

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture

Standing on Truth in
Our Shaky World



TEACHER'S GUIDE

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture: Standing on the Truth in Our Shaky World
by Author/Teacher Linda Linder

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Acknowledgements from Linda Linder

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture would not be in your hands today if God had not brought two very special, talented and godly women to Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis. Lori Bleth and Karen Heddle are humble servants who have contributed hours of time, creative talent, godly wisdom, prayer, and support to this project.

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And Ben, Steve, and Chris, our three sons—It's the joy of my heart to see each one of you become a godly man who desires to live your life to honor Him. You encourage me, and give me the freedom to minister. Thank you!

Dear Sister-in-Christ,

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body as well.—James 3:1-3

This is a sobering admonition, and not a very encouraging way to begin a teacher's guide. But you are reading these words because you are considering teaching a class on biblical womanhood, and this is very serious business. As a teacher, you will be in a position to exert influence over other women who will trust you and your words. The Bible holds teachers in strict account for what we teach. This sternness should make each one of us very careful in taking on the mantle of "teacher." If you continue reading in James 3, you will see that the brother of our Lord moves directly from this caution about teaching into the subject of the words we speak, and then he writes of wisdom, worldliness and humility—all subjects of vital importance to a teacher. I suggest you read the complete letter of James before accepting the position of class teacher of Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture.

Although the warning is sober, the privilege is great. As Christian women, we have the high calling of teaching one another. I'm so grateful you are considering this! My prayer is that you will accept this calling, not only with a sober mind, but also with confidence and joy.

The mandate we as Christian women have is spelled out in Titus 2:1-5.

*But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older women, likewise, are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women...
—Titus 2: 1, 3-4a*

These verses give the call to teach women, and some guidelines to follow when you do. We are to teach sound doctrine according to the inerrancy of the Scriptures. In our personal lives, we are to exhibit behavior that is consistent with a godly woman—to be kind with our words and not addicted to wine or anything else that would detract from being a godly example (e.g., food, TV, books or magazines, etc.) In other words, a teacher is to be a woman who not only has the reputation of being godly, but in her private life and in her heart she must honor God. This is a high calling!

Of course, none of us can meet this high standard on our own. If you are thinking right now that you just can't do it, you're not alone. Congratulations, you're right! You can't. But He can.

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in (you) that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.—Hebrews 13: 20-21

Yes, God will equip you for this task of training younger women. So if you feel inadequate, that's good. Rely on Him.

At no time in history has there been a greater need for women to rise up and teach biblical principles to other women. We've lost our way today. Too many women don't know what it means to be a woman. They don't know how to be a woman. And this isn't just in the secular world. In our churches, there is much confusion regarding the roles, responsibilities, and value of women. The time is right to teach sound doctrine from the Bible. If you have the desire to teach, this is wonderful! Rely on your Heavenly Father, and teach, teach, teach!

Take time to read this teacher's guide. I pray that it will encourage you. As Dr. Al Mohler¹ has said,

For too long, those who hold to the biblical pattern of gender distinctions have allowed themselves to be silenced, marginalized, and embarrassed when confronted by new gender theorist. Now is the time to recapture the momentum, force the questions, and show this generation God's design in the biblical concept of manhood and womanhood. God's glory is shown to the world in the complementarity of men and women. This crucial challenge is the summons to Christian boldness in the present hour.

In this present hour, I pray that you will respond to this crucial challenge with boldness.

*Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.
—1 Thessalonians 5:23-24*

Much love and blessings,

Linda

1. Mohler, Dr. R. Albert, Jr.. "A Call for Courage on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood." December 16, 2003. <http://www.albertmohler.com/2003/12/16/a-call-for-courage-on-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood-4/> (accessed 10/20/10).

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How to Use the Teacher Guide

This Teacher Guide is designed to equip you to teach *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture* to a class of women. Whether your class consists of three women or more than 100, this guide contains the tools you will need to teach the women God has given to you.

The Teacher Kit

The Teacher Kit consists of one of each of the following: a Teacher Guide, a Discussion Leader Guide, a Student Guide, a Resource CD, and three DVDs containing recorded Teaching Sessions for all eight lessons (see section in this Introduction titled “Using the DVDs”).

The Resource CD contains PowerPoint® presentation for each lesson, printable PDFs of a class roster, a treats sign-up page, teaching outlines for each lesson, and papers titled “Abba, Father,” “Biblical Womanhood and the Single Woman,” and “Busy at Home.” These papers may be printed and distributed to those who are attending your class.

Take time to familiarize yourself with the Teacher Guide. Much time, effort, and prayer has gone into the preparation of this material so you will be well equipped to confidently teach your class. As with anything you do, the more you put into your preparation the more you will get out of it. Also, when you are well-prepared and well-informed, the women in your class will benefit greatly.

What the Introduction Includes

The Introduction of this Teacher Guide consists of six sections:

- “Preparing to Teach” will provide you with suggestions on how to prepare yourself before teaching this important class, as well as a checklist of responsibilities to address before your class begins.

- “Working with Small Group Discussion Leaders” will guide you through the process of selecting leaders who will facilitate class discussion. This section will also provide you with important steps to ensure your leaders understand and embrace biblical womanhood. You also will find pointers on how to encourage and equip these women to be good discussion facilitators.
- “Teaching Material” is an explanation of the teaching materials. You will find a key to the various parts of the teaching notes in this section.
- “Explanation of Lessons” includes a summary of each lesson, its goals, and an overview of the material to be presented.
- “Use of the DVDs” provides an explanation of the DVDs included with the Teacher Guide and how they may be used to help with teaching this material.
- And finally, the “Additional Comments” section provides some important final notes to help you before you start teaching the first class.

Preparing to Teach

This material is in your hands because God has drawn you to teach other women biblical truth regarding the subject of biblical womanhood. Hopefully, you have read and thought about this subject before accepting the responsibility of teaching a class. If you need further reading, a Recommended Reading List is provided for you in Appendix 2.

Personal Preparation Checklist

- Carefully read the Purpose Statement found in Appendix 1. Become familiar with this state-

ment so you understand and can articulate the goals for your class.

- Purchase or access an online copy of the following books:
 - *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem
 - *50 Crucial Questions* by John Piper and Wayne Grudem
 - *What's the Difference?* by John Piper

These resources are available at desiringgod.org or at cbmw.org. These are valuable background materials that will equip you to answer questions and explain difficult concepts.

- Review the Danvers Statement in Appendix 3 to be certain that you are familiar with, and in agreement with the foundational principles of biblical womanhood.
- Assess your personal calendar for the weeks leading up to your class, as well as the time frame during which you'll actually be teaching the class. Mark out scheduled time on the calendar for your prayer, study, and preparation during this season of teaching. Remember to include sufficient time to complete your own Personal Homework Questions. If you have not previously studied *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture*, you will need to set aside between 2 and 4 hours per lesson to complete your homework before beginning your teaching preparation. If you have already taken the class, a good review of your previously completed homework and notes should take you at least an hour.

Class Preparation Checklist

- Ask a few women who are known to be prayer warriors if they would be willing to pray for you during this time of preparation and teaching. Create on your computer an email distribution group (perhaps called "BW Prayer Team") and send out regular prayer requests to them. Once class begins, you will want to send out reminders and requests for each class session. Be

sure to keep the women informed of answers to their prayers.

- If you are teaching this class at your local church, work closely with your women's ministry director to publicize the study, facilitate signup, reserve a large group teaching area as well as separate small group discussion areas (depending on the size of your class). You will also want to check on the possibility of using PowerPoint®. If PowerPoint® equipment is not available, you can make overhead transparencies; however, the transparencies are more costly than simply using the PowerPoint®, if you can access the equipment.
- If you are teaching your class in a home setting, you will need to think through how you will invite women to the class, and how you will get information to them about time, place, materials, etc.
- Review how to use PowerPoint®. This is really not as hard as you might think. If you have a laptop computer, insert the CD included with the Teacher Guide and click on "BW PowerPoint®." Once this comes up, click on the lesson you are preparing to teach and then go to "slide show." Once you get the hang of it, you'll love teaching with this great tool. (If you are not able to use PowerPoint®, you have permission to print the "PowerPoint®" file to use as posters or transparencies.)
- Prayerfully and deliberately look for women to be small group discussion leaders for your class. Ideally, you will know one or two women who have taken the class before and are willing to now lead a group. This arrangement works very well. If you have a small class (fewer than six women), it is possible for you to lead the discussion. However, even in a small class, it's wise to have someone else lead the discussion while you focus on the teaching. You do not want to have more than 10 in a group. If you have 10 in your class, it would be best to have two leaders with five in each group.
- Once you have your small group leaders, provide them with the Discussion Leader Guide as soon as possible. (See "Working with Small Group Discussion Leaders.")

- Print your roster page and begin to add names and information as women sign up for your class. Print your Treats Signup page and put it in a file so you have it ready for the first class session. (These pages are on your CD.)

An Important Word to You as a Bible Study Teacher

Because the nature of this study becomes very personal, many women deal with complex issues throughout the time period of the study. Often these issues will be voiced in the small groups, and at times women may come to you as the teacher with their problems. The lesson on the heart (Lesson 3) and the lesson on submission in marriage (Lesson 4) stir up a particular sensitivity in many women.

Although you and your group leaders should always desire to be helpful and understanding godly women, you must keep in mind that 1) small group leaders are facilitators of discussion, and 2) you are a Bible study teacher. Neither of which assumes that you or your group leaders are or need to be trained counselors. During the course of teaching this class, you should not allow yourself to slip into the counseling role in an effort to “help” someone with her problem. Your role as class teacher is to present biblical truth, point the women to a trust in God and in His Word, and encourage the women in your class to prayerfully search the Bible for applicable truth.

Of course, it may be appropriate, at times, to meet or talk with a woman one-on-one regarding an issue. But in such a case, your job is to point the woman to God’s Word and to God Himself.

It is usually not appropriate for you to continually meet with a particular woman who simply wants a sounding board to whom she can vent her chronic problems.

If someone comes to you or a small group leader with a serious, complex problem, you need to refer her to the women’s ministry director of your church, a trusted pastor, or a Bible-based, Christ-centered counselor.

Working with Small Group Discussion Leaders

The number of small group leaders you need depends on the number of women signed up for your class. As mentioned previously, a small group should ideally consist of between five and eight women. If you have 10 in your class, for example, it would be best to have two group leaders.

It is very important that the women you select to facilitate the discussion groups understand and agree with the principles of biblical womanhood. Rather than assume that someone is on board, talk with each woman you are considering for leadership to get a feel for what she understands biblical womanhood to be.

Discussion leaders do not have to be experts on the topic, nor must they have every one of their own personal questions about biblical womanhood answered with full clarity, but they do need to positively support the principles of biblical womanhood and be a willing learner in the areas where they still need clarity.

If a choice has to be made, I would always prefer to have a woman enthusiastic about biblical womanhood without experience leading a group, rather than an “expert” group leader who is shaky on biblical principles. A leader’s heart will become obvious to her group. You can help her develop into a good group leader.

Once you’ve identified your leaders, and have invited them to lead a discussion group, give each of them a Discussion Leader Guide.

Explain that you want them to read the Commitment Statement and follow the instructions regarding the Danvers Statement that is found in Appendix 2 of their Guide (see Appendix 3 in your Teacher Guide). They should do this before giving you their final answer. If they have questions or are uncertain about any issue, they can contact you. If not, they should sign their commitment page and have you sign in the appropriate place. Once you are, literally, on the same page as your leaders, you are ready to begin with confidence!

Small group discussions will be enriched if the discussion leaders are good facilitators. Some helpful guidelines for leading a group are provided for you

in Appendix 6 of the Teacher Guide (and Appendix 1 of the Discussion Leader Guide). Encourage your group leaders to review these tips.

It is also recommended that you meet with your leaders before the first class, if possible, to go through the “Helpful Hints for Leading a Discussion.” Plan one more time after lesson 3 or 4 to again review these helpful hints with the leaders.

The small group discussion leaders are the eyes and ears of your class. They hear the women’s hearts as they share their discoveries after personally studying each lesson. As the class teacher, you will want to stay in close contact with these leaders. You can encourage and help each other, which will make your class more effective.

Teaching Material

Explanation and Key to Teaching Material

- Lesson Goals

Goals for each individual lesson are found in both the Teacher Guide and the Discussion Leader Guide.

These goals are to help you and your small group leaders stay focused on the aim of each particular lesson, and clarify what concepts are critical to stress during each class session.

- Student Guide Material

The Teacher Guide has been carefully written to help you stay on course with your students as they interact with the material in the Student Guide. When there is something that your students should read or write, your Teacher Guide will provide a prompt for you about this. And when there is a fill-in-the-blank section in the Student Guide, your Teacher Guide will have the same wording with the answers provided and underlined for your reference.

- Scripture

1 Peter 3:15 – “...but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”

Every Scripture in the Student Guide is also included in the same order in your Teacher Guide. It is set apart from other text using rule lines and bold italic text (as shown in the example above).

- Notes for the Teacher

At this point take time to mention any practical (housekeeping) matters that need to be addressed. For instance, you may want to pass around the sign-up sheet for refreshments for each class session.

Personal notes for you as the teacher are printed with a gray box behind the text. They are not intended to be shared with the class, but they should serve as guides regarding such things as timing, difficult subject matter, or words of encouragement. Often, these notes will help you know what to emphasize in a teaching session, or what to quickly review with the class. They will help you teach more confidently and efficiently, so be sure to read them before class time.

- Teaching Material

Text that is not set apart as described above is your Teaching Material. Familiarize yourself with it so you will know it well, but please don’t just read the teaching material to your class.

Make your own notes from this material, if you like, and put them into a form that is easy for you to use. Or use my material directly from the guide, highlighting and making margin notes to aid your teaching.

Practice at home, integrating the teaching notes with the PowerPoint® so that your teaching goes smoothly. You are encouraged to do extra study, using the additional material provided in the Resources section at the end of each lesson (as described below) so that you can make the teaching your own. However, please don’t stray from the material provided for you. Whatever you do, be sure you have included all the points that are in your Teacher Guide.

- Resources

Following the teaching material for each lesson is a Resource section. In this section you will find:

Lesson Outline—The outline will give you a bird's-eye-view of the lesson. Use it as a tool to aid you in any way that suits your teaching style.

Additional Notes—These notes, quotes, and articles will give you some additional background on particular subjects. These materials should not constitute all of your study, but are provided to enhance your study.

The Four Segments of Class

1. OPENING SESSION

This Opening Session consists of two parts, the Welcome and the Introductory Remarks. With the exception of Lessons 1 and 8, the Opening Session should be about 30 minutes long.

Welcome—The Welcome is informal, and provides a time for you to make brief announcements and encourage the women each time you meet.

Introductory Remarks—Your introductory remarks are designed to bring into focus the aims of that particular lesson. You begin your teaching here, and will continue teaching after the small group discussion.

2. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

The Small Group Discussion is the time for the women to “download” what they have learned during their personal study time.

As the teacher, you can use this time for your own last-minute preparation. However, I've found it to be most helpful to visit the groups and listen to the discussion. When there is more than one group, you can rotate groups each class session, which is actually better than being a permanent member of one small group.

Sitting in on a small group is an opportunity for you to hear the hearts of the women, and evaluate the needs of your class. Keep your verbal participation to a minimum so you don't stifle the discussion.

A good time frame for small group discussion is 40 minutes. Again, the exceptions are Lessons 1 and 8. For Lesson 1, small group time should be about 30 minutes. Set aside 50 minutes to an hour for small groups during Lesson 8, the last class time.

3. TEACHING SESSION

It is during this session that you do the bulk of your teaching. Your aim is to tie together all the various parts of the women's learning experiences throughout each lesson. You will be giving them principles and truths from the Scriptures that will be foundational to their understanding of biblical womanhood.

A good rule of thumb is to teach for 40 to 45 minutes.

4. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Try to leave five, or better yet 10 minutes at the end of class for the women to reflect and fill out the personal application section that is at the conclusion of each lesson in the Student Guide.

This part of the study has been very effective so you want to deliberately plan this into your time management of the class.

This will be a silent time before the women are dismissed.

At the end of the allotted time, you will give a closing prayer and dismiss the class.

Caution: Don't assume that if you run out of time and don't get to this section the women will do this at home. Very often, they will not.

It is critical that you build this session into your class and the women get into the habit of reflection at the end of class.

Time Management

Ideally, you will have 2-1/2 hours for your class.

This may not always be possible, but it is what you should ask for at your church, or plan for in your home. This gives some time for fellowship at the beginning of class, allows for unrushed movement between the large class sessions and small groups, and provides adequate time for teaching and discussion.

Approximate time ranges are given throughout your guide. The following is a general time outline to use.

LESSON 1 – FIRST CLASS

Fellowship: 10 minutes
Opening Session: 50 minutes
Small Group Discussion: 35 minutes
Instructive Teaching: 45 minutes
Personal Application: 10 minutes

LESSONS 2-7

Fellowship: 15 minutes
Opening Session: 30 minutes
Small Group Discussion: 45 minutes
Instructive Teaching: 50 minutes
Personal Application: 10 minutes

LESSON 8 (THE LAST CLASS)

Fellowship: 15 minutes
Opening Session: 15 minutes
Small Group Discussion: 70 minutes
Instructive Teaching: 40 minutes
Personal Application: 10 minutes

Explanation of Lessons

Lesson 1: Introduction to Biblical Womanhood and Our Postmodern Culture

After familiarizing the women with the format and expectations of this study, the foundation is laid regarding the importance of understanding biblical womanhood in today's culture. This lesson presents a definition of terms, an historical overview of prevailing philosophies, the tenets of postmodernism, the history of feminism, and an explanation of evangelical feminism and the need for biblical certainty.

Lesson 2: Biblical Truth in Our Relativistic World

The goal of this lesson is to help women understand that God is the Author of the Bible, and therefore the character of God and the truth of the Scriptures are inseparable. Before moving into the principles of biblical womanhood, one must accept the Bible as authoritative truth and appreciate that obedience to biblical truth is vitally important. This lesson presents the concept of trajectory, four points regarding biblical truth, the attacks on biblical truth, the existence of God, attributes of God, the Bible as the statement of all

truth, the importance of obedience to God's truth, and an introduction of biblical metanarrative and sequence of events before and after the Fall.

Lesson 3: The Heart of a Biblical Woman

This lesson takes "obedience" out of the burdensome category, and presents the joy of trusting God. Goals for Lesson 3 include joyful acceptance of God's Word as a sweet authority, a heartfelt trust in God and His Word, a soft heart that hopes in God, inner adorning of the heart to take precedence over outer adorning of the body, and "fearless tranquility"—courageous and content women. This lesson presents the following: connecting the dots between the heart and our conduct; what the heart of a godly woman looks like; a study of the word "adorning;" and the truth a heart that hopes in God and trust in God's Word also trusts in God's character. This lesson is considered the key lesson for the study. We ask that no one begin the study after this point.

Lesson 4: Biblical Womanhood in the Home (I)

Lesson 4 begins the study of specific aspects of biblical womanhood. The focus is on marriage and the authority/submission model. Goals include a joyful embrace of the "helper" role, understanding male/female roles and responsibilities in Creation, seeing marriage as illustration of Christ and the Church, and holding to the complementarian position regarding the home. This lesson presents a detailed study of selected Scriptures regarding submission in marriage, a definition of specific terms such as "helper" and "head," a discussion of egalitarian arguments, the meaning of "leaving and cleaving;" what submission is and what is not, and common errors regarding authority/submission in marriage.

Lesson 5: Biblical Womanhood in the Home (II)

Titus 2:3-5 is the focus of Lesson 5. Lesson goals include creating a desire to reach out to other women as a mentor or mentee, understanding how behavior can beautifully adorn God's Word, and accepting that every woman is to be a "Titus 2 Woman." See Titus 2:3-5 as a guide to prioritizing life. This lesson presents an overview of Paul's

letter to Titus, the recognition of false prophets and false doctrine, the importance of how we live today, and a description of the “Titus 2 Woman.” The lesson gives freedom to share from personal experiences the different aspects of womanhood as described in Titus 2—love of husband and children, self-control, purity, being busy at home (working outside the home), and kindness.

Lesson 6: Biblical Womanhood in the Church

A strong emphasis is made to connect roles and responsibilities of men and women in the home to roles and responsibilities in the church. Goals of this lesson include the following: considering outward dress important, but not most important; glad acceptance of male leadership with a tranquil heart; focus on the many things women can do in service to the Lord; and joyful trust of the Bible’s clear direction regarding roles in the Church. This lesson presents modesty, a detailed study of 1 Timothy 2:8-15, a definition of “quietly” and “submissiveness,” church eldership, church/biblical history, and male leadership.

Lesson 7: Biblical Womanhood in the Culture

Goals for Lesson 7 include understanding that we live in tension with culture, aiming to be countercultural and courageous, developing biblically informed decision making, and desiring to reflect God’s Word and glory to the world. This lesson presents a comparison of each tenet of postmodernism with biblical truth, an examination of the tension a biblical woman has with her culture, practical application of how to deal with tension, and the Six Distinctions of a Biblical Woman.

Lesson 8: The Deep Significance of Biblical Womanhood

Lesson 8 draws the study to a close by examining the Trinitarian roots of complementarity. The goals for this lesson are having a desire to live a life that magnifies God’s Word, embracing of male/female equality of value and distinction of roles/responsibilities, seeing the eternal (past and present) significance of belief and behavior, and being satisfied in God alone. This lesson presents the Trinitarian design of biblical womanhood, the Trinity at creation, the unique creation of man and

woman, the high stakes of biblical womanhood and biblical authority, a personal challenge to live according to biblical principles, and finding joy and satisfaction in God and in how He made us.

Use of the DVDs

A DVD package is included in your Teacher Kit to aid you in teaching *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture*. This package is available only with the Teacher Kit and is not sold separately. It is intended to be used with the study curriculum and not to stand alone.

The DVDs contain presentations of the Teaching Session for each of the eight lessons of this curriculum by author/teacher Linda Linder. Linda’s teaching closely follows the written material for each of the teaching sessions in the Teacher Guide.

The DVDs may be used in one of two ways:

1. Use the DVDs as a resource in your personal preparation.

If you choose to use this approach, you would use the DVDs of Linda’s teaching as you prepare to personally teach the material to your class. It is suggested that you watch the DVDs as you follow along with the corresponding material in your Teacher Guide. This will familiarize you with the material and keep you on track with the intent of each lesson. Once you have watched the DVD for a lesson and reviewed the written material, you can make personal notes in the margins of the Teacher Guide, highlight words and phrases you want to emphasize, and add your own touches as the Lord leads. In other words, take ownership of your teaching—make it your own.

2. Present the DVD for each lesson to your class during the Teaching Session.

If you choose to teach your class using the DVD presentations, please read and follow the guidelines below.

- Follow the procedures as outlined in “Preparing to Teach” and “Working with Small Group Discussion Leaders” as you would if you were personally teaching every segment of the class.

- Prepare and personally present the Opening Session of each class meeting. You will welcome the women and personally present all of the teaching in the Opening Session using the PowerPoint® slides that correspond with this segment.
- Keep your class running on time making sure that discussion groups don't run overtime. You will find on the DVD label the exact time of the presentation for each lesson. Add about 10 minutes to this time for the Personal Application segment, count backwards from your closing time to calculate timing for Opening Session and discussion groups. Time is of the essence in this study, so you must stay disciplined in time management.

Additional Thoughts on Use of Material:

- The desired amount of time for each of the eight class meetings is 2-1/2 hours. However, this is not always possible due to tight schedules in churches and/or women's lives. Therefore, there is some flexibility and freedom to design your study to fit your particular need. For example, you may extend the study length to 16 sessions. In this case, you would alternate so that one session would include the Opening Session and discussion groups, and the next session would include the DVD presentation with discussion.
- The study is designed for a once-a-week class meeting. However, this may not fit your particular need. In that case, for example, the lessons could be covered over a two-week period. This would entail meeting approximately every weekday, with women doing their homework on a daily basis.

Regardless of how you decide to structure your study of *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture*, one thing is **not** flexible. **All three segments of the study—personal homework, small group discussion, and direct teaching—must be included.** Each of these segments is vitally important, and the combination of the three is critical to the learning process and the development of understanding the issue of biblical womanhood.

Additional Comments

- *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture* is an inductive Bible study. It is designed to be presented as a study with regular meetings, including all three segments (homework, discussion and teaching). There is some flexibility in regard to when and where you meet. Meetings can be in either a home or church setting. If time is a factor, lessons can be split—making the course stretch over a longer time frame. **The most important thing is that all three segments be conducted for each lesson.**
- **None of the Guides (Student, Discussion Leader, or Teacher) are to be used alone, but only as a part of the whole and complete study.**
- The DVDs of the eight teaching sessions can be used as part of the class teacher's preparation, and/or presented to the class as a whole for the teaching session. **They are not to be used separately without the accompanying study materials and format. See the previous section in this Introduction titled "Use of the DVDs for help in using them.**
- **If you are using the DVDs for the Teaching Session, you may or may not choose to use the PowerPoint® slides in the Introduction of each class. If you choose to present the Introduction without the PowerPoint® slides, be very careful in your presentation to ensure that everyone is able to fill in the blanks in the Student Guide.**
- **If you are using the DVDs for teaching, the Opening Session of each class time is your opportunity to relate directly to the women in your class and for you, as the teacher, to take ownership of the material.** Although there is specific material to be covered in the Introduction, you have the freedom to design this time period to fit the specific needs of your class. Make it your own.

- **The eight lessons of this study are not stand-alone lessons. Each builds on the previous lessons. Therefore, it is vitally important that women who register for the class are committed to attending all eight sessions. Please close the class to any new women after Lesson 2.**
- *If **Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture** is to be taught in a church setting, **before introducing the study to your church women, please make certain that your lead pastor and your women's ministry director approve of and are on board with the complementarian position of biblical womanhood.***

Introduction to Biblical Womanhood and Our Postmodern Culture

GOALS FOR LESSON 1:

- Get acquainted.
- Make the women in your group feel welcome and comfortable.
- Stir up enthusiasm for the study.
- Encourage the women to make this study a priority.
- Familiarize the women with the format of this study.
- Introduce the concepts of our postmodern culture.
- Introduce foundational issues, and define terms.

FELLOWSHIP FOR LESSON 1:

10 minutes

Opening Session



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 1.**)

This is the first time you will meet with your class; therefore, the Opening Session will be longer than in the following weeks and more informational in the Welcome segment. This is an opportunity for you to explain some of the reasons behind this study on biblical womanhood. You will also outline for the women the format of the study, and emphasize the importance of completing each phase of the study. If you have announcements pertaining to your local church activities, make them first before getting into your remarks regarding the study.

Welcome (25 minutes)

I. Welcome to Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture.

This is an eight-part Bible study designed to lead you into a personal discovery of what it means to be a biblical woman, and how you can become a biblical woman in today's postmodern, non-biblical world.

A. Reason for This Study

Use any examples you may have to make the following reasons for this study relevant and current. Mentioning blogs, news stories, current events, etc. will bring “life” to this first session and pique the women’s interest.

The foundations of our cultural ground are shifting beneath us.

Our Christian lifestyles are being challenged as never before.

Our beliefs are being challenged.

The very core of who we are is being poked, prodded, and skewered.

We are living in the backwash of movements that have contested the very essence of what it means to be a woman.

We live in an age of postmodern confusion.

The truth is—many women have lost their way in a tangle of words and ideas about how a woman should live her life.

Christian women have a special call today to:

- recapture the biblical concept of what it means to be a woman
- live out that concept
- be able to explain it to others

That’s what we’re about in this Bible study.

This is a Bible study, because we are going to study the Bible!

And through our study we will discover the truth about how God designed us, and what our God-designed roles and responsibilities are.

We will take our stand on the authority of His Word.

We will be encouraged and equipped to live out the truth of the Bible in our personal lives.

We will learn to articulate biblical truth to those around us.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 reminds us that, ***All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.***

Don’t be surprised if, throughout this study, you are not only encouraged and equipped, but also reprovved and corrected. That’s Scripture’s purpose, to bring our hearts in line with God’s plan.

B. Foundational Scriptures

Now let's turn to three foundational Scriptures. You will find these in the Student Guide.

The first three Scriptures referenced in the Student Guide lay a foundation for why this study is so important, and what some of the goals of the study are. Read the Scriptures aloud and make a brief comment on each one.

1 Peter 3:15—...but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

This study will *prepare you* to adequately answer questions about why you lead your life according to biblical principles.

Ephesians 4:14-15—...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ.

This study will *help you mature* in Christ so you won't be tossed about by every new doctrine or argument you hear.

2 Timothy 4:2-4—...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

This study will give you tools so you can discern true from false teaching.

Biblical women are:

- prepared
- grown up
- discerning

This would be a good time to stop and personally introduce yourself to your class. Keep your introduction brief (as a model for the women when they get to their small groups), but be informative. It's very helpful for the women to get to know you, as this promotes confidence in your teaching. Share such information as your name, your family situation (if you're married, share something brief about your husband, how many years married, your children), where you've lived, how many years at your church, etc. Most importantly, share with the women how you became interested in biblical womanhood, and perhaps how the Lord led you to teach this class. Again, be brief—the women don't need to know every detail about your life—but be informative.

II. Explanation of Format

This study involves a three-fold process of learning:

- personal study
- small group discussion
- teaching

Each of these approaches is of equal value and requires your utmost attention if you are to have the full benefit of the study.

A. Personal Study

Your personal study involves completing the Personal Homework Questions for each lesson. The only required book you need (besides the Student Guide) is the Bible.

Three tips to aide you with your personal study:

- Divide up the questions and do a few at a time. Most students report that it takes between two and five hours to complete one lesson. You will get more out of your study if you work through the questions carefully and don't cram.
- Pray each time before beginning your study. Ask God to give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, and that He will open the eyes of your heart to the riches of His Word, His truth, His promises, His character, and His blessings (Ephesians 1:17-19).
- Complete all the questions in each lesson so you come to class prepared to discuss and share your discoveries.

B. Small Group Discussion

The small group discussion time is your opportunity not only to share, but to learn from others.

We want to provide a safe place for you to talk about what God has revealed to you during your personal study.

You will have a group leader who will facilitate your discussion of the Personal Homework Questions.

Keep in mind that you are not being graded or evaluated on your answers.

This small group time is a learning tool. We learn from each other, and we learn as we verbalize what we have studied.

As a rule of thumb, if you haven't answered a question, it's best to just listen as that question is being discussed. This will help to keep your group on track and move along more smoothly.

However, when you do have a written answer please share your thoughts with the others!

C. Teaching Session

The teaching part of our class will hopefully tie together your personal study and the group discussion.

These three parts of the learning process are of equal weight and importance.

Tell the women that if they have questions regarding biblical womanhood concepts, or need counsel on personal issues, you will stay after class and talk with them one-on-one. Class time is not a good time to deal with personal relationship issues. At the same time, you will want to provide avenues for women to deal with personal matters. If, at any time, you think someone is in a situation that requires professional counsel, seek advice from a trusted pastor or the director of women's ministry. You are the teacher of this class, but most likely you are not a trained counselor. Don't get in over your head!

This study has been carefully and prayerfully designed to provide you with the optimal opportunity to learn about biblical womanhood. I encourage you to wholeheartedly embrace the study and learn all you can!

Keep in mind that this study is not made up of eight individual (stand-alone) lessons; it builds from Lessons 1 through 8. It is vitally important to attend each class session and complete each lesson before moving on to the next lesson.

At this point, take time to mention any practical (housekeeping) matters that need to be addressed. For instance, you may want to pass around the sign-up sheet for refreshments for each class session. (This sheet is provided for you on the CD included with the Teacher Guide.) Designate someone in the class to take the sign-up sheet and either call or email a reminder to the one bringing refreshments before each class. This is the time to mention any announcements you may have from your church, etc. Be brief. Time is always an issue! Move quickly into your Introductory Remarks.

Introductory Remarks for Lesson 1 (25 minutes)

Have the women turn with you to the welcome letter at the beginning of the Student Guide, and read aloud the quote from Mary Kassian found in the next to last paragraph on that page (and copied below).

I. Introduction

As Mary Kassian says in her book, *The Feminist Mistake*¹,

The time is ripe for a new movement—a seismic holy quake of countercultural men and women who dare to take God at his word, those who have the courage to stand against the popular tide, and believe and delight in God’s plan for male and female.

A. Quotes Regarding What’s at Stake

Keeping this quote in mind, let’s read the quotes in your Student’s Guide from Dr. Al Mohler and Danielle Crittenden.

First, the Dr. Mohler² quote:

The fault lines of controversy in contemporary Christianity range across a vast terrain of issues, but none seems quite so volatile as the question of gender. As Christians have been thinking and rethinking these issues in recent years, a clear pattern of divergence has appeared. At stake in this debate is something more important than the question of gender, for this controversy reaches the deepest questions of Christian identity and biblical authority.

For too long, those who hold to the biblical pattern of gender distinctions have al-

1. Kassian, Mary. *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005), 299. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

2. Mohler, Albert R. “A Call for Courage on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.” December 16, 2003. <http://www.albertmohler.com/2003/12/16/a-call-for-courage-on-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood-4/> (accessed 10/20/10).

lowed themselves to be silenced, marginalized, and embarrassed when confronted by new gender theorists. Now is the time to recapture the momentum, force the questions, and show this generation God's design in the biblical concept of manhood and womanhood. God's glory is shown to the world in the complementarity of men and women. This crucial challenge is the summons to Christian boldness in the present hour.

To summarize what Dr. Mohler writes: We have a challenge today to boldly stand for biblical principles.

Of course, this is not a new challenge. In the Bible, we are called to be bold in challenging wrong theological positions.

Jude appeals to us to contend for the faith, and Paul encourages us to be bold because we have the hope of the Gospel.

Jude 3-4 –Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:12—Since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

Along with this challenge to be bold and to contend for the faith, I'd also like to point out a caution. This is something we need to ponder throughout our study.

Listen carefully (and follow along in the Student Guide) as I read what author Danielle Crittendon writes in her book *What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us*.³

The following quote from Danielle Crittenden is powerful and should be read with emphasis.⁴

*Young women today have neither adopted nor rejected feminism. Rather, it has seeped into their minds like intravenous saline into the arm of an unconscious patient. They are feminists without knowing it.*⁵

3. Crittendon, Danielle. *What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us: Why Happiness Alludes the Modern Woman*. (Riverside, N.J.: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 19.

4. Although Danielle Crittenden's book is not considered a "Christian book," Ms. Crittenden, knowingly or unknowingly, supports biblical principles regarding womanhood. She writes clearly and boldly on the culture and women's choices regarding roles and responsibilities.

5. A supporting quote: "Most young women regard feminism as yesterday's fashion—an antiquated philosophy that hangs neglected like the hippie beads in the back of their mothers' closets. But the philosophy of feminism has not died. Rather, it has been thoroughly incorporated into our collective societal psyche. The radical has become the commonplace. Hollywood's image of women as "kick-butt" female tomb raiders, terminatrixes, and trash-talking-machine-gun-toting mercenaries do not raise our collective eyebrows. Virtually all of us—to one degree or another—have become feminists." (Kassian, Mary. *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*.(Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 2005),12.)

B. Explanation of Quotes

These quotes point out three important foundational issues regarding biblical womanhood and our culture.

Direct the women to complete the fill-in-the-blank section of the Student Guide.



(DISPLAY SLIDE 2.)

- There is a controversy in the culture (including the church) regarding who we are as women. (Of course, this controversy involves men, too.)
- We have a challenge to be courageous and take a biblical stand against the prevailing winds of our culture.
- There is a caution. We are so steeped in our culture we may not know for sure if we are thinking biblically or culturally.

Now we want to lay more foundation for our study. We will define some terms that are associated with the controversy about which Dr. Mohler was writing.

It is important to define the terms so that:

- we know what we are talking about
- we understand what we are hearing in our culture

II. Definition of Terms



(DISPLAY SLIDE 3.)

Be sure the women are looking at these definitions in their Student Guide as you read them aloud. You may want to make brief comments about each one as you go along. Simply putting the definitions into your own words after reading the written word is often helpful.

Definition of Terms

Gender Debate—A contemporary term referring to the overarching controversy in our culture and in the church regarding the sex-appropriate roles and responsibilities of men and women.

Feminism—A secular movement begun by women as a push for equality of the sexes, transformed into a radical philosophy of sameness of the sexes, and at its extreme, advances the superiority of women over men. Those who support feminism are referred to as feminists.

Evangelical Feminism—A movement within the church of those who claim belief in the inerrancy of Scripture, but employ theologically liberal interpretations of the Bible to support feminist positions, and contend that the Bible does not teach different roles for men and women in the home or in the church.

Egalitarian—The evangelical feminist position that supports and promotes undifferentiated equality of men and women, along with indistinguishable roles and responsibilities in the home and in the church.

Biblical Womanhood—The state of being a woman devoted to the God-breathed truth of the Bible, embracing her feminine design as ordained by God in His Word, and echoing the eternal relationships within the Trinity.

Complementarian—The biblical womanhood position that supports and promotes full personal equality of men and women, coupled with a glad embrace of sex-appropriate differences of roles and responsibilities in the home and in the church.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, here are five “Marks of a Biblical Woman” and five “Questions a Biblical Woman Must Answer.” Hopefully, by the end of our study you will carry these marks and be able to answer these questions in the affirmative.

Read the “Marks of a Biblical Woman” and “Questions a Biblical Woman Must Answer” directly from the slide. You don’t need to make a comment on these.

A. Marks of a Biblical Woman



(DISPLAY SLIDE 4.)

Direct the women to complete the fill-in-the-blank section of the Student’s Guide.

- A biblical woman stands on the Word of God. (Lesson 2)
- A biblical woman trusts the Word of God. (Lesson 3)
- A biblical woman obeys the Word of God. (Lesson 4-6)
- A biblical woman reflects the Word of God. (Lesson 7)
- A biblical woman rejoices in the Word of God. (Lesson 8)

B. Questions a Biblical Woman Must Answer



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 5.**)

Direct the women to complete the fill-in-the-blank section of the Student's Guide.

- Do I trust the Bible?
- Do I trust the Author of the Bible?
- Do I like the way God made me?
- Am I willing to bank everything on the authority of Scripture?
- Am I willing to allow the Holy Spirit to change my heart?

At this point, stop and pray for God's blessing on the rest of the day and on the rest of the study.

Sample Prayer: "Our Father in Heaven, You spoke the world into existence. You designed and created it all for Your glory. You love us and have given us Your Word. Open our eyes and hearts to understand Your purposes for womanhood and delight in Your way. Help us to glorify You in this class time and in our lives. In Jesus' precious name, Amen."

Now, identify the small group leaders and make sure each woman knows what group she is in. Have the women move quickly to their groups. Be sure that you leave at least 45 minutes for your teaching session, and have the women return to the full class session accordingly. Small groups today will be approximately 35 minutes, which is shorter than usual.

Move to Discussion Groups (35 minutes)

Teaching Session (45 minutes)

I. Introduction

I've included in the introduction a story that I heard Ravi Zacharias tell at a conference in March of 2007. I think it illustrates well the idea that postmodern thinking leaves us wondering *where* we are, and *who* we are. These are two questions that hopefully this study will help the women answer. In preparation, read the story, and then in class tell the story in your own words. If you have another example that you'd rather use to illustrate this same point, please do so.

A. Story

Ravi Zacharias has told the story⁶ of two Australian sailors who had just gotten off the boat in England and stepped into an English pub. They had quite a lot to drink and were pretty wobbly as they wandered out into a dense fog. As they were staggering outside the pub they saw a highly decorated British naval officer and stopped him and asked, "Say, bloke, do you know where we are?" The naval officer was offended at their manner and said to the men, "Do you know *who I am*?" At that point one of the sailors said to the other, "We are really in trouble now! We don't know *where we are* and he doesn't know *who he is*!"

B. Explanation of Story

Dr. Zacharias says this is a classic illustration of our postmodern culture. We don't know *where* we are, and we don't know *who* we are.

In many ways, this uncertainty is right in our churches and, sadly, it defines many of us sitting in this room today.

We are going to ask the Lord to correct this for us. To be a godly, biblical woman, it is absolutely essential that we know *who* we are. And we must not hide our heads in the sand as to *where* we are.

Stop and pray. Ask God to help you teach His truth accurately and clearly.

Sample prayer: "Our Father in Heaven, help me now to teach truth accurately and clearly from Your Word. Give us listening ears and responsive hearts ready to receive your Word. Change us more and more into the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen."

6. Zacharias, Ravi. "Postmodernism and Philosophy" Ligonier Conference. Orlando, Florida, March 2007.

It's quite likely that you are going to discover throughout our study that the topic of "Biblical Womanhood" is deeper and more significant than you (and most people) have ever thought.

Let's now take a look at:

II. The Serious Nature of Biblical Womanhood Today

We are living in strange and challenging times. Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr. says we are at a "hinge point" in history.⁷ There are seismic shifts taking place in our society, and these shifts are changing the way we think.

A. Challenge Today

It is absolutely essential that we think according to biblical truth, or we will become sucked into cultural thinking and confusion.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 6.**)



Romans 12:2 sums it up well.

Romans 12:2 —Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The first part of this verse addresses how we think. The second part addresses what we do.

Testing and Discern. These are action words. This is a call to action that says we must do something so we will not be conformed to this world. The only way our mind can be renewed and transformed is by intentionally, regularly, seriously studying and meditating on God's Word.

There is good reason for this admonition:

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 7.**)



We must think biblically or we will, by default, think culturally!

B. What's at stake?

There is a lot at stake today. And there is a lot of pressure. Nowhere is there more pressure than on us as Christian women.

7. <http://www.albertmohler.com/blog.php>

What is at stake is not only my own personal happiness or the happiness of my family, although that is very important. It actually goes much deeper than that.

Ultimately what is at stake is:

- the authority of Scripture
- the reflection of God's glory to a dark and dying world

This is serious business, but it is not new business.

III. Biblical Examples of Current Issues

A. Example 1—Colossians 2:3-8



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 8.**)

Take a look at Colossians 2:2b-8. Paul was *writing to believers* struggling with *false teachers who were infiltrating the church* with their unbiblical philosophy.

Let's read what Paul says:

Colossians 2: 2b-8—... to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Just like the Colossians, we too are up against...

- plausible arguments
- a prevailing philosophy
- and empty deceit...

as well as human tradition and elemental spirits of the world.

No, this is not new to today, but it is every bit as serious today as it was when Paul wrote his letter.

B. Example 2—2 Timothy 3:5-7



(DISPLAY SLIDE 9.)

We have an even more pointed warning in Paul’s second letter to Timothy. Paul is again concerned with false teaching, especially *false teaching coming from within the church*.

In 2 Timothy 3, Paul describes the signs of the times: lovers of self, pride, arrogance, no self-control, etc.

Let’s read together what he goes on to say:

2 Timothy 3:5-7—having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

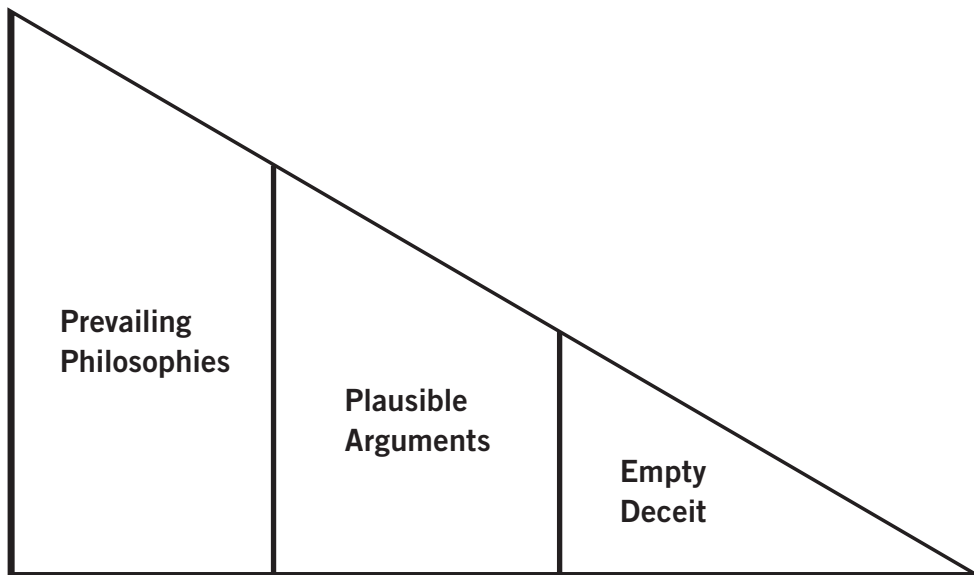
C. We are up against...

Again, we see what we’re up against:

- the appearance of godliness (plausible arguments)
- denial of God’s power (empty deceit)

Refer the women to the chart titled—“ We are up against...”

We are up against...



Pause here before beginning the following section on philosophy, and tell the women that you are about to give a review of the history of philosophy as well as a review of the development of feminism. You are going to cover a lot of information very quickly! Ask the women to bear with you as you skim through this section. Tell them that rather than a deep study of philosophies, your intention is to give a bird's eye view that you hope will help them put our culture into context. There's no quiz! So hang on for the ride and get as much out of this as you can!

