

## Gender roles in ministry



### Princess Diana

“Women always worry about the things that men forget; men always worry about the things women remember”

### Phyllis Diller

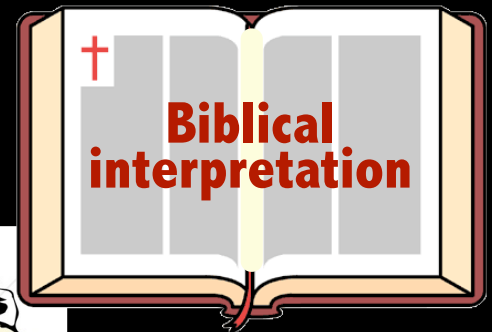
“When a man opens a car door for his wife, it’s either a new car or a new wife.”

### Henry Kissinger

“No one will ever win the battle of the sexes; there’s too much fraternizing with the enemy.”

### What should you say?

- Should the role of elder in the church be based on giftedness, ability, and character apart from gender?
- Should a woman not be allowed to teach men in the church even if she is qualified by virtue of her knowledge, wisdom, character, and spiritual maturity?
- Are Christian wives called to take a submissive, secondary, posture in marriage even when they have greater wisdom, and leadership ability than their husbands?
- Are “gender based role” teaching in Scripture limited to isolated situations, primitive culture, and unusual circumstances?



*Pastoral sensitivity*

### Three different views



#### Egalitarian

Roles in the home and church are determined by ability, giftedness, and calling apart from gender.



#### Authoritarian

Men are designed to rule (as head) and women to follow (submit) in all areas of life.



#### Complementarian



Men and Women have ascribed complementary and distinct roles in the home and church.



### Biblical arguments for *Egalitarianism*

- ✓ A Biblical understanding of **calling, gifts, and justice** demands equality of gender roles.
- ✓ The **attitude of Jesus** toward women suggests that they were given ministry authority.
- ✓ The fact that women are mentioned as having **significant ministry** in Scripture bears witness to their authority in ministry.
- ✓ The texts that seem to support the traditional argument can be **explained**.
- ✓ **Specific texts** seem to support the full ministry of women with men.

**Galatians 3:28**

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is **neither male nor female**; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

## **Gender**

*like race and political status  
is not to be an issue in defining  
value, position, or function  
in the Kingdom of God.*

**Romans 16**

“<sup>6</sup> Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. <sup>7</sup> Greet Andronicus and **Junias**, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, **who are outstanding among the apostles**, who also were in Christ before me.”

*Most scholars believe “**Junias**” to be a form of “**Junia**” (a common Latin name for a woman).*

**1 Corinthians 11:**

“<sup>5</sup> But **every woman** who has her head uncovered while praying or **prophesying** disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.”

*Women prophesied (this was among the greatest ministries in the church).*

*Common sense, history, and personal experience argue for **Egalitarianism**.*

- ✓ Women are just as **gifted** as men and even more so in spiritual and pastoral matters.
- ✓ The church generally **suffers** for lack of leadership instincts and input from women.
- ✓ Church **history** has demonstrated that women have been unusually effective in key ministries.
- ✓ Excluding women from leadership makes a minor point a major **stumbling block** for our culture.

***Egalitarianism** offers a response to some difficult texts.*

- ✓ **1 Corinthians 11:3**
- ✓ **1 Corinthians 14:34-38**
- ✓ **1 Timothy 2:11-15**

**1 Corinthians 11:3**

“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and **the man is the head of a woman**, and God is the head of Christ.”

*“Head” can mean “source”  
(not authority over)  
as in “head waters of the Mississippi.”*

### 1 Corinthians 14

“<sup>34</sup> **Let the women keep silent** in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. <sup>35</sup> And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for **it is improper for a woman to speak in church.**

<sup>36</sup> (What!) Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?”

