indicative indicates temporary instruction, whereas complementarian scholars disagree. There are several instances in which Paul utilizes a present indicative and the context clearly reveals a command.⁸¹ What ultimately matters in determining whether this is a temporary or permanent instruction is the context. Schreiner explains,

The context, not the term *permitted*, determines the universal or temporary force of the prohibition. In conclusion, the mere presence of the word ἐπιτρέπω cannot be used to establish the temporary nature of the restriction, nor can it establish that we have a universal principle for all time. Only the context can resolve that question, and v. 12 alone lacks sufficient evidence to answer it (though see the above-mentioned parallel of wording in vv. 1 and 8). That said, I will argue below that v. 13 establishes the prohibition as universal.⁸²

There are two activities not permitted for women as they pertain to men in the church. They are first prohibited from teaching, but this is qualified by the audience: they are not to teach men. Complementarian scholar Knight states, “That which is not permitted first of all διδάσκειν, ‘to teach,’ but not as an unqualified prohibition since the object ‘man’ indicates a limitation, as does the immediate context, which has been dealing with religious instruction in the life of the church.”⁸³ This is further emphasized by Paul’s clear, not contradictory, command in Titus 2:3–5 for older women to teach and lead younger women. Knight continues, “Just as v. 11 was not a demand for all learning

⁸⁰ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 188.

⁸¹ See Schreiner’s full explanation of the use of cross-references for further guidance on the use of present indicatives and context giving way to a command in Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 188.

⁸² Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 190.

⁸³ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 140.

to be done in silence, as an unqualified absolute, but was concerned with women's learning in the midst of the assembled people of God, so also the prohibition of teaching here has the same setting and perspective in view."⁸⁴ It is important to note that the setting concerns the public gathering of the church.⁸⁵ Egalitarian scholar Fee again emphasizes the connection between teaching in verse 12 and learning in verse 11, drawing one's attention again to the circumstantial crisis of false teaching. Fee and other egalitarian scholars conclude that the temporary ban on women teaching was largely due to their swayed influence under false teaching, but with proper education, they would be permitted to teach.⁸⁶

Second, women were not permitted to "exercise authority" over men. The Greek term ἀθεντεῖν "authority," used by Paul only once in his writings, differs in translation depending on one's framework. For the majority of egalitarian scholars, the connotation is negative; for complementarians, the connotation is positive and aligns with what Paul has already instructed in verse 11 pertaining to a woman's learning "in all submissiveness," albeit this is the antonym of that command.⁸⁷ Egalitarian translations commonly represent this as concerning a woman's behavior, which is not to be violent or inappropriate, nor is the woman to dominate, misuse authority, or take control by force.⁸⁸ Most egalitarian scholars derive their conclusion of the negative verb due to the circumstances in Ephesus at the time. In response, complementarian Wayne Grudem states,

Is Paul prohibiting the misuse of authority of some other wrongful act, due to some problem unique to Ephesus at that time? If so, then someone might argue that 1

⁸⁴ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 140.

⁸⁵ Earle, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 362.

⁸⁶ Fee, *1 and Timothy, Titus*, 72–73.

⁸⁷ Schreiner, "An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15," 195.

⁸⁸ See Grudem's complementarian rebuttal of the three egalitarian claims concerning the verb "exercise authority" in Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 304–22.

Timothy 2 applies only to that special situation and in ordinary situations women are free to teach and exercise authority over men. On the other hand, if ἀθηντεύειν has an ordinary, neutral meaning such as “have authority,” then it is more likely that Paul is making a general statement for all churches for all times. Rebecca Groothuis understands this, for she says, “All traditionalist interpretations, of course, require that ἀθηντεύειν be defined in the sense of the normal, neutral exercise of authority.”⁸⁹

Complementarian theologian Al Wolters provides a thorough explanation of the Greek term ἀθηντεύω. Wolters explains that most scholars now agree on the interpretation of the verb as meaning an “exercise of authority in some way.”⁹⁰ However, the debate around the infinitive remains. Wolters states, “What remains in dispute is whether the contested verb has a pejorative or an ingressive connotation. In other words, is what the apostle forbids a woman to do something intrinsically inappropriate (as in ‘domineer’), or is it the initiation of the exercise of authority (as in ‘assume authority’)?”⁹¹ Wolter proceeds to explain in great depth that neither interpretation is likely.⁹²

Complementarian scholar Andreas Köstenberger sheds further light on the positive connotation of the term ἀθηντεύω related to the Greek conjunction οὐδέ. Egalitarians use the conjunction to say that “teaching” and “exercising authority” serve as a single idea and thus lose their distinctiveness in translation.⁹³ Thus, they interpret the prohibition in light of a temporary issue and conclude if a woman is rightly identified as being in authority, she is equal in her role to teach and lead both men and women.⁹⁴ Köstenberger goes to great lengths to show that the conjunction of οὐδέ with the two Greek infinitives διδάσκειν and ἀθηντεύειν leads to a positive connotation. He states,

⁸⁹ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 306–7.

⁹⁰ Al Wolters, “The Meaning of ἀθηντεύω,” in Köstenberger and Schreiner, *Women in the Church*, 65–66.

⁹¹ Wolters, “The Meaning of ἀθηντεύω,” 66.

⁹² See chapter 2, “The Meaning of ἀθηντεύω,” in *Women in the Church*, 65–115, for the full scope of Wolters’s work pertaining to the rare verb, ἀθηντεύω.

⁹³ Andreas Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence: The Syntax of 1 Timothy 2:12,” in Köstenberger and Schreiner, *Women in the Church*, 145–46.

⁹⁴ Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence,” 145–46.

To sum up this point, it is important to keep in mind that οὐδέ functions as a coordinating conjunction in 1 Timothy 2:12, and as such—particularly as a *negative* conjunction—it does not combine two separate elements in the sense that it excludes any consideration of those elements individually. While the elements may overlap conceptually and a larger “single idea” may legitimately be posited that *encompasses* or *includes* both elements, they retain a certain degree of distinctness.⁹⁵

In conclusion, Paul’s command and prohibitions in verses 11–12 do not demean a woman’s participation in the church, nor do they undermine the equal value of her dignity to man. This is merciful, for Paul is merely following the order God ordained from the beginning. Köstenberger states, “Structurally bound to v. 11, v. 12 partakes in the larger unit’s concern for Christian deportment, congregational unity, and proper authority structure. As well, Paul supports it by an appeal to the Genesis creation-fall narrative, signifying its enduring relevance to the church.”⁹⁶

The Purpose and Promise of Paul’s Appeal to Women: 1 Timothy 2:13–15

Immediately following Paul’s command for women to learn and his prohibition on specific activities in the church, Paul appeals to the greatest defense for ecclesiastical structure: the creation account. As noted in the Genesis 1–3 overview, the creation order ultimately determines the structure of the church. That which was set from the beginning does not cease to exist because of changes in time and circumstance. God ordained a permanent structure and order, pre-fall, even though the consequences of the fall are felt in this particular area. Consequences do not override or overturn what the Creator intended.

Paul continues, “For Adam was created first, then Eve” (2:13) and proceeds to expound upon the fall of man: “Eve was deceived and was a transgressor” (2:14). Yet he concludes with a gracious promise of her “being saved through childbearing” (2:15).

⁹⁵ Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence,” 149.

⁹⁶ Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence,” 161.

According to Knight, the use of the conjunction (γάρ, “for”) “signifies that the statement that follows provides the reason for the previous command.”⁹⁷ Knight continues, “Adam (Ἀδάμ) is the transliteration of the Hebrew word used in Genesis as the name of the first man created by God. It is used in our passage not of generic ‘mankind,’ as in Genesis 1:26–27, but of man = male, as distinct from Eve (cf. especially Genesis 2:20).”⁹⁸ When women are prohibited, it is because God prohibited them, not men. He designed, and He declared what was good. The temptation is the same as seen in Genesis 3: a heart of unbelief that God has withheld, therefore, what He has ordained is not good. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In his instruction to Timothy, Paul clearly models how Scripture is to interpret Scripture. What was intended from the beginning is not ours to rewrite or redefine. Where there may have been a fork in the road pertaining to ecclesiastical order, verses 13–15 clearly reveal something timeless (a complementarian framework) contra to something changing or temporary (an egalitarian framework). This is an opportunity to taste and experientially see the goodness of God at work in His Bride. This concept is and will remain countercultural until He returns. Until then, may we be bold enough to align with what He ordered such that we are willing to “modify and correct both our thinking and our behavior”⁹⁹ to align with His Word alone.

Peace in the Permissible: Activities for Women According to Titus 2:1, 3–5

I will never forget sitting in one of my seminary classes, working to complete my master’s degree, when my professor teaching on women leading women stated, “Titus

⁹⁷ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 142. Knight notes that his translation is from Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., trans. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, ed. F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

⁹⁸ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 142.

⁹⁹ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 225.

2 is not merely about verses 3–5 for women teaching women. Do not skip over verse 1 where Paul begins with ‘know sound doctrine.’” If you have been to any church function as a woman, you have likely run into a teaching, retreat, or entire ministry program on discipleship centered around Titus 2:3–5. We would be remiss not to look briefly at these verses, for in them, women are given one example of permissible activities that further the kingdom and utilize their calling in ministry. But we must not skip over verse 1, for this is the orthodoxy that undergirds the orthopraxy of verses 3–5.

The historical context of Titus is similar to that of 1 Timothy. We know from 1:5 that Paul has left Titus in Crete “so that you (Titus) might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I (Paul) directed you.” Paul continues with listing the qualifications of an elder, a list parallel to what he provided Timothy (1 Tim 3). There are primary concerns Paul addresses to Titus, much like he did with Timothy. These concerns include false teaching and the need to confront and stand against it, instruction to the believers in Crete concerning their conduct and church order, and qualifications for elders within the church.¹⁰⁰ Titus would certainly face opposition due to the conditions in Crete.¹⁰¹

According to theologian and commentator D. Edmond Hiebert, the “origin of the Cretan churches is unknown. They had evidently been in existence for some time when Paul visited Crete.”¹⁰² Their condition was anything but encouraging. Hiebert continues, “The prevailing moral conditions in the churches were far from what they might be. Naturally prone to be lax and indifferent, the Christians were adversely influenced by the prevailing low moral standards in Crete.”¹⁰³ This ought not to be a

¹⁰⁰ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 10.

¹⁰¹ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 423.

¹⁰² Hiebert, *Titus*, 423.

¹⁰³ Hiebert, *Titus*, 423.

surprise given the disorder within leadership and the false teaching present. The overflow of both surely compromised the moral conduct of those immersed within it. Due to their disorderly daily conduct, “Titus was urged to insist on the need for sound doctrine and high level of moral and social conduct by the Christians (2:1–10; 3:1–3).”¹⁰⁴

The conduct called for in Titus 2:1–10 is in stark contrast to that of the false teachers in 1:10–16. These are men, “especially those of the circumcision party” (1:10), who profess with their mouths, yet protest with their deeds. They teach with the result of “upsetting whole households” by teaching “for shameful gain what they ought not to teach” (1:11). There are five different groups instructed in Titus 2:1–10: older men (v. 2), older women (v. 3), younger women (vv. 4–5), young men (v. 6), and slaves (vv. 9–10).¹⁰⁵ All five groups are first to concern themselves with sound doctrine and then teach those entrusted to them. Their conduct must be grounded in what they believe and have professed concerning the basic truths of the gospel (2:11–14; 3:4–8).¹⁰⁶

Paul’s command is given to women who are arguably in a leadership role, but what matters is those whom they lead. In verses 3–5, Paul instructs older women to teach younger women about Christian conduct for their personal walk with Christ, which bears communal fruit to their homes and the church gathering. It is important to note the gravity of what is permissible to women: women are to teach women, and women are to lead women. The text contrasts older and younger women, highlighting the need to learn sound doctrine (cf. Paul’s command for women “to learn” in 1 Tim 2:11) with the added fruit of life experience.¹⁰⁷ This is a gracious call not only to utilize one’s gift in leadership

¹⁰⁴ Hiebert, *Titus*, 423.

¹⁰⁵ Hiebert, *Titus*, 423.

¹⁰⁶ For the sake of this project, we will not explore the instruction pertaining to men, younger men, or slaves. We will primarily look at the permissible tasks for older and younger women in verses 3–5.

¹⁰⁷ It is important to note the contrast in physical age as it pertains to instructing younger women in their walk with Christ and how they keep their household. However, according to 1 John 2:12–14, the spiritual maturation of a believer is not necessarily bound in their physical age but in how they conduct their lives in obedience to God and His Word. See Melinda Clark, “Developing a Biblical Model to

and teaching but to disciple women in the truth of God’s Word and His design for the church. It is a command to obey, not a suggestion to rewrite. May we all, men and women, be faithful stewards of this command: to train, equip, and encourage women leading and teaching women in the local church.

Conclusion: Purposeful Contribution in the Co-laboring

As one might conclude, the debate continues concerning gender roles with respect to biblical leadership in the local church. However, when Scripture is diligently studied and rightfully handled, the design of God from the beginning radiates through the text. What God ordained, pre-fall, in the creation of male and female (created equally in His image and in dignity with distinction in roles) is merely echoed throughout Scripture, as we see in 1 Timothy 2:9–15 and Titus 2:1, 3–5. Scripture gives clarity on key issues and restates this clarity and instruction not as part of the curse but as part of God’s good design in creation.

The New Testament brings clarity in some of the ways the creation order is expressed in the order of the church, declaring permanency—not that which is temporary and fleeting. These parameters include the command for women to conduct themselves in a manner pleasing to the Lord (2 Tim 2:9–10), to learn in a quiet, submissive manner (2 Tim 2:11), and to heed the boundaries established by God in creation to not teach nor exercise authority over men (2 Tim 2:12).

In God’s gracious work in women, He does not stop with what is impermissible but instructs and commands them in Titus 2:1, 3–5 in what is permissible: to teach, train, equip, and lead other women. Titus 2:1, 3–5 should not be flippantly used as a bone to throw at women seeking to hush their concerns about how they are to rightly

Disciple Women in the Process of Spiritual Maturation” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013).

participate in the local church. This is a clear command from the Lord to train, equip, and educate women, first, in the Word and, second, in their conduct.

These boundaries, established in the creation order, ecclesiastically instructed in 1 Timothy 2:9–15, and expounded upon in Titus 2:1, 3–5, are what enable men and women to express purposeful contribution when co-laboring for the sake of the gospel. Seminary educator and author Terri Stovall declares, “There is safety and freedom in clearly defined boundaries. . . . Boundaries are not tools to oppress or confine, but first and foremost they allow us to run freely safely.”¹⁰⁸ May we all, brothers and sisters alike, spur one another on to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24), bowing individually to what the Creator established and ordained, and bravely co-laboring together for the sake of the gospel, the unity of His Bride, and ultimately for the glory of His name.

¹⁰⁸ Terri Stovall, “God’s Plan for Women, in *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church*, by Jaye Martin and Terri Stovall (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 16.

CHAPTER 3
HISTORICAL, CURRENT, AND PRACTICAL ISSUES
CONCERNING WOMEN AND BIBLICAL
LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

The seismic shift in a woman’s heart entered when she chose to disobey and rebel against her Creator. Now, the tumultuous waves of feminism find their ebb and flow in the tsunami of sin’s consequences. Author and Bible teacher Mary Kassian states, “The philosophy of feminism is part of the seismic postmodern earthquake. Feminism proposes that women find happiness and meaning through the pursuit of personal authority, autonomy, and freedom.”¹ The heart that lacks depth in sound doctrine can easily be overtaken by the postmodern message of feminism. Far worse, the biblical concept of leadership is lost in the riptides of attempting to rewrite sound doctrine to either reject women in leadership altogether or to make a place, position, or role that was not intended for her. In the opening pages of *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church*, authors Jaye Martin and Terri Stovall write, “The rise in evangelical feminism has begun to affect the sight, sound, and taste of the church. Women are leading where women should not lead, men are left sitting on the sidelines (if they are even there at all), and pastors are struggling to figure it all out. It is time to make a stand for the sufficiency of Scripture and God’s plan that it teaches for men and women and for the way they serve in the church.”²

As we have seen in chapter 2, there are boundaries placed concerning the role

¹ Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 7.

² Jaye Martin and Terri Stovall, “Part One: The Biblical Foundation; Why Women Leading Women?,” in *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 1–2.

of women in leadership within the local church. From the beginning, God designed a created order that would foreshadow a structure for the church. However, we were guaranteed disharmony and disunity concerning roles when what was orderly became disordered on account of sin. Paul expounds on the ecclesiastical order in 1 Timothy 2:9–15, explaining what is permitted and prohibited for women in the local church. He goes far beyond the history of the church to make this claim. Paul refers to the created order, reiterating to the church what was already established by the Creator. To echo Martin and Stovall, the attempt to reorder or redesign an order that we did not create has left a poor taste of church in the mouths of those who attend. We must surrender to His plan and not attempt to formulate a new set of blueprints.

So, why is there a need for another project concerning gender roles and leadership in the church? Bookstores, blogs, and media posts are certainly not lacking opinions, thoughts, and resources on the topic. Politicians build platforms on it. Churches split over it. Families divide and far too often crumble under its weight. Hollywood celebrates it. Men cower to its demands. Women are baited by its lure. Worldwide movements are developed by it and seek to protect it. Yet, those who seek to understand a woman’s role in the church, apart from the One who created and ordained her role, will miss the purpose entirely.

The most recent shockwave to hit this subject concerns women with respect to biblical leadership in the local church.³ One need not look far to find resources on either end of the spectrum of women in leadership. Women are taking leadership roles in droves, inside and outside the church.⁴ Is it possible to acknowledge women in leadership

³ A helpful resource to gauge the gender role spectrum is written by Adrian Warnock, “Gender: Complementarian vs Egalitarian Spectrum,” *Patheos* (blog), last modified June 11, 2024, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/adrianwarnock/2012/09/gender-roles-a-complementarian-and-egalitarian-spectrum/>.

⁴ For the sake of this project, I will primarily focus on women in leadership in the local church, specifically a Southern Baptist affiliated church. I will not look at the specifications of roles for women in the workplace or the home.

without losing sight of the biblical doctrine of complementarianism? Does the biblical pattern of male leadership contradict or even negate the possibility of a biblical pattern for women to serve in leadership capacities within the local church? How does the church graciously navigate the tumultuous waves of evangelical feminism and educate and train women in a complementarian framework for leadership in the church?

The following chapter will seek to (1) provide a brief overview of secular feminism and its pervasive influence on evangelical feminism as it pertains to biblical leadership; (2) compare and contrast women in leadership roles who are denying the doctrine of complementarianism with those who are training and equipping women for biblical leadership in the framework of complementarianism; and (3) conclude with an agreement concerning the need for pastoral support from both sides of the spectrum, even though these sides come to different conclusions as to how the support is put into practice. Through this, it will be demonstrated that although there is a clear agreement from both egalitarians complementarians to support women in ministerial leadership roles, the orthodoxy to which they hold is vastly different, leading to their difference in orthopraxy as expressed in local church leadership.

Feminism and the Fight for “Freedom”

The second wave of feminism can be traced to a thirty-year span, from 1960 to 1990, with ongoing ramifications and detrimental consequences.⁵ Two works undergirding the feminist movement’s development are Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* and Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*.⁶ Formerly known as a

⁵ A brief overview concerning the central concern for the three waves of feminism are as follows: The primary concern of the First Wave (1830s) was racial and social justice; the Second Wave (1960s) concerned gender equality; and the Third Wave (1990s) is “characterized by an even more radical pursuit of feminine self-realization completely removed from any guiding Christian principles.” Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger, *Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 24. See also the chart on p. 18.

⁶ This project will not provide an in-depth look at the historical timeline for the feminist movement. See these sources for a better understanding of the secular feminist movement from a Christian perspective: Kassian, *The Feminist Mistake*; Mary A. Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to*

manifesto, de Beauvoir's book was not widely accepted in North America until Friedan's book highlighted and exalted the socialist agenda. These two primary sources laid the foundation for the development of second-wave feminism. According to Kassian's study, de Beauvoir viewed women as imprisoned in the role of "wife, mother, and sweetheart" and sought to liberate women from this demise. This was de Beauvoir's goal—to liberate women.⁷

Concerning Friedan's understanding of the imprisoned nature of women, egalitarian author Rebecca Merrill Groothuis states, "Friedan's insights into the culturally entrenched stereotype of womanhood also served as a transition from early feminism to modern feminism. The groundswell that developed in the wake of *The Feminine Mystique* instigated a wide variety of feminist thought, from a revival of the evangelical and classical liberal ideas of early feminism to the fairly recent woman-centered ideology of radical feminism."⁸ In light of the more secular nature of modern feminism, Groothuis proceeds by stating that "evangelical feminism belongs more in the tradition of early feminist thought than in the current of modern, secular feminism."⁹ However, the motivation of each thought, whether early or secular, has diagnosed the issue similarly: women are bound and imprisoned, man is the cause, and freedom is the anthem.¹⁰

Unite Feminism with the Church (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1992); Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger, *Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008); Michelle Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016).

⁷ Kassian, *The Feminist Mistake*, 22. Kassian continues, "De Beauvoir viewed departure from the role of wife and mother and the establishment of economic and professional independence as the key to women's equality with men. Her model was socialist" (22).

⁸ Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Women Caught in the Conflict: The Culture War between Traditionalism and Feminism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1994), 44.

⁹ Groothuis, *Women Caught in the Conflict*, 44.

¹⁰ For further study concerning Groothuis's argument in contrasting the early thoughts of feminism and the modern, secular thoughts of feminism, please see chapter 3, "Evangelicalism and the Rise of American Feminism," in her book, *Women Caught in the Conflict*, pp. 31–47. I do not disagree that there are differences between the two thoughts; however, one current flows into the other, forming thoughts muddled into the other. One of the major differences results in a love for the Lord and His church. Modern, secular thought will leave out God completely, whereas egalitarians of "early feminist thought" seek to honor Him in what they believe He intended at creation.

According to professor and author Michelle Lee-Barnewall, “The 1960s saw a strong reaction against the domestic expectations placed on women. However, unlike at the turn of the twentieth century, this time [second-wave feminism] concerns about rights and equality predominated.”¹¹ The drive of this movement was to essentially glorify autonomy—not just merely the independence of women, but the autonomy of women at the expense of men specifically in the home and workplace. Lee-Barnewall continues, “The increased emphasis on the individual and personal fulfillment in the larger culture seemed to provide a fertile environment for the feminists who would in turn provide a vital catalyst for the evangelical egalitarian movement.”¹² Thus, rather than swimming against the current and letting Scripture be our guide, we find ourselves farther down the current of societal restructuring.

