

THEOLOGY I: Humanity (part 3)

Session 7 - Dr. Jeremy Kimble

BIBLICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD

- It is important also to note the fact that God made men and women equal in **essence** (value), **dignity**, and worth, and different in **role** and **function**.
 - Complementarianism vs. Egalitarianism

EGALITARIANISM

- The egalitarian view argues that the overall teaching of Scripture is equality between men and women, and that limiting the roles a woman can fill, just because she is a woman, inevitably violates equality. They cite texts like Gal. 3:28 and the few verses that seem to suggest otherwise, they believe, can be explained as limited by cultural factors and were never meant to be taken as timeless principles.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal 3:28

COMPLEMENTARIANISM

- The complementarian view agrees that men and women are equal, but believes equality can be maintained along with a differentiation of roles, because the roles do not involve being higher and lower, but being complementary. They see this as being taught in a number of places in Scripture. Exactly how the principles apply in specific situations can be difficult to determine, for we have positions and roles today that did not exist in biblical times (Sunday School teacher, small group leader, worship leader, etc.), but the key passages do require some differentiation of roles between men and women.

WHY AM I COMPLEMENTARIAN?

- **Eph. 5:22-33, 1 Pet. 3:1-7:**
 - These two passages seem to be the clearest teaching on the differentiation of roles in the **home**. Egalitarians believe the idea of mutual submission in Eph. 5:21 qualifies vv. 22-33, and seek to make a parallel with slavery, which follows the instructions about husbands and wives in Ephesians and precedes it in 1 Peter. They say, just as the overall teaching of Scripture eventually led us to reject slavery in spite of these verses, so the overall teaching of Scripture should lead us to egalitarian marriage in spite of these verses.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Eph 5:22-30

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. 1 Pet 3:1-7

- Complementarians accept mutual submission within the body, but see a special case of submission within marriage that reflects the relationship of the **church** to **Christ**. Husbands are not commanded to be submissive; wives are. Husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church. So their headship is not domination, but servanthood. They are given the authority to make decisions, but are charged to do so not to gratify themselves, but to give of themselves to serve and bless their wives. Still, it is headship. There is differentiation of roles.

- **Gal. 3:28:**

*But now that **faith** has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through **faith**. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. Gal 3:25-29*

- For egalitarians, this is the key verse of Scripture, giving the key by which all other teaching on men and women should be **elevated**. But the role of men and women is not even in view in the passage. Egalitarians seize on this verse, not for exegetical reasons, but because it supports what they want to say.
- I think complementarians are able to interpret this verse much more naturally. It is simply an affirmation of the unity (it doesn't even use the word "equality") all believers have in Christ that transcends the barriers of society, but in no way outlaws complementary roles.

- **1 Tim. 2:12-15:**

I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. 1 Tim 2:12-15