

Kingwood Church of Christ

Bible Study on Women and the church

	page
Introduction	2
Study One: Introduction to Hermeneutics	4
Study Two: Jesus and His interaction with women in the Bible	7
Study Three: Egalitarianism and Galatians 3	12
Study Four: Genesis 1 and 2	14
Study Five: Genesis 3	17
Study Six: 1 Corinthians 11	21
Study Seven: 1 Corinthians 14	24
Study Eight: 1 Timothy 2	28
Study Nine: 1 Timothy 3	31
Study Ten: Interesting Biblical Passages	34
Study Eleven: Disputable Matters	37

Introduction

The impetus for the elders' recent study was Steve Parker's series on giftedness. Questions were raised regarding women and their work in the church in light of their God given gifts. The elders chose to interview six women from our congregation to gain their views and perspectives, which we found to be insightful. We also read from many outside sources (both egalitarian and traditionalist), some of which we have shared on the church's website. We encourage you to read these resources as well. They will help you understand the reasons various congregations have very different views regarding women's participation within the church, especially during times of worship.

A lot of time has been spent to provide you with this study guide and we hope you find it beneficial. It is printed on one side to give you room to take notes. It is not divided by weeks but rather by topics as some studies may take more than one week to cover. Please take the time to absorb this study one lesson at a time. There is no final chapter to jump ahead and "see how the story turns out." This is a sharing of the Bible study your elders conducted and nothing more should be read into it. Although an elder position statement may come out in the future, we have yet to write one. The position stated by the elders in 2006 is still standing. We know this is a sensitive topic to some. *Let's approach this study in love remembering that church is about people and Bible study is one of our greatest heritages.*

John Walker
for the elders

This was read to the church by Royce Mason for the elders.
March 2006

Brothers and Sisters,

We are all honored to serve the Lord by serving as your shepherds. The love, honor and respect that you show us encourages us and lifts us up. We know that you pray for us often, because we feel your prayers and we see the Lord answering them in so many ways. Our recent "Dream Team" exercise showed us that you value the love and sense of family that we share here at Kingwood Church of Christ. As we strive to do what the Lord would have us do, those prayers and that love help sustain us, and we thank you for them.

As many of you know your shepherds have recently gone through a significant period of study and prayer, looking at the roles of individuals in the first century church, with special study of the roles of women. Your shepherds would like you to know where our understandings are and what we believe would be the most Biblically sound, effective, and unifying approach for this congregation in regards to gender roles in the Lord's church.

This has been an issue since the first century, so it is nothing new to us in this generation. The seven of us have made an honest attempt to look at this objectively and non-defensively to come to what we believe is best for this congregation at this time. We have studied the scripture, read all kinds of understandings in the brotherhood, and listened to many of you personally. We have read your "Dream Team" comments, and we realize that there is a diversity of understandings in this congregation, just as there is across the brotherhood. We strongly believe that all Christians should be able to use the gifts with which God has blessed them, while attempting to understand from scripture how and in what context this should occur.

It seems obvious to us that God wants men to lead women in Spiritual contexts, just as He wants men to lead in our marriage relationships. It also is apparent to us that women in the first century were very active in praying, singing, teaching, and other spiritual activities. Exactly in what contexts isn't always clear in the scripture, and even after significant and diligent study may still be open to varying understandings. It is obvious Biblically that men and women are equal in God's sight in Christ. For whatever reason, it is also obvious that there are some role differences that seemed important for both genders.

As a result of these considerations, your shepherds would ask that you follow our guidance, having men to lead in all capacities in those times when the whole church is called together, with everyone fully participating, as in our assemblies and Bible classes. Therefore, we believe it would be appropriate for only men to lead singing, teach, preach, or lead prayer at these times. We also believe it is appropriate for women to be able to speak to the church when asked to do so by a leader.

We encourage each of you to study the scriptures and become convinced in your own mind. You might start with I Cor. 11, I Cor. 14, and I Tim. 2. While this is not an exhaustive list of all the scriptures we reviewed in our study, it will help you begin your study.

Finally, it is our prayer that this church will grow beyond this issue, and that we will all serve the Lord with our gifts in all our ministries. Our prayer is that we as a church family would reach out to touch the lives of others, not only during our times together, but even more so during the rest of the week. Let's continue the love we have for each other and grow it even more. The Lord is doing great things here at this church. Please make this a beginning for you and use our wonderfully uplifting time together during our assemblies and Bible classes to inspire each of us to "Touch Lives with the Good News of Jesus"!

Elders, Kingwood Church of Christ

Study One

Introduction to Her·me·neu·tics

ˌhɜrməˈn(y)oo̩dɪks/
noun

the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation, especially of the Bible or literary texts.

Jerome, 325 AD

He wrote the Latin Vulgate translating from the original Hebrew Old Testament. He also translated the gospels and the Catholic apocrypha from Greek into Latin. His work has greatly influenced the world's translations, primarily because theologians of the Dark to Middle ages studied Latin over Greek or Hebrew. The Latin Vulgate was their Bible.

Council of Carthage (Africa), 397 AD

Made a list of the books that could be read in church as "divine Scripture" included the Bible and some of the apocrypha (Canon 24).

Canonization

We believe that "all scripture is God breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). The process of selecting what we consider as canon include several criteria. Focus on the Family listed these: (1) the document had to conform to the rule of faith (Christian truth recognized as normative in the churches). (2) The document requires some sort of apostolicity (written by those who were apostles or in immediate contact with the apostles). (3) The documents' widespread and continuous acceptance and usage by churches everywhere.

John Wycliffe, 1380 AD

Credited with translating the Bible into English. He did not work with original Hebrew and Greek text but used the Latin Vulgate for his translation. One problem in this is that Latin does not use articles and there are roughly 20,000 in the Greek which add clarity to the text.

Erasmus, 1516 AD

He published a New Testament in Greek and in parallel with a modern and corrected Latin in left and right columns. His NT became known as the Received Text, as it was "received by all." Erasmus eventually published 5 editions. One problem was that he only had a few late origin manuscripts. In some instances, where he was missing the Greek manuscript he translated the Latin Vulgate back into Greek. What he did accomplish was kick start critical review -- Hermeneutics, specially by pointing Biblical study back to original language rather than relying on Jerome's Latin Vulgate.

William Tyndale, 1525 AD

Tyndale is credited with making the first translation of the New Testament from Greek into English. It was against the law to translate the Bible into a common language (in an attempt to fight Lutheranism). The Latin Vulgate was the official scripture. So Tyndale went to Germany, completed the translation and started printing it in 1525. The Tyndale Bible brought the Word to the common people. One problem was his Greek source was Erasmus.