The feminist mentality is to create autonomy and freedom apart from the God-ordained roles for men and women. To believe the created is ultimately free from its Creator is one of the most tragic lies to which an individual can succumb. There is no freedom apart from the One who came to set the captive free (Isa 61; John 8). The notion of completely abandoning one’s role lends itself to living independently of one’s calling, ultimately leading one to live independently of one’s Creator. Whether one finds themselves treading water in the current of “early feminist thought” or “modern, secular feminism,” the waves crash into the same root issue of ultimately liberating oneself from the created order God established and declared as good in Genesis 1–2. A cry for autonomy is most assuredly accompanied by a refusal to acknowledge and obey His authority.

¹¹ Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*, 49.

¹² Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*, 49.

Evangelical Feminism Defined and Indoctrinated by Secular Feminism

As stated in chapter 2, the theological crux of understanding complementarianism and egalitarianism is one's understanding of what happened at creation and in the fall. The rapid waters of feminism continue to strip away the God-given role and identity of women. Author and professor Sandra Richter refers to the rebellion in the garden as "the crime of the garden." In a narration of God's conversation with Adam and Eve, Richter states,

"Are you in? Do you want this? The only requirement is that I stay God, and you stay image. I'm the original; you're the copy. My very character defines what is good and evil, and you submit to those boundaries." And Adam and Eve said no. They said basically, "We want to create God in our own image. We do not want God creating us in his." That's the crime of the garden.¹³

The flow of argument for feminist theology works backward to who God is and how He created and relates to His creation. However, the deception behind this pattern of thought continues to lead many women astray. If women can be deterred by the peripheral arguments of gynocentric equality, their eyes remain unfixed on what is central, Who is central, and the root issue altogether: their agenda to diminish androcentric doctrines and set free those who have been duped or imprisoned to it.

The pattern for feminist theology begins with an attack on the character of God and His Word, which inevitably impacts one's understanding of a woman's role with respect to biblical leadership. Concerning the proper design and function of manhood and womanhood, author and theologian Kevin DeYoung states, "There is much at stake in God making humanity male and female. Created for one another yet distinct from each other, a man and a woman are not interchangeable—they are designed to function according to a divine fittedness. But when this design is misunderstood, ignored, or

¹³ Sandra Richter, "The Servant, the Idol, & the Image of God (Q&A with Sandra Richter)," Henry Center for Theological Understanding, February 8, 2017, <https://henrycenter.tiu.edu/videos/#video-17950>; Daniel Darling, *The Dignity Revolution: Reclaiming God's Rich Vision for Humanity* (London: Good Book, 2018), 149.

abused, there are dire consequences.”¹⁴

In this shift, the created attempts to give an account of the Creator rather than living in the truth of what the Creator has already revealed. The sinfulness of man is further revealed when the created not only exchanges the truth for a lie but, in fact, believes they can “re-create” the Creator Himself (Eccl 9; Rom 1). The rejection of distinction in gender roles is, at the root, a rejection of God’s created order, and the dire consequences continue to wreak havoc in many ways. Leadership is not a free pass to authority overall, but properly executed under the submission and guidance of the Spirit, leadership is a beautiful thing to behold for men and women co-laboring in the church. The creation order God established is for both the provision and protection of a flourishing church. Instead, Kassian writes, “Biblical feminists formulated a definition of equality for Christian women that concurred with the definition put forth by secular society. Equality meant role-interchangeability.”¹⁵ However, those who cling to an egalitarian framework maintain the stance it is “not simply a by-product of secular feminism.”¹⁶ According to them, “It is deeply rooted in Scripture and has been publicly articulated for centuries.”¹⁷ A proper understanding of the source of each argument is crucial when applying the doctrine to ministerial roles in the church.

The agenda within secular feminism was to rename, recreate, and eventually reassign God’s original design.¹⁸ Those who pursue this agenda will find themselves clinging to the curse rather than the cross. For egalitarians, their need to harmonize what they believe Scripture teaches concerning roles became essential to their doctrine. To

¹⁴ Kevin DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 176.

¹⁵ Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel*, 211–12.

¹⁶ Ruth A. Tucker, *Women in the Maze: Questions and Answers on Biblical Equality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 216.

¹⁷ Tucker, *Women in the Maze*, 216.

¹⁸ Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel*, 212.

liberate a woman's role in the church, they had to take liberty with the text.¹⁹ According to Kassian, "They found it necessary to determine which Scriptural texts were dynamic and which were static, which were inspired and which were the author's bias, which were true and which were in error. In doing so, Biblical feminists adopted a feminist mindset."²⁰ The cultural riptide of second-wave secular feminism impacted and further resourced subsequent waves of evangelical feminism. Lee-Barnewall states, "As second wave feminism concentrated on the rights of women and the abolition of roles based on gender so did the second evangelical feminist movement."²¹ Truly, one influenced the other with an unashamed agenda to release women from the grips of the so-called patriarchal reign of men within the church. Lee-Barnwell continues, "Whereas the first evangelical movement saw a push for women's influence in the public sphere due to the belief in their greater moral influence, the second movement tried to help Christian women free themselves from what many said were the burdens of a patriarchal church culture."²² A feminist agenda consistently stresses the need for liberation, to "free themselves." However, a complementarian framework rests in the freedom already provided by God in the created order and believes overstepping these boundaries is what leads to imprisonment, not the other way around. Complementarian author Margaret Köstenberger states,

The point is that true freedom in life is not found in the abolishing of any authority over oneself, especially if it is God-ordained. Scripture presents men's authority in

¹⁹ For example, Galatians 3:28 is a banner text for egalitarians and used by the majority, if not all, to express equality between males and females in regard to gender roles. Egalitarian scholars interpret "there is neither male nor female. . . . all are one in Christ" to mean there is no longer a distinction in roles. When Christ came, Christ redeemed any distinction introduced by the fall. However, Christ reaffirmed the creation order by His redemption. Wayne Grudem states, "And so Galatians 3:28 simply says that we have a special kind of *unity* in the body of Christ. Our differences as male and female are not obliterated by this unity, but the unity is beautiful in God's sight particularly because it is a unity of different kinds of people." Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 185.

²⁰ Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel*, 212.

²¹ Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*, 50.

²² Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*, 50.

the home and in the church not as autocratic or grounded in male superiority or merit but in the mysterious, sovereign divine will subsumed under the supreme lordship and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Living within God's created male and female order allows for a genuine experience of fulfillment and freedom for everyone.²³

There cannot be true freedom apart from submission to His plan and His design.

Liberation Theology and Evangelical Feminism

The resounding cry for egalitarians is equality, exposure of patriarchy, and emancipation. Complementarians believe there is equal dignity for men and women yet distinction in function and roles for marriage, home, and the church. Egalitarians believe equality is diminished if distinction is not declared. The cry of feminists is to free those "imprisoned" by the doctrine of complementarianism by eliminating role distinctions and hierarchical structures. What is the end result? If emancipation from any form of headship or authority is the goal, the shouts of egalitarians resemble those who hold to a theology of liberalism. Grudem provides a helpful definition and outcome as it pertains to the connection between theological liberalism and egalitarianism:

I am concerned that evangelical feminism (also called "egalitarianism") has become a new path by which evangelicals are being drawn into theological liberalism. When I use the phrase "theological liberalism" I mean a system of thinking that denies the complete truthfulness of the Bible as the Word of God and denies the unique and absolute authority of the Bible in our lives. When I speak of "evangelical feminism" I mean a movement that claims there are no unique leadership roles for men in marriage or in the church.²⁴

When an individual begins to weigh the truth of God's Word with the "spirit of this age" (Eph 2:1-3), this can lead to undermining the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. When Scripture is undermined, "little by little, step by step, colleges and churches and denominations start to slide toward liberalism."²⁵ According to Kassian,

²³ Köstenberger, *Jesus and the Feminists*, 34.

²⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 15.

²⁵ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 17.

“Liberation theology focused on the Biblical passage message of God’s mission to set humans free from bondage.”²⁶ The agenda of second-wave feminism was to free women from the bondage of oppression and male headship. Lee-Barnewell suggests that in second-wave feminism, “women discovered parallels between the antislavery argument and their own situation and also parallels in the interpretation of Scripture.”²⁷

Egalitarians used the same agenda in their attack on complementarianism. Lee-Barnewell continues, “As second wave feminism concentrated on the rights of women and the abolition of roles based on gender so did the second evangelical feminist movement.

Whereas the first evangelical movement saw a push for women’s influence in the public sphere due to the belief in their greater moral influence, the second movement tried to help Christian women free themselves from what many said were the burdens of a patriarchal church structure.”²⁸ Does evangelical feminism find its foundation in

Scripture or the world? According to well-known evangelical feminist Letha Dawson Scanzoni,

For Christian women, liberation may be a long and difficult process. . . . Liberation means an end to the self-hatred women have been taught, an end to the hatred we project on other women. Often women resist liberation because we have been taught that our bodies are weak, our powers of reasoning defective, our intellects light, our skills inferior, our emotions frivolous. And we have believed our teachers. We suffer from low self-esteem and no self-confidence. Feminism has been termed an “identity crisis.” Women are beginning to ask, “Who am I? What does it mean to say that I am created in the image of God?” Christ commanded us to love others as ourselves, but we women have been taught to despise ourselves.²⁹

Egalitarians argue they are not bent on full separation or abandonment of gender, but “biblical feminists aim for both women and men to become more balanced people who

²⁶ Kassian, *The Feminism Gospel*, 53.

²⁷ Lee-Barnewell, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*, 50.

²⁸ Lee-Barnewell, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*, 50.

²⁹ Letha Dawson Scanzoni and Nancy A. Hardesty, *All We’re Meant to Be: Biblical Feminism for Today*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 317–18.

are more harmoniously related to one another.”³⁰ Author Sarah Bessey maintains that the core of “modern Christian feminism” simply “consists of the radical notion that women are people, too. Feminism only means we champion the dignity, rights, responsibilities, and glories of women as equal in importance—not greater than, but certainly not less than—to those of men, and we refuse discrimination against women.”³¹ Author, lecturer, and board member of Christians for Biblical Equality³² Rebecca Merrill Groothius goes on to define the goal of evangelical feminism and differentiation from secular feminism as follows:

The goal of evangelical feminism is that men and women be allowed to serve God as individuals, according to their own unique gifts rather than according to a culturally predetermined personality slot called “Christian manhood” or “Christian womanhood.” Also, unlike many secular feminists, women who identify with evangelical feminism are not motivated by a greed for power or a self-centered desire to prove themselves equal or superior to men. Rather, they are motivated by a sense of justice and the conviction that the traditional order which has been imposed on women and men is not in keeping with God’s will for his people. They desire to see women liberated from the stultifying effects of exclusively male leadership, and they are impelled to seek the opportunity to serve God and minister to others to the full extent of their abilities in obedience to the call of God.³³

While the appeal to “serve God as individuals” and adopt a theology “motivated by a sense of justice and the conviction of the traditional order” may seem innocent, the fundamental pillars of this type of thought ultimately undermine the order God established upon the creation of mankind. Everything must go back to the creation order. To adapt one’s hermeneutical approach in an attempt to avoid the pendulum swings between androcentric and gynocentric hermeneutics is a slippery slope at best. Bessey

³⁰ Groothius, *Women Caught in the Conflict*, p. 110.

³¹ Sarah Bessey, *Jesus Feminist: An Invitation to Revisit the Bible’s View of Women* (New York: Howard Books, 2013), 13–14.

³² CBE is a “parachurch organization whose purpose is to define, defend, and promote an egalitarian position in the evangelical world, and it is thus a counterpart to the complementarian organization CBMW.” Wayne Grudem, *Countering the Claims to Evangelical Feminism: Biblical Responses to Key Questions* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2006), 291.

³³ Groothius, *Women Caught in the Conflict*, 110.

claims that feminism “is just one way to participate in this redemptive movement” toward equality.³⁴ Groothius suggests that “a biblical feminist hermeneutic is no more woman-centered than it is man-centered; it simply seeks to correct a historic imbalance of traditional biblical interpretation as regarding the role of women. It does not attempt to rewrite the Bible or to usurp biblical authority.”³⁵ Both egalitarian authors focus on the historicity of interpretation (current vs. traditional) and the ongoing need to liberate those entangled in the web of complementarity. In response to this desire for increased hermeneutical liberty, theologian Albert Mohler states,

The modern ethic of liberation, now so deeply and thoroughly embedded in the modern mind, suggests that the traditions of the past may indeed be a prison from which the present generation should demand release. This is where biblical traditionalists must enter the debate with vigor. We do share much common ground of argument with the secular traditionalists. Biblical traditionalists affirm that the historical experience of mankind should be informative of the present. We also affirm that the enduring patterning of differing roles between men and women, combined with the centrality of the natural family, does present a compelling argument that should be understood as both descriptive and prescriptive. Nevertheless, the biblical traditionalist’s most fundamental argument goes far beyond history.³⁶

If one approaches Scripture with the belief that the interpretation of Scripture is predominately androcentric, then, no matter the attempt for balance, one will tend to shift toward a gynocentric interpretation, having convinced themselves this is only fair to both genders. This difference in hermeneutical approach, particularly for feminists and egalitarians, is worth noting. Secular feminists come with a worldview predisposed to believe in a male-dominated, unjust, and unfair biblical approach to females. Egalitarian feminists begin with a “presupposition that feminism is right, and the Bible is wrong

³⁴ Bessey, *Jesus Feminist*, 14.

³⁵ Groothius, *Women Caught in the Conflict*, 111.

³⁶ Albert Mohler, “A Call for Courage on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood,” *Albert Mohler* (blog), June 19, 2006, <https://albertmohler.com/2006/06/19/a-call-for-courage-on-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood/>.

where it stands in conflict with feminism.”³⁷ Therefore, both question the inerrancy and authority of Scripture.

Egalitarians believe in and hold to the inerrancy of Scripture but “claim to show inductively that the Bible, rightly interpreted, teaches male-female equality, including women’s eligibility to all church offices and roles of leadership in the church.”³⁸ However, according to Reformed scholar and pastor, Ligon Duncan, “Many if not most evangelical egalitarians today have significant qualms about inerrancy, and are embracing things like trajectory hermeneutics³⁹ to justify their positions. Inerrancy or egalitarianism, one or the other, eventually wins out.”⁴⁰ Feminists approach observation with a preconceived bias, whereas egalitarians approach the text similarly to complementarians but interpret it with a desire to prove the text supports liberation and equality. This worldview will certainly redefine not only their roles but who God is in relation to who He has created, and from there, the overall orthopraxy of women and their role in the church. Complementarians, however, observe and interpret Scripture based on what happened in creation, which informs and instructs the structure of the home and church. Mohler states,

For biblical traditionalists the choice is clear. We understand the Bible to present a beautiful portrait of complementarity between the sexes, with both men and women in charge to reflect God’s glory in a distinct way. Thus, there are very real distinctions that mark the difference between masculinity and femininity, male and female. Standing on biblical authority, we must critique both the present and the past when the biblical pattern has been compromised or denied. Likewise, we must

³⁷ Köstenberger, *Jesus and the Feminists*, 26.

³⁸ Köstenberger, *Jesus and the Feminists*, 26.

³⁹ Trajectory hermeneutics, also known as “redemptive movement hermeneutics,” makes the claim that a “static” rendering of the text isolates words, whereas a trajectory hermeneutic “looks for the redemptive spirit of the text to discern what still applies today. Other words that overlap in meaning with “spirit” are “progressive,” “developmental,” or “trajectory.” For a helpful and more in-depth review, see Thomas R. Schreiner, “William J. Webb’s *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals*: A Review,” *SBJT* 6, no. 1 (2002): 46–64.

⁴⁰ J. Ligon Duncan III, “Why ‘Together for the Gospel’ Embraces Complementarianism,” *JBMW* 13, no. 1 (2008): 25.

point ourselves, our church, and our children to the future, affirming that God's glory is at stake in our response of obedience or disobedience to His design.⁴¹

One's hermeneutic is surely impacted by one's initial observation and rightly ordered context of the text prior to making a sound interpretation. As we will see in the section below, an incorrect rendering of the text will lead to an unbiblical application. In this debate, the temptation is to silence and marginalize those who hold to a complementarian hermeneutic (biblical traditionalists) and usher in an egalitarian orthopraxy. The next section provides examples of some women who once held to the doctrine of complementarity but, over time, gave way to an egalitarian approach to ministry. As we saw in chapter 2, a misinterpretation of the text will eventually move or remove the boundary altogether for what a woman is permitted to do in the local church.

Re-sounding the Alarm to Redeem Roles and “Recover” from Complementarity: Examples of Current Leaders

Whether it is due to a media frenzy or increasingly wide-open doors to voice whatever you want, whenever you want, no matter how you want, it seems now more than ever that the pushback on biblical womanhood is at an all-time high. In fact, the overarching tactic seems to be an attempt to recover or redeem the attitude of complementarity, which some believe has minimized and diminished women in the local church. Whereas second-wave feminism wanted to extinguish traditionalism, in the third wave, patriarchy and misogyny were center stage and further heightened the conversation surrounding the SBC sexual abuse scandal.⁴² The ramifications continue to be ardently

⁴¹ Mohler, “A Call for Courage on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.”

⁴² The #churchtoo movement caused much turmoil and unrest in the SBC in 2018, as sexual harassment and sexual abuse in the SBC was uncovered and widely publicized. This paper will not delve into what occurred in 2018, but in no way do I agree with nor promote patriarchy especially when it is used to abuse and lord over another for power or sexual gain. I do believe the exposure of these sinful behaviors and issues opened wide the door for many leading women within the SBC to sound the alarm for ongoing misogyny and discrimination as it pertains to women in ministerial leadership positions. To read more about the 2018 SBC and sexual abuse, see Alex Johnson, “#MeToo goes to church: Southern Baptists face a reckoning over treatment of women,” *NBC News*, June 8, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/sexual-misconduct/metoo-goes-church-southern-baptists-face-reckoning-over-treatment-women-n880216>.

felt on the subject of women in ministerial roles, particularly leadership roles within the local church. Author and sociologist Lisa Weaver Swartz writes, “Differences on the question of women’s leadership in the church are intensifying divisions in an already-fractured evangelical movement.”⁴³

As noted, the rise of second-wave feminism was made a bit easier due to the ongoing work of women in the suffrage movement. Could it be that third-wave feminism has been made “easier” due to those who aim to shatter glass ceilings for women excluded from and patronized by the confines of patriarchy? Women such as Beth Allison Barr, Aimee Byrd, Sarah Bessey, Kristin du Mez, and even Lifeway’s former leading author and Bible study producer, Beth Moore, are pushing back on the complementarian way of life within the church.⁴⁴ More specifically, they are challenging the doctrine of “biblical womanhood” and its practice within the local church. They are removing themselves from churches affiliated with such teachings and even going as far as to apologize for any role they have played in its teaching.⁴⁵

What alarms are they sounding? Why the call to recover from the doctrine of biblical manhood and womanhood? Are there valid points the church needs to heed?

⁴³ Lisa Weaver Swartz, *Stained Glass Ceilings: How Evangelicals Do Gender and Practice Power* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2022), 8.

⁴⁴ This is not a comprehensive list of women pushing back on biblical womanhood. However, my purpose is to highlight the most recent written works on the subject by women who are leaders within their area of ministry and profession. Some of these works have expressed apology, concern, and warnings against complementarianism. Resources include Beth Allison Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood: How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021); Barr, *Becoming the Pastor’s Wife: How Marriage Replaced Ordination as a Woman’s Path to Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2025); Aimee Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: How the Church Needs to Rediscover Her Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020); Bessey, *Jesus Feminist: An Invitation to Revisit the Bible’s View of Women*. Several egalitarian women also contributed to *How I Changed My Mind about Women in Leadership: Compelling Stories from Prominent Evangelicals*, ed. Alan F. Johnson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010). These include Jill Briscoe, Lynne Hybels, Nancy Ortberg, and Ruth Haley Barton, Alice Fryling, Olive Liefeld, Alice Mathews, Carol Pluedemann, Minette Drumwright Pratt, and Bonnie Wurzbacher.

⁴⁵ Beth Moore (@BethMooreLPM), “I beg your forgiveness where I was complicit. I could not see it for what it was until 2016. I plead your forgiveness for how I just submitted to it and supported it and taught it. I trusted that the motives were godly. I have not lost my mind. Nor my doctrine. Just my naivety,” Twitter (now X), April 7, 2021, <https://x.com/BethMooreLPM/status/1379787363270991874>.

Have ceilings been built by man that encase women within structures the Lord never intended for the church to construct?

Cracks in Stained-Glass Ceilings

Democratic Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton is famously known for her reference to “glass ceilings,” suggesting that the “highest, hardest glass ceiling” was that of a woman being elected President of the United States of America.⁴⁶ Conceding her loss of the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama in 2008, she boasted that “although they weren’t able to shatter that highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you, there are about 18 million cracks in it.”⁴⁷ The 18 million cracks referenced the 18 million individuals who voted for her to become the Democratic party nominee. She continued by describing the light shining through the ceiling thanks to the 18 million cracks, “filling us with a hope and the sure knowledge that the path will be a little easier next time.”⁴⁸ Why is this important pertaining to a paper on biblical womanhood and its impact on leadership roles within the church? The same talk of ceilings, most recently described as “stained glass ceilings,” is alive and well as it relates to egalitarianism and complementarianism.⁴⁹

As mentioned above, there are many leading voices pushing back on biblical womanhood with the intent of adding a few cracks of their own to the stained-glass culture of evangelical churches today. Professor and historian Beth Allison Barr expanded the crack in the ceiling of complementarianism by declaring it to be nothing more than patriarchy: “Complementarianism is patriarchy, and patriarchy is about power. Neither

⁴⁶ “Hillary Clinton’s History of Talking about Glass Ceilings,” ABC News, last modified November 2, 2016, accessed December 29, 2023, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/hillary-clinton-history-talking-glass-ceilings/story>.

⁴⁷ Hillary Clinton, “18 Million Cracks in the Glass Ceiling,” Washington Week PBS, June 7, 2008, YouTube video, 0:27, <https://youtu.be/4gQ7zwnOptE?si=S6hDBfHhHmiOaEc9>.

⁴⁸ Clinton, “18 Million Cracks in the Glass Ceiling.”