Let's now attempt to answer the question: How did we get here?

How did we get to such a place that it is necessary to define what it means to be a woman?

To help us answer these questions, we'll briefly overview the history of philosophical development and the development of feminism in America.

IV. Today's Prevailing Philosophy of Postmodernism

A. How did we get here?

Every age has a dominant or prevailing philosophy. Philosophies are born in the academies with the thinkers and writers of the time. They are *taught, consumed, applied, and lived out*, and they eventually affect the whole of society.

From the cauldron of the prevailing philosophy, plausible arguments bubble up.

And if God is left out, these arguments become empty deceits that can capture us if we are weak because we are not biblically informed.

This is the slippery slope we so often hear about.

Refer again to chart titled "We are up against:" in Student's Guide.

Mary Kassian, in a book titled *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church*⁸ defines "slippery slope" this way:

... provisional acceptance of a faulty presupposition will—if not for a certain individual, then certainly for the next generation—lead to its complete acceptance.

Direct the students to write the following answer in the Student's Guide.

What is the philosophy of our day? Postmodernism

8. Kassian, Mary. *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1992), 226. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org..

Postmodernism is the philosophy that is creeping right into our churches and households, and into our hearts.

Our question is: How did we get to this postmodern world we live in today?

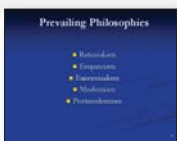
Answer: One prevailing philosophy morphing into another over time.

B. Historical Review of Prevailing Philosophies

We can discover the path to postmodernism by making a very brief overview of prevailing philosophies. This overview will take us back to as early as 470 B.C. and Socrates.

Once again, keep in mind that this is not a philosophy class and, no doubt, you are not a philosopher. The point you want to make is that every era has a prevailing philosophy, and that philosophy, over time, morphs into a new philosophy. The lines between eras and philosophies are fluid. I've given you below a brief outline of the various philosophies in chronological order. This outline is taken directly from my notes and does not contain a lot of detail. You may want to add more information from your personal study, but you need to move quickly through this section toward the description of postmodernism. Refer the women to the chart in their Student Guide titled "Prevailing Philosophies." This chart is for their personal reference, and they can look at it in detail at home. DO NOT READ the chart word-for-word in class. I recommend that you do background study for this presentation. For further study, see the book *Whatever Happened to Truth?* by Andreas J. Köstenberger, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., J.P. Moreland, and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, published by Crossway Books in 2005. You can read portions of this book online at: books.google.com and searching for "Whatever Happened to Truth?"

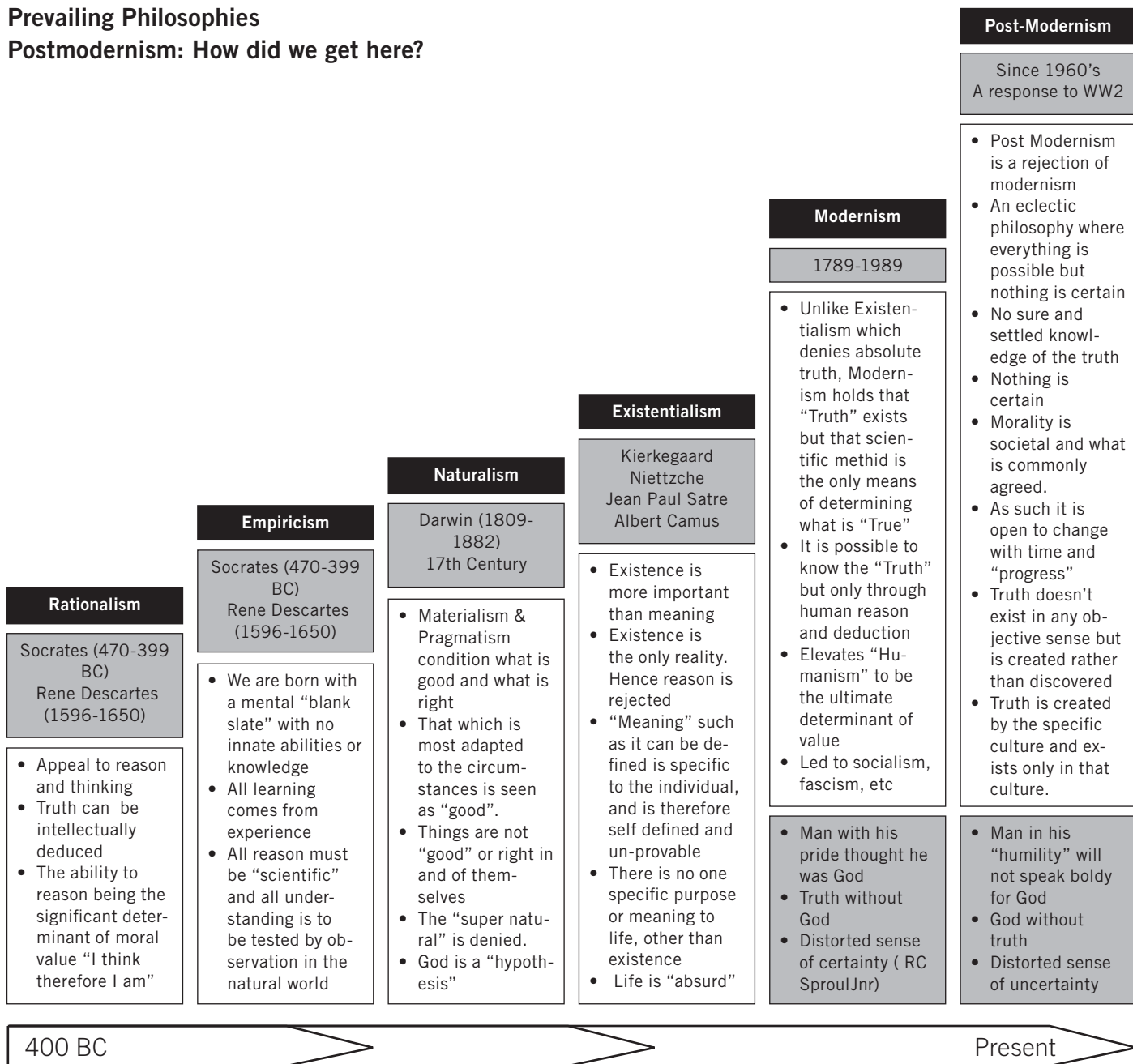
Also, see "Philosophy Over the Ages" in Resources for Lesson 1.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 10.**)

Prevailing Philosophies

Postmodernism: How did we get here?



The following outline is provided for you to use as you give brief details of the various prevailing philosophies. Choose the points you'd like to emphasize in each section, and then move to the next. For your own benefit, and to give background for your comments, you may want to research each philosophy as you prepare, just to keep the information clear in your head. The important point to make as you move through this outline is that one philosophy morphs (transforms) into another over time. The lines are fluid.

Brief Outline of the Characteristics of Various Philosophies

Rationalism

- Appeal to Reason—Thinking
- As Early as Socrates (470-399 B.C.)
- Rene Descartes (1596-1650)—“I think therefore I am”

Empiricism

- Experience
- Requirement of Scientific Method—Must Test Against Observation in Natural World
- John Locke (17TH Century)—Mind is a Blank Slate

Naturalism

- Materialism/Pragmatism
- Darwin
- 1800s
- Supernatural Denied

Existentialism

- Individuals Have Full Responsibility for Creating Meanings of Own Lives

- Origins in 19th Century
- Kierkegaard/Nietzsche (Death of God)
- 1940s-1950s—Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus
- Existence More Important Than Meaning
- No Purpose/No Meaning to Life
- Rejection of Reason

Modernism

- 1789 – 1989
- John F. MacArthur—The Truth War—“Modernity, in simple terms, was characterized by the belief that truth exists and that the scientific method is the only reliable way to determine that truth.”⁹
- Human reason = final arbiter of what is true
- Modern thinkers retained their belief that knowledge of the truth is possible
- Birth of Darwinism, which in turn gave birth to a string of humanistic ideas and world-views—Marxism, fascism, socialism, communism, theological liberalism

Postmodernism

- Eclectic System
- “...tendency to dismiss the possibility of any sure and settled knowledge of the truth. Nothing is certain.”¹⁰

9. MacArthur, John F. *The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception*. (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 10.

10. *Ibid*, 10-11.

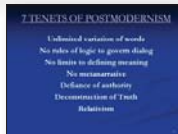
C. A Closer Look at Postmodernism

Now that we've quickly moved through our historical overview of prevailing philosophies, let's take a *closer look at postmodernism*.

Postmodernism is the philosophy of our day. It defines our world, our thinking and our behavior. It is the water we swim in, the air we breathe.¹¹

Let's look at seven tenets of postmodernism.

Direct the students to complete the following statements in the Student's Guide as you work through the following material together.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 11.**)

Again, keep in mind that this is not a philosophy class. However, this study aims to put the subject of biblical womanhood into the context of our culture; therefore, it's very important that we understand the world in which we live.

These tenets of postmodernism are critical to the rest of the study, and you will come back to them time and again. I have, once again, given you a brief outline from my own personal notes to aid you in the presentation of these tenets. I would encourage you, however, to read (books or online) about postmodernism—some suggested authors would be Ravi Zacharias, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., and John F. MacArthur.

Seven Tenets of Postmodernism¹²

1. Unlimited Variation of Words

We live in a culture where words don't always mean what we think they mean.

Example: "Spin" is an accepted form of communication today, especially in the world of politics. We even have rooms called "spin rooms" where representatives of political candidates meet with the media and "re-interpret" what their candidate has just said, always putting the remarks in a light favorable to the person they represent.

When words lose their historic/traditional meaning, we have no point of reference. There is a sense that the ground is always shifting underneath us.

The postmodern mindset encourages readers of a text to establish their own interpretation of that text. In other words, the reader or listener, not the author, establishes the meaning of the words read or heard.

11. One of the first persons to use the term "postmodern" was historian Sir Arnold Toynbee in the 1940s.
12. Please see Albert Mohler article "Ministry is Stranger Than it Used to Be: The Challenge of Postmodernism" in Lesson 1 Resource section.

Influence on the Church: Bible study becomes a discussion of what a passage means to me and what it means to you. Words can be twisted and misinterpreted to mean whatever we want them to mean. Words can easily be changed—

Father becomes Mother, etc.

2. No Rules of Logic to Govern Dialogue

When words mean what they have always meant, we can have logical discussions. Meaningful, solid words give the foundation to govern our conversations. However, when we're not sure how someone is using a word, logical/rational discussion is virtually impossible.

When words no longer mean what we thought they meant, common sense is denied. In fact, it is impossible to live in a world without logic. Such a world would be utter chaos.

Examples:

- When a baby is referred to as a “fetus” or “tissue,” it's hard to have a logical discussion about the topic of abortion.
- When we don't know what someone means when they say “marriage” or “family,” it's hard to have a logical discussion about traditional, biblical marriage and family.

We have to define words that have never before in history needed to be so carefully defined. The result is that logical dialogue is nearly impossible today. If you ever feel like you are trying to “nail jello to the wall” in your conversations, this is why!

Influence on the Church: Logical understanding and discourse of the Bible becomes nearly impossible. Because the words in the Bible can be easily changed, the logic behind what Paul writes or Jesus says, for example, becomes meaningless. Again, we interpret the Bible to mean whatever we want it to mean.

3. No Limits to Defining Meaning

There are boundaries to what words mean. Therefore, there are boundaries to logic. Therefore, there are boundaries to big issues such as the meaning of life.

When these boundaries are pushed to the limit and beyond, the end result is a life of tragedy.

Example: A man who pushed the limits of “meaning” as far as he could was the French philosopher Michele Foucault (pronounced “me-shell”, “fu-ko”). Foucault was a postmodern thinker who did not believe there was any limit to moral boundaries. He thought the only morality was liberation. Michele Foucault died of AIDS in 1984 at the age of 56.

Influence on the Church: We begin to dismiss the moral boundaries in the Bible. We can start to talk about God's love, and because God is love surely He wouldn't say, for example that homosexuality or adultery is sin.

4. No Metanarrative

A metanarrative is an overarching story with a beginning and an end. A metanarrative is the basis of truth, because it gives us a place to check facts against what we have historically known, including rules of nature, and our creation and existence.

The postmodernist does not and will not believe there is an overarching story of any kind. Life is just a collection of many little short stories.

The postmodernist will not connect the dots. Everything is disconnected and random. This, of course, allows each person to make his or her own truth (which we will see in a minute), and takes away any authority and any way to hold anyone accountable.

Influence on the Church: The Bible becomes a collection of short stories, none of which are connected, rather than a complete book with a beginning and an end—Genesis to Revelation. God's plans and purposes lose meaning, and certainly don't govern anything in our personal lives.

5. Defiance of Authority

Without a metanarrative there is no authority. And without authority there is no author. For the postmodernist, all authority must be overthrown. You cannot separate authority from its root word "author." Therefore, rebellion against authority is rebellion against the author.

Influence on the Church: Preaching from the pulpit is seen as too authoritarian. Therefore, we see more preachers telling stories, and walking around in front in a very casual way. The Bible is not the authority, just a book of suggestions. Ultimately, there is rebellion against God—the Author of the Bible.

6. Deconstruction of Truth

All of these tenets lead to the deconstruction of Truth. The following are some postmodern thoughts on "truth."

- "Truth is a name we give to our preferences."—Nietzsche
- Truth is made, not found.
- Truth, if it exists, cannot be known.

- Certainty/truth is arrogant, elitist and wrong.
- Uncertainty is seen as “humility.”

Influence on the Church: We become uncertain about the truth of the Bible, and tolerance becomes the key phrase. There is no longer just one way to God, but many ways.

7. Relativism

Pastor John Piper best illustrates relativism in the following quote (also found in the Student Guide).

This is the essence of relativism: No one standard of true and false, right or wrong, good or bad, beautiful and ugly can preempt any other standard. No standard is valid for everyone.

What does this imply about truth? Relativists may infer from this that there is no such thing as truth. It is simply an unhelpful and confusing category since there are no external, objective standards that are valid for everyone. Or they may continue to use the word truth but simply mean by it what conforms to your own subjective preferences. You may prefer the Bible or the Koran or the Book of Mormon or Mao's little Red Book or the sayings of Confucius or the philosophy of Ayn Rand or your own immediate desires or any of a hundred other standards. In that case, you hear the language of "true for you, but not true for me." In either case, we are dealing with relativism.¹³

Influence on the Church: Evangelism is no longer seen as good. After all, who's to say that Christianity is right/true? We become uncertain about our own faith and cannot take strong stands.

We will re-visit these principles of postmodernism when we get to Lesson 7 in our study. At that time, we will discuss how these tenets influence not only society, but our churches and our own lives.

Now we want to make a comparison between two philosophies—the one we're coming out of today (which still has influence), and the one in which we truly live.

D. Comparison of Modernism and Postmodernism

It is helpful in our attempt to understand postmodernism to compare it to the prevailing philosophy that came directly before it, modernism.¹⁴

13. Piper, John. "The Challenge of Relativism." Ligonier Conference. Orlando, Florida, March 16, 2007.

14. Sproul., R.C., Jr. "Postmodernism and Christianity" Ligonier Conference. Orlando, Florida. March 2007.

1. Compare and Contrast



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 12.**)

Take care to be clear about the differences between modernism and postmodernism.

- Modernism contains a distorted sense of *certainty*.
- Postmodernism elevates a distorted sense of *uncertainty*.

For the modernist:

- Education is the answer to every question.
- Truth exists, and if we just know enough we will find it.

For the postmodernist:

- There is no absolute truth; therefore, there are no absolute answers.
- In fact, there are no absolute questions!

At the base of modernism is:

- *Truth, but without God.* (Hence, the development of humanism.)

At the base of postmodernism one finds:

- *God, but no truth.* (A postmodern society is “spiritual,” but uncertain and therefore ambiguous about its beliefs.)

2. Modernism and Postmodernism Merge Today

Today part of our confusion lies in the fact that we have elements of modernism in our postmodern culture.

For example:

- Most of us are modernists when we are flying in a plane at 30,000 feet. We want the pilot of that plane to know there is absolute truth—that two plus two does, indeed, equal four!

- When we need surgery, we want our surgeon to be a modernist. When someone puts a knife to our skin, we want to be sure that he absolutely knows what he's doing.
- We don't want our pilot or our surgeon having a conversation. We want them to make decisions.
- We don't want our pilot and our surgeon taking the loudest argument as winning. We want them to know the absolute truth whether it's popular or not.

We live in a postmodern society with elements of modernism still with us.

Now let's examine the "plausible argument" that has bubbled up out of the postmodern cauldron.

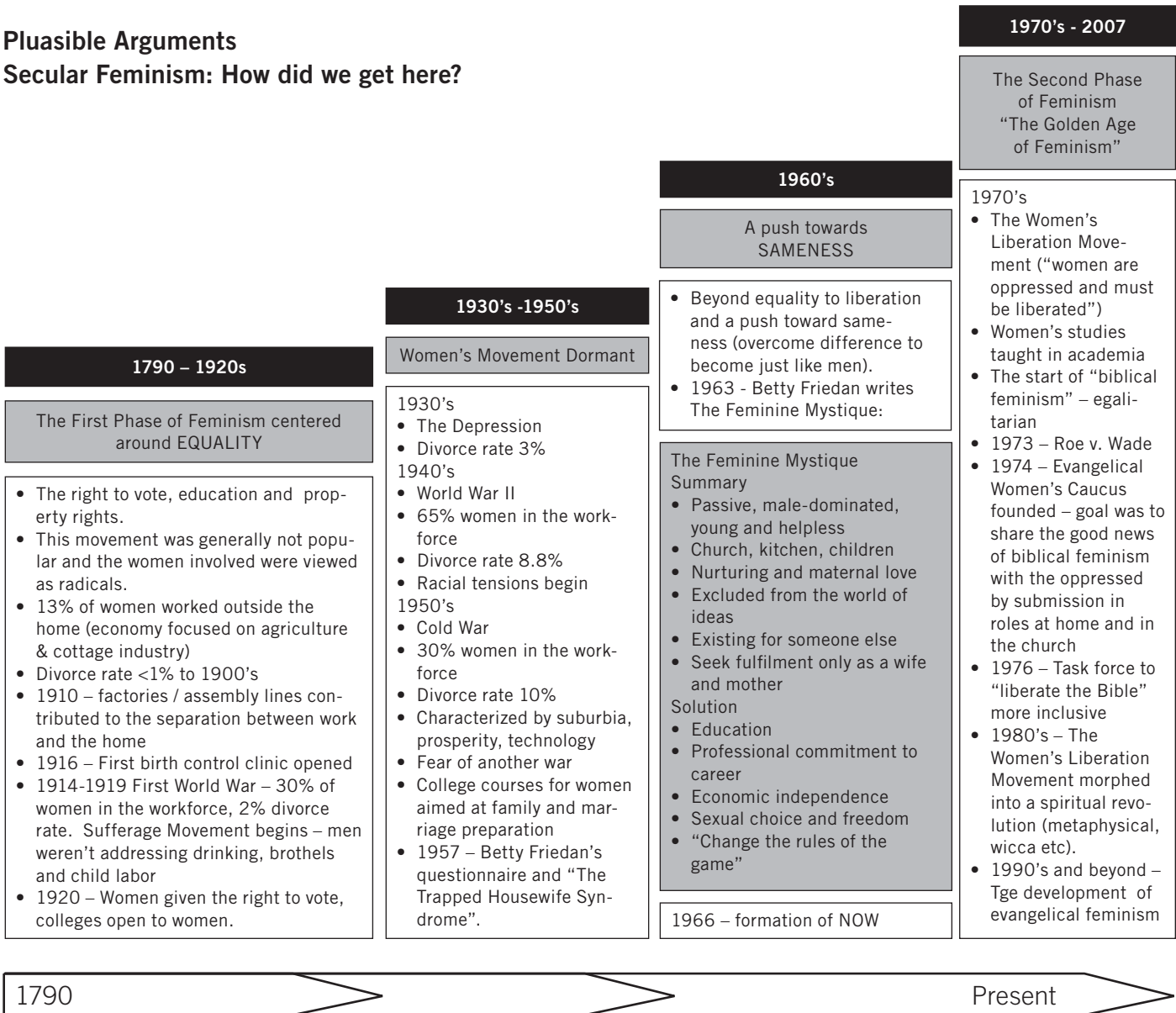
Direct the women to the following chart in the Student's Guide.

V. The Plausible Argument of Feminism¹⁵



Plausible Arguments

Secular Feminism: How did we get here?



A. History of Feminism in the United States

When we trace philosophies, we can also trace plausible arguments that are formed within these philosophies.

15. For a detailed study of feminism and its impact on the church and culture read Mary Kassian's book *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*, published by Crossway Books in 2005 .

To zero in on our topic of womanhood—biblical womanhood, to be exact—we will briefly trace the history of the feminist movement in the United States.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 13.**)

As with the section on “philosophy,” again refer the women to the chart in the “Empty Deceit” Chart in the Student Guide. Don’t read this word-for-word. Remember, you are presenting an overview.

The first stage of the woman’s movement came out of the *modernist philosophy*, and was a push for equality.

From the late 1700s to the early 1900s, women fought for and gained the right to vote, own property rights, and have equal access to education and professions. Two women who were identified with this stage of the movement were Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott.

During the 1930s, ‘40s and ‘50s, the women’s movement was generally dormant. And then came the second stage.

The second stage of the woman’s movement came out of postmodernism.

In 1957, talk began to stir about the “trapped housewife syndrome.” However, the beginning point of the second stage is usually set in 1963, when Betty Freidan wrote her book *The Feminine Mystique*. This started what is now called the feminist movement. The feminists went beyond equal rights to “liberate” women from their womanhood. Marriage, motherhood, and homemaking were degraded. The wave started by Freidan became a tsunami with the development of the National Organization of Women, no-fault divorce, and *Roe v. Wade*.

Rather than uphold the strengths and beauty of being a woman, feminists have tried to stamp down anything that has to do with being a woman. There is certainly nothing feminine about being a feminist. Rather than equality, their aim is sameness.

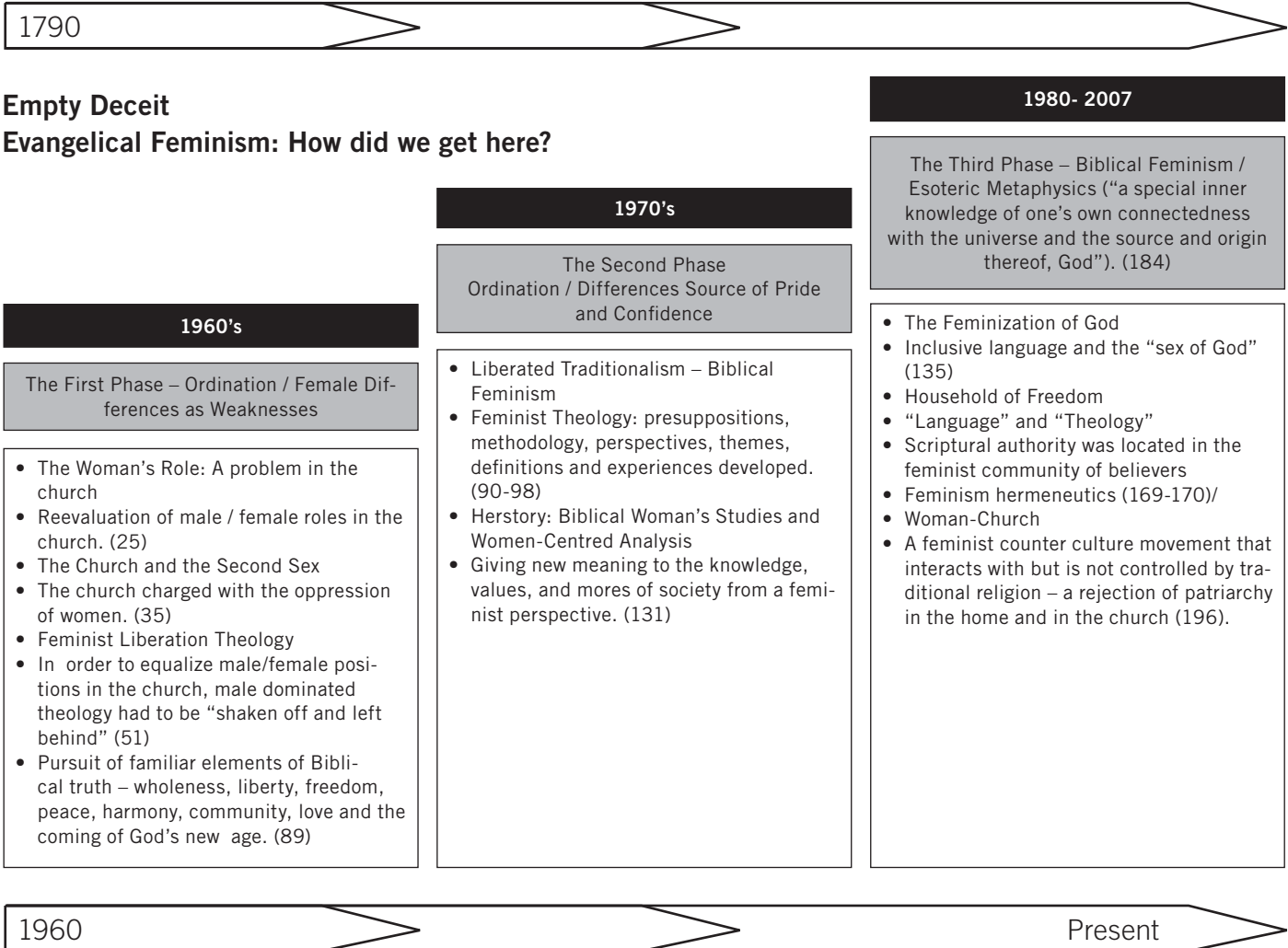
Refer to Slide 13 to reinforce the two stages of the women’s movement: equality and sameness. You may want to discuss how the move from equality to sameness has led us to same-sex marriage, which is a complete aberration of God’s Word.¹⁶

We live in the backwash of this feminist movement today. And as Danielle Crittenden so aptly put it, many women today are feminists and they don’t even know it!

16. A case can be made today that we are actually in a third stage of feminism. This stage would be woman power. The stages of feminism are equality, sameness and now power.

B. Evangelical Feminism

See Resources for Lesson 1—“Feminism Comes to the Church” and “Biblical Feminists Define “Equality.”



The feminist argument is plausible because it sounds so right. Who wouldn't want equality? But as this argument has developed in the main stream of our culture and come right into our churches, we will see throughout our study that this plausible argument is, in fact, an empty deceit.

Evangelical feminism has a hollow ring to it. It is hollow because it is empty of the truth.

The egalitarian position within churches today is so plausible. Who could possibly be against equality?!

But the truth is the egalitarian position (which goes beyond “equality” to “sameness”) is wrong and denies the power of God and His Word.

Summary Statement



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 14.**)

To understand biblical womanhood in context, we must understand that:

- The prevailing philosophy is postmodernism.
- The plausible argument is feminism.
- The empty deceit is evangelical feminism.

VI. Conclusion

Read the first two quotes below and comment on them. Perhaps point out some examples from culture to illustrate how we try to bend Scripture to fit a cultural issue.

Before we close today, let’s read the quotes in your Student Guide. The first two describe the confusion many have regarding who we are as women. The last quote will hopefully help us clear up any confusion we may be experiencing.

A. Two Quotes Regarding Gender Confusion

These are also included in the Student Guide.

Many Christian women are unsure of the honored role they have in God’s design because of the confusion between their theology and the culture in which they live.

Christian women often become confused because they take the feminist dogma they have been indoctrinated with and try to make Scripture bend to it instead of the other way around.

—Diane Passno, *Feminism: Mystique or Mistake?*¹⁷

17. Passno, Diane. *Feminism: Mystique or Mistake?* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2000).

B. Clearing Up the Confusion

Now emphasize the quote from Charles Spurgeon. This quote is critical to the study, and many women have said this is particular principle of the straight and crooked stick is one of the highlights of their study. Emphasize that the Bible is the straight stick. This idea will be illustrated every week with the “Norma” box.

There is a way to clear up the confusion that may exist between our theology and our culture. We can take the approach suggested by Charles Spurgeon.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 15.**)



If a stick is very crooked and you wish to prove that it is so, get a straight one and quietly lay it down by its side.

—Charles Spurgeon¹⁸

Philosophies come and go. The culture shifts like the sand. Our thinking easily becomes shaky.

But God never changes. His Word stands the test of time.

We are going to take our stand on the Rock.

In this study...**The Bible is the straight stick we are going to lay down, which will reveal the lies of the crooked and perverse generation in which we live.**

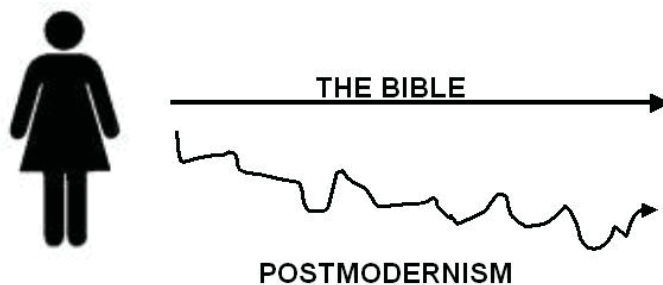
The Bible affirms that we do indeed live in a crooked and twisted generation.

The lines are crooked, and if we are to prove them so, we need to be trained in righteousness through the study of the Bible.

Philippians 2:14-15 —Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

2 Timothy 3:16-17— All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

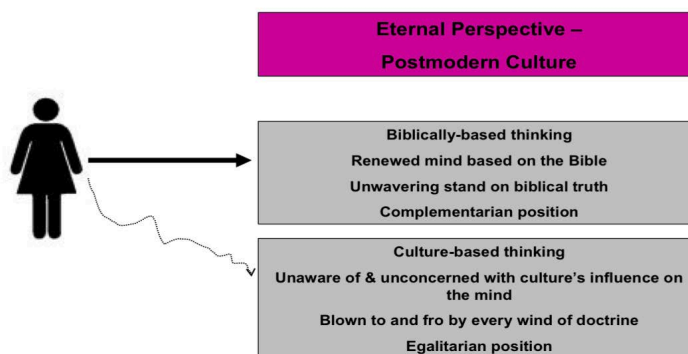
18. Spurgeon, Charles. “The Word is a Sword.” Sermon delivered on May 17, 1887.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 16.**)

At this time, draw your comments to a conclusion by directing the women's attention to the illustration titled "The Decisions We Face" (Slide 16. Make note of the straight line, which will consistently throughout the study represent the truth of the Bible, and the crooked line, which represents thinking and behavior based on the mores of our culture. Point out that every week you will end the class time by looking at this box and thinking through decisions that we face in regard to each week's topic. (Next week you will tell them the name of this illustrated woman!) Next point out the Personal Application section that is found at the end of each lesson's Teaching Session in the Student Guide. Give the women time before they leave class to read the questions and write down their answers/thoughts.

The Decisions We Face



Personal Application (10 minutes)

After giving the women time to fill out their personal application, close in prayer.

Sample prayer: Our Father in heaven, You are good. We bless Your name. We want so much to live out Your design for women. Help us to see this design clearly and joyfully embrace it. You know our hearts. You know we love you. Help us to love you and trust you more. In Jesus' matchless name we pray, Amen.

Lesson 1

Resources

Outline—Lesson 1

Introduction to Biblical Womanhood and Our Postmodern Culture

Opening Session (50 minutes)

—Welcome for (25 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Reason for this Study

B. Foundational Scriptures

II. Explanation of Format

A. Personal Study

B. Small Group Discussion

C. Teaching Session

—Introductory Remarks (25 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Quotes Regarding What's at Stake

B. Explanation of Quotes

II. Definition of Terms

III. Conclusion

A. Marks of a Biblical Woman

B. Questions a Biblical Woman Must Answer

Move to Discussion Groups (35 minutes)

Teaching Session (45 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. A Story

B. Explanation of Story

II. The Serious Nature of Biblical Womanhood Today

A. Challenge Today

B. What's at Stake?

III. Biblical Examples of Current Issues

A. Example 1—Colossians 2:3-8

B. Example 2—2 Timothy 3:5-7

C. We are up against ...

IV. Today's Prevailing Philosophy of Postmodernism

A. How did we get here?

B. Historical Review of Prevailing Philosophies

C. A Closer Look at Postmodernism

(Seven Tenets of Postmodernism)

D. Comparison of Modernism and Postmodernism

1. Compare and Contrast

2. Modernism and Postmodernism Merge Today

V. The Plausible Argument of Feminism

A. History of Feminism in the United States

B. Evangelical Feminism

VI. Conclusion

A. Two Quotes Regarding Gender Confusion

B. Clearing up the Confusion

Personal Application (10 minutes)

Philosophy Over the Ages

The following quotes are taken from Gene Edward Veith's book *Postmodern Times—A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*, published by Crossway Books in 1994. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

To understand the modern and the postmodern, we must first understand the premodern. To put it simply, in the premodern phase of Western civilization people believed in the supernatural. Individuals and the culture as a whole believed in God (or gods). (Page 29)

Plato, the disciple of Socrates, went on to develop classical idealism, the view that the particulars of this world owe their form to transcendent ideals in the mind of God (Page 30)

During the Middle Ages (A.D. 1000-1500), Christian piety, classical rationalism, and the folk-paganism of European culture achieved something of a synthesis. In the 1500's and the 1600's, Western civilization returned to its roots. The Renaissance challenged the somewhat muddled medieval synthesis, as the West returned to both of its sources. Renaissance humanism rediscovered and reasserted the Greeks; the Reformation rediscovered and reasserted the Bible. Both classicism and Biblicism came back to life in a purified form. (Page 31)

The modern world, properly speaking, began in the 1700s with the Enlightenment." (Page 32)

This age of reason, scientific discovery, and human autonomy is termed the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment rejected Christianity but did affirm the existence of God, at least at first. There is, however, no real need of a God who is not involved in His creation. Eventually, the deity withered away. Enlightenment rationalism saw the whole universe as a closed natural system of cause and effect. Every phenomenon must be understood in terms of a cause from within the system. (Page 33)

Eventually, thinkers discarded even Enlightenment classicism. The rationalism that had its roots in Plato and Aristotle assumed universal absolutes and nonmaterial truths. In the nineteenth century, however, the empirical supplanted the rational. According to nineteenth-century materialism, only what we can observe is real. The physical universe, as apprehended by our senses and as studied by the scientific method, is the only reality. (Page 34)

Romanticism cultivated subjectivity, personal experience, irrationalism, and intense emotion. It encouraged introspection and attention to the inner life. The romantics drew on Kant who argued that the external world owes its very shape

and structure to the organizing power of the human mind, which imposes order on the chaotic data of the senses. Some romantics took this to imply that the self, in effect, is the creator of the universe. (Page 36)

Darwin's theory of evolution challenged romanticism just as it did Christianity. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, romanticism faded before the hard-edged certainties of neo-Enlightenment materialism...The twentieth century saw a new worldview, one that accepted the bleak facts of materialism, while offering meaning for the individual. This worldview is existentialism. According to existentialism, there is no inherent meaning or purpose in life. (Page 37)

Existentialism provides the rationale for contemporary relativism. Since everyone creates his or her own meaning, every meaning is equally valid. Religion becomes a purely private affair, which cannot be "imposed" on anyone else. The content of one's meaning makes no difference, only the personal commitment – to give life meaning Sartre chose communism; Heidegger chose Nazism; Bultmann chose Christianity. Everyone inhabits his or her own private reality. "What's true for you may not be true for me." (Page 38)

According to Charles Jencks, the end of modernism and the beginning of post-modernism took place at 3:32 P.M. on July 15, 1972. At that moment the Pruitt-Igoe housing development in St. Louis, a pinnacle of modernist architecture, was blown up. Though a prize-winning exemplar of high technology, modernistic aesthetics, and functional design, the project was so impersonal and depressing, so crime-ridden and impossible to patrol, that it was uninhabitable. The demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe development is a paradigm for postmodernism. The modern worldview constructs rationally designed systems in which human beings find it impossible to live. This paradigm applies not so much to housing projects as to philosophical systems and ways of life. Christians could not agree more. The new secular solution, however, is not only to blow modernism to smithereens but to explode all stable forms, including Christianity. (Page 39)

Most scholars associate the postmodern shift with the counterculture of the 1960s. (Page 40)

Faced with the inherent meaninglessness of life, modernists impose an order upon it, which they then treat as being objective and universally binding. Postmodernists, on the other hand, live with and affirm the chaos, considering any order to be only provisional and varying from person to person. (Page 42)

Postmodern existentialism goes back to Nietzsche to emphasize not only will, but power. Liberation comes from rebelling against existing power structures, including oppressive notions of "knowledge" and "truth." (Page 48)

Ministry is Stranger Than it Used to Be: The Challenge of Postmodernism

By R. Albert Mohler Jr.

A common concern now seems to emerge wherever ministers gather--ministry is stranger than it used to be. Not that ministry is more difficult, more tiring, or more demanding...just different—and increasingly strange.

That sense of strangeness may well be due to the rise of postmodern culture and philosophy; perhaps the most important intellectual and cultural movement of the late twentieth century. What difference does postmodernism make? Just look at the modern media, pop culture, and the blank stares you receive from some persons when you talk about truth, meaning, and morality.

Postmodernism developed among academics and artists, but has quickly spread throughout the culture. At the most basic level, postmodernism refers to the passing of modernity and the rise of a new cultural movement. Modernity--the dominant worldview since the Enlightenment—has been supplanted by postmodernism, which both extends and denies certain principles and symbols central to the modern age.

Clearly, much of the literature about postmodernism is nonsensical and hard to take seriously. When major postmodern figures speak or write, the gibberish which often results sounds more like a vocabulary test than a sustained argument. But postmodernism cannot be dismissed as unimportant or irrelevant. This is not a matter of concern only among academics and the avant garde—this new movement represents a critical challenge to the Christian church, and to the minister.

Actually, postmodernism may not be a movement or methodology at all. We might best describe postmodernism as a mood which sets itself apart from the certainties of the modern age. This mood is the heart of the postmodern challenge.

What are the contours of this postmodern mood? Is this new movement helpful in our proclamation of the Gospel? Or, will the postmodern age bring a great retreat from Christian truth? A look at the basic features of postmodernism may be helpful.

The Deconstruction of Truth

Though the nature of truth has been debated throughout the centuries, postmodernism has turned this debate on its head. While most arguments throughout history have focused on rival claims to truth, postmodernism rejects the very notion of truth as fixed, universal, objective, or absolute.

The Christian tradition understands truth as established by God and revealed through the self-revelation of God in Scripture. Truth is eternal, fixed, and universal. Our responsibility is to order our minds in accordance with God's revealed truth and to bear witness to this truth. We serve a Savior who identified himself as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" and called for belief.

Modern science, itself a product of the Enlightenment, rejected revelation as a source of truth and put the scientific method in its place. Modernity attempted to establish truth on the basis of scientific precision through the process of inductive thought and investigation. The other disciplines attempted to follow the lead of the scientists in establishing objective truth through rational thought. Modernists were confident that their approach would yield objective and universal truths by means of human reason.

The postmodernists reject both the Christian and modernist approaches to the question of truth. According to postmodern theory, truth is not universal, is not objective or absolute, and cannot be determined by a commonly accepted method. Instead, postmodernists argue that truth is socially constructed, plural, and inaccessible to universal reason.

As postmodern philosopher Richard Rorty asserts, truth is made rather than found. According to the deconstructionists, one influential sect among the postmodernists, all truth is socially constructed. That is, social groups construct their own "truth" in order to serve their own interests. As Michel Foucault—one of the most significant postmodern theorists—argued, all claims to truth are constructed to serve those in power. Thus, the role of the intellectual is to deconstruct truth claims in order to liberate the society.

What has been understood and affirmed as truth, argue the postmodernists, is nothing more than a convenient structure of thought intended to oppress the powerless. Truth is not universal, for every culture establishes its own truth. Truth is not objectively real, for all truth is merely constructed—as Rorty stated, truth is made, not found.

Little imagination is needed to see that this radical relativism is a direct challenge to the Christian gospel. Our claim is not to preach one truth among many; about one Savior among many; through one gospel, among many. We do not believe that the Christian gospel is a socially constructed truth, but the Truth which sets sinners free from sin—and is objectively, universally, historically true. As the late Francis Schaeffer instructed, the Christian church must contend for *true truth*.

The Death of the Metanarrative

Since postmodernists believe all truth to be socially constructed, all presentations of absolute, universal, established truth must be resisted. All grand and expansive accounts of truth, meaning, and existence are cast aside as "metanarratives" which claim far more than they can deliver.

Jean-Francois Lyotard, perhaps the most famous European postmodernist, defined postmodernism in this way: "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives."⁽¹⁾ Thus, all the great philosophical systems are dead, all cultural accounts are limited, all that remains are little stories accepted as true by different groups and cultures. Claims to universal truth—the metanarratives—are oppressive, "totalizing" and thus must be resisted.

The problem with this, of course, is that Christianity is meaningless apart from the gospel—which is a metanarrative. Indeed, the Christian gospel is nothing less than the *Metanarrative of all Metanarratives*. For Christianity to surrender the claim that the gospel is universally true and objectively established is to surrender the center of our faith. Christianity is the great metanarrative of redemption. Our story begins with creation by the sovereign, omnipotent God; continues through the fall of the humanity into sin and the redemption of sinners through the substitutionary work of Christ on the cross; and promises an eternal dual destiny for all humanity—the redeemed with God forever in glory and the unredeemed in eternal punishment. That is the message we preach--and it is a glorious, world-changing metanarrative.

We do not preach the gospel as one narrative among many true narratives, or as "our" narrative alongside the authentic narratives of others. We cannot retreat to claim that biblical truth is merely true *for us*. Our claim is that the Bible is the Word of God *for all*. This is deeply offensive to the postmodern worldview, which charges all who claim universal truth with imperialism and oppression.

The Demise of the Text

If the metanarrative is dead, then the great texts behind the metanarratives must also be dead. Postmodernism asserts the fallacy of ascribing meaning to a text, or even to the author. The reader establishes the meaning, and no controls limit the meaning of the reading.

Jacques Derrida, the leading literary deconstructionist, described this move in terms of the "death of the author" and the "death of the text." Meaning—*made*, not *found*--is created by the reader in the act of reading. The text must be deconstructed in order to get rid of the author and let the text live as a liberating word.

This new hermeneutical method explains much of the current debate in literature, politics, law, and theology. All texts—whether the Holy Scripture, the United States Constitution, or the works of Mark Twain—are subjected to esoteric criticism and dissection, all in the name of liberation.

Texts, according to the postmodernists, reveal a subtext of oppressive intentions on the part of the author, and so must be deconstructed. This is no matter of mere academic significance. This is the argument behind much contemporary constitutional interpretation made by judges, the presentation of issues in the media, and the fragmentation of modern biblical scholarship. The rise of feminist, liberation, homosexual, and various other interest-group schools of interpretation is central to this postmodern principle.

Therefore, the Bible is subjected to radical re-interpretation, often with little or no regard for the plain meaning of the text or the clear intention of the human author. Texts which are not pleasing to the postmodern mind are rejected as oppressive, patriarchal, heterosexist, homophobic, or deformed by some other political or ideological bias. The authority of the text is denied in the name of liberation, and the most fanciful and ridiculous interpretations are celebrated as "affirming" and thus "authentic."

Of course, the notion of the "death of the author" takes on an entirely new meaning when applied to Scripture, for we claim that the Bible is not the mere words of men, but the Word of God. Postmodernism's insistence on the death of the author is inherently atheistic and anti-supernaturalistic. The claim to divine revelation is written off as only one more projection of oppressive power.

The Dominion of Therapy

When truth is denied, therapy remains. The critical questions shifts from "What is true?" to "What makes me feel good?." This cultural trend has been developing throughout the century, but now reaches epic proportions.

The culture we confront is almost completely under submission to what Philip Reiff called the "triumph of the therapeutic." In a postmodern world, all issues eventually revolve around the self. Thus, enhanced self-esteem is all that remains as the goal of many educational and theological approaches. Categories such as "sin" are rejected as oppressive and harmful to self-esteem.

Therapeutic approaches are dominant in a postmodern culture made up of individuals uncertain that truth even exists—but assured that our self-esteem must remain intact. *Right* and *wrong* are discarded as out-of-date reminders of an oppressive past. In the name of our own "authenticity" we will reject all inconvenient moral standards and replace concern for right and wrong with the assertion of our *rights*.

Theology is likewise reduced to therapy. Entire theological systems and approaches are constructed with the goal reduced to nothing more than self-esteem for individuals and special groups. These "feel good" theologies dispense with the "negativity" of offensive biblical texts, or with the Bible altogether. Out are categories such as "lostness" and judgment. In their place are vague notions of acceptance without repentance and wholeness without redemption. We may not know (or care) if we are saved or lost, but we certainly do feel better about ourselves.