Geneva Bible, 1560 AD

Became commonly known as the Breeches Bible, due to the translation in Genesis that God provided Adam and Eve with breeches (britches) before they were expelled from the garden. This was the first Bible to use chapters and verses and contained extensive marginal notes and maps making it the first study Bible. Translated by Protestant scholars it was considered to be a superb English translation and favored into the 1800's.

King James Bible, 1611 AD

Known also as the Authorized Version, and was to be written in the idiom of the day. Written by Church of England scholars it originally included the apocrypha and was essentially a Catholic version of the Geneva Bible. King James forbade the use of marginal notes.

English Revised Version, 1881 AD

Also known as the Revised Version, the English Revised Version used the Greek text of Westcott and Hort to translate the New Testament. Continued discovery of Greek manuscripts added depth and validity as translators attempted to capture the original. Writing style favors direct translation with less interpretative texts.

New International Version, 1978 AD

The NIV was published in 1978, and revised in 1984 and again in 2011. Why are there so many revisions over a short period? Two major reasons: Critical review - think corrections (from numerous sources) and idiomatic reading for a "clear and natural English."

Problems with Translation:

Biblical Hebrew and Greek are ancient languages. There are only 1067 Greek words which are used more than 10 times in the Greek New Testament. There are over a half million words in modern English. Yet even with that disparity, sometimes the Greek has greater meaning than the English equivalent. It's a translator's nemesis.

1) Translators do their best to translate and they do it very well. Straight or direct translation which sounds ideal doesn't always work. Slang phrases, euphemisms or plays on words don't translate well and require explanation. (example: Did he fall asleep, or did he die?)

2) Sometimes translators choose to interpret the passage rather than translate it. "After the Sabbath, on the first day of the week" is interpreted as "Early on Sunday morning" (Matt 28:1 NLT). Or, Hosea 5:10; "Judah's leaders are like those who move boundary stones" (literal, NIV) compared to "The leaders of Judah have become like thieves" (interpreted, NLT).

Emphatic words may lose their meaning (or emphasis) unless interpreted by the translator. Interpretation is necessary if we want a Bible which is idiomatic with modern spoken English.

3) Another tool translators have is transliteration. The best reason to transliterate is because the original word has such deep meaning that there is no equivalent for it. A common word transliterated in our Bible is "baptism" from the Greek *baptizo*. The original means to immerse and could have been translated. The problem is that a transliterated word is a new word and requires definition.

4) Another problem Bible translators have to deal with is interpolation. Interpolation is an addition to the text after the fact by someone other than the author. Remember Biblical

translators are not working from the original even though it is their desire to present an original equivalent. Modern Bibles may include or exclude interpolations but almost always footnote them. You can identify them by translator notes which may say "[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9-20.]" (NIV referencing Mark 16.) There are dozens of interpolations in your Bible, see if your Bible has Matthew 18:11 -- or Mark 16:16. Both are interpolations. Name a red flag signaling an interpolation?

High level versus low level written communication:

High level written communication can best be described as a textbook. It may be written to an unknown audience and makes few or no assumptions. Biblical examples of high level communication are Genesis and the Gospels. Low level written communication can be described like a text message. The author knows the recipient and can assume the recipient has a shared and understood common knowledge. Biblical examples of lower level communication are the letters, especially those written to an individual rather than a church. Why is this important in Biblical interpretation? If we are to understand what was written, we need to understand how it was received -- CONTEXT. Context can take multiple forms from culture to common experiences (previous communications) to even include geography, political events or local religion/idolatry.

Understanding exegesis and hermeneutics:

The key to hermeneutics is understanding how the message was intended to be received. Ask any teacher, communication is challenging. When studying the Bible context can be everything. This is especially true when studying low level communications. There may be assumptions that we do not readily know - but context brings comprehension. In Revelation 3:15, Jesus tells the church of Laodicea that "you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other!" I heard some teach this as meaning we should be hot, on fire for the Lord; or cold, having nothing to do with Him. But if you visited Laodicea you would learn that Hierapolis is about 5 miles North and contains amazing therapeutic hot springs. And 2 miles East is Colossae and its beautiful refreshing crystal clear and cold mountain river. The waters from Hierapolis and Colossae mix and the effluent continues to Laodicea where it is lukewarm and tastes horrible. Now that you've been exposed to the context of location, what do you think Jesus meant when he said "I wish you were one or the other"? Context sets the stage for understanding true meaning. Hermeneutics is the process of extracting that truth.

Prejudice:

"If one's prejudice is so deep-seated that one reaches a conclusion before the evidence is considered, then prejudice renders the accurate understanding of a text impossible." Osburn, p 99

"Willingness to allow one's pre-understandings to be modified or even completely reshaped by interaction with the text itself allows the text to be authoritative." Osburn, *ibid.*

"Reading the text through the colored glasses of its own preconceived prejudices, concludes what it already believes. The discussion is at an impasse" [even before it begins.] Osburn, p 103

Finding a verse to validate your prejudice is called "proof texting." It takes out of context quotes to form a proposition in *eisegesis* to support one's own presuppositions.

Study Two

Jesus and His interaction with women in the Bible

The Samaritan Woman and Mary Magdalene

This study attempts to take an abbreviated look at the Christology of Jesus' dealings with women. Understanding Jesus' attitude and interaction with women helps us to comprehend "what did Jesus do?" while seeking to know "what would Jesus do?"

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

⁴ He had to go through Samaria on the way. ⁵ Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁷ Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." ⁸ He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

⁹ The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans.* She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

¹⁰ Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

¹¹ "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?" ¹² And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

¹³ Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. ¹⁴ But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

¹⁵ "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

¹⁶ "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

¹⁷ "I don't have a husband," the woman replied.

Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband—¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!"

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. ²⁰ So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim,* where our ancestors worshiped?"

²¹ Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. ²³ But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!"

²⁷ Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?” ²⁸ The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, ²⁹ “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” ³⁰ So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

³¹ Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³² But Jesus replied, “I have a kind of food you know nothing about.”

³³ “Did someone bring him food while we were gone?” the disciples asked each other.

³⁴ Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. ³⁵ You know the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe* for harvest. ³⁶ The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! ³⁷ You know the saying, ‘One plants and another harvests.’ And it’s true. ³⁸ I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.”

Many Samaritans Believe

³⁹ Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, “He told me everything I ever did!” ⁴⁰ When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, ⁴¹ long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. ⁴² Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.”