⁴⁹ Swartz, *Stained Glass Ceilings*.

have ever been about Jesus.”⁵⁰ Whether it is an attempt to claim patriarchy as Christian or pagan, she states,

Both systems place power in the hands of men and take power away from women. Both systems teach women that their voices are worth less than the voice of men... Patriarchy by any other name is still patriarchy. Complementarians may argue that women are equal to men, as does the SBC’s 1998 amendment to the “Baptist Faith and Message”: “The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God’s image.” Yet their insistence that “equal worth” manifests in unequal roles refutes this.”⁵¹

When host Justin Brierley asked Barr about her definition of biblical womanhood, she responded, “As a historian, biblical womanhood is what I call patriarchy.” She then continued to define patriarchy as “a system in which women are always under the authority of men, and they are always (under that authority) in legal, economic, religious, family, whatever . . . and also limited by what they can do by the male jobs and male roles around them.”⁵² When asked if she would call herself a feminist, she gave a resounding “yes,” stating, “I am a very happy feminist in the sense that I believe that women are created completely equally to men and they can do their callings. . . . their sex does not limit our role and what we do in the world . . . women should have equal opportunities and (those opportunities) not dependent on male authority.”⁵³ She goes on to define feminism as simply the “concept that women are people too, and women are completely as human as men are and should be treated that way.” If one reads between the lines, to claim that feminism rightly regards women as people is also to claim that complementarians disregard even the humanity of women.

⁵⁰ Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood*, 281.

⁵¹ Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood*, 16–17.

⁵² Justin Brierley, “Beth Allison Barr & Rachel Green Miller: Egalitarian and Complementarian View on Biblical Womanhood,” Premier Unbelievable?, August 6, 2021, YouTube video, 1:15:14, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUdjx6lZARU>.

⁵³ Brierley, “Beth Allison Barr & Rachel Green Miller: Egalitarian and Complementarian View on Biblical Womanhood.”

This idea that “human rights are women’s rights”⁵⁴ has penetrated not only the secular feminist movement but continues to seep into evangelical feminism as well. The unifying cry of both is “freedom from,” in this case, the freedom from the hierarchal structure of male authority and leadership. This claim implies those who hold to complementarianism do not view women as human because of the distinction of roles. However, a proper understanding of complementarity argues the same thing concerning a woman and her personhood. A major difference does pertain to one’s orthopraxy on where a woman is able to minister. As we saw in chapter 2, this distinction was not created by a doctrine, but by design (Gen 1–2). This concept, however, leads Barr and many others to take the doctrine as a whole and assume that any restriction on role equates to a restriction on a woman’s being.

While complementarity equates to patriarchy for Barr, author and podcaster, Aimee Byrd is seeking to remove “yellow wallpaper” from outdated church walls to add paint strokes of recovery and redemption for those under the masculine thumb of biblical womanhood.⁵⁵ In a review of Byrd’s book, CBMW president, professor, and complementarian author Denny Burk states, “Byrd uses yellow wallpaper as her main metaphor throughout the book. . . . In Byrd’s book, the yellow wallpaper symbolizes how “biblical manhood and womanhood” oppresses women.”⁵⁶ Burk provides a helpful three-part summary of Byrd’s argument for recovering from the doctrine of complementarity:

⁵⁴ Hillary Clinton, “Keynote Address,” speech to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 4–5, 1995, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/exhibits/show/womens-rights/wr-hr-keynote>.

⁵⁵ The book *Yellow Wallpaper* was published in 1882 by Charlotte Perkins Gilman as is widely known as “an important early work of American feminist literature for its illustration of the attitudes toward mental and physical health of women in the 19th century.”⁵⁵ Gilman is known for pushing back on the oppressive, patriarchal mindset for women in the 1900s, and Byrd is pushing back on biblical womanhood for the same thing in the twenty-first century.

⁵⁶ Denny Burk, “Does Anyone Need to Recover from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood? A Review Article of Aimee Byrd’s *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*,” The Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, May 4, 2020, <https://cbmw.org/2020/05/04/does-anyone-need-to-recover-from-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood-a-review-article-of-aimee-byrds-recovering-from-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood/>. The article provides a helpful summary of Byrd’s main points while also exposing weak arguments against complementarianism.

(1) Byrd argues the need to recover the way we read Scripture; (2) Byrd argues we must recover our mission for discipleship in the church, and the aim is not biblical manhood and womanhood; and (3) Byrd argues for recovery of every believer's responsibility, which "entails giving women more prominent roles to teach and lead both men and women in the church."⁵⁷ For Byrd, the hierarchal structure of complementarianism strips women of being "allies" for men in the church, working equally in all leadership capacities for the overall mission of the church.⁵⁸ In restructuring terms like this in Scripture, the overarching goal is to mitigate what appears inferior and interpret terms in light of how they define equality. As this works out in the overall structure of the church, Byrd states,

It's necessary for women to learn as Christ's disciples because women are necessary allies, not option, subordinate assistants. Women are not only necessary allies to men in some things; we are a corresponding strength to men in the entire mission. The church can so easily frame service with men and women under a structure of authority and submission, with the notion that women constantly need to be led by men, that we end up focusing all our energy on squabble about who gets what label, and we miss serving in God's mission together. We need one another. While we affirm the authority Christ gave to the apostles, he didn't leave all the important work to them. Likewise, while we have authoritative/authorized offices in the church, we also have a priesthood of believers, fellow workers ready to get their hands dirty.⁵⁹

In other words, for egalitarians, complementarity focuses on converting the individual to its doctrine, neglecting the overall church, whereas egalitarians look at the community, or the church as a whole. She states, "As we've been taught to focus on aiming for biblical manhood and womanhood, we have missed the bigger picture of Christlikeness to which we are called. And we have lost the aim of what the church is for:

⁵⁷ Burk, "Does Anyone Need to Recover from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood?"

⁵⁸ Byrd agrees with John McKinley's definition of the Hebrew term *ezer* (translated as "ally") given the use of the term throughout the Old Testament describing God as a helper or rescuer to Israel. The definition "necessary ally" was to mitigate the negative connotation they find to mean as inferior when using the term "helper" and attributing it to women. See John McKinley, "Necessary Allies: God as *Ezer*, Woman as *Ezer*," recorded session from the 67th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, November 17–19, 2015, Atlanta).

⁵⁹ Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 189.

preparing us for eternal commune with a triune God. We have taken discipleship out of the church, further separating God’s people by culturally constructed gender paradigms.”⁶⁰

Byrd’s main concern with the so-called “gender paradigms” is the teaching and interpretation of biblical manhood and womanhood, which she describes as “popular Biblicist interpretive methods.”⁶¹ She argues these methods “ironically flourish in our individualistic culture that works against the values of family and community that the biblical manhood and womanhood movement is trying to uphold.”⁶² In other words, she maintains that the teaching of complementarity divides the sexes within the church and, as a result, cannot possibly maintain a communal unity within the body in which discipleship can flourish.

Byrd calls out churches that hold to a complementarian view while simultaneously challenging these churches to make the necessary shift towards an all-encompassing, well-rounded view of women in leadership today. At the beginning of her

⁶⁰ Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 26.

⁶¹ Byrd defines “Biblicists” or the “Biblicist method” as those who rightly uphold the authority of Scripture but often read the Bible with a narrow, flat lens of interpretation, zooming in on the words in the texts themselves while missing the history, context, and confession tradition of the faith. Biblicists emphasize proof texting over a comprehensive biblical theology. What often happens unintentionally is that the Biblicist readers become their own authority, since they often don’t notice they are also looking through their own lens of preconceived theological assumptions. . . . The troubling teaching of biblical manhood and womanhood has thrived under this rubric of popular Biblicist interpretive methods. (*Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 159)

Burk provides a brief rebuttal to Byrd, stating,

We can quibble over how to define biblicism. But what’s striking here is that the hermeneutic Byrd denounces is the same one she uses to defend a position that celebrates expanded leadership roles for women—a position that is relatively new and unusual in the history of the people of God, especially the Reformed tradition of which Byrd is a part (as a member of an OPC church). Not only do such arguments fail exegetically (e.g., 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy 2); they are based on a narrow biblicism that fails to incorporate both natural theology and historical theology. (Burk, “Does Anyone Need to Recover from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood?”)

Burk recommends the resource by John M. Frame, “In Defense of Something Close to Biblicism,” *WTJ* 59, no. 2 (1997): 269–318, and R. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, “In Defense of Proof-Texting,” *JETS* 54, no. 3 (2011): 589–606.

⁶² Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 27.

book, she states, “This isn’t a man-bashing book. And this isn’t a woman-empowerment book. This is a book that asks the reader to consider “the yellow wallpaper in the church” and to do something about it.” Sadly, her conclusion rests on an egalitarian hermeneutic to reread, rethink, and restructure what Scripture says to men and women in the local church. Denny Burk notes,

To support her conjectures, Byrd interacts primarily with egalitarian works and repeatedly cites them—authors such as Richard Bauckham, Kenneth Bailey, Lynn Cohick, Kevin Giles, Carolyn Custis James, Philip Payne, Cynthia Westfall, and Ben Witherington. As Byrd selectively quotes egalitarians to support her arguments, she usually assumes the egalitarian reading is correct without interacting with robust complementarian arguments. This suggests that she shares many philosophical principles with egalitarianism.⁶³

Byrd longs for the eyes of pastors to be open to the “yellow wallpaper” and the current teaching on “biblical manhood and womanhood” in the church and peel it back to reveal the true beauty of the unity of God’s church. She continues, “We often don’t see the yellow wallpaper because it was established as a hedge against real threats to God’s people. I believe that is the case with a lot of teaching on biblical manhood and womanhood.”⁶⁴ She believes that due to the “self-serving messages of the sexual revolution, some evangelical leaders began writing about ‘biblical manhood and womanhood’” in an attempt to uphold the creation of man and woman as equal in image yet distinct in personhood.⁶⁵ Though the teaching may have been well-intended, Byrd’s perspective is “damaging . . . [it] is not good for the family, and it is not good for God’s church.”⁶⁶

In the same vein, she longs for pastors to realize that their ears have been willingly open to receiving androcentric instruction and yet deaf to any gynocentric

⁶³ Burk, “Does Anyone Need to Recover from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood?”

⁶⁴ Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 19.

⁶⁵ Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 20.

⁶⁶ Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 21.

thought. She states, “I affirm that there are differences between men and women. God made male and female. But we need to be careful not to reduce us by our distinctions.”⁶⁷ This thought, however, becomes a slippery slope when lived out in the local church, as it carries the notion that equality in image-bearing creates space for interchangeability in roles. This is the rub for Byrd. She states,

Church leaders need to address this kind of thinking (androcentric language vs. gynocentric language), because such contradictions don’t only hurt women; the whole church is affected by them. While the church today does foster more reciprocity and coactivity in service among brothers and sisters, the vestiges of yellow wallpaper still lingering continue to promote the kind of separate ministries and applications for women that stunt their growth and keep them at arm’s length from the rest of the church. How would a better understanding of the function of the female voice in the Scripture help to integrate women more into robust theology and life in the church? If men and women benefit equally from God’s Word, then it will reflect in the life of the church. If we peel this yellow wallpaper of contradictions away, we are not going to take down the walls with it. Proactive investment following biblical convictions will help the whole church flourish. It will help church leaders, not sabotage their authority. It will also be a witness for the world to see how we are called to communion with the triune God and with one another.⁶⁸

The desire to strip the yellow wallpaper and redecorate portends the removal of role distinctions altogether. Even if it is not an attack on doctrine *per se*, it is an attack on the character of God’s work in creation. Byrd’s agenda is to do away with the term “role” altogether, as “roles can change, especially in different cultures . . . furthermore, role playing is neither our identity nor our actual aim.”⁶⁹ If one believes the distinction in roles is mere “role-playing,” I can easily see the frustration and need to mitigate the issue. However, a biblical rendering of the text does not diminish a woman’s personhood

⁶⁷ Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 41. This statement references the marketing of Bibles, devotionals, theological studies, and books for men and women. She believes there is an “unspoken message that while women benefit from learning from both sexes, men cannot be taught or enriched by women church workers, Bible teachers, scholars, and Christian authors.” She is shedding light on devotional tools and Bibles that target “manhood” and “womanhood” rather than urging both sexes to read the Word to see Jesus, and as a *result* of seeing Jesus, further inform and instruct their call to “manhood” and “womanhood.” For example, the *ESV Men’s Devotional Bible* excludes any female voice. Byrd believes this further reinforces the patriarchal construct within the church today in which men do not value or heed a woman’s voice. She states, “But men don’t need the female voice as they ponder how God’s Word speaks to the male heart, because they see it as a patriarchal structure already” (41).

⁶⁸ Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 42.

⁶⁹ Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 120.

because she was given a different role; rather, it highlights and enhances her personhood to live out what God intended her to do. The train of thought represented by Byrd, Barr, and their peers ends in the same interpretation as Belleville and others in chapter 2: what Paul prohibited was only for a time and in a specific circumstance (1 Tim 2:12) and must be reinterpreted and reapplied given the current culture and context. As Webb said, it must be “redeemed.”⁷⁰ Although they would not say women should automatically serve as elders/pastors, egalitarians would maintain that the opportunity should be equally provided to both genders. In an egalitarian hermeneutic, to be equal in personhood is to be equal in opportunity.⁷¹ Anything less than this is “outdated” and must be reconsidered in the current context.

Perhaps the most recognizable voice in the SBC in the area of women’s ministry is Beth Moore, whose highly successful Bible studies were published by Lifeway and used by thousands of churches, particularly in women’s ministry.⁷² In a podcast with host Preston Sprinkle, Moore discussed the scandal embroiling Hollywood in 2016, several years before a similar scandal would envelop the SBC. Moore shared that as a result of the #MeToo movement, the “fog cleared, and I saw sexism and misogyny.” The #MeToo movement helped shed light on the sexism within a

⁷⁰ See Thomas R. Schreiner, “William J. Webb’s *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: A Review*,” *SBJT* 6, no. 1 (2002): 46–64.

⁷¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, review of *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*, by Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, accessed August 15, 2024, https://cdn.sbts.edu/documents/tschreiner/review_Groothuis.pdf.

⁷² Although I do not agree with the recent decisions Beth Moore has made concerning complementarianism and actions in the local church, I am grateful for the many faithful years she sought to create biblical curriculum and teach women to know the Word for themselves. She, in many ways, blazed a trail for women in ministry that certainly was, at the time, male dominated. My sentiments towards Beth Moore echo what Thomas Schreiner states about disagreeing with someone’s interpretation and application. He states, “We can be grateful for the ministry of a person, and yet maintain significant reservations about some things they teach and some things they feel free to do. Simply put, we need to be more charitable, more discriminating, and more subtle. Some engage in discussion with a hatchet or a meat cleaver when we need a scalpel. Charity and disagreement aren’t opposed to one another, and one area we can probably all improve is the tone of our discussions.” Schreiner goes on to say he is not targeting one group from another, but all need to heed this counsel when it comes to these types of discussions. Thomas R. Schreiner, “Should Women Teach? (1 Timothy 2:12),” *9Marks Journal*, December 10, 2019: 50–54, <https://www.9marks.org/article/should-women-teach-thoughts-on-function-office-and-1-timothy-212/>

denomination she served and loved for more than forty years⁷³ and set the stage for the exposure of sexual scandal within the SBC. Moore stated, “I would’ve given anything to have gathered the clouds back. I would’ve done anything to gather the fog back because as it was dispelling then it was the next thing, and the next thing . . . and everything became suspect. It was so blatantly about power and I thought it was all about Scripture.”⁷⁴ She continued “I do not resent being taught 1 Timothy 2, I resent *only* being taught 1 Timothy 2.”⁷⁵ She states, “I was watching a severe pull to the far conservative, what I would say beyond conservatism into fundamentalism⁷⁶ in our denomination.”⁷⁷ The power struggle between the male voices and female voices within the SBC led Moore to rethink everything about the denomination and ultimately led to her departure. With deep emotion, Moore expressed, “I had to leave the SBC because you are held responsible for the knowledge that you have. I was in such a place. . . . I was in so far that I saw things that were so objectionable, and to me, not only in regard to sexism, but racism. . . . I no longer felt I belonged, I no longer felt welcome, I no longer felt wanted; but it was also an act, in some ways, of protest of saying ‘no’ I will not be a part of this.”⁷⁸

As more abuse was exposed, the SBC scandal grew, and Moore took to social media to apologize for teaching or supporting anything that would limit women in

⁷³ Preston Sprinkle, “#1000: On Going Home: My 1,000th Podcast Episode with Beth Moore,” August 18, 2022, in *Theology in the Raw*, produced by Preston Sprinkle, podcast, 56:00:00 <https://theologyintheraw.com/podcast/1000-on-going-home-my-1000th-podcast-episode-with-beth-moore/>.

⁷⁴ Sprinkle, “#1000: On Going Home: My 1,000th Podcast Episode with Beth Moore.”

⁷⁵ Sprinkle, “#1000: On Going Home: My 1,000th Podcast Episode with Beth Moore.”

⁷⁶ Concerning fundamentalism, Al Mohler states that the “misjudgment of true fundamentalism is the belief that all disagreements concern first-order (tier) doctrines. Thus, third-order issues are raised to a first-order importance, and Christians are wrongly and harmfully divided.” Albert Mohler, “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity,” *Albert Mohler* (blog), July 12, 2005, <https://albertmohler.com/2005/07/12/a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity/>.

⁷⁷ Mohler, “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity.”

⁷⁸ Mohler, “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity.”

ministerial leadership:

Let me be blunt. When you functionally treat complementarianism—a doctrine of MAN—as if it belongs among the matters of 1st importance, yea, as a litmus test for where one stands in inerrancy and authority of Scripture, you are the ones who have misused Scripture. You went too far. I beg your forgiveness where I was complicit. I could not see it for what it was until 2016. I plead your forgiveness for how I just submitted to it and supported it and taught it.⁷⁹

Moore went on to say that those holding to complementarianism teaching have made it a first-tier issue and are the ones unbiblical in their view and practice. This sparked a war of words between those who cheered her on with internet signs of “freedom” and those who held up their own protest signs of “go home.”⁸⁰ Barr reacted to Moore’s apology by likening her to Joshua and his role in leading great shouts for the walls of Jericho to fall. Barr praised Moore for her courage, declaring, “She [Moore] just shouted. This is going to be the beginning of the end of complementarianism.”⁸¹ What a bold and scary claim! The “end of complementarianism” is an attempt to end what God created and rightly ordained. We do not put an end to the One who has no end nor beginning. We are the created, not the other way around. However, the shout of one magnified the whispers of others and continues to this day within the SBC.

As we saw in chapter 2, the biblical interpretation of texts in light of permanence or circumstances lends one to the application of the text. Encouraging the demise of complementarian theology, author and historian Kristin du Mez states, “This whole complementarian ideology is a historical construction. All the packaging that comes with it—what it means to be a man, what it means to be a woman—that’s a

⁷⁹ Beth Moore (@BethMooreLPM), Twitter (now X), April 7, 2021, <https://x.com/BethMooreLPM/status/1379787363270991874>.

⁸⁰ During a conference titled “Truth Matters” in October 2019, John MacArthur was asked to give a quick gut reaction in response to a one- or two-word prompt from the moderator. One of the prompts was “Beth Moore,” to which MacArthur responded, “Go home.” This was a shocking response and one that hardly administered grace or humility. As shocking as this statement was, the eruption of laughter and cheering from the audience only exacerbated the comment. While I do not agree that Beth Moore should be preaching on a Sunday morning or teaching men in an audience, I certainly do not condone the behavior of MacArthur and other men who responded with such disdain and animosity towards her.

⁸¹ Shimron and Smietana, “Beth Moore apologizes.”

historical and cultural creation, even as it's packaged and sold as timeless, inerrant and biblical."⁸² Du Mez is merely pointing out that the egalitarian framework is structured around current engagements as opposed to complementarians who attempt to package something and tie a bow of permanence to it.

Moore created a further uproar when she accepted an invitation to be the guest speaker for her home church in Houston, Texas, on Mother's Day. This is not the only time Moore accepted an invitation to speak at a church.⁸³ After her Mother's Day sermon, the "Twittersphere" learned of the invite, and Moore once again took to Twitter to post, "Being asked by pastors and their elders on occasion to address their congregation does not mean that the woman—coming by their invitation, mind you—wants to pastor their church. Troubled brothers, try to relax. I do not see a female takeover on the horizon. Have some herbal tea."⁸⁴ In other words, if the elders extend permission to preach, she said it was acceptable to do so. However, it is crucial to understand that the elders/pastors are not the ultimate authority of the church. Their permission does not make permissible that which God prohibited.

As news of Moore's sermon began to spread to the general public, Vicki Courtney, another author and Bible teacher, announced her preaching on Mother's Day as well. As this news grew like wildfire, the attention on the SBC's sexual abuse scandal heightened the discussion on a woman's role in the church. This is what baffled Moore the most. She noted that the sexism and sexual abuse exposed in one of the most prominent denominations in the nation was quickly deflected to the necessity of guarding

⁸² Yonat Shimron and Bob Smietana, "Beth Moore apologizes for her role in elevating 'complementarian' theology that limits women leaders, *Religion News*, April 7, 2021, <https://religionnews.com/2021/04/07/beth-moore-apologizes-for-complementarian-theology-women-leaders/>.

⁸³ Moore spoke at Transformation Church, a nondenominational megachurch, outside Charlotte, NC, on June 2, 2019.

⁸⁴ Beth Moore (@BethMooreLPM), Twitter (now X), May 31, 2019, <https://x.com/BethMooreLPM/status/1134461486959603712>.

a pulpit on Sunday mornings. Many others joined Moore's resistance to teaching on biblical womanhood and called the SBC to the mat on what they considered the SBC's hierarchal teachings and misogynist ministries. Courtney took to her blog, writing of the need to "disentangle from complementarianism" and inviting others to do the same, giving them "permission to wrestle" with what they were formerly taught and what she, Moore, and others would argue the Bible actually says about biblical womanhood.

Courtney states,

This debate has become increasingly toxic, to the point of dividing churches and denominations and thus, distracting from the primary call to preach the gospel. Like many Christians, I'm exhausted over the in-fighting and particularly, the never-ending bullying, accusations, and hateful rhetoric coming from professing Christians and directed toward their own Christian brothers and sisters who dare to embrace an interpretation of scripture that does not line up with every jot and tittle of their own personal interpretation. (As a disclaimer, I am referring to secondary and tertiary issues, not issues of primary doctrine, which should be challenged when interpretation conflict with a clear reading of Scripture).⁸⁵

Courtney proceeded to make her own apology, much like Moore's, for any teaching or role she played in the hierarchal structure of women in ministry, stating, "My earlier writings/teachings reflected a more dogmatic position related to complementarianism (with a hierarchal foundation), which I now feel deep sorrow and regret over, especially given the tendency for it to be weaponized against women to silence them in regard to abuse of all types (verbal, emotional, physical, sexual and, spiritual)."⁸⁶ She, like others, supports the idea that teaching biblical manhood and womanhood led to and continues to play a role in the abuse of women within the church, home, and workplace. She references what happened during the #MeToo and

⁸⁵ Vicki Courtney, "Detangling Complementarianism: Permission to Wrestle," *Vicki Courtney* (blog), April 15, 2021, <https://vickicourtney.com/2021/04/detangling-complementarianism-permission-to-wrestle/>.

