



Facilitator Guide to
New Man, New Woman, New Life
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Overview of the *New Man, New Woman, New Life* program

The Bible presents us with a three-part story of human relationship with self, God, and with each other. This story reveals human beings created as male and female in the image of God to fulfill an ideal – all human beings created to live together in equality, self- and mutual-respect, harmony, and companionship.

The second part of the story traces our rejection of the life of faith and the loss of God's abundant provision for us. This fall from grace brought division among God's creation, a striving for power over each other, and the loss of the fearless love for which God created us. The final chapter of this story, however, finds us redeemed – brought back by Christ from the bondage of the fallen world into which we sold ourselves.

The *New Men, New Woman, New Life* explores that story, showing how redemption not only restores each one of us to wholeness with God, but also brings us back to the creation ideal of unity and equality with one another. Through redemption we become the New Man or New Woman, restored to New Life in Christ.

- Creation Ideal
- Fall
- Redemption
 - Jesus Christ
 - The Apostle Paul

Purpose:

- Restore God's life-affirming ideal for men and women, whether married or single.
- Help participants discover God's ideal for marriage and family life
- Provide the opportunity for participants to discuss with other leaders and future leaders how to apply this ideal to challenges facing self, marriage, and family today
- Equip and empower participants to become change agents
- Raise the position of women, men, children, and marriage itself to Christian standards

The Philosophy behind *New Man, New Woman, New Life*

Christ changes the world profoundly. In presenting the biblical story as we do, we strive to be an instrument of the Spirit and the Word in effecting that change. Change is more likely to occur, and be more thorough going, when it reaches deep into the individual heart. As the experience of many governments and NGOs show, you can change the laws, but laws mean little if we cannot also change people's hearts.

Similarly, in teaching the material that leads to personal transformation and cultural change, we care about more than whether students can recite the facts and perform well on the exams. For this reason, we use a different teaching methodology than is ordinarily used.

There is a model of change and learning that goes like this:

	Unconscious	Conscious
Incompetent	(1) The individual does not understand and may not recognize that they don't understand. They may deny the usefulness of the knowledge.	(2) Individual does not understand but recognizes that they don't understand. They recognize the value of the new understanding.
Competence	(4) The understanding is effortless and second nature. The individual can teach others. We have written God's word on our hearts and in our souls (Deuteronomy 11:18)	(3) Individual understands but performing the task or demonstrating understanding requires concentration and effort.

In the case of Bible understanding, we all start out in square 1. We don't understand what the Bible says and don't know that we don't understand.

Until we become conscious of our lack of understanding, we are at the mercy of culture.

Everyone, no matter where they live, interprets the Bible in terms of their own culture. Indeed, because we live in a fallen world in which self-interest is the dominant force, the cultures of the fallen world often lead us to teach the opposite of what the Bible proclaims.

In order to move on to the next stage, individuals must recognize both their own incompetence and the value of the new understanding. Some people never have a motive to change, however. They cling to the familiar and stay in square 1. In evangelism we see many people like this, who never accept Christ because they deny his value in their lives.

Every study in *New Man, New Woman, New Life* challenges some aspect of our participants' unconscious incompetence about the Bible. As people recognize the difference between their taken-for-granted cultural understanding and what the Bible is really saying,

they are usually greatly surprised. As their hearts open and their minds become curious, they move into square 2 and become teachable.

In the next stage, 3, the individual has learned the material, but it takes concentrated effort to use it. Think of learning a new language before you become fluent in it. In this stage, we may panic when someone from stage 1 challenges our new understanding, because it has not become second nature for us yet. At this stage, we may have a truer intuition of the biblical ideal and where the former cultural understand went wrong, but we struggle to explain it to others, or forget the reasoning behind our new insight.

The small group Bible-study approach is particularly effective in helping participants in stage 3, where they are convinced of their former ignorance and motivated to know more. Even if you are teaching in a more formal university or seminary setting, where the students are used to lectures and the instructors are used to lecturing, we suggest you try the approach of working in small groups. These groups teach themselves using the study guide, and then teach what they learned to the other groups. Teaching something is a good way to learn it. Seeing the enthusiasm of the others in the group, gaining the perspective of the other sex or of people coming from different backgrounds than oneself, as well as seeing how the group works through doubts, is also an effective way to bring material to heart. The approach we use allows participants to come to their own conclusions, solidify their intuition, make their own practical applications, and move solidly into stage 4.

In the unconscious competence stage, the biblical understanding becomes the individual's new culture. He or she now sees the world through different eyes, and is able to apply it in their own lives and in their interactions with others. We have written God's Word in our hearts and in our souls (Deuteronomy 10:16).

Most people coming to a master class are in stage 3, although they fear they are still in stage 2. In the master class, we will explore questions and doubts, provide deeper background, and help facilitators move into the easy mastery and confidence of stage 4.

Beginning with Discussion

New Man, New Woman, New Life begins with discussion questions. Even if this material is being used as a university or Bible school course offering, we suggest you still begin with the discussion questions. Beginning this way accomplishes several things. What happens in the first fifteen minutes of a program sets the expectations for what the rest of the program will be like. Beginning with discussion sets the norm that participants will be interacting, something that many of our participants are not used to but which they enjoy very much ("It isn't boring," as a recent seminar host noted). Everyone is equally an expert on the questions we ask, and participation of every member is encouraged. Participants' answers to the discussion questions gets them thinking about the topics we will be discussing, provides the facilitator with a valuable information about the local customs and practices, and allows participants to bring forth the issues with which they are struggling. Plus, these interactions will help students get to know each other in their Christian walks.

Put people into small groups of 5 or 6, assign each one a question of your choice from the list in the next section or of your own, and give them the following instructions:

Instructions for Introductory Discussion

In your groups,

- Introduce yourselves
- Discuss the question
- Prepare to report out to the entire class:
 - Introduce the group members
 - Tell us the results of your discussion

Write down the group results on the board or on a flipchart. This reinforces learning and makes people feel included and taken seriously. You can have someone copy out the results for you and refer to them as you proceed in the Bible studies (and if you send a copy to Empower at EIM@fastmail.com, they will increase our understanding). Lately, we have been giving each group a piece of flipchart paper and asking them to write their points. This speeds up report outs.

It is important to re-sort the groups each time they break into small groups. Counting off accomplishes this easily. Re-sorting the groups means that individual exposure to a difficult or dominating group member is limited. It also prevents adversarial or competitive subgroup identities from forming, and provides everyone with an opportunity to get to know a variety of people.

Finally, by working through the biblical material themselves, teaching what they learned to the rest of the class, and making their own applications, participants come to learn and own the Bible and its liberating message.

Sample questions for opening the seminar (small groups)

What are the burdens on men, in your culture and in today's economy?

What are the burdens on women, in your culture and in today's economy?

What are the obstacles to women and men working together?

What are the challenges facing young single people today?

What are the challenges to Christian marriage today?

What are the challenges to community today?

What concerns do you have about popular attitudes toward sexual behavior?

What changes do you see in expectations and challenges to marriage over the last several years?

As you counsel young people about relationships, what issues do they raise?

How are things different for the current generation of single adults than for their parents?

How have the challenges facing family and marriage changed in recent years?

What customary attitudes do you see as interfering with Christian marriages?

How do you want your marriage to be different from that of your parents?

What problems do you encounter in forming a meaningful relationship with someone of the other sex?

What do you want in a romantic/marriage relationship?

How do social expectations about what/who you should be as a man or a woman limit you?

Feel free to add your own questions – and to share them with us.

Overview Presentation

New Man, New Woman, New Life

This is just a sample of the overview presentation. Do not feel like you need to make every point or use every example given here. What is important is that you give your listeners an understanding of the central theme of the Bible when it comes to God's intended relationship between men and women. Overview each section of the studies (Creation ideal, Fall, and Redemption in Jesus and Paul) and give one example from each category. Be sure to include the Good News for men as well as for women.

The Bible presents us with a three-part story of human relationship with self, God, and with each other. This story reveals human beings created as male and female in the image of God to fulfill an ideal – humanity created for equality, harmony, and companionship. The second part of the story traces our rejection of the life of faith and the loss of God's abundant provision for us. This fall from grace brought division among God's creation, a striving for power over each other, and the loss of the fearless love for which God created us. The final chapter of this story, however, finds us redeemed – brought back by Christ from the bondage of the fallen world into which we sold ourselves.

Redemption not only restores each one of us to wholeness with God, but also brings us back to the creation ideal of unity and equality with one another. Through redemption we become the New Man or New Woman, restored to New Life in Christ.

Matthew 19 tells the story of a time when some religious leaders came to Jesus to ask him about how a man could divorce his wife and still be considered righteous. Jesus refused to talk to them about treating women as property who could be discarded at will. Instead, he said,

He answered, "Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female', and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." (vs. 3-6)

The religious leaders then demanded to know why the Old Testament law allowed them to divorce their wives. And Jesus said that this was due only to the hardness of their hearts.

The Bible tells us that God had a very specific ideal in mind when he created us. It is only because of our hard hearts – our selfishness and desire to serve our own interests – that we departed from that ideal. God the Father sent us his Son, Jesus, to show us the way back to the ideal in Creation.

As we more fully understand God's intent in Redemption, we will see how Jesus lifts woman back up to her place at man's side. We Christians are sometimes worried about talk about raising women up because secular people often raise women up by putting men down. Jesus shows us that by raising each other up, we are raised up as well. For in the fallen world, women are not the only ones oppressed. If we think only of the low position that men put women into, we miss the fact that most men are put in a low position

themselves. In the fallen world, yes, men rule women, but a few wealthy, powerful people, usually men, rule everyone, male and female. In fact, much of our lives are defined by the struggle to get and maintain position over other people.

We especially see in the writings of the apostle Paul how Jesus not only raises women up to their proper position with God, he raises men back up to their position with each other. He even lifts up the few big men on top who rule everyone else, because although we all think that they are the important people who have no cares, think how hard they have to work to maintain their position. One American slang expression advises people to “Watch your back.” The wealthy and powerful have to always be conscious of someone slipping up behind them to stab them in the back, because there are always those eager to pull them down and take their place. In the Kingdom of Heaven the worldly “big men” don’t matter at all. They are really very small.

Creation Ideal

The Old Testament and our cultures therefore do not reflect God’s will, but our hard heartedness. To understand what God meant us to be to each other when he made us as woman and man, we have to look where Jesus sent us: the Creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2.

In the beginning, as Jesus quoted in Matthew 19:3, the Creator made BOTH man and woman in His image. Here is the surprise: God gave BOTH the man and the woman dominion over the earth; the blessing of children; and every good thing on the earth to eat. God did not create woman to be man’s property, but to own and enjoy the earth together with the man.

Moreover, Genesis 2 tells us that God made the woman to be a *help suitable* for the man. The words God used do not mean a helper, like a servant or a housemaid. The Bible does not use the word for a lowly helper here. Rather, elsewhere the word used by God that is translated *help* is used most often in the Bible to refer to God himself!

For example, consider Psalm 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

But God did not intend the woman to be another god for the man either. He used a second word, the one that is translated “fit,” “meet” and “suitable.” This word means literally “facing.” When God said that the man needed a “help suitable” for him, he meant that the woman would be neither below nor above the man, but “facing” him – face-to-face, eye-to-eye, straight across, on the same level.

Finally, Jesus affirms that after God had created us as male and female, He said:

24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed (Genesis 2).

They were naked and not ashamed! They could be completely honest and intimate with one another, without fear or shame. They were not trying to be above one another, but were happy to life each other up, to support and care for each other, face-to-face, in unity and joy.

So what happened? How did man and woman get from this wonderful thing that God created for us to what we see in the world now?

The Fall

Well, as Jesus tells us, we have hard hearts. People want to do things their own way, to make their own decisions and to be in control. So in Genesis 3, when the serpent tempted the first man and woman, they choose to disobey God so they could control their own lives.

One surprise in Genesis 3 is that contrary to a lot of cultural beliefs, the Fall was not all the fault of the woman (read Genesis 3:6 to see that the man was there with the woman while the serpent lied to her). The biggest surprise, however, when you carefully read the passage in which God describes the consequences of sin, you will see that, God did not curse the people – not even the woman. Rather, Genesis 3:16 - 19 describes the consequences of our rejection of God's care for us – of what life will be like when our hearts are hard and we live outside of His abundant provision. Man is not cursed! Woman was not cursed! God is not trying to hurt us but wants to restore us to the relationship with Him and with each other for which He created us.

After the Fall, as God in Genesis 3 predicted, man and woman became enslaved to ground and had to struggle to survive. They also struggled for control over each other. Instead of looking to his wife for companionship and love, man now needed only three things from woman: children, labor/food, and sex. From men, women needed material goods, someone to father children, and protection. Woman was put below man, and man began to struggle for power over other men. This is the consequence of having hard hearts, not of anything God does. What a slander to think this struggle (in Hebrew, *itsabon*, pain or sorrow) is what God wants for us!

Redemption

In Old Testament times, when times were very bad, men would sell their family land, their children, and even themselves, as slaves. But in the Old Testament law, God created the role of a redeemer. A redeemer was a family member who could buy the land and the people back from slavery, and restore them to the family and community.

In the same way, God sent a Redeemer to buy us back from our slavery to the ground. And this is what Jesus does, in every way.

JESUS

First of all, we see how Jesus lifted up women. Remember, in the fallen world, men need women only for bearing children, for performing the donkey work, and for sex. Jesus refused to see women only in this limited way, but modeled a treatment of woman that restores her personhood, her relationship with God, and her potential for a “one flesh, naked and not ashamed” relationship with man.

Here is one example. One day, Jesus was out preaching, and a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that nursed you!” In the fallen world, women are judged by their ability to produce sons, and what could be more

wonderful for a woman than to have a son like Jesus? But what did Jesus say? He said, “No, rather blessed is the one who hears the word of the Lord and obeys it!” (Luke 11:27-28). *What was important about Jesus’ mother is that she listened to God and obeyed, and so brought the Messiah into the world.*

Consider similarly the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Women do not need to stay in the kitchen but could learn and be disciples of Jesus!

Jesus showed us on many occasions that women were more than child bearer, housemaid, digger, and the sexual property of men. Jesus freed women from the limitations placed on them by culture and said that what was important about them was their relationship with God, not how well they took care of men.

In a similar way, Jesus freed men from the demands of the fallen world. He taught repeatedly that Christians were free from the struggle for power over each other and against the ground. The Gospel of John tells us that at the Last Supper, Jesus knew that all things had been given to him by God. All things. So he immediately knelt down and washed his disciples’ dirty feet. He told his male disciples, who were scrambling to be the big men, that there would be no such struggle among his followers, but that “whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant” (Mark 10: 41-45).

Jesus redeems us by inviting us back to the Garden of Eden and to God’s provision for us. Remember in the Sermon on the Mount? Jesus taught, “Behold the lilies of the field. They don’t work, and they don’t spin. But Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as the lilies. If God so clothes the grass, which is there today and tomorrow is thrown in the oven, how much more will he care for you?”

PAUL

After Jesus, the apostle Paul also came to teach us how to love each other. You know, when Paul talked to the Christian household, he addressed men as well as women, but somehow we only remember that he told wives to submit to their husbands. We usually start reading with verse 22, but verse 22 is only a sentence fragment that doesn’t even have a verb in the original Greek. To understand this passage, you have to move up a few verses to the real beginning of the sentence. Paul is telling us not to worship as the pagans do, but to be filled with the Spirit, which will have an immediate effect on how we treat each other:

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, 20 always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father, 21 being submitted to one another out of reverence for Christ, 22 wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord.

The surprise here is that, when you read the whole passage, Paul is telling all of us -- wives/husbands, children/fathers, and slaves/masters -- to “submit ourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ.” This does not mean we must allow ourselves to be trampled on. To submit is to voluntarily place ourselves below other people – the equivalent of raising others up. In submission, we **all** yield the hardness of our hearts and stop struggling for power over each other, voluntarily and in imitation of Christ.

In Ephesians 5: 18 – 6: 9, Paul turned the whole customary order upside down. The few big men on top could no longer use their power over other people. Paul tells slaves to obey their masters, but he tells masters they can no longer threaten their slaves but should treat them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul tells children to obey their parents, but he also tells fathers that they must nurture their children and teach them the way of the Lord. Then Paul tells husbands how they submit themselves to their wives: by *agape* loving them as Christ loves the church, by giving themselves up for their wives, by making their wives glorious! What happens to you, men, when you have a glorious wife? Sometimes men don't want their wives to accomplish things, because they are afraid she will be above them. This is why Paul then says that wives should respect their husbands: When a husband raises his wife up to be "face-to-face" as God creates us to be, the wife is to continue to be on the same level as her husband, and does not use his submission to try to rise above him. And men, if you make your wife happy, if you raise her up, her glory will be your glory, too.

Paul ends his description of Christian marriage by quoting the same verses as Jesus in Matthew 19 and God in Creation: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

What Paul presents is the ideal relationship of Genesis – restored by Jesus. Reconciled to God in Christ, no longer alone, we once more become fearless, honest, and giving, capable of "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." And we agree with the Creator: "It is very good."

What the Bible tells us to do in relationship with each other is not always easy. But being saved is not always easy. All the Bible asks you to do is to make your salvation real in your relationships with each other. And if you do this, if you treat your husband or wife, your children, your friends, your co-workers, with caring *agape* love, then they will be the happiest people in the world. And I think you will be as well.

A Framework for Understanding Gender in the Bible

Wayne Pelly

New Testament professor S. Scott Bartchy points out that biblical statements and incidents dealing with gender fall into three categories.

Descriptive statements simply describe or report on people or things that happen with no special comment or judgment attached. Such descriptions tell us how things normally happened in the Christian community. Examples of descriptive statements:

- **Acts 18:24-26** – Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos the way of the Lord; note that Priscilla’s name is mentioned first, both here and in most other places in the New Testament
- **Acts 21:8-9** – Philip’s four unmarried daughters are described as prophetesses
- **Rom. 16:1-15** – Phoebe is a “deacon” (or minister) and “patron” (with implications for leadership) of the church in Cenchrea and the likely bearer of the Roman epistle to the church at Rome; Junia is “outstanding among the apostles”; several other women are commended – some by name – for their “hard work in the Lord,” in ministry within the church in Rome – using terminology identical to that used of men.
- **1 Cor. 11:4-5** – Women are praying and prophesying in the assembly. There is discussion about whether they should have their heads covered or not, but Paul accepts the part they are playing in the meetings.
- **Phil. 4:2-3** – Paul calls Euodia and Syntyche his co-workers who had struggled beside him in the work of the gospel.

These verses and others describe women in ministry without any attempt to justify them or their activities. Such activities were sufficiently common *and accepted* that no special comment was needed.

Instructive statements include those that explicitly teach of the way things are always to be in the Christian community, as well as those which teach the way things are to be in an implicit way. Examples of explicit teachings are:

- Gal. 3:28 – “There is no Jew or Gentile, there is no slave or free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Our new identity in Christ transcends race, social/economic status and gender – all sources of pride and identity in “the world.”
- Matt. 20:25-28/Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:1-16 – Jesus challenges the privilege, inequality and power associated with the models of male leadership the disciples were familiar with. He replaces this with a model of leadership based on the roles of servants and women – as well as His own example.
- Acts 2:17-18 – As a mark of the new age, sons and daughters, both men and women, will prophesy. Note the foundational role of prophets in the church according to Eph. 2:20.

- Spiritual Gifts – Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 28-31; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Pet. 4:10-11. There is no indication at all that there are any gender restrictions in the way the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts for ministry.
- 1 Cor. 7:4-5 / Eph. 5:21-27 – The wife respecting and lifting up her husband and the husband self-sacrificial care for his wife (Eph. 5:22, 25) results in the mutual submission of Eph. 5:21 and the reciprocal authority and mutual decision-making of 1 Cor. 7:4-5.

Implicit instruction occurs whenever what seems to be a descriptive statement actually describes an incident that is very contrary to the culture of Jesus' day. For example:

- In a culture that was very restrictive of women's behavior, Jesus consistently affirmed and empowered women – even when outside the traditionally accepted role restrictions, and included them as disciples and proclaimers of his message.
 - In Luke 10:38-42, Mary joins the male disciples at the feet of Jesus – a significant break with social custom in a culture where this was an explicitly male role. Jesus affirmed her with the strongest words: "Mary has chosen the better part, and it shall not be taken away from her."
 - While all four Gospels record that women were the first witnesses to the risen Lord, John 20:1-18 tells us *why*. Jesus intentionally waits until Peter and John, two of his closest apostles, have left the site of the empty tomb and appears to Mary, and gives her a message to take to the men. Jesus empowers her as both a witness and as His messenger to the men.

Bartchy's final category is **corrective**. Corrective statements were dealing with specific misunderstandings within the Christian community. The corrective category is very small, comprised of 1 Cor 14:34-35, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" and 1 Timothy 2: 12, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

In their context, the corrective texts are difficult to understand, mostly because there are things about the context that are unknown to us. The statements we have reflect only one-half of a two-way conversation.

We will deal with corrective statements in a later section of the guide. Right now, we will explore Jesus', Paul's and the Creator's clear instructions on what God made us to be to each other when He created us as male and female.

Debriefing the studies

The seminar structure has participants work through the studies in small groups, then teach the other. The quality of the team report-outs vary dramatically. Sometimes the group reporting out covers everything – sometimes they don't. The facilitators take turns debriefing the studies, filling in any missing material.

Each study contains something surprising. Asking for the surprise is often the best way of debriefing the team.

Following are the lesson plans (written by Donell Peck) for the studies, i.e., the objective of the study, possible answers for the study questions, and conclusion. Following the lesson plan for each study are notes on debriefing the studies, listing the important points for each that should be covered and some of the discussions applications we have heard in the course of teaching the material from Bishop Barham University College in Uganda; India; and Haiti in 2013; Nairobi, Kenya; and Blantyre, Malawi in 2009 (the last two thanks to Sally Bryant.)

STUDY 1 Man and Women in the Beginning

Objective: To discover the differences between human culture and God's design for humankind. Both men and women are made in the image of God and co-inheritors of the earth's bounty, with children given as a blessing to both. God's love is without partiality to either men and women.

Question 1 According to Jesus what is the ideal marriage relationship?

Man and woman shall become one flesh. Marriage excludes either parties' mother, father or anyone else, being exclusively between a husband and wife.

Question 2 Why don't we all live according to the "one flesh ideal"?

We are "hard hearted", i.e. focused on our own needs and desires.

Question 3 What are some examples of being "hard hearted"?

We are hard hearted whenever we seek our own selfish purposes and we place our desires above our concern for our spouse. Power struggles, divorce, and stealing or hiding money from each other are hard hearted.

Question 4 Who was created in God's image, the man or the woman?

Both are created in the image of God.

Question 5 To whom does God give the blessing of dominion over the earth, the man or the woman?

The blessing and dominion are given to both.

Question 6 To whom does God give the blessings and responsibility for filling the earth (children), the man or the woman?

The blessings and responsibilities are given equally to both men and women

Question 7 Note that dominion over the earth and the ability to have children are given as blessings, not commandments. This is like saying "Go in peace" or "Be blessed!" Does this observation make a difference in thinking about the purpose of marriage?

The purpose of marriage is not just to produce children. Marriage remains marriage whether there are children or not. Both men and women must support one another as they share equal responsibility for the family using the gifts on which God has blessed each of them, remembering that they are one.

Question 8 What else does God give the man and the woman (verse 29)?

God gave to humankind all the earth's assets; the plants and all living things.

Question 9 What have we learned so far about God's plan for the relationship between men and woman? In these verses, does God treat woman any differently than man?

God loves them both as creations in His image and gives them equal authority over all the earth.

Conclusion: Jesus said God's intent for men as men and women as women is not found in culture ("the Law") but in how He created us: equally in the image of God, equally sharing the blessings of children and of the earth.

DEBRIEFING STUDY 1, Mathew 19 and Genesis 1

Points:

According to Jesus, God's plan for the sexes is found in Creation, not culture

Woman as well as man is made in God's image

Woman as well as man is given children and dominion over the earth

Children are a blessing, not a commandment

Applications:

Women can inherit/own property

Children and property belong to women together with men

No food taboos: "My wife eats what I eat, when I eat it"

Examples from Bishop Barham University College:

Women are not property but should be equal partners.

Women are worked like slaves, not given opportunities to speak in public, to own property.

Women don't participate in the family. They are denied the right to become leaders. Not president or bishop.

Both woman and man are blessed

It is okay not to have children if God doesn't give children it is okay.

Children are a gift which depends on God. If God does not give children, it should not lead to divorce.

There is a saying that a woman's intellect is in her heel. There are many sayings like that that bring women very low. She can't give her opinion.

If the husband comes home drunk, late, she has to wait, feed him, and eat after he eats. This happens even in Christian families.

There is a double standard. The wife should never get angry, shouldn't argue, or feel bad.

Sometimes a husband takes a decision alone and doesn't even inform his wife.

The wife is blamed for everything. If anything is wrong it is her fault. If there are no children, only girls, anything unfortunate – it is her fault.

India

Marriage ideal: unbreakable and enduring, unique (exclusive). This doesn't just happen from a distance.

Example of being hard-hearted: not willing to compromise. Not accepting biblical authority makes hardness of heart worse.

Why don't we live according to one-flesh ideal: ego, pride, arrogance, culture. Here we have the office spouse. People don't know the meaning of being one flesh. Some people focus only on the physical relationships.

The Bible says that the man leaves his father and mother. Here, the wife comes to the husband. She has to cleave to the husband's parents. Most family seminars correct men.

But when it comes to family, the husband's parents control the wife.

"What have we learned so far?" We should not be shaken by worries or trouble.

Both are equal. Easy to take Bible study equality—hard to practice.

Examples from participants in Nairobi, Kenya, 2009:

Ideal Marriage relationship: One man, one woman. Jesus made man and woman to be one flesh and what God has joined man cannot separate. They are one – one cannot be separated.

Culture allows for more than one wife. Polygamy means that they cannot become one flesh; if wife #1 cannot have children, he married another woman. God-given responsibility to man/women: going away from this causes dissension. Sin – cheating (unfaithfulness); 1 flesh ideal destroyed bringing sickness and infection, lack of trust.

Hard-hearted: pride (Israelites in desert), unforgiveness, impatience. Pride reveals hard-heartedness

Both are created in God's image – man created by God; woman created out of man, therefore both created by God. Dominion is given to both man and woman

Man & woman = generation

Children are God-given – lack of children should not be blamed on wife. Marriage is complete without children – a man and woman are a family. Health is a blessing; also peace of mind. Children are a blessing, not a must.

God created them as one, communicates with them as one

Dowry and wife inheritance are outside of God's original plan, a misunderstanding of dowry – leads to taking women as property rather than as fellow human beings and companions

God doesn't see man or woman as better than each other

God gave us dominion over the earth; therefore, we are to take care of and raise many chickens or ducks. They don't belong to one or two groups/communities only

God ordained and blessed marriage

Man imbued with certain physical characteristics (muscles, strength) not to beat wife but to protect her

Having children is not a must but a blessing therefore there is no blame in marriage

Fruits and vegetables come from God not from rains. God is sole provider – responsibilities and in marriage – different duties but same function?? For example, the Trinity has different functions but is one in unity.

Study surprises:

God gave us dominion over all the earth

God blessed and ordained marriages (therefore He takes care of it)

Man and woman created equally

Children are not a command but a blessing, therefore no blaming if no children

Food from God, not from the rain

Examples from participants in Malawi, 2009 (Note: Blantyre, Malawi has a matrilineal culture. Lineage and inheritance passes through the mother's side, and family power lies with her male kinsmen.)

Two becoming one flesh

Obedience

Should not be disunity between man and woman

Contradiction between the law and God's word

Jesus modeled the one flesh ideal

He acknowledged we wouldn't live like this because of hard hearts

Selfishness and lack of forgiveness create our hard hearts

Both men and women were created in His image

Both were given dominion and blessing of children

Both have ability to bear children (??)