John 4:4-43 NLT

Why was the woman surprised that Jesus was speaking to her? v.9

How did Jesus speak to her? Was it condescending? embarrassing? belittling?

Did Jesus treat her differently because she was a woman?

The woman guesses that Jesus is a prophet and challenges Him on where people can worship. (v. 20) What did Jesus teach her regarding the future of worship?

Do you think it odd that the Son of God would take the time to discuss such matters with her?

What did Jesus tell her regarding the Messiah? v.26

How do you imagine Jesus' disciples would have reacted if they saw them conversing? v.27

What did the woman do with her knowledge of Messiah? v.28ff

How did the Samaritans respond? v.39ff

Why did Jesus choose to reveal His Messiah-ship for the first time to a Samaritan woman?

Jesus is breaking two barriers, speaking with a woman and teaching her. What Christology can we draw from this passage?

Mary Magdalene:

Women Who Followed Jesus

Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, ² along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons; ³ Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's business manager; Susanna; and many others who were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples. Luke 8:1-3, NLT

It is interesting that Jesus traveled not only with His disciples but with women as well. Some suggest that traveling with women could have been seen as scandalous, but obviously we know that was not true. Why did Jesus permit women to join their travels?

Could this be a list of women disciples?

Is there anything about being a disciple which would preclude women?

Do you think Jesus taught the women as they traveled with Him?

³¹ Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32, NLT

Do we have women disciples today?

Mary Magdalene is the first on the list which suggests prominence. Jesus had cured her very early in His ministry and she followed Him caring for Him throughout Galilee. She was with him at the crucifixion. (Mark 15:40-41, John 19:25). She was with Mary at the resurrection.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. ¹² She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. ¹³ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.

"Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

¹⁴ She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him.

¹⁵ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

¹⁶ "Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

¹⁷ "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message. John 20:11-18 NLT

Do you find it interesting that Jesus first appeared to Mary?

What was her response when she recognized it was Jesus she was speaking to?

Do you find it interesting the Jesus asked her to summon the disciples prior to His ascension?

Let's search for the Christology regarding women in other passages:

Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

³⁸ As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

⁴¹ But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! ⁴² There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."
Luke 10:38-42, NLT

Mary "sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught." What do you think of her choice?

What did Jesus think of Mary's choice?

The Lord openly taught women. And, in this case, praised her prioritizing an opportunity to learn over what were her rightful duties.

What do you think of Jesus' response "and it will not be taken away from her"?

Adultery

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."
Matthew 5:27-30, NIV

Does this passage teach more than just not to commit adultery?

How does the man who is looking lustfully at a woman view that woman?

Is he respectful in his thoughts and actions?

Do you think Jesus' teaching here shows us His view of women?

Divorce

³¹“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’” ³²But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Matthew 5:31-32, NIV

The sermon on the mount takes many Old Law instructions and adds the heart of the matter. Here Jesus discusses adultery and then divorce. Both which reflect the treatment of women in a time period when women were too commonly mistreated like chattel.

The Jews could say "I divorce you" three times and it was so. I can't imagine the difficulty faced by a woman so divorced in 500 BC. What is Jesus teaching us about divorce?

What exception makes divorce reasonable in the eyes of the Lord for a man? woman?

Did this teaching place the husband and wife on equal terms regarding termination of a marriage?

⁴“Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’” ⁵And he said, ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’” ⁶Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.” Matthew 19:4-6, NLT

Here Jesus teaches again about marriage and emphasizes that God made them -- male and female. Jesus emphasizes the holy intent and blessing in marriage.

How does God view men and women?

If our desire is to know God and seek His will, shouldn't we view each other as He does?

What changes should we consider?

Study Three

Understanding Egalitarianism

Galatians 3:28

"There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."
Galatians 3:28, NLT

The view of evangelical egalitarians is simply that in Christ, males and females find complete -- total -- absolute equality. "There is no longer ... male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus." They quote this passage as restoring women's position to the relationship that existed prior to the fall (Gen 3).

This is a powerful verse, correctly seen as liberating for many people. But to take this one verse as an absolute and say it applies to all circumstances is a position full of textual challenges. Let's consider the context of Galatians 3.

⁶ I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ.* You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News ⁷ but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ.
Galatians 1:6-7, NLT

Paul is writing the churches in Galatia and trying to persuade them to return to their faith in Jesus. Evidently some are teaching salvation through obeying the law rather than through faith in Jesus. Some were also returning to idolatry.

Chapter 3 is also about salvation, listen to Paul's argument:

⁵ I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.

⁶ In the same way, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."* ⁷ The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.

⁸ What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would declare the Gentiles to be righteous because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you."* ⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.
Galatians 3:5-9, NLT

Who are the children of Abraham (vs 7)?

What did God's promise of "all nations will be blessed through you" mean for the Gentiles?

Remember that only **free Jewish men** could receive an inheritance under Hebrew law. Traditionalist say Paul is making the argument that if you belong to Christ, you are heirs of God's promise (to Abraham) and Jewish law does not restrict your rights of inheritance.

²⁶ For you are all children* of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.* ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile,* slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children* of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

The context of Paul's discussion here is that salvation has come to the gentiles. That God's promise to Abraham is also theirs. Egalitarians read much more into this passage.

How does becoming a Christian change you, "like putting on new clothes"?

In what ways are there no longer differentiation between Jew/Gentile, slave/free, male/female?

Does/Did Christianity abolish slavery?

Paul lead Onesimus to Christ. Realizing Onesimus was a runaway slave of Philemon, Paul returned Onesimus to his master. Consider Philemon's relationship with Onesimus:

¹⁰ I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison. ¹¹ Onesimus* hasn't been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us. ¹² I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart.

¹³ I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf. ¹⁴ But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced. ¹⁵ It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. ¹⁶ He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. Philemon 10-16, NLT

Now that Onesimus is a Christian, did his relationship with Philemon change? How?

How did Christianity change the Jew/Gentile relationship?

How did Christianity change the male/female relationship?

If there is no differentiation for those in Christ, how should we treat each other?

Could we summarize Galatians 3:28 as saying that in Christ:

- 1) social, cultural, and gender distinctions do not affect our unity in Christ?
- 2) all have full access to Jesus and salvation?
- 3) that in Christ we are all equals without distinction?

Study Four Creation Genesis 1 and 2

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make human beings* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,* and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created human beings* in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

²⁹ Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰ And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

³¹ Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

Genesis 1:26-31, NLT

⁴ This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

The Man and Woman in Eden

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵ neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶ Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷ Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.

Genesis 2:4-7, NLT

¹⁸ The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

¹⁹ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh.

²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib^x he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.”