The Decline of Authority

Since postmodern culture is committed to a radical vision of liberation, all authorities must be overthrown. Among the dethroned authorities are texts, authors, traditions, metanarratives, the Bible, God, and all powers on heaven and earth. Except, of course, for the authority of the postmodern theorists and cultural figures, who wield their power in the name of oppressed peoples everywhere.

According to the postmodernists, those in authority use their power to remain in power, and to serve their own interests. Their laws, traditions, texts, and "truth" are nothing more than that which is designed to maintain them in power.

So, the authority of governmental leaders is eroded, as is the authority of teachers, community leaders, parents, and ministers. Ultimately, the authority of God is rejected

as totalitarian and autocratic. Ministers are representatives of this autocratic deity, and are to be resisted as authorities as well.

Doctrines, traditions, creeds and confessions—all are to be rejected and charged with limiting self-expression and representing oppressive authority. Preachers are tolerated so long as they stick to therapeutic messages of enhanced self-esteem, and resisted whenever they inject divine authority or universal claims to truth in their sermons.

The Displacement of Morality

Ivan, in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* was right—if God is dead everything is permissible. The God allowed by postmodernism is not the God of the Bible, but a vague idea of spirituality. There are no tablets of stone, no Ten Commandments...no rules.

Morality is, along with other foundations of culture, discarded as oppressive and totalitarian. A pervasive moral relativism marks postmodern culture. This is not to say that postmodernists are reluctant to employ moral language. To the contrary, postmodern culture is filled with moral discourse. But the issues of moral concern are quite arbitrary, and in many cases represent a reversal of biblical morality.

Homosexuality, for example, is openly advocated and accepted. The rise of gay and lesbian studies in universities, the emergence of homosexual political power, and the homoerotic images now common to popular culture mark this dramatic moral reversal. Homosexuality is no longer considered a sin. Homophobia is now targeted as sin, and demands for tolerance of "alternative lifestyles" have now turned into demand for public celebration of all lifestyles as morally equal.

Michael Jones described modernity as "rationalized sexual misbehavior," and postmodernity is its logical extension. Michel Foucault, who argued that all sexual morality is an abuse of power, called for postmodernism to celebrate "polymorphous perversity." He lived and died dedicated to this lifestyle, and his prophecy has been fulfilled in this decade.

Christian Ministry in a Postmodern Age

Postmodernism represents the unique challenge facing Christianity in this generation. Walter Truett Anderson described the postmodern reality in his clever book, *Reality Isn't What it Used to Be*(2) This is the central claim of postmodernism--reality is not what it used to be, and never will be again. Humanity now come of age, we will make our own truth, define our own reality, and seek our own self-esteem.

In this culture, ministry is stranger than it used to be. Postmodern concepts of truth now reign in the postmodern age--and even in the postmodern pew. Research indicates that a growing majority of those who claim to be Christian reject the very notion of absolute truth.

The "death of the text" is evident in the resistance to biblical preaching in many churches. Postmodern ears no longer want to hear the "thus saith the Lord" of the biblical text. Since truth is made, and not found, we can design our own personal religion or spirituality—and leave out inconvenient doctrines and moral commands. Postmodernism promises that the individual can construct a personal structure of spirituality, free from outside interference or permission. Under the motto, "There's no truth like my truth," postmodernism's children will establish their own doctrinal system, and will defy correction.

Gene Veith, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Concordia University, tells of a young man who claimed to be a Christian and professed belief in Christ and love for the Bible, but also believed in reincarnation. His pastor confronted this belief in reincarnation by directing the young man to Hebrews 9:27. The text was read: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The young man looked back at his pastor and replied, "Well, that's your interpretation."⁽³⁾

In the name of postmodernism, *anything* can be explained away as a matter of interpretation. Games played with language mean that every statement must be evaluated with care. A statement as clear and plain as the first line of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," must be evaluated in terms of the speaker's intentions. Does this confession assert belief that God is actually the maker of heaven and earth, or is this a statement of mere personal sentiment?

The strangeness of ministry in a postmodern age can be seen in Bible studies which do not study the Bible, but are psychological exercises in self-discovery; in the cafeteria-style morality practiced by so many church members; and in the growing acceptance of other religions as valid paths to salvation.

Modern culture is revolt against the truth, and postmodernism is but the latest form of this revolt. Ministry in these strange times calls for undiluted conviction and faithful apologetics. The temptations to compromise are great, and the opposition which comes to anyone who would claim to preach absolute and eternal truth is severe. But this is the task of the believing church.

We must understand postmodernism, read its theorists and learn its language. This is much a missiological challenge as an intellectual exercise. We cannot address ourselves to a postmodern culture unless we understand its mind.

By its very nature, postmodernism is doomed to self-destruction. Its central principles cannot be consistently applied. (Just ask a postmodern academic to accept the "death of the text" in terms of his contract.) The church must continue to be the people of truth, holding fast to the claims of Christ, and contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Postmodernism rejects any "once for all" truth, but the church cannot compromise its witness.

The Christian ministry is stranger than it used to be. But this is an era of great evangelistic opportunity, for as the false gods of postmodernism die, the church bears witness

to the Word of Life. In the midst of a postmodern age, our task is to bear witness to the Truth, and to pick up the pieces as the culture breaks apart.

1. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, "Theory and History of Literature," vol. 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. xxiv.
2. Walter Truett Anderson, *Reality Isn't What it Used to Be*. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990).
3. Gene Veith, "Catechesis, Preaching, and Vocation," in *Here We Stand*, ed. James Boice and Ben Sasse (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), pp. 82-83.

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Feminism Comes to the Church

In the 1960s Christian feminists set themselves on a course parallel to that pursued by feminists in secular society. They—together with their counterparts—began to seek the de-differentiation of male/female roles. The dominant theme was that women needed to be allowed to do everything that men could do, and in the same manner and with the same recognized status as men. This, they believed, constituted true equality.

Unfortunately, Christian feminists began to pursue the inclusion of women in leadership hierarchies without a clear analysis of whether or not the hierarchies themselves were structured and functioning according to a biblical pattern. They merely judged the church to be sexist and implemented a course of action in response. Christian feminists, along-side their secular counterparts, began to demand “equal rights.” They decided to seek androgyny in the church by pursuing women’s ordination and the obliteration of structured roles in marriage.

—The Feminist Mistake, Mary Kassian, published by Crossway Books in 2005, page 32. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

Biblical Feminists Define “Equality”

Biblical feminists formulated a definition of equality for Christian women that concurred with the definition put forth by secular society. Equality meant role interchangeability—a woman had the right to fill any position that a man held. With this definition in hand, biblical feminists turned to the Bible. They found that while the Bible did teach the essential equality of women and men, it also taught role differentiation. In order to harmonize the Bible’s teachings with their view of equality, these feminists found it necessary to determine which scriptural texts were dynamic and which were static, which were inspired and which reflected the author’s bias, which were true and which were in error. In doing so, biblical feminists adopted a feminist mind-set. Secular feminist philosophy taught women to name themselves and their world. The experiences and perceptions of women were regarded as a valid source for redefining truth and reality. Christian feminists adopted the mentality when they used their own definition of equality to judge the validity and applicability of the Bible. In this way, women’s experience overruled commonly accepted hermeneutic principles. Even for conservative evangelical feminists, it became the new norm for biblical study and theological interpretation.

—The Feminist Mistake, Mary Kassian, published by Crossway Books in 2005, page 255. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

The History of Feminism and the Church Part I: An Excerpt and Summary from The Feminist Gospel

By Mary Kassian

*Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt and summary of Mary Kassian's book, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church*, published by Crossway Books in 1992.*

Early Feminism

In the 1790s and early 1800s, a flurry of books on the rights of women and the equality of the sexes signaled the beginning of the "first wave" of feminism. Then, in 1848 one hundred American women gathered at a convention in Seneca Falls, New York to ratify a "Declaration of Sentiments" regarding the basic natural rights of women. The "Declaration", drafted primarily by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, catalogued 15 grievances. They complained that women did not have the right to vote, were barred from "profitable employment", were excluded from universities and the professions of theology, medicine and law, and were obligated to obey their husbands.

The women's movement gained momentum over the next few decades. Doors opened to higher education and many professions. Laws were passed which protected the economic and property-owning rights of married women. In 1920 American women obtained the right to vote. By 1930, they were entering the work force in greater numbers.

But then, for reasons that are difficult to pinpoint, the movement stalled. Perhaps it was because of the war, perhaps it was because the dream attained did not bring the satisfaction it promised, but within one generation, many women ceased to pursue the professional ends they had previously sought and returned home. The fervor of the 1920s and 30s was lost. The public cry for women's equality became dormant.

Breaking The Silence

French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir broke the silence about women's issues and began the rejuvenation of the movement. Her book, *The Second Sex*, was published in 1949 and translated into English in 1953. She was trained in philosophy and was the companion of Jean-Paul Sartre. They shared a common philosophy known today as existentialism. It is based on the concept that the individual is entirely free, and must therefore accept commitment and full responsibility for his acts and decisions in an uncertain and purposeless world. Her model for male-female interaction is based upon this existentialist philosophy.

Her primary thesis was that women are second-class citizens in today's world. Man is the measure of woman. He is the absolute, the essential. "She is the incidental, the

inessential...the other." This inequality was found in every area of society: Economics, industry, politics, education and language. The domain of women was that of "Kitchen, Church and Children." Women had been suppressed, named and defined by men. They had been robbed of their autonomy. They needed to realize that they are autonomous and must accept responsibility to shape their own destiny.

How can they do this? Women must rebel against male superiority and refuse to succumb to their traditional roles of wife, mother and sweetheart. They need to band together and organize themselves. All forms of socialism that liberate women from their families must be pursued. The state should assume responsibility for her maternal functions that restrict her participation in the work-force. Marriage should be a free agreement that the spouses may break at will. Maternity must be voluntary. Abortion and contraception must be readily and legally available. Pregnancy leaves should be paid for by the state, which would assume charge of the children.

Americanizing De Beauvoir

Because of its existentialist and philosophical terminology, *The Second Sex* made little initial impression in North America, at least until Betty Friedan popularized and Americanized it in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Together these two works form the basis for the modern feminist movement.

Friedan wrote of millions of women "kissing their husbands goodbye in front of the picture window, depositing their station wagonful of children at school, and smiling as they ran the new electric waxer over the spotless kitchen floor. They baked their own bread, sewed their own and their children's clothes, kept their new washing machines and dryers running all day. They changed the sheets on the beds twice a week instead of once, took the rug-hooking class in adult education, and pitied their poor frustrated mothers, who had dreamed of having a career. Their only dream was to be perfect wives and mothers; their highest ambition to have five children and a beautiful house, their only fight to get and keep their husbands. They had no thought for the unfeminine problems of the world outside the home; they wanted the men to make the major decisions. They gloried in their role as women, and wrote proudly on the census blank: 'Occupation: housewife.'"

Women had been trying to conform themselves to this idealized picture, but the reality of their daily lives left them feeling empty and dissatisfied. Friedan called this the "trapped housewife syndrome" and maintained that it was quite common.

Women had an identity problem. They had no purpose. The only way they could escape this dilemma was through education and work. Women must make a life-time commitment to a field of thought and to a work of serious importance to society. They must seek to shape the world in tangible ways. To do this, everything will need restructuring: Professions, marriage, the family, the home. Women must become like men. They needed to take control of their own lives, name themselves and set their own destiny.

Beginnings Of Christian Feminism

While de Beauvoir was writing her book, Katharine Bliss was doing a survey, *The Service and Status of Women in the Church*, for the World Council of Churches. She noted that women were very involved in church, but their involvement was limited to certain activities and they were excluded from leadership and teaching roles. Her report called for a reevaluation of women's role in church. Though it was completed in 1952, her report received little attention before the early sixties.

In 1961 the *Journal of Pastoral Psychology* began a series of articles on "Male and Female." In one of these articles, William Douglas claimed the church was quenching the gifts of women by denying them ordination. Because the church had adopted the patriarchal attitude of the culture of its origin, women could have a call from God, but not from the church. How could the church change? Douglas mentioned two possible courses of action. (1) The church could return to the New Testament belief in the priesthood of all believers and dissolve the clergy-laity distinction, opening ministry to all, both men and women alike. (2) Or the church could maintain its current structure and begin ordaining women. By and large, this second possibility was the course that was followed.

During the 1960s Christian feminists set themselves on a course parallel to that pursued by feminists in secular society. Women needed to be allowed to name themselves. They should be allowed to do everything a man could do, in the same manner and with the same recognized status. Only this would constitute true equality.

Their arguments for role androgyny stressed several points. First, the church fathers had been wrong in their assessment of the nature of women. Aristotle saw woman as a misbegotten or defective male, incapable of reason. Since the human species is characterized by rationality, women are less than fully human. This philosophical background led Thomas Aquinas to conclude that man is the principle and end of woman. She exists for man and not the reverse. She lacks the wisdom required to be a teacher. But, argued the Christian feminists, advances in psychology, anthropology and genetics had demolished this Aristotelian-Thomistic synthesis. Women are not inferior to men, nor do they have a smaller intellectual capacity. Therefore, they should be ordained.

Second, the Bible, rightly interpreted, teaches the equality of men and women. Feminists appealed to texts such as Genesis 2 and Galatians 3:28. They pointed to Mary learning at the feet of Jesus, to Phoebe being sent out as an ambassador to the churches, to the five daughters of Philip who exercised a prophetic ministry, and to Priscilla who taught and disciplined Apollos. Surely if Scripture endorses these women and their ministries, nothing should prevent women today from teaching and exercising authority, even if it went against longstanding social customs.

Beginnings Of Feminist Theology

Society and the church were moving in a more feminine direction. If theology was going to keep pace, it needed to change or risk becoming irrelevant. If women were going to be ordained, they needed a new theology.

Mary Daly answered this call to feminize the discipline of theology. She was a member of the Roman Catholic Church and taught at the Jesuit-run Boston College. In 1968 she published *The Church and the Second Sex*, where she severely criticized the Roman Catholic Church. As the title indicates, Daly relied heavily on the work of de Beauvoir. Yet contrary to the French philosopher, Daly believed the Church was redeemable.

The Church was guilty of (1) causing women's legal oppression and deceiving women into enforced passivity; (2) teaching women's inferiority in its doctrine; (3) harming women through its moral teaching; and (4) excluding women from Church leadership roles. The traditional doctrine of God had to undergo radical revision. Many Catholics have the vague notion that God is of the male sex. They then extrapolate from this that the male is God. This must be completely rejected. The doctrines of divine omnipotence, immutability and providence would likewise have to be jettisoned, since they discourage women from seeking change. As well, the idea of God as a jealous and vengeful deity would have to go since it helped to sustain and perpetuate androcentric theological teachings.

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Biblical Truth in our Relativistic World

GOALS FOR LESSON 2:

- Understand that God is the Author of the Bible; therefore, the character of God and the truth of the Scriptures are inseparable.
- Accept the Bible as authoritative truth.
- Appreciate that obedience to biblical truth is vitally important.
- Find joy in the declaration of biblical truth through your words and your life.

FELLOWSHIP FOR LESSON 2:

15 minutes

Opening Session



(DISPLAY SLIDE 1.)

Begin on time to create the habit of promptness in your class. Make any required announcements first thing so that you can give your welcome remarks without interruptions

Welcome (10 minutes)

I. Introduction

Welcome back to class. I hope you really enjoyed your personal study and preparation for this lesson, and that you sensed God meeting you in a personal and special way as you studied His Word.

A. The Purpose Statement

In your personal preparation, review both Colossians 2:2-8 and 2 Timothy 3 so you can easily refer to these verses when you share the Purpose Statement with the class. Explain to the women that you want them to be aware of this Statement because every lesson is intentionally designed to fulfill this overarching rationale. This is the reason behind each and every lesson. Read the statement to the class slowly so they can think through what it says.

Let's look at the Purpose Statement of our study so we can keep it in mind as our goal as we study *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture*.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 2.**)



This is a significant purpose because, as we discussed in the first lesson, there are false teachers today who are doing a good job of presenting the “plausible arguments” of evangelical feminism to Christian women.

Remember Paul's words in Colossians 2:2-8:

Colossians 2:2-8—“that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. See to it that no one takes you “captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”

As biblical women, we must also guard against becoming “2 Timothy 3 Women” who are weak women—always learning, but never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. We want to be strong women who are learning the truth—the truth of the Bible.

Again, remember the passage we referred to in Lesson 1.

2 Timothy 3:5-7—“having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of truth.

Now let me read the Purpose Statement while you follow along:

To encourage and equip women through the study of the Bible to embrace the truth about biblical womanhood so they can joyfully live out this truth in their personal lives and clearly articulate this truth to others.

Every lesson is designed to fulfill this overall purpose of the study.

Throughout this study of the Bible you will be *encouraged* to be a biblical woman, and by God's grace *equipped to live out your life* as a biblical woman.

At the same time, you will be *encouraged* and *equipped to articulate or put into words what it means* to be a biblical woman when you are talking with others.

B. Importance of Preparation

According to 1 Peter 3:15, we must always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks us for a reason for the hope that is in us.

1 Peter 3:15—...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

As you live out biblical womanhood principles, people will notice a difference. They will begin to ask questions—perhaps not direct questions, but keep your ears sensitive to quizzical comments and expressions. We need to be prepared to put that difference they see in us into words—gently, respectfully, yet boldly.

The importance of being able to explain truth to others is our reason for focusing so much on your doing your Personal Homework Questions and coming prepared to discuss in class. In your small groups, you will have the opportunity to work out how to explain these principles to others.

This would be a good time to remind the women that their discussion will be richer, and they will gain the most from their study and discussion when they are good participants in small group. Remind them that we ask them to just listen when the group is discussing a question they haven't answered yet, and to participate when they do have an answer prepared.

Introductory Remarks (20 minutes)

I. Review

Before we go to our discussion groups, we will briefly review some of the things we talked about in Lesson 1.

It is always a good thing to review. It helps us to learn, remember, and apply what we've learned, and we will do a lot of reviewing in this class. So before we move ahead in Lesson 2, let's review some of the things we talked about last time.

A. Terms to Know

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 3.**)



Have the women turn to the page from Lesson 1 that has the Definition of Terms. You don't need to read each definition in full. Briefly make a general statement about each term in your own words.

Gender Debate—the term used (most often within the church) to refer to the argument regarding sex appropriate roles and responsibilities

Feminism—the secular movement permeating our culture today that supports and actively promotes the “sameness” of the sexes

Evangelical feminism—feminism with a “spiritual twist.” Evangelical feminism is where most of us find the gender debate most difficult because it's hard to argue with a position that uses the Bible as support. Keep in mind that biblical references used by this side of the debate are often taken out of context, and definitely influenced by those who espouse liberal theological positions.

Egalitarian—the term for the position of total equality of the sexes both within the home and the church. As biblical women we can agree that men and women are of equal value and worth before God. We disagree with this position because we believe the Bible to reveal a distinction in sex appropriate roles and responsibilities, both within the home and the church.

Biblical womanhood—a woman who stands on the Word of God

Complementarian—the position of a biblical woman that supports equality of worth and distinction of roles. This is the position and perspective of our study.

B. Compare and Contrast Modernism and Postmodernism

Next, let's quickly review the difference between the two philosophies that most affect us today—Modernism and Postmodernism.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 4.**)



(The following two statements are also included in the Student Guide.)

The bottom line of modernism is summed up well with the phrase “Truth without God.”

In contrast to this, postmodernism can be summed up as “God without Truth.”

Our goal is to discover Truth with a capital T—in other words, God’s Truth. The way we discover that Truth is to abide, study, and immerse ourselves in God’s Word.

C. Seven Tenets of Postmodernism

Lastly, let’s briefly review the tenets of postmodernism.

We are not to be afraid of our culture, but we do need to be aware of our culture.

As we go through these, make a mental note of how you’ve personally seen these principles illustrated in the last few days.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 5.**)

Again, as you did with the definitions, move through the list quickly making a brief comment on each tenet. Remember, this is a review.

Direct the women to complete these statements in the Student Guide.

The Seven Tenets of Postmodernism

- Unlimited Variation of Words—people use words any way they want, twisting them to suit their own agenda and purpose. Have you noticed any examples of “spin” recently?
- No Rules of Logic to Govern Dialogue—when we throw the meaning of words out the window, logic goes with it. Have you had a conversation with anyone this week where you felt you were going around and around in illogical circles?
- No Limits to Defining Meaning—when logic goes out the window, right behind it is meaning. Have you experienced or read of anything recently where something has simply gone beyond the limits of any category of meaning?
- No Metanarrative—our culture will NOT connect the dots. “Cause and effect” arguments are not valid today. Have you recently had a conversation with someone who only sees life (or the Bible) as a collection of short stories that are completely un-connected.
- Defiance of Authority—shaking your fist in the face of any person or thing that represents authority. Have you read about, or had first-hand experience with someone in rebellion against an authority figure?

- Deconstruction of Truth—rather than standing on Truth there is a deliberate effort today to take truth apart piece by piece. Have you heard of anyone calling someone who believes in Truth “arrogant”?
- Relativism—circumstantial ethics, fluidity of truth, shaking sands of doctrine. Have you heard the phrases “that may be true for you, but it’s not true for me” lately?

II. Conclusion

A. Know the Truth

Jesus said to the Jewish believers in John 8:31...

John 8:31—...If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Biblical women are women who abide in the Word of God. The world would want us to think that the Bible is legalistic and enslaving. But that is not the case. In fact, it’s just the opposite. The truth of the Bible will set you free!

B. Examine the Scriptures

Let’s adopt the attitude and imitate the action of the believers in Acts 17:11, who ***received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were true.***

We want to be eager examiners of the Word. What we are doing in the first three lessons of this study is to lay the foundation for biblical womanhood. That foundation is found in the truth of God’s Word.

Too often we jump right into the “doing,” but if we don’t know the principles and heart issues we build on a shaky foundation.

Before we get to the practical application of biblical womanhood in the home, church, and culture, we want to be sure that we’re standing on solid truth.

You can’t *apply* principles if you don’t *know* them.

Close this time with prayer and dismiss the women to their small groups.

Sample prayer: Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth. You know our hearts and minds. Guard us from deceit—lead us into the knowledge of truth from your Word. Your Word is Truth—thank you for it, and for leading us to this place. Help us to learn well by Your Holy Spirit. We ask for discernment, peace, and joy as You change us more and more into the image of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We pray in His name, Amen.

Plan on 40 minutes for the group discussion and 5 minutes to regroup for the teaching session. Before you dismiss the women to their discussion groups, tell them when they should be finished in their groups. By saying this so all can hear, you will help the discussion group leaders to stick within the time frame.

Move to Discussion Groups—(50 minutes)

Teaching Session (45 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Reason for Concern

Each of the following statements points out a reason why we should be concerned about evangelical feminism. Let's read these statements together. Then we will focus in on the central theme of concern.

These statements are included in the Student Guide.

The each statement is from Wayne Grudem in his book *Evangelical Feminism—A New Path to Liberalism?*

...the claims and arguments that evangelical feminists adopt about (certain passages) in the Bible set in motion a process of interpreting Scripture that will be used increasingly to nullify the authority of Scripture in other areas as well. One by one, the teachings of Scripture that are unpopular in the culture are rejected, and, one issue at a time, the church begins to sound more and more like the secular world.

—Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism—A New Path to Liberalism?*¹

1. Grudem, Wayne. *Evangelical Feminism—A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2006),

Reason for Concern: Interpretation of Scripture and Rejection of Truth.

The next two statements (also from Grudem's book) are quotes from Mark Dever, senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. and writer on the blog "Together for the Gospel"

It is my best and most sober judgment that this position [egalitarianism] is effectively an undermining of—a breach in—the authority of Scripture...this issue of egalitarianism and complementarianism is increasingly acting as the watershed distinguishing those who will accommodate Scripture to culture, and those who will attempt to shape culture by Scripture....

—Wayne Grudem quoting Mark Dever's blog "Together for the Gospel"²

Reason for Concern: Relationship to Culture

Will we accommodate and adapt to culture or will we shape culture?

...there are issues more central to the gospel than gender issues. However, there may be no way the authority of Scripture is being undermined more quickly or more thoroughly in our day than through the hermeneutics of egalitarian readings of the Bible. And when the authority of Scripture is undermined, the gospel will no long be acknowledged.

—Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism—A New Path to Liberalism?*³

Reason for Concern: Undermining of Scripture's Authority Leads to the Loss of the Gospel Message

Francis Schaeffer warned years ago that the first generation of Christians who lead the church astray doctrinally change only one key point in their doctrinal position and change nothing else, so it can seem for a time that the change is not too harmful. But their followers and disciples in the next generation will take the logic of their arguments much further and will advocate much more extensive kinds of error. I think that is happening in a regular, predictable way in evangelical feminism...

—Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism—A New Path to Liberalism?*⁴

Reason for Concern: Moving Down a Path that Takes Us Further and Further from the Truth

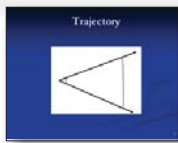
B. Trajectory

The point these quotes are illustrating is what we can call "trajectory."

2. Grudem, Wayne. *Evangelical Feminism—A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2006), 19.

3. *Ibid*, 19.

4. *Ibid*, 20.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 6.**)

Trajectory refers to the way in which a process or event develops over a period of time. (Encarta Dictionary)

There is an illustration of a trajectory in the Student Guide.

Explanation of “Trajectory”:

- Two lines (rays) come together to form an angle.
- Where the two rays meet is the vertex of the angle.
- The closer you are to the vertex, the smaller the degree of the angle.
- However, even a minute angle at the vertex, when extended out, becomes larger and larger.

Think of one of these rays as the Truth of the Bible.

The other ray appears when the Truth is changed ever so slightly.

At the vertex it may not seem like such a big change, but when extended out (over time) one gets farther and farther from the Truth.

Keep this illustration in mind throughout our study.

Psalm 125:5—But those who turn aside to their crooked ways the LORD will lead away with evildoers!

Also, keep in mind Romans 1:18-32, which shows that suppression of truth leads to futile thinking, then to darkened hearts, lusts, the exchange of the truth for a lie, and ultimately to a debased mind that cannot discern truth.

And remember that biblical womanhood embraces *Truth with God*.

Our focus will be on the truth found in the Bible. We will not spend a lot of time examining the false arguments of evangelical feminism. We will take the approach that our government takes when training agents to recognize counterfeit money. They train the agents to pick out counterfeit money by examining every detail of the real thing. When they know the real money in complete detail, the counterfeit will pop out conspicuously.

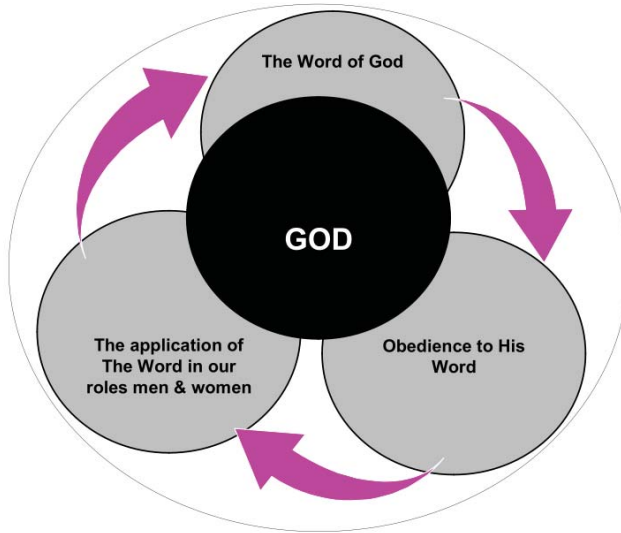
We will focus on the truth (the real thing) so that we know it well. Then, when confronted with false arguments, they will become obvious to us.

II. Introduction of the Four Foundational Points of Lesson 2

A. Identifying the Four Points

4 Points Regarding Biblical Truth

There is a copy of the following illustration in the Student Guide.



There are four foundational points for our teaching time. These points are illustrated in your Student Guide.

Each point is huge, so it may seem as if we're just skimming the surface—

I suppose we are.

But there are some very important things we must settle before we move into what is perhaps the more practical application of biblical womanhood.

In the remaining time today, we will focus on these four points, starting with the central point, which is God.

Here's the outline of our teaching:

- 1) God—who he is, what he's like
- 2) The Bible—God's Word
- 3) The importance of obedience to the Word of God
- 4) The application of specific truth regarding biblical womanhood

The reason that we are focusing on these four points is that they are all under attack.

B. Attack on the Four Points

Before we begin a close study of these foundational points, there are some general comments that need to be made.

There are two main overarching issues that have been the enemy's focus since the beginning of time:

- The existence and character of God.
- The authority of Scripture.

1. Attack from the Beginning—Verses in Genesis

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 7.**)



You discussed and compared Genesis 3:1-4 and Genesis 2:16-17. These passages illustrate this focus of attack.

Genesis 2:16-17—And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’

Genesis 3:1-4—Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’? And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, either shall you touch it, lest you die.’ But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.’

When you read these two passages carefully, you see that Eve made what seems like a *little* change in God's command.

(The command of Genesis 2 was given to Adam, before Eve, but it is generally accepted that Adam relayed this instruction to her.)

Here are some things we see going on here:

- The serpent plants a seed of doubt in Eve's mind when he asks, “Did God actually say...?” (This is an attack on the veracity of His Word—God said you can eat of every tree, but one. Satan misquoted, saying they couldn't eat of any tree.)
- He is causing Eve to question the authority (truth) of God's Word.

- Eve, in response, exaggerates God’s Word (the truth), added a prohibition that wasn’t there and made up her own truth.
- The serpent then presented a direct contradiction of God’s Word (lie). (This is, in essence, an attack on God’s character. Satan is actually calling God a liar.) Eve believed the lie.
- And, of course, we have the root of postmodernism!

2. Attack over Time

Although the overarching attack first seen in the garden has never changed, each age has had its unique points of attack.

More recently, the existence of God has been challenged with modern, humanist thinking and teaching by such men as Charles Darwin. This has escalated, and today we are seeing a more frontal attack on God’s very existence with atheism on the rise.

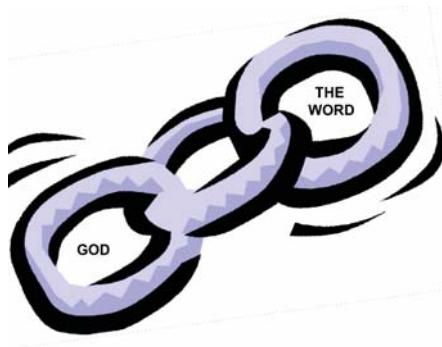
See Resources for Lesson 2—“Evolution Attacks God and the Bible”

The point of attack on the authority of Scripture and the character of God can be clearly seen today in the area of gender/sex issues, including marriage, sex-appropriate roles, and the homosexual agenda. Surely God didn’t say that! God is unfair and doesn’t want the best for us as women! These are arguments we are hearing today, wouldn’t you agree?

C. Underlying Truth of the Four Points

A very central point to keep in mind is that the authority of Scripture and God Himself (His existence and character), are inextricably connected.

You cannot separate one from the other.

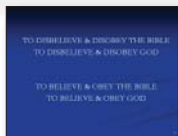


Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student's Guide as you move through this material.

Think of it this way: The root word of “authority” is “author.”

When we are talking about our view on the authority of Scripture, we are really talking about our view of God. You cannot separate the two.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 8.**)



Summary Statement

To summarize, we can make three statements.

- Our view of Scripture equals our view of God.
- To disbelieve and disobey the Bible is to disbelieve and disobey God.
- To believe and obey the Bible is to believe and obey God.⁵

Keeping this overall argument in mind and understanding that God, His Word, and His character are linked, let's now move into our four foundational points.

III. God (First Foundational Point)

A. Is there a God?

It may seem to be either elementary, or way too big to discuss the existence of God, but that's what we're going to spend a few minutes doing. It is, in a sense, elementary, and it is big, but it is very necessary if we're going to establish a strong, solid foundation.

The question: Is there a God? (Our first foundational point.)

We will attempt to answer this question as quickly and as clearly as we can.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 9.**)



We will briefly take an overview of these five particular arguments for the existence for God.

5. The last two statements are taken from: Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994), 81.

This, of course, is a complicated subject. Keep it brief, similar to how you covered the tenets of postmodernism. Make the point that you just want to lay the foundation that there is a God. When we are discussing with others a subject like biblical womanhood it is important to start here. Never take anything for granted!

The women should continue to listen for fill-in-the-blank statements to complete in the Student Guide.

Evidences of God

1. “It’s not the absence of evidence, it’s the suppression of it.”
(Ravi Zacararis)—God has shown himself to us. It is foolish to say there is no God. Evidence is all around us. The question is, “Will we embrace it or suppress it?”

Romans 1:18-19—For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

Psalm 14:1—The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.

Psalm 53:1—It is the fool who says in his heart, “There is no God.”

2. Nature tells us there is a God—We are without excuse when we see the things that God has made. The sunsets, seasons, stars, atoms, and molecules all tell of the glory of God.

Romans 1:20—For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

3. We have an inner sense that God exists.—Why do we pray? Why, when a football or basketball game is close, do you see so many people folding their hands together and closing their eyes as if in prayer? We have an inner sense that God exists. He is.

Romans 1:21—knew God, but didn’t honor him

Romans 1:25—exchanged truth about God for a lie

Hebrews 11:6—whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

4. The Holy Spirit, through Scripture, confirms in our heart—There is a God!—The Holy

Spirit presses in on our hearts and bears witness that God is there.

Romans 8:15-16—For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God.

5. Moral right & wrong / Justice—How do we know what is right and what is wrong? How do we have any kind of justice? Listen to this quote from Dr. R.C. Sproul:

For perfect justice we must have a judge who is righteous and above reproach. He must be all-knowing and all-powerful in order to guarantee justice. For meaningful ethics must assume there is a God and must live as if there is a God.⁶

We believe James 4:12: **There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?**

In fact, our nation’s Declaration of Independence states: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights...”

It’s not just civilized countries with Democracy that believe in justice. I want to read from Acts 28 about the native people on the island of Malta when Paul was shipwrecked there. He had survived the storm at sea and then was bitten by a poisonous viper.

Acts 28: 4-6—When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

Yes, even these Malta natives believed in a god they called Justice with a capital J.

Let’s agree on this first foundational point—God *is*.

Knowing that God is, we are then led to the next question.

B. What is God like?

To answer this question we transition to the second foundational point—the Word of God. Remember that the character of God and the Word of God are inextricably linked.

Here are 10 attributes of God that we glean from His Word. (There are, of course, more attributes of God. We will simply look at these 10 in this lesson.)

6. Sproul, R.C. “The Task of Apologetics.” Ligonier Conference 2007, Orlando, Florida.



(DISPLAY SLIDE 10.)

Once again move quickly, but clearly through this section. Don't spend time on each attribute individually. You're trying to make an overall point right now, so quickly move on to the main point (see summary statement). The 10 attributes are listed for you along with illustrative Scriptures.

These attributes are also included in the Student Guide with space for the students to take notes on each one.

Ten Attributes of God

1. **Omnipresent** (all-pervading)—*If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! (Psalm 139:8)*
2. **Omnipotent** (all-powerful)—*I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. (Job 42:2) And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you." (Mark 14:36a)*
3. **Omniscient** (all-knowing)—*...for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. (1 John 3:20b)*
4. **Love** (God IS love) —*Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8)*
5. **Creator** (Life-giver)—*The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (Acts 17:24-25)*
6. **Unchanging**—*For I the LORD do not change; (Malachi 3:6)*
7. **Eternal**—*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. (Psalm 90:2) "I am the Alpha and the Omega", says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8)*
8. **Holy**—*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory! (Isaiah 6:3) Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed. (Revelation 15:4)*
9. **Jealous**—*Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. (Deuteronomy 4:23-24)*
10. **Never lies**—*Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar. (Proverbs 30:5-6) Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of*

God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began...(Titus 1:1-2)

Summary Statement

Here is the point of the last two exercises—proving God exists and looking at some of His attributes.

- If this is what He's like, then His Word is true.
- If His Word is true, then this is what He's like.

His Word matches His character.

We believe in the authority of Scripture because we believe in the Author!

The settled conclusions we want to come to before moving on are:

- God exists and I can know Him. (I can know God through Jesus. I know what He's like by looking to Jesus and studying His Word.)
- The Bible is His word.
- The Bible has authority because the Author has all authority.

Therefore, we will stand on the truth of God's Word in the midst of our shaky world. Please keep in mind that all of what we have just looked at stands in direct opposition to the thinking of our culture.

IV. The Bible is the Truth (Second Foundational Point)

There are two truths regarding God's Word that are in direct opposition to postmodernism.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 11.**)



We will look at each of these truths individually. Let's begin with the first one.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

Truth exists and the Bible is the statement of all truth.

There is a true metanarrative, and it is Genesis to Revelation. The Bible is not a collection of short stories.

Tell the women that you will spend much more time on this first truth than you will on the second truth. You want to help them to avoid getting “lost” in this first section and forgetting the second truth regarding the metanarrative.

A. The Bible is the Statement of All Truth

(DISPLAY SLIDE 12.)



The women should write these five categories in the Student’s Guide where indicated.

1. Scientific Knowledge

All scientific knowledge fits into 5 categories:

- 1) time
- 2) force
- 3) action
- 4) space
- 5) matter.

All of these categories are found in the first sentence of the Bible.

(DISPLAY SLIDE 13.)



In the beginning (*time*) God (*force*) created (*action*) the heavens (*space*) and the earth (*matter*).⁷

Genesis 1:1—In the beginning, God created the heavens, and the earth.

I think we can safely say that the Bible is the statement of all truth—including scientific truth.

(Example: Job 36:27-28 is a description of the water cycle: ***For he draws up the drops of water; they distill his mist in rain, which the skies pour down and drop on mankind abundantly. Hydrology is the study of water. The water cycle was “discovered” in the late 17th century, yet we see Job speaking of God drawing up drops of water and distilling rain from the mist. That is the water cycle.***)

There is nothing that can trump the Bible.

7. MacArthur, John “The Challenge of Science” Ligonier Conference. March 2007.

Whatever subject you are studying, if you study long enough and hard enough, if you dig deep enough you will end up with biblical truth.

2. Standard of Truth

There is a Latin phrase for this concept that we're going to learn and refer to throughout our study.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 14.**)



The following Latin phrase is also included in the Student Guide.

Norma normans non normata. This means that there is a norm of norms that cannot be normed.

The Bible is the only *norma normans non normata*. It is the plumb line against which all truth is measured or evaluated.

Thinking back to Lesson 1, we can say without hesitation:

The Bible is the straight line (straight stick) that when quietly laid down reveals the crookedness of another's argument.

Summary Statements

To summarize thus far, let's lay down our first foundational points:

- God exists.
- I can know what He's like.
- His Word, the Bible, is the statement of all truth.

Now let's move to our third foundational point.

V. The Importance of Our Obedience to God's Word (Third Foundational Point)

A. Biblical Examples

How important is it that we obey the Bible?

The answer to that question is, God considers His Word and our obedience to His Word vitally important. And we have some very vivid examples to prove that.

Because the word “obey” implies an authority figure, and it is not a word most people respond to positively, stop at this point and tell the women that you understand they may be having a negative reaction when obedience is discussed. Explain that obedience has to do with authority, and our natural tendency is to rebel against authority (remember Lesson 1 and the tenets of postmodernism). However, you are making the point that it is VERY important to God that we follow (obey) His Word. Encourage them to stay with you as you work through the following illustrations.

1. In the Garden

The first illustration of the importance of obedience to God’s word is found in the garden account in the Bible.

In the garden God broke his union with the man and woman, death entered the whole human race—why?

- Because of disobedience to God’s Word.

Direct the women to complete the following two statements in the Student Guide as you read them.

God broke His union with the man and the woman.

Death entered the whole human race because of disobedience to God’s Word.

2. Abraham (*not* included in the Student Guide)

In Genesis 22, we read the breathtaking account of Abraham and his son.

Abraham took his son Isaac to Mt. Moriah, listened to God, and obeyed His Word every step of the way.

What would have happened if Abraham hadn’t been listening carefully to God when he raised the knife (in obedience to God’s instructions) over Isaac? He would have killed Isaac. But God had further instructions. He provided the ram in the thicket. Abraham listened carefully, obeyed, and adjusted his behavior according to the Word of God.

The women should take notes on the following two examples in the Student’s Guide.

3. Moses (*included* in the Student Guide)

Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of disobedience to God’s command.

In Exodus 17:6, God told Moses to strike the rock to get water. He obeyed and struck the rock.

But in Numbers 20:8-13, God told Moses, "...*tell* the rock before their eyes to yield its water."

Moses struck the rock with his staff twice. Disobedience.

This seems like such a small thing. Such a little change. (Remember the trajectory image?) But this little thing was a very big deal to God. Because of his disobedience, God did not allow Moses to enter the Promised Land!

Explain that with both Abraham and Moses, God's directives changed course from one situation to another. This points out that our God is the living God who is intimately interested and involved in our lives. We must stay in close relationship with Him and listen carefully to His guidance.

4. Saul

Turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 15, and let's review what caused the Lord to reject King Saul.

Throughout this chapter, we see words like "listen," "obey," and "voice."

In verse 1, Samuel, God's mouthpiece, tells Saul to perk up his ears and listen. In verse 3, we read God's command to Saul: ***'Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'***

Verse 9 reveals Saul's partial obedience, which is really considered to be disobedience: ***But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen...*** Saul twisted God's Word to suit his own desires.

We see examples of Saul's self-interest (verses 12 and 30), lies (verse 13), excuses (verse 15), and twisting of God's Word (verse 20), insincerity of heart (verses 24-25).

What is God's reaction to all of this? The words are chilling: ***Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.*** (verses 22-23)

B. God's Warning to Us Today

The women should take notes on the following two Scripture passages as they are discussed.

The Bible has some warnings for us today regarding how we handle God's Word.

One warning is found in 2 Timothy 2:15: ***Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.***

And the very last words in the Bible contain a pointed warning.

Turn in your Bibles to Revelation 22:18-21.

We read: ***I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.***

Summary Statement

It's important to get all of this information settled in your mind—so, again, I'll make some summary statements.

- The Bible embodies ALL truth.
- God is the Author of the Bible.
- God wants us to take Him at His Word and obey the truth of the Bible.

Before moving on to the next section, stop here and make another personal comment about obedience. It's possible that right now the women are feeling overwhelmed, and that they think they'll NEVER get it right, or that it's impossible to ever please God. They could even feel afraid that they've made so many mistakes up to this point that God is going to really do something bad to them. Tell the women that although you want them to feel the weight of God's authority and obedience to His Word, next week they will (hopefully) discover that God's authority is a sweet authority. Remind the women of 1 John 5:3: *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.*

The passage in Revelation regarding not changing God's Word brings us full circle and to the second statement that is in direct opposition to postmodernism—there is a true metanarrative, and it is in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

VI. There is a True Metanarrative and it is Genesis to Revelation

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 15.**)



There is an overarching story! From Genesis to Revelation, we find one story, not a collection of short stories.(See Isaiah 46:9-11) In Revelation 4, we see God's throne, His holiness, and His eternal existence. The creator God is sitting on the throne of Heaven.

In Revelation 22, we find the “tree of life” (verses 2, 7, 14, and 19). The blessings that were barred after the Fall are renewed.

The following note from the Reformation Study Bible is included in the Student Guide.

The final description of paradise contains elements alluding to the Garden of Eden. The intimacy of God with His people (vv. 3, 4) and the abundance of His blessing (vv. 1, 2, 5) are stressed even more than in the preceding verses. The final state restores the unbroken, idyllic communion between God and human beings. But the apex of history is more magnificent than the beginning. The garden is now also a city, and the light has driven out all night.

—*The Reformation Study Bible*⁸

Summary Statement

To summarize this section on God’s Word let’s conclude:

- The Bible is the embodiment of all truth.
- The Bible contains an overarching “story” with a beginning and an end.

VII. Specific Application for Biblical Womanhood in the Bible (Fourth Foundational Point)

Now we will take these principles that we’ve just discussed...

- the existence of God and Who He is.
- the truth of His Word.
- the importance of obedience to His Word and the metanarrative from Genesis to Revelation.

... and zero in on application of these principles to the specific topic of our study—biblical womanhood.

When we believe God exists, and that He is all that his Word says He is—and when we’ve settled in our minds that the Bible is true, and we desire to obey that truth, then we can embrace the biblical truth regarding the roles and responsibilities of men and women.

⁸ *The Reformation Study Bible*. Sproul, R.C., Jr., general editor. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2005.), note on Revelation 22:1-5, page 1873.

If we struggle in any of these areas, we will struggle with our acceptance of biblical truth regarding biblical womanhood and manhood.

Tell the women that if they have not settled any of these foundational points in their own minds to: 1) work their way carefully through the next lesson; and 2) speak with you or their discussion group leader.