*Paul may be quoting a false teaching that he then refutes.*

### 1 Timothy 2

“<sup>11</sup> Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. <sup>12</sup> **But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.** <sup>13</sup> For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. <sup>14</sup> And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. <sup>15</sup> But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”

### Two possible egalitarian explanations of 2 Timothy 2.

#### 1. The teaching is occasional

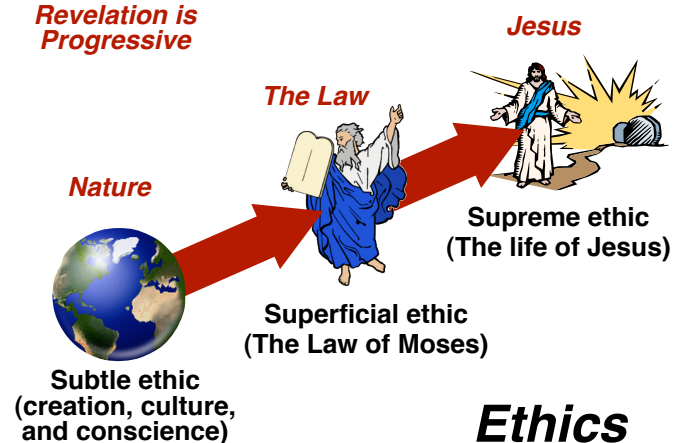
- addressed to a local situation not for universal application.

- ✓ There are many clear examples of this in the New Testament - (meat offered to idols).
- ✓ Women were uneducated in Paul's day and apparently disruptive to the church meetings.
- ✓ This unique problem does not exist today making Paul's teaching occasional.

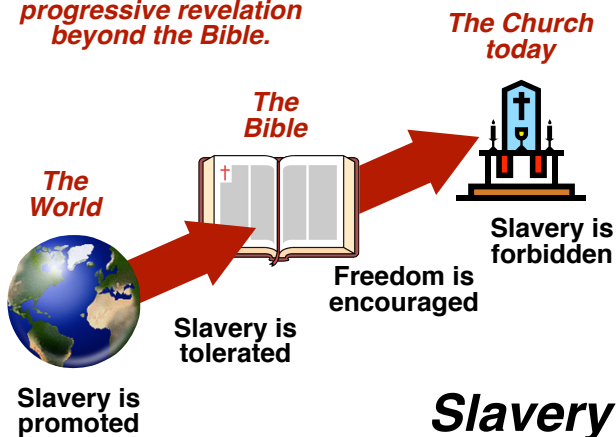
#### 2. The teaching is undeveloped and incomplete

- a part of a trajectory that must be followed.

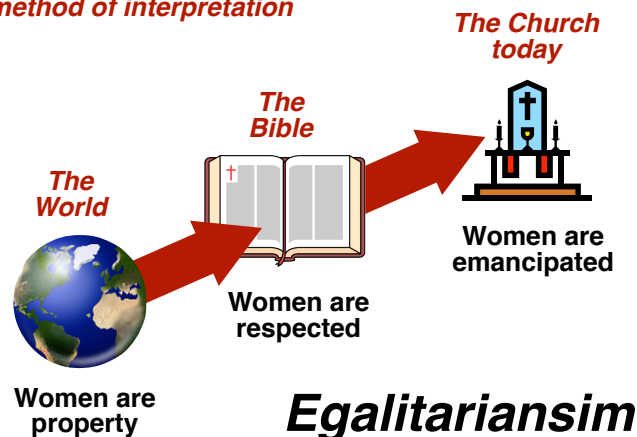
Note that  
*Revelation is  
Progressive*



*The modern Church extended  
progressive revelation  
beyond the Bible.*



*Redemptive Movement  
method of interpretation*



## Putting the issue in context

- ✓ Keep the debate on the real issue - **hermeneutics** not gender roles.

*Gender roles is not a **major issue**, but how we interpret Scripture is.*



The Enlightenment made it all about "Me."

- \* Personal rights and justice
- \* Productivity and efficiency

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- ✓ Take your **baptism** seriously because God will.



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My baptism made it all about Him.

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- \* Living sacrifices
- \* A picture of Christ & the church



My baptism made it all about Him.

## Contrasting models



The Enlightenment made it all about "Me."



My baptism made it all about Him.

Achieved roles  
Democracy

Ascribed roles  
Theocracy

*Reasons why, in the end, I cannot buy  
**Egalitarianism***

### ✓ 1 Timothy 2:11-15

- ✓ The **pattern and consistency** of other relevant passages. 1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:34-38
- ✓ The **weakness** of egalitarian explanations of their problem texts.
- ✓ The **consensus** of the church's interpretation outside modern, post enlightenment, Western culture.



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