Genesis 2:18-23, NIV

When was man created? When was woman created?

Was man created in the image of God? Was woman created in the image of God?

The doctrine of CREATION ORDER attempts to reason why woman was created after man.

What was man created from?

What was woman created from?

Name two reasons God created woman:

Could it be that woman was created after man so that man could appreciate the blessing God had in store for him through his wife? (He had to learn that he was alone.)

"It was not good for the man to be alone." Why?

Does the fact of woman being created after man make her subject to him?

What do you think of the term "helper suitable" to describe Eve? Is there anything condescending about it?

In English, the word "help" has a broad range of connotations. "Help" can refer to a simple, modest act or it can refer to something much more significant. An example of significant help is the assistance and counsel provided by professionals such as doctors, etc. In Hebrew, the word for "helper" used in [Genesis 2:18](#) and [20](#) is *ezer*, and it is always and only used in the Old Testament in the context of vitally important and powerful assistance. According to R. David Freedman, the word *ezer* is a combination of two roots, meaning "to rescue, to save" and "strength".

The word *ezer* is used twenty-one times in the Old Testament. Twice it is used in the context of the first woman. Three times it is used of people helping, or failing to help, in life-threatening situations. Sixteen times it is used in reference to God as a helper. Without exception, all of these biblical texts are talking about a vital, powerful kind of help, yet when *ezer* is applied to the first woman, its meaning is usually diminished to fit with traditional and cultural views of women's roles.

I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my *help* come from? My *help* comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. [Psalm 121:1-2](#)

Our *help* is in the Name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. [Psalm 124:8](#)

Blessed is he whose *help* is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God. [Psalm 146:5](#)

Ezer describes aspects of God's character – he is our strength, our rescuer, our protector, and our help! And *ezer* was the Holy Spirit's choice of word to describe the first woman. Eve was someone who would provide valuable and vital strength and assistance to Adam.

Ezer kenegdo – "a suitable helper" – is used in reference to the first woman without any narrow qualifications, prescribed limits, or carefully crafted cultural restrictions. In other words, it does not state anywhere in Genesis 2 *how* the first woman was to express and apply her strength and help towards her husband. Unfortunately too many people have just presumed that the woman's role was to be subservient. These people have read Genesis chapter 2 with narrow, preconceived notions and have not seen the wonderful expressions of equality, affinity and unity in this passage.

Women: In what ways can you be an *ezer* – a valuable strength – in your family, in your church, at your workplace, in your community?

<http://newlife.id.au/equality-and-gender-issues/a-suitable-helper/>

We are studying Genesis 1-2, particularly man and woman's relationship in Eden prior to sin entering the world.

The Lord gave them instructions in Genesis 1:29-30. Were the Lord's instructions any different to the man or the woman?

Can we say, God created men and women in His image and they existed fully as equals in Eden prior to the fall?

¹³ For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve. ¹⁴ And it was not Adam who was deceived by Satan. The woman was deceived, and sin was the result. ¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing,* assuming they continue to live in faith, love, holiness, and modesty. 1 Timothy 2:13-15, NLT

If you are inclined to fully dismiss creation order relevance, note that the Apostle Paul used both creation order and fall doctrine (Genesis 3) as part of his argument that "women [*or* wives] should learn quietly and submissively."

Study Five

The Fall

Genesis 3

The Man and Woman Sin

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

² “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. ³ “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’ ”

⁴ “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵ “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

⁶ The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸ When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

¹¹ “Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

¹² The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

¹³ Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike* your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶ Then he said to the woman,

“I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,
and in pain you will give birth.
And you will desire to control your husband,
but he will rule over you.*”

¹⁷ And to the man he said,

“Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree
whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,

the ground is cursed because of you.
All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.
¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you,
though you will eat of its grains.
¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow
will you have food to eat
until you return to the ground
from which you were made.
For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return.”

Paradise Lost: God's Judgment

²⁰ Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.*
²¹ And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.
²² Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings* have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” ²³ So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴ After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis 3, NLT

Genesis 3 and the consequences of initial sin by Adam and Eve are commonly referred to as FALL DOCTRINE.

We are all familiar with Genesis 3, but let's examine some of the finer points.
Who did the serpent speak to and tempt to eat?

Where was Adam when Eve was being tempted? (verse 6)

Traditionalist view: Tempting Eve and not Adam was an attack on the authority of the man.
The serpent knew already that women are gullible.

Egalitarian view: Tempting Eve and with no response from Adam shows both were equal.

When did Eve sin?

- a) When the serpent told her she wouldn't die and will be like God.
- b) When she was convinced and saw the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious
- c) When she wanted the wisdom it would give her.
- d) when she picked the fruit.
- e) when she ate the fruit.
- f) when she gave the fruit to her husband.

Adam and Eve ate the fruit and their eyes were opened and they were ashamed of their nakedness. The Lord came in the cool of the evening and confronted them on their sin. The blame game started, "the woman you gave me ..." and "the serpent deceived."

CONSEQUENCES:

As a result, God chose to curse:

- 1)
- 2)

Did God curse Adam? What were Adam's consequences?

Did God curse Eve? What were Eve's consequences?

Did Adam and Eve die? (Genesis 5:5)

God's response:

Did God command the consequences of the fall, or are the consequences of the fall a natural result from sin? or maybe some of both?

Prescriptive or Descriptive?

Let's look at the results from the fall and ask, is this what God wanted and intended from the beginning (prescribed by the Lord)? Or is this different from what God intended and a result of Adam and Eve's action (descriptive of changes from Genesis 2)?

- a: In pain you will give birth.
- b: You will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.
- c: All your life you will struggle to scratch out a living.
- d: By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat.
- e: You will return to the ground from which you were made.

¹⁹ For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.

²⁰ Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹ the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. Rom 8:19-21

Consequence of sin is far reaching. It includes all creation which looks forward to restoration.

God spoke to Eve and told her that she will have pain in childbirth and that her husband will rule over her.

God spoke to Adam and told him that he will work for his food until he dies and will then return to the ground.

If we think consequences of a, c, d and e are not what God desires (not His preferred will), then why should we think "b" is His will?

Interestingly, we all try to minimize the consequences of sin. Today we use herbicides to control weed growth and pain blockers to relieve the pain woman experience in childbirth. But what have we done to minimize the idea that the husband will rule over his wife?

Traditionalist will say this is an acting command that will last the ages. Some expand it to mean that men will rule over women in the home and the church (an absolute).

Egalitarians will say that this was resolved in Christ and that He has established full gender equality.