A. Basic, Foundational Observations from Genesis Regarding Biblical Womanhood

Let's move on now and make the specific application from the Bible to biblical womanhood. We will look at three areas: creation of man, sequence of events, and importance of the metanarrative.

1. Creation of Man

What is the foundational (biblical) truth regarding men and women?

To answer this question, turn to Genesis 1.

For our purposes now here are some observations that will help us understand the truth in reference to the “gender debate” and the difference between complementarians and egalitarians.

In Genesis 1:26-27, we read: **Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion...** And it says: **So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**

Genesis 1:26—Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Genesis 1:27—So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 16.**)



Direct the women to the fill-in-the-blank sentences in the Student's Guide as you cover the following information.

The term translated in English as man is the Hebrew word A-dam.

This is a collective noun that has a plural membership.

In other words, this is a term that covers all of “mankind” or human beings.

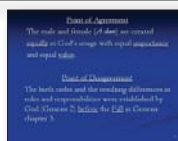
It would be helpful to point out here that another collective noun is the word “group.” One entity yet with the understanding that there are many members. This helps to understand the concept of “a-dam” as one entity but two members.

When we see the collectivity with the use of the word “them” in verses 26 and 27, it is even more clear—God created *A-dam* as male and female.

A-dam is male and female.

a. Point of Agreement with Egalitarians

(DISPLAY SLIDE 17.)



The male and female (*A-dam*) are created equally in God’s image with equal importance and equal value.

On this point, complementarians and egalitarians agree.

As an aside, you can mention that to be made in God’s image is to set human beings apart from all the other creatures that God previously made. We are like God in that we are the only made creatures who can think, plan ahead, feels, and cry tears of sadness or joy. Men and women carry these qualities equally.

b. Point of Disagreement with Egalitarians

Now when we dig into the details we begin to discover the points of disagreement between complementarians and egalitarians.

For example, Genesis 2:7 makes it clear that God formed the man (male) before He formed the female.

The woman (female) is not formed until after a period of time has passed and is recorded in Genesis 2:18.

In fact, in this verse we discover both the reason for the formation of the woman (not good for the man to be alone), and the role of the woman (helper).

Keeping in mind that the Bible is a metanarrative, when we put the birth order into the whole context of Scripture we discover that the birthright always goes to the first-born and therefore, the leadership position goes to the first-born—in this case, the male.

We see an example of this in Genesis 2:23, where the male names the female “woman.” The act of naming indicates authority or a leadership role.

The birth order, and the resulting roles and responsibilities were established by God before the Fall in Genesis 3.

Another aside, which is a note of interest, is to point out the establishment of marriage between the man and the woman (even the mention of parents!) in Genesis 2:24—again before the Fall.

2. Sequence of Events—Before and After the Fall

It is important to understand the sequence of creation, and the timing in relationship to the Fall and the subsequent curse. We need to build biblical womanhood on the strong foundation of biblical truth. Remember, if we’re not thinking biblically, we will, by default, think culturally!

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 18.**)



The *Reformation Study Bible* defines the Fall as, “the original human lapse from God and godliness into sin and lostness.”

Before the Fall, there is oneness with God—peace, happiness, godliness.

After the Fall, there is separation from God—sin, guilt, the curse.

We can summarize before and after the Fall this way:

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 19.**)



Before the Fall:

Full equality of image and value.

Leadership role of the man.

Helper role of the woman.

This is good!

After the Fall:

Disparity in relationship.

Distortion of roles.

Difficulty and pain in areas of responsibility.

This is the curse!

3. Importance of the Metanarrative

We’ve just looked at the foundational truth of the Bible regarding biblical womanhood. And we can put all of this into the continuing story throughout Scripture.

For example, if we continue on in Genesis, we see in Genesis 3:9 after the sin that God called to the man to make an account of what had just happened. God held the man responsible. The man had the leadership role. Just as if you walked into a room and two of your children were fighting, most likely you would first address the oldest child and ask him/her to tell you what's going on.

Further on in Genesis 3, we find (verse 15) the promise of the offspring, which is a pointer to Jesus and (verse 20) the man naming his wife Eve (after the Fall). Eve means the mother of all living which is a wonderful statement of hope in God's promise.

In the New Testament, Jesus (Matthew 19), when asked about divorce, refers back to Genesis 1-3. And Paul refers to Genesis 1:27 and 2:7 to explain his point about the relationship between men and women in 1 Corinthians 11:8.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 20.**)

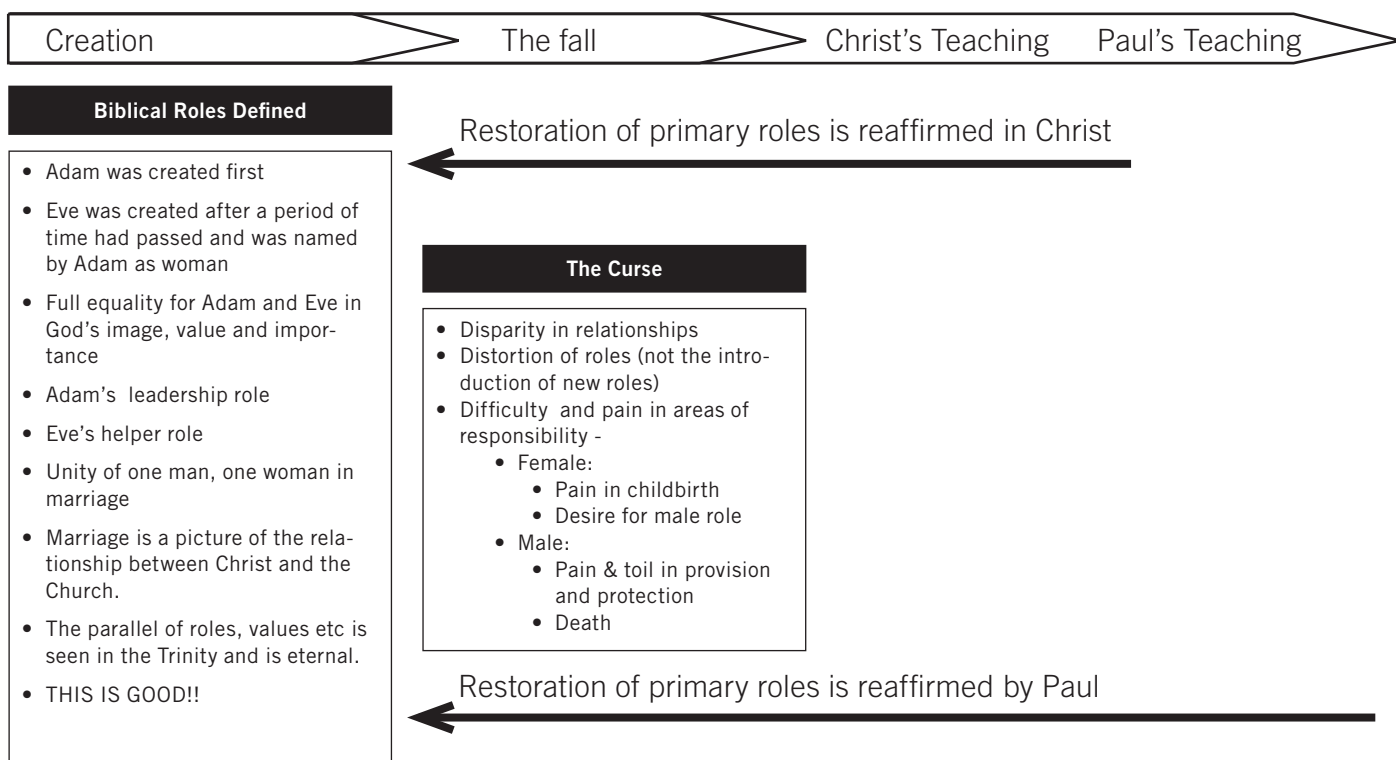


Christ restores the primary roles of men and women, and Paul reaffirms this restoration.

Beautiful!

Look at the chart in your Student's Guide to help you visualize what we've just discussed.

We will be coming back to Genesis in detail when we get to Lesson 4.



This is an introduction to biblical truth and its application to the subject of biblical womanhood. Remind the women that you will be studying this in more detail in Lesson 4. Keep in mind that for many women, this is new material. Present the following principles and information as clearly and thoughtfully as you can.

III. Conclusion

As biblical women, we have a wonderful call.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 21.**)



We will—we **MUST**:

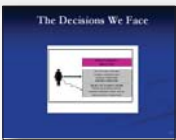
- Declare that God's Word is Truth to a world that deconstructs truth.
- Declare that God's Word is our authority to a world that debunks authority.
- Declare the Truth about biblical womanhood to a world that believes the distortion of that Truth.
- Live and tell the Truth to the glory of God!

This is what it means to “stand on the Word of God.”

We must get our sure footing before we begin to walk in the truth of the Bible.

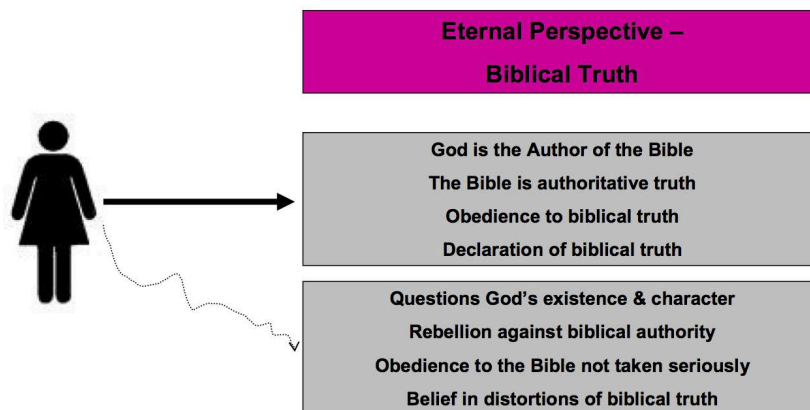
We must also get our heart right before God, or we will just be going through so many motions. When it gets tough, we must be strong of heart. That's what we will examine in the next lesson—the heart of a biblical woman.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 22.**)



Refer the woman to the “Decisions We Face” illustration. Tell them that this woman has a name, and that name is Norma! She’s named to help us remember the Latin phrase “norma normans non normata.” Allow about five minutes to have the women reflect on Norma, and then complete the “Personal Application” section in the guide.

The Decisions We Face



Personal Application Lesson 2 (10 minutes)

Close in prayer.

Sample prayer: Father, You are good—You’ve created the universe. You created us in Your image—male and female with specific roles. These roles are good. Help us love our biblical role as women. We need Your help to obey Your Word. Your commands are not burdensome. Jesus tells us to take His yoke upon us and learn from Him, for He is gentle and lowly in heart, and we will find rest for our souls. For His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. Galatians 5:1 tells us of another yoke—a yoke of slavery to sin: ...for freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. In Jesus’ precious name we pray, Amen.

Lesson 2

Resources

Outline – Lesson 2

Biblical Truth in Our Relativistic World

Fellowship (15 minutes)

Opening Session (30 minutes)

—Welcome (10 minutes)

I. Welcome

A. The Purpose Statement

B. Importance of Preparation

—Introductory Remarks (20 minutes)

I. Review

A. Terms to Know

B. Compare and Contrast Modernism and Postmodernism

C. Seven Tenets of Postmodernism

II. Conclusion

A. Know the Truth

B. Examine the Scriptures

Move to Discussion Groups (50 minutes)

Teaching Session (45 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Reason for Concern

B. Trajectory

II. Introduction of the Four Foundational Points of Lesson 2

A. Identifying the Four Points

B. Attack on the Four Points

1. Attack from the Beginning—Verses in Genesis

2. Attack over Time

C. Underlying Truth of the Four Points

III. God (First Foundational Point)

A. Is there a God?

(Evidences of God)

B. What is God like?

(Ten Attributes of God)

IV. The Bible is the Truth (Second Foundational Point)

A. The Bible is the Statement of All Truth

1. Scientific Knowledge

2. Standard of Truth

V. The Importance of Our Obedience to God's Word (Third Foundational Point)

A. Biblical Examples

1. In the Garden

2. Abraham

3. Moses

4. Saul

B. God's Warning to Us Today

VI. There is a True Metanarrative, and it is Genesis to Revelation

VII. Specific Application for Biblical Womanhood in the Bible

(Fourth Foundational Point)

A. Basic Foundational Observations from Genesis Regarding Biblical Womanhood

1. Creation of Man

a. Point of Agreement with Egalitarians

b. Point of Disagreement with Egalitarians

2. Sequence of Events—Before and After the Fall

3. Importance of Metanarrative

VIII. Conclusion

The Decisions We Face

Personal Application (10 minutes)

The Bible is True

... within the compass of these three short chapters [Genesis 1-3], we see the word of God in all the relations in which it stands to the world, and to man within it – on the one hand fixing man's circumstances and environment, on the other, commanding man's obedience, inviting his trust, and opening to him the mind of his Maker. The rest of the Bible sets before us many new utterances of God, but no further categories of relationship between God's word and His creatures. Instead, the presentation of the word of God in Genesis 1-3 is reiterated and confirmed.

— J.I. Packer from *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1973), 100.

A Christian Stands on the Truth of the Bible

What is a Christian? ... he is a man who acknowledges and lives under the word of god. He submits without reserve to the word of God written in 'the Scripture of truth' (Dan. 10:21), believing the teaching, trusting the promises, following the commands. His eyes are to the God of the Bible as his Father, and the Christ of the Bible as his Saviour. He will tell you, if you ask him, that the word of God has both convinced him of sin and assured him of forgiveness. His conscience, like Luther's, is captive to the word of God, and he aspires, like the psalmist, to have his whole life brought into line with it. 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' 'O let me not wander from thy commandments.' 'Teach me thy statutes. Make me to understand the way of the precepts.' 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies.' 'Let my heart be sound in thy statutes.' (Ps. 119: 5, 10, 26 f., 36, 80) He knows that in addition to the word of God spoken directly to him in the Scriptures, God's Word has also gone forth to create, and control, and order things around him; but since the Scriptures tell him that all things work together for his good, the thought of God ordering his circumstances brings him only joy. He is an independent fellow, for he uses the word of God as a touchstone by which to test the various views that are put to him, and he will not touch anything which he is not sure that Scripture sanctions. Why does this description fit so few of us who profess to be Christians in these days? You will find it profitable to ask your conscience, and let it tell you."

— J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 104-105.

The Bible is Truth

Truth exists, though it often eludes us, and we may fail to grasp it perfectly. Christians have always known this. What God reveals in His Word is absolutely true. These truths can be reasoned upon, fit together with other truths, and applied. Moreover, the revelation that God created the universe gives us a basis for believing in other kinds of objective truths. This does not mean that human beings can intellectually comprehend the vastness and complexity of God's revelation. There is an old story about a theologian attempting to comprehend the doctrine of the Trinity while walking along the beach. He noticed a boy who had dug a hole in the sand and was filling it with water from the ocean. The theologian realized that he had been trying to do the same thing —attempting to fit the limitless ocean of God's being into the tiny hole of human mind. It is easy, however, to make too much of the difficulty of interpreting Scripture. In most cases, its meaning is all too clear. The main problem is not interpreting the Bible, but acknowledging its authority —particularly when it conflicts with our own desires—and obeying what it teaches.

— Gene Edward Veith from *Postmodern Times: A Christian guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1994), 68-70. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

God's Word Our Foundation

Our Lord Himself spoke of foundations: "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." He who rejects the foundation of God's Word, on the other hand, "is like a foolish man who built his house on sand" (Matthew 7:24, 26). Sands, of course, keep shifting. The history of modern thought consists of a succession of foundations—the rationalism of the Enlightenment, the emotionalism of Romanticism, the will-power of Existentialism. In times of crises, however, when "the rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew," each of these humanly built foundations collapses "with a great crash" (Matthew 7:27). Today we see the rejection of all foundations. The various projects of modernism involved destroying foundations and replacing them with foundations of a different kind. Today the modern has become obsolete, and the futility of this never-ending cycle of demolition and reconstruction has become evident. The postmodernists pose a completely different alternative. Perhaps we can build without foundations. Those who defend postmodernism and those who criticize it agree that the essence of postmodernism is that it is "anti-foundational." Whereas the various kinds of modernism, beginning with the Enlightenment, sought, in David Har-

vey's words, to "totalize chaos," postmodernism seeks to live with the chaos, to avoid foundational judgments altogether. Christians can accept and take part in the postmodernists' critique of the endless succession of humanistic foundations. But the church is "build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:20). "Each one should be careful how he builds," warns the Apostle Paul. "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:10-11).

— Gene Edward Veith, *Postmodern Times: A Christian guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*, 225-226.

The Heart of a Biblical Woman

GOALS FOR LESSON 3:

- Joyful Acceptance of God's Word as a Sweet Authority
- A Heartfelt Trust in God and His Word
- A Soft Heart that Hopes in God
- Inner Adorning of the Heart to take Precedence over Outer Adorning of the Body
- Fearless Tranquility—We want to be courageous & content women

FELLOWSHIP FOR LESSON 3:

10 minutes

Opening Session



(DISPLAY SLIDE 1.)

Welcome (5 minutes)

I. Introduction

As usual, make any necessary announcements first thing. Remember, to thank the woman who brought treats to class and encourage the women to enjoy the refreshments. Sometimes the class time can go so fast women forget to take refreshments. It's a shame to have someone go to the trouble of providing treats and not have them enjoyed.

You will notice that starting with this lesson, the wording in the "Welcome" section of the Opening Session has changed from a first person point of view, as you would say the words, to suggestions for you to follow in your welcome statement. By now you should be quite comfortable with your class, and I want you to have the freedom to personalize your relationship with the women. From here on out, I encourage you to closely follow the suggestions in your "Welcome," but use your own words to truly make the women in your class feel welcome.

Tell the women you hope they found their personal study for this lesson to be rewarding and insightful.

Remind them of the importance of completing their homework and not leaving it to the last minute. They have probably discovered by now that The Personal Homework Questions require a little more time than it seems at first glance.

Introductory Remarks (15 minutes)

Have the women turn to Hebrews 3:1 in their Bibles. Below are printed the selected verses for you to read aloud from Hebrews 3:1-13; 4:11-13. These have been selected for their reference to the Gospel, salvation, the heart, and the power of God's Word—all of which are emphasized in Lesson 3.

You do not need to comment on these verses. Just read the verses and let them stand on their own. When you have finished reading, pray that God will soften the heart of every woman in class, save anyone who does not know Jesus as Savior and Lord, and ask that His Word will penetrate hearts during class time.

The references for the following passages from Hebrews and the two chapters in 1 Samuel (15 and 16) that are discussed later in the lesson are included in the Student Guide with a bit of space for taking notes.

I. The Importance of God's Word

Hebrews 3:1-13—Therefore, holy brothers (and sisters)¹, you who share in the heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’”

Take care, brothers (and sisters), lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

1. The English word “brothers” is the plural Greek word adelphoi. In the New Testament, adelphoi may refer to either brothers, or to brothers and sisters, depending on the context. The English Standard Version of the Bible is helpful in that it footnotes when the word “brothers” refers to both brothers and sisters as in Hebrews 3:1.

Hebrews 4:11-13—Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Take a moment to pray before moving on with your introductory remarks.

Sample prayer: Dear Lord, we come to you today and ask you to soften our hearts so that the truth of your Word will penetrate deeply into the heart and take root. If anyone here does not know you as her Savior and Lord, please reveal yourself to this woman in an irresistible way that will draw her to the place of salvation. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

A. Obeying the Bible is Not Burdensome

Turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 15.

In Lesson 2, the focus was on the truth of God’s Word, and the high value God puts on obedience to His Word.

“Obedience” often feels like a heavy weight, and yet the Bible says (1 John 5:3b) that God’s commandments are not burdensome.

What we need to discover then is: What takes obedience out of the “burdensome” category?

The answer to this question is that:

A biblical woman embraces the sweet authority of God and His Word.

But now we have the “how” question.

How can the distastefulness of authority become sweet authority?

Remember that we traced the downward spiral of King Saul in 1 Samuel 15.

He lost the kingship and the favor of God, it seems, because he disobeyed God’s command.

But as we dig a little deeper, we see that there is something else God sees in King Saul. He doesn’t just disobey; he makes excuses, lies, twists God’s word, and is self-centered. What does this behavior indicate?

We are given a clue when we get to the next chapter. In chapter 16, Samuel is commissioned by God to select a new king. The story is familiar. In a nutshell, God sends Samuel to Bethlehem to the man Jesse. Samuel conducts interviews with each of Jesse’s sons—and each one is impressive.

But then God tells Samuel something that provides a new standard to evaluate the men, and tells us something about God Himself.

Let's read 1 Samuel 16:7.

1 Samuel 16:7—But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

This statement is breathtaking! Yes, obedience is of utmost importance. But it's not the MOST important.

To God, the heart is the most important. That is why we're spending a complete lesson on issues of the heart.

B. Obedience from the Heart Becomes Sweet

We can say the “right” words and do the “right” things, but all the while God is weighing our heart.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 2.**)



Biblical women are concerned about the heart, because it matters to us what God sees and what God thinks.

Proverbs 21:2—“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart.”

1. Biblical Women Bear Real (Not Fake) Fruit

The Bible tells us in Galatians 5 that there is such a thing as “fruit of the Spirit,” and this fruit is characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

These are the same qualities of a biblical woman that will show up in Titus 2.

Therefore, we can safely say that the Titus 2 woman is a woman who is bearing fruit for God.

In your personal preparation, see Matthew 3:7-8 for an additional illustration of the importance of bearing “real” fruit. This passage points out the discrepancies between outward behavior and inward heart-attitude of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

We want to be fruit bearers to the glory of God. And it's very important that the fruit we bear is real fruit, not artificial fruit.

Artificial fruit to the casual observer looks very authentic. But it doesn't taste good or have any nutritional value. It does not reproduce. And God knows it. And that matters to us.

Lesson 3 is the most personal lesson in this study from a teaching standpoint, and very likely the most critical for the students. This is the lesson that provides an opportunity to consider salvation in Christ. It is also critical because it deals with the deepest heart issues that are really at the bottom of biblical womanhood. The teaching for this lesson should include more personal illustrations from you than the previous lessons. The women need to hear your heart and experiences. Because of the more intimate nature of the teaching, where personal illustrations are appropriate I will occasionally include my own illustrations (clearly marked). You may use these illustrations as examples of the types of examples you can share from your own life, or you are free to share my experiences with your group.

My Personal Example

When I was a little girl, I was fascinated by a brass bowl of fruit that my grandmother had on her coffee table. In that bowl, as I remember it, were a banana, an apple, an orange and a big bunch of grapes. That fruit was so beautiful, and it looked so delicious that I wanted to take a bite of it—and I did! To my surprise I discovered that the fruit was not real! It looked real, but it was artificial—a fake.

Will we fake it and bear artificial fruit, or will we bear the true fruit of the Spirit that is real, nourishing, and brings glory to God?

Jesus tells us in John 15 that the way to bear real fruit is to abide in Him. He is the vine, we are the branches, and we must be so connected to him that His juices flow through us to others.

2. Hard Hearts Create Fake Fruit

We cannot bear real fruit if we have hard hearts.

Hard hearts stop the flow of life that results in good spiritual fruit. If we have hard hearts, our actions are fake.

Our aim is to have our actions be an outflow of the heart.

Therefore, our hearts must be soft so they can be molded by God through His Word.²

(See Matthew 3:7-8)

² Listen to Paul Tripp talk at the Desiring God Conference on September 27, 2008 at www.desiringgod.org.

3. Soft Hearts Bear Real Fruit

In Lesson 2, it was pointed out that biblical women are strong, bold women. In this lesson we will discover that biblical women are women with soft hearts.

Summary Statement

To summarize these two points, we can make this statement to describe biblical women:

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 3.**)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

Biblical women are strong women with soft hearts.

Biblical women are tough and tender.

At this point stop and pray that God will make each woman in class a strong woman with a soft heart, so that she will be able to bear spiritual fruit to God's glory. Ask God to bless the discussion and the teaching time. Again ask that the seed of His Word will be planted deeply in soft hearts, so it will take root, grow, and blossom. After praying, dismiss the women to their groups.

Move to Discussion Groups – 60 minutes

Throughout my years of teaching and ministering to women, I've discovered that often women are not able to trust God with their heart because they cannot trust Him as Father. Women often get stuck in their relationship with God because of a hardness of heart in this area. Not only is this true on a personal level, but is most likely why evangelical feminists have rejected the name "Father," and are now pushing to call God "Mother." In the Lesson 3 resource section, you will find some quotes on this subject to help you think through the fatherhood of God for yourself, and articulate this to the women in your class. Also, a worksheet titled "ABBA! FATHER!" is provided for your use. It is included in the Resources section following this lesson, and is also included as a printable PDF on the Resource CD. Pray that God will give you sensitivity to anyone in your class who may be struggling to accept God as her Father. And if it seems appropriate, you have permission to copy the worksheet and give it to anyone for whom you think it would be helpful.

Teaching Session (50 minutes)

I. Introduction: Connecting the Dots Between Heart and Conduct

If there is one main point in this lesson, it would be: *both my conduct and my thinking are in direct relation to the condition of my heart.* (See Luke 6:45.)

This point is in direct contrast to postmodern thinking.

The postmodernist does not connect the dots between conduct and heart attitude.

To the postmodernist, a highly rated trait is the ability to “compartmentalize,” or separate your actions from your actual feelings.

For the Christian, compartmentalization must not be an option.

Look closely at Paul’s words in Ephesians 4:17-18.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 4.**)

Ephesians 4:17-18—“...you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart.”

Most often, we think that wrong thinking (futility of the mind) causes the heart to harden. But on close examination, we discover that the process is actually just the opposite.

Due to a hardness of heart, the thinking become futile. It begins with the heart!



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 5.**)

Direct the women to complete the following statement in the Student Guide, and to follow along there with the two quotes from John Piper.

Pastor John Piper says that according to the Bible:

At the bottom of human irrationality and spiritual ignorance is hardness of heart.

Piper continues by saying³:

...our self-centered hearts distort our reason to the point where we cannot use it to draw true inferences from what is really there. If we don't want God to be God, our sensory faculties and our rational faculties will not be able to infer that he is God.

3. These two Piper quotes are taken from a presentation titled “Faith and Reason” given at the Ligonier Conference on March 15, 2007.

II. The Heart

The Bible is replete with references to the “heart.” There are more than 1,000 passages in the Bible related to the heart.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 6.**)

Dr. Paul David Tripp defines the heart, as referred to in Scripture, as the “causal core of your personhood.”⁴

The heart is the directional steering wheel of your life. Keeping this definition in mind, let’s look at three representative passages in the Bible.

In your personal preparation for the next section, “References to the heart in the Bible,” look up Psalm 51, Romans 2:29, and Matthew 12: 33-37. Along with the teaching material below, do your own personal study of these references so you can teach from your own conviction and understanding.

Direct the women to the area for note taking with the following three Scripture references as you study them.

A. References to the Heart in the Bible

1. Psalm 51 (A Clean Heart)

This psalm depicts the depth of David’s sin and his repentance. It is obvious that David was dealing with a heart issue. Listen to David’s cry in Psalm 51.

(Verse 6) ...you delight in the truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

(Verse 10) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

(Verse 17) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

4. Tripp, Paul David. “War of Words: Getting to the Heart for God’s Sake.” Desiring God National Conference, September 27, 2008, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

It's important to point out that the word "create" used in Psalm 51 is the same verb used in Genesis 1:1 for the creation of the world. David seems to know that a change in his heart is possible only if God does it. (See reference on Psalm 51:10 in the Reformation Study Bible.) When we ask God to change our hearts, we are asking for something that only He can do. We can't do it.

2. Romans 2:29 (A Soft Heart)

...circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.

This passage refers back to Deuteronomy chapters 10 and 30, where the subject of circumcision is discussed. God was making a point to those who thought that religious actions and religious rites (like circumcision) were all that was important.

The point is that the heart is what's important.

Deuteronomy 10:16 records God saying, "**Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.**"

And Deuteronomy 30:6 tells us, "**...the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.**"

You could make the suggestion here that if someone is sensing they have a "heart" problem, or hardness of heart, and they want to deal with it, they could prayerfully read through Deuteronomy 10–30, asking God to apply the scalpel of his Word to their heart. God is the surgeon who performs circumcision of the heart.

3. Matthew 12:33-37 (The Overflowing Heart)

(See also Luke 6:45.)

Our words indicate what's in our heart.

Matthew 12:33-37—Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

Yes, the heart is of utmost importance to God and it should be to us, as well.

Move quickly through this next section. You simply want to give an overview to make the point that the heart is important. Scripture verses have been supplied for many references to the heart. These are for your personal study, and I would not suggest (for timing reasons) mentioning each verse in class.

Direct the women to complete the following statements as you read them.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 7.**)

Our hearts can be:

Hard or soft like flesh

Troubled or cheerful

Dark or full of light

Deceitful or pure

Anxious or peaceful

Hateful or loving

Refer the women to the “Our Hearts Have” Chart in the Student Guide.



Our hearts have:

Intentions

Desires

Meditations

Purposes

Thoughts

We can POUR OUT our hearts. (Psalm 62:8)

We LOVE with our hearts. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

We should SERVE with our hearts. (1 Chronicles 28:9)

We LAY UP GOD'S WORD in our hearts. (Psalm 119:11)

We BELIEVE in our heart. (Romans 10:9)

God SEARCHES our heart. (Romans 8:27)

He KNOWS our heart. (Luke 16:15)

God LOOKS ON our heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)

He WRITES on our heart. (Romans 2:15)

He PUTS HIS LAWS in our heart. (Hebrews 8:10)

CHRIST DWELLS in our heart. (Ephesians 3:17)

He SHINES God's glory in our heart. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

B. The Main Point about the Heart

The main point to be made in this lesson is:

The heart of the biblical woman trusts in God and in His Word.

If we are not to be persuaded by the plausible arguments of our day, and if we are *to be* wise and understanding, then we must have God answer for us the prayer that Paul prayed for the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:17-18—May God give us a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of our hearts so that we may know his hope and his power and his glory.

Two Questions Regarding the Heart

Now we are confronted with two questions (included in the Student’s Guide).

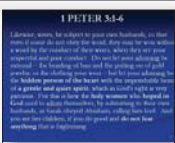
- What does God see when He sees your heart?
- What does the heart of a godly woman look like?

Let’s deal with the second question and that will help us answer the first.

III. What Does the Heart of a Godly Woman Look Like?

A. Introduction to 1 Peter 3:1-6

(DISPLAY SLIDE 8.)



To answer the question “What does the heart of a godly woman look like?” we will first focus on Peter’s portrait or word picture of a godly woman—1 Peter 3:1-6.

1 Peter 3:1-6—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 hope 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.

(DISPLAY SLIDE 9.)



Direct the women to complete the following statement in the Student’s Guide.

When we get the heart right, we’ll get the conduct right.

As biblical women, we want our words and our conduct to be the outflow of the heart.

When it comes to submission, for instance, a biblical woman isn’t sitting down on the outside, yet standing up on the inside.

The focus of this passage in 1 Peter is most often the issue of submission within marriage, which we’ll be studying in the next lesson.

However, we want to first zoom in a little closer, go a little deeper, and try to answer this question:

What kind of heart enables a woman to submit?

Direct the women to answer this question in the Student Guide where indicated.

We will pull out of the 1 Peter 3 passage a few specifics that will help us put the actions of a godly woman in context. Let's see if we can figure out what the hidden heart of holy women looks like.

B. Holy Women of the Past

You will notice that Peter mentions Sarah specifically; however she is but an example of an overarching reference to holy women (plural) in the past.

1 Corinthians 10: 6, 11 give some insight into why references to people in the past are helpful to us today.

1 Corinthians 10:6, 11—Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did...Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

First of all, we are told that these things (or people and their experiences) are recorded as examples for us so that we won't desire evil as they did.

Secondly, we are told that these things that happened to people a long time ago were recorded in the Scriptures for our instruction today.

In other words, we are to learn from their mistakes, as well as from what they did right. There are warnings and instruction.

With this in mind, it's not hard to see why Sarah is the prime example for us as women. Her mistakes are recorded—and she had some failure—but she also did a lot of things right. She's a good role model for us.

But Peter refers to other holy women.

Who are these women? Let's take a quick look at some Holy Women of the Past.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 10.**)



Again, move through this section fairly quickly. Remember that you are trying to make a point, and these are examples to help you. The point here is that women in the Bible are real women, who really lived and really experienced God in their lives. We can learn from their stories. Tell each story briefly (their lives are interesting!), and then move on. Do your best to point out how each of these women fits the 1 Peter 3 pattern or portrait of a godly woman. The Scripture references are provided for each woman of the past. I encourage you in your personal preparation to read and study these references. This will not only be informative for you, but will help you to tell each woman's story more smoothly.

Each of these women is listed in the Student's Guide with a small space for note taking during the class discussion.

Overview of Holy Women of the Past

Jochebed—Her story is told in Exodus 2 and Exodus 6:20. She is also mentioned in Hebrews 11. Jochebed was a slave living under a cruel political system. She was not fearful, but devised a rational, yet risky, plan, and carried it out because she had more hope in God than in the government. Jochebed is the mother of Moses. Jochebed is a woman who did not give way to fear as described in 1 Peter 3:6. (See also Exodus 2; Hebrews 6:20 and Hebrews 11.)

Shiprah & Puah—These women were Hebrew midwives who were very courageous. Exodus 1:17 tells us that these “midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.” God dealt well with these courageous women. These women exemplify 1 Peter 3:5. (See also Exodus 1:17.)

Rahab—Rahab's story is told in Joshua 2 and referred to in Hebrews 11. She was a prostitute who had heard of God and believed his promises. She, too was courageous and God blessed her by putting her in the line to Christ. (See also Joshua 2, Matthew 1:5, and Hebrews 11.)

Ruth—A whole book in the Bible is devoted to this woman who hoped in God rather than return to her people for an earthly husband. God blessed her by also including her in the line to Christ. Ruth hoped in God. When we think of the trajectory image discussed in Lesson 2, we can think of Ruth choosing to follow the path that leads her closer to God. (See Ruth 1-4.)

Hannah—Hannah poured out her heart to God, and her very countenance changed. We are told that after her time of intense prayer, her face was no longer sad. Hannah says, “My heart exults in the Lord.” (See 1 Samuel 1 and 2.) Hannah is a wonderful example of how the heart affects the outward appearance. (See also 1 Peter 3:4 and 1 Samuel 1-2.)

Abigail—What an interesting woman! Her story is told in 1 Samuel 25. Abigail was a discerning, beautiful and courageous woman. She was able to think clearly and act confidently. She had insight into the Lord’s choice of David. She obeyed God rather than man, and spared David from acting out his personal vendetta. (See 1 Samuel 25.)

Esther—Another woman who has a complete book titled for her. Esther fasted and prayed, and was enabled to act courageously in a very dangerous situation. She bowed low before God so she could hold her head high before the king. Here was a woman who knew how to not only adorn her heart, but she knew how to adorn herself outwardly, too. She had hope in God’s sovereign will and uttered the breathtaking words, “If I perish, I perish.” (See Esther 1-10.)

Mary the Mother of Jesus—Of course, much can be said about Mary. Two important things stand out about her. One, Mary hoped in God. In Luke 1:38 she said, “Let it be to me according to your word.” And Mary’s “magnificat” is one of the most beautiful expressions of praise to God ever! (See Luke 1:38.)

Sarah—We probably know more about Sarah than any other woman of the Bible. Her story is told throughout Genesis. She is referred to in Hebrews 11 and is the prime example in 1 Peter 3 of a godly woman. Sarah was not married to a perfect man. Abraham made his mistakes and she made hers. But she is remembered for her faith. She was a holy woman who hoped in God and was able to submit to her husband. We can learn a lot from Sarah! (See also Genesis 11:29-23:20, Hebrews 11, and 1 Peter 3:5-6.)

Summary Statement

These are the “Holy Women of the Past.”

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 11.**)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

Holy women are separated (or sanctified) unto God in heart and conduct.

Holy women have hearts that belong to God.

Holy women hope in God.

These are women from whom we can learn.

They are reverent women along the lines of Titus 2:3. Their conduct is worthy of their calling.

With this cloud of witnesses, we are called to run our own race today (Hebrews 12:1).

C. Two Parenthetical Points from 1 Peter 3

Let's return to the 1 Peter passage and pull out two additional points before we move on.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 12.**)



1. Focus on the Word “Adorning”

Peter tells us that we are not to let our adorning be external (only), but we are to adorn the hidden person of the heart.

Remember Dr. Tripp’s definition of the “heart”—the causal core of your personhood.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 13.**)



To “adorn” means to put in order, or...

To arrange one’s person.

When you adorn yourself you put yourself together in order...

To bring out your best.

Adorning is...

What one uses to make oneself beautiful to others.

We don’t use the word “adorn” often in regard to ourselves.

Maybe it would help to think of it as used for a Christmas tree. When you buy a tree and put it in your home, it is simply a tree. But when we adorn the tree with decorations, it transforms the simple tree into something beautiful. The adornment brings out the best in the tree. It makes us see the tree in a new light.

The word as used in the English Standard Version of the Bible is adorn-ing.

This means...

Adorning is a repeated action over time.

It is as if Peter is saying that they were repeatedly or continually adorning themselves.

This is the same word that is used in Titus 2:10

Titus 2:10 —...so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

1 Peter 3 gives us insight into what it means for a biblical woman to adorn herself.

We want to have godly behavior, so that in everything we will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

This brings a deeper significance to the idea of adorning.

It takes the focus off ourselves and onto God—where it should be.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 14.**)

We are going to discover throughout our study that our heart-attitude and our outward conduct can:

Draw others toward or away from Christ.

We either...

Adorn God's Word (make it look good), or revile God's Word (make it look bad).

A biblical woman adorns her heart with hope and fearlessness.

Mention at this point that further thoughts on this 1 Peter passage will be developed in following lessons. For instance, some women may be left with a question about outward adorning. Does God not want us to look our best? The answer is, of course, He does. We will explore this in Lesson 6 on the church. Right now you are making the point of the importance of the heart.

2. A Heart that Hopes in God

The last point to make from 1 Peter 3 in this lesson is focused on the words “holy women in the past” and “hoped in God”.

These words help us answer the question of what a godly woman's heart looks like—what's in there?

The heart of the biblical woman hopes in God.

D. Example of the Proverbs 31 Woman

In your personal preparation for this section on the “Proverbs 31 Woman,” carefully read Proverbs 31:10-31. What I hope you will see and then convey to your women is a word picture of the foundational importance of the heart. Visualize all the things this woman does throughout her lifetime (verses 10-27) undergirded by the truth of Proverbs 31:30. Her activities stand on the rock of her heart attitude. She is to be praised, not for her activities, but for the fact that she fears the Lord!

In your personal study for the next lesson (Lesson 4), you will take a detailed look at what is commonly called the “Proverbs 31 Woman.”

Today, we want to understand a foundational principle illustrated by the “Proverbs 31 Woman.”

Turn in your Bibles to Proverbs 31:10, and we will get a visual to help us understand what a godly woman is like.

Verses 10 through 27 are a list of all the things this woman has done.

By the way, she probably didn’t do them all at once, or in one day! Life is in seasons. Life comes in sections. We can accomplish different things in different season of life. Don’t get overwhelmed! This is an overview of this woman’s life. Nevertheless, this is a list of things she has done.

We want to focus our attention on verse 30.

Proverbs 31:30—Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

The Proverbs 31 woman fleshes out 1 Peter 3.

This woman has great outward adorning. She must be charming and beautiful. Her actions speak loudly of her godly life.

But what is the foundation for all of this outward activity?

Proverbs 31:30 tells us: It’s her heart attitude.

This woman “fears the LORD,” and this is why she is to be praised.

Whenever you think of the Proverbs 31 woman, visualize all the things she does resting, or sitting, on the foundation of trust in God. If that sentence wasn’t in there, we really would be discouraged and out of breath when we read all of her accomplishments.

The heart attitude is the foundation to all that has been previously mentioned.

A godly woman’s heart is adorned with hope...in God.

IV. Personal Application

Now let’s bring all of this down to us.

Let me ask you a question.

Where do you put your hope?

In what, in whom, do you put your expectations?

- Your self?
- Your husband?
- Your children?

- Your wealth?
- Your job?
- Your intellect?
- Your home?
- What?



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 15.**)

Direct the women to complete this statement in the Student Guide.

Any answer other than in God will eventually wreak havoc on your heart, and in your relationships.

At this point, give a personal example of how you learned to put your hope in God. Following is my own example—you may share this with the class, but it will be most effective if you also share something from your own life.

My Personal Example

In 1976, my husband Doug and I moved with our three-month-old baby to Sao Paulo, Brazil. Little did I know that we would not return to the United States until 1989!

During the first few years of life in Brazil, Doug would, on occasion, indicate that he felt a certain uncomfortable pressure on him...and he thought it was coming from me. Over the years, we had some pretty lively (heated) discussions about this. I was being a submissive wife—I was there, wasn't I? And I wasn't complaining much. Round and round we'd go, until the year 1981 rolled around. Many things came together (or fell apart) that sent me reeling, and in my suffering the Lord had my full attention.

It was during this time that the Lord made very clear to me what was causing Doug to FEEL this pressure. It wasn't an issue of submission, cooperation, or anything I was *doing*. It was a matter of the heart. It was a matter of HOPE. You see, I was putting my HOPE in Doug—not in the Lord.

I was (unconsciously) holding my husband responsible for everything that happened to us—both the good and the bad—and it felt like pressure to him. I was hoping in Doug when I needed to be hoping in God. Placing my hope in my husband to meet every need for me and our children was too much pressure for him—and it was unfair. Once I understood this, and began to place my hope and trust in God, it freed up Doug.

Yes, a godly biblical woman puts her hope in God.

But what does that mean exactly?

And...*how* do I hope in God?

A. How to Hope in God

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 16.**)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

Hope is often translated “trust.”

We will answer the question “How do I hope in God?” by considering two propositions:

- To hope in God is to trust in His Word.
- To hope in God is to trust in His character.

We’ll take these one at a time.

See Resources for Lesson 3—“True Faith Involves Trusting.”

1. Trust in God’s Word

Romans 15:4—For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Psalms 119:81 —My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word.

Do you stake it all on God’s Word?

My Personal Example

Our son Chris was born when I was 27 weeks pregnant. That was 23 years ago. Right before Chris was born, God gave me many Scriptures and cor-

responding promises of hope, starting with Romans 15. However, after Chris was born he did not do well. He had a 10 percent chance of survival, was full of infection, and there were no physical signs of hope. But day after day, month after month, the promises of hope from the Bible stacked up. One day, when Chris was so very bad, nothing was working and all seemed hopeless. I remember sitting with a mature missionary lady in the hospital and nearly throwing the Bible in her face. From the depths of my emotions and my heart, I raised my Bible and asked her, “What do I do with all these verses?!” And she responded, “Believe them anyway.” That took my breath away. Those words changed my life. I learned that I must trust in God’s Word anyway. And I did. Today, Chris is a big, strong, God-honoring young man. But I know that even if he weren’t, I must trust in God’s Word. You see, three years before Chris was born, we lost a little baby boy. Well, we didn’t really lose him. We know exactly where he is—in the arms of Jesus. That loss did not make God’s Word any less trustworthy. No, we must trust in God’s Word anyway, and we’ll never be disappointed or let down when we do.

When we trust in God’s *trustworthy* Word, we are encouraged and able to endure the hardest of circumstances.

Hebrews 6:13—For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself.

Summary Statement

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 17.**)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

God’s promises are certain, and when we hold fast to the hope of the Scriptures we have strong encouragement.

This hope becomes the sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.

Romans 15:13—May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Yes, a biblical woman hopes in God’s Word.

As you prepare to teach this next section on God’s character, see Resources for Lesson 3—“Notes from J.I. Packer’s book *Knowing God*.” I have included for your study excerpts from Packer’s book. This is an excellent book and a resource I recommend for your personal library.

2. Trust in God's Character

Turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 40.

God called Isaiah to minister during a period of more than 40 years, from 740 to some time after 701 B.C. This was a time of great political turmoil, spanning the reign of four kings—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. In chapter 6, the prophet Isaiah tells the fabulous story of his commissioning.

By the time we get to Isaiah 40, the people are greatly discouraged. Nothing is going their way, and they are, in a sense, hopeless.

Isaiah's charge at this point is to comfort the people, and it's very interesting to note how God tells him to do this. God doesn't tell him to pat the people on the head and tell them it's all going to be OK. No, He tells Isaiah to make a bold declaration. He says to tell them, "Behold your God!"

God wants Isaiah to tell the people Who He is. His very character will give the people hope.

Let's examine five attributes of God that Isaiah points out will be a comfort to the people.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 18.**)



When we see and grasp these attributes, hope is created in our hearts.

You are at a very important point in this lesson. Although time is always tight, you must move through these five attributes forcefully. Do not dwell on any one of the attributes, but do teach and give a personal anecdote for each one. Remember the main point is that God is trustworthy and we can, we must, trust in Him. Below, I will present a few general thoughts and personal examples. I encourage you to study and bring your own study and personal examples to your teaching.