God gave all plants and seeds for food

God treats both man and woman the same

Woman may feel inferior but it is not according to the Bible

Both share responsibility to raise children and run households

STUDY 2 The Ideal Relationship

THE CREATION OF SEXUALITY

Objective: Be able to explain: (1) the two creation accounts show both man and woman created in the image of God and equals. (2) The Hebrew meanings of the words *ha'adam*, *'ezer kenegdo*, *'ish* (man), and *'ishshah* (woman). (3) Before woman is created, the creature that God made of the earth was not a man but a human or literally, "earth creature". (4) Woman was not created to be a housemaid or slave but an equal partner/strong helper. (5) Together as one, man and woman stand face-to-face, one flesh, 'naked and not ashamed'.

NOTE: If your participants are using a version of the study guide that refers to *eben* as the Hebrew word for a subordinate helper, this is a slight error. The word for a subordinate helper is *ebed*.

Question 1 Following each act of Creation in Genesis 1, God pronounced his creation "good." How is Genesis 2:18 different?

In Genesis 1, God called each step of Creation "good", and when He created man and woman together, He said it was "very good." In Genesis 2, when there is only one human, God says, "It is *not good* that human not be alone."

Question 2 God created both Ha'adam and the animals from the dust of the earth. In what way did the creation of man differ from that of the animals? (Genesis 2: 7)

Only the human received God's "breath of life".

Question 3 The human cannot find his partner among the animals. What does this tell us about what Ha'adam needs in his partner? In what way is the woman like the man, and is not like the animals?

After searching through all the animals, the human could not find his "help like him". Woman is not an animal, but being made from the human's own flesh and bone, she shares with him the breath of God.

Question 4 How do people usually understand the statement that woman was created to be a help to the man?

Women are viewed as being worthy of doing only the work that men choose not to do; work that is dull or unpleasant. (Ask for examples in the class of tasks that they might view as woman's work). But God created woman to be an equal helper. She is a strong *'ezer* or help in time of trouble, suitable for and "like" man. (In what ways might a man need a woman's help?) *To share concerns with and comfort each other, support each other in life-goals and achievements, be joint partners in family matters, be a companion.*

Question 5 What does man say when he sees the woman for the first time? Verse 23 Do you hear the joy in these words?

"Wow! At last, someone like me!" She will be called woman, who is part of me. What joy to no longer be alone! I have someone like me, created in the image of God.

Question 6 From these words, do you think the man thought of the "help suitable" would be a housemaid, of someone more special?

She is a part of him. How could man harm his own body? She is not taken from the head to rule over man, not the foot to be trampled on, but she is taken from the side to share equally with man. Only after the creation of woman was the earth creature referred to as man. God took one creation and divided it into two in a way that they yearned to come together again as one. This is the ideal relationship of Creation.

Conclusion: God created both man and woman in His image and only then did He call Creation “very good.” Man and woman are above the animals and are equal heirs of the earth’s bounty. Woman was created not to be a servant but as a strong help, on the same level as the man. As God intended, becoming “one flesh,” man and woman share a relationship of honesty, mutual support, and transparency (“naked and unashamed”).

DEBRIEFING STUDY 2, GENESIS 2

Points:

Before the woman is created, the creature that God made of the earth was not a man but a human or “earth creature” (*omuntu* in Luganda).

Woman was not made to be the housemaid but a strong partner/helper, face-to-face with the man.

God intends the relationship between husband and wife to be ‘one flesh, naked and not ashamed’

Applications:

Woman is man’s equal

People owe their first allegiance to their spouse, not their parents/clan

Is it okay to be naked (wives had let their husbands see them naked for the first time after the seminar). However, we are talking about transparent, open and honest, without secrets, even in finances.

Husbands should greet their wives (look at how Adam greeted Eve!)

Man and woman were created for a face-to-face relationship. This is profound in some of the cultures in which we work, in which a woman never dares look her husband in the eye.

Examples from participants in Nairobi, Kenya, 2009:

Adam looked deeply when he first saw Eve to see his ribs in her even though they were hidden in her flesh.

Woman came out of man – woman (not animal) came as helper

Too often woman is seen as inferior to man – NOT God's intention

Woman created to be one with man

Man's response to woman: this is part of me (bone of my bone)

Looked deeply to see his bones within woman

He saw himself

Adam's response indicates equality and shared responsibilities

Woman: another "man" with a womb

Woman as equal partner in marriage

Man's loyalties belong to the couple: submit to one another

Both sets of in-laws are equal

Parents of daughter: teach to obey

Parents of son: teach to love his wife

Relationship: open, truthful to one another: "Tell the naked truth"

Both created in God's image and both given equal responsibilities

Examples from participants in Malawi, 2009

God said it was not good for man to be alone – man was incomplete

God formed man from dust as well as creating the animals. God put his likeness and spirit in man, also intellect in him as well

Man needs partnership, someone suitable to him (spiritually, physically, intellectually).

Qualities of man and woman are not like the animals

We have misinterpreted the word help to mean the man gives all the duties to the woman.

This is not so.

He is shouting for joy because both have the same spirit of God, both have the same image

A woman is so special to a man

By recognizing God's creation in man and woman, we can respect woman because she is like man

Honor belongs to the woman and husband not to in-laws. Important to respect parents.

Parents must set free the children and not interfere

One flesh, set free spiritually, physically, emotionally

Ahmedabad, India

In our culture, a wife is a servant, and maid, a sex tool, and they are to produce children. But that is not the meaning of the help meet.

Haiti

Eve was created from Adam's side as a partner. Equal spiritually, emotionally, therefore you need to be an advocate of these truths.

Both are created in God's image. We are not to put either down but be face-to-face as partners to each other.

STUDY 3 Man and Woman's Position with God

Objective: To know that women are NOT cursed. The Fall was when Adam and Eve together disobeyed God. The result is a broken fellowship between men, women, and separation from God. God cursed *only* the ground and the serpent. The man and woman were not cursed but suffer the consequences of their sinful disobedience – having to live in a world of scarcity.

Question 1 Who all is present during the talk between the serpent and the woman (verse 16)? (Note: the form of the “you” used throughout this passage is plural, that is, when the serpent says “you,” he is talking to more than one person.)

The man was there with the woman while the serpent tempted her (and said nothing).

Question 2 What happens to the first man and woman's relationship after they sin? To their relationship with God?

The relationship between man and woman is broken. Honesty and mutual support are replaced with shame and man's abuse of woman. For the first time death enters the world.

Question 3 Genesis 3:14-19 is often referred to as “the Curse.” Look carefully at the verses. God uses the word “cursed” only twice. What is cursed?

Have participants read this carefully and note that the word “cursed” is used only twice, for the serpent and for the ground. After the Curse, the ground produced “thorns and thistles” and required sorrowful labor to produce inferior food. Gone is the abundance of the Garden of Eden.

God put a curse on the ground, but He did not curse the man or the woman. Instead, what God says to them in Genesis 3:14-19 is a prophecy of what will happen to them because of their actions. These bad things are the consequences – what happens when we choose to live outside of faith in God.

Question 4 To understand the difference between a curses versus foretelling the consequences of a behavior, think about a young child putting out his hand to a fire, and his father says, “No, no, don't touch. You will be burned.” Suppose the child touches it anyway and is hurt. Is the child suffering because his father cursed him?

No! God does not curse us. Our wrongful action produced miserable outcomes that were not in God's original plan for us. God does not want these bad things but us, but still wants to bless us.

Question 5 Even as God describes the sorrows and struggle man and woman will face apart from Him, He assures us that He has not turned away from us entirely. What is the hope God gives us in Genesis 3:15?

This is the promise that although the serpent shall bruise the heel of the woman's seed (Jesus). Jesus will defeat sin. This is a prophecy. The Garden of Eden destroyed by sin

can once more be ours through Jesus. We are not forever lost but have a way back to full relationship with God our Creator.

Question 6 Many people have been taught that man and woman were cursed by God in Genesis 3. How does understanding Genesis 3: 16-19 as prophesy or God's description of the consequences of their behavior (not as a curse) change the way you think about man and woman's position with God?

Women do not deserve to be treated like a source of evil. Neither man and woman are cursed by God. Both still reflect the image of God.

Question 7 What are the practical implications of this different way of understanding the curse as a curse on the ground rather than on the people?

Although the Bible tells us that some individuals are cursed for their actions, God never blamed the woman alone for sin entering the world. Men cannot use the Bible as a excuse for their hard-hearted mistreatment of women.

Conclusion: The "curse" in Genesis 3 is only on the serpent and on the ground. Women are not solely responsible for the Fall. The rupture in our relationship with God and with each other is healed through Christ so that together we can manage the burdens of living in a fallen world. God still wants us to live according to the Ideal for which He created us.

DEBRIEFING STUDY 3, GENESIS 3

Points:

The Fall (and sin) is not exclusively the fault of woman (the man was with her – and said nothing -- while the serpent was tempting her).

God did not curse people but the serpent and the ground.

The statements made in Gen 3: 16 -19 are not curses or punishment but God's prophesy of the consequences of living outside of faith in him.

Applications:

The false belief that women are cursed causes great oppression. When God's pronouncements in Gen 3 are viewed as curses, what he says are believed to be how he wants the woman to be treated. And if God himself decries that a woman is good for nothing but child bearing, hard work, and to satisfy her husband sexually, this fosters the belief that woman is inferior and immoral. Treating her as any better or as worthy of more than this can be seen as contrary to God's will. When people come to believe that the woman is not cursed, they must immediately begin to treat women with much more dignity and kindness.

Examples from Nairobi (study 3 and 4)

Present during temptation: woman, man and serpent

After sin, there is shifting of blame between one another

Broken fellowship between man and woman

Serpent and land cursed – not man and woman

Suffering happens because of our disobedience – NOT God's cursing

Traditional women's work: cooking, collection water and firewood, raising children

As result of sin, painful childbirth, husbands rule over woman

Pressure to compete and dominate others now exists between men
God's question, "Where are you?" refers to spiritual, not geographic, location – condition
Death enters the world

They lost the glory of God that had been their covering – we still see the love of God as he provides animal skins (more durable protection than leaves)

Man works hard to survive

Relationship between man and woman harmed

Struggle for power and honor leads to tribalism and conflict

Study surprises:

God hates sin of lust of the eyes and other sexual sin

Serpent lost his feet because of his participation in this. When we use our bodies to sin, we hurt self and others.

From Malawi:

Surprise: man and woman were NOT cursed

Eve, Adam both present in talk with serpent

Oneness dislodged; relationship with God broken

Ground and serpent cursed, not man and woman

Consequence is result of our action

Women do most of work – childbirth, childcare, fetch wood and water. Man seeks money

Woman's value in childbearing, responsible for most work, man rules over her

Man works hard to survive

God's pleasure, purpose and love for man unchanged after the fall

Pollachi, India

Women are considered the source of all evil and cursed by God.

If the pastor had preached every Sunday for a year that the woman was not cursed, the men would not believe it. But because of the way this is presented (they explore it themselves) the men accepted it.

Ahmedabad, India

Women are considered low.

Women are considered unclean when menstruating.

Haiti

God only wants good things for us (Jer 29:11)

Satan wanted to destroy the good that God did

Adam was with Eve when she (and they) was tempted. Eve's fault?

Lesson – doubt God's truth led to separation from God

Disobedience – serpent spoke to Eve, she took fruit and gave to Adam who was with her.

They share responsibility for sin.

STUDY 4 The End of Unity

Objective: Understand how the curse on the ground results in both men and women becoming enslaved to gender norms of the fallen world. The choice of man and woman to live outside the garden of God's provision resulted in "sorrow", anxious, hard work (including struggles for power), and eventually, death. With the need to bear many children, women became dependent on man, who made her his inferior. Men themselves struggle with their position. Woman's subordination to man was not God's will but is a consequence of the Curse on the ground.

Question 1 What was traditionally considered woman's work in your culture? What work do men usually do? (Note: in modern times, many of the things that men once did exclusively, like clear the land of hunt, are no longer done. You might want to think about how things were in the past when answering this question.)

Answers will vary depending on location. Women care for children, work in the house, and do other tasks that can be done while pregnant. Men protect their families, go to war, hunt, and do the dangerous work requiring strength. Women's work does not require control over other people, but men either control or are controlled. They bring that power struggle into the home and expect submission from their wives.

Question 2 What does God say will happen to men because of sin (verses 17-19)? Give examples of how men suffer from the effect of the fall in their lives today.

Adam knowingly "ate the fruit". He was not cursed but suffers sorrow, hard work, and anxiety in protecting himself and his family and tribe. Then the harshest consequence of all, for the first time death will be his future. Examples of men's suffering will vary from area to area, present and past.

Question 3 How much does men's struggle for position or power over each other shape your culture? Marriages? Churches?

Answers will vary.

Question 4 The chart below lists the things that God said would happen to women in the fallen world (verse 16). Give examples of how women suffer from the effects of the Fall in their lives.

In the Fallen world women are no longer valued as individuals but for their ability to produce children, often more than they can care for. They must work hard to survive but are dependent on men for cash and protection, so they strive to marry dominant men, even though these men may be unpleasant to live with. Men are dominant in social institutions and marital relationships, demanding that women be subordinate.

Question 5 This study suggests that men's ability and drive to dominate each other, their wives and children in their lives comes from sin, not from God's intent in creation. Identify those practices that need to change in order to defeat the effect of sin in our lives.

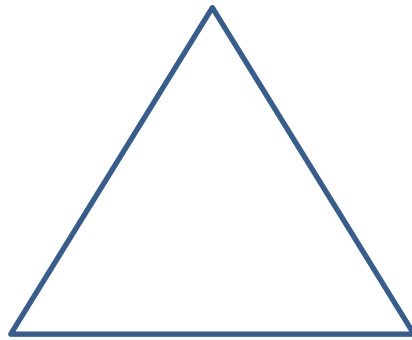
This is sometimes difficult to get answers from class. Here you might refer to the answers given in the introductory questions of "pressures on men and women;" the need to control less they be controlled.

Conclusion: We were created for a face to face relationship with God. But after the Fall, all relationships become hierarchical:

A few powerful men dominate

Most men are subordinated

Almost all women are subordinated



God does not want any of us to stay in slavery to culture of the fallen world.

DEBRIEFING STUDY 4, GENESIS 3

Points:

Both man and woman face “sorrow” and hard work when they choose to live outside of God’s provision.

The sexual division of labor and woman’s inferior position relative to man is a result of the need for many children.

The male status hierarchy and striving for position and power over other men – and the deep shame they feel when they don’t achieve it – is the male half of the sexual division of labor.

Applications:

God does not want any of us to stay in slavery to gender norms of the fallen world. “

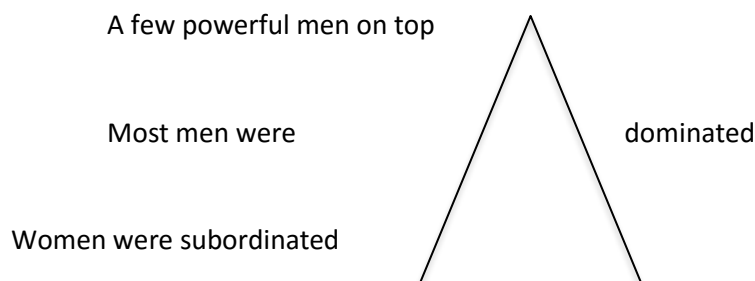
Francine Thomas wrote of her experience teaching *New Life* in Tanzania, “By the end of the first day of classes, a number of men stood to their feet to express dismay that they never questioned their culture and, in fact, now realize that even their own wives probably haven’t fared much better than the rest of the population. They did not know that their wives were supposed to be equal partners, but have only seen them as tools for labor and offspring. Now, however, they understand this is not God’s plan. One pastor stood to his feet to say he was making a commitment to begin a new chapter by loving, honoring, and respecting his wife and treating his children with love.”

Also from Francine, reporting on the debriefing in Tanzania: “The consequences of our behavior, while it affects ourselves and others, are not God’s punishment. He is not trying to hurt us; it is the result of our own actions.”

We were created for a face-to-face relationship:



But after the Fall, all relationships become hierarchical:



STUDY 5 Redemption from the Curse

Objective: To be reminded that Christ came to redeem (buy us back) from slavery to sin, by restoring us to relationship with God and with each other. Jesus' teachings show us how those who live by faith are no longer slaves to suffer sorrow, anxiety, fear, or shame.

Question 1 What kind of behavior is expected of a Big Man, one who is successful or who has high status in a worldly sense? What anxieties and obligations does this create for the man? For those who are trying to become important men?

He must stand alone, never trusting others, and be a source of wisdom. He is expected to help the poor (but with the expectation that the poor are now indebted to him), and always be right. The top man is always fighting to be "first" and is locked in constant struggle to maintain his power, and at a cost, to maintain followers with unquestionable loyalty. He must never let his "guard down." For a man to become important he must place the goal of power above all else. His life ruled by the opinion of others.

Question 2 Jesus' disciples are shocked by what he said about the rich. To what extent do Christians share the belief that the rich are somehow more worthy than the poor?

Even Christians envy the power of the rich and give them high positions and honor them in exchange for money. But our goal must be to become one with the Lord and not pursue money.

Question 3 What is the point Jesus is making in this passage?

God will provide for all your needs, but first you must strive for the kingdom of God. What good is it to have all the world's wealth only to lose your soul?

Question 4 Contrast Jesus' statements with God's word to Adam in Genesis 3:17-19.

Jesus returns us to a life trusting God and His abundant care. Once we are redeemed, we no longer experience the "sorrowful" and anxious hard work, and death God predicted in Genesis 3:17-19.

Question 5 Look up the following verses with each person taking a verse. What aspect of the fall is reversed by Christ in each verse?

I Cor. 15:22-26 In Adam we all are dead but Christ we are made alive. After Jesus destroys all earthly authority, power, and yes, death, will He then hand over the world to the Father.

II Tim. 1:10 The resurrected Jesus has destroyed death and brought immortality and light (understanding).

Rev. 7:16-17 In the New World to come God's promise is: Humankind will never again hunger, thirst, or be victims of the environment (physical healing). God himself will comfort us and wipe every tear from our eyes (spiritual healing).

Rev. 21:3-4 God's promise is reinstated again as the New Jerusalem is described. Every tear will be wiped away, no more death, crying, or pain as the old world order is no more.

Rev. 22:2-3 The curse on the ground is removed: The tree of life will once again bear fruit each of the twelve months. The leaves will heal the nations. Humankind is no longer separated from God, and God and His Son Jesus will live in the city with those who serve them.

Question 6 What differences do you think there are between "painful labor" and "tending" or "keeping" the garden?

God gave Adam work before the Fall: he tended the beautiful garden. Tending or keeping may require heavy labor but it's done with joy. Painful labor – working out of fear and threat of starvation – was the result of the Fall, not God's intent for us.

Question 7 Are the things that Jesus promises us for heaven only? If we are supposed to experience the Kingdom of Heaven now, in this life, how does that affect the way we live?

Abundant life in Christ doesn't mean material goods, but rather the joy and freedom of living a life without anxiety, fear, shame, or enslavement to the material world.

Question 8 Does being a Christian mean that one should not have to work?

We must work but our attitudes will change we are freed from fear, anxiety, or shame of who we are. Our work should be done as to the Lord to please Him.

Question 9 If you are redeemed to view work as "keeping a garden" instead as "painful labor," how might that affect the way you treat your husband/wife? Your children?

Our families can no longer be used as tools to accomplish materialist goals. We no longer compete with each other or seek revenge and dominance, but share joyfully, knowing that all good things are providing for those who love God

DEBRIEFING STUDY 5 JESUS: REDEMPTION FROM THE CURSE

Points:

Note that in Africa, as in Jesus' culture, the rich are honored and regarded as more worthy than the poor.

Christ came to redeem us (buy us back) from slavery to sin. In him the curse on the ground is reversed. The ideal of Genesis 1 and 2 – a one flesh, naked and unashamed relationship – is what God made us for and what he still wants for us.

Those who live by faith are restored to 'tending the garden', the task for which we were created, rather than the 'sorrowful toil' to the Fall. Example: Compare running for sport with running in fear from a thief with a knife. You may be moving just as fast in either case, and your heart beating as hard. But one case is 'tending the garden' – enjoying life – and the other is 'sorrowful toil.'

Note that in Matt. 6:25-34, Jesus gives examples from both men's and women's work. Women as well as men were listening to Jesus.

Application

From Tanzania: Abundant life in Christ doesn't mean material goods, but rather spiritual benefits, life without anxiety, fear, and shame.

Nairobi example:

Big man = rich man; led by greed, always striving for more (local example: MPs and government ministers refusing to pay taxes); live evil kind of life, trust in riches more than in God. Fear for life and property—when you have nothing, you sleep soundly. (nothing written down)

Natural to worry about being hungry but we are not to do this. Instead we are to trust in God. Instead of worry, believe God. All these things that cause us to worry – instead we should look to God to meet our needs.

Because ground was cursed (because of us), it produces thorns. Jesus tells us to trust God to provide for us – Jesus redeems us from the curse of the law.

I Cor. 15: Christ has made these things new (curse on ground, childbirth) when Christ raptures the church there will be no more hunger. Rev. 7:16-17: Because of Eve's sin, we inherited death. Christ has conquered death – there will be feasting with the tree of life – we will use its leaves for healing (Rev. 21:3-4)

Painful labor is like working hard with no or less return; tending is like working with good return. Local example: safari.com – many lost money with these shares; example of painful labor

Enjoy abundance of life blessings in the kingdom from God

Work not a punishment or curse – God gave Adam work before the fall; he tended a garden. Bishop Charles gave an example of a time when he was asked to pray for healing for a Muslim woman. He did so and asked her if she wanted to be saved. She said no, she was a Muslim and asked for prayer for a "dance" job she had. He did. She was unable to do "dance," came back and accepted Christ. His point was that had he not prayed for this woman regardless of her faith in Christ, she might not have accepted Christ. She had "work" but it was not the kind of work that we should do.

Malawi

Big men expect respect

Rich people in church treat poor people as useless because they have no money to contribute

Jesus tells us not to worry about food or clothing (material things) but to seek His kingdom because Jesus is everything

We still need to work, even ministers. We work to achieve God's will and goals

Christ reverses the effects of the Fall

Sin brought hunger. Jesus feeds us

Jesus removes the curse of sin so we can live with him forever.

Jesus encourages us not to worry about anything because we are sons and daughters of God.

Differences between painful labor and tending a garden

When pregnant, a woman works 24 hours a day. It takes courage to have a baby since the woman may die.

Ahmedabad, India

People give more importance to the rich than to the poor. They value their opinions more.

Poor people are not bad people but we value the rich more practically. A poor man, even if a good believer, we don't value him.

Women worry – what will they cook tomorrow? Jesus was talking about worries, day to day needs.

Some people take this teaching negatively and become idle—"God will provide." But birds don't just sit on the nest. We are to work hard without getting stressed.

On the difference between "painful work" and "tending" – tending is time with family, and the Lord. There are some Christians who believe that they should not have to work. They are applying scripture wrongly. There was a missionary lady who would not do housework.

Haiti

Qualities of a great Christian man: follows JC, great vision for life, circle of influence, model good Christian life

Qualities of big man (worldly): strives for power, competes for recognition

The message Jesus relays: We are more important than God's creatures. He will take care of us. Trust him.

Seek the kind of God first

Don't worry about tomorrow

Jesus breaks the curse at the Fall

But man places more importance on what he has acquired. We become selfish. Never satisfied. Hardness of heart.

STUDY 6 Honor, Patriarchy, and Dominance

Objective: Understand the burdens on men in the fallen world and how Jesus frees men of these burdens including, the need to maintain pride/honor; the drive to dominate others, including one's family; the need to prove one's masculinity by sleeping with many women.

Question 1 What is the problem with insisting on revenge? Do these contests ever end?

The cycle is unending to the destruction of both, so don't participate.

Question 2 What was Jesus offering the young man?

Jesus offered him discipleship and eternal life if the young man would follow Jesus rather than the dictates of patriarchy and an earthly inheritance.

Question 3 If this is a correct understanding of this passage, who are the dead to which Jesus referred? What did Jesus mean when he said, "Let the dead bury the dead"?

The dead are those who seek the materialistic wealth of the fallen world ("for dust you are, and to dust you shall return") and not that of God.

Question 4 What were James and John asking for?

They wanted the seats of power and to be superior to the others.

Question 5 Why were the other ten apostles angry with James and John?

The apostles voiced feelings of jealousy and resentment as James and John asked to be first over them.

Question 6 What did Jesus tell them in response?

Greatness does not lie in holding power over others. To be great one must empower and serve others, even at the cost of one's life.

Question 7 The Jews hated Samaritans. What point did Jesus make in making a Samaritan the hero of this parable?

That one's worth is not measured by worldly standards but by how one treats others. God does not recognize ethnic division but calls us to love even despised groups as our neighbors and ourselves.

Question 8 Men often feel compelled to prove their manhood by sexual union with many women. Discuss Jesus' attitude about how a "real man" behaves sexually.

To respect all women and not treat them as objects who exist only to gratify their own selfish needs.

Question 9 What do all these incidents have in common?

Men are freed from cultural mandates that lead to violence, loss, and despair.

Question 10 How are men limited and harmed by the belief that they must get position and dominate other people?

In the Fallen world, men either oppress or be oppressed. Big Men must always be looking over their shoulder for fear that others stronger will overtake them. There can be no real trust, no real love, no real friendship. Life is all “sorrowful toil”.

Question 11 Men: What are the biggest pressures you feel to behave in any of these ways? What is the solution to situations in which you are tempted or pressured to behave in these ways? Answers will vary.

Women: Have you ever expected a man close to you to get power over other people or to take revenge? How might your behavior or expatiations be changed to help the men in your life find their freedom in Christ? Answers will vary.

Question 12 As Christians, how and why do we forgive those who harm us?

By not forgiving we carry the burden of pain forward, in time limiting our relationship with Christ. We cannot experience the fullness of God’s love while we are filled with anger as the two are not compatible with each other. We don’t not forgive because the person who harms us desires or even asked for forgiveness. We forgive in order to be freed of the burden of the other’s sin.

Conclusion: Jesus taught men to opt out of worldly struggle for honor and power by: 1) serving God before earthly fathers and their desire for worldly power and inheritance (patriarchal establishment), 2) refusing to participate in revenge cycles, 3) not seeking position over others, 4) treating women with respect and as human beings, not as property, 5) the rules of sexual morality apply to both men and women, and 6) learning to accept all ethnic groups as part of the family of God.

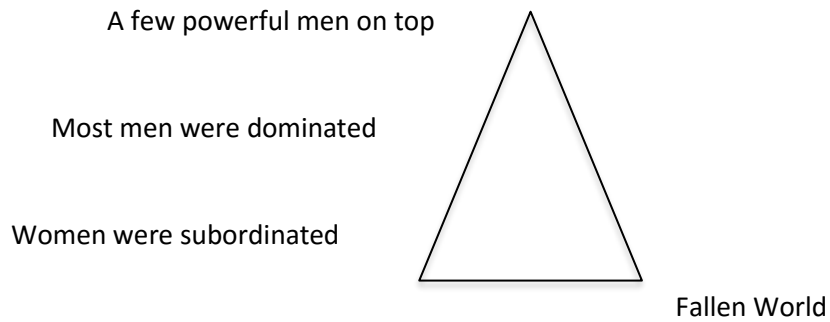
BRIEFING STUDY 6 JESUS: HONOR, PATRIARCHY, AND DOMINANCE

Points:

The behaviors Jesus lists in Matt 5:38-41 (“if anyone strikes you on the right cheek,” “if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat,” “if anyone forces you to go one mile,” are not physical threats but insults and affronts to honor.

The culture of the fallen world requires men to seek honor and dominance,

Patriarchy We think of patriarchy as the subordination of women by men but it is really the dominance of a few big men on top over everyone else, i.e., most men are also oppressed. Refer to this diagram from Study 4.