But what God told Eve was "you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you." This is quite a change from Genesis 1-2. Obviously it is the result of sin. Consider 1 Peter 3:

⁷ In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered. 1 Peter 3:7, NLT

"She is your equal partner in God's gift of new life." What do you make of that?

How about Ephesians?

Spirit-Guided Relationships: Wives and Husbands

²¹ And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. ²⁴ As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

²⁵ For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. Ephesians 5:21-25, NLT

Compare "desire to control your husband" with "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Compare "he shall rule over you" to "love your wives, just as Christ loved the church."

Yes, Christ is head of the church. Yes, the husband is head of his wife. But the Christology here is that Christ loved, served and died for the church -- and is the example for the husband to love and serve his wife. The wife has no fear submitting to such a husband as he loves her and puts her first. Her trust should be beyond doubt.

Shouldn't we see the consequences of Genesis 3 just as that. Nature in a sinful world versus what blessings God has for us when we live according to His will.

Study Six

1 Corinthians 11

Describe the context.
What is at issue?

Instructions for Public Worship

² I am so glad that you always keep me in your thoughts, and that you are following the teachings I passed on to you. ³ But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.* ⁴ A man dishonors his head* if he covers his head while praying or prophesying. ⁵ But a woman dishonors her head* if she prays or prophesies without a covering on her head, for this is the same as shaving her head. ⁶ Yes, if she refuses to wear a head covering, she should cut off all her hair! But since it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut or her head shaved, she should wear a covering.*

⁷ A man should not wear anything on his head when worshiping, for man is made in God's image and reflects God's glory. And woman reflects man's glory. ⁸ For the first man didn't come from woman, but the first woman came from man. ⁹ And man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man. ¹⁰ For this reason, and because the angels are watching, a woman should wear a covering on her head to show she is under authority.*

¹¹ But among the Lord's people, women are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. ¹² For although the first woman came from man, every other man was born from a woman, and everything comes from God.

¹³ Judge for yourselves. Is it right for a woman to pray to God in public without covering her head? ¹⁴ Isn't it obvious that it's disgraceful for a man to have long hair? ¹⁵ And isn't long hair a woman's pride and joy? For it has been given to her as a covering. ¹⁶ But if anyone wants to argue about this, I simply say that we have no other custom than this, and neither do God's other churches.

Order at the Lord's Supper

¹⁷ But in the following instructions, I cannot praise you. For it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. ¹⁸ First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹ But, of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God's approval will be recognized!

1 Corinthians 11:1-19, NLT

Apparently the church in Corinth was a mess. Lets examine broadly what Paul is discussing in his letter:

Chapter 11, Instructions for public worship, specifically prayer and communion

Chapter 12, Spiritual gifts and the make-up of the church (one body, many parts)

Chapter 13, Spiritual gifts without love are nothing, instructions on how to treat each other

Chapter 14, Continues instruction regarding worship, specifically orderly worship

Chapter 15, Paul's "most important teaching" of salvation through Jesus and His resurrection

What are Paul's instructions in verses 3 - 10?

Why were women to cover their heads?

Is this a custom or a command?

Why don't women cover their heads in worship today?

Was Paul telling women not to pray or prophecy?

What was prophecy? (14:3)

Is this not an example of women praying and prophesying in worship? (verse 5)

¹⁷ 'In the last days,' God says,
'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

Acts 2:17a, NLT

Is chapter 11 a discussion of public worship?

11:13 "in public" (NLT) is not in the Greek. It is an interpretation, added for clarity by the translators.

One argument that it is public starts with why would it matter what she wore if she were at home with her husband? The covering honored her husband in front of others by showing that she was under his authority.

Another argument that it is public is the surrounding context. Verse 17ff discuss the Lord's supper and clearly they are given instruction on how to act (and now to not act) when assembled.

²⁰ When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord's Supper. ²¹ For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others. As a result, some go hungry while others get drunk. ²² What? Don't you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God's church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this!

1 Corinthians 11:20-22, NLT

The church is divided and their actions are a disgrace. They are not honoring each other when they assemble and it is hurting the church. Paul is giving instruction on how to treat each other and honor the assembly in chapters 11-14.

An argument that 11:1-16 is a private setting has to do with these verses in chapter 14:

³⁴ Women should be silent during the church meetings. It is not proper for them to speak. They should be submissive, just as the law says. ³⁵ If they have any questions, they should ask their husbands at home, for it is improper for women to speak in church meetings.*

1 Corinthians 14:34-35, NLT

Some feel that Paul has contradicted himself, unless 11:5ff is a private setting.

⁵ But a woman dishonors her head* if she prays or prophesies without a covering on her head, for this is the same as shaving her head.

Significant discussion on "women should be silent" will be covered next lesson. It is brought up here to support an argument that some believe chapter 11's setting to be private.

⁷ A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; ⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. ¹⁰ It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels. ¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

1 Corinthians 11:7-12, NIV

Paul here brings up creation order as a basis to follow the custom of the woman covering her head. The difficulty of this passage occurs when it is taken as absolute, meaning that all men have authority over all women. Remember that in Greek man/husband and woman/wife are the same word. Verse 11 could be translated: "Nevertheless, in the Lord a wife is not independent of her husband, nor is a husband independent of his wife."

I like one summary I read of this passage. That men and women (or husbands and wives) are incomplete without the other.

What do you think, especially when considering the way Paul closes the thought with "but everything comes from God"?

Study Seven

1 Corinthians 14

Tongues and Prophecy

Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy. ² For if you have the ability to speak in tongues,* you will be talking only to God, since people won't be able to understand you. You will be speaking by the power of the Spirit,* but it will all be mysterious. ³ But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them. ⁴ A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church.

⁵ I wish you could all speak in tongues, but even more I wish you could all prophesy. For prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues, unless someone interprets what you are saying so that the whole church will be strengthened.

⁶ Dear brothers and sisters,* if I should come to you speaking in an unknown language,* how would that help you? But if I bring you a revelation or some special knowledge or prophecy or teaching, that will be helpful. ⁷ Even lifeless instruments like the flute or the harp must play the notes clearly, or no one will recognize the melody. ⁸ And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear call, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle?

⁹ It's the same for you. If you speak to people in words they don't understand, how will they know what you are saying? You might as well be talking into empty space.

¹⁰ There are many different languages in the world, and every language has meaning. ¹¹ But if I don't understand a language, I will be a foreigner to someone who speaks it, and the one who speaks it will be a foreigner to me. ¹² And the same is true for you. Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church.

¹³ So anyone who speaks in tongues should pray also for the ability to interpret what has been said. ¹⁴ For if I pray in tongues, my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying.