Direct the women to the area in the Student Guide for note taking during this discussion.

Five Attributes of God from Isaiah 40

God is Powerful (See verse 10.)

God has a mighty, ruling arm. He has the ability and strength to bring to pass whatever He pleases.

Always remember—**God is able!**

He is able to do whatever He wants, whatever He says, whatever is needed, whatever... In Mark 9:22-24, we read the account of a father who comes to Jesus for help because his son is filled with a demonic spirit. The father says to Jesus, "...if you can do any-

thing, take pity on us and help us.” Jesus turns to the father and says, “*If you can?*” You see the father is asking the wrong question. It’s not if you can, it’s if you *will*.

My Personal Example

Again, when our Chris was born, we went through several months of ups and downs while he was in the hospital. At a down time, a really down time, as we poured our hearts out to God in our anguish, we came to a point where we were able to say to God, “I know you *can*; I don’t know if you *will*. But even if you *won’t*, I know you can.”

We have evidence that Jesus believed this truth. In His prayer to the Father at Gethsemane before His betrayal, Jesus prays, “***...Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will***” (Mark 14:36). He knew God was able to do anything. He asked him to spare him the upcoming suffering. Then he bowed before the Father’s will.

We often quote Ephesians 3:20-21, which says, “***Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen***”

Do we believe that?

Settle in your mind:

When the question is, can God do this? This answer is always yes!

God is Gentle (See verse 11.)

Yes, God has powerful arms. But He uses these arms in a gentle way.

He is the gentle shepherd of Psalm 23.

He cares for us, provides, and protects us.

He knows when I need to lie down.

He leads me when I don’t know where I’m going.

He restores me when I’m worn out.

He loves me and carries me close to his heart.

He quiets me.

Jesus exemplifies this gentleness when he tells us in John 10:11 that He is the good shepherd. God is gentle. I love this!

This is a good place to linger. But we must move on.

God is Majestic (See verses 12, 15, and 22.)

Remember, Isaiah is speaking to despairing people. The tide of events has been running against them for a long time.

Isaiah relates God's words to the people. God says to look at:

- What I've done (verse 12)—He's measured waters in the hollow of His hand; marked off the heavens; weighed the mountains.
- The nations (verse 15)—they are like a drop from a bucket; like dust on the scales.
- The world (verse 22)—God sits above the circle of the earth.
- Great men (verse 23)—God brings the princes of this earth to nothing. He blows on them and poof, they're gone!
- The stars (verse 26)—God calls the stars by name; none are ever lost.

Oh, we have a majestic, great God! This is an invitation to worship!

Peter, James, and John caught a glimpse of God's majesty at the transfiguration, and in 2 Peter 1:16 Peter says he was an eyewitness of God's majesty. And what happened when he and the others saw this majesty? They were left speechless, a little silly and ultimately terrified. (See Matthew 17.)

The majesty and greatness of God means that nothing escapes Him. (See Psalm 8.)

God is Wise (See verse 14.)

Wisdom can be defined as the power to see, and the inclination to choose the best and highest goal.

As we discussed in Lesson 2, justice and knowledge originated with God. God is wise, and what a difference that can make for us.

Think of the following verses and ask yourself if you REALLY believe them or not.

Jeremiah 29:11— ...I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Does God really have good and hopeful plans for you?

Romans 8:28—And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Does God really take everything in your life and work it for your good?

Romans 12:2—Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Is God's will really perfect?

At this point you want to make a dramatic pause to explain the importance of this particular set of attributes that God used to comfort His people.

After this explanation, emphasize the last attribute (God is eternal).

We must stop right now, step back, and make some important observations.

- True Christian contentment is in direct relationship to our view of God. We are trying to figure out *how* we can be biblical women who hope in God. We hope in God when we trust His Word, and when we trust in His character. So if God has these four attributes, is He trustworthy? Yes, He is.
- Isaiah is speaking to people who need comfort and hope—like us? God says to tell the people to look at Him. What's particularly interesting is the combination of these attributes. It is this particular combination of attributes that makes God trustworthy.
- Think about this:
 - Strength without wisdom is scary. So if God were only really powerful, that would scare us not comfort us.
 - On the other hand, gentleness without power is wimpy. If God were only a gentle God, he couldn't help us, and that wouldn't be very comforting, would it?
 - To know everything and see everything (majesty) and not understand or have the power to do something about what is known and seen is simply meaningless, and certainly not comforting.
- It is the combination of power, gentleness, majesty, and wisdom that makes God so trustworthy and comforting.

But that isn't all.

Finally we see:

God is Eternal (See verse 28.)

All of these attributes of God were there when Isaiah wrote these words. They are the same today and will be forever.

Deuteronomy 33:27 speaks of God’s arms again: ***“The eternal God is your dwelling place and underneath are the everlasting arms.”***

- God has powerful arms that rule and lift valleys.
- He has gentle arms that gather the lambs.
- He has everlasting arms that will never, ever let us down.

God is immutable—He is not going to change. He never has, and He never will. Now there’s not anything more comforting than that.

Who in all the world do you know who will never ever let you down? No one but God!

Is this not a God in whom you can trust?

Can you hope in God? Oh, I pray that the answer is Yes!

Many women struggle with the issue of trusting God. Often this is because they do not have good thoughts or feelings when they think of God as their Heavenly Father. The name of “father” has a powerful impact. If you sense someone in your class is having difficulty at this point with trusting God, please review the resources section for this lesson, especially the article God, My Father and the worksheet titled “Abba! Father!” If you sense someone is stuck at this point, please copy the worksheet, have the woman take it home and work on it, and then discuss it with her (or have her group leader meet with her).

V. Conclusion

(DISPLAY SLIDE 19.)



Direct the women to complete the following statement in the Student’s Guide.

What is the end result when you hope in God and trust in His Word? A gentle and quiet spirit, and victory over fear.

This is the hidden heart of a godly woman.

These are the characteristic of the holy women of the past, and these are the characteristics of biblical women today.

The world tells us to be angry and to fight for our so-called rights.

The world wants us to believe it is a fearful thing to submit to your husband.

We are told in so many ways that when you submit to your husband you will lose your self-respect and identity.

The world tells us we cannot let men lead in the churches. It's not fair, they say. We can do a better job, and they will lead us astray.

Some will say that women are to be timid and never express an opinion in church.

Holy women, biblical women, know these are lies. We can test these things against the norm of the Bible and see that they are not true.

When we hope in God; when we trust in His Word and trust in His character we have a wonderful hope.

And, strangely enough, when we have this kind of hope it makes us bold.

We can boldly and courageously stand on the Word, and take our stand against the plausible arguments of empty deceit of our culture.

2 Corinthians 3:12 —Since we have such a hope, we are very bold...

Think of the holy women of the past. Every one of them was a courageous, counter-cultural woman.

And holy, biblical women today are courageous, counter-cultural women.

Holy women of the past were countercultural and courageous. Holy women of today must be countercultural and courageous.—Author Linda Linder

Today's biblical woman is a woman who has a gentle and quiet spirit and who doesn't give way to fear because she hopes in God.—Author Linda Linder

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 20.**)



Another way to say this is a term used by John Piper:

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 21.**)



*A biblical woman has **fearless tranquility**.*—Pastor John Piper

A. Our hope makes us bold.

Paul says that because of his hope, he is very bold.

Christian hope is the cause of boldness in the Christian life.

“If you are not bold in your witness,

if you are not courageous and risk-taking in your ventures of righteousness,

if you are not open and straightforward in your speech,

it may be that your hope is defective.

Perhaps you are hoping in the wrong things to make your future happy.

Perhaps you have never really thought seriously about the relationship between the strength of your hope and the boldness of your service to Christ.

But Paul says there is a very close relationship: Since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

(See 2 Corinthians 3:12.)

A. Transition to Lesson 4---Building on the Foundation

We have spent our first three lessons laying a solid foundation on which to build the rest of the study.

It’s vital that we understand the world in which we live.

We must make sure that when we obey the Word of God we do so because our hearts hope in God and trust in his Word.

And *then*, when we submit to our husbands and to the leadership in our local church, our conduct will be an outflow of our hearts and not abject outward obedience.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 22.**)



Give the women time to reflect on Norma, and then fill out their personal application. Allow 5 -10 minutes, and then close in prayer.

Personal Application (10 minutes)

5. Piper, John. “The Fruit of Hope: Boldness.” July 20, 1986 sermon preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and posted at desiringGOD.org.

Lesson 3

Resources

Outline - Lesson 3

The Heart of a Biblical Woman

Fellowship (10 minutes)

Opening Session – (20 minutes)

—Welcome (5 minutes)

—Introductory Remarks (15 minutes)

I. The Importance of God's word

A. Obeying the Bible is Not Burdensome

B. Obedience from the Heart Becomes Sweet

1. Biblical Women Bear Real (Not Fake) Fruit

2. Hard Hearts Create Fake Fruit

3. Soft Hearts Bear Real Fruit

Move to Discussion Groups – (60 minutes)

Teaching Session (50 minutes)

I. Introduction: Connecting the Dots Between Heart and Conduct

II. The Heart

A. References to the Heart in the Bible

1. Psalm 51

2. Romans 2:29

3. Matthew 12:33-37

B. The Main Point about the Heart

III. What Does the Heart of a Godly Woman Look Like?

A. Introduction to 1 Peter: 1-6

B. Holy Women of the Past

(Overview of Holy Women of the Past)

C. Two Additional Points from 1 Peter 3

1. Focus on the Word “Adorning”

2. A Heart that Hopes in God

D. Example of the Proverbs 31 Woman

IV. Personal Application

A. How to Hope in God

1. Trust in God’s Word

2. Trust in God’s Character

(Five Attributes of God from Isaiah 40)

V. Conclusion

A. Our Hope Makes Us Bold

B. Transition to Lesson 4—Building on the Foundation

Personal Application (10 minutes)

True Faith Involves Trust

... faith is something that is substantial, not ephemeral... Faith represents a type of evidence. It is the evidence of the unseen. At the heart of the concept of New Testament faith is the idea of trust, namely, that faith involves placing one's trust in something. In this regard all human creatures are subject to depending at one point or another on faith. I am not an expert in medicine, so I must give a certain trust to the diagnoses offered to me by experts in the field. That trust may be provisional until I find that it is not based in substance or evidence. But in the meantime, to trust what we do not see is not necessarily a matter of being irrational. Without reason, the content of biblical faith would be unintelligible and meaningless. So we say that biblical faith is not the same as reason, but that faith is rational and reasonable.

When the Scriptures say that faith is the evidence of things not seen, what are we to understand that to mean? The example given is that by faith we understand the world was formed by the Word of God. None of us was an eyewitness of the action of God in creation. Yet we trust that the universe has come into being by the act of God's divine work of creation because we have come on reasonable grounds to believe that God's Word is trustworthy. Because we are convinced that God's Word is trustworthy and that that conviction is a reasonable conviction, we can trust God's Word even for those things that we cannot see. John Calvin also argued the point that true faith is not believing against evidence. Rather, true faith involves trusting in the evidence that God has amply provided in and through His Word. That faith is not without what Calvin called evidences; rather, it is a faith that surrenders to or acquiesces to the evidences.

We must be on our guard and vigilant at every moment against the intrusion of irrationality coming from existential philosophy, new-orthodox theology, and the resurgence of mysticism set forth in neo-Gnosticism. What is at stake is the coherence and intelligibility of God's divine work.

—Dr. R.C. Sproul from an article titled “Faith & Reason.” *Tabletalk*. August 7, 2008. From Ligonier Ministries and R.C. Sproul. © *Tabletalk* magazine. Website: www.ligonier.org/tabletalk. Email: tabletalk@ligonier.org. Toll free: 1-800-435-4343.

Authority

Both authority and submission are good, for both are expressive of God himself. This principle is about as countercultural as we can imagine, though some will simply dismiss it as old-fashioned. But it is the truth.

We live in a culture that despises authority at every level. We find it hard to think positively about authority for one very simple reason: we are sinners who

want to be in charge of our own lives. We want to be captains of our own destiny. We want to govern our own futures. God loves this authority-submission structure because God embodies this very structure in his Trinitarian relations of Persons. If our homes and our churches are truly to be countercultural, we need to exhibit a whole-hearted, healthy respect for authority.

—Bruce Ware from *Father, Son & Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005),137. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

Notes from J.I. Packer's book *Knowing God*

The following are excerpts from *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press), 1973.

The Study of God

...[some assume] that a study of the nature and character of God will be unpractical and irrelevant for life. In fact, however, it is the most practical project anyone can engage in. Knowing about God is crucially important for the living of our lives. As it would be cruel to an Amazonian tribesman to fly him to London, put him down without explanation in Trafalgar Square and leave him, as one who knew nothing of English or England, to fend for himself, so we are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it. The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it a disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know about God. Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lost your soul (pp 14-15).

God Does Not Change

1. God's **life** does not change. He is 'from everlasting' (Ps. 93:2), 'an everlasting King' (Jer. 10:10)... Earth and heaven, says the psalmist, 'shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end' (Ps. 102:26 f.)

2. God's character does not change. He never becomes less truthful, or merciful, or just, or good, than He used to be. The character of God is today, and always will be, exactly what it was in Bible times. He told Moses that He was. God's moral character is changeless. So James, in a passage that deals with God's goodness and holiness, His generosity to men and His hostility to sin, speaks of God as one 'with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change' (James 1:17, RSV).

3. God's truth does not change. Men sometimes say things that they do not really mean, simply because they do not know their own mind; also, because their views change, they frequently find that they can no longer stand to things that they said in the past. All of us sometimes have to recall our words, because they have ceased to express what we think... The words of men are unstable things. But not so the words of God. They stand for ever, as abidingly valid expressions of His mind and thought. Nothing can annul God's eternal truth.

4. God's ways do not change. So we read of Him dealing with His people in the Scripture record, and so He deals with them still. His aims and principles of action remain consistent; He does not at any time act out of character. Man's ways, we know, are pathetically inconstant— but not God's.

5. *God's purposes do not change. What He does in time, He planned from eternity. And all that He planned in eternity He carries out in time. And all that He has in His word committed Himself to do will infallibly be done.*

6. *God's Son does not change. Jesus Christ is 'the same yesterday, and today, and for ever' (Heb. 13:8), and His touch has still its ancient power (pp 68-72).*

The Majesty of God

Our word "majesty" comes from the Latin; it means greatness. When we ascribe majesty to someone, we are acknowledging greatness in that person, and voicing our respect for it: as, for instance, when we speak of "Her Majesty" the Queen.

Now, "majesty" is a word which the Bible uses to express the thought of the greatness of God, our Maker and our Lord. (Ps 93:1; 2 Pet. 1:16; Heb. 1:3; 8:1) The word "majesty," when applied to God, is always a declaration of His greatness and an invitation to worship. The Christian's instincts of trust and worship are stimulated very powerfully by knowledge of the greatness of God.

... God is not... limited. He is eternal, infinite, and almighty. He has us in His hands; but we never have Him in ours. Like us, He is personal, but unlike us He is great.

I can hide my heart, and my past, and my future plans, from men, but I cannot hide anything from God. I can talk in a way that deceives my fellow-creatures as to what I really am, but nothing I say or do can deceive God. Living becomes an awesome business when you realize that you spend every moment of your life in the sight and company of an omniscient, omnipresent Creator (pp 73-76).

God is Wise and Powerful

In Scripture wisdom is a moral as well as an intellectual quality, more than mere intelligence or knowledge, just as it is more than mere cleverness or cunning. To be truly wise, in the Bible sense, one's intelligence and cleverness must be harnessed to a right end. Wisdom is the power to see, and the inclination to choose, the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it.

Power is as much God's essence as wisdom is. Omniscience governing omnipotence, infinite power ruled by infinite wisdom, is a basic biblical description of the divine character. (Job 9:4; 12:13; 36:5; Dan. 2:20) Wisdom without power would be pathetic, a broken reed; power without wisdom would be merely frightening; but in God boundless wisdom and endless power are united, and this makes him utterly worthy of our fullest trust (pp 80-81).

... for the same wisdom which ordered the paths which God's saints trod in Bible times orders the Christian's life today. We should not, therefore, be too taken aback when unexpected and upsetting and discouraging things happen to us

now. What do they mean? Why, simply that God in His wisdom means to make something of us which we have not attained yet, and is dealing with us accordingly (p 86).

God, My Father

Many women do not have good thoughts and feelings when they hear the word father. To them, the word means abandonment, anger, shame, insecurity, fear, unpredictability, conflict, or pain. But whether your thoughts are good or bad, it is undeniable that the word means something to you. That is because father is a word that has a specific meaning. The concept is not abstract. When you speak of your father, I know you are speaking of a person who has profoundly affected your life. I know you are speaking of someone who is or was alive—someone who has individual characteristics and a distinct personality—someone with whom you might interact and relate. Whether positive or negative, the word father means something very real to each of us. We all have a strong, clear concept of what father mean—or what it ought to mean (p 49).

“Father” is the most significant name of the God of the Bible. It is the name that sets Christianity apart from all the other religions of the world. Other religions invite us to worship their gods, allahs, creators, or metaphysical forces, but Christianity invites us to believe in a Son and to enter into an intimate family relationship with a loving Father. Jesus, the Son of God, came so that we could meet his Father, be adopted into the family of God, and relate to the almighty God of the universe in an intimate, personal, concrete way as sons and daughters. As God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people... I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me” (2 Cor. 6:16, 18

—Nancy Leigh DeMoss, editor, *Becoming God’s True Woman*, chapter 3 “Daddy’s Girl: Knowing God as Father” by Mary A. Kassian. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2002, 2008), 51. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

Abba, Father Worksheet

God, My Father

Read: Matthew 6:1-4; 9-18
Galatians 4:3-7
Ephesians 2:17-22

Write down your thoughts when you consider God as your Heavenly Father.

Read: John 3:3 & 5

How do these verses help you understand the concept of God's family?

Do you belong to His family?

Read: Luke 11:11-13 and Psalm 27:10

What contrast do these Scriptures draw between your earthly father and your Heavenly Father?

Does this contrast help you accept God as your "Abba, Father"?

Enter into My Father's Presence

Read: Luke 23:44-45
Hebrews 10:19-22
Hebrews 4:14-16
Ephesians 2:18

Are you reluctant to enter into God's throne room?

If so, why do you think that is? If not, why are you confident to enter into His presence?

What is My Father Like?

Read: Job 42:2
Psalm 33:7-18
Psalm 36:5-9
Romans 11:33-36
Ephesians 3:20

Write down everything you discover from the above Scriptures and other resources about the character of your Heavenly Father.

What attributes make God, your Father, most worthy of your trust in a particular situation you are dealing with at the moment?

Permission is granted to copy this worksheet "Abba! Father!" to be used on an individual basis with women who are struggling to accept God as their Abba Father.

Biblical Womanhood in the Home (I)

GOALS FOR LESSON 4:

- Joyfully embrace our “helper” role
- Understand male/female roles and responsibilities in Creation
- See marriage as illustration of Christ and the Church
- Hold to the complementarian position regarding the home

FELLOWSHIP FOR LESSON 4:

(10 minutes)

Opening Session



(DISPLAY SLIDE 1.)

Welcome (10 minutes)

Lesson 4 begins the specific lessons that build on the foundation you’ve laid in the first three lessons. It’s possible that the women in your class will be expecting to talk about specific application to their personal situations—in the teaching sessions and especially in their small group discussions. In your welcome, please make it very clear that although the subject matter in the next few lessons is specific (marriage, home, church, your own life in the culture) the approach will be to answer the “why” behind our actions, not to tell women exactly what they are to do in specific situations. Encourage the women to study hard at home and complete their homework, and then come to class prepared to discuss each question and listen carefully in the teaching session. Encourage them to ask God to send the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ name to teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all that Christ has to say (John 14:26) on the subject of biblical womanhood so they can apply these truths to their personal circumstances. This is a VERY important point to make! If the women are expecting to receive specific answers to specific questions (especially in their small group sessions), you will quickly get off track and the basic principles that are so important for the women to grasp will become lost in the shuffle. Always encourage the women to join an accountability group, or to talk with you or their group leader privately about personal matters.

Remind the women that *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture* is a study designed to answer the “why” questions behind biblical womanhood.

The aim of our study is to encourage and equip you by helping you discover foundational biblical truth.

Because of the nature of this study, not a lot of time is devoted to specific instruction regarding how to work out these principles in each individual's life and situation.

This is why we emphasize the importance of:

- joining a "Titus 2" group
- being in a mentor/mentee relationship
- reading further books on the subject
- discussing the issues with others

We will all interpret our study through the grid of our personal experiences. This is valid and unavoidable. We must pray and ask the Holy Spirit to make the personal application.

Refer the women to the Recommended Reading List in Appendix 1 of the Student Guide.

Hopefully, you have read some of the books on the Recommended Reading List yourself and can personally recommend a book or two to the women. I urge you to have *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* and *50 Crucial Questions* by John Piper and Wayne Grudem in your personal library, and suggest that you bring these books to class so the women can examine them and be encouraged to have their own copies. In fact, any books you can bring to class and let the women peruse will be an encouragement to them.

Introductory Remarks (15 minutes)

Keep your remarks fairly brief. Because of the amount and complexity of the discussion questions with this lesson, you will want to leave as much time as possible for small groups.

I. Review

Remember the little story Ravi Zacharias told about the Australian sailors? They didn't know *where* they were and were alarmed when they heard the important man ask them if they knew *who* he was.

Zacharias reminds us through this story that there are two problems facing us today in the postmodern world

- we don't know *where* we are
- we don't know *who* we are.

We have tried in the first three lessons of our study to bring some clarity to these two problems.

A. Where We Are—Our Culture

Where are we?

We are living in a postmodern age where words are meaningless, authority is abhorred, and truth is relative. We are told we must embrace the chaos.

These tenets of the prevailing philosophy of our culture have infiltrated today's churches and the thinking of, unfortunately, too many church leaders.

We are also living in the backwash of the feminist movement, which began as the suffragette call for equality and became the feminist angry cry for sameness.

As with the tenets of postmodernism, this plausible argument has come right into our churches as evangelical feminism.

This is where we live. Hopefully, by knowing this, we will not allow the intravenous saline of feminism to seep into our minds and not even know it.

Instead of the chaos we need clarity. And we will get clarity through God's Word.

B. Who We Are

We have also tried to answer in our first three lessons the question: who are we?

1. Women Who Stand on the Truth

We are women who believe in and stand on the truth of the Bible.

We are women who obey God's Word, not out of burdensome duty, but as a result of hearts that are soft enough to be molded by God's Word.

We obey God's Word, because we love God and we know He loves us.

2. Strong Women with Soft Hearts

We are strong women with soft hearts.

We exemplify "fearless tranquility."

We want God to renew our minds and mold our hearts so that we will think biblically, not culturally. (Romans 12:2)

Summary Statement

It is so important that we have this foundation as we now move forward to study biblical womanhood in the home, church, and culture.

There are going to be times, most likely, when we will not understand or like what we read.

The principle will feel unfair.

It is at these times that we have to come back to the character of God and the inextricable link of his character to his Word.

We must keep in mind that God's Word is our sweet authority. It is sweet because He loves us and wants the best for us.

At this point take a moment to speak directly to the single women in your class. You want to reassure them that this lesson on marriage is an important one for them, even though they are not married themselves. Please refer to the article titled "Biblical Womanhood and the Single Woman" in the resource section for Lesson 4. Share this information with your class. You may simply read the paper, or put it in your own words to share with your class.

As we begin the first lesson in the rest of our study let's read together Romans 11:33-12:2 and pray.

Romans 11:33-12:2—"Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present you bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

At this time, close in prayer and then dismiss the women to their discussion groups.

Sample prayer: Gracious Heavenly Father, from you and through you and to you are all things. We want to give you the glory. We want our lives to glorify you—to adorn your Word beautifully. Help us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to You. Transform our minds so we can discern your will as we discuss these questions. May our words be gracious and benefit one another. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Move to Discussion Groups (50 minutes)

Teaching Session (50 minutes)

I. Introduction

The three divisions for this lesson have been selected to give some organization to the complexity of issues involved when we study the subject of submission in marriage. You want to give the women as much information as possible from God's Word, trusting the Holy Spirit to reveal truth and make application. Move methodically through your teaching time. Pray before you begin, and ask God to send His Holy Spirit to make the personal application for each woman.

We will divide our teaching time into basically three sections:

- **Selected Scriptures that Reference Submission in Marriage**—With each of the selected Scriptures, we'll look at either points of context or points of clarification so that we will be familiar with God's Word on the subject of submission and not be astray by other winds of doctrine.
- **Definition of Terms**—Because we live in a culture that doesn't value words or the meaning of words, we want to be sure we have a solid understanding of specific and important words that are used in the Bible in reference to roles and responsibilities in marriage.
- **What Submission Is and Isn't**—We will apply the biblical pattern for marriage in a relevant way to each of our own marriages.

It is often thought that the subject of biblical womanhood is only for married women. This is not the case. Any Christian woman, married or not, is called to be a biblical woman. However, there is specific teaching of biblical truth that applies to marriage, and that is what we're looking at in this lesson. It's important to understand God's truth regarding marriage in order to embrace the relationship between Christ and the Church. Understanding the biblical pattern for marriage is also critical to the understanding of women's roles in the local church and in the culture at large. Encourage unmarried women to carefully study this lesson for understanding, and assure them that the following lessons (as well as the previous lessons) absolutely apply to her

II. Selected Scriptures and Points of Context Regarding Submission in Marriage

A. 1 Peter 3:1, 5-6

(DISPLAY SLIDE 2.)



We are looking at the specific verses from 1 Peter 3:1-6 that are a *direct reference to marriage*. We must keep in mind the verses from this passages that we discussed in the last lesson as we focus on these verses now.

1 Peter 3:1, 5-6—“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...For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.”

Points of Context for 1 Peter 3:1, 5-6

1. 1 Peter 2—“likewise”

Open your Bibles to 1 Peter 2, and we'll put the familiar verses of 1 Peter 3 into context.

Direct the women to the space for notes on Points of Context on each of the following passages in the Student Guide.

The word “likewise” in 1 Peter 3:1 is a word that means we need to look back to the previous chapter. What was said before is the pattern for what is now discussed.

What is Peter talking about in chapter 2?

Peter is teaching and admonishing us to live honorable lives as holy people. He is reminding us of who we are, and says now live like it (verses, 5, 9, 11, 16 are a few examples).

Part of this honorable living is the voluntary submission and obedience to those in authority (1 Peter 2:13). This is an introduction to a theme that is then applied to marriage in chapter 3.

The word “likewise” refers back to the general principle of submission in 2:13 and is not intended to equate the wife’s submission to the husband with that of slave to a master. The word “likewise” recurs in v. 7, establishing that just as the wife submits to her husband, so also the husband must give understanding and honor to the wife. The relationship of men and women involves both spiritual equality and some differentiation of roles and functions in the home and church.”—Reformation Study Bible on 1 Peter 3:1¹

We see the sweetness of God’s authority in 1 Peter 2:16, “Live as people who are free...” We can (and should) roll this same concept over into the application to marriage.

Submission in the biblical sense doesn’t obliterate freedom, it is an act of freedom. This is sweet.

2. Be Subject to Your Own Husband

Another point of context we want to be sure to emphasize in 1 Peter 3 is the three-letter word you focused on in your study—own.

“...wives, be subject to your *own* husbands”

The inclusion of this word makes it very clear that *all* wives are not to be subject to *all* husbands.

In other word, as a married woman, I’m to be submissive to my husband, but not to yours.

This is a principle that is applied within a marriage—the marriage of one woman and one man.

Also, this eliminates the wrong-thinking that all women are subject to all men.

We must be careful not to add prohibitions to God’s Word that are not there, like Eve did.

3. An Adorned Heart

We also see in this 1 Peter 3 passage a purpose for adorning not only our outward appearance, but the heart.

1. Sproul, R. C., editor. *Reformation Study Bible* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2005).

A beautifully adorned heart will draw others (your husband or this principle applies to others) to Christ. Your holy life, your respectful and pure conduct, displays the beauty of the Gospel.

We can conclude our look at 1 Peter 3: 1-6 by saying that the submission of a wife to her own husband is to be a free act of holy living designed to give glory to God and draw others closer to Him.

B. Ephesians 5:22-24

Now turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 5:22-24

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 3.**)



Ephesians 5:22-24—“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.”

Before we take a wider look at the context of this chapter, notice that again the reference in verse 22 is for wives to submit to their *own* husbands. There is consistency throughout the Bible regarding the principle of submission in marriage.

Points of Context for Ephesians 5:22-24

1. Overview of Key Verses

Now when we take an overview of the whole of chapter 5, we see that the teaching here is, as in 1 Peter, on how to live godly lives.

Some key verses in this chapter are:

- Verse 8—walk as children of light
- Verse 10—try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord
- Verse 15—look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise
- Verse 17—understand what the will of the Lord is

And then starting from verse 22 through chapter 6:9, this same pattern is applied to the responsibilities within a family beginning with the husband and wife.

This is such a beautiful passage. Talk about sweet authority!

Oh how feminist proponents want to put a bitter pill in our mouth when it comes to Ephesians 5: 22-24. But this isn't bitter; It is sweet.

2. Christ and the Church

Ephesians 5:22-24 draws the parallel between the relationship between husband and wife and Christ and the church. It gives a depth of meaning to marriage that goes way beyond our earthly relationship.

It puts the weight of Christ's love for his church on the shoulders of the husband, and the sweetness of the church's submission to Christ in the heart of the wife.

See Resources on Lesson 4 – “Marriage, Christ and the Church” and “The Analogy of Christ and the Church.”

Amazingly, Ephesians 5 roots the principle of leadership and submission back in Genesis and the pattern for marriage before the Fall. Verse 31 reads, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

Clearly, Christ restores the intended good order of the family through the marriage relationship.

Clearly, submission of the wife and leadership of the husband is not rooted in culture, but in creation.

Surely, this is one (if not the main) reason that Satan attacks Christian marriages. If the enemy can destroy the illustration of Christ and the Church, he will have won a great victory.

The following section, “A Point of Clarification,” is a parenthetical section that has been inserted here in order to deal with some Scriptures that are often used by evangelical feminists to support their egalitarian position. Although our focus in this study is not to combat every feminist position, but to quietly and boldly lay down the “straight stick” of biblical truth, it is important from time to time to point out the error in widely used “plausible argument.” This is one of those times.

III. Three Points of Clarification in the Gender Debate

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 4.**)

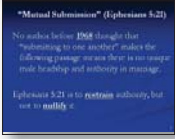


There are three Scriptures that are often misunderstood and/or misused to support the egalitarian position. We will briefly examine each one so that we will recognize the false teaching when we hear it.

We will take these passages one at a time.

A. “Mutual Submission”—Ephesians 5:21

Ephesians 5:21— “...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 5.**)

Ephesians 5:21—This passage is used by egalitarians to support what they call “mutual submission.”

The egalitarian view of “mutual submission” is a novelty in the history of the church.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

According to Dr. Wayne Grudem...

No author before 1968 thought that “submitting to one another” makes the following passage mean there is no unique male headship and authority in marriage.

The truth is that...

It is most likely that Ephesians 5:21 is to restrain the authority of husbands, parents, and masters, but not to nullify it.

It is thought that Ephesians 5:21 means that those in authority should govern wisely and with sacrificial concern for those under their authority or leadership. All Christians should pattern their social behavior on the humility and kindness of Christ.

Point out that all Christians, including Christian husbands and wives, are to have the Christ-like attitude described in Philippians 2:5-8. “Have this mind among yourselves, which is your in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (See note in resources, Ephesians 5:21.)

Never does one verse of Scripture cancel out another verse of Scripture. And most certainly this never happens in such close proximity.

Ephesians 5:21 is a transitional verse. It gives context. It does not cancel out Ephesians 5:22-24.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

B. Everyone is the same in Christ, right?—Galatians 3:28-29

What about Galatians 3:28-29?

Galatians 3:28-29—“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor 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.”



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 6.**)

See Resources for Lessons 4, “Notes on Galatians 3:28.”

Galatians 3:28-29—Again we have an illustration of the equality of men and women before God.

We are, indeed, one in Christ Jesus. But that doesn’t mean we’ve lost our distinctiveness.

The Jew is still a Jew, and the Greek, a Greek. The slave doesn’t automatically become free from his earthly master even though he is free in Christ.

And a man is still a man and a woman, a woman.

Evangelical feminists will use this passage to make their argument for “sameness.” But the truth is this passage is proof of the complementary pattern.

It’s important to examine the Scriptures.

It’s important that we understand these passages of Scripture. This is what it means when Acts 17:11 tells us that the people examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. We are examining the Scriptures to discover the truth. Interesting that those in Acts 17 who did this examining we’re told were “not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.” (Just an interesting side note.)

C. A beautiful picture of complementarity—1 Peter 3:7

1 Peter 3:7 – “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.”

What about 1 Peter 3:7?



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 7.**)

Let’s now examine 1 Peter 3:7.

Some would want us to think that this verse is unfair to women, or a wrong assessment of a woman’s strength.

But the truth is this verse is a beautiful picture of the complementarian position.

This is an example of the proper perspective of mutual submission without taking away the role distinctions.

Men and women are equally heirs of God's grace. In Christ, we are all heirs according to the promise, yet we see here the protective role of the husband.

"Weaker vessel" refers to physical strength, not moral, spiritual, or mental ability.

Women *are*, in general, physically weaker than men.

Men are to gently lead their wives keeping in mind that, although they are physically weaker and need their husband's protection, they are also their equal before God.

This takes away the harshness of the husband's leadership under which the wife is to submit.

Now you will return to the presentation of Scriptures that speak of submission in marriage and make your points of context.

The parenthesis is closed, and now let's return to the Scriptures on submission in marriage and pull out points in context.

IV. Two additional Scriptures and Points of Context Regarding Submission in Marriage.

A. Colossians 3:18

Turn in your Bible to Colossians 3:18.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 8.**)



Colossians 3:18—"Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

Points of Context for Colossians 3:18

1. Overview of Chapter 3

Once again, the overarching context of the passage is holy conduct.

We could say that the verses previous to these verses are about "adorning." We are told to put some things off (anger, malice, slander, obscene talk) and put some things on (compassion, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness, love).

Many of the key verses in Colossians 3 should start to sound a familiar theme.

- Verse 15 says to let the peace of Christ rule in your *hearts*.
- Verse 16 says to let the *word* of Christ dwell in you richly.

- Verse 17 says that whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
- Verses 23 & 24 say that whatever we do we are to work heartily for the Lord and not for men.

2. Holy Conduct in the Home

Into these verses we drop Colossians 3:18, “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

Paul is bringing the subject of holy conduct right into the home.

He is speaking of order in the home—husbands, wives, children, servants.

When put in context, we get a wonderful perspective on submission in marriage.

Submission to your husband should:

- come from a peaceful heart.
- be the result of thinking that is based on the Word of God.
- is done to bring honor and glory to the Lord.

3. A Helpful Perspective on Submission

Too often this verse is read as if to say, “Wives should submit to their husbands as if their husbands were the Lord.” But that’s not what it says. “Wives, submit to your husbands, *as is fitting* in the Lord.”

In other words, because we love the Lord and we trust him and his Word, we are enabled to voluntarily and joyfully submit to our husbands without fear. This is fitting in the Lord. In fact, this is serving the Lord when we submit to our husband. A great and helpful perspective!

B. Titus 2:4-5

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 9.**)



Finally, turn in your Bibles to Titus 2:4-5, and we will look at the verses most often identified with biblical womanhood.

Titus 2:4-5—“so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be reviled.”

Points of Context for Titus 2:4-5

In the next lesson we make a more detailed overview of Paul’s letter to Titus, but for our purposes today we’ll focus on three things.

1. Consistency with Other Passages

Here again, we find the consistency of being submissive to your *own* husband.

2. Continuing Battle with False Teachers

Keep in mind that Paul is again addressing the problem of false teachers in the church. Paul is writing to Titus to help him combat these false teachers. His advice is to teach sound doctrine and encourage corresponding godly conduct. Again, this point will be developed further in Lesson 5.

3. The “Why” Behind the Good Conduct

Once again, we see the “why” behind good conduct—in this case, the “why” behind being a Titus 2 woman.

What is this “why”? Answer: How we live within our homes and with our own husbands combats the lies of false teachers, and reflects positively on the Gospel (that the word of God will not be reviled).

Summary of the Scriptures Just Examined

What are the themes then that we discover from these four Scriptures relating to submission in marriage?

- We are to submit to our own husbands.
- This principle is reinforced over and over again in the context of combating false teachers who present plausible arguments in the culture and within the church.
- The act of wifely submission has long-reaching positive impact. It draws others to Christ (even unbelieving husbands), illustrates Christ and His Church, is fitting in the Lord, and adorns God’s Word in a way that will lift it up to others.

V. The Importance of Defining Words

Remember that to the postmodern thinker, words are only in the mind of the reader or hearer. However, to God we know that words are very important.

We will now look at several Scriptures and try to clarify our thinking about leadership and submission in marriage by going to the source—meaning of some important words.

And *then*, before we close, we will apply all of this to our own marriages.

A. Biblical Terms: Before the Fall

First we will define a term that is found before the Fall, in Genesis 3.

1. “Helper” (ezer)

(DISPLAY SLIDE 10.)



Genesis 2:18—“Then God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’”

a. God made a helper for the man

Recently some have denied that the creation of woman as a “helper” signals any differentiation in role and authority from the man, Adam.

Some claim that because the same word is applied to God as our helper it can’t possibly mean “subordination.”

On this point, Dr. Wayne Grudem in *Systematic Theology* quotes David J.A. Clines (Emeritus Professor at The University of Sheffield and the editor of *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, published in 1998). The quote is in your Student Guide.

*...though superiors may help inferiors, strong may help weak, gods may help humans, in the act of helping they are being ‘inferior.’ That is to say, they are subjecting themselves to a secondary, subordinate position. Their help may be necessary or crucial, but they are assisting some task that is someone else’s responsibility. —David Clines from “What Does Eve Do to Help?,” as published in *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem²*

In other words, God helps us by equipping us to fulfill our responsibilities. In the same way, a wife helps her husband fulfill his role and responsibilities.

2. David Clines, “What Does Eve Do to Help?” as quoted in: Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, .

Think through this quote, and use some of your own examples to illustrate the point. For instance, a piano teacher stands over her student putting her hands on the student's and help him strike the correct notes. God helps us carry out our responsibilities when He sends the Holy Spirit to bring Scripture to mind.

b. Think biblically, not culturally

(DISPLAY SLIDE 11.)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

We must get over thinking that authority is a bad word.

- Subordination is not denigration.
- Equality is not indistinguishability.

God created the woman to be an e' zer (pronounced a' zar) to be a helper exactly fit for the man.

Paul refers to this role of helper in 1 Corinthians 11:9 when he says ***Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.***

This is a time when we must let the Bible transform our thinking so we will not be conformed to the world.

Now remember, that God created the woman as a helper for the man *before* the Fall. Therefore, this must be good (not a curse).

God said it wasn't good that the man should be alone, and then created a helper fit for him.

This helper wasn't to just help in one or two areas where Adam couldn't handle something. This woman is a helper by the very virtue of creation. It's her role.

It's God's plan and purpose that the man is in the leadership position, and the woman is to be the helper.

To be a helper is not to be inferior. That is why the words "fit for him" are included. This means "corresponding to him".

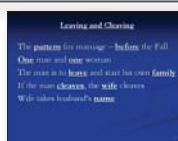
The woman was Adam's equal, but she was different from him.

c. God's Good and Perfect Will

This was before the Fall. Therefore, this is God's good and perfect will.

Have the women open their Bibles and see for themselves that Genesis 2:18 occurs before the account of the Fall. It's very important to understand the sequence of events in order to keep from being drawn into the empty deceit of evangelical feminism. Have the women then look at Genesis 2:23-24 and then make the point below.

2. "Leaving" and "Cleaving"



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 12.**)

Notice the incredible description of marriage in verse 24 of Genesis 2.

This description comes *before* there was such a thing as a mother and father.

This is *before* the Fall.

There are five points to make here.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

1. The pattern for marriage was established at the time of creation before the Fall.
Marriage is not something man made up and is not changeable according to the mores of a culture.
2. Marriage is the coming together of one man and one woman to become one flesh.
(1 + 1 = 1)
3. The man is to leave his mother and father and start his own family.
He leaves and then he becomes the head of a new family unit. The man establishes the marriage to which the wife joins.
4. If the man cleaves (holds fast) to the wife, it goes without say that the wife must cleave (hold fast) to her husband.

This concept of holding fast or cleaving is like joining two pieces of paper by gluing them together. You simply can't separate them. Those two pieces of paper have become one piece. If you try to separate them, you ruin both. It just can't be done. A wife cannot cleave to her husband in this way (the way he needs her to) if she hasn't left her mother and father. The man leaves and establishes the head of the marriage. The wife leaves and joins him. They hold fast to one another as one flesh.

5. It's important for a wife to take her husband's name.

This is an illustration of the above concept of leaving and cleaving. It shows respect to the husband. It puts the pieces of the marriage in proper biblical order.

B. Biblical Terms: After the Fall

Now we will define two terms that are found after the Fall.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 13.**)



These terms are part of the curse stemming from sin.

1. “Desire” (teshuqah)

Genesis 3:16b—“...Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

“Desire”—the Hebrew word *teshuqah* (*tey shu' cah*) indicates...

a desire to conquer, indicating that the woman would have a wrongful desire to usurp authority over her husband.

It seems that as a result of the Fall, a conflict is introduced into the relationship between man and woman. A desire on Eve's part to rebel against Adam's authority rears its ugly head yet today.

Comparison to Genesis 4:7

Genesis 4:7—“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

This term “desire” (Genesis 3:16b) is the same term that is found in Genesis 4:7, which is the account of Cain and Abel. It is not a good term.

Cain is very angry with his brother Abel, and God warns him by saying, “...if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

This desire to usurp our husband's leadership—to take over in our marriages—is like a crouching lion ready to leap at the first opportunity.

We must rule over it. It is sin.

The word *teshuqah* is also used in Song of Solomon 7:10. The ESV Study Bible notes: “the context tells the reader what kind of desire it is;” in the Genesis passages *teshuqah* is the desire to usurp power. In Song of Solomon, *teshuqah* indicates sexual desire. It is not necessary to mention this, but it’s important that you are aware of this third usage of the word.

Let’s face it...

It’s not our natural desire to want to arrange ourselves under our husband’s leadership (authority).

Women, in general, are very willing, eager and capable of taking over—especially in areas where our men are weak.

2. “Rule” (*mashal*)

Now the word “rule” is...

a strong term—*mashal* (*ma shal*) in.

This word is also in Genesis 3:16, and a part of the curse is a word...

usually used of monarchical governments, not generally of authority within a family. It reflects harshness, rather than servant leadership.

This is the tug of war that is going on in marriages—probably all marriages. It is a power struggle.

Too many husbands and wives are vying for the leadership position in their marriage, and in doing so they are creating a two-headed monster.

David Clines’ quote (included in the Student Guide) is a good summary:

The curse brought a distortion of man’s humble, considerate leadership and the woman’s intelligent, willing submission to that leadership which existed before the fall.

—David Clines from “What Does Eve Do to Help?,” as published in *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem⁴

C. Contrast Before and After the Fall

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 14.**)



So far, we have discovered:

- The leadership of the husband and the helper role of the wife are good.

4. David Clines, “What Does Eve Do to Help?” as quoted in: Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), 462.

- The desire to rule on the wife’s part and the harsh leadership of the husband are part of the curse.

D. Biblical Terms: New Testament

Christ came to restore the created order and pattern to marriage.

This is glorious!

Jesus restores the good pre-Fall order. He teaches this, and this is what Paul is also teaching.

The last two terms we will define are from the New Testament.

1. “Be Subject To” (hupotasso)

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 15.**)



1 Peter 3:1—“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.”

The phrase “to be subject to” as found in 1Peter 3:1 means to arrange yourself under something and always implies a relationship of submission to an authority.

We have several other examples of the phrase “be subject to” in the Bible.

Direct the women to follow along in the Student Guide, completing statements and taking notes.

It always implies a relationship of submission to an authority.

- Luke 2:51—the submission of Jesus to authority of his parents.
- Romans 13:1, 5; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13—citizens are to be subject to government authorities.
- 1 Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 1:22—the universe is subject to Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 15:28—Christ is subject to God the Father.
- 1 Corinthians 16: 15-16; 1 Peter 5:5—church members should be subject to church leaders.

When we think of all the times when one person or groups of persons is said to be subject to another person or group of people, never are these relationships reversed anywhere in the Scriptures. For example, husbands are never told to be subject to wives, or governments to citizens.

This Greek word, *hupotasso*, is always used of submission to an authority in all literature, whether it's Christian or not.

When we read that we as wives are to be subject to our own husbands, it means that we are to arrange ourselves under the headship of our husbands.

2. “Head” (kephale)

(DISPLAY SLIDE 16.)



Ephesians 5: 23—“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.”

a. A Metaphor

This term “head,” *Kephale* (*kay fall lay*), is used metaphorically.