⁸⁶ Courtney, "Detangling Complementarianism."

#ChurchToo movements as a “bullhorn wake-up call” for her own personal life and ministry.⁸⁷

Is there validity to this “wake-up call” from both men and women seeking to disentangle themselves from a complementarian framework? The #MeToo movement certainly amplified the questions pertaining to a woman’s role in leadership in the local church that had already been posted by the egalitarian perspective. Complementarians do not want to place unnecessary restrictions on women, let alone anyone, in the church where Scripture does not place restrictions. However, the created order in Genesis 1–2 clearly sets the boundaries and role distinctions that lay the foundation for the prohibitions in church structure, as Paul instructs in 1 Timothy 2:9–15.

Tiers of Orthodoxy and Its Impact on Orthopraxy

Before we look to those who support, teach, and practice within the complementarian framework, it is important to define what is meant by primary, secondary, and tertiary doctrines.⁸⁸ In 2005, Albert Mohler defined these terms, describing the importance of delineating between them “theological triage” and calling the church to Christian maturity in this area. Primary, or first-level theological issues, “would include those doctrines most central and essential to the Christian faith. Included among these most crucial doctrines would be doctrines such as the Trinity, the full deity and humanity of Christ, justification by faith, and the authority of Scripture.”⁸⁹ To deny a first-tier doctrine is to deny Christianity itself. The first tier may also be termed essential doctrines; that is, they are necessary to salvation. Second-tier doctrines include, for

⁸⁷ Courtney, “Detangling Complementarianism.”

⁸⁸ See Gavin Ortlund, *Finding the Right Hills to Die On: The Case for Theological Triage* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020) for a more thorough investigation of essential and non-essential doctrines and knowing which hills are essential die on and which hills are okay to merely disagree on.

⁸⁹ Mohler, “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity.”

example, different practices of baptism. These disagreements do not necessarily lead to a denial of the Christian faith, but they often indicate the differences between denominations and orthopraxy. Complementarianism has historically been described as a second-tier issue. Mohler states, “Christians across a vast denominational range can stand together on the first-tier doctrines and recognize each other as authentic Christians, while understanding that the existence of second-order disagreements prevents the closeness of fellowship we would otherwise enjoy.”⁹⁰ Churches may disagree on third-tier issues, but the fellowship of the church is not at odds. Mohler presents eschatology as a third-order issue. He states, “Christians may find themselves in disagreement over any number of issues related to the interpretation of difficult texts or the understanding of matters of common disagreements. Nevertheless, standing together on issues of more urgent importance, believers are able to accept one another without compromise when third-order issues are in question.”⁹¹

The closeness of fellowship that Mohler describes as a second-tier differentiation has certainly been impacted in the debate between egalitarianism and complementarianism. Second-tier issues are not as easily overlooked as third-tier issues. The departure of Beth Moore from the SBC is a prime example of many examples that demonstrate how close fellowship is impacted when individuals disagree on second-tier issues. Michael Lawrence reminds us that “we need to assess the urgency and seriousness of the various challenges the application of complementarianism poses to both our cooperation in and among local churches and our conscience before the Lord.”⁹² There is a fine balance in rightly engaging with Scripture, dividing the truth accurately, and putting that rightly divided truth into action. We cannot take what is central (first tier) and

⁹⁰ Mohler, “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity.”

⁹¹ Mohler, “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity.”

⁹² Michael Lawrence, “Complementarianism and Theological Triage,” *9Marks Journal* (December 2019): 77–80.

make it peripheral and exchange the position of peripheral (second tier) for what is central. A failure to properly assess and diagnose first, second, and third-tier issues can result in a pendulum that swings toward hurt instead of healing. Lawrence sheds light on two common errors when performing theological triage: “We treat everything as if it’s life-threatening to biblical faithfulness—or we treat nothing that way, save for the gender of those who hold the office of elder. When everything is an emergency, or nothing is, it’s hard for two people to have thoughtful, respectful conversation when they agree on the principle but disagree on the details.”⁹³

Those pushing back against biblical womanhood claim that those holding to complementarianism have taken a second-tier issue and made it a first-tier issue.

Concerning this accusation, Mohler states,

Complementarianism is one of these doctrinal commitments under severe scrutiny. To be clear, complementarian theology is a secondary issue for Christians—you can reject complementarianism and be a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, committed to the gospel and the expansion of Christ’s kingdom around the world. While it is secondary, second-tier issues can often become first-tier issues. Rejection of complementarian theology may lead to a rejection of biblical authority, inerrancy, and the infallibility of God’s Word. Indeed, complementarianism represents a right reading of the Word of God. Men and women equally bear the image of God; yet, they are distinct in their roles, as men seek to glorify God in biblical masculinity while women glorify God through biblical femininity.⁹⁴

Theological triage helps us realize what is at stake in this debate. To practice what they believe is misinterpreted, egalitarians will eventually have to question the inerrancy and authority of Scripture. This is where the danger lies for egalitarianism. When one breaches the boundaries of Scripture and questions what God has created, one has moved into the first tier of doctrine. It is ironic that egalitarians accuse complementarians of making the prohibition on women leading in the church a first-tier issue. To make this claim, egalitarians actually alter the meaning of the Scripture to

⁹³ Lawrence, “Complementarianism and Theological Triage.”

⁹⁴ Albert Mohler, “The Increasing Social Cost of Complementarianism,” *9Marks Journal* (December 2019): 16–17.

support their call for equality and the removal of restrictions. This is a fundamental claim that should not be ignored. Mohler points out,

Confronted by biblical evidence, we must make a vitally important interpretive decision. We must choose between two unavoidable options: either the Bible is affirmed as the inerrant and infallible Word of God, and thus presents a comprehensive vision of true humanity in both unity and diversity, or we must claim that the Bible is, to one extent or another, compromised and warped by a patriarchal and male-dominated bias that must be overcome in the name of humanity.⁹⁵

For complementarians, the decision is clear. We must stand for biblical truth, Scriptural integrity, and submit to the authoritative, inerrant teaching of His Word. The ministerial practice of secondary issues sheds light on the primary issues we believe in. The following section provides a few examples of women who hold various leadership positions in ministry without abandoning a complementarian framework.

**Resilient Stand on Scripture to Exercise Roles within
the Biblical Framework of Complementarity:
Examples of Current Leaders**

Can the doctrine of complementarianism co-exist within the local church and provide leadership roles for women in ministry without crossing boundaries established in the creation order? Are egalitarians and complementarians bringing to the table valid questions pertaining to the orthopraxy of the local church? Do the theological practices of complementarian leaders encourage other female leaders in ministry and yet illuminate the need for possible change in SBC churches?

Those resisting complementarianism seek to awaken people to the dangers of its application. With enough voices in their chorus, they want to add more cracks to the stained-glass ceiling they find obstinate, offensive, and oppressive. However, other voices are speaking: women who are in leadership roles, holding to the doctrine of complementarity, and encouraged to teach within the boundaries of Scripture's commands. Instead of resisting biblical womanhood, they are encouraging the church to

⁹⁵ Mohler, "A Call for Courage on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood."

practice what they preach concerning the dignity and distinctions of men and women in the local church. These leaders include Nancy Guthrie, Terri Stovall, Kathleen Nielson, Mary Kassian, Melissa Krueger, Jen Wilkin, and many more.⁹⁶ While holding to the equality of creation between male and female, these women also affirm and minister out of a biblical understanding of role distinctions within the church. Rather than resisting specific egalitarians, they are pushing back against the theology that advocates gender equality in roles. Author and Bible teacher, Kathleen Nielson states,

Complementarians find Scripture to speak clearly and cohesively from beginning to end on the subject of human beings as male and female created equally in the image of God and with distinct roles relating to marriage and the church. The prominence and pervasiveness of this strand of Scripture’s teaching, even more than strands like those of baptism modes or eschatological views, make this a biblical issue that merits and even requires regular attention and discussion—especially in light of contemporary challenges to centuries-old understandings. The fundamentally crucial issue for all of us in these matters must be to hear and obey the word of God.⁹⁷

In Nielson’s reference to the second-tier doctrinal issues of “baptism modes and eschatological views,” she emphasizes the importance of Scripture’s teaching pertaining to the roles of men and women. Egalitarians will claim this is a reversal of tiers, but that is precisely the point. Orthopraxy is ultimately birthed from one’s orthodoxy. The practice and preaching of those pushing back on complementarianism inevitably brings us back to their hermeneutics. This is a matter of biblical concern that calls us to the importance of the right ordering of essential and non-essential doctrinal issues. Leading women’s author, Bible teacher, and theologian Jen Wilkin states, “Complementarians celebrate that men and women are not interchangeable, that while we are created equal in value and dignity as image-bearers and co-rulers of creation, we are

⁹⁶ Much like the examples used for those pushing against biblical womanhood, these are a few women among many holding to the biblical teaching of complementarianism and serving in various leadership capacities within the church, seminary, and para-church ministries. An excellent dialogue pertaining to women’s role in the church can be found in chapter 7, Köstenberger and Schreiner, “Application: A Roundtable Discussion,” in Köstenberger and Schreiner, *Women in the Church*, 297–336.

⁹⁷ Kathleen Nielson, “To My Egalitarian Friends,” *The Gospel Coalition* (blog), August 15, 2012 <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/to-my-egalitarian-friends/>.

distinct from one another in good and mutually beneficial ways.”⁹⁸

These complementarian leaders encourage and support the biblical office of elders as qualified men called by God to lead the church. Wilkin also writes about being the church “pursuing” women to serve, not merely “permitting” to co-labor with them in the gospel.⁹⁹ Wilkin does not seek to undermine or rewrite what is permitted in Scripture; rather, she challenges pastors to remember that they have women who can shepherd women, even as the pastor shepherds the congregation:

How sweet a thing when a woman of apparent ministry gifting elicits from male leadership not “Oh, no” but “At last!” God help complementarians if we spend our energies fastidiously chalking the boundaries of a racecourse we never urge or equip women to run. I have to think that egalitarians would grow quieter in their critiques if we could point to more women within our ranks who convincingly demonstrate equal, complementary values in our churches.¹⁰⁰

Complementarian leaders commonly point to the pastoral support they receive as they submit to their pastoral leadership, especially from the men with whom they co-labor. It makes all the difference in the world. Wilkin notes, “Women who flourish in ministry can point to not just female leaders who affirmed them but to male leaders who championed and cultivated them. That has certainly been my story.”¹⁰¹ If pastors and elders want to encourage women to fulfill the ministry entrusted to them (i.e., Titus 2:1, 3–5), they should be the very ones cheering them not only with a pat on the back but with a place to lead and teach other women. The reality is that women *will* seek out instruction somewhere: the latest podcast, social media post, or book. So, pastoral support of training and educating women in sound doctrine is crucial. Wilkin affectionately refers to the world of women’s ministry as the “pink ghetto.” In a podcast interview on encouraging

⁹⁸ Jen Wilkin, “Counsel for a Complementarian Pastor,” *9Marks Journal* (Winter 2015): 18–20.

⁹⁹ Jen Wilkin, “The Complementarian Woman: Permitted or Pursued?” *Jen Wilkin* (blog), April 23, 2023, <https://www.jenwilkin.net/blog/2013/04/the-complementarian-woman-permitted-or.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Wilkin, “The Complementarian Woman.”

¹⁰¹ Wilkin, “The Complementarian Woman.”

everyone to pursue theological instruction, she said, “I would say that women’s spaces have been bereft of theology, and some of that is because of the mechanics of the local church. The ‘pink ghetto’ often operates under a benign neglect where the pastor who is overseeing it is not really sure what should happen in there.”¹⁰² When participating in a roundtable discussion with Andreas Köstenberger and Thomas Schreiner, Mary Kassian noted,

Christian leaders must realize that due to popular ideology, God’s design for manhood and womanhood will rarely be *caught*—it must be intentionally *taught*. Every believer needs to understand that God created male and female to tell the incredible story of Christ and the church and that this has implications for who they are and how they live.¹⁰³

Can a woman have the gift of leadership and hold to complementarianism? I believe so. A call to biblical leadership does not only translate to the office of elder/pastor/overseer. I believe this is where the frustration lies for many women. We equate leadership to pastor only and confuse gifts for an office. The qualifications for this position differ from the spiritual gifts given to all believers; when these gifts are rightly understood, taught, and applied, the church flourishes.¹⁰⁴ Too often, office and giftings are misinterpreted and misapplied.¹⁰⁵ I am grateful for complementarian leaders like

¹⁰² Jen Wilkin and J. T. English, “Everyone Is a Theologian. But Are You a Good One?,” October 11, 2023, in *The Stetzer ChurchLeaders Podcast*, produced by Ed Stetzer and Daniel Yang, podcast, 35:52, <https://churchleaders.com/podcast/460435-jen-wilkin-j-t-english-everyone-theologian-good.html>.

¹⁰³ Mary Kassian, quoted in Köstenberger and Schreiner, “Application: A Roundtable Discussion,” 335.

¹⁰⁴ Believers in Christ possess spiritual gifts given by God and empowered by the Spirit for the edification of the church. Peter declares in 1 Peter 4:10, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” These giftings include but are not limited to leadership, administration, hospitality, teaching, evangelism, faith, and more (see Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4). As we saw in Titus 2, women are instructed not only to know sound doctrine but to administer the gift of teaching to younger women. This is an exercise of the gift of leadership rightly utilized within the appropriate context of ministry. I believe women can and should hold places of leadership on a church staff such as overseeing children’s ministry, women’s ministry, and operations. I believe, biblically speaking, there are limitations to roles of leadership as prescribed in 1 Timothy 2 and Titus 2, but outside of what is prohibited, women should be welcome and invited into various areas of ministry to utilize their gifts for the advancement of the kingdom and edification of the body.

¹⁰⁵ Some evangelicals argue the use of “pastors” in Ephesians 4:11 is to be rightly understood as a gift. Therefore, if the restriction on women concerns the office of elder, she is not prohibited from the

Nielson, Wilkin, Kassian, and others who have not only pushed back on egalitarian hermeneutics but also the far-right patriarchal structure of some who hold to a complementarian hermeneutic. These are women who continuously “fight the good fight” out of a deep love and conviction for the Lord, His Word, and their brothers and sisters in the church.

Conclusion

The core convictions of egalitarians and complementarians are vastly different. However, in practice, is there any agreement on the importance of or way that churches utilize women in leadership capacities? Are there legitimate concerns worth evaluating from those pushing back on biblical womanhood? Are complementarians generous in their response to the opposition, or are they acting out of a greater sense of duty to the doctrine and forgetting to respond by speaking truth in love?

Recalling Hillary Clinton’s declaration that “human rights are women’s rights, and women’s rights are human rights,”¹⁰⁶ the anthem of egalitarians in the church implies that the battle for women’s freedom within ministerial endeavors rages as a battle against the rights that are diminished or eradicated by patriarchy or hierarchy. Although some egalitarian points should cause us to engage in self-reflection about how we care for women in the church, their agenda focuses on highlighting the oppression of women and women’s rights more than the unity they claim to be pursuing for the gospel. The truth is that no human, male nor female, has a right to make any claim because the gospel calls us to something entirely different: to pursue humility and to seek the mind of Christ, who

gift of pastoring. However, according to Denny Burk, the list provided in Ephesians 4 is about gifted persons, not gifting *per se*. He states, “The gifts in this text are not Spirit-given ministries. The gifts are the persons themselves. All of the persons in the list fulfill *offices* in the church—some of them extraordinary offices (apostles, prophets, evangelists) and some of them ordinary offices (pastor-teachers). God gives these office-holders to the church to build it up and to strengthen it in the faith. In that sense, the office-holders themselves are the gifts to the church.” Denny Burk, “Can Women Be Pastors but Not Elders?,” *9Marks Journal* (Winter 2019): 56.

¹⁰⁶ Hillary Clinton, “Keynote Address.”

had the absolute right to make claims and yet set this aside to take on flesh and save mankind from our depravity (Phil 2). He alone is to increase, and we all, rightfully, are to decrease (John 3:30).

When a woman's voice supersedes the voice of truth and diminishes the voice of man, no one wins. They may not claim that is their intention, but it certainly seems that one tactic is to turn down the volume of men to that of a whisper so the shout of women can be heard. They claim that complementarianism is abusive, unequal, and demeaning while at the same time claiming that our current context should define what Scripture means rather than allowing Scripture to establish the foundational truth. This is a bondage and trap that leads to unbiblical orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

Although I understand where women like Barr, Moore, Byrd, and others are coming from pertaining to the harsh orthopraxy of biblical womanhood within the church, the actions of certain men and institutions cannot determine what Scripture says, and my response in obedience to His Word. I, too, have been the only woman in a room filled with men, primarily pastors, who tend to overlook women altogether as they study theology. I have seen the impact of pastors who use the pulpit as a boxing ring and the Bible as their boxing glove to minimize the roles of women and preach directly to men. I have sat in the pews of churches that seem blind to the fact that the number of women is double that of men. I have read books by well-intended authors seeking to encourage and uplift women, only to tell them they are needed in the nursery or on the mission field. I have listened to men teach on aspects of biblical womanhood and wondered why a theologically astute woman would not be able to teach on the subject most relevant to her. However, it is dangerous to rewrite the text of Scripture because one's experiences have left one hurt and disoriented. That is not to negate the hurt, disappointment, and, at times, frustrations that can come from our experiences. But that is not the point: humans will hurt, disappoint, and frustrate us which gives us all the more reason to look to the One who set the world and mankind in motion, including our distinction in roles. He does not

disappoint and can always be trusted. As a woman called to ministry, gifted in leadership, may my eyes ever be fixed on the Author and Perfector of my faith (Heb 12:1–2), no matter the publicity, platform, place, or praise.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project was to equip women at Charlottesville Community Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, for biblical leadership within the framework of complementarity. This chapter outlines the preparation and implementation of this project, including a detailed overview of the development of the project and the curriculum created for the one-day intensive.

Preparation of Ministry Project

The preparation for the project contained four major steps. In the first step, I promoted the event in multiple ways: personal invitation via email, church-wide communication in our church's weekly newsletter and church app, and verbal announcements on Sunday mornings. I scheduled the event in the summer on the church calendar and began promoting the one-day intensive several weeks prior to September 7, 2024.

On Tuesday, August 20, 2024, women who are members at CCC received a personal invitation inviting them to not only attend but participate in the doctoral project by completing the pre- and post- assessments and attending all four lectures. Although initially, the invitation was sent to women who were members of CCC for at least one year, I sent a revised email the following morning (August 21) to remove the statement "at least one year" and invited any woman who was a member of CCC to attend and participate in the doctoral project. Another email was sent out on Wednesday, August 21, to all CCC women providing upcoming fall dates for women's ministry, including the training. As the Director of Women's Ministry at CCC, I made the one-day intensive

coincide with a pre-existing women's ministry program called ROOTED: Grounded & Growing in Christ, open to all women at CCC.¹ Verbal announcements for the one-day intensive were also given on a few Sunday mornings during the church service, including one announcement by the elder/lead pastor of CCC encouraging women to attend.

Second, to fulfill the requirements of the first goal, I created the pre- and post-series assessments for the women who agreed to participate in the doctoral project to complete. Before implementing the final assessments, I provided both assessments to a group of individuals unaffiliated with CCC and the project, asked them to take a test run of the assessments, received feedback, and made revisions accordingly. I created a Google Form to administer the pre-series WBLA to attain quicker responses and linked an Excel spreadsheet to the Google Form to collect the participants' responses. I set a deadline of Friday, August 30, for the pre-assessment and extended the deadline for some participants to Sunday, September 1. The completed assessments aided in final revisions to my teaching notes and handouts the women used during the event. Their answers enabled me to ascertain what was necessary to emphasize and spend time developing versus what was necessary to mention, but did not warrant a great deal of teaching (i.e., being created in His image equally; leadership as a spiritual gift not limited to only men, etc.).

Third, to fulfill the requirements of the second goal, I finished writing my lectures for the one-day intensive in the week leading up to the event. My lectures were structured with the research I developed in chapters 2 and 3. I met with my immediate supervisor and went over what I planned to teach the women during the intensive. This was not a formal evaluation, but he provided necessary guidelines for the implementation

¹ I established ROOTED in the fall of 2023. The purpose is to take biblical topics, such as discipleship, missions, biblical womanhood, and search what Scripture says about it and how we are to live in light of it. ROOTED consists of a teaching time and either a panel or Q&A. There is typically an opportunity for follow-up depending on the topic at hand. This program is separate from the women's Bible study that meets weekly in the fall and spring semesters.

of the curriculum and counsel for questions regarding leadership roles to be answered in alignment with CCC's conviction. I also created handouts for the ladies to use during the lectures that coincided with the curriculum.

For the final step, I secured a space for the event's location, created an agenda, and scheduled the food catering. Because our church is mobile (we meet in an elementary school), I used another church in town for the event and provided snacks and lunch. I sent two separate reminder emails a couple of days prior to the event. The first email was sent to the participants participating in the doctoral project, reminding them of the following requirements to participate: attend all four lectures and stay at least 30 minutes after the final lecture to complete the post-assessment. I sent another email to the remaining ladies, reminding them of the location, schedule, and other details.

Project Implementation

The third goal was to increase the knowledge of women with respect to biblical leadership by teaching them the four-part lecture series at the one-day intensive.

Immediately following the lectures, I manually administered a post-series assessment to the attendees who were also participating in the doctoral project. They were required to fully complete the post-assessment prior to leaving for the day, ensuring that only women who are CCC members participated in the pre- and post-series assessments.² I also created an electronic questionnaire and emailed it out to all of the women who attended the event on Tuesday, September 10. This questionnaire provided a space for feedback, questions, and an opportunity to meet one-on-one with me if they had further questions.

The fourth goal was to develop and submit strategic next steps to the elders at CCC for further theological training on biblical womanhood for women at the church. I

² To be a member at CCC, you must attend a two-part membership class that takes place quarterly on Friday evening and Saturday morning. The elders and staff oversee the membership class. Those who have walked through the class are aware that our church is (1) a part of the Southern Baptist Convention of Virginia, (2) elder-led, and (3) holds to the biblical framework of complementarity as it pertains to leadership in the local church.

created the document and emailed it to my immediate supervisor on Thursday, September 12, 2024.³

Content Overview of Ministry Project

The content overview contains details for the four lectures I taught during the one-day intensive on women in biblical leadership within the local church.