¹⁵ Well then, what shall I do? I will pray in the spirit,* and I will also pray in words I understand. I will sing in the spirit, and I will also sing in words I understand. ¹⁶ For if you praise God only in the spirit, how can those who don't understand you praise God along with you? How can they join you in giving thanks when they don't understand what you are saying? ¹⁷ You will be giving thanks very well, but it won't strengthen the people who hear you.

¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you. ¹⁹ But in a church meeting I would rather speak five understandable words to help others than ten thousand words in an unknown language.

²⁰ Dear brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies when it comes to evil, but be mature in understanding matters of this kind. ²¹ It is written in the Scriptures*:

“I will speak to my own people
through strange languages
and through the lips of foreigners.
But even then, they will not listen to me,”*
says the LORD.

²² So you see that speaking in tongues is a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers. Prophecy, however, is for the benefit of believers, not unbelievers. ²³ Even so, if unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your church meeting and hear everyone speaking in an unknown

language, they will think you are crazy. ²⁴ But if all of you are prophesying, and unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your meeting, they will be convicted of sin and judged by what you say. ²⁵ As they listen, their secret thoughts will be exposed, and they will fall to their knees and worship God, declaring, "God is truly here among you."

A Call to Orderly Worship

²⁶ Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you.

²⁷ No more than two or three should speak in tongues. They must speak one at a time, and someone must interpret what they say. ²⁸ But if no one is present who can interpret, they must be silent in your church meeting and speak in tongues to God privately.

²⁹ Let two or three people prophesy, and let the others evaluate what is said. ³⁰ But if someone is prophesying and another person receives a revelation from the Lord, the one who is speaking must stop.

³¹ In this way, all who prophesy will have a turn to speak, one after the other, so that everyone will learn and be encouraged. ³² Remember that people who prophesy are in control of their spirit and can take turns. ³³ For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the meetings of God's holy people.*

³⁴ Women should be silent during the church meetings. It is not proper for them to speak. They should be submissive, just as the law says. ³⁵ If they have any questions, they should ask their husbands at home, for it is improper for women to speak in church meetings.*

³⁶ Or do you think God's word originated with you Corinthians? Are you the only ones to whom it was given? ³⁷ If you claim to be a prophet or think you are spiritual, you should recognize that what I am saying is a command from the Lord himself. ³⁸ But if you do not recognize this, you yourself will not be recognized.*

³⁹ So, my dear brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But be sure that everything is done properly and in order.

1 Corinthians 14, NLT

14:6, 20, 26, 39: "and sisters" is an interpretation. Literally Paul wrote "brothers" The translators added "and sisters" for clarity that the textual comment was for women as well. It's present in several translations.

What were the benefits of prophecies and tongues? (vs. 3-4)

How do prophecies and tongues differ? (vs. 5, 14, 22)

What are the problems of speaking, praying or singing in tongues? (vs. 15-17)

How is your Bible sub-titled at 14:26?

Corinth had chaos in its assemblies. Paul is helping them resolve these difficulties. He gives instructions regarding three different disruptions which have come to his attention.

What was Paul's principle objective in teaching about worship? (vs. 26)

If someone speaks in tongues, who must also be present? (vs. 27)

If an interpreter is not present, what must the one speaking in tongues do? (vs. 28)

If someone is prophesying, and another receives a revelation from the Lord, what must the person prophesying do? (vs. 30)

What does Paul say about women in verses 34-35?

What was Paul's objective for these previous instructions? (vs 39-40).

The same Greek word is used in verses 28 ("keep quiet", NIV), 30 ("stop", NIV/NLT) and in 34 ("silent", NIV/NLT). The word means "keep silent, be silent, become silent, stop talking."

Does the context suggest that to be silent is a situational issue or a lasting ordinance?

- a) regarding the one speaking in tongues (v 28)
- b) regarding the one who is prophesying (v 30)
- c) women in the church (v 34)

Traditionalist will say speaking in tongues and prophesying are conditional / situational restrictions. But 34-35 are not and treat it as law.

Egalitarians will say that all three are situational and to view the silence of women as law is contradictory to 11:5 "every woman who prays or prophesies" and Acts 2:17 "your sons and daughters will prophesy" and 14:39 "be eager to prophesy."

Does your study Bible have a note following 14:35 that says "Some manuscripts place verses 34-35 after 14:40"?

Verses that cannot find a home are a red flag for a possible interpolation.

What does your study Bible or commentary say about v 34 "just as the law says"?

The only reference I found regarding "the law" points to Genesis 3, the fall. There is no law saying women were to remain silent in worship. In fact, any adult in the community could actively participate in the synagogues and shared readings from the scroll and sitting in Moses seat sharing their thoughts. Many believe that verses 34-35 are an interpolation most likely copied from a marginal note and as such should be given no special consideration.

Another view: v34 says "she should be submissive" could point to Genesis 3 (fall doctrine). However, if that is so we are now discussing a different relationship -- that of a husband and wife (not an absolute of all women). There is an argument that the women in 1 Corinthians 14 are wives harassing their husbands as they taught or prophesied. While it is a possible

scenario (remember wife and women is the same word in Greek) it assumes the wife of the teacher was possibly ignorant (think young and untrained) and was improperly asking lots of questions. To which Paul's response to save them until later can make sense.

Labeling a passage as an interpolation is a serious matter. We must allow the evidence to speak. We can't discard verses we don't like any more than we can accept verses we do like. Doing so is a type of negative proof texting. There is a much stronger argument that Mark 16:9ff is an interpolation than is 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. If scholars were to discover ancient writings which did not include them then the argument for an interpolation would be stronger.

What we need to do is search the context and intent of the message delivered and ask ourselves what did Paul mean to say. It seems he is responding to an inquiry from someone close to the Corinth church: "Help, our worship is a disorganized mess!"

Combine verse 26 with verse 40 and you get Paul's purpose for writing:

Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Chapters 11-14 address worship, communion, giftedness, how to act in love, honoring one another by withholding your gift in the interest of orderly worship. How does that influence your hermeneutic?

One problem with the absolute position of "women must be silent in the church" is how to define it. How do we set the boundaries of when women must be quiet?

- Be silent once you cross the threshold of the church building?
- What about during Bible class?
- Or is it, just during assembly 10:15 to 11:30 on Sundays?
- Can they participate at all during worship? What about singing?

When we start doubting the scriptural reasons for our beliefs or understandings, we have to ask ourselves if what we are doing is to comply with God's will or is it a tradition.