In other words, it's not a physical head with eyes, nose, mouth, etc. It is a metaphor (image, figure of speech) to illustrate the directional flow of authority in the relationships between God, Christ, men, and women.

The *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words: With Topical Index* defines *kephale*: “metaphorically, of the authority or direction of God in relation to Christ, of Christ in relation to believing men, of the husband in relation to the wife, of Christ in relation to principalities and powers.”⁵

b. Refuting an Egalitarian Argument

Those who take the egalitarian position argue that *kephale* means “source.”

Wayne Grudem contends that a good way to find the meaning of a word is to examine its use in various contexts.

Grudem made an extensive study of the word *kephale* and found that in more than 50 contexts, this word refers to people who have authority over others of whom they are said to be the “head.” Grudem discovered that *kephale* never once takes a meaning “source without authority.”⁶

5. Vine, W.E., Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words: With Topical Index*. (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 532.

6. Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), 202.

Let's take a quick look at some of these examples.

Direct the women to complete these statements in the Student Guide.

- King David is called the head of the people that he conquered (2 Samuel 22:44).
- Leaders of the tribes of Israel are called “heads” of the tribes (1 Kings 8:1).
- Jephthah becomes the “head” of the people of Gilead (Judges 11:11).
- The husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the “head” of the church (Ephesians 5:23).
- Christ is the “head” of the church (Ephesians 1:22).
- Christ is the “head” of all things (Ephesians 1:22).
- God the Father is the “head” of Christ (1Corinthians 11:3).

In each and every one of these examples “head” *kephale* means one in authority or in a leadership position.

At this point you've presented a lot of material. However, there is one more important point to make before your conclusion. The point is that the very principle of authority and submission is rooted in the relationship of the Trinity. This is not new. Not even New Testament. This is eternal. Authority and submission go beyond creation to God Himself. It is his way. It is his pattern for all relationships for all of eternity. It is of utmost importance that you stress this point before moving on. When women grasp the idea that submission and authority are eternal and Trinitarian, it will change their thinking, their lives and their marriages! I've seen this happen many times. Take time to think through this issue yourself. Read the Wayne Grudem and Bruce Ware quotes in the Student Guide out loud to the class. Tell the class that you are introducing them to this awesome thought, and that you will revisit the relationships within the Trinity in Lesson 8. For further study on the Trinity, I highly recommend Bruce Ware's book, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance*. For your personal preparation you may want to read the last chapter in this book. Again tell the women that you will revisit the theme of the Trinity in Lesson 8. You are simply introducing the concept now.

E. Concluding Points Regarding Definition of Terms

Before we move on, one more very important point needs to be introduced. We will revisit this point in Lesson 8.

1. Biblical womanhood is rooted in the eternal Trinity.

For now, let me simply give you something of significance to think about, by reading with you the quotes from Wayne Grudem and Bruce Ware. Please read along with me from your Student's Guide.

Just as God the Father has authority over the Son, though the two are equal in deity, so in a marriage, the husband has authority over the wife, though they are equal in personhood.

—Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*⁷

Both authority and submission are good, for both are expressive of God himself. This principle is about as countercultural as we can imagine, though some will simply dismiss it as old-fashioned. But it is the truth. We live in a culture that despises authority at every level. We find it hard to think positively about authority for one very simple reason: we are sinners who want to be in charge of our own lives. In the very eternal relations that are true of the Persons of the Trinity, authority and submission are lived out with love and joy. We must learn to embrace what is eternally true in God, and this means, among other things, embracing rightful authority and rightful submission.

—Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance*⁸

2. Illustration of Submission in Biblical Context



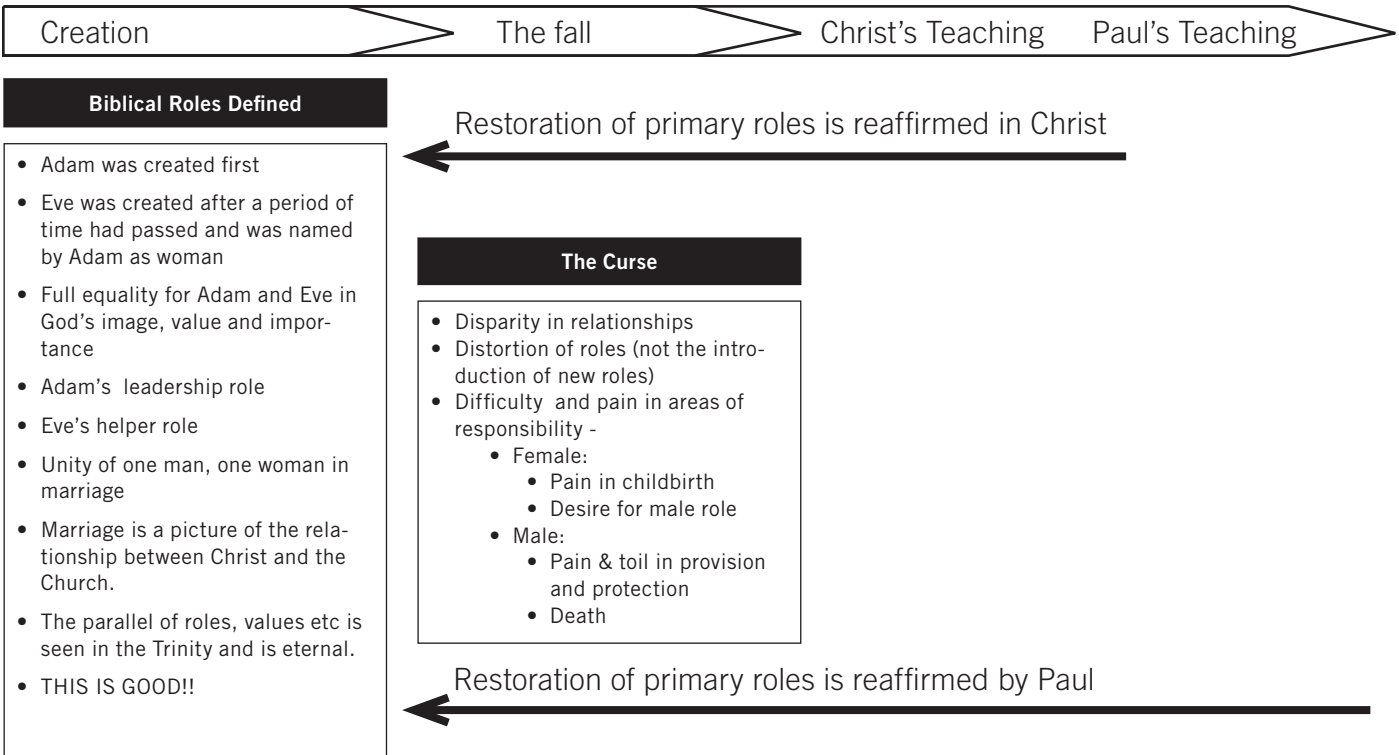
(DISPLAY **SLIDE 17.**)

To conclude this section on definition of terms, quickly turn to the diagram titled “Birds-Eye View of Biblical Womanhood” found in your Student Guide (This same chart was also included without this title in Lesson 2 of the Student Guide.). Look closely at what comes both before and after the Fall. Also, follow the arrows backwards, and see that both Jesus and Paul are referring back to pre-fall perfection.

7. Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), 459.

8. Ware, Bruce A. *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005), 137. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

Birds-Eye View of Biblical Womanhood



Through the examination of these critical terms, we can see an important pattern and put our submission in marriage into its proper biblical context.

Not only is it important to understand the timing of before or after the Fall. But it's of utmost importance to understand that when Christ spoke of marriage issues and Paul taught regarding marriage (and church) issues, they went back to the good and perfect pattern that God created in the first place. This helps us when we read difficult passages such as 1Corinthians 11(head coverings) or Matthew 19 (divorce).

VI. Application of Foundational Truths

Now let's take all of this and do some application. What does all of this look like in real life?

A. Example of Sarah

1 Peter 3: 1-6 gives us the specific example of Sarah.

What can we learn from her?

Move through this section quickly. The point is to understand why Peter chose Sarah as the example of a holy woman from the past, and to see her as a real woman with real positives and negatives.

We actually know quite a lot about Sarah. Her story is told in the span from Genesis 11:29 to Genesis 23:20.

Biblical accounts confirm that Sarah was a holy woman who hoped in God and submitted to her husband. It is also confirmed that she was not a perfect woman, and she was not married to a perfect man. Whew!

We know that when:

- Abraham heard the call of God and moved the family from Ur to Haran, there is no mention of complaint from Sarah; yet she moved from a large sophisticated city where she was a woman of means to a small town to live with her father-in-law.
- Abraham moved out of Haran and forever after lived a nomadic life in tents; there still is no mention of complaint from Sarah.
- Abraham made some serious mistakes, went to Egypt and lied about Sarah, which put her in harm's way.
- Visitors came, she was in the tent, and Abraham asked her to make the meal. In other words, Sarah was a homemaker.

Sarah, herself, made mistakes like when she thought God wasn't coming through on his promise of an heir. She took things into her own hands and concocted the plan for Abraham to have relations with her maid, Hagar.

In trying to help God out, she left God out, and Ishmael was born.

Sarah lost her temper with Hagar and treated her harshly.

In the end, however, Sarah is remembered for her faith and her relationship with her husband.

She is held up as the example for us today.

In fact, we're told that we are her daughters, and we share in her dignity and honor when we imitate her submission to her own husband and her trust in her God.

This is a great encouragement! We don't have to be perfect.

We don't have to be married to perfect men.

One last note: Sarah was submissive, but she was not passive.

She spoke up. She influenced her husband (sometimes wrongly, but more often for good), and we can assume that she had great influence on her son, Isaac. We are told Isaac mourned his mother’s death for three years!

Sarah is our example of a strong, submissive woman who, because she put her hope in God, did not give way to fear. She is the example of “fearless tranquility.”

However good and wonderful this example is, we may still need a little more practical advice—something more specific to take home and actually put into action.

B. What does submission look like?

We will close by looking at what submission is, and what it isn’t. (The following is based on teaching from Pastor John Piper.)

This is a very long teaching session. Hopefully, you have left enough time here to actually share some examples of what submission is and isn’t from your own life. This, I think would be a great help to the women. Personal examples, as long as you don’t tell every little detail and/or reveal confidences that would embarrass your family, are always a good teaching technique. Work your way through the chart that shows what submission is and what it is not.

1. What Submission is NOT

We must be careful not to add prohibitions that are in the Bible. Therefore, it’s important to get clear what submission is NOT.

Submission is NOT:

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 18.**)



See illustration the “Submission Is/Submission Is Not” chart in the Student’s Guide.

Submission Is:	Submission is Not:
The divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts.	Agreeing with everything your husband says.
The disposition to follow a husband's lead.	Leaving your brain or your will at the wedding altar.
The inclination to yield to his leadership.	Avoiding every effort to change a husband.
An attitude that says "I delight for you to take the initiative in our family. I am glad when you take responsibility for things and lead with love."	Putting the will of the husband before the will of Christ.
	Getting her personal, spiritual strength primarily from her husband.
	Acting out of fear.

This chart is based on a sermon by Pastor John Piper of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, "The Beautiful Faith of Fearless Submission," April 15, 2007. It can be found by searching for this title at www.desiring-God.org.

If you agree with everything your husband says, you're not being a very good helper, are you? He needs you to respectfully challenge him at time. He needs you to help him think through issues. And we, as wives, must always keep in mind that because we are our husbands' God-designed helpers, we must never challenge our husbands in ways that would put him down, but always in ways to bring out the best in him.

Your husband married you because he saw something in you that he knew (aware or not) would complete him. Don't leave that "something" at the altar. Bring your brain into the marriage.

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another, it says in Proverbs 27:15. This principle applies with a husband and wife, too.

We all need to be changed, and we can be a positive change agent for our husbands.

Interestingly, enough two verses ahead of Proverbs 27:17 read, ***A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike***. That's good advice on how NOT to change our husbands. Enough said.

Remember, a biblical woman puts her hope in God. Our personal and spiritual strength must first come from our relationship with our Lord and the working of His Word in our hearts. This doesn't mean that we aren't strengthened by our husbands, but our primary source of strength is from God.

We are not fearful women. This means that we are not afraid to submit. We trust that this is God's design, and then we obey. However, this *definitely* does not mean we should not listen to our legitimate fears. If you are in any way afraid because of something in your marriage, please tell someone!

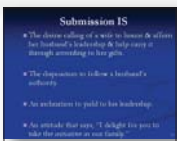
Important Note: Please mention here that submission is never meant to put a wife in a position of abuse. Submission should never stem from fear of retribution or any kind of harm (physical, verbal or emotional) on the part of the husband. You cannot assume that just because a woman is in a Bible study she cannot be experiencing abuse at home. Therefore, make it very clear that if anyone is or thinks she is being abused in her marriage in any way PLEASE talk to someone! She should feel free to speak to you or her discussion group leader. If someone does tell you of an abusive situation, you need to then contact your women's ministry director or trusted pastor and seek guidance about how to help this woman.

If this is what submission is NOT, then what is it?

2. What submission IS:

Submission Is

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 19.**)



Notice that in each one of these definitions the focus is on the heart attitude.

This is what is meant when we say that a biblical woman is not one who is sitting down on the outside, but standing up on the inside. No, a biblical woman is sitting down on the outside AND the inside.

When we sense the divine calling and have the disposition, inclination, and attitude to carry out that calling, our conduct will be a godly outflow from the heart.

Putting this biblical pattern into practice is a challenge, because we can so easily err in one direction or the other.

3. Common Errors

Maybe this illustration can help you keep your balance in your own marriage.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 20.**)

It's important to point out here that every person in every marriage errs in one direction or another. I like to think of the cross hovering over the section titled "Biblical Ideal," and that the closer I am to the cross the closer I am to that ideal (of course the same is true for our husbands). You might even suggest the women draw a cross over the middle of the chart to remind them of this principle. I've found this chart to be a great help and comfort to many women as they see their own marriage with new eyes.

Putting this biblical pattern into practice is a challenge because we can err in one direction or the other.

	Errors of Passivity	Biblical Ideal	Errors of Aggressiveness
Husband	Wimp	Loving, humble leadership	Tyrant
Wife	Doormat	Joyful, intelligent Submission	Usurper

The biblical ideal is *kephale* on the husband's part, and *hupotasso* on the part of the wife.

We should be aiming for the middle. But we often fall on one side or the other.

Today one of our biggest problems is that of a passive, wimpy husband and an aggressive, usurper wife...although there are, of course, other combinations.

The truth is that as one moves closer to the center, the other begins to move to the center, too. We are responsible for our own movement.

- Think of the cross of Christ in the middle.
- Christ has come to restore our marriages.
- Christ has come to restore our hearts.
- Christ has come to restore the pattern that is rooted in creation and modeled in the Trinity.

The most common question women have regarding submission in marriage goes something like this: What do I do when my husband will not take the lead in our marriage?

It is often difficult to know exactly what a woman means when she says this. It could be that her husband will not make decisions or take the lead in the area of finances. Or it could mean that he won't make the little day-to-day decisions. Often, the woman means that her husband will not take the lead in the spiritual arena.

It's important to acknowledge that there are no easy answers for this question regarding lack of leadership on the husband's part. You should acknowledge that this is a common problem.

In a group setting, this question can and should only be answered in a general way. Go back to the charts just discussed and try to pull out some specific ways these charts can be applied to a situation where the husband is not leading.

In a one-on-one setting, be sure to have the woman tell you exactly what she means when she says her husband will not take the lead.

One thing to keep in mind, regardless of the situation, is that a man SHOULD take the lead. The wife is his HELPER. So we, as wives, should help our husbands take the lead. We must NOT do this by nagging and continuing to remind our husbands of their "duties." This is not helpful. Neither is it helpful to simply become passive.

Some sample suggestions you can make are: Help your husband by making specific suggestions. Ask for his opinions. Encourage him when he DOES take the lead. And above all, pray!

Encourage a woman who has this question to prayerfully review this lesson (Lesson 4), including the two charts on submission. Also, encourage her to complete her homework for Lesson 5.

Tell women that specific applications will be made throughout the next lesson (Lesson 5).

Summary Statements

Here are some summary statements we can make.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 21.**)



Submission is:

- God's good and perfect way

- Modeled in the Trinity and rooted in creation
- An illustration of the Gospel (Christ and the church)
- Validates God's Word
- Draws others to Christ

To conclude our lesson let's read together what George W. Knight wrote in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. The quote beautifully and clearly pulls together what we have learned in Lessons 3 and 4.

The respect asked of a wife recognizes the God-given character of the headship of her husband and thus treats him with dutiful regard and deference. Just as husbands have been asked to display their headship through likeness to Christ's headship over His church, that is, through a love that cherishes and nourishes (verse 25, 28, 29), so wives are asked to render their submission in a way that is most like that of the submission of the church to Christ, that is, a truly respectful submission because it is rendered voluntarily from the heart. A wife's respecting her husband and his headship therefore implies that her submission involves not only what she does but also her attitude in doing it. As with the husband, so with the wife, it is the heart's attitude of grateful acceptance of the role God assigns to each and the determination to fulfill the particular role with all the graciousness God gives that Paul is urging on both wives and husbands in this last verse of his instruction.⁹

Now give the women time to focus on Norma and fill in their Personal Application box. It's possible that some women will want to talk to you about their own personal situations. Do your best to not answer personal questions until the woman has spent time thinking through the application portion of the lesson. Give the class some quiet time to reflect before you pray and dismiss the women.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 22.**)

Personal Application (10 minutes)

9. Knight, George W. Knight III. "Husband and Wives as Analogues of Christ and the Church: Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19." Chapter 8 of *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1991, 2006), 175.

Lesson 4

Resources

Outline – Lesson 4

Biblical Womanhood in the Home (I)

Fellowship (10 minutes)

Opening Session (25 minutes)

—Welcome (10 minutes)

—Introductory Remarks (15 minutes)

I. Review

A. Where We Are—Our Culture

B. Who We Are

1. Women Who Stand on the Truth

2. Strong Women with Soft Hearts

Move to Discussion Groups (50 minutes)

Teaching Session (50 minutes)

I. Introduction

II. Selected Scriptures and Points of Context Regarding Submission in Marriage

A. 1 Peter 3:1, 5&6

1. 1 Peter 2—“likewise”

2. Be Subject to Your Own Husband

3. An Adorned Heart

B. Ephesians 5:22-24

1. Overview of Key Verses

2. Christ and the Church

III. Three Points of Clarification in the Gender Debate

A. “Mutual Submission”—Ephesians 5:21

B. Everyone is the same in Christ, right?—Galatians 3:28-29

C. A Beautiful Picture of Complementarity—1 Peter 3:7

IV. Additional Scriptures and Points of Context Regarding Submission in Marriage

A. Colossians 3:18

1. Overview of Chapter 3

2. Holy Conduct in the Home

3. A Helpful Perspective on Submission

B. Titus 2:4-5

1. Consistency with Other Passages

2. Continuing Battle with False Teachers

3. The “Why” Behind the Good Conduct

V. The Importance of Defining Words

A. Biblical Terms: Before the Fall

1. “helper” (ezer)

a. God made a helper for the man.

b. Think biblically, not culturally.

c. God’s Good and Perfect Will

2. Leaving and Cleaving

B. Biblical Terms: After the Fall

1. “Desire” (teshuqah)

2. "Rule" (mashal)

- C. Contrast Before and After the Fall

- D. Biblical Terms: New Testament

1. "Be Subject To" (hupotasso)

2. "Head" (kephale)

- a. A Metaphor

- b. Refuting an Egalitarian Argument

- E. Concluding Points Regarding Definition of Terms

1. Biblical Womanhood is Rooted in the Eternal Trinity

2. Illustration of Submission in Biblical Context

- VI. Application of Foundational Truths

- A. Example of Sarah

- B. What does submission look like?

1. What Submission is NOT

2. What Submission IS

3. Common Errors

Personal Application (10 minutes)

Biblical Womanhood and the Single Woman

When discussing the topic of biblical womanhood, the question always arises, “How does biblical womanhood relate to the single woman?”

The first and foremost answer to that question is that the Bible does not distinguish between married and un-married women in the call to live a godly, biblical life. There are, of course, some principles that specifically apply to the married woman, and some to women with children. However, the overall reference in the Bible is to all women, married or single, with or without children.

Accompanying this first question generally follows a second issue. Is it necessary for a single woman to study the biblical principles that relate directly and specifically to marriage?

The answer to this question is “yes.” Here are four reasons it is important for a single woman to understand the biblical principles on marriage.

1. The relationship of the husband and wife in marriage is an illustration of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33). It is a great blessing to understand this and to recognize this illustration as one observes another’s marriage. If we are not aware of this “mystery,” we won’t be able to recognize it when we see it, and we will be robbed of great personal blessing.
2. Single women are often called upon by God to mentor or counsel married women—formally or informally. A single woman has perspective that can bring clarity to a married woman with a question in her marriage. It is imperative that one knows, understands, and can articulate the biblical principles of marriage in order to counsel well.
3. Principles of biblical manhood and womanhood should be extrapolated to apply to other male/female relationships outside of marriage. For example, in the workplace a biblical woman should treat men with respect. Or, if a man attempts to protect a woman in any appropriate way, a woman should allow him to do that. In other words, there are many principles of biblical womanhood that apply outside of marriage.
4. One never knows how the Lord will work in the future. A single woman may become a married woman, and it’s a great advantage to already be familiar with the biblical principles of manhood and womanhood before marriage.

Lionhearted and Lamblike: The Christian Husband as Head, Part 2

What Does It Mean to Lead

By John Piper, March 25, 2007

Ephesians 5:21-33

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27so 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. 28In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30because we are members of his body. 31“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Jesus—The Pattern for Manhood

The reason I am using the title “Lionhearted and Lamblike” to refer to the Christian husband as head of his wife is because the husband is called to lead like Jesus who is the Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5) and the Lamb of God (Revelation 5:6)—he was lionhearted and lamblike, strong and meek, tough and tender, aggressive and responsive, bold and brokenhearted. He sets the pattern for manhood.

But it may not yet be crystal clear to some that the concept of headship involves leadership as its main meaning. That is what I think is the case. The key verse on headship here is Ephesians 5:23: “The husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.” So the husband is to take his unique cues in marriage from Christ in his relationship to his church. I take that to mean that the husband bears a unique responsibility for leadership in the marriage.

The Husband as Leader

I suggested last time that a biblical definition of headship would be: Headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like, servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home. The more I have thought about those three facets of headship—leadership, protection, and provision—the more it seems to me that they really resolve into one thing with two expressions. Leadership is the one thing,

and protection and provision are the two expressions. In other words, a husband's leadership expresses itself in taking the lead in seeing to it that the family is protected and provided for. So protection and provision are not separate from leadership. They are the two most fundamental areas where the husband is called upon to bear primary responsibility.

So what we need to do is see the support for this in the text and then some application or illustration of what it means. Let's give a few arguments from the text for why we think the word head in verse 23 involves a unique responsibility of leadership.

The Husband as Head

1) Head is used for leader in the Old Testament. For example, Judges 11:11, "So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them (eis kephal n kai eis arch gon)." (See also 10:18; 11:8, 9; 2 Samuel 22:44; Psalm 18:43; Isaiah 7:8.)

2) Ephesians 1:21-23 says that Christ is "above every name that is named . . . and God has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body." The focus in this text is on Christ's rule and authority when he is called head of the church. So the emphasis falls on his leadership over the church.

3) In Ephesians 5:25, Paul says, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." While the stress here falls on Christ's sacrifice for his bride and so tells the husband to love like this, we must not miss the inescapable truth that Christ took an absolutely decisive action here. He was not responding to the church. The church did not plan its salvation and sanctification. Christ did. This is leadership of the most exalted kind. But it is servant leadership. Christ is taking the lead to save his bride, and he is doing it by suffering for her.

But we see leadership in Christ's sacrifice not just because he planned it and took the initiative rather than responding to her initiative, but also in the fact that he died to give an example to us. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). In other words, I have taken the lead in suffering for love's sake; now you take up your cross and follow me. This is why leadership is not mainly a right and privilege, but a burden and a responsibility.

4) Finally, in view of these three reasons why headship involves leadership, the fourth argument is that the concept of submission, when related to headship, implies that headship is leadership. Paul says in verses 22-23, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife." When the ground of submission is expressed as the headship of the husband, it is clear that headship involves the kind of leadership that a woman can honor.

The definition of submission that we will unfold after Easer is: "Submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts." The point today is simply that when submission is correlated

with headship, it implies that headship involves leadership. The wife honors and affirms her husband's leadership and helps carry it through according to her gifts.

So from these four observations—and there are more for other parts of the Bible that we could look at—I conclude that headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like, servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home.

Protection

Now where in this text do we see the idea that this leadership takes special responsibility for protection and provision in the family? First, consider protection. In verses 25-27, Paul shows the husband how to love his wife—that is, how to exercise the kind of servant leadership that Christ did: “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 words “gave himself up for her,” we hear the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When Christ gave himself up for us, he took our place. He bore our sins (1 Peter 2:24) and became a curse for us (Galatians 3:13) and died for us (Romans 5:8); and because of all this we are reconciled to God and saved from his wrath. Romans 5:10: “If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”

If there ever was an example of leadership that took the initiative to protect his bride, this is it. So when Paul calls a husband to be the head of his wife by loving like Christ when he leads, whatever else he means, he means: Protect her at all costs.

Provision

And what about provision? I am contending that headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like, servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home. Are there evidences in this text that a husband's leadership should take primary responsibility for the provision for his wife and family? Yes. If anything, this is even more explicit. Consider verses 28-29: “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.”

The words “nourish and cherish” are significant. The word nourish (*ektrephei*) is most often used in the Bible for raising children and providing them with what they need, but the part of that meaning that applies here is not that the husband is a parent but that he is a caring provider. It's used more in the sense of Genesis 45:11 where Joseph says to his brothers, “There I will provide (*ekthreps*) for you, for there are yet five years of

famine to come.” So the point is at least that the husband who leads like Christ takes the initiative to see to it that the needs of his wife and children are met. He provides for them.

Similarly, the other word in verse 29 points in the same direction but even more tenderly. The husband “nourishes and cherishes (*thalpei*) it [his body, his wife], just as Christ does the church.” This word for cherishing is used by Paul one other time, namely, to refer to his tender love for the church in Thessalonica. He compares himself to a mother caring for her infant. First Thessalonians 2:7: “We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.” The point was not at all to belittle the church; the point was to emphasize his tender care and that he would do anything he could for them the way a mother does her child.

So I conclude that there is good reason just from Ephesians 5—not to mention Genesis 1-3 and elsewhere—to lift up the divine calling of the husband as bearing a primary responsibility for Christ-like, servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home.

Life Hangs on Protection and Provision

Now notice something about protection and provision. The reason they stand out is that they are so basic. Without protection and provision, life itself is threatened. So the reason these two rise to the surface so quickly is that if a husband fails in his leadership here, there may not be any other place to exercise it. The life of the family hangs on protection and provision. Life itself must be protected and nourished, or it ceases to exist.

But there is another reason these two stand out. Protection and provision both have a physical and a spiritual meaning. There is physical food that needs to be provided, and there is spiritual food that needs to be provided. Husbands need to protect against physical threats to the life of the family and spiritual threats to the life of the family. So when you think it through, virtually everything a husband is called upon to do in his leadership is summed up in one of these four ways: 1) physical provision (like food and shelter), 2) spiritual provision (like the word of God and spiritual guidance, instruction, and encouragement), 3) physical protection (as from intruders or natural disasters or disease), and 4) spiritual protection (like prayer and warnings and keeping certain influences out of the home). Provision: physical and spiritual. Protection: physical and spiritual.

Encouragement of Husbands

Before I give some examples, let me give a word of encouragement and caution. The encouragement is to men. If this sounds new and overwhelming, be encouraged that Christ does not call you to do what he won't empower you to do. My father loved to quote to us as a family Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Husbands are called to do some very hard things. Leadership is not easy. That's part of what being a Christian means: Take up your cross and follow me. But with every command comes a promise. “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I

am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). So be encouraged. Leadership is hard. But you’re a man. You’re a man. If your father never taught you how to lead, your heavenly Father will.

A Caution to Wives

The caution is to women. You cannot demand that your husband take leadership. For several reasons: 1) Demanding is contradictory to the very thing for which you long. It is out of character. If you become the demander, he’s not the leader. 2) Demanding will be counterproductive because if he had any impulse to try harder, your demanding will take the heart out of it, because it won’t feel like leading any more; it will feel like acquiescence. 3) It has to come from inside him worked by the word of God and the Spirit of God. So, instead of demanding, 1) pray earnestly for him that God would awaken his true manhood. 2) Ask him for a time when the two of you alone, when you are neither tired nor angry, can talk about your heart’s desires. When you express your longings, do it without sounding any ultimatums, and with a sense of hope grounded in God, not man. Express appreciation and honor for any ways that he is leading.

Examples and Explanations

That’s the encouragement and the caution. Now some examples and explanations. These must be brief and provocative rather than complete and an attempt to answer all your questions. Consider what leadership is in each of the four spheres mentioned earlier.

1. Leadership in Spiritual Provision

To provide spiritual food for the family, you must know spiritual food. This means that a man must go hard after God. You can only lead spiritually if you are growing in your own knowledge of God and love for God. If you are feeding your soul with the word of God, you will be drawn to feed your wife and your children.

Gather your wife and children for family devotions everyday—call it whatever you want: family prayers, family worship, family Bible time. Take the initiative to gather them. If you don’t know what to do, ask some brothers what they do. Or ask your wife what she would like to do. You don’t have to be a loner here. Remember, headship takes primary responsibility, not sole responsibility. The wife, we pray, is always supporting and helping. And regularly has gifts that the husband doesn’t. What women rightly long for is spiritual and moral initiative, from a man, not spiritual and moral domination.

And remember there is no necessary connection between being an effective leader and being more intellectual or more competent than your wife. Leadership does not assume it is superior. It assumes it should take initiatives. See that the family prays and reads the Bible and goes to church and discusses spiritual and moral issues, and learns to use the means of grace and grows in knowledge, and watches your example in all these things.

2. Leadership in Physical Provision

The husband bears the primary responsibility to put bread on the table. Again the word primary is important. Both husbands and wives always work. But their normal spheres of work are man: breadwinner; wife: domestic manager, designer, nurturer. And that never has meant that there are not seasons in life when a wife cannot work outside the home or that the husband cannot share the domestic burdens. But it does mean that a man compromises his own soul and sends the wrong message to his wife and children when he does not position himself as the one who lays down his life to put bread on the table. He may be disabled and unable to do what his heart longs to do. He may be temporarily in school while she supports the family. But in any case his heart, and, if possible, his body, is moving toward the use of his mind and his hands to provide physically for his wife and children.

3. Leadership in Spiritual Protection

The spiritual dangers that beset the family today are innumerable and subtle. We need valiant warriors like never before. Not with spears and shields, but with biblical discernment and courage. First, husbands, pray for your family everyday, "Lead them not into temptation but deliver them from evil." Fight for them in prayer against the devil and the world and the flesh. Pray the prayers of the Bible for them. Don't grow weary. God hears and answers prayer for our wives and children.

Set standards for your wife and children. Work them through with your wife. Remember the path of leadership here is primary responsibility, not sole responsibility. Wives are eager to help here, but what frustrates them is when we don't take any initiative and they are left to try to determine and enforce the standards alone. Take the initiative in thinking through what will be allowed on TV. What movies you and the children will go to. What music will be listened to. And how low your daughter's necklines will be. I am tempted to preach a whole message on the relationship between dads and the way their daughters dress. Yes, mom is the key player here in helping a young woman learn the meaning of modesty and beauty. But dad's role for both of them is indispensable both in celebrating what they look like and telling them when the way they dress means what they don't think it means. Dads, you know exactly what I mean. What you need here is courage. Don't be afraid here. This is your daughter, and she must hear from you what she is saying to men with her clothes.

One other example of leadership in spiritual protection: Paul says in Ephesians 4:26-27, "Do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil." In other words, one wide open door to the devil in your house is unresolved anger as you go to bed. In the children and in the marriage. Leadership means we must take the lead in reconciliation.

I don't mean that wives should never say they are sorry. But in the relation between Christ and his church, who took the initiative to make all things new? Who left the comfort and security of his throne of justice to put mercy to work at Calvary? Who came

back to Peter first after three denials? Who has returned to you again and again forgiving you and offering his fellowship afresh? So husbands, your headship means: Go ahead. Take the lead. It does not matter if it is her fault. That didn't stop Christ. Who will break the icy silence first? Who will choke out the words, "I'm sorry, I want it to be better"? Or: "Can we talk? I'd like things to be better." She might beat you to it. That's okay. But woe to you if you think that, since it's her fault, she's obliged to say the first reconciling word. Headship is not easy. It is the hardest, most humbling work in the world. Protect your family. Strive, as much as it lies within you, to make peace before the sun goes down.

4. Leadership in Physical Protection

This is too obvious to need illustration—I wish. If there is a sound downstairs during the night and it might be a burglar, you don't say to her: This is an egalitarian marriage, so it's your turn to go check it out. I went last time." And I mean that even if your wife has a black belt in karate. After you've tried, she may finish off the burglar with one good kick to the solar plexus. But you better be unconscious on the floor, or you're no man. That's written on your soul, brother, by God Almighty. Big or little, strong or weak, night or day, you go up against the enemy first. Woe to the husband—and woe to the nation—that send their women to fight their battles.

For God's Glory and Our Good

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and God came to call them to account, it didn't matter that Eve had sinned first. God said, "Adam, where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). That's God's word to the family today: Adam, husband, father, where are you? If something is not working right at your house and Jesus comes knocking on the door, he may have an issue with your wife, but the first thing he's going to say when she opens the door is, "Is the man of the house home?"

When a man joyfully bears the primary God-given responsibility for Christ-like, servant leadership and provision and protection in the home—for the spiritual well-being of the family, for the discipline and education of the children, for the stewardship of money, for holding of a steady job, for the healing of discord—I have never met a wife who is sorry she married such a man. Because when God designs a thing (like marriage), he designs it for his glory and our good.

By John Piper. © Desiring God. Website: desiringGod.org

Notes on “Marriage, Christ and the Church”

...marriage is God's idea: he designed it, he described it, and he does it. It is one of the deepest realities in the world. Deeper than any of us knows. What God joins together he joins deeply together - deeper than feelings, deeper than promises, deeper than sex, deeper than friendship. “One flesh” is a deep, deep mystery. That is exactly what Paul calls it in Ephesians 5:32. And he says it is an image of Christ and the church. The union of husband and wife in marriage is like the union of God and his people. It is an ocean of deep, deep unseen wonders. Yet many people today treat it like a backyard swimming pool for lounging around as long as we feel like it.

God joined this. Jesus says: God joined this. God joined this. God joined this! The charge of adultery (in verses 11 and 12) is far deeper than we think. Marriage is an image of the covenant commitment between Christ and the church for whom he died. To walk away from marriage for another relationship is not just about marriage, but about Christ, and about God. What God has joined together in man and woman, in Christ and church, do not separate. God will never separate Christ and his church. Let your marriage tell the truth about that. Don't lie to the world about the covenant between Christ and the Church. God joined this. Don't separate it - even an image of it.

(And just in passing, so that you know where I stand - though I don't have the time to develop it - that is one of the reasons I would not counsel you to end your second marriage. Repent if you should. And start where you are to honor the vows you have made and, cost what it may, fulfill your calling to live out the rock-solid relationship of Christ and his Church.)

That's point one: marriage is a work of God and gets its meaning from God. And its meaning is mainly the portrayal of the covenant love between Christ and his Church.

—Taken from a sermon by John Piper, “God, Marriage and Children” Mark 10:1-16, March 1, 1998. Full sermon available on www.desiringgod.org

The Analogy of Christ and the Church

After quoting Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31), Paul gives an interpretation that shows God's purpose in marriage: “This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church” (verse 32).

Unbeknownst to the people of Moses' day (it was a “mystery”), marriage was designed by God from the beginning to be a picture or parable of the relationship between Christ and the church. Back when God was planning what marriage would be like, He planned it for this great purpose: it would give a beautiful earthly

picture of the relationship that would someday come about between Christ and his church. This was not known to people for many generations, and that is why Paul can call it a “mystery.” But now in the New Testament age Paul reveals this mystery, and it is amazing.

This means that when Paul wanted to tell the Ephesians about marriage, he did not just hunt around for a helpful analogy and suddenly think that “Christ and the church” might be a good teaching illustration. No, it was much more fundamental than that: Paul saw that when God designed the original marriage He already had Christ and the church in mind. This is one of God’s great purposes in marriage: to picture the relationship between Christ and His redeemed people forever!

But if this is so, then the order Paul is speaking of here (submission and love) is not accidental or temporary or culturally determined: it is part of the essence of marriage, part of God’s original plan for a perfect, sinless, harmonious marriage. This is a powerful argument for the fact that Christlike, loving headship and church-like, willing submission are rooted in creation and in God’s eternal purposes, not just in the passing trends of culture.

—George W. Knight III from “Husbands and Wives as Analogues of Christ and the Church: Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19,” Chapter 8 of *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1991) 175.

Marriage is Universal, not Cultural

The apostle Paul says that the great “mystery” of the Genesis 2 norm of marriage (one man and one woman in covenanted union) is that God intended it all along to be a shadow of a greater reality. From the Garden of Eden forward, God intended marriage to be an enacted parable of another marriage: Christ’s marriage to His church (Eph 5:31-32). Thus, marriage is not defined by the culture, but by the gospel itself. Jesus loves His bride, the church, exclusively and self-sacrificially; and Jesus’ bride is to respect and to submit to her husband. Marriage is meant to be a portrayal of a gospel archetype that is rooted in the eternal purposes of God. The gospel that shapes this archetype is also the hope for humanity and the context in which human happiness reaches its fullest potential. Herein is the innermost meaning of marriage, and faithful churches will engage the culture with proclamation and living that bears out this truth.

—Denny Burk from “A Collision of Worldviews and the Complementarian Response,” an editorial published in *The Journal for Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, Spring 2009, volume XIV, Issue 1, pages 4-5.

Notes on Ephesians 5:21

As Paul went on to explain (Eph. 5:22-6:9), the structural function of the family, like that of the church and of government, requires both authority and submission. But in all interpersonal relationships there is only to be mutual submission. Submission is a general spiritual attitude that is to be true of every believer in all relationships.

Even the authority-subject relationships in the church and home are to be controlled by love and modified by mutual submission. Wives have traditionally received the brunt of Ephesians 5:22-33, although the greater part of the passage deals with the husband's attitude toward and responsibilities for his wife. Paul devoted twice as much space to the husband's obligations as to the wife's. The husband not only in "head of the wife, as Christ also is head of the church" (v.21) but husbands are commanded to "love [their] wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her: (v.25). "Husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies,...even as [themselves]" (vv.28,33). Christ's giving His life for the church was an act of divine submission of the Lord to His bride, that he might cleanse, glorify, and purify her "that she should be holy and blameless" (v. 27).

—John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary EPHESIANS*. (Chicago: The Bible Institute of Chicago, 1986), 277.

Notes on Galatians 3:28

...Scripture makes clear that there are no spiritual or moral distinctions among Christians. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). There are no classifications of Christians. Every believer in Jesus Christ has exactly the same salvation, the same standing before God, the same divine nature and resources, and the same divine promises and inheritance (cf. Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; James 1:1-9).

But in matters of role and function God has made distinctions. Although there are no differences in intrinsic worth or basic spiritual privilege and rights among His people, the Lord has given rulers in government certain authority over the people they rule, to church leaders He has delegated authority over their congregations, to husbands He has given authority over their wives, to parents He has given authority over their children, and to employers He has given authority over employees.

—John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary EPHESIANS*. (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1986), 280.

Standing Firm on Marriage— Thinking Biblically Not Culturally

The world is clamoring to blur the distinctive roles between men and women. Even many in the church, in the name of “liberation,” seek to break down the walls of role and gender distinction. I think it interesting that the following statement, written by the Southern Baptists (the largest evangelical denomination in the world) and adopted by Campus Bresade for Christ (the largest para-church ministry in the world), supporting God’s order for marriage appeared on a full page ad in USA Today in August 1999, and voiced the affirmation of 131 evangelicals that “you are right!” in holding forth the Bible’s teachings on marriage. Here is just a summary (for the full statement, see www.baptistpress.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=648):

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God. Since both are created in God’s image, the marriage relationship models the way that God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband, even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God, as is her husband, and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. In a marriage lived according to these truths, the love between husband and wife will show itself in listening to each other’s viewpoints, valuing each other’s gifts, honoring one another in public and in private, and always seeking to bring benefit and not harm to one another.

We need not compromise, manipulate, or revise God’s Word to accommodate a pagan culture. God’s Word is very clear and means no less than what it says. God’s order for marriage and the home leads to life and joy and peace.

—James MacDonald, “Order in the Court: God’s Plan for Marriage,” from *The Journal for Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, Spring 2009, volume XIVm Issue 1, page 59.

Submission from the Heart

We live in a culture that despises submission as much as it despises authority, but God calls us to a different mind and heart on this matter. And here, wives can benefit enormously from the doctrine of the Trinity in realizing that the submission required of them as wives is itself reflective of the very submission eternally given by the Son to his Father, and by the Spirit to the Father and the Son...it is not enough before God simply to grit your teeth, buck up, and say, “Okay, if you insist, God, even though I don’t like it and I don’t want to do it, I’ll submit.”

Why is such begrudging submission insufficient? It is insufficient in part because it fails to understand the nature of submission as reflective of the Son's submission to the Father, and the Spirit's submission to the Father and the Son.

...the wife's glad-hearted and consistent submission reflects the church's responsibility and privilege of absolute submission before the lordship of Christ (Eph. 5:24, 31-32). Therefore, the kind of submission a wife is to render to her husband needs to be a joyful, heartfelt, willing, glad-hearted submission.

—Bruce Ware, *Father, Son & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005), 144-145. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

Biblical Womanhood in the Home (II)

GOALS FOR LESSON 5:

- A desire to reach out to other women as mentor/mentee
- Understand that behavior can beautifully adorn God's Word
- Accept that every woman is to be a "Titus 2 Woman"
- See Titus 2:3-5 as a guide to prioritizing life

Two valuable resources to aid in your preparation for teaching on the Titus 2 woman are Martha Peace's books *The Excellent Wife* and *Becoming a Titus 2 Woman*. Some excerpts from these books are provided in your Lesson 5 Resource section, but I highly recommend you get copies of these books and peruse them for your own personal use and for the benefit of your class.

FELLOWSHIP FOR LESSON 5:

(10 minutes)

Opening Session



(DISPLAY SLIDE 1.)

Welcome (10 minutes)

By now your class is quite familiar with the format of the study and should be comfortable with each other, which should make this lesson particularly sweet. Of all the lessons, this one (Lesson 5) is the most relaxed and informal. There are some important teaching points to make, of course, but assure the women that today you want to give them opportunity to actually be "Titus 2" women to each other and share from personal experiences.

Be sure to make any relevant announcements that come from your church in order to draw the women into the life of your local church.

Also, remind the women that you've now passed the halfway mark in the study. Encourage them to be persistent in completing their homework questions and consistent in their attendance.

Introductory Remarks (20 minutes)

Introduce Lesson 5 by telling the story of Mary, mother of Jesus, and Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist. I will write the “story” to share with the women below, but please take time to read Luke 1 for yourself, and then tell this beautiful story in your own words. Emphasize how God knew these two women needed each other, and how He provided for them. You will be blessed, and so will your class.

I. Introduction: A Story**A. The Story**

When the angel Gabriel was sent from God to Mary, he gave her the astonishing news that she was to be the mother of the long-awaited Messiah! He also slipped in another piece of information. He told Mary, **...your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren** (Luke 1:36).

As soon as Gabriel left, we’re told that Mary went “with haste” to the home of Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah.

Sharon James in her book *God’s Design for Women: Biblical Womanhood for Today* beautifully describes this meeting. Listen to this.

“She hurried to visit her relative Elizabeth, and what a meeting it was! Two women: one young, the other old; one pregnant with the Messiah, the other pregnant with his special fore-runner; both of them filled with the Holy Spirit – and even the unborn John leaping for joy! Elizabeth’s warm embrace confirmed Mary’s heartfelt hope and holy excitement, while her inspired greeting commended the implicit faith of her young relative: *Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished*”! (Luke 1:45)¹

What a beautiful picture of two women, one younger and the other older, coming together for mutual encouragement and blessing!

B. Lessons from the Story

Elizabeth pointed Mary’s thoughts directly to the Lord.

And God, no doubt, blessed Elizabeth through Mary’s coming.

In this story God has provided for us a model of what Paul is saying in Titus 2. Two women come together, glorifying the Gospel, and confirming God’s Word. And when they leave each other, each one is encouraged, strengthened, and rejoicing.

1. James, Sharon. *God’s Design for Women: Biblical Womanhood for Today*. (Hamilton, N.J.: Grace Distribution, 2007), 280.