Jesus told men to opt out of the worldly struggle for honor by:

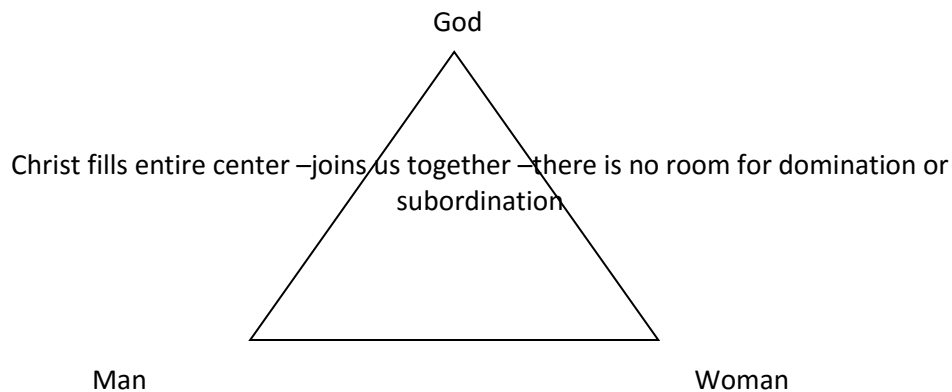
- Refusing to participate in the culturally expected revenge cycle
- Serving God before serving earthly fathers (and the whole patriarchal establishment)
- Ceasing to strive for position and lording it over each other ("Not so with you")
- Recognizing that ethnic conflict is never justified
- Not lusting after women

Applications:

Someone in Malawi said that in marriage, "We don't forgive, we revenge." In Christ, we forgive, and do not seek revenge.

Don't treat people as objects.

Canon Gideon's (BBUC) new picture – not a hierarchy but a joining



Nairobi examples:

- Seeking revenge puts family at risk
- Abuse of alcohol
- Sexual unfaithfulness
- Sons may act on behalf of father
- Revenge ends only with Christians
- Jesus offered rich young ruler the kingdom of God and eternal life; we should not be bound by the world's rules but only by God's word.
- James and John asking for power, knowing Jesus was filled with power
- Others angry because they believe James and John will lord it over them
- Jesus emulates servant leadership

Parable of Good Samaritan

Love and compassion not dependent on tribal identity

Common areas:

All striving for power is sin

Men worry they won't get possessions and respect

Christian point of view: only way not to be tempted is to be in the word

Women may want a man to take revenge for them. It is only the word of God that takes away the desire for revenge.

Desire to be on top can lead to death.

Malawi examples:

Surprise: Go the extra mile, even for an enemy.

Follow Jesus, not those who do not believe in him

To be great, one must be a servant to all

Summary

Demonstrates effects of the Fall

Patriarchy: a few men rule over everyone, both men and women and suppress others

Jesus says stop honor/shame culture and struggle for power

Fathers' absolute power and control in household. Jesus frees us from cultural requirements so we can follow Him

Jesus came not to be served but to serve. We are not to struggle for power or seek greatness for ourselves.

Ahmedabad, India

Our culture is male dominated in all spectrums of life. Men are concerned about their own self-respect. Maleness cannot bear insult. Competition to maintain status. If he doesn't have it, he feels as if his nose is cut. To prove maleness, he drinks liquor, has many women, and producing children through those women.

Insisting on revenge: spoils the relationship between husband and wife, between family. It leads to financial losses. You lose the joy of life. The desire for revenge never stops, it increases.

Do women put pressure on husband? A woman wants her husband to be respected. If the husband is insulted, the wife says, "Why did you keep quiet? You should have answered him." We like the men around us to be respected, honored. Men should not do what I want, but what God wants. We should not nag our husbands, but encourage them to do the right thing. Encourage him to be a free man.

BBUC

We trust in the Lord to be our protector. If we insist on revenge we are not trusting God.

When Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead," he was talking about the spiritually dead, not the physical.

How are men limited and harmed: Greed for wealth, honor, power, position, control. We always feel these pressures. Women want men to lead.

Re: “everyone who looks at a woman with lust...” Jesus was challenging a culture which is contrary to the Bible. A real man is called to deny himself and follow Jesus.

One of the canons became saved as a student. Those who were not save criticized him for not being a “real man”.

If a man is faithful, people think his wife bewitched him.

Men who are faithful to their wives are called “buttons”, because they stay in one hole.

Men who has only one wife are called “married to his mother.”

How can women help men find freedom in Christ: Support them, believe in them.

Why do we forgive those who harm us? If you forgive someone, you feel set free. Forgiveness is a commandment.

Haiti

Patriarchy: In the world –man is over women. Even when parents die, a young man makes the decision over property –man dominates

The ideal – both man and woman have dominion

The problem with insisting on revenge – it perpetuates the problem. The contests seldom end.

Jesus offered the young man to be a disciple and seek the kingdom first – instead of seeking worldly things and materials goods.

The dead are those who do not respond to the gospel – let them be, but don’t stop proclaiming the kingdom of God. The dead are those who are tied to the cultural traditions. They are not free from the “materialistic chains”

James and John were asking for prideful significance. They were totally interested in their own selves.

The other 10 apostles were angry with James and John because they were totally selfish.

STUDY 7 What Does it Mean to Be Lord?

Objective: The earliest Christian confessions declared that only Jesus is Lord. When we are appointed to be leaders or given authority over other people, we must be “lord” the way Jesus is. Jesus did not seek to control others, but rather empowered the powerless, lifted up the fallen, reconciled, created healing opportunities, encouraged maturity and responsibility, and restored community.

Question 1 When Jesus acknowledged that he was the Messiah, but then said he would be rejected and murdered, why did Peter rebuke him?

Peter, like others Jews, believed that the Messiah would be a righteous ruler who would restore the earthly kingdom and free them from the oppression of Rome.

Question 2 What is the relationship between Peter’s expectation about what the messiah would be and the third temptation?

Peter wanted Jesus to accept what Satan offered Jesus in the third temptation, i.e., all the kingdoms of the world.

Question 3 Why does Jesus say that his followers will be ashamed of him?

Rather than becoming a glorious, earthly king and defeating Israel’s oppressor, Jesus would suffer a shameful death.

Question 4 Why is Peter so upset? When Jesus took on the houseboy or housemaid’s job, what did this mean for what Peter might be expected to do?

Washing feet was the tasks of household slaves. Peter did not yet understand what Jesus was trying to teach him.

5 Why does Peter ask Jesus to wash all of him?

Perhaps because he knew that accepting his new role would require a complete transformation.

Question 6 Locate other times when Jesus showed, by word or example, that worldly ideas about authority, honor, and power have no place in the kingdom of God.

There are a great many: Jesus’ treatment of women, his teaching about the role of leaders, his interactions with children (with whom men did not bother) and friendship with all regardless of their position in society was contradictory to the culture of Israel. Jesus did not even heal people against their will.

Question 7 Is Christian humility a mere symbol or a test? Was Jesus humble during his lifetime just so that he could win the right to forever after “Lord” it over everyone else?

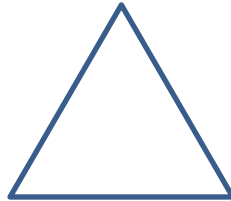
Even after Christ was glorified and sits at the right hand of God, He still “reigns” not by force or through judgment but by serving us: empowering the powerless, lifting up the fallen, reconciling, creating healing opportunities, encouraging maturity and responsibility, and restoring community.

Question 8 Jesus, knowing that God had given everything into his hand, used that authority to take on a task that his disciples found demeaning, and asked them to copy his behavior. What does this mean for how we should use whatever authority we hold over each other today?

Answers will vary. We must seek to serve and encourage others rather than expecting to be the one honored and served. Why is it hard to do this? Why do we feel weakness when we follow Jesus' example? Why do we feel intimidated by the opinion of others?

Conclusion: Refer back to the hierarchy pyramid (study 4) and ask what Jesus has to say about it.

A few powerful men on top
Most men were dominated
Women were subordinated



God did not create us to dominate or be dominated, but rather to work together for unity, with no divisions and fighting.

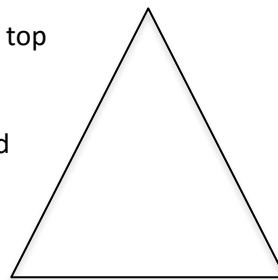
DEBRIEFING STUDY 7: What Does it Mean to be Lord?

Points:

The quote from Scott Bartchy on p. 25 says it all

Refer back to the hierarchy pyramid (Study 4) and ask what Jesus has to say about it.

A few powerful men on top
Most men were dominated
Women were subordinated



Fallen World

Applications:

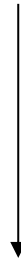
So many! Even pastors expect to be Big Men, entitled to the slavish services of their wives, and occasionally the sexual services of their female congregants.

But Christian leadership is not about privilege, but about responsibility and service.

Wayne Pelly illustrates Jesus' teachings on the use of authority this way:



Knowing that God had given all things into his hand,



Jesus came down out of the kingly space and immediately took on the garments of a slave and began washing feet:



Power is no longer exercised vertically but shared horizontally.

Nairobi examples:

Jesus is great teacher, our hope and deliverer, the great priest

To serve others

Power to reconcile and restore community

To exercise servanthood

Study surprise: authority is not to oppress others but to serve others

Seeing Jesus, the all-powerful, acting as servant

Change begins inside ourselves

There is only one Lord

Malawi:

Definition of Lordship: Master of everything; his power and authority to tell others what to do

Jesus shows us he understands lordship in direct opposite [of cultural norms]. To be Lord means to be the one who serves, raises the lowly up

Most striking points: humility. Jesus is humble and even washes the feet of his disciples, a job that even a Jewish servant would not do

Applications

As Christians we need to forget our positions of authority, of being boss over others. Jesus led by example (foot washing). We need to be humble and follow his example.

Family and church relationships: Jesus, a Jew, broke down cultural customs by foot washing.

We too need to break down cultural barriers – cultural gender norms.

Summary: Cultural expectations condition us to believe certain things, accept certain attitudes and actions. Jesus breaks cultural expectations.

Ahmedabad, India

We all love to follow a powerful leader. People join a ministry with certain expectation about how the leader will be perceived. When the expectations are not met, they go back.

Why did Peter object to Jesus washing feet? Our ego doesn't allow us to bend down.

Other occasions when Jesus showed that the world's idea about power was wrong: blessing children, the Good Samaritan, sinful woman, woman taken in adultery, Peter cutting the ear of the soldier – Jesus could call legions but didn't.

Haiti

Confusion over the purpose of the Messiah

Peter rebuked Jesus because he didn't understand Jesus' mission

Peter was expecting Jesus to restore the earthly kingdom of Israel – similar to the third temptation by Satan, to worship man's power and achievements

Jesus taught us to be humble – to wash each other's feet – to be willing to be a servant.

Spiritual cleanliness comes only from Jesus.

Jesus is Lord of all—and he comes in the form of a servant.

Jesus is Lord totally. There is no room for anyone else to be lord. Not a president, not a bishop, not your father, not your husband.

Jesus' Lordship is not of controlling others, but to empower the powerless, to lift up the fallen, to heal, to reconcile, to encourage, to restore community.

STUDY 8 The Freedom that Christ Gives Women

Objective: In the Fallen world, a woman is valued mainly for her ability to **provide children, labor/food, and sex** for her husband. Jesus taught that women's worth goes beyond this, and that the true value of women is found in her relationship with God. Women are important equally with men as resources for leadership in the church, home, and community.

Question 1: What risk was Mary taking in agreeing to bear a child that was not Joseph's? What does Mary's willingness to accept this risk tell us about her character?

The punishment for women having sex outside marriage was death by stoning. Mary had courage to go against Jewish traditions and public opinion by agreeing to become the mother of Jesus. As she obeys God's word, she replaces her fear with faith that God will provide for her safety.

Question 2 What did the woman say was important about Jesus' mother?

That she was truly "blessed" because she had a wonderful son like Jesus. But she is praised only because she had a womb and breasts.

Question 3 . In the fallen world, women are valued for the number and quality of sons they produce. In contrast, what did Jesus say was important about his mother? What does this mean for what God considers important about a woman?

That she had enormous faith in God. Those who are "blessed" -- of any sex -- are not those who get the things the Fallen world demands of them, but those who live in faith with God.

Question 4 The words, "to sit at the feet" of a teacher meant that one was his student or disciple. This was not something women usually did. What does Jesus' acceptance of Mary in this role tell us about his attitude toward women?

Jewish education was allowed for only men. Jesus breaks this tradition by praising Mary's choice to learn from the Master and not worry about her Fallen world role as servant.

Question 5 Jesus compared Martha's worries about her role as hostess with Mary's with Mary's choice of learning God's word. How did Jesus answer Martha?

Martha is "distracted" by the cultural expectations of women to provide food for guest and fears of becoming a poor host. Jesus frees Martha by encouraging her to make the same choice that Mary had.

Question 6 What do these stories about the two Marys have in common? What can men as well as women learn from them?

Better to listen and obey the word of God than to follow in fear the traditions of a fallen world culture.

Question 7 What do these stories mean for women today? For women who are rejected because they do not produce children or produce only girls?

Jesus returned us to living by faith in relationship with God, not to obedience to the dictates of culture and the Fallen world. Women are valued by God for obeying his word and living their lives using the abilities with which he has gifted them. Whether or not one has children has no bearing on the worth of a woman.

Question 8 How can we escape being “worried and upset” by worldly expectations about what we should be as men or women in order to devote ourselves to what is truly important?

It takes great courage to break from the accepted behavior. We should encourage each other to discover the gifts that God has given to each one of us and live our lives accordingly as we obey his word.

Question 9 Husbands and wives, how can you help free partners to sit at Jesus’ feet?
Answers will vary.

Conclusion: As Jesus showed great respect toward the women he encountered, he provided an example to all Christians. Married couples are to encourage each other in ways to grow in their relationship with Jesus and hold each other with equal respect as God’s creation. Marriage is marriage even if there are no children, and husbands and wives should look for ways to help each other “sit at Jesus’ feet.”

DEBRIEFING STUDY 8 The Freedom that Christ Gives Women

Points:

In traditional marriage, men expect women to provide children, labor, and sex. But Jesus said that a person’s true value lies in their relationship with God, not in how well they fulfill social or economic roles

Applications:

“Marriage remains marriage even if there are no children.”

Husbands and wives should look for ways to help each other “sit at Jesus’ feet.”

Women can and should learn (often a shock. Pastors in the Tanzanian program, for example, never involved their wives in ministry work, seeing her as just a household worker.)

Nairobi:

Mary’s risks: death by stoning

Mary’s willingness: obedience and humble

Jesus praises Mary for her obedience – not for her biology

Hearing and obeying the word of God the most important – even more so than gender

Men and women equal in God’s eyes

Word of God frees us and sustains us

Better for us to hunger after Jesus (even if we are physically hungry); to be at his feet

The Two Marys: Obedient, available to serve God. They teach us obedience to God and to be ready to serve Him
God used more than one woman to do His work
The Spirit of God will always tell us what to do
Today's meaning:
Seek the kingdom of God first
By grace, God gives boys or girls as children to women
Seek God before other duties; connect to God while doing household chores
Pray to God
If you are not blessed with children, you are blessed with salvation: seek God
Family is important

Malawi:

Mary risks her life to bear the Son of God, Jesus the Redeemer
In the fallen world, men need wives for sex, children, labor. This is the consequence of the fall, not God's plan for us.
Cycle of redemption begins with woman
Jesus teaches that women have value beyond bearing children and providing labor. They are free to serve God.
Most important to be transformed by God's word
Men can help their wives sit at the feet of Jesus. They can lift them up so they can do what God calls them to do. They can give money and resources so they can attend conferences and preach and teach others.

Pollachi, India

Women are considered the source of all evil and cursed by God.

Haiti

Woman and Childbearing
Mary risked stoning by bearing a child that was not Joseph's
She trusted God and the visitation of the angel. She had a strong character.
God trusted a woman!

Woman as Laborer
Jesus place greater value on spiritual issues than domestic issues
Women are capable and worthy of learning just as the men. This was a great break in the custom of the day. Women can be students, too.
A woman is more than a laborer. MORE THAN BEARING CHILDREN
WOMAN'S PURPOSE IS IN SEEKING JESUS, HIS KINGDOM.
What can men do to help women have time to sit at Jesus' feet?
Offer to help with their tasks. Schedule for husband and wife to share tasks
Hire a housekeeper for the wife
Woman as leader: spiritual growth equips women to lead others.

STUDY 9 Jesus to the World: Women are not Sex Objects

Objective: To be reminded men that women are coheirs of the kingdom of God, not simply objects of male consumption. To understand the lust that Jesus prohibited is not sexual attraction, but regarding a person as an object to be used for one's own pleasure.

Question 1 Why was the Pharisee disturbed?

He felt that if Jesus were indeed the prophet he was reputed to be, he would have recognized that this was a sinful woman who should have been shunned.

Question 2 What did Jesus think of the woman touching him?

Her sins were many but the humbling act of using expensive oil and tears were evidence of her love. She was rewarded with Jesus' forgiveness.

Question 3 Is there any hint that Jesus thought he should protect himself from women?

None. Jesus saw the woman only as a child of God.

Question 4 This woman's "sexual history" would have made any Jewish man chase her away, a fact of which Jesus was well aware. In fact, he made a point of bringing it up. Did Jesus' knowledge of her living conditions affect his willingness to speak with her? What important thing does Jesus reveal to this woman?

Jesus let the woman know that he understood her circumstances: many husbands, cohabitation, being a Samaritan – but he was purposefully teaching her despite these conditions.

For the first time, Jesus reveals that he is the Messiah, which the woman proclaimed to her whole village, making her an apostle ("one who is sent out").

Question 5 What do you suppose Jesus wrote in the dust?

Answers will vary. Many wonder, "where was the man"?

Question 6 Jesus told the men "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." How does this response challenge the traditional double standard? (The double standard is the belief that while adultery is a crime for women, it is okay for a man to have women other than his wife).

In this culture, an adulterous woman was considered to have irrevocably lost her honor, and there was no way to get it back. The men, all of whom had committed sins themselves, believed themselves superior nonetheless. Jesus told them they were not, and that men could not refuse to grant women redemption while claiming it for themselves.

Question 7 What did Jesus urge men to stop doing? Whom does Jesus blame for a man's lust, the woman or the man?

Lust regards another person as an object for one's own sexual pleasure. Those who indulge themselves in lusting are just as guilty as if they had committed adultery. Jesus blamed the men, not the woman who was the object of their lust, for this sin.

Question 8 How would women's lives be different if all men obeyed Jesus and stopped lusting after women?

Wait out the period of quiet that will follow this question and listen.

Question 9 How would your work, school, church or family be better if men and women could work together without thinking about sex? Answers will vary.

Conclusion: Jesus removed the cultural, gender, and tribal barriers that divide us, including breaking the unholy triumvirate of women being valued only for their provision of children, labor, and sex to men. After Jesus, women could no longer be regarded just as objects who exist to serve men, and who have no value when they fail to live up to the standards of the fallen world.

DEBRIEFING STUDY 9: Women are not Sex Objects

Points:

Women tend to be seen by men primarily as providers of sexual services (including children). Jesus ignored the sexual component and encouraged men and women to work together for the kingdom.

Lust is not sexual attraction, but regarding the other person as an object to be used. Jesus condemned men for viewing women this way. NOTE: Do not let the conversation get sidetracked by discussions about whether women lust. Women are almost never in a position where they can use men as sexual objects against their will.

Applications:

There is a tendency for even pastors to buy into the "big man" mentality and to feel entitled to have affairs with the women in their congregations. Jesus obviously does not approve!

Because men believe they own their wives sexually, they are demanding and inconsiderate lovers (and in all-female settings, the women complain about this). If a woman wants sex or satisfying relations, the husband may call her a whore.

Men (and boys) are abusing tradition to seduce girls. If she becomes pregnant and he has abandoned her, she may be killed or cast out by her family.

Nairobi:

Discomfort when an "unclean" woman worships at Jesus' feet by Pharisee
Pharisee looked at eternal views; Jesus looks at the heart
The woman honored Jesus, she put her faith in action by using her perfumed ointment
Jesus came to save the whole world: men, women, children
Jesus reveals He is the Messiah to the Samaritan woman
All are guilty
We can all be too quick to judge
Jesus came for sinners

Sin is sin in the eyes of the Lord
God is faithful to forgive our sins when we repent
Jesus asks men to stop committing adultery; both man and woman share blame
Women would be more free to serve God and easier to submit to God
Would reduce/eliminate HIV/AIDS

Freedom from lust:

More productive workplaces and schools,
More and mutual respect,
Better performance in schools
In church:
very prayerful and spiritual
power of God manifest

In family:
no more incest
more respect
no shame
Most important: we must value Jesus more than anything else
Jesus extended love to all
We must not judge others
Jesus has no favorites
God uses available vessels
Believers should live in the Holy Spirit

Malawi:

Most surprising: Jesus broke cultural ideas of women as source of all evil. Men blamed women for their (men's) lust.
Sin of adultery requires two.
Application: everything is better. Women would not think of themselves as sex objects. We could think about how to minister to others. Women: don't look down on self as just something to be used by men.
Jesus broke cultural, gender, tribal barriers – the Samaritan woman became an evangelist

BBUC

"8. How would women's lives be different if all men obeyed Jesus and stopped lusting after women? "

They would feel safer, more effective at home and work. Men's behavior restricts the kind of work women can do.

The world would be a wonderful place to live in. Women would have peaceful lives full of joy.

"How would work, e tc. be better if women and men could work together without thinking about sex?" efficiency would go high. It would be very conducive. People would feel valued, and respect each other.

Ahmedabad, India

Society thinks that women are responsible for adultery- but Jesus sees it differently.

“8. How would women’s lives be different if all men obeyed Jesus and stopped lusting after women? “It would stop infanticide. Parents are afraid to raise girls. It is not safe.

Christian boys will have sex with Hindu girls without marriage.

Women are also responsible for the way they dress. Immodesty should stop.

Haiti

Lust in the heart – have clean healthy thoughts. Do not objectify women. They are not objects. It is sinful to only look at women only as bodies to meet men’s needs.

STUDY 10 Submission

Objective: To correct the misunderstanding of the words “submit” and to expand Paul’s admonition of submission to include all members of the Christian community, not just wives. “Submission” does not mean obedience or allowing oneself to put underfoot, but to place ourselves below another in order to “raise” them up. An example is Christ submitting himself to the Church.

Question 1 How have these passages usually been understood?

“Wives, submit to your husbands” has usually been quoted out of its context (“Submit yourselves one to another”) to urge them to obey their husbands and in some cases, accept any mistreatment without complaint.

Question 2 What meaning does “submissive” have in your local language?

Answers will vary. In traditional cultures, to be submissive usually means to be a doormat.

Question 3 How does this understanding of submission change the way you read this passage?

If the Greek word *hypo* (under) and *tasso* (place) are understood to be in the middle voice then we together submit *ourselves* to someone else. Out of reverence for Christ, in marriage husbands and wives want to follow Christ’s submission in honoring others above ourselves.

Question 4 How does this understanding of a wife’s submitting herself to her husband fit with woman’s creation as a “help face-to-face” or fitting or suitable for the man? (see study 1)

A wife’s submission is that of the *‘ezer kenegdo*, a strong, equal help, not as a slave.

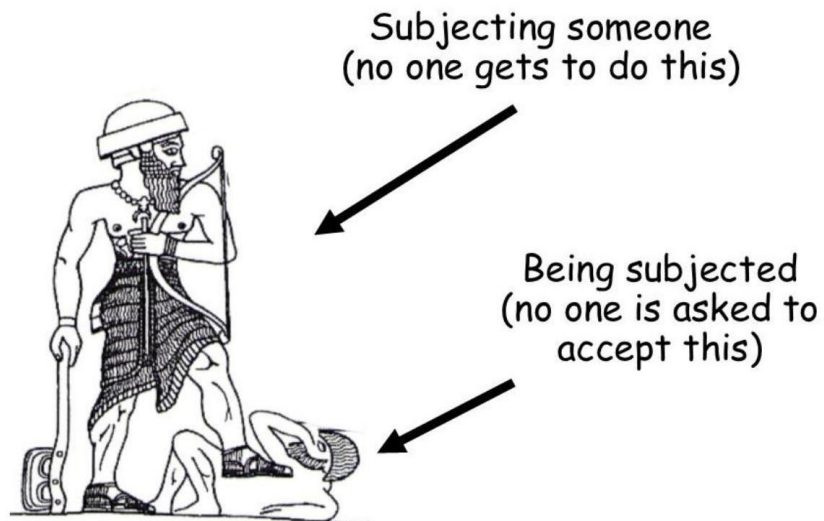
Question 5 Is there any way in which your personal relationships would be changed if both husband and wife submitted themselves to each other in imitation of Christ (stopped trying to get their own way at the others expense)?

The power struggles within the family would cease. Couples would work in selfless cooperation and mutual support.

Question 6 In 1 Corinthians 11:7, Paul writes that a wife is her husband’s glory. In Ephesians 5:26-27, he tells husbands to make their wives glorious. How should a couple behave so that the husband can help his wife be glorious without fear that she will be above him, treat his with disrespect, or lord it over him?

Answers will vary. By encouraging one another in all ways and holding each other up with highest respect. Well trained soldiers “have each other’s back” offering equal protection at all costs; we should look a marriage with the same dedication, trustworthiness, and loyalty.

Conclusion: Understanding what it means for BOTH men and women to “submit one to another in reverence for Christ”. Christians in all contexts must not struggle to exercise dominion over each other but work together as they acknowledge each other as children of God (“bone of my bone”). They are to treat one another with honor and respect in all ways and to support each other.



But this! Lift each other up

Be submitted to one another in reverence for Christ

DEBRIEFING STUDY 10: Submission

Points:

Ephesians 5 does not command only women to submit, but enjoins submission on the entire Christian household in imitation of Christ, who submitted in all things.

The word for submission, *hypotasso*, is used in the middle voice, and means to voluntarily “put oneself under” another person. It does not mean to obey, to give up, or to allow oneself to be abused or dominated.

Rather, it is the flip side of “raising others up”. This is Jesus’ re-definition of power, i.e., true power consists of raising up other people. In submission, we seek not to dominate others, but to place ourselves below them in order to raise them up.

In many local languages, as in English, it is difficult to distinguish “submit” versus “obey.” The distinction is there, however.

Application:

Husbands and wives no longer struggle to exercise dominion over each other but work together.

Nairobi examples: (note from Carrie: not all of this is quite right)

For authority to be complete, both husband and wife have to play their part

Usual understanding of submission: man is superior to woman and his word is final

“Submission”: Obey, don’t question; obey without question

Two levels: God commands both husband and wife to submit to one another and on a different level he calls the wife to submit to her husband

Submission is not a sign of weakness; obeying without authority. When marriage is easier, life is easier

If a woman does not submit, she cannot serve as help fit for man in God’s creation. You cannot help another person without being submitted to them. Without submission, we don’t fit in God’s creation. A woman who doesn’t submit is out of order. A man who doesn’t love a woman is not continuing the order of creation. Submission in relation to creation.

Change – no strife – husband would no longer say, “you must do what I say.” Wife says, “No, I want it my way” which is dishonoring. There will be unity – harmony, which leads to understanding. God will bless

Wife submit, husband love. Many men walk in front of their wives because they are ashamed of her for they haven’t taken good care of her.

The duty of the husband is to lift up his wife: buy a property in her name. Men have responsibility to build up their wives.

Women are a package stamped Fragile, handle with care. Please remember this when treating your wives.

Malawi:

Traditionally understood in “bad” sense – to put someone under slavery

To subject: both man and woman submit to one another as to the Lord

Submission is not forcing others to our will

Man and woman both equal; we both share God’s spirit

Adam’s words (bone of my bone) show that man and woman are one

No one should feel inferior

Ahmedabad, India

We skip the “submit to one another” part. A husband expects his wife to do exactly what he says, when he says, without questioning. Husbands= god.

