

An Introduction to Biblical Womanhood

Biblical Womanhood, Part 1

Men and women are different. A seemingly obvious statement, yet one that is up for debate nowadays. Our culture is fighting to convince the world that, besides their reproductive systems, there are no significant differences between a man and a woman. The logic goes like this: 1. Men and women should be equal. 2. Equality means the same. 3. Therefore, for men and women to be truly equal, they must be the same.

But equality **does not** equal sameness. This concept is widely understood in many areas of life. Consider the cultures in the world. Asian, European and South American cultures are all very different. They connect differently, eat different foods, and celebrate differently. Is one culture greater than another? Should all the cultures of the world be exactly the same so they can be equal? Of course not. It is the differences within the world's cultures that bring so much beauty and value to the human race.

Are men and women equal in intrinsic value and dignity? Yes. Should we fight for this? Of course! But let us not strip each gender of their unique beauty, purpose, and strength by forcing them to be the same. Men and women most certainly are equal, but they are not the same.

Recognizing God as Creator of male and female and recognizing the Bible as our only authoritative source for all of life, this document has been written to discuss God's beautiful design of womanhood.

UNDERSTANDING THE INFLUENCE OF FEMINISM

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. Colossians 2:8

One reason a document like this exists is because there is currently such great effort in our culture to minimize the God-designed distinctions of the genders. The movement toward a world where gender doesn't matter is an assault on God's design and purpose for humanity as His image bearers.

While the principles of the world will always be contrary to Christ, the last 50 years have contained a concentrated effort to destroy gender distinctions by the feminist movement. Most of us grew up under the influence of this ideology and have never taken the time to acknowledge the potential impact it has had on our thinking. It's worth asked the question, have you been discipled by the feminist movement?

The heartbeat of feminism is women's rights, primarily as it relates to men. Equality is sameness is an assumed truth. Namely, if women are truly equal with men, then they have the right to be exactly the same as a man in every way. While there are some steps toward equality that feminism has rightly secured (the right to vote, equal pay, etc), most of the movement falsely assumed that a woman only has value when she is just like a man, effectually stripping womanhood of all that made it beautiful, unique, and powerful.

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Thanks to feminism, the idea that women are distinctly different than men and called to different things seems old fashioned. Nowadays, all roles are interchangeable, and everyone has the right to determine his or her own definition of manhood or womanhood. Feminism took God out of the equation and spread the lie that we can determine what it means to be a woman, and no one has the right to tell us otherwise.

When an ideology is this prevalent in our culture, it is inevitable that we will start to believe some of it without even questioning. We must be armed with a Biblical view of womanhood to think critically about our culture to make sure we aren't being held captive by "empty deception, according to the elementary principles of the world."

HEART POSTURE

Before we dive into what the Bible says about womanhood, we need to come with a right heart posture.

THE GLORY OF GOD

As Christians, our primary goal is to extend the fame, the renown, and the beauty of God. This purpose should be front and center in all we do, including our approach to this topic. Unlike the world's self-centered views of gender, we want a God-centered view of gender.

The very first mention of male and female in the Bible revolves around God. Genesis 1:26-27 states, *"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."* God created two distinct expressions of humanity, male and female, to reflect Himself. **Our femininity isn't about us, it is about God and reflecting who He is.**

We don't reflect God simply as humans, but specifically as male and female. This is important because God is triune. God is one and God is also Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Unity and diversity in one God. Likewise, men and women are both human. They both have the same organ systems, bodily functions, and are distinctly human as compared to other species on the earth. Yet men and women are very different in how they express their humanity. It is with this unity of species and diversity of expression that we reflect God fully. This is why a Biblical expression of womanhood is important: to bring God glory.

HUMILITY

All creatures, with two exceptions that we know of, have willingly taken the places appointed to them. The Bible speaks of angels who rebelled and therefore were cast down out of heaven, and of the fall of man. Adam and Eve were not satisfied with the place assigned. It was, in fact, the woman, Eve, who saw the opportunity to be something other than she was meant to be – the Serpent convinced her that she could easily be "like God" – and she took the initiative. What sort of world might it have been if Eve had refused the Serpent's offer and had said to him instead, "Let me not be like God. Let me be what I was made to be – let me be a woman." – Elisabeth Elliot

God has the right to define our womanhood; this is why we look to the Bible for direction. It is God who created women after all and therefore knows how we flourish. As we look at His design for

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women, we must not respond in pride, thinking we know better than God. This was Eve's original sin. Rather, let us respond with humility by allowing God to have the final word of femininity.

FAITH

Along with humility we need to come with faith, trusting that we serve a good and gracious God who went to unthinkable lengths to save us. Many women don't want to hear what the Bible has to say about womanhood because they doubt God is for them. Let us exercise faith that God wants good things for His daughters. Remember, Jesus gave such great honor to women that His own disciples rebuked Him.

With a vibrant faith in a redeeming God, we will see that Biblical womanhood is about the freedom to be what we were designed to be! Though there may be limitations in this process, the limitations themselves are part of being free.

"Every creature of God is given something that could be called an inconvenience, I suppose, depending on one's perspective. The elephant and the mouse might each complain about his size, the turtle about his shell, the bird about the weight of his wings. The special gift and ability of each creature defines its special limitations. And as the bird easily comes to terms with the necessity of bearing wings when it finds that it is, in fact, the wings that bear up the bird--up, away from the world, into the sky, into freedom--so the woman who accepts the limitations of womanhood finds in those very limitations her gifts, her special calling--wings, in fact, which bear her up into perfect freedom, into the will of God." – Elisabeth Elliot.

What have been your thoughts on Biblical womanhood? Does it scare you when you think of what the Bible has to say about women? Or do you believe that the Bible is true and that it sets women free? Have you ever considered that God might have something to say about our womanhood? What influence has the feminist movement had on you and how you view yourself and others?

The subsequent parts of this series cover the following topics:

- Women, We Are Influencers
- A Heart for Home
- A Theology of Singleness
- A Wife After God's Own Heart
- A Jesus-Heart for Children

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