And the timing is so perfect! One just pregnant, the other in her last three months of her pregnancy.

They needed each other, and God knew it!

Psalm 8: 1a, 4a—O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!...What is man that you are mindful of him...?

These women, Mary and Elizabeth, were doing what we've been studying. And now we, too, want to put feet to our study in this lesson.

II. The Titus 2 Woman

There are probably more church programs and Bible studies today on Titus 2 and the "Titus 2 Woman" than on any other subject. I believe this is from God.

A. Why study Titus 2?

Today we lead our independent, individualist, solitary lives to our detriment. Our schedules are packed. We move frequently. We live far from family. Our mother, sisters, or other family members don't know the Lord. All of these things (or any one of these) can cause us to feel alone and isolated.

Much like God knew that Mary and Elizabeth needed each other, He knows that we have a very special need today. We need each other. These "Titus 2" studies and ministries have been raised up to meet our God-given needs. It is His way to bring women together to minister to each other.

B. A Fresh Look at the Titus 2 Woman

This is a common, well-known passage of Scripture. It can seem mundane at first glance.

This lesson aims to take Titus 2 out of the mundane and familiar, and put it in a setting that will let it sparkle. We want to come away seeing the "Titus 2 woman" in a new light of importance, and even critical to God's cause.

Let's pray that God will refresh our vision as we discuss this lesson and learn from His Word the importance of being a Titus 2 woman.

At this time, close the Opening Session in prayer and encourage the women to pick up a snack and move quickly to their discussion groups.

Sample prayer: Father, You have created us male and female in Your image, with different and complementary roles. We see the beauty of headship and submission in the Trinity where all three persons are equally God. Help us to love Your design for us as women, and to come together, older and younger, to support and guide

one another. We love Your Word. Bless our discussion and teaching times. In the matchless name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Move to Discussion Groups (50 minutes)

Teaching Session (50 minutes)

I. Introduction

Have the women turn in their Bibles to Paul's letter to Titus. Your aim here is to put Titus 2:3-5 into context, and make some general points about the letter before getting into specifics. Explain that you will address the Who, What, Why and How questions after putting Titus 2:3-5 into context.

We will first put Titus 2:3-5 into context. So please turn in your Bibles to Paul's letter to Titus, chapter 1.

The context will help us, once again, answer the "why" question behind the importance of the "Titus 2 woman." Once we deal with the "why" question we will cover:

- Who is the "Titus 2 woman?"
- What does the "Titus 2 woman" do?
- How do we do what a "Titus 2 woman" is supposed to do?

II. Overview of Paul's Letter to Titus

The letter of the apostle Paul to Titus was written while Paul was in the midst of his fourth missionary journey.

Paul and Titus had ministered together on the island of Crete. When Paul left the island, he left Titus behind to continue the work. Paul is writing to encourage Titus to now bring his ministry on the island to a close.

A. Four Areas Addressed in the Letter

There are four areas Paul wants Titus to address before leaving this ministry.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 2.**)

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

Points of Context (Themes) in Titus:

- Complete the organization of the churches.
- Deal with false teachers, who were in the church.
- Emphasize the importance of sound doctrine.
- Give instruction to churches on proper conduct.

B. Two Important Specific Issues: Connecting the Dots



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 3.**)

Throughout the context of his letter, Paul emphasizes two important issues and makes a connection between them:

- sound doctrine.
- proper conduct.

We must connect the dots between sound doctrine and proper conduct.

Our postmodern culture tells us that what we believe does not affect our behavior.

That is NOT a biblical view.

Keep in mind that biblical women think biblically, not culturally!

To understand this issue of “dot connecting,” let’s first briefly examine the negative side of this coin.

1. Connecting the Dots Between False Doctrine and Behavior

Titus 1:9-11 and 16 are the example here.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 4.**)

Titus 1:9-11, 16—“He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.”

What we discern from these verses is that false doctrine contradicts sound doctrine. Therefore, we can surmise that false doctrine is unsound.

Let's look at some specifics:

- Verse 9—Doctrine that contradicts sound doctrine must be unsound or false.
- Verse 10—We can recognize those who hold to false doctrine by certain behaviors. Unsound doctrine results in insubordinate behavior like empty talk, deception, teaching for gain (greed), hypocrisy.
- Verse 16—The chilling truth about false prophets—remember those who make plausible arguments that are really empty deceits? They profess to know God, but the truth is their conduct gives them away.

Once again, we have an example of how God's Word gives us discernment so that we will not become the weak-willed women of 2 Timothy 3 who, we're told, are captured by those who have the appearance of godliness, but deny its power.

2 Timothy 3: 1-5—But understand this that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

To complete this thought on false prophets we can go Jesus' words in Matthew 7:15-20.

Matthew 7:15-20—Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Jesus is connecting the dots for us by using the example of a tree and its fruit.

- A healthy tree bears good fruit.
- A diseased tree bears bad fruit.
- Just as healthy sound doctrine bears good conduct and unhealthy diseased doctrine bears bad conduct.

A biblical woman is not helpless in the face of false teachers. We can and must stand firm against such teachers.

To stand against these false teachers that Jesus is talking about and Paul is writing about to Titus, we must first recognize them. We do that by looking at their lives. What they believe shows up.

And, of course, we must base our own lives on sound doctrine which will result in godly conduct which will in turn, honor God.

Explain that although it's critical to be able to recognize false teachers and the false doctrine they teach, it is even more important to recognize and understand sound doctrine. Therefore, we will spend the balance of our time focusing on sound doctrine.

Let's now move on to the positive.

2. Connecting the Dots between Sound Doctrine and Proper Conduct

Paul's letter to Titus is full of sound teaching.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 5.**)



Direct the women to the fill-in-the-blank section in the Student Guide.

Here is a quick overview of **sound doctrine throughout the letter to Titus:**

- 2:11—Salvation by God’s Grace
- 2:13—Second coming of Christ
- 2:14—Substitutionary Atonement
- 3:5—Regeneration by the Holy Spirit
- 3:7—Salvation by Grace

These are examples of sound doctrine, and Paul tells Titus in Titus 2:1 to teach what ACCORDS with sound doctrine.

In other words, teach the people to have conduct that is in harmony with the sound teaching of the Gospel.

He is making the point that our inner belief and our outer conduct are connected.

Therefore, as we will see one way (not the only way, but an important way) to combat false teachers is to live lives that reflect sound doctrine.

Summary Statement of Overview

This is the context into which the teaching on the “Titus 2 woman” is placed—**good conduct flows out of sound doctrine.**

III. Why is the Titus 2 woman important?

Now we will deal with the “Why” question. Why is biblical womanhood important?

There are four answers to this question.

1. How we live reflects what we believe. We’ve just covered this point. We can take this truth and say: when we live God-honoring lives, we not only illustrate biblical truth, but we are taking a stand against false teachers and false doctrine.
2. We are called to live the life of a Titus 2 woman “in this present age.”
3. The life of a Titus 2 woman upholds God’s Word.
4. It’s good for you!

We will now cover the last three points.

A. We are called to live the life of a Titus 2 woman “in this present age.”

This point is key to understanding Paul’s letter to Titus.

The key is found in Titus 2:11-13.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 6.**)

Titus 2: 11-13—“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

The PowerPoint® slide is separated out to give you a mental picture of Paul’s point.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

1. Living between the Two “Comings”

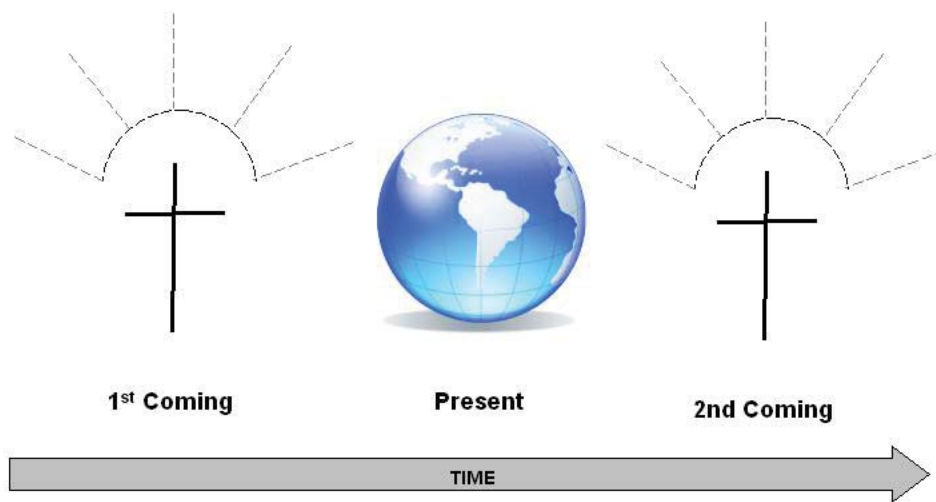
We live between the two “comings” of Christ.

- First Coming—Coming of Grace
- Second Coming—Coming of Glory

The grace of God appeared when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us—the incarnation. He came to die in order to save us. This has already happened.

The glory of God will appear when Christ returns. This has not happened yet.

We live in between these two comings. We live in this “present age.”



2. How do we live in this present age?

What are we to be doing as we live between the grace that has appeared and the glory that will appear?

We are to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions.

And we are to live godly, self-controlled, and upright lives while we're waiting for His return.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 7.**)



Again, we see the importance of connecting the dots.

While we wait in this present age, our conduct should reflect our belief, our hope, our joy, and our certainty in the character of God and the truth of His Word.

3. Other Examples of How We Live

The connection between belief and behavior is not only found in Paul's letter to Titus, but is a continuing theme throughout the Bible.

Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 1:27-28; and Colossians 1:10 all reinforce the importance of walking in a manner worthy of our calling. In other words, live like who you are.

Ephesians 4:1—“...walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.”

Philippians 1:27-28—“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.”

Colossians 1:10—“so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

Let's continue to answer the “why” question.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 8**)



B. The Life of a Titus 2 Woman Upholds God's Word

We find two parts to this answer of the “why” question in Titus 2 in verses 5 and 10.

Titus 2:5, 10—“to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled...not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

So that the Word of God may not be reviled. (Titus 2:5)

So that the doctrine of God our Savior will be adorned. (Titus 2:10)

Point out that “may not be reviled” means to confirm God’s Word, to highly regard it; and to “adorn” means to make God’s Word attractive to others. Now move into an explanation of “who” the Titus 2 woman is.

Again, we see that our lives have significance. If we live our lives according to biblical principles, and do this joyfully, what a good recommendation of the Bible that is to others! This is an important and significant “why” behind the actions of a biblical woman. It’s not just about us, but...

C. It's good for you!

And the fourth answer to the “why” question is: It’s good for you!

Titus 3:8—“The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.”

It is good for you! (Titus 3:8)

Summary Statement

Hopefully, we have answered the “why” question to your satisfaction.

Why is the Titus 2 woman important?

- How we live reflects what we believe.
- We are called to live a godly life in “this present age.”
- The life of a Titus 2 woman upholds God’s Word.
- It’s good for us!

If you still have some questions about the reasoning behind the Titus 2 admonitions, please let's talk further after class.

IV. Who is the Titus 2 woman?

Now we will attempt to answer the "who" question.

Who is the "Titus 2 Woman"?

You will notice, just as in 1 Peter 3, the instruction in chapter two of Titus is given to both men and women.

However, because we are women, our focus will be on the portion directed specifically to women.

A. Characteristic of the Titus 2 Woman

The Bible gives a clear description of what kind of woman to look for when looking for a mentor, and what kind of women we are to aim to be.

The description is the same in both cases. It is the description of the older woman.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 9.**)



1. Reverent

The older woman is to have

- Reverent behavior.

This is a woman who lives her life worthy of the Gospel. Her behavior is suitable and respectable. She lives according to the pattern of the holy women of the past. She has a reputation of a godly woman.

But interestingly, Paul doesn't stop here.

2. Not a Slanderer or Gossip

You may know this woman by her reputation, but he wants you to get up close and personal.

What is she like when you are with her in a small group, or one on one? If she is a woman who spends a good bit of time talking about other people, if she knows everyone's business, stay clear.

The older woman of Titus 2 is...

- Not a slanderer or gossip.

To know this, you have to spend some time with this woman, and then be discerning. Remember, out of the heart the mouth speaks. What does this woman's conversation tell you about her heart?

Then Paul goes even one step further.

3. Not Addicted to Much Wine

What's the point here? Why does he say that the older woman is...

- Not addicted to much wine?

There are good reasons for including this particular descriptive of a Titus 2 woman.

First, the mentoring relationship is one in which we actually get to know each other. The masks are off. We get into each other's lives.

Second, addiction says something about our lives—what we value. We can be addicted to wine, but we can also be addicted to pills, or TV, or romance novels, or the internet. You name it. Addiction is more common than we might want to admit. We must guard against this ourselves, and we must not hang around with women who have this problem. This doesn't mean, of course, that we can't help someone with an addiction or mentor that person. This, however, is a warning to us that a woman who has an addiction should not be sought after as a mentor.

B. The Titus 2 Woman is Every Woman

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 10.**)



Direct the women to the statements to complete in this section, and to the spaces for note taking in the Student Guide.

The bottom line is—the Titus 2 woman is every woman.

Although it says there are older women and younger women, each of us falls into both categories at the same time.

We will always find someone older than us or ahead of us in some experience from whom we can learn.

We will always find someone younger in age or experience to train or mentor.

1. Older Women

Now a word to older women. Our culture is not kind to older women.

My Personal Example

Mother-in-law jokes used to be funny until I became one. Covering up gray hair and wrinkles seemed a good idea until I could no longer keep up. As an older woman, we can get all tied up in knots in Titus 2. We are often so afraid of being a “know it all,” or of knowing nothing at all, that we become afraid to share our lives with younger women. But the Bible isn’t calling us to be perfect. We are called to share our life experiences. Not perfection. Not having all the answers. But being willing to invest in a younger woman.

As older women, we must set aside our pride and insecurity. We must be honest about our struggles, and humble in sharing our victories. And always, always, point the younger woman to God, who *is* perfect, and has all the answers. This is God’s model in Mary and Elizabeth. And it is His mandate to us through Titus 2. We dare not run from it.

Let Psalm 71:17-18 be an encouragement to you as it is to me: ***So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation.***

(See also Proverbs 16:31)

2. Younger Women

A quick word to younger women:

Be teachable!

Psalm 90:12—So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

Psalm 27:11—Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

3. Single Women

And a word to single women:

The following section is a repeat of the message to single women that, hopefully, you gave to the class in Lesson 4. Remind your class of these points. Don’t spend a lot of time on this. But do mention this. We want to be sure that it’s understood that all women all called to be biblical women.

The mandate in Titus 2 is not to married women, but to younger and older women. That includes all of us.

The training regarding husbands and children may not apply to you directly, but there are some important blessings that come your way when you have clarity on the biblical teaching on marriage.

One, because the marriage relationship is designed by God to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the Church, it is a blessing to recognize this illustration when we see it.

Two, you can mentor your married friends in an objective way when you know the Word of God and have clarity on the Bible's teaching regarding marriage.

Three, the biblical principles on marriage, as we'll see in the balance of our study, will be extrapolated to other situations and give appropriate guidelines for the workplace and social settings.

Four, knowing these principles will be a huge help to you if and when you consider marriage.

Finally, of course, the rest of the passage will apply to you directly. So if you're single, Titus 2 is for you!

Summary Statement

All Christian women are called to be godly, biblical women!

This next and final section of teaching is focused on answering both the "what" and the "how" questions. Included here in your notes are, as usual, specific teaching points. These points are divided according to each Titus 2 topic. The teaching on this lesson is greatly enhanced by personal examples. This is a good time for you to share appropriate examples from your life and experiences that will help the women relate these principles to their own lives. I have not included my own personal examples because I believe this is a time when you can rely on the Holy Spirit to bring to mind those specific things that you can share.

When presenting personal illustrations, a few cautions should be considered. Don't go into too much detail and go on too long with your experience. Don't say anything that would betray a confidence or embarrass someone in your family. Be certain that your illustration honors God and points others to Him. We all have experiences we can share with others that will help them to apply scriptural principles to their own lives. Ask God to bring to your mind those things that He would like for you to share.

We have now tried to answer the "why" question, and we have defined "who" is a Titus 2 woman. Now we turn to the "what" question.

V. What is a Titus 2 woman to Do?

What are we to do as “Titus 2 Women”?

A. Teach and Train

As biblical women, we are called to both teach and train.

- Teach sound doctrine.
- Train how to live out this doctrine in our everyday lives.

Let’s look at Titus 2: 1-4 to understand the subtle difference between teaching and training.

Titus 2: 1-4—But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,

In verse 1, there is a general instruction to teach sound doctrine. And then the instructions are divided out to be specific for the men and for the women.

The men are to teach sound doctrine. Then we see specifics of behavior that is to flow from this teaching.

The women also are told to teach what is good and then to train in the area of conduct.

This is really an important distinction.

Women are to teach women sound doctrine, which is good.

However, when it comes to our conduct—how we live out that sound doctrine—we are to train the younger women.

There seems to be a slightly different approach. Let’s briefly examine what it means to teach, and then we’ll focus the rest of our time on training.

1. Teach

To teach is to impart knowledge to someone through instruction or example.

Pastor John Piper speaks of the importance of teaching solid doctrine or theology.

Wimpy Theology Makes Wimpy Women

Wimpy theology makes wimpy women. That's my assumption that I bring to this evening. Wimpy theology simply does not give a woman a God that is big enough, strong enough, wise enough, and good enough to handle the realities of life in a way that magnifies the infinite worth of Jesus Christ. Wimpy theology is plagued by woman-centeredness and man-centeredness. Wimpy theology doesn't have the granite foundation of God's sovereignty or the solid steel structure of a great God-centered purpose for all things.

—John Piper, “The Ultimate Meaning of True Womanhood”²

To teach, to learn, to use our minds to understand good doctrine is of utmost importance. And alongside the teaching and learning of granite solid theology comes training.

2. Train



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 11.**)

Direct the women to complete this statement in the Student's Guide.

To train can be defined as...

to cause to be of sound mind; to recall to one's senses; cultivating of sound judgment and prudence.

To train is to teach somebody skills, especially through practical experience.

Training goes beyond the acquiring of knowledge. This is application! It's helping someone learn how to think, how to be reasonable, and how to have good judgment.

Summary Statement

We want to encourage one another to think clearly and sensibly as we apply the Bible to our everyday lives.

So there is a place for both teaching and training within our churches.

We must be taught sound doctrine.

And we need to be trained through practical experience how to live according to that doctrine. Beautiful!

VI. Perspective on Titus 2:3-5

Another “what?” question

² John Piper, “The Ultimate Meaning of True Womanhood,” True Woman Conference, October 9, 2008, Chicago, Illinois.

What are we to train the younger women to do? That question is very clearly answered in Titus 2:3-5.

Titus 2: 3-5—Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

To give us some perspective on this passage, let's read together the quote in your Student Guide.

Robert Lewis & William D. Hendricks, in their book *Rocking the Roles: Building a Win-Win Marriage*, write:

I believe this list of responsibilities in Titus 2:4-5 represents the most succinct summary of the woman's core role in all of Scripture. This defines the term helper...in clear and specific terms...

...A core role is not everything a woman does in marriage. She is not confined only to what Paul describes here. But she dare not excuse herself from these responsibilities or neglect them for other ambitions. Like the planets around the sun, everything in marriage should revolve around these crucial core-role responsibilities and concerns. A wife's core role should prioritize her commitments and her use of energy and time. It should keep her from missing out on what God has called her to do in her life and in her marriage.

It also should give stability to her marriage, because it provides a grid through which she can filter, measure, and evaluate all the opportunities that come her way. Unfortunately, the mistake many women are making today is in treating these core-role responsibilities as just options in a myriad of options. But a core role is not an opinion. It's a biblical absolute.³

At this point, tell the women that you will go through the specifics of Titus 2:4-5 and share with them some thoughts as if you were their mentor. Again, use a combination of the teaching tools along with personal examples for each subject. Don't spend too long on each section, as time is always a factor.

With this perspective, let's now get more specific as we attempt to answer this question:

3. Lewis, Robert and William D. Hendricks. *Rocking the Roles: Building a Win-Win Marriage*. (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 1999), as quoted by Alexander Strauch in *Men and Women, Equal Yet Different: A Brief Study of the Biblical Passages on Gender*. (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Lewis & Roth Publishers, 1999), 66.

VII. Train the Younger Women to...

What are we to train?

A. Love Their Husband and Children

They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children.

Does a woman need to be *trained* to love her husband and children?

According to the Bible, yes.

Although most of us would agree that we love our families, apparently there is a need to be taught *how* to love them. We will group our husband and children together first, and then make some comments specifically to each one.

Here are three guideline to help you love your husband and children.

1. Love as Jesus loves you.

John 15:12 has something to teach us about this. Jesus says...

John 15:12—“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

Here are some questions to think about as you consider how Jesus has loved you.

- Has Christ been patient with you?
- Has He sacrificed for you?
- Does Christ know you and love you anyway?
- Is Christ prejudiced against you?
- Can you do anything to separate yourself from His love?

If you answered “yes” to the first three questions, and “no” to the last two, then you have an idea of how to love your husband and children.

When you are patient while at the same time you feel like flying off the handle, when you put your needs aside for your husband’s, when you know their obvious weaknesses, but love them anyway, you are loving your family with Christ-like love.

When you demonstrate love without playing favorites, or love no matter what your husband or children have done, you are loving them as Christ loves you.

2. Use 1 Corinthians 13 as your guide.

The qualities of love as described in this passage can serve as a guideline for you.

- Love is patient, kind, doesn't envy, or boast.
- Love is not arrogant or rude, doesn't insist on its own way, is not irritable or resentful, doesn't rejoice at wrongdoing.
- Love rejoices with the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

There is much to ponder here!

3. Keep current and remember that life is in stages.

This is where the training part really comes in.

Keep reading books and relating to other women who can help you through each new stage and or situation. The following quote from Pastor John Piper helps here. You'll find the quote in your Student's Guide. Let's read it together.

...step back and (with your husband, if you are married) plan the various forms of your life's ministry in chapters. Chapters are divided by various things—age, strength, singleness, marriage, employment, children at home, children in college, grandchildren, retirement, etc. No chapter has all the joys. Finite life is a series of tradeoffs. Finding God's will, and living for the glory of Christ to the full in every chapter is what makes it a success, not whether it reads like somebody else's chapter or whether it has in it what only another chapter will bring.

—John Piper, *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible*⁴

Specific Applications

Now let's briefly look at some specifics on how to love our husbands and children.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.



(DISPLAY SLIDE 12.)

4. Piper, John. *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2009), 54-55.

Love Your Husband

- Make him first—before the kids.
- Make him your best friend—before all others.
- Learn what says “love” to him—respect him!
- Have fun!

Love your Children

- Don’t neglect discipline.
- Enjoy your children.
- Know your children well.
- Respect your children.

Again, remember that I have given you some examples here but have purposely kept them brief. I suggest that you use this teaching material to spur your own thinking and share your personal examples.

B. Be Self-Controlled

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 13.**)



The dictionary defines self-control as...

control of one’s emotions, desires, or actions by one’s own will.

The Bible describes self-control as a fruit of the Spirit.

This is an important distinction to make if we are to be biblical women.

A Fruit of the Spirit

Draw the women’s attention to the suggestion that they read through John 15 to discover how they can bear real fruit in their lives.

Rather than work harder and harder at being self-controlled, we need to go to John 5 and see just exactly how we develop this fruit (or any fruit) of the Spirit.

John 15:1-5—“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Our focus must be on abiding in Christ and letting His word richly dwell in us.

Self-control covers so many areas: food, sleeping, thoughts, feelings, emotions, speech finances, time to name but a few.

Galatians 5:22-23—But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

C. Be Pure

Purity

God’s Word gives the best advice on how to develop purity in our lives.

Colossians 3:1-6—If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

If purity is an area of concern for you, please talk to someone in whom you have great confidence. If you *hear* about a problem in this area from someone, keep this person’s confidence and point them to the truth of the Scripture.

Just a reminder as we go along to augment the comments here with your own brief examples.

D. Be Busy at Home

Working at Home

See Resources for Lesson 5—Notes on Working at Home.

Of all the topics in Titus 2, this one is the most counter-cultural and therefore confusing. This is an area where, sadly, Christian women have been seduced (or at the very least, confused) by feminist doctrine and by the church.

On one hand, we're told to be of value we *must* work outside the home.

On the other hand, we're told to be a good Titus 2 woman we must *not* work outside the home.

Let's see if we can get some balance on this issue.

This Dorothy Patterson quote gives an interesting perspective that may be of help as we sort through this.

*Much of the world would agree that being a housekeeper is acceptable as long as you are not caring for your own home; treating men with attentive devotion would also be right as long as the man is the boss in the office and not your husband; caring for children would even be deemed heroic service for which presidential awards could be given as long as the children are someone else's and not your own.*⁵

—Dorothy Patterson, *quoted in Feminine Appeal by Carolyn Mahaney, Feminine Appeal*

It is of utmost importance to know that the Bible never says that wives and mothers aren't allowed to work outside the home.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 14.**)

Direct the women to complete the following statement in the Student Guide.

But the Scriptures do consistently confirm that:

A woman's primary responsibility is the home.

Whether married or single...

We are managers of our households.

There is so much to say here. Many books are written on this subject, and I suggest that you read some of them. (Check out the Recommended Reading List in Appendix 1.)

Maybe the bottom line is that women are nurturing by nature, creators of beauty, and detail oriented when it comes to schedules, meal planning, and basically running the home.

We are homemakers.

5. Mahaney, Carolyn. *Feminine Appeal: Seven Virtues of a Godly Wife and Mother*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 90.

We manage the home whether we have an outside job or not.

That's reality. This is our priority.

Two Cautions⁶

Now there are two cautions here:

As we manage our homes and families, we are to carry out our husband's leadership and support him in his role.

Direct the women to complete the following two statements in the Student Guide.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 15.**)

1. This is not a license to usurp our husband's authority.

There are those who will tell us that because, as a woman our primary responsibility lies within the home and family, that we are the “despots” of the home. We rule the home. This is an aberration of the truth. Just as one verse never cancels out another verse of Scripture (remember our discussion of Ephesians 5:21?), one biblical truth doesn't contradict another. A wife is to be submissive to her husband, and it's within this context that she fulfills her responsibilities and role within the family and the home.

We have to use common sense here. Remember, we need to get closer to the cross and not into a usurper role—even in the area of our primary responsibility. A husband and wife are on the same team, aiming toward the same goals, working together within the constructs of biblical truth.

At the same time, we will do much better if we don't expect our husbands to contribute equally to the task.

2. This precludes the current popular co-responsibility approach.

The fact is, co-responsibility doesn't work. Someone is always frustrated with this arrangement, and it's usually you.

Pastor John Piper's quote can help us here.

That you not assume that secular employment is a greater challenge or a better use of your life than the countless opportunities of service and witness in the home, the neighborhood, the community, the church, and the world; that you not only pose the question: career or full-time homemaker?, but that you ask just as seriously: full-time career or freedom for ministry? That you ask: Which would be greater for the Kingdom—to work for someone who tells you what to do to

6. Mahaney, Carolyn. *Feminine Appeal: Seven Virtues of a Godly Wife and Mother*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 95.

make his or her business prosper, or to be God's free agent dreaming your own dream about how your time and your home and your creativity could make God's business prosper? And that in all this you make your choices not on the basis of secular trends or upward lifestyle expectations, but on the basis of what will strengthen the faith of the family and advance the cause of Christ.

—John Piper, *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible*⁷

In your preparation before you move onto the next section, please turn to the Resource section for Lesson 5 and read the notes regarding working at home. In particular, read “Thoughts on Titus 2:5: ‘Working at home.’” This paper was designed to help a woman think through whether or not she should take a paid job outside of her home. A series of questions she can ask herself and others (particularly her husband if she is married), along with bullet points to consider. You will also find a PowerPoint® slide on the CD that came with this Teacher Guide, which you can share with your class. You may want to simply present the slide, and then make the paper available to whoever would like it. Please use this material however the Lord leads you. Women need specific help to think through this issue.

E. Be Kind

Be Kind

Point out that there is space in the Student' Guide for notes on being kind.

Kindness begins at home!

Are you kind to those closest to you?

Are you kind to your husband?

Often anger, bitterness, and a judging spirit can hinder our kindness.

Do you cultivate kindness in your family?

Do you cultivate kindness, a fruit of the Spirit, in your own heart?

Summary Statement

We have just come full circle. We are, once again, back to the heart!

Each one of the characteristic of the Titus 2 woman must flow from a heart changed by God, or we will only be going through the motions. We want to bear real fruit for God. We do not want to be a display of artificial fruit, as good as we can make that look.

7. Piper, John. *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2009), 54-55.

Just think what a difference a woman whose heart willingly and joyfully submits to God's Word can make!

VIII. Conclusion

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 16.**)



Point out that in each one of these areas, if we apply the “trajectory” image we see that simple arguments that seem harmful, if taken to their logical conclusions can be very damaging. For example, if men are not to be trusted, we may conclude that we don’t need men, we can raise children without a man, we can get pregnant without a relationship with a man, or we could become involved in lesbian marriage. If children are a bother, when that thought is taken to its logical conclusion, it can lead to abortion. If purity is old-fashioned, that idea can lead to involvement in pornography. The trajectory results of worldly thinking is provided below in parentheses.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

We live in a culture that is screaming at us:

- My husband is to serve me.
- He’s to meet my every need, or he can’t be trusted. (Or, farther out on the trajectory of feminist thinking: I don’t need a husband. Men are unnecessary.)
- Children are a bother.
- They interrupt my career. They can be raised by others. I don’t want them. (Abortion)
- I can read what I want, eat what I want, sleep as much or as little as I want, drink like a man.
- I’m in control, even though I’m out of control. (Sexual exploitation, drugs, etc.)
- Purity is old-fashioned. (Pornography)
- Taking care of my home is menial work.
- Staying at home means I’m lazy. My husband better do his share, and mine too, for that matter. (Bossy women and wimpy men)

- Be kind to those you don't know, but watch out at home! (Divorce)
- Submission is totally out of touch. (Rebellion against God)

The Bible says,

Older women, likewise, are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine.

They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women

- ***to love their husbands and children,***
- ***to be self-controlled,***
- ***pure,***
- ***working at home,***
- ***kind,***
- ***and submissive to their own husbands, so that the word of God may not be reviled.***

Summary Statement

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 17.**)



Who is the Titus 2 woman? Every woman—young & old /married & single

What is a Titus 2 woman to do? Teach what is good and train godly conduct

Why is the Titus 2 woman to do this?

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 18.**)

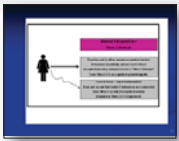


Because He is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him!

This ending statement is taken from a central theme based on Pastor John Piper’s writings and preaching, and is often associated with Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I’ve included it as the concluding statement of this lesson, because I believe it encapsulates the whole point of biblical womanhood. The aim is to glorify God. What glorifies Him more than for the world to see that we are satisfied in Him! This goes back to the heart of a biblical woman. We can go through all the motions, but if we are not satisfied in God, it will show through. Think through this statement carefully and prayerfully so you can personally embrace this truth. If you want to read and study further on this topic, go to www.desiringgod.org and reference this statement.

As usual, allow time for the women to reflect on “Norma” and to fill out their Personal Application box. Remember to keep this time quiet, watch the clock, and at the proper ending time for the class, pray and dismiss the women.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 19.**)



The next lesson, Lesson 6, focuses on the biblical woman in the church. For some reason, the attendance for Lesson 6 is traditionally low. It may be that because women are so eager to understand submission in marriage, once that lesson is completed and you’ve covered the “Titus 2 woman” they let down in their homework and attendance. It’s vitally important that women complete this study in order to have a full understanding of biblical womanhood. Make a forceful plea for the women to keep up with their personal study and to come to class! Also, be sure to encourage your small group leaders to contact the women in their group before the next lesson.

Personal Application (10 minutes)

Lesson 5

Resources

Outline – Lesson 5

Biblical Womanhood in the Home (II)

Fellowship (10 minutes)

Opening Session (30 minutes)

—Welcome (10 minutes)

—Introductory Remarks (20 minutes)

I. Introduction: A Story

A. The Story

B. Lessons from the Story

II. The Titus 2 Woman

A. Why study Titus 2?

B. A Fresh Look at the Titus 2 Woman

Move to Discussion Groups (50 minutes)

Teaching Session (50 minutes)

I. Introduction

II. Overview of Paul’s Letter to Titus

A. Four Areas Addressed in the Letter

B. Two Important Specific Issues: Connecting the Dots

1. Connecting the Dots between False Doctrine and Behavior

2. Connecting the Dots between Sound Doctrine and Proper Conduct

III. Why is the Titus 2 Woman important?

A. We are called to live the life of a Titus 2 woman “in this present age.”

1. Living between the Two “Comings”
2. How do we live in this present age?
3. Other Examples of How We Live

B. The life of a Titus 2 woman upholds God’s word.

C. It’s good for you!

IV. Who is the Titus 2 Woman?

A. Characteristics of the Titus 2 Woman

1. Reverent
2. Not a Slanderer of Gossip
3. Not Addicted to Much Wine

B. The Titus 2 woman is every woman.

1. Older Women
2. Younger Women
3. Single Women

V. What is a Titus Woman to do?

A. Teach and Train

1. Teach
2. Train

VI. Perspective on Titus 2:3-5

VII. Train the Younger Women to...

A. Love their Husband and Children

1. Love as Jesus Loves You

2. Use 1 Corinthians 13 as Your Guide**3. Keep current and remember that life is in stages.****B. Be Self-Controlled****C. Be Pure****D. Be Busy at Home**

1. This is not a license to usurp our husband's authority.

2. This precludes the current popular co-responsibility approach.

E. Be Kind**VIII. Conclusion**

Personal Reflection (10 minutes)

Thoughts on Titus 2:5—“Working at Home”

One of the major decisions facing women today (especially married Christian women) is how to answer the question: Should I work outside of my home?

If you are trying to make this decision, here are some questions and thoughts to help you think through this important issue.

Why am I considering work outside the home?

- I am single and need to provide for myself.
- I am preparing for marriage and want to save for future expenses.
- My husband is completing his education/training, and I need to provide an income during this time.
- I’m bored at home.
- I want to live in a big home, take nice vacations, and have luxuries that we can’t have on my husband’s salary alone.
- We can’t make ends meet.

What season of life am I experiencing right now?

- I am single.
- I am newly married.
- I have a new baby.
- I have young children.
- My children are in school.
- My nest is empty.
- My husband is retired.
- I’m widowed or divorced.

How can I best fulfill my role as “helper” to my husband?

- We’re newly married, and I can work so we can save for the future.
- The children are young, and I need to keep the home functioning smoothly so my husband is free to work without hassle.
- The children are in the “busy years” of grade school and high school, and I can help my husband by being steady at home when all else is whirling around us.
- I can step into a part-time job to get us over the hump of major expenses.
- It’s important to my husband for him to be the provider for our family.
- Rather than working outside the home, I could be intentional about saving money by wise shopping, preparing meals at home, etc.

How can I best love my husband and children?

- I put my husband first.
- No one else can love my husband like I can.
- No one else can love my children like I can.
- My husband and my children are most secure and content when they have my full attention.

Would working outside my home encourage or discourage my self-control?

- Eating patterns would get out of balance because of time pressures.
- I would be more organized with my time.
- I would be less organized with my time.
- I would be less prudent in how I would handle use of money.

Would working outside my home enhance or diminish my purity?

- I would probably have less time on my hands if I had a job, so I wouldn't be as tempted to watch TV or look at the internet.
- I could be more tempted to inappropriately use the internet outside of my home.
- A job outside my home could put me in compromising situations with men other than my husband.
- I would be more tempted to dress immodestly if I worked outside my home.

What about kindness?

- If I worked outside the home, it's possible I could spend all of my "kindness quotient" at work and have nothing left when I got home.
- I could be tempted to show kindness to other men ahead of my husband.

What is my husband's desire regarding my having a job outside of the home?

- It is his heart's desire that I work.
- He does not want me to work outside of the home.
- He says it's ok for me to work, simply because he's tired of the hassle of my complaining.
- I can find some way to volunteer/minister that would fulfill my desire to use my gifts without taking on a paid job.

What is the best reflection of God's glory and His Word in my life?

Permission is granted to copy this article for women participating in this study.

Notes on “Working at Home”

Some Christian women may have no choice but to work because they have no provider in their family and their church is unwilling to help them. But the great majority of women who work outside the home do so for the sake of some imagined need for personal fulfillment or extra income to increase their standard of living, rather than to provide for family necessities. Many young mothers leave their three- or four-month-old babies with babysitters in order to return to work so they can earn more money or sometimes just to get away from the responsibilities of the home. Some Christian churches, schools, and other institutions foster that practice by providing child care centers and nursery schools for mothers who work.

If the standard of living a family has cannot be maintained without the wife’s working outside the home, that family should consider carefully whether their standard is God’s will for them, and surely should not confuse the economic benefits of their presumption with blessing from God.

Just as with drinking of alcoholic beverages, the Bible does not specifically forbid a wife to work outside the home. But the biblical priorities are so clear that they can only be obeyed or rejected openly, and each woman must choose how she will honor those priorities.

—John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary EPHESIANS*. (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1986), 287.

Notes from **The Excellent Wife** by **Martha Peace**

What exactly is a “worker at home?” In the Greek, “worker at home: is one word, oikourgos which comes from two root words. Oikos, which means “a dwelling, a home, or a household” and ergon which means “to work or be employed.” So, a “worker at home” is someone who guards the dwelling or is a keeper of the household. Common sense would dictate that the younger women, for the most part, would have to be at home to accomplish this objective well.” (pg 72)

“If a wife is working or is thinking of returning to work, she should examine her motives. What is it she really wants? What is her heart set on? Is it to avoid becoming a “non-person?” Is it more material things? Is it wanting to be out from under the demands of child care? Is it to relieve her husband from his responsibility to work? None of these motives are for the glory of God. They are self-serving and sinful. Godly motives would be “learning to be content” (Philippians 4:11), “gratitude to the Lord for what she does have” (I Thessalonians 5:18), and “whatever you do in thought, word, and deed, do all for the glory of God” (I Cor-

inthians 10:31). Staying at home and organizing a clean, well run household is a major biblical emphasis in the God-given ministry of the wife.” (pg 73)

*“What if a husband instructs a wife to work? Is she to be submissive? Yes, unless the wife can show him that she would be sinning by working. It would be sinful for her to financially support her husband so that he could be irresponsible or lazy. Instead, she should take advantage of the biblical resources God has given to protect her. It would be wise (although not necessarily a sin) for the wife not to work and place the children in child care if the children are susceptible to repeated illnesses from exposure to the other children in the day care center. Certainly, it is a sin if through surrogate childcare, the children are not being brought up in the **“discipline and instruction of the Lord”** (Ephesians 6:4).” (pg 74)*

—Peace, Martha. *The Excellent Wife: The Biblical Perspective*. (Bemidji, Minnesota: Focus Publishing, Inc., 1995, 1999).

Notes from Becoming a Titus 2 Woman by Martha Peace

...Being “reverent in her behavior” does not mean she whispers when she talks, hide in the background, or does not look at others when they talk. I used to know a woman who did whisper when she talked and I remember thinking, “she is so sweet and feminine and godly.” That is what I thought before I really got to know her character! It turned out that she is mean as a snake, but she certainly whispers sweetly as the venom is coming out of her mouth.

In contrast, women who are actually reverent in their behavior enjoy life. They laugh and speak loudly enough for others to hear. They do not have a false idea of spirituality. They have fun and love the Lord. They want to make others comfortable. They show love to others by acting properly as they rejoice in every day that the Lord has made. Their dress, attitude, and behavior are pleasing to the Lord. They are a modernized version of the “holy women of old” (1 Peter 3:5).” (pg 35)

The Greek word translated “to be pure” in Titus 2 is hagnos. Hagnos means to be “free from ceremonial defilement; holy; sacred; chaste; pure; free from sin; and innocent.” This word is similar to the word hagios which is often translated “holy.” This righteous purity is not only outward chastity but also inward freedom from impure thoughts.

Often bondage to sinful lust is thought to be a problem for men but not women. That is not true. Women also may be enticed into the world of fantasies, self-gratification, pornography, and immorality. It all begins with their thoughts.” (pg 100)

The Greek word for kind is agathos. It means to be “generous, good, or kind.” We get our beautiful English name Agatha from agathos. A woman’s goodness, generosity, and kindness should be expressed in performing kind and generous deeds as well as speaking in a gentle tone of voice. The Titus 2 Woman is to show agathos by personal example. (pg 120)

—Peace, Martha. *Becoming a Titus 2 Woman: A Study with Martha Peace.* (Bemidji, Minnesota: Focus Publishing, 1997).

Biblical Womanhood in the Church

GOALS FOR LESSON 6:

- Consider outward dress important, but not most important
- Accept male leadership with a tranquil heart
- Focus on what women can do in service to the Lord
- Joyfully trust the Bible's clear direction regarding roles in the Church

Lesson 6 has proved to be challenging on several fronts. This lesson follows the very personal lessons on marriage and the home, and women sometimes don't see the issues of the church as being as critical to their lives as the previous issues. You are nearing the end of the study, and women tend to let down regarding homework and attendance. The spiritual battle is great today regarding roles of women in the church. Due to a combination of each of these challenges, experience has shown that attendance is often low for this sixth session. As you prepare to teach Lesson 6, pray diligently. Ask God to keep the women engaged and faithful to their personal study. Ask Him to tear down the barriers that keep women from attending class. And, above all, ask for His victory over the enemy as you study roles of women in the church. Also, you or your discussion leaders should make an extra effort before the session on Lesson 6 to communicate with the women in your class and encourage them to be faithful to complete the full study.

FELLOWSHIP FOR LESSON 6:

(10 minutes)

Opening Session



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 1.**)

Welcome (5 minutes)

This lesson is somewhat longer than the previous lessons so you'll need to get started right away. Plan to make your introductory remarks brief so you can add about 10 minutes to the small group discussion time.

After making any necessary announcements and welcome, explain to the women that because you want to give extra time for discussion your introductory remarks will be brief.

Introductory Remarks (15 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Feminism: From the Culture into the Church

1. Culture

It may seem that the feminist agenda has overtaken our culture; maybe it has. Certainly feminist philosophy is gaining (if it's not already in) control in the universities and the media.

Books and movies have become bolder in their feminist claims. In fact, in his popular novel and movie *The Da Vinci Code* author, Dan Brown, speaks of the “divine feminine” as the hope of humanity.

As Christian women, we can often feel overwhelmed and discouraged because we sense we are outnumbered and that our culture has gone too far down the road.

2. Church

Even the church, the very churches many of us grew up in, has embraced the feminist position. Denominations are splitting because of the “gender debate.”

In fact, this is where we get the term *evangelical* feminism. Those who take this position try to match us verse by verse to prove their point.

It's a difficult battle, and we must be prepared to fight it by standing firm on the Word of God!

Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt in their book *Women's Ministry in the Local Church*, quote Dr. Peter Jones author of *The Gnostic Empire Strikes Back* and *Cracking Da Vinci's Code*. This quote is found in your Student's Guide. Let's read it together.

Christians, and in particular, Christian women, must understand these issues. This is a unique moment for faithful women to know their Bibles, understand the biblical worldview, and make sure their voices are heard. This is why it is absolutely essential that the church equip women to speak to the burning issues of the culture by being trained in the disciplines of theology and apologetics. This is why it is essential, according to the biblical pattern, that Christian women disciple other women to know and live the truths of biblical womanhood in the church and in the world.

—Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt, *Women's Ministry in the Local Church*¹

1. Duncan, Ligon, and Susan Hunt. *Women's Ministry in the Local Church*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2006), 129-130.

B. Biblical Thinking

Our task in Lesson 6 is to study what is today one of the most sensitive and unpopular passages of Scripture.

Feminist organizations denounce and dismiss the positions based on the passages we are looking at by calling them either “antiquated” and “chauvinistic.”

What is even more alarming is that many churches, denominations, and Christian organizations have adopted the politically correct, social stand of the egalitarian position.

Often they are feminists, and they don’t even know it!

To avoid being deceived by empty words spoken by those who have the appearance of godliness, but are all the while denying the truth (2 Timothy 3:5), we are studying to become informed, biblically thinking, and living women.

Our aim is to be women who walk as children of the light able to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:8-10—...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

Because of the time factor, move very quickly through this review. The main point of what you’re doing here is to develop the bridge between biblical womanhood in the home to biblical womanhood in the church.

II. Review

A. Foundations of Biblical Womanhood



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 2.**)

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

We have laid a foundation that will stand the test of time and cultural shifts.

The purpose of this study, remember, is to encourage you by explaining these foundational truths, and then equipping you to live out and articulate to others the foundations of biblical womanhood.

In our study so far, we have established that...

- The character of God

is trustworthy, and therefore we can trust both Him and His Word.

We have determined that if God is who He says He is in His Word, then we've established...