The person who submits is considered weak. They have to submit, have no rights, not options.

Submit almost is equivalent to obedience. To submit means one's will is broken. Like a circus lion. It is strong enough but its will is broken and it is made to submit. Forcefully conditioned. A wife is conditioned.

How is it possible? How can a master submit to a slave? Romans 15:3 – Jesus himself did not do what he wanted to do but for the welfare of others, submitted himself.

There is no middle voice in Gujarati. Submit voluntarily – no force, no defeat, no tug of war among us. No rivalry, competition.

No ego. If I have to submit, it is insulting.

Submission as part of thanksgiving becomes possible.

“As unto the Lord” is misunderstood. Man is not God.

A husband is never told to bring his wife into submission.

“5. Is there any way in which your personal relationships would be changed if both husband and wife submitted themselves to each other in imitation of Christ (stopped trying to get their own way at the other's expense)?” The wife will be surprised. The husband may be quiet. Stop scolding. The wife may not be able to accept the change and will go off to her parents. Husband may be afraid, she will climb on my head, box over me. Wife may think man is escaping responsibility. But if they behave mutually, the relationship can improve. Without common understanding, there will be more problems.

Both husbands and wives should be in the seminar.

“6. In 1 Corinthians 11:7, Paul writes that a wife is her husband's glory. In Ephesians 5:26-27, he tells husbands to make their wives glorious. How should a couple behave so that the husband can help his wife be glorious without fear that she will then be above him, treat him with disrespect, or lord it over him?”

A husband encouraged his wife to go on a church committee. Soon she was everywhere. All he did was drive her. He was told to leave the room when his wife was counting money. He was insulted.

A wife should use language to honor her husband. Not insult him. Making his wife glorious should not backfire. It should not be a competition.

BBUC

Respecting one another would be heaven on earth, as in Creation.

One young man was questioning the idea of equality between men and women. One of the ladies: we need to understand where he is coming from. I have bought her with my cows, and now she is equal to me? We need to eliminate brideprice.

Haiti

Culturally, submission was without question, out of weakness.

Biblically: willing choice, based on trust. Be devoted to one another, out of reverence for Christ

STUDY 11 Paul and Authority in the Household

Objective: To understand that Paul's "household code" in Ephesians 5 and 6 did not support patriarchy in the household but instead repudiated it. In the eyes of God we are equally loved and we are to "submit to each other in reverence for Christ" and respect, honor, and nurture each other.

Question 1 How does Paul tell slaves to behave in Eph. 6: 5-8? List the verbs in Eph. 6:5-8 that describe what slaves are to do in the box below (you will fill in the other boxes later). To whom does the slave owe obedience? To whom does the slave owe obedience? To whom does he owe his good works "in fear and trembling" and "singleness of heart"?

Slaves box answer: Obey earthly masters. Avoid manipulative and passive-aggressive behavior (eye-service) but in all things do the will of God and serve as to the Lord.

Question 2 What does Paul ask of children? Again, list the verbs that describe what they are to do in the box labeled "children. Why are children to do this?

Children box answer: Obey and honor both parents. They do this not so they will eventually get their inheritance from their father (under the rules of patriarchy), but because this is right in the sight of God, and they will receive long life upon the land as their inheritance.

Question 3 What does Paul ask of wives? List the verbs in the box labeled "Wives".

Be subject to husband in the Lord, respect husband.

Note that in directions to slaves, children, and wives, they are asked to do as required by Roman law. Paul, however, changes their motivation from fear or promoting their own self-interest to doing their work as a service to God.

Question 4 What is the difference between what wives are asked to do and what is asked of children?

Slaves and children are to obey, wives are to submit.

Question 5 Why are wives to do this?

Because they are imitating Christ. They do not submit out of fear, or in order to manipulate their husbands. To submit is not to accept abuse or subjugation. It is the willing support of one's husband – to remove the struggle for power from the relationship altogether.

Question 6 Paul tells master to "do the same things" to their slaves that slaves were supposed to do to their masters. What were these things? What are the other things he tells to masters do? Write these actions in the "Masters" box.

"Do the same" as the slaves, i.e., serve them.

Do not threaten them, i.e., stop using the coercive power given master by law.

Know that both slave and master have the same master in heaven, who does not respect the customs of the fallen world and regards them both the same.

Question 7 What does “with [the Lord] there is no respect for persons” mean?

See above.

Question 8 In Eph. 6:1-3 Paul told children to honor and obey both their father and their mother. He goes on to address only fathers in verse 4. In a fallen world, a son’s duty is to bring glory and honor to his ancestors. In Rome, his obedience and service to his father was required by law, and a disobedient son could be put to death. In contrast, what does this verse tell us about the purpose for which a Christian father used his child’s obedience and honor? Write the verbs in the box under “fathers

Father do not provoke your children to anger (use intimidating power) but use children’s obedience to serve them (“nurture and instruct your children in the way of the Lord”).

Question 9 How does Paul tell husbands to treat their wives? Write the verbs in the “husband” box.

Agape love, love as own body/self, sacrifice for wife, make her glorious, nourish and care for her, and leave father and mother for wife.

Question 10 Look at the verbs you listed for slaves and masters, wives and husbands, and children and parents. In your opinion, was Paul supporting patriarchy or asking for something different?

Paul is asking each to serve one other as Christ’s example. There is no hierarchy when the Christian community serves one another.

Question 11 Why do you think that Paul felt he had to encourage the wives of men following Christ to respect them (verse 33)?

While coming from a position of weakness or being oppressed, wives often find ways to equalize the power between themselves and their husbands or to get revenge, often by being passive-aggressive or manipulative. Women must respect their husbands’ sacrifice of privilege for their wives’ sake.

Question 12 What do Paul’s instructions mean for how parents should treat their children; For how people should treat their household helpers; For how married people should treat each other?

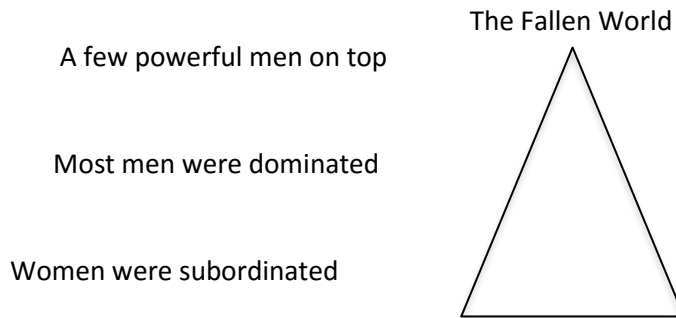
We are to treat all others with respect and submission. Stop exercising worldly power and stop passive-aggression.

Conclusion: God never intended for people to be oppressed or to oppress another. Understanding Paul’s instruction on submission, we are to end abuse and the power struggle within the household and community. Revenge or passive aggressive behavior is never the answer. We are to encourage and serve each other in imitation of Christ.

DEBRIEFING STUDY 11: Authority in the Household

Points:

In Ephesians 5 and 6, Paul turns the traditional understanding of authority in the household on its side. Refer back to the drawing from study 4. Paul told us we could no longer live this way.



Those in the subordinate positions (wives, children, slaves) submit themselves, but Paul changes the meaning of submission as well as their motivations for submitting.

Children and slaves obey not out of fear of coercive power (that is, from fear of being beaten, deprived of their inheritance, or even to executed as a disobedient son or slave), but because their work in this life is to please God, not man.

Wives are not asked to obey but to submit themselves (their own choice) to and to respect their husbands. Don't shame him or take advantage of his Christian humility and self-sacrificing love.

Paul also changes the motivation of the Big Men in power (husbands, fathers, master). They can no longer use their earthly power against those subordinate to them but must serve them instead. Thus, he restores the face-to-face relationship we were created for:



Applications:

There is usually some discussion in the group about how they treat their household helpers. One pastor in Rwanda also owned a wood working shop. He had never paid his workers. After this session at the seminar, he left to go to the shop and pay them.

Men can't come home roaring at wife, children, and household helpers.

Paul's advice to slaves makes clear that those in subordinate positions have been finding ways to revenge themselves or manipulate their masters ("act not in eye-service as man-pleasers"). People may not see this at first, but as you debrief, refer to the hierarchy pyramid and point out that God never intended people to be oppressed. Ask how those who are oppressed respond and you will get lots of examples of passive aggressive behavior and hidden revenge, such as a wife refusing to cook or have sex with her abusive husband, even

poisoning his food; a housemaid slapping the children; servants selling goats and pretending they were stolen or lost.

We also have good discussions about the need for wives to respect and not take advantage of husbands, especially when they become saved and stopped behaving in their formerly abusive ways.

Nairobi example:

Wives respect and submit to their husbands out of obedience to Christ

Instructions to Masters:

Obey and serve

Stop threats and killing slaves

ALL are equal in the eyes of God

Instructions to Fathers

Nurture and train in the ways of God

Instructions to Husbands:

Love their wives

Paul asks for mutual respect

For good relationships, step out of power struggle

When men are respected, they are productive in every area, including the church

With respect, love and honor one another in same way God does not show favoritism

Forgive one another

Make things right

Make things in order

Slavery does not prevent us from serving God

Do good to one another

Act in the ways of Jesus

Submit to one another as to the Lord

Today's world:

Masters = Employers

Slaves = Employees

We should do our work as to the Lord

Il Kings example: our current capacity does not affect our ability to do God's work

Malawi:

Christians are not to exercise control over others.

Paul addresses slave, children, wives, husbands with same message: submit to one another

Paul wanted each member of the family to love one another; the husband should love his wife as himself.

Each of us should perform our duties to one another as to Christ

Become servant for the Lord

Paul instructs masters to treat their slaves with respect; do not threaten them

Children are to honor and obey both father and mother

Submit to one another as they would submit to God

Husbands to have caring concern for their wives

Husbands to give themselves up for their wives

Ahmedabad, India

When people have not submitted to each other, they are often just showing off (“eye-service”). Servants work properly when the master is there, and they don’t work when he is now. We are to be sincere.

Advice to fathers: We must support our children. Don’t put our own expectations on them.

Paul was not supporting patriarchy but following Jesus in rejecting it.

Haiti

Fathers are not to provoke children but nurture and instruct, bring joy, be responsible

Husbands are to love, sacrifice for, make wife glorious, nourish and care for wife

All are equal in God’s eyes.

It is safe to make your wife glorious because you will be made glorious in turn.

STUDY 12 What Does it Mean to be the “Head”?

Note chapter title has been changed.

Objective: Understand that when the apostle Paul called man the head of the wife, he did not mean that the husband was her leader, authority, or ruler. Rather, in Ephesians 5, Paul used a head/body metaphor to describe how man and woman attain the one flesh ideal of Creation. Man is to imitate Jesus’ headship of the church as he sacrifices himself for his wife, nourishes her and cares for her, and loves her as he loves himself.

Question 1 What do people usually understand “head” to mean in this passage?

Answers will usually center on words like “boss” or “absolute authority.”

Question 2 How have these verses been understood traditionally to define the relationship between husband and wife?

Usually, that the husband has absolute authority over the wife. She is of lesser value than the husband or his relatives (father/mother).

Question 3 What does the “head” mean in these verses?

The head creates unity with the body and causes it to grow. We are reminded that head + body = one flesh.

Question 4 How does translating kephale (head) as something like “creator of unity” (two individuals coming together in one) instead of “authority over” help our understanding of Paul’s instructions to husbands in Ephesians 5:25 – 31?

Husbands are to be the ones to take the lead in creating unity with their wives. This understanding makes sense of Ephesians 5:25-31, which uses the head/body metaphor to describe how husbands should love their wives (as their own bodies, to nourish and cherish her as his own bodies, etc.) to recapture the “one flesh” relationship.

Question 5 In these verses, what does the husband do as head that is similar to what Jesus does as head of the church (in the verses listed earlier in this study)?

The head (Jesus) does not rule the body (the church) but reigns with it. We submit to one another in a Christian marriage.

Question 6 What effect would it have on a relationship to have a husband seeking unity and growth within a marriage?

He would change his actions from those of self-interest to open sharing with his wife; to value her as a gift from God. By doing this he would replace distrust, competition, and resentment in the relationship with trust, love, and companionship. To be head is not a privilege but a responsibility.

Question 7 How does this understanding of what is Paul saying about headship within Christian marriage enrich or challenge your own relationship? Answers will vary.

Question 8 Husbands, how can you be more like Jesus in creating unity with your wife?
Answers will vary.

Question 9 Wives, how can you show greater respect and support for your husband as he follows Christ? Answers will vary.

Conclusion: Understand that when the apostle Paul called man the head of the wife, he did not mean that the husband was her leader, authority, or ruler. Rather, in Ephesians 5, Paul used a head/body metaphor to describe how man and woman attain the one flesh ideal of Creation. Man is to imitate Jesus' headship of the church as he sacrifices himself for his wife, nourishes her and cares for her, and loves her as he loves himself.

DEBRIEFING STUDY 12: What does it mean to be the "Head"?

Points:

The Greek word translated "head" is *kephale*. It had no connotation of leader, ruler or authority over in Koine Greek. Interestingly, the word for head in the local language of Bondo does not have that connotation either!

Paul does NOT say that the husband is the *kephale* of the household or the family. He said the husband is *kephale* of his wife.

If Paul had wanted to say that the husband was leader, ruler, or authority over his wife, he would have used a different word: *arche* (authority or ruler), *despotis* or *oikodespotis* (head of the household), or *kyrios* (lord). Since Jesus is called *kyrios*, if Paul had intended that meaning for the relationship between husband and wife in parallel with the relationship between Christ and the Church, using *kyrios* in this parallel would have made sense. In fact, secular Greek usage referred to the master of a household as the *kyrios*, not as the head. But Paul is trying to convey something else about the intended relationship between husband and wife in his use of the word *kephale* – that of being head/body/one flesh.

Reviewing the scriptures in which Christ is referred to as the head of the Church makes it obvious that Paul was writing about the *kephale* as one who creates unity and growth. Rather than seeking to be served, the *kephale* serves the other.

This is an important point. For the sake of the other groups that did not have this study, I recommend you read those scriptures on p. 41 and 42 of the study guide out loud and have the participants listen for the meaning.

Ephesians 1:22 is the clincher on this understanding: "And God **placed** all things **under** his (Christ's) feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way". In Greek, the words in bold are the word for "submitted" or "subjected" in the active voice. God submitted everything under Christ's feet. Ask the group, "Who are Christ's feet?" It will take them a minute, but they will recognize that we, the Church, are Christ's body and therefore his feet. So the things that are subjected (active voice) are subjected to us as the church. The head does not rule the body but reigns in unity with it. The body is the fullness or completion of the head. This is a parallel with Genesis 1, in which God created both woman and man in God's own image, and gave them together dominion over the earth.

Nairobi example:

Head often understood as the one in control or directs

Traditionally understood that man is head of the family

Obedience required by law

Women to be seen and not heard

“Head” is mandate to unite (Eph 1:9-10); to bring together; to foster growth

Christ as head

Above every ruler

Above every authority

Over everything for the church

Reigning together as one body

Husbands to be like Christ:

To give themselves unconditionally and sacrificially

Give themselves totally to their wives (becomes one flesh)

****If a husband did this, it would be WOW!**

Comfort

Stress-free

“heaven on earth”

When we live in obedience to Christ, we bring harmony to our own relationships effect

Husbands to be like Jesus in creating unity:

Sacrifice

At least on same level as his honor

Wives show respect as husbands follow Christ

Pray for them

Support them

Submit

Relationship reflects one flesh ideal

Most Surprising:

To be the head is to sacrifice

Love of God gives new life

A man with Christ is a man with a head; a man without Christ is a headless man. A woman with a man without Christ is a woman with a headless husband. The greatest gift a woman can give her husband is Jesus, who is the head.

Malawi:

Headship means oneness. Christ is head of church; husband is head of wife, wife is equal partner. They are both a creation of God. Meaning of headship = oneness

Christ is head of church. He was humble so we are to be humble. There should be no inequality in the home

Neither husband nor wife should do things in secret; they should both be united

Application:

There should be transparency. The man and woman should not do things secretly but they should become one and equal

Men and women use Ephesians passage against each other – this is wrong application of it
Being head is not a privilege – it is a responsibility

“The face of a wife reflects the heart of a husband” – What is in your heart reflects on your wife’s face so make her glorious, make her glad she married you.

BBUC

People usually understand “head” to mean: boss, leader, king, chief. When a man says something, the answer must be, “yes”.

“You speak once, I speak twice.”

There is no democracy. He is a king.

Ephesian 5 understanding of head: The head is responsible for all aspects of the family. Bringing together or uniting. Coordinating.

Ahmedabad, India

People understand “head” to mean ruler, final word, the one who controls everything. If there is not enough salt in the food, he can slap his wife. In some cultures, the wife must massage the legs of all the men with oil.

In one state in India, the wife is the husband’s property. Any man in the family can use that lady sexually.

BBUC or India (I don’t know which)

The Ephesians 5 concept of “head”: It helps us in holding the family together. The head is the unity carrier, protector, provider. Not ruling, but bearing a responsibility.

Since Jesus loves the church to the extent of dying, a man should love sacrificially.

If the husband seeks unity and growth, you would have complete love, a good marriage.

That family would be like the creation idea. There would be happiness and harmony in marriage.

The wife should not take advantage of such a husband but should respond with joy, harmony, love, and happiness.

This teaches us to work together as a family, challenges us to love sacrificially.

Haiti

Paul teaches with the goal of bringing man and woman back to the ideal relationship of Creation.

Husband is head of his wife as Christ is head of Church.

Man as head = kephale, creator of unity, top of object, co-worked. To unite not rule over another

Haitian culture: women expect men to tell them what to do

Men asked how they direct their wives:

Meet together

Discuss

Decide together

Both share. Headship and submission out of respect for Christ

STUDY 13 The Mystery of Marriage

Objective: Understand the “big picture” of Ephesian 5. Both husbands and wives are to submit or give to each other above all others their respect, honesty, acceptance, and commitment. By cherishing his wife as a gift from God, like Eve was for Adam, a husband will triumph in his Christian marriage. To be loyal and show respect for her husband, a woman will bring peace to the home. They will encourage one another in the Lord as they hold each other up throughout life together.

Question 1 Who is addressed in verses 20 – 21? Both the husband and wife.

Question 2 In verses 25 – 30, Paul described what the husband’s attitude should be toward his wife. In daily life, through what actions or attitudes can a Christian man do these things for his wife? Answers will vary as people share from their own experiences or obviations.

Question 3 In everyday life, how can or should a wife: (various answers will come forth. Examples below).

Give her allegiance (loyalty, support) to her husband? Stand by him against all others/encourage him with honesty.

Show this support in everything? When in public show support but in private be truthful with words of loving kindness.

Respect her husband? By her words a woman can be encouraging. By mocking him she tells all she has no respect for him.

Question 4 It would be difficult for a husband to do as Paul directs if his wife made fun of him or took advantage. How can a wife make it safe for a husband to care for her as Christ cares for the church?

A wife can build a safe relationship by being trustworthy and affirming. When she proves that she is on the husband’s side, he will form a trust with her and treat her with care.

Question 5 What is the ideal relationship between man and woman, according to Jesus?

“They shall become one flesh.”

Who did Jesus say first said this? The Creator.

Question 6 Genesis 2:24 – 25 also tells us that the man and his wife were “naked, and were not ashamed.” What does it mean to have a relationship in which one can be “naked and unashamed”?

Open, honest, transparent, etc.

Question 7 Compare a relationship in which one can be “naked and unashamed” with Paul’s recommendations for husband and wives in Ephesians 5.

It is a relationship in which husbands and wives can feel safe, and in which truth, trust, and acceptance are freely present. Both can be themselves without fear. They give freely and sacrificially to each other as they would to Christ showing affection and compassion to one another.

Question 8 Remember that marriages at the time when Paul was writing tended to be arranged marriages, just as they are in some areas today. How is it possible to be “one” with someone you did not choose? Answers will vary with personal experience within the culture.

Question 9 How close are you to being “one” in your relationships with other Christians? Do you believe this is possible? What stands between you and this ideal? Answers will vary.

Conclusion: The Creation Ideal relationship commanded by Jesus is the same as Paul’s teachings in Ephesians 5. A couple can truly achieve “the one flesh ideal” when the unity of their marriage is husband, wife, and Christ; “and the two shall become one forsaking all others.” By cherishing his wife as a gift from God, like Eve was for Adam, a husband will triumph in his Christian marriage. By showing respect a wife honors her husband and makes it possible for him to imitate Christ in his relationships.

DEBRIEFING STUDY 13: The Mystery of Marriage

Points:

This final study ties together Paul’s teachings in Ephesians 5 with the Creation ideal relationship commanded by Jesus.

Applications:

How do the things Paul asked of husband and wife play out in real life? Frank Tweheyo loves to debrief this one and talks about making marriage companionate and affectionate. Other examples below.

Nairobi examples:

How can a husband:

“Give himself up for his wife”: do the hard jobs: fetch firewood, buy charcoal, install electricity and pay the bill. Provides and protects – not beat

“Cleanse her from every blemish”: buy her cosmetics for wife, fashionable clothing – hair salon

“Love his wife as he loves his own body”: don’t keep other mistresses; satisfy wife sexually

“Nourish and care for his wife”: give her a balanced diet, take care of her medical expenses, don’t force her to bear many children

“Leave his father and mother and be united with his wife”: build his own house, make his own decisions, take care of his family

How can a wife:

“Give her support to her husband”: cooking, washing, cleaning

“Show this support in everything”: take care of children, support her (sic?) projects and decisions

“Respect her husband”: give him the chance to speak often, especially when they have visitors. Spend wisely as agreed. Show respect to in-laws – a wife doesn’t consider

husband's family as family. "A man feels secure when he knows his mother is being well-treated".

"How can a wife make it safe for a husband to care for her as Christ cares for the Church?" submit in everything. Don't take advantage by denying sex; don't use sex as a weapon. The seed is love – husbands need to love their wives first.

"What is the ideal relationship"? one flesh per God

"What does it mean to have a naked and unashamed relationship?" honesty, acceptance, commitment

We redeem that relationship in Christian love; we regain that oneness in Christian redemption

10a: Romans 5:12: members of one another

10b: We are members in Christ's body. The most striking – the mystery of marriage. Each member of the body is there to complete one another. Because of our uniqueness, be satisfied with who God has called you to be.

Bishop Charles: a man should leave his family when he marries because there cannot be more than one father in a home.

Malawi:

The mystery is how we in Christ can be naked and unashamed

Without love, the two cannot become one

Unity – the husband and wife unite to make one body

Relationship: marriage brings people from husband's and wife's families

Protection: when people are in love and relationship, the husband or wife will not go outside marriage [for sexual satisfaction]

No more arranged marriages

We need to seek God's will with choosing a wife or husband

We need to pray for our marriages so they can be healthy

Husbands, offer your wives forgiveness; free her from cultural or gender expectations

Husbands and wives should work out conflicts together

Wives should give loyalty to husbands [not to brothers or other family members]

Ahmedabad, India

Question 2: How can a husband do these things?

Give up his bad habits.

Give space for the wife to grow spiritually

Allow wife to pursue her hobbies

Take care of her health

Correct her when she is wrong (Carrie – careful with this one)

Not rebuke her publically

Cook, help her with household

"Leave father and mother..." This is most interesting. Couples live with husband's parents after marriage. This may not necessarily be a physical leaving, but the husband looks after his wife's emotional needs, give priority to wife. Maintain balance in the home.

Don't correct her in front of her in-laws.

Become the wife's spokesperson

Question 3: How can wife support her husband?

Don't openly correct him.

Appreciate husband in front of her parents

Address him respectfully

Use right time for correction –not when tired.
Accept husband's gift even if it is not her choir.
Remain loyal in true sense. Don't compare him with others.
Encourage him in his interests.
Be with him in difficult times (not like Job's wife – "Curse God and die")
Help husband ease tension between wife and mother
Sex
Don't nag
If he wants to sweep or wash vessels –let him. This is how he cares for us (much laughter)

Question 6: What does it mean to be "naked and not ashamed"?

Transparent
Open
No masks
Accept weaknesses

What keeps us from this: Ego, pride, expectations, tendency to judge, don't want to accept new ideas, lack of charity, gossip, harbor bitterness.

Question 8: How is this possible when marriages are arranged?

You are still responsible because you said yes.
Just because you choose them doesn't mean they will be perfect.

Understanding the Corrective Verses

with Wayne Pelly

As we look back through *NMNW*, we will see that the many scriptures it covers fall into the descriptive and instructive categories discussed earlier.

1. Some examples:
2. Based on these verses, what is the Bible is instructing us to do as far as gender treatment?

When the instructive and descriptive texts are used to interpret the scriptures, a clearer vision of the glorious biblical view of redemption of us all, male or female, comes through.

Unfortunately, this clear vision was lost long ago as the imperatives of the fallen world (culture) crept back into the body of Christ. Instead of looking at the big picture provided by the instructive and descriptive texts, people started to read culture back into the Bible. To do this, they went to the verses New Testament scholar S. Scott Bartchy refers to as corrective, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" and 1 Timothy 2: 12, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." These verses are pulled out to use as "proof texts" to promote exactly the opposite point that Paul was making.

Bartchy writes, "The imperative force of these two exhortations has encouraged male church leaders and interpreters to wrest them from their literary and historical contexts and to transform these words into generalized, contextless commands, taken as valid wherever males have gladly dominated and females have seemed glad that their God has chosen males to bear all responsibilities in the public realm." (Bartchy, 1992)

When these corrective verses are taken out of context and treated as normative, they have several negative effects:

- They minimize or even negate the plain meaning of and the positive attitude toward women and their ministry expressed by the other texts listed under instructive and descriptive.
- They encourage a negative or even suspicious attitude toward women – reinforcing prejudices toward them that neither Jesus nor Paul express; and that are in fact is contrary to all other biblical evidence, both Old and New Testaments.
- They affirm ungodly dominance and hierarchy in the Body of Christ, burdening men with false obligation and shame.

- They violate a principle of true biblical authority expressed in 2 Cor. 10:8 and 13:10 in that, rather than “seeking to build them up,” they are used to suppress or control strong, gifted women.
- They violate an important principle of biblical interpretation in that these obscure and difficult texts have been used to override clear, straightforward ones.

The Apostle Paul was as affirming of women as was Jesus. He followed Jesus in urging men to release themselves from the demands on them in the fallen world, that is, from the Big Man mentality of striving to be on top and suppress other. But because Paul is interpreted through the lens of misunderstanding of the corrective passages, his plain and precious teachings have been used to advocate hierarchy and dominance in family, church, and society.

So what is the correct understanding of these verses? In approaching difficult to understand passages in the Bible, it is important to keep some guidelines in mind:

- **A Berean Spirit**
 - The contrast between how Thessalonica and Berea received the Gospel in Acts 17:11 illustrates an important attitude to have when approaching an issue such as this.
 - With eagerness the Bereans examined the Scriptures with humility, curiosity and a lack of prejudice
 - A willingness to consider all biblical evidence, and to form one’s beliefs from it, rather than holding firmly to a previously formed belief and only considering evidence that supports it.
- **The Entire Counsel of God**
 - This expression (or the entire *purpose* or *will* of God in some translations) – expressed by Paul to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:27 – expresses a significant principle in allowing all relevant biblical texts on a subject to be heard, not just one’s favorite verse.
 - Contrast the usual approach on this topic: Only a few passages (typically 1 Tim. 2:12 and occasionally 1 Cor. 14:34-35) are allowed to speak, while other important passages of Scripture remain silent.
 - Biblical authority on any matter is the result of allowing the *entire* Bible to speak. Thus, we need to listen to *each relevant text*, interpreted in its own context, and each in relation to the others.
- **Context**
 - Scripture must be considered in the light of its historical, cultural and literary contexts.