Doing something out of tradition is not wrong, it is just tradition. As such, it is a freedom in Christ. We may elect to continue the practice or not. It's our choice to make and should be made in love and unity. Our traditions are part of our identity.

Remember the elders have no agenda with this study. Here is one concern:

If someone takes a tradition and teaches it as law then potentially sin can result where God never intended there to be law.

⁵ May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. ⁶ Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15:5-6, NLT

Study Eight

1 Timothy 2

The setting of 1 Timothy is Ephesus. The home of the Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the world and packed with priestess. Paul is writing to Timothy in an obvious continued dialog. The letter should be considered a low level communication, assuming that Paul and Timothy are very familiar with each other and have common knowledge, interest and past experiences. Paul refers to Timothy as "my son" (1:18) an endearing sentiment prior to telling him to "fight the battle well."

Paul is writing to Timothy encouraging his opposition of false teachers.

Warnings against False Teachings

³ When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there in Ephesus and stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth. ⁴ Don't let them waste their time in endless discussion of myths and spiritual pedigrees. These things only lead to meaningless speculations,* which don't help people live a life of faith in God.*

⁵ The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. ⁶ But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. ⁷ They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don't know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently.

1 Timothy 1:3-7, NLT

What was being taught? What were these meaningless discussions?

Instructions on Worship

2 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³ This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. ⁷ And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.

⁸ Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. ⁹ I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

¹¹ A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety. 1 Timothy 2, NIV

What is the key message of 1 Timothy 2? (vs 3-6)

What do you think of Paul's message in 3-6 compared to his warnings to Timothy in chapter 1? Does it sound like a rebuttal?

What was the instruction for men and women in worship (vs 8-10)?

Does your version of the Bible have a translator's note on verse 9?

It could be interpreted as "want women [who pray] to do so in modest apparel." This would tie the verse to verse 8, men who pray, followed by verse 9 instructions for women who pray.

Part of the concern regarding women dressing modestly at church is to not confuse them with the prostitutes which were ever present in Ephesus. Paul stresses that woman should be known by their good works and presenting their true inner beauty before the community (and honoring God).

¹¹ A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.

1 Timothy 2:11, NIV

Instructing women about religion was seldom done. Here Paul continues his discussion by saying women (or wife's) should lean in quietness and full submission. The word for quietness here is not the same word used in 1 Corinthians 14, here it means stillness, or distance from bustle.

Why do you think it was important to teach the women (wife)?

Evidently women were teaching in Ephesus, if it weren't so Paul would not need to forbid it. Why do you think Paul was stopping the women from teaching?

Paul instructs not to let women teach men or have authority over them. The word for "authority" is only used this one time in the Bible. Does your Bible have a note regarding "authority"?

The word for authority is very strong and means literally to dominate or usurp authority. Remembering that wife/woman and man/husband are interchangeable in Greek, verse 12 could read like this:

I do not permit a wife to teach or to dominate her husband; she must be quiet.

- or -

I do not permit a woman to teach domineeringly over a man; she must be quiet.

We again have to ask ourselves, does the context here suggest a situational instruction based on what is going on in Ephesus, or is Paul stating a lasting command?

Paul then goes into a discussion regarding creation order and the fall. Almost suggesting that women are naive and subject to being deceived -- which may play well into the situation at Ephesus. The fix for all this is teaching the truth about Jesus and shutting down the false teachers (which would include both men and women). Additionally Paul instructs that the women should be taught (again assuming that they are the trouble maker, discussing genealogies, myths and meaningless speculations). If we remember that this is a personal letter to Timothy, then the assumptions make sense. "I do not permit" (vs. 12) is Paul expressing his opinion on how to resolve the problem shared to him by Timothy.

¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing,* assuming they continue to live in faith, love, holiness, and modesty.

Did Eve die after she ate the forbidden fruit of the garden of Eden?

Verse 15 is actually very simple. The salvation of Eve came from her children, mankind continued (if she didn't have children humans would cease to exist) in this cursed world and through them the Christ was born bringing salvation to all. (If Eve did not have children, Jesus would not have been born.)

³ This is good and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.

⁵ For, There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus.

⁶ He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.

1 Timothy 2:3-6, NLT

How should that affect our worship? Why?

Study Nine I Timothy 3

Leaders in the Church

This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be an elder,* he desires an honorable position."² So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife.* He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach.³ He must not be a heavy drinker* or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money.⁴ He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him.⁵ For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?

⁶ An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall.*⁷ Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap.

⁸ In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money.⁹ They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience.¹⁰ Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons.

¹¹ In the same way, their wives* must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do.

¹² A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well.
¹³ Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 3:1-13, NLT

A question that is commonly asked while examining women in the church is if a woman may serve as an elder or deacon.

Read verses 1-7 and list all the conditions mentioned of an elder:

Read verses 8-9 and list all the conditions mentioned of a deacon:

Read verse 11, what are the conditions mentioned of these women:

Check your study Bible for verse 11. What are the translator notes regarding "wives*"?

So there are two different ways to translate verse 11. The traditional view is these are characteristics necessary of a deacon's wife. The egalitarian view is these are characteristics of a woman who desires to serve as a deacon. The Greek word for "wife" and the Greek word for "woman" is the same word and must be deciphered by context. Same is true for the Greek word meaning "man" or "husband."

Do you find it interesting that there are no qualifications for an elder's wife?

In your review of verses 1-7, do you read any exception that would include women to serve as an elder?

Egalitarians would argue that women should not be excluded as serving as elders on the basis that Galatians 3:28 is authoritative and absolute.

²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile,* slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Egalitarians also argue that there are no qualifications for an elder's spouse and similarly there are no qualifications for a deacon's spouse. Notice how similar verses 8-9 are to verse 11. Notice the differences also tend to follow male/female considerations.

Some read 1 Timothy 3 as qualifications of male elders (v1-7), male deacons (v8-9), and then female deacons (v11). What do you think?

What about Romans 16?

Paul Greets His Friends

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. ² Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me. Romans 16:1-2, NLT

Was Phoebe a deaconess?

There is an interesting classic Greek study on the word deacon. The first time the feminine "deaconess" is known to be used recorded in the script of the Council of Nicaea (325 ad). This has been used to explain 1 Timothy 3:11 phrase "woman who is a deacon" was used in lieu of the feminine "deaconess" at the time Paul wrote it.

Other thoughts:

Traditionalist will point out that when the apostles chose 7 to care for the Grecian widows that they were all men. Although they were not referred to as deacons there were called to serve. (Acts 6:1-6). Egalitarians will say the men were selected out of cultural custom.