Lecture 1

The first lecture was two-fold. I explained the background and purpose of the project, including my own personal journey and interest concerning gender roles and biblical leadership and how it has impacted my ministerial endeavor today. Second, I defined necessary terms, provided a brief overview of secular feminism, and primarily focused on more current dates pertaining to egalitarianism and complementarianism. I compared and contrasted major biblical views for egalitarians and complementarians and provided the women with a helpful table (see table 1) to utilize throughout the day as we looked at various Scriptures pertaining to a woman's role in leadership within the local church.

³ See appendix 5 to view the document of strategic steps provided to the elders at CCC.

Table 1. Roles of men and women⁴

| EGALITARIAN | COMPLEMENTARIAN |
|---|---|
| Because man and woman are created equal, there are no role distinctions. | Man and woman are equal in being but have different, God-ordained roles to fill. |
| Role distinctions are the result of the original fall into sin and the subsequent curse. Therefore, redemption in Christ removes role distinctions. | The fall into sin and the subsequent curse did not institute roles. Rather, creation order established the roles and the fall into sin created the struggle to fulfill those roles. |
| Role distinctions are legalistic and contrary to Scripture *(Goal: Liberate women from boundaries) | Role distinctions are freeing not binding. They are given by God to help the man and woman function together. *(Goal: Freedom in the boundaries) |

I explained the meaning of primary, secondary, and tertiary tiers of doctrine, explaining that gender roles and leadership are secondary issues. I provided historical dates for second-wave feminism and its impact on an egalitarian’s doctrine. I did not spend a great deal of time on secular feminism as I wanted to primarily focus their attention on two main hermeneutical approaches to this topic: egalitarian and complementarian. I explained the impact one’s hermeneutical approach has to one’s application of the text and overall service to the local church.

Lecture 2

The second lecture included an overview of Genesis 1–3, stressing the importance of pre-established roles per the created order prior to the fall. I taught through the creation of mankind (Gen 1:26–28), the creation of Adam (Gen 2:1–9), the creation of Eve (Gen 2:18–23), and the impact sin had on pre-existing roles (Gen 3:16–18). I compared and contrasted an egalitarian and complementarian approach as I taught

⁴ This table was created by Terri Stovall, “God’s Plan for Women, in *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church*, by Jaye Martin and Terri Stovall (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 17.

through Genesis 1–3. I explained from the Genesis account how both males and females are image-bearers of God, equal in dignity, yet distinct in roles per the created order. I relied on at least nine indications of role distinctions prior to the fall and interwove those into the main teaching sections for the lecture.⁵ I spent a lot of time on this section as I found it to be one of, if not the most important, in understanding and interpreting the rest of Scripture (1 Tim 2 and Titus 2) concerning women in biblical leadership.

Lecture 3

For the third lecture, I taught on a widely debated passage of Scripture concerning church structure, biblical leadership, and particularly a woman's role in the church. For the sake of my project, I did not have the capacity to delve into other Scriptures, such as 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, but I spent time teaching through Paul's instruction to the church according to 1 Timothy 2:9–15. We began with the background and cultural context of 1 Timothy. I reminded the women of three hermeneutical approaches as it pertains to women in ministry: critical (secular) feminist, evangelical feminist (egalitarian), and evangelical traditionalist (complementarian). In doing so, I compared and contrasted how egalitarians and complementarians interpret the text and apply it to various ministry approaches.

While I helped frame an understanding of where egalitarians come from, I interpreted and applied these verses from a complementarian framework. We looked at how there are blessings within boundaries, first expressed in Genesis 2 and redeemed for those who minister within these boundaries in 1 Timothy 2. I taught through Paul's appeal to the moral behavior of women in the church (1 Tim 2:9–10) and his appeal to biblical activity for women in the church (1 Tim 2:11–12). I concluded by stressing the importance of understanding these verses in the context of verses 13–15, when Paul

⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 460–64.

appeals to the created order for the foundation of his instruction and establishing of male leadership for the office of elder/pastor in 1 Timothy 3:1–7. I refrained from teaching through 1 Timothy 3 and only referenced it for the purpose of stressing the created order in 1 Timothy 2:13–15.

Lecture 4

In lecture 4, I addressed what is permissible for women in the church according to Titus 2:1, 3–5. Having just taught through what is prohibited, we ended on the peace found for women in ascertaining and obeying what the Lord ordains as permissible. We began with the historical and cultural context of Titus. I emphasized the need to know and rightly divide “sound doctrine” (2:1) as women commanded and called to educate, train, and equip other women in “what is good” (2:4). I explained that their orthodoxy—what they believe and interpret about Scripture—will assuredly impact their orthopraxy—the manner in which they live and conduct themselves in the church. I concluded by reminding them of the boundaries, established in the creation order, ecclesiastically structured in 1 Timothy 2:9–15, and expounded upon in Titus 2:1, 3–5. These boundaries are what enable men and women to express purposeful contribution when co-laboring together for the sake of the gospel.

There are many opportunities where women can serve and utilize their gifts at CCC. The office of elder/pastor is prohibited, per Scripture’s instruction; however, under the leadership and encouragement of the elders, opportunities exist and conversation is welcome when looking at various ministries in our church. Women can serve on the women’s ministry team in a variety of ways: facilitating Bible study small groups, teaching, planning and executing events, discipleship, and theological instruction to other women. We have women who serve as directors and oversee our international missions team, local missions team, and children’s ministry. Our leadership encourages all our members to utilize their gifts and provides an open door for conversations if an individual

has a particular passion and sees a gap in ministry within our church. I encouraged the women to whole-heartedly pursue what is permissible and to see me with questions or follow-up conversations. I warned the women who attended to guard their hearts against narrowing in on what is prohibited, but instead, to pursue what is permissible and vitally important to the life of the church. I concluded by explaining the questionnaire they would receive in days to follow for the purpose of polling interest in future classes. The questionnaire also provided a space for questions on the topic, an opportunity to meet with me one-on-one for follow-up, and a space to provide feedback for the one-day intensive.

Conclusion

Overall, the preparation and implementation of the project were educational and encouraging and revealed a desire from women at CCC to grow in their biblical understanding of the topic at hand. I personally learned a lot from the process and what I would do differently if I were to administer the same curriculum in the future. This was not an easy topic to teach given the diversity of the audience, which included women from both complementarian and egalitarian perspectives. It was like walking a balance beam to teach unashamedly and with conviction what I believe Scripture says to women in the church, while also displaying humility towards those who I knew held and ministered from an opposing view. My greatest desire is for women to know the Word for themselves and to biblically evaluate both their orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The final chapter will provide an evaluation of the project, analyzing the purpose, goals, strengths, weaknesses, and what I would have done differently as I reflect on the project. I include theological and personal reflections and offer a word of encouragement to both my brothers and sisters in the body of Christ as we seek to co-labor together for the sake of the gospel and the glory of His name.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip women at Charlottesville Community Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, for biblical leadership within the framework of complementarity amid a cultural pull for equality in all ministerial roles. According to the WBLA post-assessment of the doctoral project participants, the Google Forms questionnaire completed after the course by all participants, and personal conversations with women at CCC, this project's goal to equip the participants through and in the Word was achieved. Many expressed a greater understanding of both a complementarian and egalitarian framework. The consensus per the post-assessment from doctoral participants was that they had a stronger biblical understanding of why they hold to a complementarian framework, encouragement for pursuing spiritual gifts and ministry opportunities available to them in the church, and an eagerness to learn more of what God's Word says pertaining to women in the local church.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Goal 1

My first goal for the project was to assess the current knowledge of women

who are members of CCC regarding gender roles and biblical leadership in the local church. Though my initial hope was for ten women to participate in the doctoral project, I was thankful that fourteen women who are members at CCC completed the WBLA pre-series assessment prior to attending the one-day intensive.¹ Thus, this goal was successfully met. The WBLA assessed both their confidence in the subject matter and their current knowledge of gender roles and biblical leadership in the church.² I analyzed and utilized these results when making final adjustments to the course. The results indicated a need to adequately define terms, provide historical context along with biblical instruction, and provide clear instruction on the created order from Genesis 1–3.

Goal 2

My second goal was to develop a one-day intensive course containing four lectures on women with respect to biblical leadership in the local church that educates and equips women at Charlottesville Community Church. The second goal was successful because I developed the one-day intensive held on September 7, 2024, which included four lectures on women and biblical leadership in the local church. The lectures included a historical overview and description of current issues pertaining to the topic, the defining of terms used throughout all four lectures, an overview of Genesis 1–3, a closer look at the ecclesiastical structure of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 in light of the created order, and time spent in Titus 2:1, 3–5 looking at examples of what is permissible for women in the church. I met with my immediate supervisor prior to the one-day intensive; our discussion prepared me to address specific questions that could arise during the

¹ The course was open to all women at CCC who wanted to learn about gender roles and biblical leadership in the church. A total of twenty-seven women attended, which included church attendees and church members. Some ladies were only able to stay for half of the day, while others were not able to commit to completing the pre- and post-assessments that were required of those who wanted to participate in the doctoral project. The data represented in this project reflects those who were able to complete the pre- and post-assessments, attend all four lectures, and are members of CCC. A total of fourteen women met all the requirements to be participants in the doctoral project.

² See appendix 1 for the WBLA pre-assessment.

intensive so that I could answer in alignment with CCC convictions.

Goal 3

My third goal was to increase the knowledge of women with respect to biblical leadership by delivering the four lectures to women at CCC. This goal was measured by administering a post-series assessment that excluded the general questions asked in the pre-series assessment (numbers 1–7) but otherwise contained the same survey questions and included five additional open-ended questions.³ This goal was successfully met when a t-test of dependent samples showed a statistically significant increase in the participants' knowledge concerning gender roles in biblical womanhood. The first subscale t-test measured the participants' confidence in the topic and showed a statistically significant increase ($t_{(13)} = 6.13, p < .001$).⁴ The second subscale t-test measured the participants' knowledge using factual statements and also showed a statistically significant increase ($t_{(13)} = 2.73, p = .017$).⁵

Concerning subscale 1 in measuring the confidence of the participant's knowledge on the topic of gender roles, the confidence level either remained the same (these individuals already had an understanding of the framework), or there was an increase (at times, a substantial increase) in their understanding of the two primary frameworks (complementarian or egalitarian) as a result of the course. Many participants also showed an increase in knowledge pertaining to their understanding of gender roles and leadership in the local church and the importance of this topic. Two participants showed a decrease in confidence after the course. One individual indicated a one-point decrease in their current knowledge of a woman's role in biblical leadership in the local church. The other individual indicated a one-point decrease in their confidence in the

³ See appendix 2 for the WBLA post-assessment.

⁴ See appendix 4 for the t-test subscale 1 confidence results.

⁵ See appendix 5 for the t-test subscale 2 knowledge results.

Scripture's clarity on gender roles. This is helpful to note as I prepare to teach this course again at the church. I was grateful to see, overall, an increase in their confidence and a better understanding of the two primary frameworks (complementarianism and egalitarianism) and the importance of discerning what Scripture says about gender roles and leadership.

Concerning subscale 2, which measured the participant's knowledge of specific statements, a few participants showed an increase in their knowledge of man and woman being created equally in His image and in dignity. Many participants showed an increase in their understanding of what is permissible and prohibited for women in ministry (questions 23–26 on the assessment) and how they can utilize gifts of leadership in the church (questions 27–29). The two individuals who indicated a decrease in confidence (subscale 1) also reflected a decrease in knowledge (subscale 2). This makes sense, given their answers on gender roles, and helps me make improvements in future implementations of this material. Participants also answered open-ended questions, and their answers were extremely helpful in measuring the success of the material presented. Their comments also helped to provide clarity as I think through ways to strengthen and solidify future teaching concerning gender roles and biblical leadership.⁶

It is important to note that question 20 was thrown out from the knowledge subscale because participants perceived it to have different meanings; this resulted in confusion when participants completed the pre- and post-series assessments. The statement “God created male and female equal in leadership” could have been interpreted as equal in leadership roles such as pastor/elder or it could have been interpreted as equal in value as it pertains to leadership. One participant with a bias toward the egalitarian view showed a significant difference in scoring as compared to the other participants. I was aware of this individual's beliefs and practices prior to the intensive. I did not

⁶ See appendix 8 for examples of the open-ended questions and participant responses.

remove this participant as an outlier because the t-test revealed significant change even in this individual's assessment. The participant's removal would have only resulted in a greater mean change between the pre- and post-series assessments. I found it helpful to have this individual participate in the completion of the assessments and the one-day intensive.

Goal 4

My fourth goal was to assist the CCC elders by developing a strategic priorities document, which included the next steps and future courses to train, equip, and biblically educate women at CCC for theological and ministerial endeavors. This goal was successful because, on September 12, 2024, I submitted a document including the purpose and overview of my project and strategic next steps to further educate and train women at CCC on biblical womanhood and, in particular, leadership roles in the local church.⁷ I provided an overall summary of my lecture, including the biblical context for my teachings. I also expressed my desire to make the course a part of a larger foundational course on biblical womanhood in which women can participate throughout the year. This document invited future conversations and implementation of a foundational course in the Equipping Hour on Sunday mornings at CCC.

Strengths of the Project

The project had several strengths. The first was personal growth and biblical understanding of difficult passages concerning a woman's role in the local church. While I came into the project with a passion for complementarianism, I was challenged and further convinced of gender role distinctions in the local church. I was raised in churches that implemented this truth to an extent, but understanding Scripture and effectively ministering and teaching in light of that truth was extremely beneficial during this

⁷ See appendix 3 for the document emailed to the CCC elders.

process.

Another strength of the project was the response of the women who attended the one-day intensive. There were many women who communicated in their post-series assessments, the follow-up questionnaire, and one-on-one conversations that they enjoyed and were encouraged by the one-day intensive. A lot of women communicated they operated from a complementarian framework but gained a greater biblical understanding as to why they hold to that position. Many women communicated a desire to obey the Lord in His clear instruction for women to teach and lead other women. They also communicated an appreciation for understanding terms often thrown around in the church like egalitarian and complementarian. Many expressed how they were encouraged and reminded of how Scripture clearly allows ample opportunity to utilize gifts of leadership and more in the church and that blessings abound within God-ordained boundaries.

The implementation of the project itself resulted in a strength. I have had and continue to have many women share their desire to see this topic addressed, taught, and implemented in the church. Many were grateful for the conversation itself, let alone the growth in their understanding of the topic. The response to the project indicated to me what I long have wondered for our church: the need for a foundational course on biblical womanhood that includes topics such as gender roles with respect to biblical leadership in the local church.

Weaknesses of the Project

While there were several strengths to the project, there were also a few weaknesses. The primary weakness pertains to time in both the implementation of the project and the number of participants I was able to gather. The first weakness was the timing of implementing the project. CCC operates on a semester-based schedule, as the majority of our church travels in the summer. To graduate from the doctoral program on

time, I needed to implement the project immediately after Labor Day weekend, which allowed time for a one-day intensive. This resulted in delivering a lot of information in one day as opposed to spreading out the lectures over a several-week period and allowing time for questions, discussion, and reflection. If I had implemented the project during the spring semester, I would have likely gained more responses from doctoral participants, those who completed the pre- and post-series assessments, and those who wanted to attend but not as a doctoral participant.

Second, due to the time crunch, I was not able to utilize an expert panel to evaluate the curriculum before implementing it. While I had an informal consultation with my immediate supervisor and multiple conversations with ministry leaders throughout the process, having feedback from an expert panel would have only strengthened my teaching material.

Third, I would have successfully recorded the lecture series for women who were unable to attend due to prior engagements. An attempt was made to record the lectures; however, some of the lectures were not fully recorded. As a result, I did not send out the recordings or handouts to ladies who would have liked to attend. Thankfully, these same women expressed interest in the Equipping Hour opportunity, and I will make sure those lectures are recorded for anyone who misses them.

A concluding weakness would be the lack of time for questions at the end of each lecture. Again, due to the time constraint and amount of material to cover for the one-day intensive, there was no opportunity for questions to be asked. I attempted to mitigate this weakness by administering a follow-up questionnaire. This questionnaire provided space to ask questions and also provided an opportunity for women to schedule a meeting with me one-on-one to ask any questions they may have had during the course.

What I Would Do Differently

The first thing I would do differently would have been to implement this

project in the Equipping Hour format and provide a 5 to 6-week course on the topic. This would provide more opportunity to discuss in greater depth the debate concerning gender roles with respect to biblical leadership in the local church. I would provide time at the end of each lecture for questions and provide further instruction pertaining to the topic on gender roles and leadership. I would also provide a list of helpful resources and articles to read before they returned for the following week's lecture.

I would have submitted my curriculum to an expert panel and provided them with a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the teaching series. As a result of their feedback, I would make necessary revisions to improve the overall experience and instruction on the topic. I would have also submitted a rubric to the CCC elders to evaluate my ministry plan for implementing this foundational course in the Equipping Hour prior to the project implementation. I would have provided more time to gather more participants to ascertain, for my own understanding, the confidence and knowledge of women at CCC regarding gender roles and biblical leadership in the church.

Theological Reflections

Where do I begin to express my deep love for One who has no beginning? I am overwhelmed by Him: that He, who is completely other, set apart, He who is God, allows me to know Him, serve Him, and worship Him. I was reminded of His deep love for His creation, His children, and His Church, that He graciously established boundaries within the created order for the abundant life that can be experienced when we remain within those boundaries. He Himself is not bound by anything, but He set gracious boundaries for His creation. This is clearly evident in His caring command to Adam not to partake of the one tree that would lead us to death. It is even more evident in His promise to provide a Savior because we would choose to listen to another, step outside of His boundaries, and disobey His command. The obedience or disobedience to what His Word says will

bear consequences, either for good or bad, in our response to them.

I have a post-it note on my desk with a quote from a pastor that reads, “I tell people the greatest obstacle to the knowledge of the Bible is the knowledge of the Bible . . . What keeps us from knowing more about the Bible is that we think we already know it.”⁸ This statement provides both a warning and a blessing. The warning for me is approaching His Word as though I know and have nothing left to learn from the One who knows all things. Second, it points to the blessing the Word is both “living and active” (Heb 4:12); these are not merely idle words (Deut. 32:47) but words that point me to the One who is the very Living Word in whom alone rests the words of eternal life (John 1:1, 14; 6:68–69). This project heightened this understanding that although I may know some of what His Word contains concerning gender roles and leadership in the local church, there is always more to glean from Him.

I grew in my love not only for the church but, in particular, for the family I am blessed to congregate with at Charlottesville Community Church. In His kindness, not only did He provide the greatest gift to meet our greatest need, His Son, but He gave us the body of Christ: many parts, many gifts, united by a love for Him and a desire for the gospel to be proclaimed. I have held a deep respect for the office of elders/pastors and have a deep love for the elders who oversee CCC. If we really ascertain the high calling for these qualified men, it ought to lead us to a greater desire to pray, come alongside, and encourage them. I dearly love the ladies the Lord has graciously entrusted to me for this season. Their participation in the project, and moreover, in the life and ministry of CCC, encourages and bolsters my own faith. Unbeknownst to me, my love for the Lord, for His Word, and for women to rightly divide the truth of Scripture and live in accordance with what He ordains only grew as a result of this project. I am eager to continue the

⁸ TGC article featuring an interview with 6 new narrators for the reading of the Bible. Robert Smith Jr., was one of the 6 interviewed: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/esv-audio-readers/>

conversation and look forward to, with great anticipation, the way the Lord will fulfill what He has begun.

Personal Reflections

This was a challenging project to research and implement. There is a reason gender roles and biblical leadership continue to be a widely, and sadly, often divisive topic in the church. Even coming in with a clear understanding and conviction concerning a complementarian framework, the conversations around this topic are, at times, discouraging and even deflating. The more I listened to both sides of the argument, the more I was convinced of what Scripture clearly communicates regarding the distinction in roles for men and women in the home and church. While I did not focus my time on roles within the home, the distinctions established in the created order impact that of church structure and the home. Personally, I do not believe you can divorce the two. I listened to and read books and articles from individuals who hold passionately to an egalitarian framework and those who hold passionately to a complementarian framework. Depending on the extreme to which they hold their convictions, I was amazed and saddened by the tone used to explain the text (whatever biblical text they were interpreting) and the task of gender roles in the local church.

For the majority of egalitarians, certainly not all, I heard undertones of anger, bitterness, and a strong sense for justice to be done. In order to equalize women with men in leadership roles, they more often than not demeaned and criticized men, especially those who hold to a complementarian framework. I found it ironic that the very mantra they chant is freedom, justice, and respect, yet in a vain attempt to achieve this, they disrespect and show nothing but injustice towards men and those who hold to a different argument.

On the other hand, it can certainly be stated that not all of those who hold to a complementarian framework write or speak with tongues seasoned with salt and grace.

Although they may have the correct biblical verbiage for this secondary doctrine, the manner in which that is communicated, especially on social media platforms, often demonstrates a heroic persona that defends the truth while demeaning an image-bearer with whom they ardently disagree. There must be room in the gender debate to defend the truth of Scripture pertaining to gender roles and leadership in the church while also demonstrating love and charity to those who disagree. No one ultimately wins when others are cut down for the sake of an argument.

This project challenged me personally in this endeavor. While I strongly hold to the biblical truths pertaining to complementarity and will lead, train, and educate women within that framework, I was challenged about how to worship alongside, to love, and to lead those who hold to a very different understanding of the text. I was and am still amazed we can study the same Scriptures and come to two very different conclusions. However, I will continue to faithfully point women to the Word and to Jesus. He alone can take His Word and do transformative work in the hearts of His people, no matter the doctrinal position one holds.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have a word for my brothers who have been called by the Lord to oversee and pastor the flock entrusted to them and a word for my sisters who seek to serve the Lord in the place He has called them.

For my brothers: First of all, let me say that I praise the Lord for you and pray for you. The calling you have been entrusted with is both high and weighty. I am beyond grateful for those of you who faithfully lead in both word and deed, walking in obedience to the Lord. Let me encourage you that there is a large group of godly, trained, gospel-minded women called to ministry and eager to lead, love, and serve the body of Christ alongside you, not to usurp you. There are women surrendered to the authoritative, inerrant Word of God. I know because I have met, served, or conversed with many of

them. You might have as well. These women are seeking the Lord. These women are looking for an opportunity, not an office. A seat at the table, not the elders' table. A place, not a pulpit. A voice to proclaim His name, not a shout to overrule what has been ordained. These women more than likely exist in your church. Do you know them? Do you seek to create a place for them? Not to merely serve in the nursery rocking a baby. I am talking about women gifted by God in leadership, teaching, discipleship, and discernment. Women not seeking a title, but a task. Not a position but a bowed posture of obedience to the One who called them. Do you know them?