ADVANCED STUDY 1: Usurping Authority

1 Timothy 2 and Women in Leadership

1 Timothy 2:11-15 is the prime example of what Bartchy calls a “corrective” passage. This one passage possibly has had a greater impact in limiting women’s participation in the church than any other verse in the Bible. It has been used to (1) prohibit women from teaching men, (2) prohibit women from positions of leadership, and (3) as the source of the “creation order” and “women are more easily deceived” arguments, justify the subjugation of women to men. This passage is obviously about power, however, and so we must be very careful not to let preconceptions about hierarchy get in the way of understanding it.

1 Timothy 2:11-15

¹¹ Let the woman learn in silence with all subjugation. ¹² But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority (*authenthein*) over the man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was first formed, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. ¹⁵ Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. (KJV)

Paul wrote the first epistle to Timothy, an individual whom Paul had asked to stay in Ephesus in order to keep the congregation there from accepting false teachings (1 Tim. 1: 3-4). Despite the efforts of them both, the church at Ephesus was deeply troubled by those who “want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about....” (v. 7), who occupied themselves with “meaningless talk,” and “myths and endless genealogies” (vs. 4,6). Paul had already ejected two of the worst false teachers from the church (v. 20). This passage, referring to a complex situation about which we have limited knowledge, offers an excellent example of the dangers of allowing the verses in which Paul is dealing with a problem situation to overrule the plain sense of the Descriptive and Instructive teachings of Jesus and the rest of the New Testament.

To being with, the language of most translations is loaded. The Greek word translated “silence” in the King James Version is not silence but quietness. Further, there is no reason to translate “submission” as “subjection”. An alternative translation of verse 11 is:

¹¹ Let the woman learn quietly (or calmly) without striving to dominate.

Beyond the prejudicial language the major translation difficulty for 1 Timothy 2:11-15 is that we don’t know the meaning of a key word in verse 12, *authenthein*. Modern translations usually render it as “to have authority”, but the underlying Greek word is not the word used throughout the New Testament for authority (*exousia*). Actually, this is the only time this word is used anywhere in the New Testament, and it was rarely used elsewhere in Greek literature. Its original meaning referred to someone who commits suicide or a family murder (Richard Kroeger and Catherine Kroeger, 1992). The Kroegers’ extensive study suggests that Paul may have meant “to hold oneself to be the source” of something, as in false teachings that the woman was the source of the man. By the first century, when Paul wrote, it may have meant to “domineer” (Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, 1974). This is the meaning underlying the translation found in the King James Version, “to usurp authority”. The root of the word means “self”, and closely related words mean “self-willed” or “proud willfulness.” It apparently did not have the meaning of “having authority” until nearly two hundred years after Paul wrote the letter to Timothy (Kovacs, 1982). But whatever the concept Paul meant to convey in using this word, it was nothing good. That is, Paul would undoubtedly have told men not to *authenthein* as well.

1. Suppose that Paul did mean that he did not want women “to usurp authority” over men. Who did Paul allow to dominate other people?

What women are denied in v. 12 was already explicitly denied to men by Jesus (Mark 10:42-43). The thing that women shouldn’t do, men shouldn’t do either. And in fact, Paul has already said as much just a few sentences earlier:

1 Timothy 2:8

I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument.

2. What is Paul telling the men of the congregation in Ephesus to stop doing?

This problem was part of a pattern, as is seen in the next passage, where Paul addresses “the women, likewise”:

1 Timothy 2:9-10

Likewise, the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God.

3. What were the women of the congregation doing that Paul wants them to stop?
4. The men were quarreling and the women were dressing extravagantly. Think about the motives underlying these behaviors. Although the behavior took a different form for the men as opposed to the women, what is it that both groups were doing?

Then follows :

11 Let the woman learn quietly without striving to dominate. 12 But I am not permitting a woman to teach or *authentēin* of (or like) a man, but to be quiet (my paraphrase from Greek).

Verse 11 instructed “the woman” to learn quietly or calmly (not “silently”), “in all submission.” The use of the definite article here (*the* woman) suggests that it may be one individual who is promoting a false teaching. Next Paul goes on to say that he is not permitting (present imperfect) a woman to teach nor *authentēin* (infinitive) “of (or like) a man” (genitive or possessive case. There is no preposition for “over” in the text).

Look at this in context of verse 2 to 10. Paul has said, “I want” the men to stop trying to have their own teachings adopted; “I want” the women to stop trying to top each other; and “I am not permitting” the women to impose their own false teachings promoting women over men.

If Paul had spoken English, perhaps he might have said, “and heaven forbid” or “please don’t let” the women act like the men. In other words, Paul was trying to get the congregation to stop trying to be self-defined authorities. The men have been scuffling among the men, and the women, for the most part, have been competing among the women, but it appears that at least one of the women has crossed over from female power struggle (where you come out on top by being the best-looking or having expensive ornaments) to arguing like or with the men as well. Paul counseling Timothy not to allow this, but to encourage women to learn quietly in submission to correct teachings.

1 Timothy 2:13-15

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

The rest of this passage, vs. 13-15, contrary to the opinion of those who use 1 Tim 2 to restrict the ministry of women, is not an explanation for why women should not teach or hold authority over men. From Paul’s open endorsement of Priscilla, who taught the learned Apollo more perfectly in the way of the Lord (Acts 18:24-26 – and right there in Ephesus), it is clear that Paul had no problem with women teaching men. Rather, vs. 13 – 15 are Paul’s refutation of the false teachings that these women were promoting, the things he did not want them to teach.

Despite extensive scholarship, we will probably never know exactly what this “myth” was. Richard and Catherine Kroeger trace a number of false teachings from this time period which resemble those alluded to in 13-15: a myth that taught that Eve was created before Adam; one that said that Eve knowingly chose to defy God’s commandments and that this was not sinful, but good; and others that condemned women for having sex or bearing children (Paul further denounced such false asceticism in chapter 4, vs. 1-5.) For more detail on these false teachings, see an article by Catherine Kroeger, “Ancient heresies and a strange Greek verb,” or her book with Richard Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*.

More recent scholarship suggests that the false teachings may have been related to the worship of the Greek goddess Artemis (Diane is the equivalent among the Roman gods), of which Ephesus was the center. Only fragments of the Artemis myths survive, but in one, Artemis was born before her twin brother, Apollo, and then acted as her mother’s midwife in his birth. Verse 13 may be a reference to some reinterpretation of Genesis 2 in the context of the worship of Artemis.

Further, Artemis was a goddess of fertility, childbirth, and midwifery. If the false teaching or myth to which Paul refers related to the cult of Artemis, verse 15 now makes sense: “notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety” (the “good works” they are encouraged to do just a few verses earlier). Paul may have been trying to prevent Christian women from making offerings to Artemis for safety in childbirth by assuring them that the only offering they need give the Christian God is faith, love, and holiness. Even today, in many parts of the world, Christian leaders struggle to keep their congregants from making offerings to local gods, idols, witchdoctors, and non-Christian “spiritual” healers in times of stress.

“Creation Order” Argument

The “Creation Order” argument holds that men should dominate women because Adam was created first (vs. 13). This argument doesn’t hold if Paul was referring to a specific false teaching, and not making a general theological statement. As many people have pointed out, the order in which things were created is not an order of precedent. The plants and animals were created before Adam (Genesis 1), but Adam is not subordinate to them. Further, the Creation accounts themselves contain no suggestion that woman was created as man’s inferior. Rather, woman was created because man needed a help and companion on the same level as himself.

“Woman is More Easily Deceived” Argument

Finally, verse 14 has been used to argue that woman is to be subjugated to man because Eve was deceived while Adam was not. This explanation seems to argue that Adam was more righteous than Eve because he sinned willingly. This is an odd doctrine of sin, and one which is not consistent with others of Paul’s statements (“For as all die by Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ”, I Cor. 15:22, **the** lengthy discussion in and Romans 5:12-21 of how “one *man’s*” sin required Jesus’ sacrifice).

The argument that woman must be subordinated to man because she was a greater sinner than Adam is also inconsistent with Paul’s own statement a few paragraphs earlier: “I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Timothy 12-15; emphasis added.) In Paul’s theology, those who sin in ignorance are more readily granted grace.

Conclusion

1 Tim 2 offers a good example of what happens when we start our understanding of gender with the “corrective verses” rather than with the whole body of instructive and descriptive teachings. These corrective passages are part of conversations of which we have only one side. When we start with them, we immediately get stuck in a bog of confusion, and the plain message that Jesus and Paul were trying to communicate gets lost.

ADVANCED STUDY 2: “Let the women be silent”

Like 1 Timothy 2, 1 Corinthians 14:34 – 35 is often quoted out of context to justify the exclusion of women from active participation in the churches. Using a Berean approach, however, yields an entirely opposite understanding of this passage and Paul’s intent.

I Corinthians 14:34-35:

The women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for women to speak in church.

1. How have these verses been used traditionally to define women's roles in the churches?

The usual interpretation of this passage is a textbook example of scriptures being taken out of context. The word translated “speak,” *laleo*, means “talk.” Verse 34 commands women to keep “silent.” If it were really Paul’s intent to enforce these rules, they would “apply to all manners of speech such as prayer, prophecy, tongues, interpretation, evaluation, teaching, and even to the whisper of women who might be tempted to ask their husbands a question.” (Bilezikian, 1985)

Using the “entire counsel of God” rule of scriptural interpretation here, however, it is notable that there is no evidence that Paul himself enforced such a demand for absolute silence. In fact, in this same letter, 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote approvingly of women praying and prophesying in the church. Further, the early meetings of the Body of Christ were small groups that met in each other’s homes. It is not believable that Paul would refuse to allow women to speak in their own homes.

2. Locate other verses in which women spoke in a religious context.

Verse 34b refers to the “law” forbidding women’s speech. However, there are no Old Testament law that demands women keep quiet. In fact, women were allowed to read from the Torah in Jewish synagogues, although due to the customs, at the time of Paul most women would have turned down any request for them to do so.

Instead of scriptural teachings, the laws forbidding women’s speech were part of the Jewish oral tradition. These traditions were later written in such documents as the Mishnah and the Talmud. Such “laws” include: “Out of respect to the congregation, a woman should not herself read in the law.” “It is a shame for a woman to let her voice be heard among men.” “The voice of a woman is filthy nakedness.” “Let the words of the law be burned rather than committed to women.”

These “laws” are not found in the New Testament, or even in the Old. They were never in the Christian scriptures. Further, it would be very odd for Paul to quote the laws and traditions of the Jews approvingly or to make a point. Paul “spent a large share of energy battling against these very 'traditions' of the Jews.” (Katherine Bushnell, 1923, p. 201)

What!

1 Corinthians 14: 34 – 36 – a verse further

34 The women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. 35 If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for women to speak in church.

36 What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?

New Testament scholar Gilbert Bilezikian writes that, “The grammatical structure of this verse indicates a sharp break with the preceding statement....Recent scholarship has called attention to the disjunctive force of the particle *e* that precedes it” (1985, pp. 151-152).

The King James Version translates *e* as “What!” Bilezikian goes on to say that an expression such as “Bunk!” (or perhaps, “Nonsense!” or, as the kids would say, “No way!”) would come closer to what Paul meant. (Most modern translations, not knowing what to do with it, leave this word out altogether.)

Verse 36 shows that Paul strongly disagrees with what he just wrote in verse 34 and 35. What is going on? Here we call on the literary context.

To understand what is going on in these verses, look to the wider context of 1 Corinthians. I Corinthians is a letter Paul wrote in response to a letter from the Corinthian church. That letter is not available to us, and sometimes it is not clear where Paul is quoting the Corinthians letter back to them, as there were no punctuation marks in Koine Greek. There weren’t even spaces between the words. (See the illustration of an ancient Greek manuscript at the end of this study).

There are several verses in 1 Corinthians, however, that make it clear that Paul is responding, often disagreeing, with what the Corinthians wrote had written to him. Here I present them as they are without punctuation, followed by how scholars generally agree they should be punctuated:

6:12: All things are lawful for me but not all things are beneficial all things are lawful for me but I will not be dominated by anything.¹³ Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food and God will destroy both one and the other the body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord and the Lord for the body.

1Co 7:1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote it is well for a man not to touch a woman² but because of cases of sexual immorality each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband

1Co 8:8 Food will not bring us close to God we are no worse off if we do not eat and no better off if we do.

1Co 10:23 All things are lawful but not all things are beneficial all things are lawful but not all things build up.

1Co 15:35 But someone will ask how are the dead raised with what kind of body do they come

This is probably how these verses should be punctuated:

6:12: "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³ "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (Then a discussion about avoiding immorality).

1Co 7:1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." ² But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. (These verses are followed by a whole chapter in which Paul addresses the issues of sexuality).

1Co 8:8 "Food will not bring us close to God." We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. (Then a discussion about eating meat sacrificed to idols).

1Co 10:23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. ²⁴ Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other.

1Co 15:35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"

In the verses above, he quoted back to them things they wrote initially, then responded to their statements. 1 Cor. 14:34-36 follow the same pattern.

"We should be ready to suspect Paul is making a quotation from the letter addressed to him by the Corinthians whenever he alludes to their knowledge, or when any statement stands in marked contrast either with the immediate context or with Paul's known views." (Professor Sir William Ramsay, quoted in Bushnell, p. 205).

Does 1 Cor 34 – 36 meet Ramsay's criteria for a quotation?

Paul alludes to their knowledge:

he statement stands in marked contrast with the immediate context:

The statement stands in marked contrast with Paul's known views:

The evidence suggests that 1 Cor 14:34 -35 is a statement the Corinthians made to Paul, which would be punctuated as follows:

[You suggest] 34 “Let the women keep silent in the assemblies. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subject, as the law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”

36 What! Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?

Further supporting this interpretation, following this disjunctive “What!” Paul switches pronouns. Verses 34 and 35 address “they,” (the women being forbidden to speak). In verse 36, Paul uses the second-person masculine – “Did the word of God originate with you (masculine)? Or are you (masculine) the only people it has reached?” Verse 36 has traditionally been understood to be a rebuke to the noisy women, but if that is the case, Paul would not shift pronouns. Instead, he is addressing a different group. Paul is correcting not the women who are speaking, praying, and prophesying but the men who dared propose this new regulation:

"The two clauses of verse 36 may be paraphrased: 'Since when have you become the source of divine revelation so that you make your own rules? Or are you the exclusive recipients of a divine revelation that the rest of us should know about?'" (Bilezikian, pp. 151-152)

Reading in Context

Some scholars believe that 1 Cor. 14:33-38 is an interpolation – a passage added later by someone besides the original author – both because these statements makes little sense as coming from Paul, and because they seem to break the flow of the discussion before and after it, which is about speaking in tongues in a disorderly manner. But if the assembly in Corinth was struggling with keeping order in the meetings, it makes sense that Paul would address this issue here.

Consider the following possible scenario: The church in Corinth was experiencing difficulties keeping an orderly service, particularly with speaking in tongues. One of the factions suggested that the problem might be solved if the women were told to shut up, and quotes their former, pre-Christian culture, to support this idea. Paul addresses their concerns about tongues in the first part of chapter 14 and suggests some guidelines for keeping things under control (vs. 27-33). He then considers and discards their suggestion about silencing the women as being contrary to God’s will. He then goes on to say, “Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (vs. 39-40). Seen in this light, the “problem passage” is not out of place at all.

Read this passage in the entire context with this in mind:

1 Corinthians 14

6 Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I speak to you in some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?

27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30 If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, 33 for God is a God not of disorder but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.

[You suggest] 34 “Let the women keep silent in the assemblies. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subject, as the law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”

36 What! Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?

37 Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. 38 Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized. 39 So, my friends, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; 40 but all things should be done decently and in order.

When we read a “corrective” passage in light of what we know about the Word of God through the instructive and descriptive statements, we are challenged to find a meaning that is consistent and sensible.



AN EARLY GREEK MANUSCRIPT

ADVANCED STUDY 3: Authority Over their Own Heads

1 Corinthians 11

A I praise you for your attempts to follow my word... (v.2)

B You're dealing with people who say a man shouldn't cover his head, but a woman should (vs. 4-5)

C ...and that it's shameful for her hair to be seen – if she won't cover it, she should cut it off, and vice versa (v. 5-6)

D Don't you know that woman was made equal to man (is man's glory) and should decide for herself whether she wants to cover her head? (vs. 7-10)

(Chiastic center – the most important point):

For man is not without the woman, nor is woman without the man. Woman came from man, now man comes from woman – but really, all things come from God (vs. 11-12)

D' Judge for yourselves whether a woman ought to cover her hair (vs. 13-14)

C' Far from being a source of shame, a woman's hair is her glory (v. 15a)

B' A woman's hair is given to her for a covering (v. 15b)

A' If they still want to argue about this, we have no rule that says a woman must cover her hair (v.16)

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Facilitator Materials

Seminar structure for the 3-day Program

Introduction and welcome

- Have flip chart numbers one and two posted as people come in.

Welcome people as they arrive and put them into small groups of 5 or 6. As each group fills up, start a new group. Give each group one of the discussion questions and give the instructions on flip chart number 2. If married couples attend, put the husband and wife in different groups. Try to keep the number of men and women in each group balanced. Ask the participants to introduce themselves to each other.

- The entire class reconvenes. Officially open the seminar with a prayer and welcome by your host/sponsor or visiting dignitary.
- The facilitator or host gives basic information like schedule (beginning and ending times, breaks, lunch).
- Each small group introduces its members and reports on its answers to the discussion question. The facilitator charts these questions and answers and posts them on the walls.

Overview

- The facilitator gives an overview of the program, relating it where possible to the discussion items. See the file labeled “seminar introduction and overview sermon” included. See flipchart #3.

The Studies and Schedule

- The class numbers off into small groups. Each group is assigned a study. The groups work for one hour on their assigned study and prepare to report out on (1) the most surprising, important or striking things they learned from the study, and (2) lead the entire class in a discussion of the application/cultural challenges questions (the instructions on flipchart #4.)

As you assign people to small groups, try to keep the groups varied, that is, strive to vary the groups so that each person is with a new set of people each time. Also, if people are attending as couples, try to keep spouses in different groups.

We usually count off to assign people to groups. Write the number of the studies in the current unit on the back of the “study group instructions” in large lettering and count off with the number of the study (i.e., for the first set of studies, count off 1 – 4, then give a member of group one the paper with the number “one” on it. Have those who counted off “one” gather around that person and find a place to convene, and so on for the other

groups. For the second set of studies, count off 5 – 9, and follow the same pattern. For the third set, count off 10 – 13.

- The entire class reconvenes. Then group with study #1 reports out on what they learned in the study, and on the surprises. (Instructions on flipchart #4). If necessary (and only if necessary) the facilitator **briefly (5 minutes)** overviews the first study.

This process is repeated for each study in the block. There are three blocks of studies:

Block one (day one): 4 groups each assigned one of the following studies on Creation:

Study 1	Man and Woman in the Beginning
Study 2	The Ideal Relationship
Study 3	Man and Woman's Position with God
Study 4	The End of Unity

Block two (day two): 5 groups each assigned one of the following studies on Jesus' teachings:

Study 5	Honor, Patriarchy, and Dominance
Study 6	What Does it Mean to Be Lord?
Study 7	Redemption from the Curse
Study 8	The Freedom that Christ Gives Women
Study 9	Jesus to the World: Woman is not a Sex Object

Block three (day two or three): 4 groups each assigned one of the following studies on Paul's teachings:

Study 10	Submission
Study 11	Paul and Authority in the Household
Study 12	The Apostle Paul and "Headship"
Study 13	The Mystery of Marriage

Summary and conclusions

The facilitator sums up by reviewing the items generated by the initial discussion groups and showing how scriptures address these issues.

The seminar may end with testimonies and/or planning for taking this material forward.

Award Certificates

Time allocation

Each seminar will have a break morning and afternoon as well as lunch mid-day. Rarely will meals be available at the time you expect it, so plan to be flexible.

Day one

1 hour	Welcome
	Small group discussions and introductions
5 minutes	Prayer and welcoming remarks by any visiting dignitary or seminar sponsor
1 hour	Small groups report out
15 minutes	Break
20 minutes	Overview sermon
1 hour	Studies 1, 2, 3 and 4 in small groups (Creation ideal and fall)
1 hour	Lunch
2 hours	For each study in turn: The facilitator briefly reviews the subject. The small group presents the most interesting points from the study, then leads the entire class in a discussion of it, especially the application/cultural challenges questions

Day two

30 minutes	Worship and prayer (ask your host to take charge of this)
1 1/2 hours	Small groups work on studies 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (Jesus)
3 hours	Facilitator overview and small groups leading the class in discussion
15 minutes	Break whenever it is available
1 hour	Lunch whenever it is available

Day three

30 minutes	Worship and prayer
1 1/2 hours	Small groups work on studies 10, 11, 12 and 13 (Ephesians 5 and 6)
3 hours	Facilitator overview and small groups leading the class in discussion
1 hour	Discussion of how to teach this material themselves (see Support for Local Facilitators below)
Remaining time	Debrief whole seminar, testimonies
	Award certificates
15 minutes	Break when available
1 hour	Lunch when available

Flipcharts for seminar

#1

Welcome
to
***New Man, New Woman,
New Life*** Seminar

Facilitators:
(your names)

#2

Instructions for Introductory Discussion

In your groups,

- Introduce yourselves
- Discuss the question
- Prepare to report out to the entire class:

Introduce the group
members

Tell us the results of
your discussion

#3

Seminar Overview

- Creation ideal
- Fall
- Redemption

Jesus
Paul

#4

Instructions for Bible studies:

Read the material and work
through the questions as a team

Prepare to report out:

Briefly (5 minutes) teach the
rest of the class what you
learned in the study.

What were the SURPRISES?

Facilitator preparation

Arrange with your host for the host/sponsor or visiting dignitary (as appropriate) to open the seminar in prayer.

Speak with the facilities staff about approximate times for breaks and lunches.

Prepare flip charts 1-4 (see flipchart section in this guide)

Select six questions for the introductory discussion (see the file labeled “Introductory discussion questions”). Print or print out each question on a separate piece of paper. Number the back of the pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6.

Prepare the program overview (File labeled “Seminar introduction and overview”)

Prepare a **brief** (5 minute max) overview of each study that includes the scripture and relevant point.

Ask your host to assign someone who can read the local handwriting to fill out the certificates for each person attending the seminar. Sign the certificates.

Facilitators' material list

Take with you (assuming you have access to these things):

A set of marking pens. Do NOT use permanent pens on paper posted on the wall – they will bleed through and mark the wall.

Masking tape

Name tags and marking pen for name tags. Tags that come one to a backing are preferable as some participants have difficulty separating them.

Registration forms

Award certificates and a good pen for signing them

A set of discussion questions for each seminar

14 copies of the group instructions for each seminar

Ask your host to purchase:

Pen and a small notebook for each participant

Flipchart paper pad (unless the hotel provides this)

Ask for at the meeting facility:

Flip chart stand

Your hosts or the meeting facility may offer a public broadcast system and/or videography. You won't need it.

Study guides

We are trying to have the study guides printed in the country you are in, in which case we will put you in touch with the local Empower leader to get them. If they aren't available this way, you may have to carry them over with you.

Study guides are currently available in English, Kirundi, French, Chichewa, Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili (Kenyan Swahili and Tanzanian Swahili), and Lukiga. Coming up: Tamil and Gujarati.

Contact Carrie for information on where to obtain the study guides and certificates.

Registering Participants

On a table by the door, have a sign in sheet and pen, the name tags, and a pen for the name tags. Ask participants to bring the name tags back each day but have extra in case they forget them. Take up the registration sheet at the end of the day and put a new one out every day. Expect people to arrive late or to miss days. Be sure to have late comers introduce themselves to the group.

As most handwriting is a bit different from American, ask your host to ask someone to write the names on the certificates. If the participant signed in as “Rev”, etc., use the form of the name they give you for the certificates.

Empower International Ministries

New Man, New Woman, New Life Seminar: Bible Studies on Marriage, Family and Gender

Information for Seminar Hosts

The Bible presents us with a three-part story of human relationship with God and with each other. “Once upon a time,” this story reveals, human beings were created as male and female in the image of God to fulfill an ideal – a one flesh, naked and unashamed marriage that was the crowning act of creation. The second part of the story traces our rejection of the life of faith and the loss of God’s abundant provision for us. This fall from grace brought division among God’s creation, a striving for power over each other, and the loss of the fearless love for which God created us. The final chapter of this story, however, finds us redeemed – brought back by Christ from the bondage of the fallen world into which we sold ourselves.

The *New Men, New Woman, New Life Seminar* and study guide explores that story, showing how redemption not only restores each one of us to wholeness with God, but also brings us back to the creation ideal of unity and equality with one another. Through redemption we become the New Man or New Woman, restored to New Life in Christ.

Audience: Christians pastors, leaders, educators, social workers, and politicians. Maximum 30 – 40 participants per seminar. An equal number of men and women are encouraged but they need not be married couples. The participants should be able to understand and read English.

Purpose:

- Restore God’s life-affirming ideal for men and women
-
- Help participants discover God’s ideal for marriage and family life
- Provide the opportunity for participants to discuss with other leaders how to apply this ideal to challenges facing marriage and family today.
- Empower participants to teach the biblical ideal themselves
- Raise the position of men, women, children and marriage itself to Christian standards

Format: The seminar can be taught over 2 or 3 days (depending on time available). Most of the time is spent in small group study of scriptures using the *New Man, New Woman Bible study guide*.

Facilities and material required:

We ask our hosts to arrange for:

Meeting facilities that are spacious enough that people can move their chairs around to form small groups far enough apart that each group's discussion will not disturb the others.

A flipchart stand and full pad of paper.

A pen and small pad of paper for each participant.

For a full-day program: A morning and afternoon break with water or tea and a lunch.

AV equipment or public address systems are **not** required for the seminar.

Materials provided: Each participant will receive a copy of the Bible study guide and a certificate of participation at the end of the seminar.

Seminar schedule:

Introduction and welcome

- Welcome by facilitators
- Participants work in small groups of 5 or 6, introducing themselves and answering a discussion question assigned to their group.
- The entire class reconvenes. Each small group introduces its members and reports on its answers to the discussion question. The facilitator charts these questions and answers.
- The facilitator gives an overview of the program, relating it to the discussion items.

The Studies

- The class numbers off into small groups. Each group is assigned a study. The groups work for one hour on their assigned study.
- The entire class reconvenes. The facilitator gives a brief overview of the first study.
- The group with study #1 leads the other class members in a discussion about the surprises they found and application of what was discovered in the portion of the scripture they studied.
- The facilitator briefly overviews the second study. The group with study #2 leads the other class members in a discussion of the material.
- The pattern is repeated until all the studies in that block are presented.

Block one (day one): 3 groups each assigned one of the following studies on Creation ideal and the Fall:

- Study 1 Man and Woman in the Beginning
- Study 2 The Ideal Relationship
- Study 3 Man and Woman's Position with God after the Fall
- Study 4 The End of Unity

Block two (day two): 5 groups each assigned one of the following studies on Jesus' teachings:

- Study 5 Redemption from the Curse
- Study 6 Honor, Patriarchy, and Dominance
- Study 7 What Does it Mean to Be Lord?
- Study 8 The Freedom that Christ Gives Women
- Study 9 Jesus and "Unclean" Women

Block three (day two or three): 4 groups each assigned one of the following studies on Paul's teachings:

- Study 10 Submission
- Study 11 Paul and Authority in the Household
- Study 12 The Apostle Paul and "Headship"
- Study 13 The Mystery of Marriage

Summary and conclusions

The facilitator sums up by reviewing the items generated by the initial discussion groups and showing how scriptures address these issues.

The facilitator presents the certificates.

New Man, New Woman, New Life Registration

Date _____ Place _____

Please print your name carefully as you would like it to appear on your certificate.

NAME

E-MAIL ADDRESS

[illegible]

Discussion question:

In your group, discuss the following question. Write your answers on the flipchart and be prepared to report the results of your discussion to the rest of the class. Be sure to call on everyone in the discussion.