Consider 1 Timothy 3:12:

¹² A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. NLT

Does this verse confirm only men should serve as deacons or could it be applied generically?

It is important to differentiate elders and deacons. Elders are Bishops of the church and are placed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). Deacons are not in a position of authority but of service and are confirmed by a test (1 Timothy 3:10).

Some will say that Phoebe was "just a servant." (Rom 16:1) But isn't that what all deacons are? Our society has elevated deacon to an office, but there is no Biblical argument for deacon being anything other than a position of responsible service. We have many people (both men and women) who diligently serve our congregation -- some with and many without a title. May God bless all who serve and unselfishly give of themselves.

It is legalism that pushes who can do what, when and where. Let's not let distractions rob us of the joy of God's salvation or divert us from the task at hand. We are here to worship in spirit and in truth. We are here to encourage one another to love and good works. We are here foster relationships and restore people with their God.

Study Ten

Interesting Verses

Let's examine the following verses and ask how they apply to us.

¹⁸ And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. ¹⁹ For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. ²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" ²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin,* so that we could be made right with God through Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, NLT

Aren't all Christians expected to act as Christ's ambassadors, God speaking through them?

⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God ^P may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV

Who is the servant of God?

¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 1 Peter 3:15-16 NIV

Who is expected to "always be prepared?"

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. Romans 8:26-28, NLT

God gives us all (men and women) His Spirit to help us pray.

If we need the Spirit to intercede after searching our heart, does it matter who is praying?

Wouldn't it be best that the prayer leader is the one with the right heart?

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10, NIV

Do we not all have the same Spirit dwelling within us?

One Body with Many Parts

¹² The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. ¹³ Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles,* some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.* 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, NLT

Sound familiar?

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 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. Galatians 3:26-28, NIV

If you are a part of the body of Christ, what are you?

What does it mean to share the same Spirit, to be one in Christ Jesus?

Does it have anything to do with your heritage, economic class, or gender?

Where do you find your identity?

¹⁴ Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. ¹⁵ If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

¹⁸ But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. ¹⁹ How strange a body would be if it had only one part! ²⁰ Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. ²¹ The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."

²² In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. ²³ And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, ²⁴ while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. ²⁵ This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

²⁷ All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, NLT

My identity is that I have died to myself and have been clothed in Christ. My hope is found in the resurrection of Jesus. I'm glad to be some part of the body of Christ and know my function is to care for the body. God has placed me just where I needed to be and has enabled me with a giftedness to serve.

Apollos Instructed at Ephesus

²⁴ Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures well, had arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt. ²⁵ He had been taught the way of the Lord, and he taught others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit* and with accuracy. However, he knew only about John's baptism. ²⁶ When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately. Acts 18:24-26, NLT

Priscilla (wife) and Aquila (husband) helped Apollos after they heard him teach. While we do not know exactly what was said by whom, we do know that they both acted to correct Apollos. There is an assumption that Priscilla had the greater input because she is listed first. What is important is that they acted and "as iron sharpens iron"

Priscilla and Aquila were very active in their faith. Read what Paul had to say about them.

³ Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus. ⁴ In fact, they once risked their lives for me. I am thankful to them, and so are all the Gentile churches. ⁵ Also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home. Romans 16:3-5a, NLT

Quite a legacy. Obviously they used their gifts.

⁴ There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶ God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, NLT

How do we honor the gifts given to men? to women?

How do we protect against quenching the Spirit in our brothers? in our sisters?

²³ And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. ²⁴ Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us. 1 John 3:23-24, NLT

That same Spirit will also lead us to love one another. Praise God.

Study Eleven Disputable Matters

14 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. ² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹ It is written:

“ ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,
‘every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will acknowledge God.’ ” ^z

¹² So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴ I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. ¹⁵ If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸ because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹ It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

²² So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³ But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. Romans 14

What action is required of the person with "strong" faith toward the one of "weak" faith in a dispute? (vs 3.)

What action is required of the person with "weak" faith toward the one of "strong" faith in a dispute? (vs. 3)

To act differently is to pass judgment on the other, why?

What are the various disputes listed in Romans 14?

vs. 2

vs. 5

vs. 21

Doesn't Paul consider these disputable matters as freedoms we have in Christ?

Do the above disputes include sinful matters or man's traditions?

Paul clearly teaches that food offered to idols is just food, as there are no idol gods.

Can man create laws that lead to sin? Can man's traditions affect a person's faith?

Where should our focus be? vs. 17-18

Paul's Use of His Freedom

¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23, NIV

When Paul encountered a Jewish community, he lived in accordance with that community's customs (those having the law). When Paul encountered a gentile community, he lived in accordance of gentile customs (those not having the law). In both instances, he did not violate the law of Christ, but rather surrendered his freedoms in Christ which could offend the local community. Why? (vs. 22-23)

Remember Paul is a visitor. When he enters a community, he acts so as to not complicate his gospel message. He is not trying to influence the community by pointing out their traditions -- his message of salvation is too precious.

Would you willingly surrender your freedoms in Christ for the benefit of the Body?

Over the series of this class we have shown Biblical examples of women praying and prophesying during public worship. We have explained the unique circumstances where women were told to be silent, or quiet. Having our women remain quiet during the worship service has been our tradition. There is nothing wrong with a tradition, as long as people recognize it as tradition and not law. It is our choice, our preference, our custom, our community.

Now ask yourself:

- 1) Do you think you could attend an egalitarian worship service and remain throughout the worship without making a scene by leaving? Could you compliment the young lady who lead a beautiful prayer as you left?
- 2) Ladies, could you surrender your freedom by remaining quiet during the worship in order to build up a church which struggles with egalitarian views?

I think we sometimes get in our own way when it comes to religion.

Listen to Jesus words:

²⁸“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”
Matthew 11:28-30, NIV

Christianity is not a difficult life; it's a blessed life.

Listen to how Paul closes out his thoughts on disputable matters:

Living to Please Others

We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. ²We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. ³For even Christ didn't live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, “The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me.”* ⁴Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.

⁵May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. ⁶Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

Romans 15:1-7, NLT

"We who are strong" in the Lord "MUST BE CONSIDERATE of those who are sensitive about things like this. We MUST NOT just please ourselves."

God will give you this patience and encouragement.

God will help you live together in complete harmony with each other.

We need to "accept each other, just as Christ has accepted you" = brings glory to God!

What are you willing to do in the name of unity? Are you willing to permit another to express their gifts even if it makes you uncomfortable?

If we insist that someone else suppress their giftedness in Christ in order for us to be comfortable, what does that say about us?