If you know them, do you include them? Do you provide opportunities for them to fulfill the call on their lives to train, educate, and equip women in the church to seek, know, and obey the Lord. I would lovingly encourage you to look at your theology, not so much in speech, but in practice. If you say women are valuable to the life of the church and women ought to know sound doctrine, do you provide the opportunity and space to put that into practice? As you know, women and men are called to carry out the same mandate Jesus gave in Matthew 28:18–20. Do you let them? I would encourage you to ask them. Trusted women who are more than likely already faithfully serving in your church and praying for you.

For my sisters: Let me also begin by praising the Lord for you. What a tremendous gift and asset you are to the life of the church and the spread of the gospel. My encouragement to you is what I am regularly reminding myself: to lift your eyes to the Author and Perfector of your faith (Heb 12:1–2) and take your eyes off of man. To bring to Him your hurt, questions, disappointments, and confusion. I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of Him, surrendering your will to His will, walking in obedience to His Word. He has graciously redeemed and called you to Himself. Stay the course. Persevere in the lane He has entrusted you to run in this spiritual race, being careful not to look to the right nor to the left. Your value does not come with a position, a title, or a desk. Even when these things exist, disappointments can ensue. Your value is in Jesus, and there is

no other name, in heaven or on earth, more worthy or more valuable.

To both my brothers and sisters: there is even ground at the foot of the cross. There is only One who is to increase, and as a result, we all rightfully decrease. As we seek to co-labor for the gospel, may we do so in such a way that a dark and dying world around us sees the light and life of Christ in those who claim Him. May He be our very life (Col 3:14).

APPENDIX 1

WOMEN IN BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP PRE-ASSESSMENT

The following instrument was created to assess the current knowledge and understanding of gender roles and biblical leadership in the local church. The WBLA utilized general questions and a Likert scale to ascertain this knowledge.¹ The instrument was administered electronically, and answers were collected approximately one week prior to the one-day intensive.

¹ When developing this pre-assessment, I referenced another ministry research project conducted by Christine Noel Sandra at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. I utilized some of the questions in her gender role questionnaire and personally created the remaining questions with the assistance of my supervisor, Dr. Matt Haste. See Christine Noel Sandra, "Equipping the Staff at Christ Chapel Bible Church in Fort Worth, Texas, to Understand Biblical Complementarianism" (DEdMin project, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023).

Women in Biblical Leadership Pre-Assessment

Agreement to Participate

This research concerns women's roles in the local church with respect to biblical leadership. The research is conducted by Maegan Clark under the direction of the Professional Doctoral Studies office at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for the purpose of assessing your current knowledge of gender roles and biblical leadership. The answers provided will be strictly confidential, and your name will not be reported or identified with your response. You will be provided a code you will use at the top of the pre- and post-assessments to ensure full anonymity. Your participation in the study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. By completing the assessment and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your response in this research project.

Name _____

I agree to participate

I do not agree to participate

PART 1

Directions: Answer the following questions by placing a checkmark in the box that most closely represents your current stage of life and study of gender roles and biblical leadership.

1. What is your age range?

____ 18–24 ____ 25–34 ____ 35–44 ____ 45–54 ____ 55–64 ____ 65+

2. How long have you been a member of CCC?

____ < 1 year ____ 1–3 years ____ 4–6 years ____ 7–9 years ____ 10+ years

3. Have you ever studied what the Bible says about gender roles?

_____ Yes _____ No

4. Have you ever served in a leadership role in an evangelical church?

_____ Yes _____ No

5. Have you ever been a part of a church that has women serving as elders?

_____ Yes _____ No

6. Have you ever been a part of a church that has women serving as pastors?

_____ Yes _____ No

7. Have you ever attended a church that had women teaching on Sunday mornings to men and women?

_____ Yes _____ No

PART 2

Directions: Please rate the following questions using a 1–10 scale.

8. How important do you believe a biblical understanding of gender roles is concerning leadership in the local church?

Not very important 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Extremely Important

9. What is your current knowledge of a woman’s role in biblical leadership in the local church?

Very little knowledge 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very knowledgeable

10. Do you believe a biblical understanding of roles in the local church aids in one’s ability to serve the local church better?

Is not helpful 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Extremely helpful

11. What is your current knowledge of a complementarian framework for biblical leadership?

Very little knowledge 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very knowledgeable

12. What is your current knowledge of an egalitarian framework for leadership in the local church?

Very little knowledge 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very knowledgeable

13. How clear do you think the Bible is concerning gender roles?

Not clear at all 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very clear

14. How clear do you think the Bible is concerning a woman’s role with respect to leadership in the local church?

Not clear at all 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very clear

Continued on the next page.

PART 3

Directions: Answer the following questions by placing a checkmark in the box that most closely represents your current practices or beliefs.

The scale is as follows:

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

DS = Disagree Somewhat

AS = Agree Somewhat

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

| # | Question | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
|----|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 15 | God created male and female equally in His image. | | | | | | |
| 16 | God created male and female equally in dignity. | | | | | | |
| 17 | God created male and female equally in roles. | | | | | | |
| 18 | God created male and female with distinction in roles. | | | | | | |
| 19 | Gender roles are a result of the Fall. | | | | | | |
| 20 | God created male and female equal in leadership. | | | | | | |
| 21 | God created women to use their spiritual gifts. | | | | | | |
| 22 | God gives both men and women spiritual gifts. | | | | | | |
| 23 | Men and women can be pastors in the local church. | | | | | | |
| 24 | Men and women can hold the office of elder in the local church. | | | | | | |
| 25 | Women can exercise authority over men in the local church. | | | | | | |
| 26 | Women can preach on a Sunday morning under the authority of an elder. | | | | | | |
| 27 | Women can have the spiritual gift of teaching. | | | | | | |
| 28 | Women can have the spiritual gift of leadership. | | | | | | |

| # | Question | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
|----|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 29 | Leadership is a spiritual gift women can use in the local church. | | | | | | |
| 30 | Women are devalued without a pastoral title in the local church. | | | | | | |

APPENDIX 2

WOMEN IN BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP POST-ASSESSMENT

This instrument was created and administered immediately following the four lectures during the one-day intensive. The WBLA post-assessment consists of general questions and the same Likert scale administered in the pre-assessment, with the addition of several open-ended questions to aid in the development of more education and training at CCC.

Women in Biblical Leadership Post-Assessment

Agreement to Participate

This research concerns women's roles in the local church with respect to biblical leadership. The research is conducted by Maegan Clark under the direction of the Professional Doctoral Studies office at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for the purpose of assessing your current knowledge of gender roles and biblical leadership. The answers provided will be strictly confidential, and your name will not be reported or identified with your response. You will enter the same code you used in the pre-assessment on this assessment. Your participation in the study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. By completing the assessment and by checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your response in this research project.

Name _____

I agree to participate

I do not agree to participate

PART 1

Questions 1–7 completed in pre-assessment.

PART 2

Directions: Please rate the following questions using a 1–10 scale.

15. How important do you believe a biblical understanding of gender roles is concerning leadership in the local church?

Not very important 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Extremely Important

16. What is your current knowledge of a woman's role in biblical leadership in the local church?

Very little knowledge 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very knowledgeable

17. Do you believe a biblical understanding of roles in the local church aids in one's ability to serve the local church better?

Is not helpful 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Extremely helpful

18. What is your current knowledge of a complementarian framework for biblical leadership?

Very little knowledge 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very knowledgeable

19. What is your current knowledge of an egalitarian framework for leadership in the local church?

Very little knowledge 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very knowledgeable

20. How clear do you think the Bible is concerning gender roles?

Not clear at all 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very clear

21. How clear do you think the Bible is concerning a woman’s role with respect to leadership in the local church?

Not clear at all 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10 Very clear

PART 3

Directions: Answer the following questions by placing a checkmark in the box that most closely represents your current practices or beliefs.

The scale is as follows:

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

DS = Disagree Somewhat

AS = Agree Somewhat

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

| # | Question | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
|----|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 15 | God created male and female equally in His image. | | | | | | |
| 16 | God created male and female equally in dignity. | | | | | | |
| 17 | God created male and female equally in roles. | | | | | | |
| 18 | God created male and female with distinction in roles. | | | | | | |
| 19 | Gender roles are a result of the Fall. | | | | | | |
| 20 | God created male and female equal in leadership. | | | | | | |
| 21 | God created women to use their spiritual gifts. | | | | | | |

| # | Question | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
|----|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 22 | God gives both men and women spiritual gifts. | | | | | | |
| 23 | Men and women can be pastors in the local church. | | | | | | |
| 24 | Men and women can hold the office of elder in the local church. | | | | | | |
| 25 | Women can exercise authority over men in the local church. | | | | | | |
| 26 | Women can preach on a Sunday morning under the authority of an elder. | | | | | | |
| 27 | Women can have the spiritual gift of teaching. | | | | | | |
| 28 | Women can have the spiritual gift of leadership. | | | | | | |
| 29 | Leadership is a spiritual gift women can use in the local church. | | | | | | |
| 30 | Women are devalued without a pastoral title in the local church. | | | | | | |

PART 4

Directions: Please provide a written response to the following questions.

31. In what ways did this course improve your understanding of what the Bible teaches about women in leadership?

32. In what ways did this course challenge your current convictions about women in leadership in the local church?

33. In what ways did this course strengthen your convictions about women in leadership in the local church?

34. In what ways did this course encourage you to know your spiritual gifts and seek opportunities to serve in your local church?

35. In what ways did this course educate you about the gender role debate with respect to biblical leadership in the local church?

APPENDIX 3

EQUIPPING HOUR: FOUNDATIONAL COURSE ON BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

The following document was developed and submitted to the CCC elders for review. The document includes the purpose and content overview of the project while providing action steps to develop and integrate theological courses like biblical womanhood and leadership in the local church.

Equipping Hour

Foundational Course on Biblical Womanhood

The purpose of my doctoral ministry project was to equip women at Charlottesville Community Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, for biblical leadership within the framework of complementarity amid a cultural pull for equality in all ministerial roles. I believe, according to Scripture, men and women are created equal as image-bearers and in dignity, yet distinct in roles. I believe the office of elder/pastor/overseer is reserved for qualified men according to 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9, prohibiting women from holding this office per the created order established pre-fall (Gen 1–2; 1 Tim 2:9–15). I believe there are many permissible places for a woman to serve in the church, including leadership capacities, and my desire is to further educate, train, and biblically equip them in this endeavor.

I recently completed a 4-part teaching series on Saturday, September 7, 2024, for our women’s program, ROOTED: Grounded & Growing in Christ. During this one-day intensive, I taught women about the following:

- **Lecture 1:** Tiers of doctrine (primary, secondary, tertiary); defining of terms such as hermeneutics, egalitarian, complementarian; provided a brief overview of secular feminism, and current issues pertaining to evangelical feminism and complementarianism. I did not spend a lot of time on secular feminism but highlighted the impact it had on an egalitarian hermeneutic. I provided a table differentiating between egalitarians and complementarians to be utilized throughout the other lectures.
- **Lecture 2:** This lecture included an overview of Genesis 1–3 from a complementarian hermeneutic. We walked through the creation of mankind (Gen 1:26–28) and what it means to equally be image-bearers of God; the creation of Adam (Gen 2:1–9); the creation of Eve (Gen 2:18–25); and the curse sin had on pre-established roles for male and female (Gen 3). I included the 9 indications of role distinction pre-fall using Wayne Grudem’s list and interwove the indications throughout the teaching.¹
- **Lecture 3:** I taught through 1 Timothy 2:9–15 and Paul’s appeal to Timothy for ecclesiastical structure amid false teaching. Here, Paul commands women to learn yet prohibits them from teaching or exercising authority over men. The context is a public setting of worship. The context of the prohibition along with Paul’s reference to the created order in vv. 13–15 further solidifies what is prohibited and permissible for a woman’s role in the local church. I believe there is immense blessing in boundaries, and the temptation to step over those boundaries is a result of what happened in Genesis 3.
- **Lecture 4:** We walked through Titus 2:1, 3–5, highlighting what is permissible for women in the local church, i.e., knowing “sound doctrine” so that they might be able to train and teach other women “what is good.”

¹ See the entire list and explanation from Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 460–64.

The women were emailed a follow up questionnaire on Tuesday, September 10, welcoming questions, feedback, and polling interest in an Equipping Hour opportunity for another course like this. I have heard from many women who were unable to attend with an expressed interest in an Equipping Hour opportunity as well.

In a culture that continues to be inundated with equality, autonomy, empowerment, and more, I believe a foundational course on biblical womanhood is necessary and aligns with the mission and vision of CCC. Below is a list of action steps for this course:

1. Set up a meeting with the elders to discuss a biblical womanhood course for the spring semester
2. Create foundational courses and coursework for women at CCC during the Equipping Hour on Sunday mornings
3. Create an outline and major topics pertaining to biblical womanhood
4. Create curriculum on biblical womanhood in addition to gender roles and biblical leadership to teach over a 6 to 8-week period
5. Submit curriculum on biblical womanhood in addition to the curriculum developed on women and biblical leadership in the local church to an expert panel.
6. Submit a rubric to an expert panel to provide feedback and evaluate the overall biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the course.

APPENDIX 4

T-TEST RESULTS SUBSCALE 1–CONFIDENCE

| T-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means for Subscale 1 - Confidence | | |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>Pre-Test Total</i> | <i>Post-Test Total</i> |
| Mean | 50.92857143 | 62.78571429 |
| Variance | 57.14835165 | 28.48901099 |
| Observations | 14 | 14 |
| Pearson Correlation | 0.4113758538 | |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference | 0 | |
| df | 13 | |
| t stat | 6.12653 | |
| P(T<=t) one-tail | 0.00001942989836 | |
| t Critical one-tail | 1.771 | |
| P(T<=t) two-tail | 0.00003622023218 | |
| t Critical two-tail | 2.16 | |

APPENDIX 5

T-TEST RESULTS FOR SUBSCALE 2-KNOWLEDGE

| T-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means for Subscale 2 - Knowledge | | |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>Pre-Test Total</i> | <i>Post-Test Total</i> |
| Mean | 82.71428571 | 87.28571429 |
| Variance | 62.06593407 | 48.52747253 |
| Observations | 14 | 14 |
| Pearson Correlation | 0.6491590771 | |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference | 0 | |
| df | 13 | |
| t stat | 2.727063 | |
| P(T<=t) one-tail | 0.0107276956 | |
| t Critical one-tail | 1.771 | |
| P(T<=t) two-tail | 0.01727840791 | |
| t Critical two-tail | 2.16 | |

APPENDIX 6

TEACHING NOTES FOR LECTURES ON GENDER ROLES AND BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

This appendix contains my teaching notes for the four lectures implemented on Saturday, September 7, 2024, at the ROOTED event for women at CCC.

ROOTED

Lecture 1 (History, Defining Terms, Current Issues)

Background and purpose of this project

- Interest in this topic and how it has impacted ministerial endeavors
- Desire to train, equip, and educate women on God's Word – important to know what you believe and why you believe it!
- Goal: to create a foundational Equipping Hour at CCC each year concerning biblical womanhood

Three Tiers of Doctrine

Primary, Secondary, Tertiary (essential and non-essentials of Christian doctrine)¹

1. **Primary or first-tier**: doctrines most central and essential to the Christian faith.
 - Ex – Trinity; the full deity and humanity of Christ; etc.
 - In other words, these are the hills to die on in Christianity!

2. **Second-tier**: Second-tier doctrines differentiate from first-tier in that one may disagree with second-tier, but these disagreements do not necessarily lead to a denial of the Christian faith.
 - “Christians across a vast denominational range can stand together on the first-tier doctrines and recognize each other as authentic Christians, while understanding that the existence of second-order disagreements prevents the closeness of fellowship we would otherwise enjoy.”²
 - Ex – Baptism, Complementarianism / Egalitarianism

3. **Tertiary or third-tier**: Third-tier issues may be disagreed upon, but the fellowship of the church is not at odds.
 - Ex – Eschatology

Defining Terms

Two primary hermeneutical approaches to Scripture we will look at today as it pertains to gender roles and leadership in the church:

- 1) Complementarianism – men and women are created equal in person, dignity, and as image-bearers of God; yet, distinct in roles.

- 2) Egalitarianism – men and women are created equal in both person, dignity, image-bearing, and roles. There is no role distinction.

¹ Albert Mohler, “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity,” *Albert Mohler* (blog), July 12, 2005, <https://albertmohler.com/2005/07/12/a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity/>.

² Mohler, “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity.”

ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN³

| EGALITARIAN | COMPLEMENTARIAN |
|---|---|
| Because man and woman are created equal, there are no role distinctions. | Man and woman are equal in being but have different, God-ordained roles to fill. |
| Role distinctions are the result of the original fall into sin and the subsequent curse. Therefore, redemption in Christ removes role distinctions. | The fall into sin and the subsequent curse did not institute roles. Rather, creation order established the roles and the fall into sin created the struggle to fulfill those roles. |
| Role distinctions are legalistic and contrary to Scripture *(Goal: Liberate women from boundaries) | Role distinctions are freeing not binding. They are given by God to help the man and woman function together. *(Goal: Freedom in the boundaries) |

The manner in which one applies either their egalitarian or complementarian hermeneutic falls on what can be referred to as a gender spectrum.

Historical Overview of Feminism, Egalitarianism, and Complementarianism

Brief History of Feminism

Three Waves of Feminism⁴

| Movement | Rise of Movement | Central Concern |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---|
| The First Wave | 1830s | Racial and social justice |
| The Second Wave | 1960s | Gender equality |
| The Third Wave | 1990s | Radical pursuit of feminine self-reliance |

³ This is the table created by Terri Stovall, “God’s Plan for Women, in *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church*, by Jaye Martin and Terri Stovall (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 17. The goal is added by the author (M. Pittinger).

⁴ Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger, *Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

The seismic shift in a woman's heart entered in the Garden when she chose to disobey and rebel against her Creator. Now, the tumultuous waves of feminism find their ebb and flow in the tsunami of sin's consequences. Complementarian author and Bible teacher Mary Kassian states, "The philosophy of feminism is part of the seismic postmodern earthquake. Feminism proposes that women find happiness and meaning through the pursuit of personal authority, autonomy, and freedom."⁵

The second wave of feminism can be traced to a 30-year span: from 1960–1990.

There were two leading sources that served the wake of the second feminist movement: *The Second Sex* and *The Feminist Mystique*. These sources, formerly known as manifestos, *The Second Sex* was not widely accepted in North America until *The Feminist Mystique* highlighted and exalted the socialist agenda.

According to Kassian, "*The Feminine Mystique* was published in 1963, and it, together with de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, formed the base for the development of the modern feminist movement."⁶ In their attempt to shed light on the so-called imprisonment of women as "wife, mother, and sweetheart" they cut all relational and communal opportunities creating a wide chasm between the sexes.

According to professor and author Dr. Michelle Lee-Barnewall (author of *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*), "The 1960s saw a strong reaction against the domestic expectations placed on women. However, unlike at the turn of the twentieth century, this time (second wave feminism) concerns about rights and equality predominated."⁷

The drive of this movement was to essentially glorify autonomy, and not just merely the independence of women, but the autonomy of women at the expense of men specifically in the home and workplace.

Lee-Barnewall continues, "The increased emphasis on the individual and personal fulfillment in the larger culture seemed to provide a fertile environment for the feminists who would in turn provide a vital catalyst for the evangelical egalitarian movement."⁸ This most certainly impacted the church.

The banner of this movement was: autonomy and shouts of freedom!

⁵ Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 7.

⁶ Kassian, *The Feminist Mistake*, 23.

⁷ Michelle Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 49.

⁸ Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*, 49.

Feminism seeks to empower women for the sake of fulfilling and exalting women. This is not the gospel!

The Spirit of God is the One who empowers believers: both men and women. Nowhere in Scripture do you see one gender empowered and exalted over another. In fact, there is only One who is exalted, One who is to increase – we are all called to decrease (John 3:30)

The message of secular feminism causes you to cling to the curse and not the cross!

Brief History of Egalitarianism or Evangelical Feminism

Significant dates:

(Began as early as the 1950s and 1960s)

1988 – Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE International) – founded as Christians for Biblical Equality⁹

- This was split from the originally formed Evangelical Women’s Caucus (EWC). The split was due to a complete disagreement concerning homosexuality.¹⁰

1989 - First major project was creating and publishing “Men, Women, and Biblical Equality” which “laid out the biblical rationale for equality as well as its application in the community of believers and the family.

Egalitarians formulated a definition of equality for Christian women that concurred with the definition put forth by secular society. Equality meant role-interchangeability.¹¹

Michelle Lee-Barnewall (professor and author) states, “As second wave feminism concentrated on the rights of women and the abolition of roles based on gender so did the second evangelical feminist movement.”¹²

Lee-Barnewall continues, “Whereas the first evangelical movement saw a push for women’s influence in the public sphere due to the belief in their greater moral influence, the second movement tried to help Christian women free themselves from what many said were the burdens of a patriarchal church culture.”¹³

⁹ CBE International, “History of CBE,” accessed August 2024, https://www.cbeinternational.org/primary_page/cbes-history/.

¹⁰ Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism within the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1992), 215–16.

¹¹ Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel*, 211–12.

¹² Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*, 50.

¹³ Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*, 50.

Common theme of liberation – similar to that of liberation theology: this idea that women are oppressed and must be set free. The idea that different or distinction means something is wrong.

Brief History of Complementarianism

Significant dates:

1987 – Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW)

- comprised of individuals such as Wayne Grudem, John Piper, Susan Foh, and more¹⁴
- known for the Danvers Statement (1987) and Nashville Statement on biblical sexuality (2017).
- Primary resources:
 - *“Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism”* – Grudem and Piper
 - *“Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions”* – Wayne Grudem

The Danvers Statement:

The Danvers Statement summarizes the need for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) and serves as an overview of our core beliefs. This statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts, in December of 1987. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in Wheaton, Illinois in November of 1988.¹⁵

Sample: The Fall introduced distortions and redemption in Christ aims to remove these distortions:

“In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2–16; 1 Tim 2:11–15).”¹⁶

¹⁴ The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), “Our History,” accessed August 1, 2024, <https://cbmw.org/about/history/>.

¹⁵ CBMW, *The Danvers Statement*, CBMW.org, last modified November 1988, <https://cbmw.org/about/danvers-statement/>.

¹⁶ CBMW, *The Danvers Statement*, Affirmations no. 6.2.

1988 – the term “complementarian” is used a year after the release of The Danvers Statement as a label for the position.¹⁷ The theology of complementarianism is traced all the way back to Genesis 2 with the creation of Adam and Eve “complementing” one another.