How do you want your marriage to be different from that of your parents?

Discussion question:

In your group, discuss the following question. Write your answers on the flipchart and be prepared to report the results of your discussion to the rest of the class. Be sure to call on everyone in the discussion.

What are the burdens on men, in your culture and in today's economy?

Discussion question:

In your group, discuss the following question. Write your answers on the flipchart and be prepared to report the results of your discussion to the rest of the class. Be sure to call on everyone in the discussion.

What are the burdens on women, in your culture and in today's economy?

Discussion question:

In your group, discuss the following question. Write your answers on the flipchart and be prepared to report the results of your discussion to the rest of the class. Be sure to call on everyone in the discussion.

What are the challenges facing young single people today?

Discussion question:

In your group, discuss the following question. Write your answers on the flipchart and be prepared to report the results of your discussion to the rest of the class. Be sure to call on everyone in the discussion.

What concerns do you have about popular attitudes toward sexual behavior today?

Discussion question:

In your group, discuss the following question. Write your answers on the flipchart and be prepared to report the results of your discussion to the rest of the class. Be sure to call on everyone in the discussion.

What problems do you encounter in forming a meaningful relationship with a member of the other sex?

Discussion question:

In your group, discuss the following question. Write your answers on the flipchart and be prepared to report the results of your discussion to the rest of the class. Be sure to call on everyone in the discussion.

“What are the obstacles to men and women working together?”

Discussion question:

In your group, discuss the following question. Write your answers on the flipchart and be prepared to report the results of your discussion to the rest of the class. Be sure to call on everyone in the discussion.

“What do you want in a romantic/marriage relationship?”

Discussion question:

In your group, discuss the following question. Write your answers on the flipchart and be prepared to report the results of your discussion to the rest of the class. Be sure to call on everyone in the discussion.

How do social expectations about what/who you should be as a man or a woman limit you?

Supplemental Reading: Women's Role in the Church

A Berean Approach to Scripture

By Wayne A. Pelly

A Perplexing Problem

Today we are going to settle once and for all the issue of women's ministry and leadership roles in the church.

In 1 Tim. 2:12, the Apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit, says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet" (ESV). There. God said it. I believe it. That settles it.

Or does it? The issue becomes more complex when we consider additional teachings from the Bible. For example, in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Paul says that the women should be silent in church – and not only this, that it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. Just a few chapters earlier, however, in 11:4-5, women as well as men are praying and prophesying in the church. In both of these passages Paul is speaking by the Holy Spirit as well, isn't he?

What places the first two passages in a position to minimize or suppress the implications of the third passage? Why wouldn't the third passage, which shows women praying and prophesying, be received as a normal and universal activity, which would tell us that the first two passages restricting women are somehow reflecting a local and limited situation?

So – how do we address this apparent contradiction? How do we deal with this problem?

Some Important Criteria

If there is tension or an apparent contradiction I suggest that the problem is not with the Bible, but with us and our approach to the Bible and our perspective regarding it. Do we tend to underline the verses we like and ignore others that do not suit our preferences? Our churches and our sisters – as well as our brothers – deserve a better approach and a fuller perspective. And our Lord, I think, expects it!

It should be obvious in the case of the 1 Corinthians passages that, when we consider only one of them, we see only part of the picture. We need the entire picture, not just in these passages but all relevant passages in the New Testament.¹

This important concept is expressed by the Apostle Paul as he describes his former ministry in Ephesus to the elders of that church.

Acts 20:27 (ESV)

. . . I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

This expression, "the whole counsel of God" (or the entire purpose or will of God in some translations) – expresses a significant principle that all relevant biblical texts on a subject must be heard, not just one's favorite few passages (or even just a few verses). Any understanding of "biblical authority" that falls short of this cannot in any way be considered valid.

In our study of the Bible on this topic we need to seek a fullness of understanding that leaves nothing out.ⁱⁱ

The next conviction is the one we bring to our study of the Bible to begin with. The following is a contrast between two groups of recipients of the gospel message preached by the Apostle Paul:

Acts 17:11

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

The sharp contrast between how the Thessalonians and the Bereans received the gospel illustrates important attitudes to have when approaching any issue such as this: humility, curiosity and a lack of prejudice. The Bereans were willing to consider all biblical evidence and form their beliefs from it, rather than hold firmly to a previously formed belief and only consider evidence that supported it.

A Proposed/Working Framework

We want an approach/perspective that not only considers all of the New Testament, but that enables us to hear all that Scripture has to say with openness and humility. We are calling this the Berean approach to women's ministry and leadership roles in the church. So how do we put this into practice?

We are going to explore the process undertaken by New Testament historian and cultural specialist, S. Scott Bartchy. To really search the Scriptures on the position of women in the church, he wrote the text of each New Testament passage that addressed women in the life of the church on a separate note card. He then sorted and resorted those note cards, looking for patterns that would give insight into this important issue.ⁱⁱⁱ

So here we see our criteria: The "entire counsel of God" is applied as all relevant Scripture texts from the New Testament are included, and then carefully reviewed with a "Berean spirit," as each text is considered in its original context, and allowed to speak.

As Bartchy performed this process, the most striking thing that he encountered is the many texts that simply describe women in ministry or leadership activities, as supporters of Jesus and the apostles, and as co-workers of the apostle Paul. These passages appear with no explanation or defense whatsoever, indicating that these activities were both common and accepted. When these texts are all separated from the rest of the stack, they form over half of the cards. This is quite amazing – and significant enough that he made it his primary criterion for further sorting.

Professor Bartchy called this category of New Testament texts "Descriptive." They simply describe the things that some women were doing in the early church.

The obvious question that occurs at this point is this: How did these activities come about? So the next step was to look for texts that would have encouraged women to function in the ways that are found in the Descriptive texts – and have encouraged men to accept and even welcome such activities. This, surprisingly, is the next largest stack of cards. This category Bartchy labeled "Instructive" – they "instruct" Christians regarding the way things should be in the church (Bartchy 1996, 20).^{iv}

These are texts that would have not only encouraged women to engage in the kind of ministry and leadership activities seen in the descriptive texts, but that also would have encouraged men to be both supportive and welcoming of such activities.

The final step in his process, in order to get a complete picture, was to look for texts that would have discouraged women from engaging in ministry and leadership activities. There were only two of these. He labeled them “Corrective” for several reasons.

1. The context of each passage indicated that they appeared to be correcting problems that were occurring in those specific contexts.
2. The sharp contrast between these two texts on the one hand, with what emerged in the Descriptive and Instructive texts on the other: If these “Corrective Texts” actually express the attitude of Jesus Christ and the Apostles toward women in ministry, they cannot explain the behavior and activities that are found in the Descriptive texts and supported by the Instructive texts.
3. On the other hand, the Descriptive and Instructive texts actually explain the Corrective ones. With the new freedom and encouragement in Christ that women experienced, it is not surprising that there were problems that needed to be corrected. In fact, Bartchy explains, given the culture of the day, it is surprising that there were not more problems reflected in the New Testament (Bartchy 1993)!

The Gospels – The Impact of Jesus Christ: Descriptive and Instructive

First, we will examine the texts that occur in the Gospels – the actions and words of Jesus Christ. In the Gospels the categories of Descriptive and Instructive overlap one another enough that we will consider them together. There are no Corrective texts found in the Gospels. Later, when we review the texts in the book of Acts and the letters of Paul, we will consider the three categories separately.

What we also find is that it is helpful to group the Gospel material in a different way, looking separately at the impact of Jesus Christ on women, on men, and on their relationships with each other. So first we will review the impact of the words and actions of Jesus on women themselves.

The Impact of Jesus’s Teachings on Women

When we ask men in our Empower seminars what they are buying when they pay dowry price for their wives, the answers are consistent: children, food, and sex. What we see in the gospels is that Jesus did not treat women on this basis! These roles and relationships do not define women and their value in the kingdom of God.

For example, in Luke 11:27-28, when a woman calls out, “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you nursed” (ESV), Jesus replies, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.” Jesus does not allow women to be reduced to biological function, but redefines their blessedness – not from the usual praise for women only for bearing sons but in terms of their own relationship with and obedience to God. As Bartchy explains, “Motherhood is not the core definition of a ‘real woman’” (Bartchy 1993; emphasis his).

In Luke 8:1-3 we see multiple women traveling with Jesus and his male disciples, and even supporting them financially. In John 4 Jesus holds a sustained theological discussion with a Samaritan woman, who then becomes the witness through whom her entire village comes to Jesus. The terminology that John uses in 4:39, “Many Samaritans . . . believed in him because of the woman’s testimony” is very similar to John 17:20, where Jesus prays for those who believe in him through the word (or testimony) of the apostles.

In Luke 10:38-42, Mary left her traditional kitchen duties and joined the men in the sitting room at the feet of Jesus. When criticized by her sister Martha, Jesus explicitly defends her: “Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Craig Keener tells us, “Mary’s posture and eagerness to absorb Jesus’s teaching at the expense of a more traditional womanly role would have shocked most Jewish men.” He further explains, “This passage challenges the role designations for women in the first century; the role of disciple and future agent of Jesus’s message is more critical than that of homemaker and hostess, valuable as the latter may remain” (Keener 2014, 208).

The most significant reflection of this impact on women by Jesus is what we see toward the end of each of the gospels: All four of them unanimously report that women were the first witnesses to the resurrected Lord – and that the Lord then sent them to bear witness to the apostles! Mark Husbands comments, “This alone ought to leave an indelible mark on our understanding of ministry: God first appointed women to proclaim the gospel to the apostles” (Husbands 2007, 132).

Not only this, but John’s gospel tells us that it was not incidental or accidental that women were the first witnesses to the risen Lord, but intentional on his part. According to John 20, Mary Magdalene saw the empty tomb, then ran to tell Peter and John, who themselves then raced to the tomb. Mary arrived after them (this was her third trip, after all), and only after Peter and John had left the scene did Jesus appear – and sent a message to the men only through her!

Bartchy summarizes the impact of Jesus Christ on women as “the rejection of female gender roles” (as defining women’s identity and value) and the “creation of new, public roles for women” (Bartchy 1993).

The Impact of Jesus’s Teachings on Men

While we usually think that improving how men view women is important to bring change, we have found in Empower International Ministries – consistent with the results of Bartchy’s note card research – that changing how men view themselves is every bit as important. We see this issue raised again and again in the gospels, and it is given a prominent place in each of the four.

In order to truly see “the full counsel of God,” we need to go back to our original process of recording New Testament verses on notecards in order to re-define our strategy to include this crucial issue.

The impact of Jesus on men was significant, as explained in the following summary by Carrie Miles, Director of Empower International Ministries:

Because traditional gender norms so obviously restrict women’s freedom, the extent to which norms of masculinity limit men is often overlooked. Jesus’ teachings free men as well as women. Jesus’ statement that men should not treat women as sexual objects (Matt. 5:27-28) addresses concerns about sexuality that play a dominant, and unpleasant, part in men’s lives. “Aggressiveness, virility [and] sexual prowess” were important parts of a man’s claim to honor in the Greco-Roman world (Osiek and Balch 1997^v). Placing sexuality back into its Creation context as a tool of relationship, not as a contest in which “manhood” is judged, Jesus began to redefine what it means to be a man.

Similarly, Jesus redeemed men from a system that pressured men to: measure their worth in terms of material wealth (Matt. 6:19–20; Matt. 4:8–10; Matt. 19:16–26); subordinate themselves to the absolute power wielded by powerful patriarchs (Luke 9:59–62); participate in the endless cycles of strife, competition, and vengeance typical of honor/shame cultures (Matt. 5:38–41); or struggle to dominate, control, and be honored by other men (Mark 10: 35–45; Mark 8:27–33).^{vi}

It is this last impact – building on the others – that would have been the most significant in how men used their position and power with respect to women.

In Mark 10:35-37, while traveling toward Jerusalem, James and John ask Jesus to be able to “sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” (In Matt. 20:20-21 it is their mother who brings the request on behalf of James and John.) They are certainly thinking of the Son of Man as described in Daniel 7:13-14, who appears before “the Ancient of Days” and is “... given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him” (NRSV). This is the Messiah, the judge of the earth; holding the positions of his chief of state and prime minister would certainly be a coveted position! But Jesus told them in Mark 10:42-45 (ESV),

You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Later, in Luke 22:25, during the Last Supper, Jesus’s response to his disciples and their dispute about which of them was the greatest is expressed differently: “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors.” Halvor Moxnes informs us that this description reflects what are called “patron-client” relations, which are “based on a very strong element of *inequality* and *difference in power*.” The “patron,” or what Jesus here calls the “benefactor,” has resources such as land, money or influence which the client needs (Moxnes 1991, 248, emphasis his). This is the kind of greatness to which the disciples aspired.

Jesus, however, points his disciples – and us – to a different model of greatness:

But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:26-27)

Moxnes tells us how this transforms the traditional concept of the patron or benefactor. “[Jesus] identifies greatness with the act of *serving* rather than *being served*.” “The word ‘to serve’ was linked to food; it was the task of nurturing, associated with women and servants” (Moxnes 1991, 259, emphasis his).

Bartchy paraphrases Jesus’s reply in Mark 10:45 as follows: “I who do accept the role of being the judge of the world am judging the world and the way in which the world uses power and saying that I will use my power for the sake of others” (Bartchy 1993). This is the picture of the cross: The Son of Man, as described in Dan. 7:14, but with an unexpected twist: instead of being served by others, he gave his life to serve them.

In our Empower seminars we ask, “What does it mean to be Lord?” Or, to put it another way, “What would you do if you were the one in the room with the most power?” In John 13,

Jesus shows us. He takes up a basin and a towel and washes the disciples' feet and afterwards adds, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (vs. 15). As you may remember, Peter resists – even objects (vss. 6-8). Bartchy explains, Peter already understands the implications; if Jesus washes his feet, he will be expected to wash the feet of others. Peter is not ready to become this kind of man (Bartchy 1993). The question for us is, Are we?

There are important lessons here in at least four areas, all revolving around the central theme of service to others:

1. Honor and status (or, we might say, the male ego): Jesus challenges this drive for honor and status and says that leadership in his kingdom is about humility and service. Any view of manhood or masculinity that revolves around the male ego and desire for status must be abandoned.
2. Dominance: This male drive for dominance and position is a significant part of what is called patriarchy. Bartchy tells us that it is incomplete to call patriarchy the rule of men over women, as it is actually the rule of a few men over everyone else, men and women (Bartchy 1993). What men do is then replicate this pattern in their own spheres, such as their homes, in which case women are subordinated. This structure – the one Jesus referred to in his words about the Gentiles, was the one that appealed to his disciples. Jesus, on the other hand, challenges this entire way of thinking and acting.
3. Authority: We must never forget that Jesus regarded the possession and use of authority as a danger and a temptation, due to the way in which it is used by the world all around us. Even when we create hierarchical relationships in order to establish areas of responsibility and lines of accountability, we must not forget that true authority is rooted in God's work in our lives and our resulting character and relationships of service to others.
4. Power: Jesus challenges us to change our perspective from power *over* others to power *alongside* others:

"If the Lord is Jesus, legitimate power seeks not to control others and things but to empower the powerless, to lift up the fallen, to reconcile, to create healing opportunities, to encourage maturity and responsibility, and to restore community" (Bartchy 1993).^{vii}

We have looked at the impact of the teachings of Jesus on women and on men; now we look more specifically at his impact on how men and women relate to one another.

The Impact of Jesus's Teachings on Relationships

Jesus's instructions on gender frees both women and men from the burdens imposed on them by culture. More teachings of Jesus further define the intended relationship between them, particularly regarding how men view and treat women.

Consider the sexual double-standard, the insistence that women remain faithful as the sexual property of their husbands, who are themselves free to have as many women as they want.^{viii} Jesus challenges this sexual double-standard in John 8:1-12, when the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus for judgment. The absence of the man whom she had been with is quite obvious, although apparently not to the men who

brought her. Jesus replies, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her,” and the men, convicted, slink away in shame.

This challenge is reinforced in Matt. 19:3-9/Mark 10:2-12 where Jesus makes it clear that sexuality fidelity in marriage, always expected of wives, is required of husbands as well. Carrie Miles explains, “Jesus’s definition of marriage as a ‘one flesh’ relationship . . . implicitly recast adultery not as a property crime against men but as a shattering of an essential union created by God” (Miles 2006, 59).

In Matt. 5:28 Jesus states that “. . . everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (ESV). And if this is not radical enough, he follows with, “If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away” (vs. 29). Two important things follow from these verses:

1. Men are clearly responsible for their own thought life, and consequently for what they do with their eyes and hands. This is not talking about simple sexual attraction, but the desire to use someone as an object for one’s own gratification. As Sarah Sumner says, “. . . Lust is not an innate male reflex; it is a condition of the heart.” She also points out the similarity between greed and lust: The greedy person “uses people to make money for himself,” while the lusting man “uses women to make himself feel powerful and manly” (Sumner 2003, 304, 305).
2. Women are not sex objects for men, nor are they responsible for the thought life of men. (There may be important reasons for women to dress modestly, but they would be related to how they think of themselves and of their relationships with men.^{ix})

An additional example of Jesus’s challenge to the sexual double standard can be found in Luke 7:36-50, where Jesus is anointed by a “sinful woman” while dining in the home of Simon the Pharisee. He senses Simon’s judgment of the woman – and even more significantly of him, since he is letting her touch him – and so he says to Simon, “Do you see this woman?” He then calls attention to the ways in which she is demonstrating her love for Jesus because of the forgiveness of her sins.

The double standard in the shame-honor culture of Jesus’s world is described by New Testament cultural experts Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh. A woman’s honor is like virginity: “While male honor is flexible and can sometimes be regained, female honor is absolute and once lost is gone forever” (Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003, 372).

In the case of the woman in the home of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus explicitly challenges this sexual double standard by calling attention to the woman’s behavior in a way that ascribes honor to her, and asks Simon the Pharisee to see her through that lens, rather than through the lens of her sin.^x

There is an important point here: Men are to “see” women as Jesus sees them. In contrast to the severe warning in Matt. 5 about not looking at a woman with lustful intent, now Jesus urges Simon to see this woman for who she is as a person, a person who responds to God’s love and who loves, serves, and has value before God as a human being. It is interesting that, while men may look at women, they tend not to see them. Jesus asks men to see women for who they are and how they serve – or can serve – Jesus Christ.

Acts and the Letters of the Apostle Paul – the Early Church

As we review the book of Acts and the letters of the Apostle Paul, we will see whether the same emphasis we saw in Jesus Christ also appears in the early church.

Descriptive Texts

We begin with the “Descriptive” passages. These passages of Scripture simply describe what women in the Christian community recorded in the Book of Acts and Paul’s letters were doing.

- Acts 18:26. Priscilla, together with her husband, Aquila, teach the learned Apollos “the way of God more adequately.”
- Acts 21:9. Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied.

Romans 16 is full of references to women in ministry, all of whom Paul mentions with praise, affirmation and recommendation:

- Rom. 16:1-2. Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchrea and a benefactor of Paul and others. Paul commends her and asks that they receive her and give her any help she may need.

Bartchy points out that both deacon and benefactor involve “leadership and initiative” (Bartchy 1978, 64). When Paul uses this word for himself, it is typically translated “minister.” When he uses it in 1 Timothy of an office for which he gives the qualifications, it is translated “deacon.” So the insistence of some translations to render the word as “servant” *only* in Phoebe’s case is quite perplexing, other than a reflection of bias.

- Rom. 16:3-4. Priscilla and her husband Aquila are Paul’s co-workers in Christ Jesus, who had risked their lives for Paul.

Interestingly, in most places where Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned, Priscilla’s name is placed first. Priscilla played a significant role in the teaching of Apollos, and in fact, was a significant if not the most prominent partner in a ministry team with her husband.

- Rom. 16:7 – Junia is named along with Andronicus as “outstanding among the apostles.”

Both Scott Bartchy and Lynn Cohick remind us that Junia was both clearly a woman’s name in in New Testament era Greek, and was understood by the church fathers in the first several centuries as both a woman and an apostle (Bartchy 1993; Cohick 2009, 215, 216). In the thirteenth century, however, a translator apparently did not believe a woman apostle was possible, so – going against the evidence – he converted her name into a masculine form. This miraculous “sex change” was further reinforced by Martin Luther, “whose influential translation of the Bible into German included the reference to two men, Andronicus and Junias” (Cohick 2009, 215).

- Rom. 16:6, 12, 13 & 15. A number of women are mentioned: Mary, who worked very hard for them; three women who “work hard in the Lord” are named: Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis; the mother of Rufus has, in some sense, been a mother to Paul as well, and in verse 15 several women are greeted, Julia and the sister of Nereus.

- 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 – Paul refers here to both men and women praying and prophesying, apparently in the assembly. The only issue is whether women covered their heads while speaking, but Paul clearly accepts the part they are playing in the meetings.
- Philippians 4:2-3 – Paul appeals to two women, Euodia and Syntyche, whom he describes as having striven together with him for the gospel – using coworker language.

What is interesting about these “Descriptive” texts is what is *missing*: Bartchy notes that there is no effort to justify or explain these activities of women. This indicates that “. . . such activities had become sufficiently common that no special comment was needed in these contexts” (Bartchy 1978, 62).

In these Descriptive texts, women are appreciated for their ministries and celebrated for their contributions to the ministry and mission of the church equally with men.

Instructive Texts

After reviewing the activities of women in the early church, our next question is, where did these activities come from? What is it that encouraged women to function in this way in the early church? This is what we look for next: These are the “Instructive” texts – those that instruct the church in the way things should be.

- Acts 2:17-18. The apostle Peter, as part of his sermon at the founding of the church on the day of Pentecost, quotes from the prophet Joel. As a mark of the new age, sons and daughters, both men and women, will prophesy.
- Spiritual gifts are described in Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11 and 28-31; Eph. 4:11-13; and 1 Pet. 4:10-11. There is no indication at all in any of these passages that there are any gender restrictions in the way the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts for ministry.
- 1 Cor. 7:4-5. “For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (ESV).

Note that here, the only place where authority is mentioned in the marriage relationship, it is reciprocal, and decision-making is mutual. The idea that a woman had authority over her husband’s body would have been as shocking in the Greco-Roman world to whom Paul wrote as it is in Africa today. Although this text is addressing marriage and not roles in the church, the change that Christ has wrought permeates all aspect of the Christian life, including giving authority to women in their relationships with their husbands.

- 1 Cor. 7:7. “I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.” In this case Paul is discussing his singleness as a gift from God. He is saying that “neither men nor women *have* to marry . . . in order to be fully human and acceptable to God” (Bartchy 1978, 60 [emphasis his]).
- 1 Cor. 11:11-12. “Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.”

- Gal. 3:28. “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Given Paul’s appeal to this very concept in the previous chapter as the basis for his rebuke of Peter, his counter-cultural advice to Philemon regarding his slave Onesimus, and the presence of all the “Descriptive” texts already discussed, Paul was definitely talking about equality in this life, not the next!
- Eph. 5:21-6:9. The husband no longer rules his wife but loves her as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her; the father brings his children up not for his own benefit but in the training and instruction of the Lord; and the master’s power over his slave is relativized by the reminder that he and his slave have the same master in heaven, who will not favor the master.
- Paul’s designation of the husband as the “head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church” in Eph. 5:23 is consistent with all we have been saying. The thousands of pages of debate over the meaning of “head” can be resolved by simply observing that Paul himself defines his own use of the term: In Eph. 4:15, Christ as the head of the church provides for its maturity and growth. When we help men in our Empower seminars to understand this (along with what Jesus said to men about authority, power and service) they – who previously might have told their wives, “You speak once, I speak twice,” now begin to share decision-making with them.^{xi}
- Consider also what some call Paul’s “pursuit of radical self-humiliation,” expressed throughout his letters (Bartchy 2003, 144). For example, while the false apostles lord it over the Corinthians, Paul calls attention to his suffering and weakness (for example, 1 Cor. 4:8-13; 2 Cor. 11:22-12:10). His authority from the Lord is to “build up” the Corinthians and not “tear them down” (2 Cor. 10:8 & 13:10), in contrast to the false apostles who, by their dominance, were benefiting themselves at the expense of the Corinthians.

Corrective Texts

We now are left with only the two passages that Bartchy calls “Corrective.” These texts are those in which Paul is clearly addressing a problem situation in order to correct it.

Unfortunately, both of these texts have been used extensively as “proof-texts” – texts taken out of context to shore up otherwise unsupportable arguments – in clear violation of the “whole counsel of God” admonition.

As we approach these texts, remember that we have only one-half of a two-way conversation. Paul is addressing issues raised by those to whom the letters are addressed, whose letters to Paul were lost. We need to look at the context carefully and ask what is going on in the other half of the conversation which we are otherwise unable to hear.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 (ESV)

... The women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

The first thing to notice about the context of this passage, according to Bartchy, is that the women are the *third* group Paul asks to be silent, in a context in which Paul is addressing disruptions in the church service (Bartchy 1978, 68). Both tongue-speakers and prophets have already been asked to be silent under certain conditions.

This text, and its classification as “Corrective,” is further elaborated by quickly examining the multiple ways in which it can be understood. Each of these options identifies significant problems with simply taking this text at its face value as a universal restriction on women.

- A. Philip Payne, in *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, reports both internal and external evidence that these verses are an insertion by later manuscript copyists. In this case, they are not the words of the Apostle Paul at all (Payne 2009, 225-267).
- B. Kenneth Bailey, in *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes*, explains that this refers to chatting by the women. They start chatting among themselves in an effort to understand what is going on. He explains that, in a city as diverse as Corinth, “Multiple factors must be considered. Attention-span problems, limited knowledge of Greek, accent issues, . . . lack of amplification for the speakers, along with chatting as a methodology for learning are all involved” (Bailey 2011, 414, 416).
- C. James S. Jeffers sees evidence in the culture that this is referring to “. . . the inappropriate interruption of speakers. . . . In some contexts, including the Jewish religious context, it was considered inappropriate for women to interrupt a speaker with questions” (Jeffers, 1999, 252).
- D. The view of my own pastor, Ralph Kieneker of West Side Church in Richland, Washington State, is that the wives, by arguing with their husbands in the process of evaluating the prophecies that have been shared (discussed in the immediately preceding verses), are shaming their husbands in a culture very sensitive to honor and shame, so Paul simply asks them to wait and discuss it with their husbands when they get home.
- E. Carrie A. Miles, Director of Empower International Ministries, sees evidence that Paul is quoting the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians, Paul often responds to questions asked by the Corinthian church. For example, in 1:11 he refers to information he has received from some in Chloe’s household. In 7:1 he refers to a letter they wrote to him, “Now for the matters you wrote about.” Sometimes he tells us when he is referring to their letter, as in 8:1, “Now about food sacrificed to idols. . . .” Sometimes we have to discern his reference to information he has about them by the context, such as in 6:12, “All things are lawful for me,” which is a slogan among the Corinthians, to which Paul replies, “. . . but not everything is helpful” (ESV).

Miles argues that the Corinthians have written to Paul about problems they were having with disorderly gatherings, especially regarding speaking in tongues (the immediate context that the passage about women interrupts). The Corinthians proposed solving the problem by suggesting they tell the women to be quiet. Paul quotes their statement back to them, then protests it, “What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?” (vs. 36, RSV) (Miles 2013, 94-98). This is comparable to what we often do in American English today: A statement can be dismissed as not even worth considering with the words, “Are you serious?”

So – study the options and take your pick! But the key thing is that this text cannot in any way be viewed as instructive; it cannot be used to negate the positive statement about women praying and prophesying in the assembly that occurs just a few chapters earlier: there are too many significant indications that this is dealing with a local and culturally-specific problem. It does not represent Paul’s instructions to all women in all churches. As Bartchy puts it, “Is it plausible that Paul would have exhorted such potent and fruitful leaders as Phoebe, Prisca and Junia to keep quiet in the Christian assemblies? I don’t think so” (Bartchy 1992, 12).

1 Timothy 2:11-15 (ESV)

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.

This is the text that is usually appealed to as a restriction on women holding positions of leadership and authority within the church, often, in my experience, the only one. Yet we are classifying it as “Corrective” for two reasons: (1) it is contrary to so much of the rest of the teaching of the New Testament as seen in the Descriptive and Instructive texts; and (2) the immediate context of this passage is a long one in which Paul addressed the specific and unusual situation of the Ephesian church, thus making it difficult to apply his teaching in this passage as a universal directive to all churches everywhere.

Here are some of the indications that Paul, in writing this passage, was attempting to correct problems in the church Timothy was serving, rather than giving universal directions.

First, the broader context of 1 Timothy tells us about some of the problems that the church in Ephesus was experiencing. Right at the beginning of the letter, in 1 Tim. 1:3-4, Paul reminds Timothy of why he left him in Ephesus: “so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines . . . or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies.” Throughout the letter he continues to provide specifics on teachings and practices to correct. The false teachings included, at a minimum:

- A. Continuing influence of the worship of the goddess Artemis, which we learn in Acts 19:23-40 was very important in Ephesus. Ephesus held her temple and was a major location for the worship of this goddess of childbirth. As in Africa, it may have been difficult to keep even believers from making offerings to the local gods during pregnancy and childbirth. This would help to explain Paul’s brief (and otherwise inexplicable from a Christian context) comment in v. 15.
- B. There is also some indication that the church in Ephesus was being influenced by an early form of an ancient Christian heresy called Gnosticism. For example, in 1 Tim. 4:3 Paul states that “. . . some will forbid people to marry.” Why would anyone forbid marriage? Because in gnostic thinking sexual activity in marriage becomes a hindrance to spiritual perfection, which may be an important key to understanding verse 15, regarding a woman being saved through (i.e., passing safely through) childbirth with their salvation intact (Kroeger & Kroeger 1992, 161-177; Bartchy 1978, 74).

Paul’s statement, “For Adam was formed first, then Eve” may have related to either Artemis worship or Gnosticism (or both). This false teaching was probably an argument that woman should dominate man because she was created first or was involved in the creation of man. The goddess Artemis, for example, was not only born before her twin brother, Apollos, she helped her mother deliver him. We also learn from Richard and Catherine Kroeger that the form of proto-Gnosticism in Ephesus may have included the belief that not only was Eve created before Adam, she created him and brought him enlightenment. Paul refuted both arguments by pointing out that in Hebrew scripture, Adam was created before Eve and Eve, rather than bringing enlightenment, was deceived (Kroeger & Kroeger 1992, 103-104, 113).

Second, the usual word for “authority” in the Greek New Testament is *exousia*. In this one instance, however, Paul uses *authentēin* – a word that is used nowhere else in Scripture – which accounts for confusion over just what Paul is denying women in 1 Tim 2. There is ample evidence, however, that its meaning carries the sense of “domineer,” or even, “hold oneself to be the author or origin of something else” (Kroeger and Kroeger), which is consistent with elements of the context noted above. This is seen in the lexicons of both Thayer (Thayer, 84) and Bauer (Bauer 1979, 121), as well as Louw and Nida’s lexicon.^{xii} *Authentein* cannot be translated as “authority” in the usual sense.

Finally, in the verses immediately preceding 2:12, we learn that men have been expressing anger and disputing with one another (2:8), and that women have been trying to outdo one another in elaborate hairstyles, jewels and expensive clothes (2:9). Both of these are expressions of efforts to create or maintain a status hierarchy, which would be consistent with the understanding of “authentēin” as meaning to domineer. Both men and women are attempting to dominate members of their own sex. Paul may have been trying to keep women from using false teachings as a tool to dominate the men as well. (Miles 2013, 101-102).

By telling women they should not dominate men, however, Paul is not thereby telling men they should dominate women! Taking 1 Tim 2:11-15 as Instructive also reinforces the cultural belief that while women can’t hold authority, men are *supposed* to dominate, especially women. This misinterpretation completely negates Jesus’s many teachings to the contrary, including his sacrifice of his own life as an example of a different way of leadership (see Mark 10:35-45).

These all point to the text addressing and correcting a problem specific to the situation where Timothy was serving as the Apostle Paul’s troubleshooter.

The Value of the Berean Approach

In our “whole-council-of-God”-honoring Berean framework we find clear, uncontested meaning in the Descriptive and Instructive texts. The Descriptive texts typically are found in contexts where there is no problem that is being addressed, so it is natural and appropriate to take them at face value.

Moreover, when we look at the texts in the Descriptive and Instructive categories, we find substantial agreement in passages from the Gospels, the Book of Acts, and the letters of the Apostle Paul.

On the other hand, we have already identified significant issues with the interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:12 and 1 Cor. 14:34-35 that make them very difficult to interpret with confidence. Texts with very obscure levels of clarity thus form the center of the patriarchalists’ framework of understanding, raising serious concerns regarding their claim to biblical authority in the confident application of these verses.

The Berean Framework we have described, however, allows all Scripture texts to be heard, each in a way that is consistent with its context, and each category in a way that supports and explains the others.

- The Descriptive texts are key: they show the Instructive texts were taken seriously and literally, and reflected in the life of the early church.
- The Instructive texts help us to understand the values held by both Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul that influenced the behavior of women – and men – in the early church.

- The Corrective texts actually reinforce the Descriptive ones, in that the Descriptive texts tell us why problems arose in specific situations where local cultural issues caused an inappropriate distortion of women's activities – resulting in the Corrective texts.

The distinction between these categories is very important. When the Corrective texts are viewed as Instructive, only a few passages are allowed to speak. Other important passages of Scripture – including most of Jesus's teachings on the proper treatment of both women and men – are ignored. When taken as Instructive, these two texts minimize or even negate the plain meaning of and the positive attitude toward women and their ministry expressed by the other texts listed under Instructive and Descriptive. With 1 Tim. 2:11-15 and 1 Cor. 14:34-35 at the core, there is no meaningful framework that allows the entire body of Scripture to be heard in a historical and cultural context. Indeed, the problem is not that women are required to be silent but that so many other biblical passages that we need to hear are also silenced.

Perhaps a practical illustration will help bring this issue home to our hearts. A woman today could have the best of a Christian upbringing, a Christian college and even seminary education, demonstrated godly character and serve as a powerful example of the women Jesus encouraged in ministry and the women Paul named as his coworkers, but she can never fully escape the restrictions on women that result from the misinterpretation of Paul's words in 1 Tim. 2:11-15 – nor, we might add, the suspicion toward women that often results from some of the misunderstandings of this passage.

On the other hand, giving priority to the Descriptive and Instructive texts encourages and empowers such a woman to take her rightful place alongside the Marys, Phoebe, Priscilla and Junia of the New Testament in providing effective and strategic leadership to the church of today – a leadership that is so desperately needed!

Thus, it is not a choice between reading Gal. 3:28 through the lens of 1 Tim. 2:12, or of reading 1 Tim. 2:12 through the lens of Gal. 3:28, as the contrast between Patriarchalism and Egalitarianism is often portrayed.^{xiii} It is the issue of setting up a process that allows us to hear all Scripture on the topic, and then developing a framework for all those Scripture passages to be heard with equal voice in their historical and cultural context. In this case, we might select Gal.3:28 as best summarizing our result, but it is not our lens.

Our "lens", the "full counsel of God" approached with a "Berean spirit", yields a compassionate understanding of the full purpose of women and men in God's sight – one of balance, mutual respect, and mutual service.

Endnote

ⁱ Due to space limitations this paper will be limited to the New Testament. Many good works are available for studying the relevant Old Testament passages; Miles 2006 and Miles 2008 are good starting points to examine the creation and fall narratives, which are critical.

ⁱⁱ The concept of a “fullness that leaves nothing out” (in contrast to a “balance”) was first suggested by Christian ethicist John Howard Yoder during a lecture in the late 70’s.

ⁱⁱⁱ In preparation for this paper I repeated the process, scanning through the New Testament and recording any text that mentioned women (or even broader gender-related issues) on note cards. I ended up with about one dozen from the book of Acts and about two dozen each from the gospels and the letters of Paul. My findings confirm Bartchy’s approach and conclusions.

^{iv} These findings were originally published in Bartchy 1978, where the three categories were identified as Descriptive, Normative and Problematic. He explains in Bartchy 1996 how feedback from readers convinced him of the need for less confusing titles for the latter two categories, resulting in those presented here.

^v Carolyn A. Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches*; Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

^{vi} From the Empower International Ministries website: <http://www.empowerinternational.org/jesus-and-men/>; accessed 19 August 2014.

^{vii} For further study of this concept of power, see Andy Crouch, *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL USA, 2013), MaryKate Morse, *Making Room for Leadership: Power, Space and Influence* (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL USA, 2008), and Beverly Bell, *Walking on Fire: Haitian Women’s Stories of Survival and Resistance*, (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY USA and London, England 2001), particularly chapter 5, “Resistance Transforming Power.”

^{viii} The qualification for elder/overseer in 1 Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:6 as literally, “a man of one woman” should be seen in this cultural context as intended to exclude men with multiple sexual partners, not to exclude women.

^{ix} Jesus does not address the issue of women’s lust for men; as we often point out in our Empower seminars, “Women are almost never in a position where they can use men as sexual objects against their will” (Miles 2013, 63 [Debrief for Study 9, “Women as Sexual Property”]).

^x This, along with the expansion of women’s value beyond what they do for their husbands, has important implications for cultures where “honor killings” of women and girls is practiced.

^{xi} This is further reinforced in vs. 23, where Christ’s “headship” is associated with his function as savior – not as lord; in Eph. 1:9-10, where God “unites” (Greek: “heads up”) all things in Christ; and in Eph. 1:22, where God subjects all things to Christ and places them under his feet, not under his head (reflecting that Christ raises his body, the church, to reign together with him). See Miles 2006, 96-97 and Miles 2008, study 12, “The Apostle Paul and Headship.”

⁸ Referenced by Belleville, Linda, “Teaching & Usurping Authority: 1 Tim.2:11-15,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, Ronald Pierce & Rebecca Groothuis, eds., InterVarsity Press, 2005, pp. 205-223.

^{xiii} For example, Sarah Sumner takes this approach in Sumner 2003, 128, where she calls this a “guiding hermeneutic.”

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Redeeming the Changing Family

The Bible as a Solution

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When I first visited Burundi, a small country in Central Africa next to Rwanda, Burundi was just emerging from a devastating 17-year civil war. Foreign investment had long-ago been withdrawn, farming had been disrupted and many people had fled. Development agencies considered Burundi to be one of the poorest countries in the world. My host took me to Rutana, a small town that had seen its share of suffering during the war. I picked my way across the stones of a rubble-filled church yard to meet with several church leaders. They had come to tell me about the problems they were experiencing with families, in hope that the Bible-based program I was there to teach might help them.

The pastors spoke no English, only Kirundi. Maybe some French. While I can ask for hot water in either of those languages, hot water requests are pretty much the extent of my linguistic skill. It didn't much matter, though, because even with the able translation of my host, I did not understand what they were talking about. Polygamy had come back, they said. The churches thought they had polygamy under control. They were baffled by its reappearance. And I wondered how anyone could afford more than one wife under the present circumstances. Additionally, the pastors reported, there was the problem of men marrying women out of their fathers' houses. The children those women bore – whose children were they? Where would they inherit?

I had no clue at all as to what that meant, but finally deciphered it with help from our African Program Director, Pastor Frank Michael Tweheyo. Frank writes, "Carrie, being from the West, could not understand this phenomenon until I explained the system of paying dowry or bride price. The man has to take his new bride to his home, and the woman has to farm, produce children and do other household chores as well as raise children.

"In Rutana, however, marrying these women in their fathers' compound was really baffling. The usual marriage system appears to be broken down. The men are not paying dowry. Instead, a man visits occasionally, will bear a child or two with this woman, but does

* For more information, please go to our website, EmpowerInternational.org, or contact us at EIM@fastmail.fm.

not take responsibility of raising them. Over time, this woman may be involved in several other relationships which may result in several children, whose ancestry is not known and who become a burden to the father and brothers of the woman.

“Empower has encountered the same phenomena in other places where we are operating, like Southern Malawi, DR Congo and cities where single parenthood is the order of the day. In Malawi, for example, one family can have as many as 14 children in a household, from different girls, whose fathers are not known or are not responsible. Which tribe do they belong to, and how will they grow without parental care?

“Among the Makuwa of Northern Mozambique, boys and girls of 10-13 years are taken to the bush for a month for cultural indoctrination. During this initiation period, they are told that they are mature and should never fear any man (if they are girls) or any woman (if they are boys). After this period when boys are circumcised and girls are initiated, they come out ready to face the world. At an early age these innocent children are exposed to sexual life that unfortunately causes a lot of infidelity in their later marriage life. The church has failed to take root in this part of the country because family values are not aligned to the word of God from the very beginning.

“In a September 2015 visit to Mozambique to train Church leaders, a pastor who missed a session came back the next day reporting that he had been invited to a stakeholders’ meeting where traditionalists and witchdoctors were being contracted by government to teach young people culture. During the deliberations, one traditionalist asked this pastor, “So where is the church in all this? What are you doing?” The pastor came back in tears, in which we joined him.

“So where is the church and what are we doing? This is a relevant question as we deliberate today.

“International Justice Mission-Kenya reports that over 27 billion Kenya shillings (over \$27 million in U.S. dollars, or about 1 trillion in Uganda Shillings) are left in Kenyan banks when men die without telling their spouses about the money they have heaped in secret bank accounts. The money does not help the family when the man dies and eventually reverts to the state coffers. In a recent Citizen TV program (3rd June 2016), panelists discussed the current family situation in Kenya where a man has several mistresses. These extra-marital relationships may be unknown to the legal wife until the man dies, and his many children and other women show up at his burial to claim a portion of his property.

“Another program on K24 was asking about the prevalent problem of fatherless children and birth certificates. Whose child is it and who will sign as required by law?

“In Uganda, as a result of affirmative action, many women have been enlisted into high profile jobs, and parliament. However, the recent statistics show that as many as 60-70% of the women who successfully climb the ladders of managerial, ministerial and parliamentary posts end up divorced. The marriages of those who have not yet divorced are considered to be in great jeopardy.” (Frank Michael Tweheyo, June 2016)

What is happening in Africa has its own unique form, but the forces underlying “a man marrying a woman out of her father’s house” exist in societies the world over. All around the world, the family is undergoing massive change. The changes are more obvious in the most developed countries, but they are happening everywhere. They make themselves seen in high rates of divorce, falling rates of marriage, and growing rates of non-marriage and extra-marital births. The changes mean that many young men cannot support even themselves, let alone a family, and are being squeezed out of the family picture. All around the world, the “family” is coming to consist of a woman, her children, and temporary, more-or-less disposable, father-figures. In the United States, the average such family may experience 5 or more such temporary “fathers”.

Although everyone has an idea of whom to blame for the deterioration of the family, there was no great personality or idea behind the massive changes of the last century. Rather, the new attitudes toward sex and all things associated with it flow naturally from economic changes so comprehensive that the traditional ways of doing things simply no longer make sense. Behaviors, and in turn, beliefs and attitudes, have followed the economic winds and become new social, cultural, and political attitudes.

The point of this paper is to help the reader understand the social and economic roots of both the old and the new behaviors. In Empower International Ministries, we use this understanding to set aside the “way things are” so that we can read the Bible without culture, tradition, and economic incentives driving our understandings. As Jesus told the Pharisees long ago, God’s intent for us is not to be found in our laws or traditions. Our families, or our lack of family, must be based on His Word.

A Brief History of the Family

The Need for Children

Before the Industrial Revolution (dated to about 1800 in the West, and coming along later in most of the rest of the world), all of the necessities of human life were generated in households or family groups.¹ The marriage and family practices that we think of as traditional or old-fashioned came directly from the demands of pre-industrial household production. Living at even a subsistence level (i.e., just enough to survive) required the coordinated labor of a lot of people. While the pre-industrial households could not do without servants or slaves, the most reliable, loyal, and least expensive source of labor was

one's own children. Further, without government programs, pensions, or commercial insurance, people needed children to provide for them in illness, widowhood, disability, old age, and physical catastrophes.²

Additionally, women needed to bear as many children as they could, because children often did not survive to adulthood. In pre-industrial economies, married women spent much of their adult lives either pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or nursing infants.

Dividing up Work by Gender

Childbearing was women's most important work, but they still had to perform many other tasks necessary for survival. Pregnancy limits the kind of work a woman can do, however. Hard or heavy work can cause a mother to miscarry or lose her breast milk. Further, nursing mothers cannot go far from their infants, and those accompanied by small children cannot engage in dangerous activities. Societies learned to divide up work so that the women did the tasks that could be done without endangering pregnancy or young children. Such work was centered in the household. The things that become women's work vary from place to place, but generally, women care for children, the sick, and the elderly; keep the garden (and where people do not use the plow to farm, women do the farming); cook; weave cloth and create clothing; carry water; do laundry; and many, many, other domestic tasks.

This, Nobel Laureate economist Gary S. Becker noted, is the key to the traditional gender division of labor. The gender division of labor is the historic pattern, found in every culture, of men and women doing different work.

Women Have Less Power than Men

The limits created by child bearing are also the source of the very common practice of the subjection of women to men. Women do many necessary and vital things, but because the most important thing they do – bear children – keeps them close to home, women in traditional economies end up dependent on their husbands for resources coming from outside the family, for protection, and for status.

Men's work is by default the things that women cannot do due to the limitation of pregnancy. It involves interacting with the outside world and also interacting with other men. Traditional societies can be very competitive and tough. Achieving position, status, and honor over other men are often of great importance. These demands on men make them hungry for power and control. The personalities that men develop in these tough environments work to make woman's position even more dependent. Even if a man has little or no power outside the home, he will expect his wife and children to serve him at home. What's more, a woman's family may prefer that she marry a dominant man. Even if such men are unpleasant to live with, they can provide more resources than the less powerful men.

The Reasons for Marriage

In pre- or less-industrialized contexts, marriage was about production, not companionship. A wife had duties toward her husband – the provision of children, food, and sex. The husband had duties toward his wife – protection, providing land to farm, cash and other resources, and fathering children. People did not expect to be emotionally close to their spouses. In fact, the ancient Romans had a word for men who were “too fond” of their wives, a word that survived into modern English: “uxorious.” It was an insult. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, if a woman’s husband is “too kind” to her, gives her things his family doesn’t think she should have, or helps in the kitchen, she might be accused of having him bewitched.

In such circumstances, neither the husband nor wife could be assumed to have one another’s best interests at heart. Whoever had more power in the relationship would probably use it to get his or her own way. Since women as child bearers were usually in the less powerful, subordinate position, virtually all societies developed some form of the marriage contract to protect them. Marriage laws, contracts, or customs prevented men from using their wives up in child-bearing and hard work and then discarding them.³

Traditional Sexual Morality

Since marriage developed to control the behavior of men, men had to be somehow motivated to marry. That is, if they weren’t compelled to bind themselves, they probably would not choose to do so. There is an old English saying warning that, “No one buys a cow if he can get the milk for free.” If a woman could be persuaded to provide her services – sex, children, household management – without marriage, she was without protection from the man’s eventually desire to replace her with another more productive or desirable woman. Worse, if even a few women gave away sex “for free,” no woman would be able to require male commitment. To get men to marry, *all* the women had to refuse to provide their services unless the men married them. Traditional sexual morality, then, developed as an invisible conspiracy, a cultural pattern in which *no* woman gave away her sexual services without a binding commitment from the man.⁴ Such sexual morality is best thought of as a kind of cartel enforced on women by women.

Most forms of traditional sexual morality took the form of a “double-standard.” Women were expected to be chaste and, once married, faithful to their husbands. Men, however, have not needed the legal protection of marriage. They could behave as they pleased sexually. Society was indifferent to their behavior except as it trespassed on other men’s interests.

This brief history of the traditional family gives a causal chain from:

- the need to produce everything in the household
- the need for many children
- the domestic specialization of women and dependence on men
- the development of legal marriage to protect dependent women
- traditional sexual morality (double standard, sexual cartel)

The Industrial Revolution and Family Change

In the United States and much of Europe, traditional family practices began to change about two hundred years ago with the Industrial Revolution. Before the Industrial Revolution, all of the necessities of human life were generated in households or family groups. People grew or made almost everything they consumed within the household.⁵ As the Industrial Revolution progressed, however, more and more of those necessities began to be produced outside of the household. This included new products of industry, such as cars, toasters, telephones, and computers, as well as the basic necessities like food, clothing, and shelter. It also includes many things that we no longer recognize as family functions, such as education, health care, care for the elderly, and the various services that make up “social security” in Western countries.

Economists use the terms “developed” countries to refer to those that have passed through this period and in which most production takes place in the marketplace rather than in the home. “Less-developed” (LDC) or “developing” refer to countries in which these changes in production are in earlier stages. Significantly for my definition, even in most countries defined as less-developed, the goods and services of the developed world are available. They just are not being produced in the less-developed country. I call this state “quasi-development.”

Social historian Ruth Schwartz Cowan offers a brilliant history of housework that traces the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the United States to around 1780, when a man named Oliver Evans designed the world’s first partially automated flour mill. Prior to this innovation, the staple of most American families was corn, which required the labor of a whole household to grow, harvest, husk, grind, and bake into cornbread. With Evan’s invention, however, it soon became cheaper to buy wheat flour (and eventually, ready-made white bread) than to grow one’s own corn.⁶

Further technological innovations during the nineteenth century eliminated virtually all of men’s traditional work in the household.⁷ No longer required at home, but needing cash to pay for newly available products, men increasingly spent their time working away

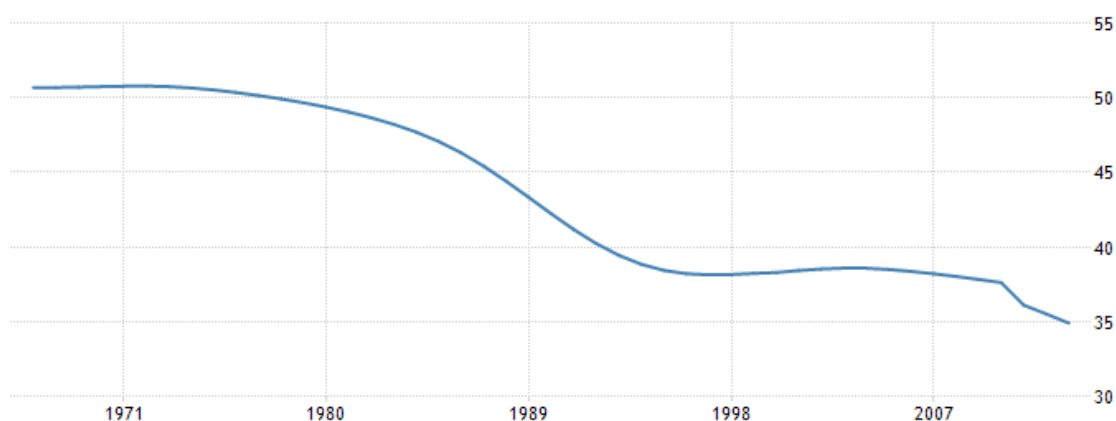
from the home. Another thing that happens is that people begin moving from rural areas to the cities in search of work.[†]

At the same time, with the new availability of treated, piped-in water and efficient stoves, most of children's work went away as well. Furthermore, the post-industrial world required that children have a different set of skills than could be taught at home. By the 1930s, American law forbade child labor and required school attendance.⁸

Here we arrive at the root of everything that follows. While children who do farm work, carry water, or bring home pay packets are an economic benefit to the family, children who contribute nothing financially and who have to be educated are very costly. One U.S. agency estimates that the average American family will spend \$241,080 raising a child born in 2012 to age 18. This amount does not include university attendance, which will add many thousands more. Families in highly urban areas will spend even more to raise a child to adulthood.⁹

Birthrates in the developing world began to fall almost as soon as the Industrial Revolution began. In the United States, the average number of children born per woman dropped from 7.04 in 1800, to 3.56 in 1900, to slightly less than 2 in 2000¹⁰, to 1.9 per woman in 2012. In 2010, almost a fifth of American women had ended their "childbearing years" without bearing any children at all.¹¹

We see a similar decline in the birthrate in Kenya:



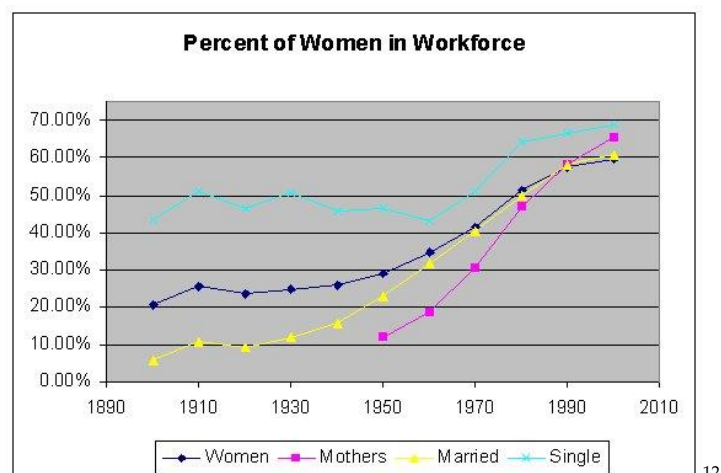
Births per 1000s in population

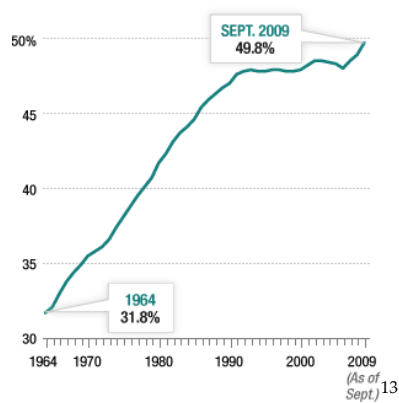
[†] In some places, inheritance customs require the man to leave his wife behind to maintain his claim to the land. This has the effect of dividing families, and often exposes them all to HIV/AIDS when the man takes a city wife, girlfriend, or visits prostitutes.

By mid-twentieth century, the typical American household comprised a nuclear family, with husband, wife, only a few children, and no servants. It had become a site of consumption but not production. Although childcare, housework, cooking, and laundry still required a non-trivial amount of time, women's historic tasks – baking bread, growing vegetables, tending to livestock, knitting sweaters and socks, weaving, and sewing – were no longer necessities but instead had become expensive hobbies. Indeed, the icon of traditional womanhood – keeping the home fires burning – has been declared illegal in some American cities concerned about air pollution.

By the middle of the twentieth century, women found that the essential items that their not-so-distant foremothers had produced could now be purchased in the marketplace at far less expense than producing them at home. Like men a century earlier, women had to leave home and find paid employment.

The “women's movement” and drive for the equal treatment of women began full force in the early 1960s, with women flocking into the workforce and universities in unprecedented numbers throughout the 1960s and 70s. Although many blame the women's movement and feminism for the breakdown of the family, this explanation gets cause and effect reversed. Rather, the breakdown of the economic function of the family gave rise to the women's movement.





Women as a percentage of the U.S. workforce (they are presently at 51%)

The Collapse of Marriage

Divorce

As children became a significant expense rather than an economic necessity, two critical things happen to traditional marriage. First, the marriage contract can no longer be enforced. It was simply not feasible to require a man to support a woman for the rest of her life in exchange for the prospect of her bearing him a child. Divorce rates in the U.S. began a dramatic rise in the late 1960s. Soon the traditional legal meaning of marriage as protection for woman in her dependent role of child-bearer was lost. “No-fault” or unilateral divorce, in which either partner could leave the marriage for any reason, became the norm.

Of all American adults who had ever been married, the percentage that had also been divorced doubled from 17% in 1972 to 33-34% in 1996/98.¹⁴ An analysis of 1985 census data showed that among recent first marriages, the divorce rate was 67%.¹⁵ The rate of divorce leveled off about then, but I suspect that is because, as cohabitation became common, many of those who might have divorced no longer contributed to the divorce statistics because they had never married in the first place.