According to CBMW and theologian, Denny Burk, “The term has a profound exegetical and linguistic root in the Hebrew of Genesis 2:18 (*kenegdo*), which the lexicons define as “**corresponding to**.”¹⁸

“If one word must be used to describe our position, we prefer the term *complementarian*, since it suggests both equality and beneficial differences between men and women. We are uncomfortable with the term “traditionalist” because it implies an unwillingness to let Scripture challenge traditional patterns of behavior, and we certainly reject the term “hierarchicalist” because it overemphasizes structured authority while giving no suggestion of equality or the beauty of mutual interdependence.”¹⁹

What does this have to do with us today?

¹⁷ Denny Burk, “What’s in a name? The meaning and origin of ‘complementarianism’,” *CBMW* (blog), August 9, 2019, <https://cbmw.org/2019/08/01/whats-in-a-name/>.

¹⁸ Burk, “What’s in a name?”

¹⁹ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *RBMW*, xv.

ROOTED: Lecture 2 (Genesis 1–3 Overview)

In Genesis 1, God speaks into being the creation of the universe describing every component as “good.” Bible teacher and author, Kathleen Nielson proclaims, “His word is the action; we can’t miss the insistent repetition of “And God said” or “Then God said” (v 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29). His words not only narrate; they create.”²⁰

In Genesis 1:26–28 we behold the pinnacle of God’s creation.

Read Passage: Genesis 1:26–28

Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.’

Creation of Mankind

Key subtle contrasts to explore when looking at the creation of man:²¹

- 1) There is a shift in the text with God’s command from “Let there be…” (third person) to “Let Us make” (first person) in v. 26
- 2) The making of other creations is “according to its kind”, where here it is specified the creation of man is like God – “Man’s image is not simple of himself; he also shares a likeness to his Creator.”
- 3) Gender specifications are given: “male and female.” Moses did not stress the gender of other forms of creation, but for man it stands out and is significant.
- 4) Man alone was given dominion over all the living creatures (vv. 26, 28)

v. 26 – “made” and “create”: synonymous with that of 1:1; but a significant difference here is that the verb “make” is grammatically plural. “Created” is highlighted in v.27 by its repetition three times, and in v.26 the plural form of the verb distinguishes “make.”²²

²⁰ Nielson, *Women and God*, 21.

²¹ John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. Frank Gæbelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 37.

²² Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 160.

“Created is a word that in Hebrew is used only of God’s activity. It occurs 6 times in this opening account of creation.... *Created* is in contrast to the Hebrew word “do” or “make”, which is used throughout this account for making and forming things from already created items or as a general word for God’s work (v. 7, 11–12, 16, 25–26, 31; 2:2–3).²³

“man” – Hebrew word (’ādām)

- used generically of mankind, rather than the individual, Adam.
- Only man is called God’s image – this defines the human race.

V. 27 indicates two distinct sexual persons: male (zākār) and female (nēqēbâ)²⁴

- ALL mankind (male and female) are created in the “image” and “likeness” of God.

What does it mean to be created in His “image” after His “likeness”?

“Image” (*tselem*) defined: has the meaning of something that is carved or cut out.²⁵

Both Hebrew terms “image” and “likeness” refer to something similar, but not identical.²⁶

“It is used figuratively here, and does not refer to physical shape or outer appearance. Being the image of God means that humans share, although imperfectly, in the nature of God—that is, they were given the **communicable attributes** of intelligence, knowledge, spiritual understanding, creativity, wisdom, love, compassion, holiness, justice, and the like. As the text will explain (2:7), all these capacities were given by the inbreathing of the breath of life. Thus, humans have the capacity to commune with the living God, as well as with one another.”²⁷

²³ Andrew Steinmann, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic), 50.

²⁴ Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 172.

²⁵ Richard Phillips, “Man as the Image of God,” The Gospel Coalition, accessed August 2024, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/man-as-the-image-of-god/>.

²⁶ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 442–43.

²⁷ Allen Ross, Genesis, in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1, *Genesis, Exodus*, ed. Phillip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), 39–40.

What does this not mean?

We are not nor will we ever be God! He is the Creator and we are the created. We are like Him (patterned after Him), but never divine. Here is a visual to help²⁸:

ETERNITY PAST:
God the Father
God the Son
God the Holy Spirit

| <u>Created</u> |
|---------------------|
| Angelic realm |
| Animals |
| Plants / Vegetation |
| Man |

Important to note from the image above:

- He has no beginning (eternity past); we have a start date.
- He is Creator; we are the created.
- He is divine; we are mankind who shares in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), after His likeness, but are nor will ever be God.
- He is God; we are created to bow.

v. 27 – “so God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

This verse further solidifies that both male and female are created in His image – patterned after Him. The use of the definite article in v. 27 refers to mankind or humankind in general, not an individual person.²⁹

There is no differentiation between man as an image-bearer and woman as an image-bearer. Thus, you have the equality of man and woman in their person, value, and dignity.

vv. 26 & 28: God gives two commands to man:

- 1) Dominion – v. 26 provides a list
- 2) Fruitfulness -

*Note in v. 28 – “And God said to them” indicates personal, intimate relationship between God and man³⁰

²⁸ This illustration is from Mendy Clark, *Created to Bow: Transforming the Heart Bound in Fear, Perfectionism, and Control*, Following God Discipleship Series (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2022).

²⁹ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 32.

³⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 33.

Creation of Man

Read the passage: Genesis 2:1–9

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up – for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground – Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in the Eden, in the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We should already pause to see the distinct difference in the creation of man. The creation account of chapter 1 – God speaks, and it is so. Here, in chapter 2 both man and woman are created out of what already exists: for man (dust); for woman (man).

Creation of man:

- Formed from dust of the ground
 - “formed” – is likened to that of a potter and clay
 - “dust of the ground” – “shows man’s close connection with the ground, his cradle, his home, his grave (see 2:5, 15; 3:19)”³¹
- God breathed into his nostrils the “breath of life”
 - “This breath (*neshamah*) from God made man a living spiritual being, with the capacity for spiritual understanding, discerning right from wrong, and communing with God.”³²
- Man is created first, placed in the garden to keep and cultivate it, and participates in having dominion over living creature by authorization to name them.

³¹ Bruce Waltke with Cathi Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 85.

³² Ross, *Genesis*, 43.

Creation of Woman

Read the passage: Genesis 2:18–23

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.

But for Adam (*the man*) there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

- Hebrew term (*ezer kenegdo*): defined as “helper fit”

Complementarians and egalitarians agree that it is a Hebrew word often used of God in the Old Testament. The conclusions for the title, however, could not be more different.

Egalitarians believe that since Eve was given a name that God Himself uses, this institutes equal status if not makes her superior to Adam.

There is no indication in the text that the term “helper” means: inferior.

She is not just a helper to anyone, but was created as specifically fit for him. “The Hebrew word *kenegdo* mean a help ‘corresponding to him,’ that is “equal and adequate in himself.”

For complementarians, “Eve was created as a helper, but as a helper who was Adam’s equal, and one who differed from him, but who differed from him in ways that would exactly complement who Adam was.”³³

So, was Eve Adam’s equal? Yes and no. She was his spiritual equal and, unlike the animals, “suitable for him.” But she was not his equal in that she was his “helper.” God did not create man and woman in an

³³ Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 119.

undifferentiated way, and their mere maleness and femaleness identify their respective roles. A man, just by virtue of his manhood, is called to lead for God. A woman, just by virtue of her womanhood, is called to help for God.³⁴

A Cursed Creation **Distortion, Destruction, and Death**

“This role relationship of leader and follower is indicated directly and implicitly. First, the participant structure of Genesis 2–3 shows implicitly the hierarchy of creation: God, the man, woman, and animal (serpent). But this was reversed in the fall: the woman listens to the serpent, the man listens to the woman, and no one listens to God.”³⁵

The curse of sin introduced the distortion to roles

- 3:16 – For the woman:
 - Hebrew term “desire” (*teshuqah*) – she seeks to usurp his authority; desire to control him³⁶
- 3:17–18 – For the man:
 - ground is cursed, will endure pain, thistles, thorns, sweat; “till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”
 - Rule over her – no longer indicative of kindness, but dominating with harshness

³⁴ Raymond Ortlund Jr., “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship (Genesis 1–3),” in *RBMW*, 102.

³⁵ Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 220.

³⁶ Susan T. Foh, “What Is the Woman’s Desire?,” *WTJ* 37 (1974/75): 376–83.

Creation Order
Equal in Dignity Yet Distinct in Roles

There are at least 9 indications of distinction in roles prior to the Fall:³⁷

1. Adam was created first, then Eve – indicates leadership in the family; Paul also comes back to this created order in 1 Timothy 2:13
2. Eve was created as a helper for Adam
 - a. Cf: “Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man” – 1 Cor. 11:9
 - b. Term helper means “corresponding to” – it is not a name of inferiority, but does reveal subordination. This is not a “less than” title. It is a title of honor and when rightly applied works in beautiful harmony/fellowship with man.
3. Adam named Eve
 - a. “In OT thought, the right to name someone implied authority over that person (this is seen both when God gives names to people such as Abraham and Sarah, and when parents give names to their children.)”³⁸
 - b. Adam’s displays authority and leadership in the naming of the animals (prior to Eve’s existence)
4. God named the human race “Man,” not “Woman”
5. The serpent came to Eve first
 - a. The enemy is the master distorter and the chief rebel of the created order (ex: the enemy’s own fall)
 - b. The order: God spoke to Adam first (Gen. 2:15–17; 3:9)
 - c. Cf: 1 Timothy 2:14
6. God spoke to Adam first after the fall
7. Adam, not Eve, represented the human race
 - a. Cf: Romans 5:15; vv. 12–21
8. The curse brought a distortion of previous roles, not the introduction of new roles
 - a. What was introduced in the fall was pain and sorrow into functions they previously held
 - i. Adam – still has primary responsibility for the ground
 - ii. Eve – still has responsibility in bearing children
9. Redemption in Christ reaffirms the creation order

³⁷ See the entire list and explanation from Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 460–64.

³⁸ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 462.

ROOTED:
Lecture 3 (1 Timothy 2:9–15)

Read the passage: 1 Timothy 2:8–15; 3:14–15

“I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness – with good works.

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.”

Background and Context of 1 Timothy

1 & 2 Timothy, Titus: referred to as the Pastoral Epistles

Author: Paul (1:1 – “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope...”)

Recipient: Timothy (1:2 – “To Timothy, my true child in the faith...”)

Written: It is likely Paul wrote 1 Timothy in Macedonia (1 Tim 1:3).

- 1 Timothy and Titus are thought to have been written closely together given the same subject matter concerning church structure, conduct, and warning against false teaching.
- Likely date for the letter is A.D. 62–66. These two epistles (1 Timothy and Titus) would have been compiled upon Paul release from prison and prior to his second imprisonment in Rome.³⁹

Location: Timothy is in Ephesus (1:3)

Purpose:

- 1) Ecclesiastical structure
- 2) Warning against false teaching
- 3) Conduct for the church

³⁹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, Timothy, Titus*, NAC 34 (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 40.

**Blessing in the Boundary: A Comprehensive Look at
Paul’s Appeal to Women in 1 Timothy 2:9–15
Regarding Permissible Church Activities**

Paul’s Appeal to Women in Public Worship: Matters of Adornment and Authority

There are considered to be three primary positions towards women and Scripture. This is clearly evident as it pertains to controversial texts such as 1 Timothy 2:9–15 and other texts such as 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14.

In his commentary on 1 Timothy, Robert Yarbrough summarizes the positions as follows:

Critical Feminist: The Bible is traditionalist. Its patriarchalism oppresses women; the Bible is wrong.

Evangelical Feminist: The Bible is feminist. Its egalitarianism liberates women; the Bible is right.

Evangelical Traditionalist: The Bible is traditionalist. Its advocacy of loving leadership lets women thrive; the Bible is right.⁴⁰

- A. Critical feminist: holds that the doctrine and ideology of 1 Timothy 2 is to be viewed as patriarchal with an agenda to demean women. The motive is to reject Paul’s teaching altogether.

- B. Evangelical Feminist: often termed egalitarianism
 - a. sees 1 Timothy 2 and its instruction to women as situational and is not to be viewed as permanent order.
 - b. Yarbrough, in quoting theologian I. Howard Marshall, a proponent for the middle position on 1 Timothy 2:9–15, argues, “Interpreters who are sympathetic to the ministry of women in teaching and church leadership today claim that the passage does not give a blanket condemnation of these activities, and argue that it is dealing with an unusual ecclesiastical situation that required unusual measures and/or that the teaching reflects a particular culture situation and therefore should not be universalized.”⁴¹
 - c. Overall conclusion for the text centers around the theme of false teaching and restrictions being temporary, circumstantial, not permanent for the church.
 - d. Need to liberate women

- C. Evangelical Traditionalist: often termed complementarianism
 - a. Holds the doctrine of 1 Timothy 2 as permanent marching orders for the church, especially with Paul’s use of the created order in vv. 13–15.

⁴⁰ Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 137.

⁴¹ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 141. Yarbrough is responding to I. Howard Marshall with P. H. Towner, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 438–39.

- b. Agree that false teaching is present and an issue, but does not make up the entirety of why the book was written. It was also written to provide clear leadership structure in the church concerning the conduct of those who make up the household of God.
- c. Do not view women as imprisoned, demeaned, or unable to serve in ministry; but holds to the establishment of roles by God in Genesis 2.

While there may be agreement between egalitarians and complementarians for women to be called and to pursue ministerial endeavors, the conclusion for what is prohibited and permissible is starkly different.

We will look more at the difference in conclusion as we walk through the 1 Timothy 2:9–15.

Important to note the context of Paul’s instruction:

- 1) The context concerned the church, not the home, and not the world. “Paul was providing instructions for praying and teaching within the confines of the local congregations.”⁴²
- 2) The appeal was certainly to men and women with a focus on wives in v. 15. It is important to note the instruction in vv. 9–12 is to women in general within the church, not just wives.⁴³

Paul’s appeal to women in the following verses is as follows:

- vv.9–10 he described the moral behavior of the women, and in
- vv. 11–12 he outlined their proper church activity
- vv. 13–14 he gave reason for his appeal
- v. 15– he delivered a promise to obedient women.⁴⁴

Paul’s Appeal to Moral Behavior of Women in the Church: 1 Timothy 2:9–10

Vv. 9–10 - “likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness – with good works.”

The appeal to the outward adornment of a woman is ultimately a reflection of the inward nature of her heart.

1 Peter 3:3–4 - “Do not let your adorning be external – the braiding of hair and the

⁴² Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, 40.

⁴³ Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, pg.

⁴⁴ Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, pg.

putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear – but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.”

Peter’s address to wives in this passage mirrors Paul’s appeal to women in the church. This instruction set them apart from the culture in which they resided. The matter at hand was not merely modest dress, but proper adornment of one’s heart before the Lord displayed through good works and not “gold or pearls or costly attire” (2:9).

Paul’s Appeal to Church Activity for Women in the Church: 1 Timothy 2:11–12

v. 11 – “Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness,”

There is a shift from the plural of “women” to “woman” further emphasizing this concerns all women in the church and not merely wives.⁴⁵

The command for women to learn was a cultural shift from what they would have known by example in Judaism. Rather, Paul is not pulling from his Jewish roots, but is instead calling women to learn that they might grow and mature in their walk with Christ.

She is commanded and permitted to “learn”: (imperative) – literal sense of learning through instruction⁴⁶

How is she to learn?

- “quietly” – silently (public setting), peaceable demeanor, teachable – quite the opposite of what is shown in 1 Timothy 5:13 of women being “gossips and busybodies...”
- “with all submissiveness” – “subjection, submission, subordination.”
 - In this passage, “submission is, more broadly, the norm for the relationship of women to men in authority functions within the church.

It is quite important to note this does not mean women are to submit to all men. In this passage, Paul is instructing women to learn and to submit to those in authority (which is not them according to v. 12). These are appointed, called, and qualified men as Paul lays out in 1 Timothy 3:1–7.

⁴⁵ Thomas R. Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 184.

⁴⁶ George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 139.

Two views of this text:

- 1) Egalitarians – they interpret permission to learn lifts the ban of the prohibition in v.12, therefore permitting a woman to teach; they believe one of the key issues was the lack of education for women.
- 2) Complementarians – they interpret permission to learn as means of growing in their maturation and walk with Christ

**We must pay careful attention to the entirety of the verse. A removal of the imperative verb “quietly and with all submissiveness” alters the interpretation and application of the verse altogether.

Paul does not merely say “Women should learn!” for this would result in a different application. “The command focuses not on women learning but, on the manner, and mode of their learning, that is, quietly and with all submissiveness... Paul undoubtedly commends women to learn, and yet his central concern is the manner in which they learn.”⁴⁷

Our focus shifts primarily the verse which holds leadership qualities expressed in v. 12, “teaching and exercising authority.”

Two qualities of pastoral leadership, specifically pertaining to the office of elder/overseer/pastor, is the ability to teach (1 Timothy 3) and the position to exercise authority.

v.12 – “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.”

She is not permitted to:

Egalitarian argument: Egalitarian scholars believe the verb “I do not permit” is a present active indicative translating to “I am not permitting” with a singular objective: “a woman.”⁴⁸ Some also translate it to mean “I am not permitting a woman to teach now.”

They would argue that the indicative is meant for instruction...

⁴⁷ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 139.

⁴⁸ Linda Belleville, *1 Timothy*, in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, vol. 17, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews*, ed. Phillip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), pg.

Complementarian argument: There are several instances where Paul utilizes a present indicative and the context clearly reveals a command.⁴⁹ The egalitarian conclusion implies that only commands are in the imperative mood, which is not the case due to **context**.

- Examples of Paul’s use of present indicative cases where the **context** reveals that he intends a command
 - “I exhort” – Romans 12:1; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 4:2; 2 Tim. 1:6⁵⁰

“Neither the tense of the verb “permit” nor the verb’s intrinsic meaning can determine whether what is permitted or forbidden is universal. Rather, the verb’s **context** is decisive.”

The context, not the term *permitted*, determines the universal or temporary force of the prohibition. In conclusion, the mere presence of the word ἐπιτρέπω (permitted) cannot be used to establish the temporary nature of the restriction, nor can it establish that we have a universal principle for all time. Only the context can resolve that question, and v.12 alone lacks sufficient evidence to answer it (though see the above-mentioned parallel of wording in vv.1 and 8). That said, I will argue below that v.13 establishes the prohibition as universal.⁵¹

She is not permitted to:

- **“teach”** – the audience and immediate context (dealing with leadership structure in the life of the church) aide in this prohibition
- - “Just as v.11 was not a demand for all learning to be done in silence, as an unqualified absolute, but was concerned with women’s learning in the midst of the assembled people of God, so also the prohibition of teaching here has the same setting and perspective in view.”⁵² – Knight
- **“exercise authority”** - ἀὐθεντεῖν; neutral meaning to “have authority”
 - The Greek term for authority is rare and only used in this passage

⁴⁹ See Schreiner’s full explanation of the use of cross-references for further guidance on the use of present indicatives and context giving way to a command in Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 188.

⁵⁰ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 188.

⁵¹ Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 190.

⁵² Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 190.

E: Most common among egalitarian translations concerns a woman's behavior which is not to be violent or inappropriate, nor is she to be dominate, misuse authority, or take control by force.⁵³

However, there is much to learn from the coordinating conjunction “oude” – “OR” and the two infinitives to follow.

- Egalitarians use the conjunction to say that “teaching” and “exercising authority” are serve as a single idea, thus lose their distinctiveness in translation.⁵⁴

In the Greek, the function of the conjunction (conjunction, junction – what's your function?) “oude” is not to join two elements into one single idea.

Scholars (Philip Payne) translate the conjunction into the English idea of “and”; however in doing so, they are “using a positive conjunction (and) to support a point about a negative conjunction (oude).”⁵⁵

In other words, it would seem that if Paul wanted to combine “teaching” and “authority” into a single idea, he might have considered the Greek word *kai* and not the negative conjunction *oude*.

C: The functions are related in that “teaching” in this passage stands “in conjunction with ‘exercising authority’: it refers to teaching in the ecclesial context, which would amount to an instance of exercising authority over the congregation as a whole, including men.”⁵⁶

While the two actions overlap and are related: “teaching” and “exercising authority”; they retain their distinctness.

Note the context again: public worship / household of God

Note the audience pertaining to the context and prohibition: men

Important to note:

We know from Paul's instruction in Titus 2:3–5, women are not to remain silent for the sake of silence. We will spend time in our last lecture looking at this important text for women commanded to teach and lead according to the text, but again, the audience matters!

⁵³ See Wayne Grudem's three egalitarian claims concerning the verb “exercise authority.” For further detail, including Grudem's complementarian rebuttal of each claim: Grudem, Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 304–22.

⁵⁴ Andreas Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence: The Syntax of 1 Timothy 2:12,” in Köstenberger and Schreiner, *Women in the Church*, 145–46.

⁵⁵ Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence,” 148.

⁵⁶ Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence,” 150.

Immediately following Paul's command for women to learn and prohibition on specific activities in the church, Paul appeals to the greatest defense for ecclesiastical structure, the creation account.

vv.13–14 – “For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

- Significance of the Greek term for “Adam” – not used of generic “mankind”, but man = male as distinct from Eve (cf. Gen. 2:20)
- Note the creation order
- Note the one deceived
 - Why is it not said “Adam was deceived”?

v. 15 – “Yet she will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”

Hope of the One to come as promised in Genesis 3:15!

Concluding Thoughts

Paul is modeling in the greatest way, Scripture interpreting Scripture in this passage. What was intended, from the beginning, is not ours to rewrite. Where there may have been a fork in the road pertaining to ecclesiastical order, vv.13–15 clearly reveals something timeless (complementarian framework) from that of something changing or temporary (egalitarian framework).

We will spend the end of our time looking at what is permissible for women and this includes leadership and teaching – just a specific audience.

Notes:

Fascination for the forbidden – we tend to hyperfocus on what we can't do and ignore the blessing found in boundaries.

The boundaries established in Genesis 2 were for their ultimate good and LIFE. We have the opportunity to receive that same blessing and peace when we obey the One who created and ordered things to begin with.

ROOTED
Lecture 4 (Titus 2:1, 3–5)

Read the passage:

“But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine . . . Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

Background and Context of Titus

Author: Paul (1:1 – “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ...)

Recipient: Titus (1:4) – “To Titus, my true child in a common faith...”

Written: (reminder)

- 1 Timothy and Titus are thought to have been written closely together given the same subject matter concerning church structure, conduct, and warning against false teaching.
- Likely date for the letter is A.D. 62–66. These two epistles (1 Timothy and Titus) would have been compiled upon Paul release from prison and prior to his second imprisonment in Rome.⁵⁷
- The book of Titus is very similar to that of 1 Timothy, albeit more brief in instructions.