I don’t know the legal procedures for divorce in African countries, but as Frank Tweheyo reports, the divorce rate is rising rapidly there as well in recent years, particularly among educated and accomplished women. The traditional motivations for marriage simply do not sustain marriage in a drastically changed economic circumstances.

The Double Standard

Second, with the marriage contract unenforceable and no longer necessary for economic survival, the reasons for female sexual restraint outside of marriage vanished. The sexual cartel quickly crumbled as women stopped policing each other. Instead, women claimed the same sexual freedoms enjoyed by men. Once ostracized, sexually-active single women came to be viewed as psychologically healthier and socially more desirable than their virginal sisters. While aspects of the sexual double standard remain, with women stigmatized if they engaged in serial liaison with the abandon that is admired in men, the

Sexual Revolution was more about “liberating” women to exercise the same sexual freedom as men.

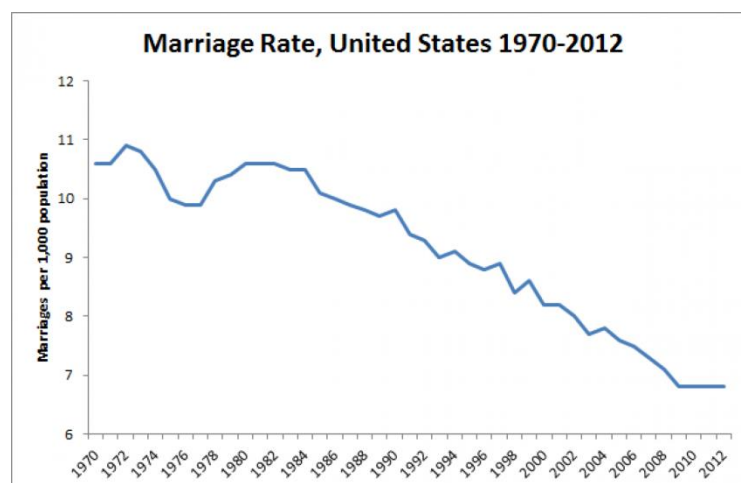
Percent of U.S. Women Reporting Premarital Intercourse by Age 20¹⁶

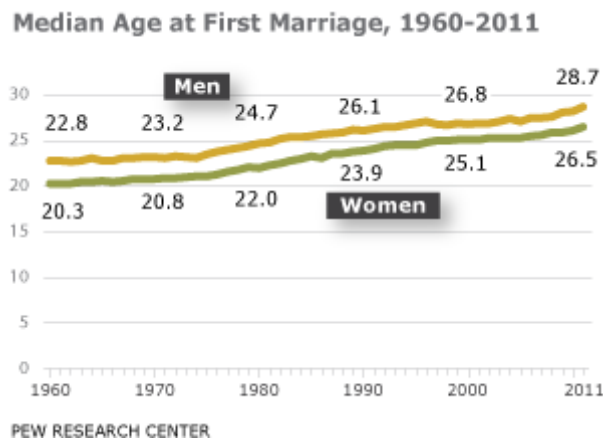
American Women born	
between:	
1939-1948	48%
1949-1958	65%
1959-1968	72%
1969-1978	76%

In 2003, 94% of women aged 15 – 44 reported that they had had pre-marital sex^{17, 18}.

And what about marriage itself? In the United States, even as late as the 1950s or 1960s, the average person could not live comfortably in a one-person household. Not long afterward, however, living by one’s self became quite possible. Market-produced meals, clothing, shelter, and heat, have steadily become affordable for even a person living alone. In fact, having another person around today may add to one’s domestic burden. Even companionship has become expensive, as relationships take time and a degree of flexibility that many people no longer have, as even married couples struggle to find time to share a meal.

As with childbearing, a one-time economic necessity, marriage has become dear, perhaps even a luxury that the average person cannot afford. Social attitudes followed: In 2010, 39% of Americans surveyed by Pew Research agreed that marriage is becoming obsolete, with half or more saying that “there is no difference between being married or single in the ease of having a fulfilling sex life, being financially secure, finding happiness, getting ahead in a career or having social status.”¹⁹ Marriage rates in the United States are at an all-time low, with only 51% of adults married in 2011.²⁰ Age at first marriage is also at an all-time high, as well as the percentage of the population that has never married at all.





Cohabitation and non-marital births

With little legal or economic advantage to marriage, the number of people living with a sexual partner outside of marriage has risen sharply. The number of non-marital births has also risen sharply for the same reasons. This is particularly marked among the poor. In many ethnic groups, the number of births to unmarried women far outstrips that of births to married women.

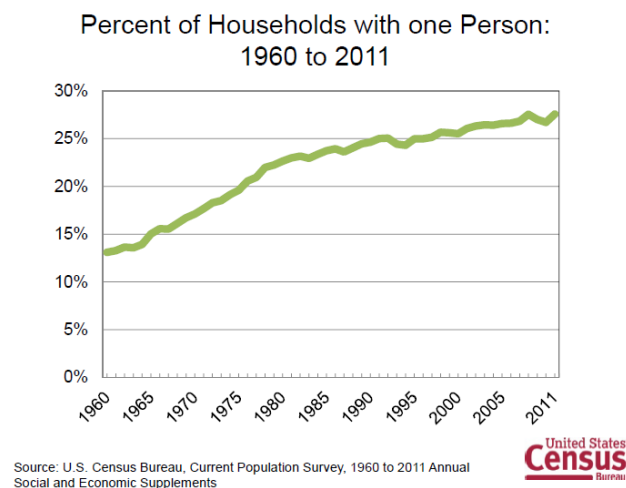
High rates of divorce, combined with equally high rates of cohabitation and non-marital childbearing, reflect a trend away from permanent sexual relationships and toward more-or-less temporary liaisons. Social observer Karl Vaters casually, and chillingly, refers to Millennials (young Americans born between 1977 and 1998) as “the first generation with a majority born and raised outside traditional marriage”²¹. In fact, as mentioned earlier, all around the world, the “new” family unit comprises a woman, her children, and an assortment of men who rotate through the family for a few years at a time. Many children today grow up in homes with father-figures who are temporary at best. In 2007, the average number of temporary alliances experienced by single-parent families was 5.2²².

The same thing is happening around the world. In Africa particularly, we see how modern pressures combined with tradition can be a deadly combination. For example, in some parts of Africa, a couple had to ‘prove’ that they could have children together before they were legally married. A couple would become betrothed and start sleeping together, and when she got pregnant, he would pay her brideprice and they would be married.

Under pressure from economic change and increasing number of people living away from their village setting, many of the traditional safeguards surrounding this practice are being lost. A man will tell a woman that he wants to marry her, but that she has to produce a child first. But now when she gets pregnant, he may disappear. The woman – or more likely, girl – is left helpless. There are no social services to help her with the child, and her village elders, who might have enforced the traditional practice of marrying, are far away and have no control over this man. She fears what will happen to her if she goes home. So

she may drop the baby in a far village with a discreet relative, or down a hole, or she may end up living on the streets with the child, begging or prostituting to survive, or looking for another man. One of our partners reported on a woman in Kenya who had five children from five different men, each of whom promised to marry her once she produced a child, and all of whom disappeared when she got pregnant. I understand that most of the slums in Nairobi are populated with such women and their children.

This isn't necessarily just cruel indifference on the man's part. Certainly a lot of men deceive women in order to get sex, and part of what our material works against is the belief that women are just sex objects. But with the disappearance of traditional ways of providing for a family, many men no longer have the wherewithal even to pay a woman's brideprice, let alone anything else. When men can't meet cultural expectations, they become overwhelmed with shame. That's why they abandon their partners and children, drink excessively, or abuse their wives and children.



Hook-up Culture

For many people, however, even temporary liaisons are becoming fleeting. At the leading edge today is the form of social life called "hookup culture."

"Hooking up" refers to casual, no-strings-attached physical relationships. Typically, two singles meet at a social gathering – or by means of smartphone apps designed for the purpose – and go off together for some kind of sexual contact. What is done on a hook-up is left purposefully vague, but it can include kissing, sexual touching, oral sex, or intercourse. A hook-up is defined not so much by what is done, but by the attitude one is supposed to have toward it: Indifferent, casual, no-strings attached, with no commitment or expectation on the part of either party.²³

Researcher Donna Freitas found that hooking-up is the dominant form of social life at all but the most religious college campuses. About eleven percent of the college students were satisfied with their hook-up experiences; over one-third (38%) of the students did not participate at all; and the remaining 50%, who had taken part, were ambivalent at best, with some finding the experience painful and damaging. Even those who disliked “hooking up” continued doing it anyway, however, believing that they would have no social life otherwise. “Dating” in the earlier sense of a man inviting a woman to accompany him to dinner or a movie, picking her up at her home, etc., is almost unknown.

Interestingly, another study of college students found that young women especially are using hooking-up to avoid serious relationships that will threaten their educational or career plans. Between school and jobs, they feel they do not have time for a relationship. A rising share of contemporary young adults plan to attend graduate school, and hold off marriage until they are established in careers.²⁴

Marriage in a Post-Industrial World

Although relationships have become increasingly fragile in the modern world, most people (61%) who have never been married still hope to marry eventually. On a most basic level, however, the meaning of marriage and sexuality has changed profoundly with economic development. Marriage today does not depend on the economic need for sexual complementarity and production. Instead, the reasons for marrying today are almost entirely emotional. Sexual attraction and romantic love, once considered too fragile or irrelevant as a basis for marriage, have instead become its sole motivating force. Entering into marriage without romantic love or sexual attraction has come to be regarded as foolish, materialistic, and immoral.

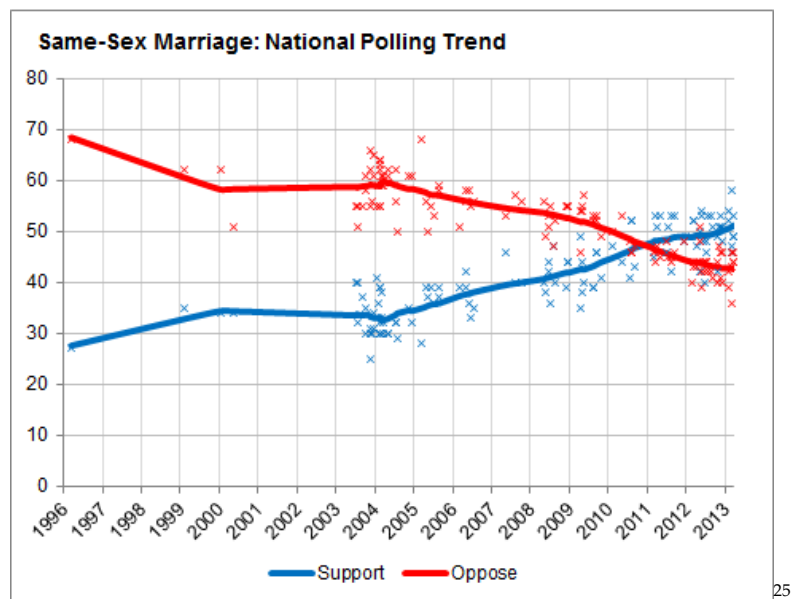
Same-sex Marriage

The switch from marriage rooted in economic incentives to relationships based on emotional and sexual attraction made same-sex marriage possible. In the pre-industrial economy, the practical needs for sexual complementarity – that is, both a man and a woman were required to make the economically-essential child – left no room for men marrying men or women marrying women. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, marriage was about household production in a very literal sense, and people chose their spouses based more upon their ability to build a household together than on their sex appeal. Whom one found sexually desirable, whom one loved, and whom one married were usually distinct issues. Further, marriage as a legal contract to protect women in their roles as child bearers was unnecessary for same-sex lovers, who did not bear children together and so did not need this protection.

In post-industrial polities, however, legal marriage offers significant legal protection regardless of the genders of the partners: tax benefits, inheritance rights, access to partner’s employer-provided health insurance, parental rights over the other spouse’s biological

children, adoption rights, etc. These offer very strong incentives for partners to seek legal marriage regardless of their biological sex or that of their partner.

As the way people thought about marriage shifted from procreation to feelings and sexual attraction, it became unclear to many why marriage should be denied to same-sex couples. If two people of the same sex also feel emotional and sexual attraction to each other, and these are the primary reasons why people marry, then it makes no sense to many people that marriage should be limited to heterosexual partners. The new logic has resulted in growing acceptance of same-sex marriage.



The family, pre-Industrial Revolution:

- everything is produced in the household
- creates a need for many children
- which limits women to the household and makes them dependent on men
- legal marriage develops to protect dependent women
- traditional sexual morality (double standard, sexual cartel) develops to motivate men to marry

The family, post-Industrial Revolution:

- little or nothing is produced in the household
- children are expensive, a luxury
- women are no longer dependent on men
- Life-time marriage contract becomes unenforceable.
- Marriage is becoming a luxury not available to the poor.
- traditional sexual morality/the sexual cartel breaks down. Young may regard traditional norms as old-fashioned and ridiculous

Quasi-development and the plight of men

With economic development, much of what was historically “men’s work” is no longer being done. There is no more land to clear and no more game to hunt. While the proceeds from small-hold farming, raising livestock, or fishing may still allow a man to feed his family, they usually do not generate enough cash to pay for things necessary to modern life, such as school fees, medical care, shoes, mobile phones, computers, clothing, and decent housing.

In developed countries, men’s traditional work was eventually replaced with paid employment. This has been slow to happen in many developing countries today, however, and is becoming an increasing problem in developed countries. Many people have been able to develop skills that pay well in contemporary economy, but a growing number have not. For instance, India, a country that is considered to be growing rapidly economically, is experiencing a widening gulf between the technological elite and those people who remain in their increasingly-disadvantaged traditional employment. Good-paying jobs in industry and manufacturing have become rare in the United States and Europe. Many of the current generation of young adults there struggle to find employment at salaries that allow them to repay the cost of their education. These young adults still live at home with their parents, or on the dole in Europe, unable to afford their own home, let alone marriage and a family.

When men lose the ability to support a family – indeed, many young men today, like the men in Rutana, lack the where-with-all to marry – they lose a great deal of what defines them as men in their cultures. Ugandans, for example, refer to unmarried men as “boys,” even when the “boys” are men in their thirties. Too many men respond to their situations with despair, alcohol and other substance abuse, abandonment of families, domestic violence, and self-indulgent, predatory sexual behavior.

The New Family

The “new family” I wrote of in the beginning comes from the growing inability of men to support a family. A study of poor American households described a pattern strikingly similar to the basics of the Burundi of “a man marrying a woman out of her father’s house.” In the U.S., the women do not live with their fathers. They may or may not live with their boyfriends. Non-resident boyfriends may bring gifts when they visit, but do not provide for their children. Like the occasional husbands of Burundi, these men usually have more than one woman at a time, and often take pride in having numerous children by multiple women.

Strikingly, these single mothers would prefer to marry. The women recognize, however, that the kind of men available to them have so little to offer that being legally

bound to them would actually take resources away from the woman and her children.²⁶ Like the men in Burundi, growing numbers of men in the American inner-cities do not have the resources to marry.

At the same time, with no economic value to children, marriage to poor women has little to offer poor men. The economics of the family is now such that marriage is too expensive for an increasing number of people.

Economic change and the market for men in India

The declining economic value of children and marriage explains other emerging oddities around the world. The increasingly problematic practice of dowry in India offers an important example. Although dowry has been legally forbidden in India, it persists there and in neighboring countries. Dowry is the converse of brideprice, in that the bride's, rather than the groom's, family is expected to make the marriage payment. In countries where dowry is practiced, the number of "dowry deaths" or "bride burning" has grown steadily. Dowry deaths occur when the groom's family demands more dowry-payments after the wedding. When these demands are not met, the bride may suffer a fatal "accident" at the hands of her in-laws, or commits suicide because she cannot endure the pressure. The custom of *stridhan*, in which the bride received her share of her father's estate in the form of property that belongs to her personally, has grown far less common, as so many assets have to go to the groom's family. The higher the status and wealth of the groom, his family, or the groom's occupation, the higher the dowry demands.

In poor African countries, the growing inequality between men harms women through the practice of bride- or dowry-price. Less well-off men will not be able to pay dowry, which may result in cohabitation. Cohabitation affords little legal safety for the woman and her children. On the other hand, if a girl comes from a poor family, her parents may be too eager for the dowry-price she brings. This may lead them to give her in marriage at a too-young age or to an unsuitable man. Further, they will be desperate to ensure that her groom is satisfied with her and does not find reason to demand return of her dowry-price. The bride's parents may urge her to exhibit extreme submission and to accept any mistreatment so that they will be able to keep the dowry, which they may have already eaten.

I suggest that the growing income inequality between men created by economic development is responsible for these changing practices. Just as in the rest of the world, economic development has taken away the traditional ability of men on the low end of the economic spectrum to support a family. With fewer marriageable men available, the demand for men with well-paying jobs or significant family connections grows. These

economically-superior men are able to command higher and higher dowries, while the men at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder struggle to marry at all.

The Bible as a Solution

There are two ways of defying economic reality. One is to deny it.

That doesn't really work.

The other is to transcend it.

Economics explains what is rational, but just because something is rational/optimal under the material circumstances does not mean it is good from a moral point of view. Gary Becker notes that for societies struggling with scarcity, the unequal provision of resources to boys, even to the point of killing new-born girls, may be *rational* and make good sense economically. But no one would agree that what is rational is necessarily *good*.

Empower's seminar, *New Man, New Woman, New Life*, is a Bible study that lets participants explore how Jesus's coming redeemed us from the effects of the Fall and transformed the structure and interpersonal patterns of the family. Participants work in small groups to work through the Bible studies themselves and come to their own conclusions. Each small group shares what it has learned with the other participants in the seminar and applies the biblical teachings to their own cultural situations. The seminar is a lively, provocative, and spiritually rich experience for all.

What we learn is that the Bible affirms the dignity and worth of all human beings, regardless of gender, riches, education, or worldly accomplishments. Jesus's teachings in all ways redeem and restore us to the unity and peace for which God created us. These teachings raise up women from the dependent, subjugated position imposed on them by the old economy. When we talk about Empower, this raising up of women is what people hear. But just as important is Jesus's strong insistence that men give up clinging to their culturally-imposed burdens of pride, shame, privilege, false entitlement, and the need to feel superior to other people.

We begin the seminar with Matthew 19, which tells of a time when some religious leaders came to Jesus to ask him about how a man could divorce his wife and still be considered righteous. Jesus refused to talk to them about discarding their wives. Instead, he said,

“Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female’, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” (vs. 3-6)

The religious leaders then demanded to know why the Old Testament law allowed them to divorce their wives. And Jesus said that this was due only to the hardness of their hearts, “But in the beginning, it was not so.”

Jesus taught that the relationship among human beings – not just men and women – was found not in the Law or in human customs, but in how God made us in Creation. The ideal relationship for the family is embedded in the biblical story of Creation Ideal, Fall, and Redemption.

Creation Ideal

In our study of Genesis 1 and 2, we find that God made both man and woman in His image and gave BOTH the man and the woman dominion over the earth; the blessing of children; and every good thing on the earth to eat. God did not create woman to be man’s property, but to rule the earth together with the man. Moreover, Genesis tells us that God made the woman to be a *help suitable* for the man. The words God used do not mean a worker like a servant or a housemaid. The Bible does not use the word for a lowly helper here. Rather, elsewhere the word used by God that is translated *help* is used most often in the Bible to refer to God himself!

God did not, however, intend the woman to be another god for the man either. He used a second word, the one that is translated “fit,” “meet” and “suitable.” This word means literally “facing.” When God said that the man needed a “help suitable” for him, he meant that the woman would be neither below nor above the man, but “facing” him – eye-to-eye, straight across, on the same level.

Finally, after God had created us as male and female, He said:

24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed (Genesis 2).

The Fall

Next we study how we came to be ashamed and to have hard-hearts. In Genesis 3, when the serpent tempted the first man and woman, they choose to disobey God so they could control their own lives. There are huge surprises in a careful reading of Genesis 3. First, we see in Genesis 3:6, the man was present during the temptation. Second, while God cursed the serpent and the ground, He did not curse the people, not even the woman. Rather, God prophesies what will happen to the woman and the man when they live, as they chose, outside of His abundant provision.

God did not curse us. He is not trying to hurt or punish us. Rather, His will is that we return to a life of faith in Him.

After the Fall, man and woman became enslaved to ground and had to struggle to survive. They also struggled for control over each other. Instead of looking to his wife for companionship and love, man now needed only three things from woman: children, labor/food, and sex. From men, women needed material goods, someone to father children, and protection. Woman was put below man, and man began to struggle for power over other men. This is the consequence of having hard hearts.

Redemption

In Old Testament times, when times were very bad, men would sell their family land, their children, and even themselves as slaves. But God created the role of a Redeemer. A redeemer was a family member who could buy the land and the people back from slavery.

In the same way, God sent a Redeemer to buy us back from our slavery to the ground. And this is what Jesus does, in every way.

Jesus

Jesus freed men from the demands of the fallen world. He taught repeatedly that Christians were free from the struggle for power over each other and against the ground. For example, the Gospel of John tells us that at the Last Supper, Jesus knew that *all authority* had been given to him by God. So he immediately knelt down and washed his disciples' dirty feet. He invites us back to the Garden of Eden and God's provision for us. Jesus returned us all to the Garden of Eden with his teaching, "Behold the lilies of the field. They don't work, and they don't spin. But Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as the lilies. If God so clothes the grass, which is there today and tomorrow is thrown in the oven, how much more will he care for you?"

Jesus also lifted up woman to her original place at man's side, as his equal and strong help. Here is just one example. One day, Jesus was out preaching, and a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that nursed you!" Women were judged by the sons they produced, and what could be more wonderful for a woman than to have a son like Jesus? Jesus disagreed with her, however, saying, "No, rather blessed is the one who hears the word of the Lord and obeys it!" What was important about Jesus' mother was not simply that she had a woman's body. What was important is that she listened to God and obeyed, and so brought the Messiah into the world.

The studies explore the occasions on which Jesus taught that women were more than child bearer, housemaid, digger, and object of male satisfaction. Jesus freed women from the limitations placed on them by culture and said that what was important about them was their relationship with God, not how well they took care of men.

Paul

In the last set of studies, After Jesus, the apostle Paul also came to teach us how to love each other. When Paul talked to the Christian household, he addressed men as well as women, but somehow we only remember that he told wives to submit to their husbands. We usually start reading with verse 22, but to understand this passage, you have to move up a couple of verses. What Paul says is:

20 always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father, 21 being submitted to one another out of reverence for Christ, 22 wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord.

The surprise here is that, when you read the whole passage, Paul is telling all of us – wives/husbands, children/fathers, and slaves/masters – to "submit ourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ." This does not mean to allow ourselves to be trampled on. Rather, we **all** have to yield the hardness of our hearts. The entire Christian community has to stop struggling for power over each other, voluntarily and in imitation of Christ.

Paul, following Jesus's example, turned the whole customary order upside down. The few big men on top could no longer use their power over other people. Paul tells slaves to obey their masters, but he also tells masters they can no longer threaten their slaves but should treat them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul tells children to obey their parents, but he also tells fathers that they can no longer have children just to serve them. Instead, fathers must nurture their children and teach them the way of the Lord. Then Paul tells husbands how they submit themselves to their wives: by *agape* loving them as Christ loves the church, by giving themselves up for their wives, by making their wives glorious! Men sometimes fear letting their wives become accomplished. This is why Paul then says that wives should respect their husbands: their husbands are raising their wives up to that

“facing” position that God created them for, but the wife is to continue to be on the same level as her husband, not use his submission to try to rise above him. Paul assures us that when men make their wives glorious in Christ, she will in turn bring glory to her husband.

Paul ends his description of Christian marriage by quoting the same verses as Jesus in Matthew 19 and God in Creation: “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”

What Paul presents is the ideal relationship of Genesis – restored by Jesus. Reconciled to God in Christ, no longer alone, we once more become fearless, honest, and giving, capable of “submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” And we agree with the Creator: “It is very good.”

A lay leader in Bondo, Kenya, reported after attending our program:

"I never used to have time with my wife just to talk and share things pertaining to our family. I used to see her just as a worker in our family and could not even sit to eat with her from the same table. After attending the Empower conference, things have changed. My wife is now a companion. We eat together, we sit and talk, and life is so good in our family."

We at Empower hope that you will join us in this amazing journey back to God's intent when He created us. In it, we will build strong and happy marriages, families, churches, communities, and nations.

For more information, please go to our website, EmpowerInternational.org, or contact us at EIM@fastmail.fm.

¹ Of course, there are variations in family practices from culture to culture. This analysis focuses on the most common practices.

² Gary S. Becker, *A Treatise on the Family*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991, 38, and chapter two.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The cultural practices referred to here are based on economic motivations. While biblical teachings on marriage and sexual ethics were co-opted (and distorted) to reinforce culture, they are not the same values at all.

⁵ Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*. Basic Books, 1983, 32. Although this system has virtually disappeared in the United States and Europe today, these conditions persist in most of the rest of the world.

⁶ Cowan, *More Work*, 48.

⁷ Ibid, p. 64.

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- ⁸ Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985, p. 6.
- ⁹ <http://money.cnn.com/2013/08/14/pf/cost-children/>. Accessed 5/7/2014.
- ¹⁰ Cowan, p. 43, and U.S. Census Bureau, "Population Profile of the United States: 2000" Internet version. <http://www.census.gov/population/pop-profile/2000/chap04.pdf>.
- ¹¹ <http://www.lemondrop.com/2010/06/30/intentional-childlessness-on-the-rise/>
- ¹² <http://spicie.com/articles/parenting/do-women-really-want-it-all/>. Accessed 5/7/2014.
- ¹³ <http://blsciblogs.baruch.cuny.edu/his1005fall2010/files/2010/12/gr-women-payrolls-300-1.gif>. Accessed 5/7/2014.
- ¹⁴ Smith, pp. 1-2. Smith noted, "The 33-34% level is lower than the commonly cited figure that 'half of all marriages end in divorce.' The latter is a projection of how many married people will eventually divorce."
- ¹⁵ 1989 study of US Census records, researchers at the University of Wisconsin. Cited (without further reference) in John Gottman, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail...and How You Can Make Yours Last*. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1994.
- ¹⁶ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/19/AR2006121901274.html>
- ¹⁷ Finer LB. "Trends in premarital sex in the United States, 1954–2003." *Public Health Rep* 112(1):73–8. 2007.
- ¹⁸ A significant percentage of the women who came of age before the 60s who had had premarital intercourse had sex only with their fiancé, a circumstance no longer true of those born later, who were very likely to report having had more than one sex partner.
- ¹⁹ Vera Cohn, "Love and Marriage", Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/02/13/love-and-marriage/>. Accessed 5/8/2014.
- ²⁰ "Love and Marriage", Pew Research Social and Demographic Trends, February 13, 2013, www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/02/13/move-and-marriage/ downloaded 3 May 2014.
- ²¹ Karl Vaters, "Why Small Churches are the Next Big Thing," <http://www.qideas.org/blog/why-small-churches-are-the-next-big-thing.aspx>, downloaded 6/11/13.
- ²² Osborne, C. and McLanahan, S. (2007), Partnership Instability and Child Well-Being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69: 1065–1083. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2007.00431.x.
- ²³ Donna Freitas, *The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture is Leaving a Generation Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled, and Confused About Intimacy*, Basic Books, 2013, p. 21.
- ²⁴ Laura Hamilton and Elizabeth A. Armstrong, "Gendered Sexuality in Young Adulthood: Double Binds and Flawed Options," *Gender & Society*, Vol. 23 No. 5, October 2009, 589-616. Cohn, *ibid*.
- ²⁵ <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/26/how-opinion-on-same-sex-marriage-is-changing-and-what-it-means>.
- ²⁶ Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas, *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood before Marriage*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2005.