Location: Titus was left in Crete by Paul to “appoint elders in every town” (1:5)

Facts about situation in Crete:

- The origin of Cretan churches is unknown, but given the content, had evidently been in existence for some time.
- Their structure was disorganized and their daily living lackadaisical at best.

“The prevailing moral conditions in the churches were far from what they might be. Naturally prone to be lax and indifferent, the Christians were adversely influenced by the prevailing low standards in Crete. Perhaps the gospel of the grace of God had been misinterpreted to mean that salvation was unrelated to daily conduct. Titus was urged to insist on the need for sound doctrine and a high level of moral and social conduct by the

⁵⁷ Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, 40.

Christians (2:1–10; 3:1–3). Christian behavior must be grounded in the basic truths of the gospel (2:11–14; 3:4–8).”⁵⁸

In a sense, Timothy and Titus were teaching the brothers and sisters in Ephesus and Crete to not merely be hearers of the Word, but doers, lest they deceive themselves (James 1:22).

Paul’s charge to Timothy and Titus:

- 1 Timothy – stresses sound doctrine
- Titus – stresses conduct congruent with sound doctrine

“... in Titus, he (Paul) stresses worthy Christian conduct and insists that Christian conduct must be based on and regulated by Christian truth. Nowhere else does Paul more forcefully urge the essential connection between evangelical truth and the purest morality than in this brief letter. Here the basic truths of the gospel are displayed in the abiding glory of their saving and sanctifying appeal. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is the experiential basis for Christian conduct (3:3–7).”⁵⁹

Purpose:

- 4) Ecclesiastical structure – the description of elders in Titus 1:6–9 is paralleled to that of 1 Timothy 3:1–7
- 5) Warning against false teaching – although not as severe as what was happening in 1 Timothy
- 6) Conduct for the church

“Paul’s purpose in writing was to instruct Titus to appoint and train the newly appointed elders of the Cretan church to reprove the heretics of their error (1:9), but Titus was also to rebuke the false teachers himself (1:13)...One antidote to the spread of the heresy in Crete was the demonstration of a godly lifestyle by the believers (2:2–10; 3:1–2, 14). Paul’s words to Titus place a heavy emphasis on this feature (3:1, 8, 14). He reminded Titus that the aim of Christ’s death was to produce a “people that are His very own, eager to do what is good” (2:14).”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 423.

⁵⁹ Hiebert, *Titus*, 424.

⁶⁰ Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, 44.

Peace in the Permissible: Activities for Women in the Church According to Titus 2:1, 3–5

Personal example: Dr. Stovall in one of my Master's classes emphasizing the significance of verse 1 (to learn, know, and teach sound doctrine).

Important to remember: your orthodoxy (what you believe) will assuredly impact your orthopraxy (what you practice). You cannot divorce the two from one another. They are intermingled and interwoven into the fabric of how you serve and love the Lord, the church, and your neighbor.

v.1– “But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.”

How can you teach what you do not know?

- Parallel to 1 Timothy 2:11 and the instruction for women to learn

Maybe a better question is, how can you rightly handle and ascertain that which you have not diligently studied?

- 2 Timothy 2:15 – “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

Immediate contrast in verse 1 to that of the false teachers with the emphatic use of the word “you.”

Imperative use of Greek term (laleo)

“teach” (lalei) – imperative to Titus; generally defined as “speak, say, talk”

- Titus, as a church leader, is to say / speak / teach in accordance with what is true

“Paul’s concern is not limited to what Titus “teaches” or preaches in the formal sense but extends to the fullest expression of who he is as a verbal and interactive man of faith and ecclesial leader.”⁶¹

- Paul restates his counsel to Titus in v. 15 – “Declare these things: exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”
 - “declare” (lalei) – speak (second person singular)... implying to speak what is instructed in 2:1–14.⁶²

His teaching overflows into main groups of people who make up the church:

1. Older men (v. 2)
2. Younger men (v. 6)
3. Older women (v.3–5)
4. Younger women (v.3–5)
5. Bondservants (v.9–10)

⁶¹ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 507.

⁶² Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 507.

We will focus primarily on vv.3–5 as it pertains to a woman’s role and activity in the church.

v.3 – “Older women, likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good...”

“**likewise**” – indicates the close parallel of Titus’ teaching to the older men.

It is important to note Titus is teaching both men and women. The imperative for Titus to speak sound doctrine (what is true) is not reserved for the hearing of one gender.

The application for what is taught does become gender specific as it is applied in the church.

Three Primary Areas of Conduct Addressed to Older Women⁶³

- 1) Reverent in the way they live
- 2) Arduously avoid moral failures which they have been associated with at times
- 3) Teach what is good⁶⁴

A. Reverent in the way they live

“**reverent**” – Greek term (*hieroprepēs*): occurs only here in the New Testament.

- Combination of the Greek word (*hieron*) meaning “sacred, holy, consecrated to God and the Greek term (*prepo*) meaning to be “fitting, seemly, suitable, right (and is used in v. 1 to describe things “fitting” for sound doctrine).⁶⁵
- “befitting a holy person or thing” or more particularly “like a priest(ess)”⁶⁶

The Greek term has a “root meaning of being ‘priest-like’ and came to refer to that which is appropriate to holiness.”⁶⁷ (Example: Anna in Luke 2:37–38)

“**behavior**” – can also be translated demeanor

⁶³ It is important to note the contrast in physical age as it pertains to instructing younger women in their walk with Christ and how they keep their household. However, according to 1 John 2:12–14, the spiritual maturity of a believer is not necessarily dictated in their physical age, but in how they conduct their lives in obedience to God and His Word. See Clark, “Developing a Biblical Model.”

⁶⁴ John Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), 188.

⁶⁵ Precept Austin, “Titus 2:3–4 Commentary,” accessed August 2024, https://www.preceptaustin.org/titus_23-4.

⁶⁶ Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, 188; also see Philip Towner, *1–2 Timothy & Titus*, IVPNTC 14 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010); Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC 14 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 213.

⁶⁷ Precept Austin, “Titus 2:3–4 Commentary.”

In other words, holiness should permeate a woman's public and private life. It will be the crux of her teaching and conduct.

B. Arduously avoid two moral failures

1. **Not slanderers:** accuse, to speak against maliciously
 - “The same term is used to describe degenerate people, men and women, in the terrible last days of which 2 Timothy speaks: they will be ‘without love, unforgiving, slanderous,’ and much more (2 Tim. 3:3).”⁶⁸
2. **Slaves to much wine:** addicted to, imbibe in excess to wine
 - Corresponding phrase in 1 Timothy 3:8, 11
 - “Evidently in Crete the liability to these excesses was more severe than in Ephesus, especially among the women, for the verb (*douloō*) here signifies ‘bondage,’ a much stronger expression than the corresponding phrase in 1 Timothy.”⁶⁹

C. Teach what is good

Important to note who is doing the teaching! The teaching is not up to Titus in this portion. This is women teaching women; women leading women; women training women.

“teach what is good” - Greek term (*kalodidaskalos*): single Greek compound word derived from:

- *Kalos* – refers to that “which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good and which provides special or superior benefit.”
- *Didaskalos* – (from *didasko*; English term for “didactic” – meaning to teach in such a way so as to shape the will of the one being taught by the content of what is taught); refers to an instructor, teacher, master.⁷⁰

In other words, the older woman is to both speak (instruct) and live (conduct) what is good (aligns with sound doctrine).

Important to note: there is not new instruction in Crete from what Paul emphasized to Titus in Ephesus. The “teaching what is good” is not public, formal instruction (for that is forbidden according to 1 Timothy 2:12), but they are certainly called to teach women.

- ‘Good things’ in this passage are “acceptable patterns of behavior. But the term contains a hidden implication: one teaches with one’s life either good things or

⁶⁸ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 511.

⁶⁹ Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 214.

⁷⁰ Precept Austin, “Titus 2:3–4 Commentary.”

bad things; pursuit of the acceptable lifestyle will ensure teaching what is good.”
– Towner

The conduct, speech, and instruction of the older women is purposeful in training / advising younger women concerning their own life. One cannot teach what they themselves have not learned and lived.

Quickly note the recurring theme of “self-control” for all groups involved.

“self-control”: Greek term (*sophronas*) – distinguishing mark for all believers (fruit of the Spirit according to Galatians 5; therefore, impossible to be obtained and applied without the Holy Spirit)

Concluding Thoughts

The command Paul instructs women in is arguably a leadership role, but those to whom they lead matters. In vv.3–5 older women are instructed to teach younger women concerning Christian conduct for their personal walk with Christ with communal fruit to the both their home and church gathering. It is important to note the weight of what is permissible to women in this text. Women are to teach women, and is so much, women are to lead women. The text contrasts older to younger highlighting the need to learn sound doctrine (cf. Paul’s command for women “to learn” in 1 Timothy 2:11) with the added fruit of life experience. This is a gracious call not only to utilize one’s gift in leadership and teaching, but to disciple women in the truth of God’s Word and God’s design for the church. It is a command to obey, not a suggestion to rewrite.

APPENDIX 7

HANDOUTS FOR THE FOUR LECTURES ON GENDER ROLES AND BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

This appendix contains the class handouts for the participants to follow along with during the four lectures. The purpose of the handouts was not to provide all of the information, but to create an aid that would help them follow along during the lecture.

ROOTED: LECTURE 1

Three Tiers of Doctrine

Primary, Secondary, Tertiary (essential and non-essentials of Christian doctrine)¹

1. **First-Tier (Primary):**

- Examples:

2. **Second-Tier:**

- Examples:

3. **Third-Tier (Tertiary):**

- Examples:

Defining Terms:

Two primary hermeneutical approaches to Scripture we will look at today as it pertains to gender roles and leadership in the church:

Complementarianism:

Egalitarianism:

¹ Albert Mohler, *A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity*, 2005:
<https://albertmohler.com/2005/07/12/a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity/>

ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN²

| EGALITARIAN | COMPLEMENTARIAN |
|---|---|
| Because man and woman are created equal, there are no role distinctions. | Man and woman are equal in being but have different, God-ordained roles to fill. |
| Role distinctions are the result of the original fall into sin and the subsequent curse. Therefore, redemption in Christ removes role distinctions. | The fall into sin and the subsequent curse did not institute roles. Rather, creation order established the roles and the fall into sin created the struggle to fulfill those roles. |
| Role distinctions are legalistic and contrary to Scripture *(Goal: Liberate women from boundaries) | Role distinctions are freeing not binding. They are given by God to help the man and woman function together. *(Goal: Freedom in the boundaries) |

The manner in which one applies either their egalitarian or complementarian hermeneutic falls on what can be referred to as a gender spectrum.

Historical Overview of Feminism, Egalitarianism, and Complementarianism

Brief History of Feminism

Three Waves of Feminism³

| Movement | Rise of Movement | Central Concern |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---|
| The First Wave | 1830s | Racial and social justice |
| The Second Wave | 1960s | Gender equality |
| The Third Wave | 1990s | Radical pursuit of feminine self-reliance |

² Terri Stovall, “God’s Plan for Women, in *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church*, by Jaye Martin and Terri Stovall (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 17. The goal is added by the author (M. Pittinger).

³ Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger, *Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 24.

Notes on Feminism:

Brief History of Egalitarianism or Evangelical Feminism

Significant Dates:

Significant Facts:

Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE):

Brief History of Complementarianism

Significant Dates:

Significant Facts:

Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW)

ROOTED: LECTURE 2
Created Order: Genesis 1–3 Overview

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.’” Gen 1: 26–28

Creation of Mankind

In Genesis 1, God speaks into being the creation of the universe describing every component as “good.” Bible teacher and author, Kathleen Nielson proclaims, “His word is the action; we can’t miss the insistent repetition of “And God said” or “Then God said” (v 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29). His words not only narrate; they create.”⁴

In Genesis 1:26–28 we behold the pinnacle of God’s creation.

What does it mean to be created in His “image” after His “likeness”?

What does it not mean?

**ETERNITY PAST:
God the Father
God the Son
God the Holy Spirit**

| |
|---------------------|
| <u>Created</u> |
| Angelic realm |
| Animals |
| Plants / Vegetation |
| Man |

⁴ Kathleen Nielson, *Women and God: Hard Questions, Beautiful Truth* (Charlotte: Good Book, 2018), 21.

Creation of Man

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up – for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground –

Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in the Eden, in the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” –
Genesis 2:1–9

Notes:

Creation of Woman

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.

But for Adam (*the man*) there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” – Genesis 2:18–23

Notes:

A Cursed Creation Distortion, Destruction, and Death

“This role relationship of leader and follower is indicated directly and implicitly. First, the participant structure of Genesis 2–3 shows implicitly the hierarchy of creation: God, the man, woman, and animal (serpent). But this was reversed in the fall: the woman listens to the serpent, the man listens to the woman, and no one listens to God.”⁵

Notes:

⁵ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 220.

Creation Order
Equal in Dignity Yet Distinct in Roles

There are at least 9 indications of distinction in roles prior to the Fall:⁶

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

⁶ See the entire list and explanation from Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 460–64.

ROOTED: LECTURE 3

Blessing in the Boundary

“I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness – with good works.

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:8–15; 3:14–15

Background and Context of 1 Timothy

Author:

Recipient:

Written: It is likely Paul wrote 1 Timothy in Macedonia (1 Tim 1:3).

- 1 Timothy and Titus are thought to have been written closely together given the same subject matter concerning church structure, conduct, and warning against false teaching.
- Likely date for the letter is AD 62–66. These two epistles (1 Timothy and Titus) would have been compiled upon Paul release from prison and prior to his second imprisonment in Rome.⁷

Location:

Purpose:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

⁷ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, Timothy, Titus*, NAC 34 (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 40.

Blessing in the Boundary:
A Comprehensive look at Paul's Appeal to Women in 1 Timothy 2:9–15

There are considered to be three primary positions towards women and Scripture. This is clearly evident as it pertains to controversial texts such as 1 Timothy 2:9–15 and other texts such as 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14.

In his commentary on 1 Timothy, Robert Yarbrough summarizes the positions as follows:

Critical Feminist: The Bible is traditionalist. Its patriarchalism oppresses women; the Bible is wrong.

Evangelical Feminist: The Bible is feminist. Its egalitarianism liberates women; the Bible is right.

Evangelical Traditionalist: The Bible is traditionalist. Its advocacy of loving leadership lets women thrive; the Bible is right.⁸

Notes:

Context of Paul's instruction in 1 Timothy 2:9–15:

Paul's appeal to women in the following verses is as follows:

- vv. 9–10 he described the moral behavior of the women, and in
- vv. 11–12 he outlined their proper church activity
- vv. 13–14 he gave reason for his appeal
- v. 15 he delivered a promise to obedient women.⁹

⁸ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*.

⁹ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*.

**Paul's Appeal to Women in Public Worship: Matters of Adornment and Authority
(v.9–10)**

Notes:

Paul's Appeal to Church Activity for Women in the Church (vv.11–12)

Notes:

The Purpose and Promise of Paul's Appeal to Women (vv.13–15)

Notes:

ROOTED: LECTURE 4

Peace in the Permissible

“But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine...Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.” Titus 2:1, 3–5

Background and Context of Titus

Author:

Recipient:

Written: (reminder)

- 1 Timothy and Titus are thought to have been written closely together given the same subject matter concerning church structure, conduct, and warning against false teaching.
- Likely date for the letter is A.D. 62–66. These two epistles (1 Timothy and Titus) would have been compiled upon Paul release from prison and prior to his second imprisonment in Rome.¹⁰
- The book of Titus is very similar to that of 1 Timothy, albeit more brief in instructions.

Location:

Facts about situation in Crete:

“The prevailing moral conditions in the churches were far from what they might be. Naturally prone to be lax and indifferent, the Christians were adversely influenced by the prevailing low standards in Crete. Perhaps the gospel of the grace of God had been misinterpreted to mean that salvation was unrelated to daily conduct. Titus was urged to insist on the need for sound doctrine and a high level of moral and social conduct by the Christians (2:1–10; 3:1–3). Christian behavior must be grounded in the basic truths of the gospel (2:11–14; 3:4–8).”¹¹

¹⁰ Lea and Griffin, *1, Timothy, Titus*, 40.

¹¹ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 423.

Purpose:

- 1) Ecclesiastical structure – the description of elders in Titus 1:6–9 is paralleled to that of 1 Timothy 3:1–7
- 2) Warning against false teaching – although not as severe as what was happening in 1 Timothy
- 3) Conduct for the church

Peace in the Permissible: Activities for Women in the Church According to Titus 2:1, 3–5

Significance of v. 1, 15 – Knowing, teaching, declaring “sound doctrine”

His teaching overflows into main groups of people who make up the church:

1. Older men (v. 2)
2. Younger men (v. 6)
3. Older women (v.3–5)
4. Younger women (v.3–5)
5. Bondservants or slaves (v.9–10)

Three Primary Areas of Conduct Addressed to Older Women

- 1) Reverent in the way they live
- 2) Arduously avoid moral failures which they have been associated with at times
- 3) Teach what is good¹²

¹² John Stott, BST: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus, 188.

Notes (vv. 3–5)

A. Reverent in the way they live (v. 3)

B. Arduously avoid two moral failures (v. 3)

C. Teach what is good (v. 3–5)

Concluding Thoughts

The command Paul instructs women in is arguably a leadership role, but those to whom they lead matters. In vv.3–5 older women are instructed to teach younger women concerning Christian conduct for their personal walk with Christ with communal fruit to the both their home and church gathering. It is important to note the weight of what is permissible to women in this text. Women are to teach women, and is so much, women are to lead women. The text contrasts older to younger highlighting the need to learn sound doctrine (cf. Paul’s command for women “to learn” in 1 Timothy 2:11) with the added fruit of life experience. This is a gracious call not only to utilize one’s gift in leadership and teaching, but to disciple women in the truth of God’s Word and God’s design for the church. It is a command to obey, not a suggestion to rewrite.

APPENDIX 8

WOMEN IN BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP POST-ASSESSMENT: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FROM PARTICIPANTS

The addition of several open-ended questions on the WBLA post-assessment provided helpful feedback and helped ascertain how the participants grew in their understanding of gender roles and biblical leadership. It also aided in the development of future education and training at CCC. The questions are provided below with a few specific responses from participants for each question.

Q1. In what ways did this course improve your understanding of what the Bible teaches about women in leadership?

Participants Responses:

- This course taught me the biblical evidence behind women's roles in the church and gave reasoning behind gender roles without devaluing either gender.
- I learned more about the egalitarian's viewpoint and more about specific Scriptures which both sides point to, yet interpret differently. Reminded that it begins in Genesis and that Paul goes there for reference and support of his teaching
- Walking through the Old Testament (Genesis), 1 Timothy, and Titus helped me see a complete picture of God's distinction of gender roles.
- Gave me a broader understanding of how complementarians interpret Scripture.

Q2. In what ways did this course challenge your current convictions about women in leadership in the local church?

Participants Responses:

- It challenged my view of leadership and teaching for women and allowed me to view those spiritual gifts as items that can be utilized differently in men and women.
- It challenged me to remember to approach other viewpoints with understanding and grace. I didn't know the egalitarian viewpoint very well.
- It caused me to think more deeply about why this divisive issue is important and reinforced the biblical idea that women are just as valuable to God and His work in the local church.
- The content taught in this course flies in the face of cultural positions on gender roles. I appreciated the absolute truths presented and the clear explanation of created gender roles.
- That women's leadership gifts should be actively utilized and encouraged in the local church.

Q3. In what ways did this course strengthen your convictions about women in leadership in the local church?

Participants Responses:

- The Scripture presented strengthened my confidence in the view of complementarianism; The course increased how important I believe a strong biblical understanding of female roles in the church is; It encouraged me to be eager to serve God with the spiritual gifts I do have and not focus on the restriction to not teach men.
- I was reminded of the grace and gift extended to us in the many roles God has ordained to be fitting for women to serve in leadership in the local church, and the importance of recognizing the freedom that lies in obeying the Lord in this area.
- I love the emphasis on where women should be serving rather than an emphasis on the few things we are not permitted to do (truly, spared from doing...)

- That the boundaries of women in leadership are good and derived from Scripture. Now more than ever the situation in our culture means messages like this should be regularly taught.

Q4. In what ways did this course encourage you to know your spiritual gifts and seek opportunity to serve in your local church?

Participants Responses:

- Many! I think in focusing on what women CAN do in the church it upholds a calling of what we should pursue.
- I really appreciate the encouragement of the spiritual gift of leadership in women, as that is often treated as a man-only spiritual gift.
- I am encouraged that as a woman God has specific gifts that I can use within the context of teaching other women. I will continue to seek ways to utilize this gift.
- It's encouraging to have God's spiritual gifting of leadership to women highlighted, emphasized, and validated by these lectures.

Q5. In what ways did this course educate you about the gender role debate with respect to biblical leadership in this local church?

Participants Responses:

- I feel I better understand the context around the verses discussed in the lectures on Genesis, 1 Timothy, and Titus. I am more confident in my view of complementarianism and that the Bible fully states men and women are both image bearers of God that have distinct roles given before the Fall.
- By learning the terms that are often thrown around in these debates and discussions allowed me to have a framework to see where not only I stand but others stand which will hopefully lead to beneficial discussions in the future. It also gives me encouragements to pursue the calling that God has placed on women in the local church (Titus 2) as well as pray for and encourage the calling He has placed on the men.
- I was reminded of the beauty of the different roles God sovereignly and intentionally designed both for men and women distinctively, and of the potential for better witnessing and ascribing glory to God when we embrace these roles with thanksgiving.
- This course did a great job outlining the different views and gave a good overview of the history of this debate. It also encourages me to dive deeper into the subject and study it more for myself.

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING WOMEN AT CHARLOTTESVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA, FOR BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF COMPLEMENTARITY

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The purpose of this project is to equip women at Charlottesville Community Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, for biblical leadership in the local church within the framework of complementarity. Chapter 1 introduces the evaluation and overall understanding of biblical womanhood amid a culture of evangelical feminism. Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological basis for women being adequately trained and equipped within the local church on biblical womanhood. Foundational to this understanding are a few key passages: Genesis 1–3, 1 Timothy 2:9–15, Titus 2:1, 3–5. Together, these passages provide the mandate to study and practice sound doctrine while providing biblical boundaries and permissible activities for women leading in the church. Chapter 3 addresses the impact of theological liberalism on women as it relates to the local church and the influence of theologically trained women throughout the history of the local church. Chapter 4 details the development and implementation of a biblical womanhood curriculum to be regularly offered at CCC. Chapter 5 concludes with an overall evaluation of the project, and suggestions for improvement and further development.

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