- The truth of His Word.

Along with the foundational points regarding the character of God and the truth of His Word, we have established that it is critical that the...

- Inclination of our heart is to trust Him and His Word

And lastly, we've laid the foundational points of the...

- Importance of sound doctrine influencing our actions as we fulfill our primary role and responsibilities in the home

All of these points are foundational for biblical teaching regarding roles and responsibilities in the church as well as in marriage.

B. Definitions: egalitarianism & complementarianism

Let's quickly review the definitions of egalitarianism and complementarianism.

Review of Definitions

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 3.**)



The egalitarian position is one that promotes the undifferentiated equality of men and women, meaning that there is no male headship in either the home or in the church. This is the “sameness” argument.

Remember, egalitarianism is the position of the evangelical feminist. This position does not accept the clear biblical teaching on male and female role distinctions.

The complementarian position, on the other hand, supports the...

personal equality of the sexes (of value and worth), but acknowledges role distinctions in both the home and the church.

In fact, there is not just an “acknowledgement,” but a “glad embrace” of these distinctions.

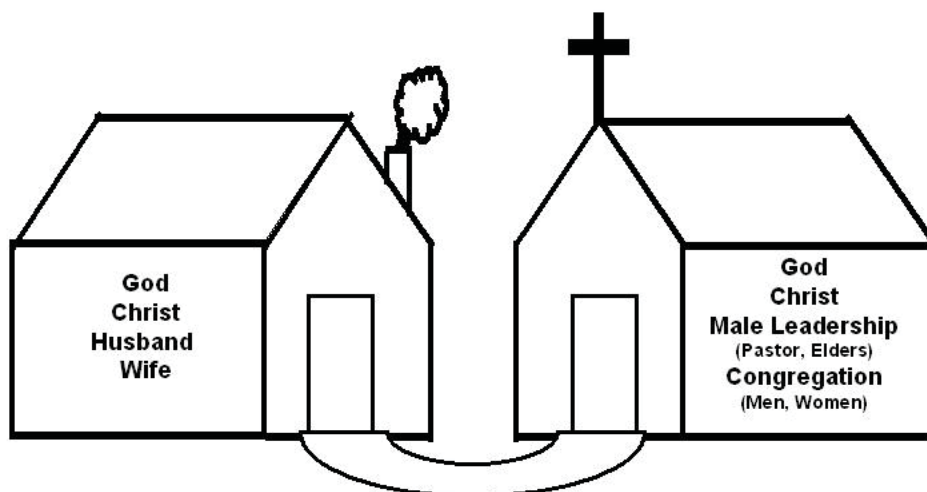
The complementarity is the biblical womanhood position.

Although in agreement with the egalitarian regarding the equality of value of men and women, the complementarian position embraces the biblical teaching on role distinctions of men and women both at home and in the church.

III. Biblical Leadership Pattern: Home and Church

You are now introducing the point that the same principles we studied regarding roles in marriage have their counterpart in the church. Emphasize this bridge between home and church. (See Resources for Lesson 6, “The Relationship between the Family and the Church.”)

Biblical Complementarity



What we will hopefully discover throughout this study is that biblical leadership patterns in the home will be reflected in the local church. There is a pattern: it is from God, and it is very good.

Pastor John Piper wrote the following back in 1990 in his book *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible*.²

The realities of headship and submission in marriage have their counterparts in the church.

And Wayne Grudem writes in *Systematic Theology*

...leadership patterns in the family will reflect leadership patterns in the church,

2. Piper, John. *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2009), 48.

and vice versa...as godly men fulfill their leadership responsibilities in the family, they should also fulfill leadership responsibilities in the church. Conversely, if patterns of female leadership are established in the church, it will inevitably bring pressures toward greater female leadership, and toward abdication of male leadership, within the family.³

At this time, pray for God's blessing on your class time. Encourage the women to move quickly to their groups and get right into their discussion.

Sample prayer from Psalm 1: Father, we know from Your word that blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. Dear Lord, help us love Your law. We want to be like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. Grant that we may walk more and more in Your ways for Your glory. In the name of Your precious Son Jesus we pray, Amen.

Move to Discussion Groups (55 minutes)

Because of the sensitive nature of the subject of women's roles in the church, I made an extra-special effort with Lesson 6 to be sure to be in line with the position of my pastor, John Piper. Pastor John's assistant, as well as the director of women's ministries at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, have looked over and approved this entire study. However, on this particular lesson there was extraordinary input from David Mathis, Pastor John's assistant. I'm so very grateful for David's help and encouragement. And because of that support, you are encouraged to teach this material with confidence.

Teaching Session (55 minutes)

I. Introduction

Direct the students to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

In Lesson 4, we made the case for male leadership in marriage and the submission of a wife to her own husband.

We laid the foundation for the biblical order in the home with a concentration on the role of the husband as the leader and the wife as the helper.

³ Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), 940.

In Lesson 5, our focus moved from roles in marriage to core responsibilities in marriage. We have examined the responsibilities of the "helper" and made the case for godly living in the home based on sound doctrine.

Now we want to take...

both patterns of biblical roles and responsibilities in the home and apply them to the church.

Before we get into specifics we will take an overview of Paul's first letter to Timothy.

A. Overview of Paul's First Letter to Timothy

We see in 1 Timothy a similar pattern as in Paul's letter to Titus.

Paul left Titus on Crete and wrote to him to establish the ministry there.

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus and is writing to him about issues in the church there.

In each case, the topics addressed are similar.

Let's look at the main topics in Paul's letter to Timothy.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 4.**)

- The organization of the church
- Combating false teachers and false doctrine
- Standing on sound doctrine
- Living life in accordance with that sound doctrine

The overall theme of 1 Timothy is the same that we saw in Titus: biblical truth (sound doctrine) will always lead to godly behavior. Just like a fruit tree bears fruit, it's a natural flow of events.

This is in direct contrast to false teaching and the resulting destructive behavior.

Although Paul's real concern is combating false teaching, he focuses on the positive outcomes of sound teaching. And we will follow his lead.

Notice in 1 Timothy 2:1, Paul gives a plea for prayer. He asks for prayer that the people will lead dignified, peaceful, quiet, godly lives that have a sense of order. (Not chaos or random.)

He moves into a statement of the gospel (sound doctrine), and then to instruction on prayer and worship in the church.

The very qualities he asks the people to pray for are the very qualities that he desires to see in the local church.

Two last points before we examine our focus passage.

B. Bridge between Home and Church

In 1 Timothy 3:4, Paul makes the bridge between the home and the church.

Speaking of overseers in the church he says, ***He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?*** He continues this thought of home and church throughout this chapter.

C. Reason for the Letter

Paul states the reason for his letter in 1 Timothy 3:14-15. He writes, ***...I am writing these things to you so that, ...you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth.***

Now we will turn to our focal passage for this lesson.

D. 1 Timothy 2:8-15—Focal Passage

There are a variety of passages we could go to (e.g., 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Corinthians 14:33b-40, etc.), but our focus is going to be on 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

I encourage you to personally study and understand the 1 Corinthians passages, as well as the 1 Timothy passage. (The ESV Study Bible is very helpful.) It is difficult to cover all of these passages in depth during one teaching session. I believe the focus in this session on 1 Timothy 2:8-15 will bring clarity to the 1 Corinthians passages. However, it's important that you as the teacher are well-versed on all of these Scriptures so you have the background to teach in depth and answer questions that may come from your women.



(DISPLAY SLIDE 5.)

Read aloud the complete passage 1 Timothy 2:8-15, and then explain that you will divide this passage into sections according to topic.

1 Timothy 2:8-15—I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

Let's pull apart this passage and look closely at its individual parts.

II. 1 Timothy 2: 8-10

We will now focus on verses 8-10 and make our points of context.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 6.**)

1 Timothy 2:8-10—I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.

These verses point out that there are two issues that need to be addressed in the Ephesian church.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 7.**)

Paul addresses:
the anger of men.

- the modesty (adorning) of women.

We'll briefly look at the men, and then focus on the message to us as women.

A. The Men

Remember that Paul has just called the people to pray. The concern here doesn't seem so much about praying (which he wants the men to do) or the posture of prayer.

Paul is addressing the heart attitude of men.

He is calling the men to be holy and not filled with anger, which leads to quarreling with one another.

When he says to lift holy hands he means hands that are undefiled by an angry heart.

B. The Women

When Paul turns to the women, we have the first of two points directed to women in the church.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 8.**)



This first point is: As women...

1. Our appearance is important.

Notice Paul is talking to (or about) women who profess godliness along with good works (Titus 2 women). He's calling them to behavior that is proper for such women.

He's addressing the issue of modesty.

Godly, reverent, biblical women have a call to modesty. If we profess godliness, then we should dress in accordance with that. We must walk worthy of the call.

The full counsel of Scripture shows continuity of teaching that is specific to women.

1 Peter 3, Titus 2, and 1 Timothy 2 all encourage women to be respectable in their behavior, use self-control, and to put ourselves together (adorn ourselves) in a God-honoring fashion.

Mary Mohler, wife of Dr. Albert Mohler, says it well in her pamphlet, *Modeling Modesty*.

If you arrive at church and your perfume arrived five minutes before you, there is a problem. If you arrive at church dressed in such a way that you have spent more time and effort preparing your clothing, hair and make-up than you have preparing your heart for corporate worship of the one true and living God, there is a problem. But, if you arrive at church dressed like you are ready to slop the pigs on a farm, there is a problem. If you arrive at church dressed in such a way that by the end of the service the people around you, by no fault of their own, now know the color of your underwear and they have watched you do a shimmy dance as you try to get your too-short, too-tight skirt to go under you, there is a big problem.

It is very difficult for us to recover and to take steps to go back toward traditional Sunday dress. The fourth commandment is still there: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Many have forgotten that Sunday is set apart, and that it is not like every other day."⁴

4. Mohler, Mary K. *Modeling Modesty*, pamphlet available for download as an electronic file or purchase as a printed document from Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, www.cbmw.com.

How we dress speaks loudly about who we are (e.g., a prostitute dresses in a way that identifies her).

We are not spending much time on the importance of outward appearance because there are so many issues to cover in this study.

But think carefully about what Mary Mohler says, and think about who you are in Christ when you select what clothes to wear.

Does your appearance honor your God?

Our outward appearance says a lot about our heart.

The issue of modesty for women is not simply about tempting men by how we dress. The call for modesty is actually mentioned in God's Word. It is a matter of obedience!

Summary of this First Point to Women



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 9**)

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

In 1 Timothy 2:8-10, we find that although the outward behavior is mentioned, the condition of the heart is the focus.

Men are called to have holy hands, which reflect a holy heart.

Women are called to have holy dress, which reflects a holy heart.

We now come to the second point regarding women.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 10.**)

2. Our attitude is more important than our appearance.

The point is: yes, our outward appearance is important. We should not neglect how we “put ourselves together.” When choosing clothing, we must always keep in mind the characteristics of a godly woman and dress accordingly.

However, as important as our outward appearance is—our inner *attitude* is more important than our appearance.

This second point is spelled out for us in 1 Timothy 2:11. We will examine this verse in detail and draw out points of context for the verse.



III. 1 Timothy 2:11

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 11.**)

Now let's look closely at this verse.

1 Timothy 2:11— Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.

There are several points that we can make that will help us understand this one small, yet huge, statement.

Before we get to these points, it's important to keep in mind that the situation Paul is referring to here is that of teaching and learning in the assembled church, not every situation in life or in the church is in mind.

The situation is one of teaching and learning in the assembled church.

Within this context of the local, assembled church, let's pull three words from the verse and see what they mean.

Direct the students to the space for taking notes in the Student Guide.

A. Learn (*manthano*)

Our focus in this sentence needs to be on the word *learn*.

Women are to learn.

The Greek word, *manthano*, indicates this is a command.

Women were to be a part of the learning process.

They were not to be excluded. They were to increase in knowledge.

Jewish and Greek culture of the day in which this was written had a very low view of women. Women weren't usually given the opportunities like we have today to learn.

Paul was writing in defense of women and to include them in the life of the church. Women were to learn.

But now we have a question: How are women to learn?

B. Quietly (*hesuchion*)

Women are to learn quietly. Let's examine this word.

The word *quietly* is the same word (*hesuchion*) that is used earlier when Paul called the people in 1 Timothy 2:2 to pray for a "peaceful and quiet life."

In this context, the word is translated by using two English words: "peaceful" and "quiet." This gives us some insight into this kind of "quietness." It is a quietness that corresponds with peacefulness.

There are various interpretations of how this is to be applied. In his book *God's High Calling for Women* John MacArthur, Jr. writes,

Paul in verse 12 says that women are to be silent in the sense of not teaching or exercising authority over men in the church.⁵

This quietness does not mean total silence.

It's more like the quietness of serenity or contentment.

Vine's defines this as a tranquility rising from within, causing no disturbance to others.

That sounds like a heart issue to me!

In fact, the same word is used in 1 Peter 3:4 where Paul is describing the heart of a godly woman—"a gentle and quiet spirit."

This kind of quietness on the woman's part respects and honors the leadership of the men God has called to oversee the church.

She is not sitting in the pew or Sunday school class seething inside while a man is preaching or teaching up front.

This definitely does not mean that a woman must never speak. However, it is a caution that women should not speak in a way that would compromise the authority of the men. She speaks with a gentleness and sensitivity, with words that come from a quiet heart.

Now we come to the third word we will focus on in this sentence:

C. Submissiveness (*hypotasso*)

This is the same word we defined when we studied roles in marriage (Lesson 4).

Submissiveness (*hypotasso*)—to line up under; to arrange yourself under

Summary Statements

Direct the students to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

When we put all the pieces together of what we've studied up to this point, we can make some foundational statements.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 12.**)



- If you don't have a quiet heart, you can't learn.
- A rebellious heart hardens the mind.
- A quiet heart enables the mind.

5. MacArthur, John, Jr. *God's High Calling for Women*. (Chicago, Moody Publishers, 2009), 36.

This is a difficult verse, isn't it?

Not difficult to understand. It is quite clear.

But, if we don't understand the meaning of the words, and if we don't trust God to know what is best, our hearts become hard and refuse to accept this sweet authority of the Bible in our lives regarding our role as women in the church.

Summary of 1 Timothy 2:11

A summary statement of 1 Timothy 2:11 might read like this:

A biblical woman is to increase in knowledge with an inner heart of tranquility, arranging herself or lining up under the elder leadership of her church.

IV. 1 Timothy 2:12

We now move on to verse 12.

We've just examined how a woman is to *learn*—and she is to learn!

Now we will look at when she can and cannot *teach*.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 13.**)



1 Timothy 2:12— I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

Here are a few clarifying points regarding this verse.

A. Examples of Women Teaching

As you discovered in your study for this lesson, in the context of wider Scripture this does *not* mean that a woman can never teach.

There are three examples that explicitly illustrate women in teaching situations.

- Titus 2:3—Older women teach the younger women.
- 2 Timothy 1:5 and 3:14—Eunice & Lois, Timothy's mother and grandmother, taught him.
- Acts 18:29—Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, taught Apollos in a casual, home setting.

B. The Clear Meaning of 1 Timothy 2:12

1 Timothy 2:12 *does* mean that...

Women are not to teach when teaching is part of the exercise of authority over men.

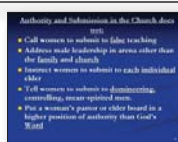
Pastor John Piper puts it this way:

A woman is not to teach in a situation that calls for a strong, forceful pressing of men's consciences on the basis of divine authority.⁶

V. Submission in the Church

Just as we did when we studied submission in marriage, we must do with submission in the local church. To keep from wrong thinking, we must know what submission in the church is not.

A. What Submission in the Church is Not



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 14.**)

Authority and Submission in the Church does not:

- Call women to submit to false teaching.
- Address male leadership in arenas other than the family and church.
- Instruct women to submit to each individual elder.
- Tell women to submit to domineering, controlling, mean-spirited men.
- Put a woman's pastor or elder board in a higher position of authority than God's Word.

These points of what submission is *not* help us guard against being weak-willed women who leave their brains at the door of the church.

We must be women who learn and discern the truth.

We must understand that we are to submit to the elder leadership of our local church in a corporate way. We are not to submit to each individual man on the elder board.

We must be searching the Scriptures daily (just as the Berean Christians did in Acts 17:11) so we can arrive at the truth and run away from the false teachers and their teaching—or confront boldly, but respectfully.

6. Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2006), 70.

B. What Submission in the Church Is

Submission in the Church Is:

We will define what authority and submission are by using the definitions developed by Pastor John Piper.⁷

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 15.**)



Authority—the divine calling of spiritual, gifted men to take primary responsibility as elders for Christ-like servant-leadership, and teaching in the church.

Submission—the divine calling of the rest of the church, both men and women, to honor and affirm the leadership and teaching of the elders, and to be equipped by it for the hundreds and hundreds of various ministries available to men and women in the service of Christ.

VI. Church Elders

A. Two Basic Responsibilities

When we continue reading in 1 Timothy, we discover in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 that the elders in a local church have basically two responsibilities.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 16.**)



- To govern
- To teach

B. Regarding Women Elders in the Church

Based on all of what we have just discussed we can come to the conclusion that agrees with Pastor John Piper.

I do not permit women to function as an elder in the church. The elders are charged with the primary leadership and instruction of the church. That's a summary of their job. So when Paul puts those two things together and says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority," the most natural sense is, "I do not permit a woman to assume the office of elder in the church."⁸

7. Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. *What's the Difference?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990), 48.

8. Piper, John. "Manhood, Womanhood, and the Freedom to Minister." Sermon delivered at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 18, 1989, available online at www.desiringGOD.org.

The Bible is quite clear in the teaching regarding the roles of men and women in the church.

God inspired the Scriptures.

God is good.

Therefore, we come back to the question we've asked before.

Do I trust God to know what's best, for His glory and my good?

Summary Statement

There are only two areas that are not open to women in local church ministry, being a pastor or elder, and teaching the Bible to men.

Every other ministry is completely open to men and women alike.

See list of Opportunities for Ministry in Pastor John Piper's book *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible*. It might be good to at least point out some of these ministries. Although it's important to understand the prohibitions, it's also important to see the breadth of ministries open to women.

VII. 1 Timothy 2:13, 14, and 15—Back to the Beginning

Now let's move on to 1 Timothy 2:13, 14 and 15.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 17.**)



In these verses, Paul takes the reader back to Genesis to ground his argument about church order in creation.

Pastor John Piper explains this perhaps better than anyone else, so let's simply read some Piper quotes to help us understand these verses.

We will go verse by verse.

A. 1 Timothy 2:13

1 Timothy 2:13—For Adam was formed first, then Eve;

Paul sees in God's order of creation a teaching concerning the responsibility of man to be a leader in relationship to woman. God created man first, put him in the garden, gave him the responsibility over the garden and the moral pattern for life in the garden, and then created woman as his partner and assistant to help him carry that responsibility into action together.

... when Paul teaches that men should bear the primary responsibility for governance and teaching in the church he is basing it not on any culturally temporary situation at Ephesus, but on something woven into the fabric of manhood and womanhood by virtue of our creation. Not on the basis of sin, but on the basis of how God wanted it to be before there was any sin—for the good of his people, both women and men.⁹

B. 1 Timothy 2:14

1 Timothy 2:14 –and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

Again, let's read a Piper quote.

Adam was not deceived (that is, Adam was not approached by the deceiver and did not carry on direct dealings with the deceiver) but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor (that is, she was the one who took up dealings with the deceiver and was led through her direct interaction with him into deception and transgression).¹⁰

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

When God's order of leadership is repudiated, it brings damage and ruin.

Role differentiation (differences) for man and woman is rooted not in culture or temporary missionary strategy, but in creation—in the way God created us to be.¹¹

Men and women are both more vulnerable to error and sin when they forsake the order that God has intended.

When Satan approached the woman, he was very likely attacking the man's God-given leadership position. Satan attempted to invert God's good order. He brought woman out from under the man's leadership.

This is an attack on God, Himself. It is also an attack on the Gospel.

Christ and the Church

Remember in Lesson 4 that we saw in Ephesians 5 that Paul says marriage is a mystery. He also tells us that marriage is the illustration of Christ and the Church.

The Church is the Bride of Christ.

Christ is the head.

9. Piper, John. "Affirming the Goodness of Manhood and Womanhood in All of Life." Sermon delivered at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 25, 1989, online at www.desiringGOD.org.

10. *ibid.*

11. *ibid.*

The Church submits to the headship of Christ.

If this order can be marred from the beginning, Satan has won a great victory.

By going back to Genesis and discussing the Fall, Paul is attempting to re-establish God's good pre-Fall order, both in the home and in the church.

C. 1 Timothy 2:15

Lastly, we have the very difficult verse 15.

1 Timothy 2: 15—Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

There are five points to make here.

Four of these points are speculations by various scholars as to what this verse means.

The last point is an agreed upon conclusion of what the verse does NOT mean.

We'll state these quickly and then move on.

1. Four Speculations

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 18.**)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

- This is the opposite of being deceived into sin; being saved from sin.
- It is doubtful that this means through the birth of Christ.
- It could be a reference to the woman's primary role regarding the family.
- This is to guard against being deceived by false teachers. The focus is on proper role and attitude.

2. Agreed Upon Conclusion

- This does not mean being justified by bearing a child.

You have done a lot of teaching in this lesson! Let me just encourage you by saying that you have presented some very important and critical information to bring an understanding of a woman's role in the church to your class. Pray a silent prayer right now that the women will stay with you (mentally) throughout this last section and then move through this material quickly.

VIII. Biblical and Historical Patterns of Male Leadership in the Church

Before we conclude, I'd like to look at biblical and historical patterns of male leadership in the church.

It's important when we look at the issues regarding roles and responsibilities based on sex facing the church today that we don't back away from biblical and historical truth.

Although it is, perhaps, counter-cultural to say so, the truth is:

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 19.**)



Christianity is undergirded by a pattern of male leadership.

From Genesis to Revelation there is a consistent pattern of male leadership among God's people.

A. Biblical History

1. Old Testament

a. Male Leadership Pattern

In the Old Testament, the tribes of Israel are consistently divided into groups based on the family line of the fathers. There are more than 700 references to priests, and not one is a woman.

b. Rare Exceptions to Male Leadership Pattern

There are, of course, some examples of women in leadership roles. For example:

Direct the women to the area for note taking on this section in the Student Guide.

Queen Athaliah in 2 Kings 11—

this woman was an evil queen who brought David's dynasty to the brink of extinction.

Deborah in Judges 4—

she stepped into a leadership position most likely because of the lack of male leadership. The women at this time did what the men would not do.

Huldah in 2 Kings 22—

a court prophetess who consulted mainly on matters of state.

These women are rare exceptions in the midst of an overwhelming pattern of male leadership. None of these women were leaders in the “church.”

2. New Testament

When we get to the New Testament, we must keep in mind that in the first century Jewish culture, women were considered second-class citizens.

Jesus, in fact, raised the stature of women by treating them with respect. He raised them from a position of servitude to a position of value.

Women of Jesus’ time were forbidden to learn from rabbis, but Jesus had women who traveled with him, supported him, and learned from him.

He always spoke to women respectfully using terms of endearment like *daughter*, *little girl*, and *daughter of Abraham*.

He related to women in a variety of ways that were not culturally “correct.”

Move through this list of women quickly.

Examples of Christ Relating to Women

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 20.**)



Woman at the Well—John 4:7-26

He met the woman at the well in Samaria and talked to her when men weren’t to talk to such women. He cared about her salvation. He even revealed who he was to her when he said, **...I who speak to you am he (John 4:7-26).**

Adulterous Woman— John 8:10-11

He protected the woman the Pharisees said they had caught committing adultery.

Woman Who Touched the Hem of His Garment—Luke 8:43-48

Jesus responded to the need of the woman who touched the hem of his garment.

Poor Widow—Luke 21:1-4

He noticed the few pennies that the poor widow gave as an offering and stood up for her.

Mary of Bethany—John 12:1-8

He defended Mary of Bethany when she anointed him with oil.

Mary and Martha—John 11: 1-44

And Mary and Martha were his friends.

Summary Statement

The point is that regarding women, Jesus was not bound by his culture. He was not concerned with political correctness.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 21.**)

Yet after a full night of prayer, Jesus established a pattern of male leadership in the church when he appointed 12 men as apostles.

Jesus was not afraid to counter his culture. He could have—would have—named women if he had wanted to.

Jesus, Himself, is a man.

The 12 apostles whose names are written on the foundations of the new Jerusalem are all men. (Revelation 21:14)

3. The Metanarrative of the Bible

In the metanarrative of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, there is a male leadership pattern.

B. Church History

When we examine Church history, we consistently find the biblical pattern of male leadership.

As Wayne Grudem says,

The pattern through the entire history of the church has been that the office of pastor/elder (or its equivalent) has been reserved for men. This should give us reason to pause.¹²

Summary Statements

Behind the idea of male leadership in the church and the family lies the whole of biblical and church history as well as future eternity.

When we support male leadership in the church we are on solid ground and in good company.

12. Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), 942.

One side-note you might want to mention is the possibility that we are at a point in history when male leadership is generally weak. Therefore, we are seeing again the rise of women in leadership positions. When men are weak, women are more than eager to step into leadership positions. This has been the case since the beginning.

IX. Concluding Points

Hopefully, what we've studied so far will give understanding to some of the other Bible passages that teach on order and roles in the church.

A. Some Clarity of Difficult Passages

The study of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 helps us understand other Scripture passages that refer to the organization of roles and responsibilities in the local church.

1. 1 Corinthians 11: 3-16

When we read 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, we can now more clearly understand that Paul is discussing God's ordained pattern for order based on authority and submission. God is the head of Christ, Christ the head of man, and man the head of woman.

This passage elaborates on this subject of order, and Paul gives both the cultural ways this order is reflected and the biblical foundation for the order in creation.

2. 1 Corinthians 14

Similarly in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul is addressing the problem of disorder in the church, especially where revelation, tongues, and interpretations are happening.

In this case, he teaches that a woman should not offer critique of prophecy as this would put her in an authoritative role.

(The ESV Study Bible is helpful in explaining these two 2 Corinthian passages.)

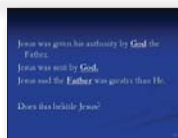
B. A Question

Here's the question that is probably forefront in the argument for women to be pastors and elders in the local church.

Doesn't this prohibition (not to teach men, be elders, nor pastors) belittle women?

Is a woman belittled by male leadership in her church? Think of it this way:

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 22.**)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

Jesus was given his authority by God the Father (Matthew 28:18).

He was sent by God (John 6:38).

He said the Father was greater than He (John 14:28).

Does this belittle Jesus? Surely, not!

Summary Statement

God has set up order in the church the same way He set up order in the home.

God is good.

I trust Him.

Do you?

We must stop here.

Because this subject is often hard to accept, we must point the women to the greatness of God. Romans 11:33-36 is a great place to stop this lesson. Read these verses aloud, give the women time to reflect on Norma and fill out their personal application section, and then close in prayer.

Romans 11:33-36—Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 23.**)



Personal Application (10 minutes)

Lesson 6

Resources

Outline of Lesson 6

Biblical Womanhood in the Church

Fellowship (10 minutes)

Opening Session (20 minutes)

—Welcome (5 minutes)

—Introductory Remarks (15 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Feminism: From the Culture into the Church

1. Culture

2. Church

B. Biblical Thinking

II. Review

A. Foundations of Biblical Womanhood

B. Definitions: Egalitarianism and Complementarianism

III. Biblical Leadership Pattern: Home and Church

Move to Discussion Groups (55 minutes)

Teaching Session (55 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Overview of Paul's First Letter to Timothy

B. Bridge between Home and Church

C. Reason for the Letter

D. 1 Timothy 2:8-15—Focal Passage

II. 1 Timothy 2: 8-10

A. The Men

B. The Women

- 1. Our appearance is important.**
- 2. Our attitude is more important than our appearance.**

III. 1 Timothy 2:11

A. “Learn” (manthano)

B. “Quietly” (hesuchion)

C. “Submissiveness” (hypotasso)

IV. 1 Timothy 2:12

A. Examples of Women Teaching

B. The Clear Meaning of 1 Timothy 2:12

V. Submission in the Church

A. What Submission in the Church is Not

B. What Submission in the Church Is

VI. Church Elders

A. Two Basic Responsibilities

B. Regarding Women Elders in the Church

VII. 1 Timothy 2:13, 14, and 15—Back to the Beginning

A. 1 Timothy 2:13

B. 1 Timothy 2:14

C. 1 Timothy 2:15

1. Four Speculations

2. Agreed Upon Conclusion

VIII. Biblical and Historical Patterns of Male Leadership in the Church

A. Biblical History

1. Old Testament

- a. Male Leadership Pattern

- b. Rare Exceptions to Male Leadership Pattern

2. New Testament

3. The Metanarrative of the Bible

B. Church History

IX. Concluding Points

A. Some Clarity of Difficult Passages

1. 1 Corinthians 11:3-16

2. 1 Corinthians 14

B. A Question

The Decisions We Face

Personal Application (10 minutes)

The Relationship between the Family and the Church

The New Testament makes frequent connections between the life of the family and the life of the church. Paul says, “If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God’s Church?” (1 Tim. 3:5). He says to Timothy, “Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity” (1 Tim. 5:1-2).

Because of this connection, it is inevitable that leadership patterns in the family will reflect leadership patterns in the church, and vice versa. It is very appropriate that, as godly men fulfill their leadership responsibilities in the family, they should also fulfill leadership responsibilities in the church. Conversely, if patterns of female leadership are established in the church, it will inevitably bring pressures toward greater female leadership, and to abdication of male leadership, within the family.

—Wayne Grudem *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1994),940.

Only Men in the Pastorate

The issue in this debate [should or should not women be pastors?—is the authority and interpretation of the Bible.

The case against women pastors does not rest on a few isolated proof texts, and this issue cannot be separated from the larger questions of gender roles within God’s creative intention.

Siding with modern egalitarian feminism, liberal Protestants and some leftish evangelicals have embraced the presence of women in the pulpit. The result is what veteran Newsweek reporter Kenneth L. Woodward calls the “rapid feminization of the clergy.”

Conservative evangelicals are willing to follow this course. The Bible reveals this pattern of male leadership in the church and in the home as enduring and authoritative. We have no right to reject or to compromise clear teachings of the Bible in order to meet the demands of today’s political correctness. The Word of God is eternal and totally true. Without a firm biblical foundation, the church ceases to be a church in anything but name. It has become nothing more than a voluntary association with a liturgy.

For nearly 2,000 years, the Christian church has limited the office of pastor to men.

As a seminary student, I followed the only arguments I was given, and supported the idea of women in the pastorate. Challenged by friendly critics to defend my position, I was driven to Scripture—and I was forced to reverse my understanding. The Word of God is the ultimate authority. If this conviction is the cause of some controversy, at least it is over something that matters.

—R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "Biblical Pattern of Male Leadership Limits Pastorate to Men," *The Courier-Journal*, published June 3, 2000 in Louisville, Kentucky. © All rights reserved, www.AlbertMohler.com

The Feminization of the Ministry

The feminization of the ministry is one of the most significant trends of this generation. Acceptance of women in the pastoral role reverses centuries of Christian conviction and practice. It also leads to a redefinition of the church and its ministry. Once women begin to fill and represent roles of pastoral leadership men withdraw. This is true, not only in the pulpit, but in the pews. The evacuation of male worshippers from liberal churches is a noticeable phenomenon.

Furthermore, the issues of women's ordination and the normalization of homosexuality are closely linked. It is no accident that those churches that most eagerly embraced the ordination of women now either embrace the ordination of homosexuals or are seriously considering such a move.

The reason for this is quite simple. The interpretive games one must play in order to get around the Bible's proscription of women in congregational preaching and teaching roles are precisely the games one must play in order to get around the Bible's clear condemnation of homosexuality.

Put another way, once one is satisfied to relativize the biblical texts limiting the congregational teaching office to men, one can (and almost surely will) be satisfied to employ those same strategies on texts condemning homosexuality. In both cases, the texts are relativized by postmodern ideologies.

The future course of the Church of England seems rather clear. What about your church?

—R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "The Feminization of the Ministry—A Milestone in Britain," © All rights reserved, www.AlbertMohler.com

Biblical Womanhood in the Culture

GOALS FOR LESSON 7:

- Understand that we live in tension with culture
- Aim to be countercultural and courageous
- Biblically informed decision making
- Desire to reflect God's Word and glory to the world

FELLOWSHIP FOR LESSON 7:

(10 minutes)

Opening Session



(DISPLAY SLIDE 1.)

Welcome (10 minutes)

Again, make any necessary announcements at this time.

Remind the women that there is only one more lesson to complete this study.

Encourage them to diligently do their homework for Lesson 8 and spend time in review.

Have the women turn to the Recommended Reading List and the list of Recommended Websites found in Appendix 1, and highlight a few books for them.

Once again, I think it's a good idea to bring a book or two that you have read to actually hold up and recommend to the women. Continue to encourage the women to read these books, and to get together with other women to discuss the books and/or be a part of a Titus 2 ministry.

Introductory Remarks (20 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Broadening the Focus—Coming Full Circle

We are broadening our focus of biblical womanhood now to include society at large—the culture.

We began our study by trying to understand the world in which we live—we looked at our culture. Then we zeroed in to the most personal point we could—the heart.

And then moved out into the topics of marriage, the home, and the local church. Now we have come full circle—back to the culture.

The question we're hoping to answer is:

How do I, as a biblical woman, relate to the postmodern culture in which I live?

Elisabeth Elliot and Wayne Grudem do a good job of summing up Lesson 7 for us.

Let's read what they have to say.

Elisabeth Elliot:

For years I have watched with growing dismay, even anguish, what has been happening in our society, in our educational system, in our churches, in our homes, and on the deepest level of our personality (heart?), as a result of a movement called feminism, a movement that gives a great deal of consideration to something called personhood but very little to womanhood, and hardly a nod to femininity.¹

Wayne Grudem:

So in the end, this whole controversy is really about God and how His character is reflected in the beauty and excellence of manhood and womanhood as He created it. Will we glorify God through manhood and womanhood lived according to His Word? Or will we deny His Word and give in to the pressures of modern culture? That is the choice we have to make.²

Elizabeth Elliot stresses the areas affected by feminism today—our society (culture), our churches, our homes, and the deepest level of our personality (heart).

Dr. Grudem gets right to the point. The gender controversy is about God and how His character is reflected.

B. A Critical Choice

We need to carefully and prayerfully think about the choice Grudem puts before us.

Will we glorify God through our womanhood, or will we deny His Word and give in to the pressures of our culture?

Hopefully, we all desire to be women who reflect the Word of God and His glory into our culture.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

A biblical woman reflects the Word of God into her culture.

1. Elliot, Elisabeth. "The Essence of F femininity: A Personal Perspective." *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1991), 394.

2. Grudem, Wayne. *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2002), 68.

II. Review

To set the stage for our discussion, let's make a quick review of who we are and where we are.

A. Who We Are

We are biblical women.

You may want to have the women turn to Lesson 1 in the Student Guide and quickly review the terms and definitions found there.

A biblical woman is devoted to the God-breathed truth of the Bible, and embraces her feminine design as ordained by God in His Word and echoing the eternal relationships within the Trinity.

There are certain characteristics of a biblical woman that correspond with each of our lessons.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 2.**)



A biblical woman:

- Stands on the Word of God.
The Bible is her authority. We studied this in Lesson 2.
- Trusts the Word of God.
She understands that God is the Author of the Bible. Because she puts her hope in God, she trusts His Word. This was our subject in Lesson 3.
- Obeys the Word of God.
In her marriage, in her home, and in her church a biblical woman obeys the Bible because she knows it is authoritative and she trusts that God knows best. These were the subjects of Lessons 4, 5, & 6.
- A biblical woman reflects the Word of God.
This is the focus of our study in Lesson 7.
- A biblical woman rejoices in the Word of God.
This is where we'll conclude.

B. Where We Are

That is *who* we are. Now let's review *where* we are.

Hopefully, by now you are recognizing the tenets of postmodernism when you see and experience them. Let's review the seven tenets of our postmodern culture, as included in this lesson in the Student Guide.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 3.**)

The Seven Tenets of Postmodernism

1. Unlimited Variation of Words (ground always shifting; no point of reference)
2. No Rules of Logic to Govern Dialogue (can't have rational discussion)
3. No Limits to Defining Meaning (“The only morality is liberation”—Foucault”)
4. No Metanarrative (no over-arching story; only disconnected little stories)
5. Defiance of Authority (all authority must be overthrown)
6. Deconstruction of Truth (truth is made, not found; certainty is arrogant)
7. Relativism (no standard is valid for everyone; true for you, but not true for me)

This is our culture.

This defines the world *in* which we live. This is how people around us think.

This is not the world *of* which we are. Not if we know Christ!

Summary Statement

We need to be sure of who we are in Christ, and remind one another that we are continually called in God's Word to live our lives worthy of who we are in Him.

It is also vitally important to understand the world in which we live—where we are. This helps us to be discerning regarding what is true and what is false.

And now in this lesson—knowing who we are, and knowing where we are—we will focus on just how we live as biblical women in our postmodern culture.

At this point, stop and pray that God will send the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our hearts so that we will know how to reflect the beauty of His character to those around us.

Sample Prayer: Our Father in heaven, send Your Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our hearts. Help us to see You for who You are, as Isaiah did in Isaiah 6:5. He saw You on your throne, high and lifted up surrounded by seraphim calling to one another, “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” May

we be humbled and say with Isaiah, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” Rule in our hearts today. You are our high King of heaven. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Move to Discussion Group (50 minutes)

Teaching Session (50 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Tension with Our Culture

(DISPLAY SLIDE 4.)



It should be clear by now after your own personal study, discussion and from your own life experiences that...

As biblical, Christ-exalting women, we are in tension with our culture.

Actually this tension is a good thing.

It is a witness to our spirit that we belong to Jesus.

If we were both *in* and *of* the world, there would be no tension.

Think of this tension as a positive in your life.

B. Overview of Teaching Session

In our teaching time, we will do two things.

1. Examination of Tension with Culture

Using the tenets of postmodernism as outline points, we will examine how we are in tension with our culture.

2. Discovery of Six Distinctives of a Biblical Woman

We will discover six distinctives of a biblical woman that will reflect God’s Word and His glory to the world around us.

In the following section, you will take each of the seven tenets of postmodernism, and describe how when one thinks and lives according to biblical principles, tension occurs between that person and her culture. I have given several examples under each tenet, but please use current examples that will really bring this section alive. Also included at the end of each segment is a Scripture. These are simply example Scriptures that are in opposition to our culture. Before teaching this next section, review the tenets of postmodernism in Lesson 1, and reread the material in the resources section for Lesson 1.

Direct the women to the space for taking notes on this material.

II. Tension with our Culture

A. Postmodern Tenet 1—Unlimited Variation of Words

1. The Tenet

To the postmodern mind, words have no meaning apart from the definitions a speaker chooses his or her words to have.

Because of this instability of words, it's very hard to keep track of what people are saying. They can change the meaning of their words whenever they want.

Language is used to construct meaning rather than reveal meaning.

This, of course, is nothing new. Remember the serpents question to Eve in Genesis 3, "Did God really say...?"

2. The Tension

For the biblical woman, words mean what they say. It is important to us to know the meaning of words and to stick with that meaning.

Words are important. That's why included in this study is the occasional look at the Hebrew or Greek meaning of a word.

Words are in the Bible for a God-breathed (inspired) reason.

We agree with Peter when he says that God put every word in the Bible (2 Peter 1:20-21).

2 Peter 1:20-21—...no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

And we believe 2 Timothy 3:16 that the Scriptures are God-ordained, God-breathed inspiration.

The words of a manuscript are not there for the interpretation of the reader. Words are used to convey the thoughts of the author.

For example, if you receive a letter or email from someone dear, you don't want to interpret his or her words just any old way. If you do, you will be in big trouble especially with the one who wrote the letter. The writer of that letter (or email) chose words to convey a thought or meaning to you. Therefore, you read the words, and try to decipher what the writer of those words meant.

When we tell someone something, like I'll meet you at 9 a.m., we mean 9 a.m. We don't expect the receiver of our words to interpret them any way they want.

The point is: we use words for specific reasons to convey a thought or truth.

When we read something, it doesn't really matter what those words mean to me.

The most important thing is to figure out what the author of those words meant when he or she used them.

We can apply this same principle to how we approach the Bible. Our goal must be to decipher what God is saying in His Word, not just what it means to me.

We must be careful not to change even so-called "little" words, for that can put us on a trajectory that will eventually lead very far from the biblical truth.

Such things as the gender-neutral Bible, or the changing of God's name from Father to mother or to mother-nature are critical trajectory choices.

B. Postmodern Tenet 2—No Rules of Logic to Govern Dialogue

1. The Tenet

The fundamental rules of logic³ are discredited by the postmodern thinker.

When words lose their meaning, common logic goes out the window too. The cultural ground beneath us is always shifting.

2. The Tension

When words mean what they have always meant, then we can have logical discussions. Meaningful, solid words give the foundation to govern our discourse. However, when we're not sure of how someone is using a word, logical discussion is virtually impossible.

Therefore, when we refer to a "baby" as a "fetus" or as "tissue," it's hard to have a logical discussion.

When we don't know what someone means when they say "marriage," it's hard to have a logical discussion.

3. The fundamental rules of logic are: identity, non-contradiction, the excluded middle and rational inference. It's not necessary to explain these, but they are footnoted in case you would like to do further research.

When the meaning of “family” is changed from what it has traditionally, historically meant, it’s impossible to have a logical discussion.

Is this not happening in our culture today?

We have to define words that never had to be so carefully defined before in history. The result is that logical discourse is nearly impossible today. If you ever feel like you are “nailing jello to the wall” in your conversations, this is why.

Words convey meaning, which in turn governs our discourse. How good it is to talk with someone who follows Matthew 5:37, ***Let what you say be simply “Yes” or “No;” anything more than this comes from evil.***

We must mean what we say, and say what we mean.

Matthew 5:37—“Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”

C. Postmodern Tenet 3—No limits to Defining Meaning

1. The Tenet

When there are no foundations for truth and the culture defines “meaning,” all boundaries and limits are thrown off.

Because there is no metanarrative, and no dot is connected to any other dot, one floats through life disconnected and without purpose or meaning.

2. The Tension

There are boundaries to what words mean. Therefore, there are boundaries to logic. Therefore, there are boundaries to big issues such as the meaning of life.

Again, we are reminded of the trajectory example. Changing a word seems like a small thing, but it can lead down the wrong path, away from God. Change in a word leads to change in logic, which changes meaning.

As biblical women, we can be secure in God’s words, His logic, and his meaning.

The sand is not always shifting underneath us. Psalm 40:2 is rock solid assurance that He can draw us up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and He will set our feet upon a rock, making our steps secure. This assurance is what is emphasized in the byline of this study: *Standing on the Truth in our Shaky World.*

Psalm 40:2—He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

We need boundaries. We are secure with boundaries. And God’s Word gives us boundaries. There are boundaries that define who we are as women. We know from the Bible

how God created us. We know our role and responsibilities. This gives us meaning and purpose. Without boundaries, we have no meaning or purpose.

D. Postmodern Tenet 4—No Metanarrative

1. The Tenet

To the postmodernist, the metanarrative (any overarching story) is oppressive.

This leads to a distrust, even denial of history, whether in the world, the Bible, or our own personal lives.

2. The Tension

One reason little words have meaning is because they fit into the overarching big story.

Individual words are important, because when put together with other individual words, they tell the whole story.

The culture may tell us that there is no metanarrative, no overarching story, only man disconnected individual stories. But as biblical women, we go back over and over again to Genesis, the beginning. And it's important to understand the Trinity (before the beginning) and Revelation (the end). Yes, there is an overarching story.

There is a metanarrative, a beginning and an end—not just to the Bible, but to history (which in reality, is one and the same).

There is meaning. There is purpose. We are part of something bigger than ourselves and our individual lives today. We are secure in the revelation of Jesus in Revelation 1:8, ***“I am the Alpha and Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”*** (See Isaiah 46:8-11.)

Revelation 1:8—“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Issues such as the roles of men and women have significance way beyond me or my culture. These issues are rooted in eternity. When we grasp this, we are less likely to pull Bible verses out of context. When we take the full counsel of Scripture, we begin to think biblically and not culturally.

E. Postmodern Tenet 5—Defiance of Authority

1. The Tenet

When one throws off all limits, then the obvious result is the rejection of authority.

“Authority” is a bad word to the postmodern mind and heart.

2. The Tension

If I rebel against authority, of course, I cannot accept any of the first four arguments. The ultimate authority for the biblical woman must be God. If I am in rebellion against Him, my heart becomes hard and then I cannot think according to His Word.

Ephesians 4:18 is such a good example of how our minds can be transformed through the Word, rather than be conformed to our culture. Remember, this verse tells us, ***They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.***

Often, we think that if we're not thinking according to the Bible our hearts will become hardened. But Ephesians 4:18 makes it clear that those who cannot think clearly about God's Word already have a hard heart. Nothing hardens the heart more efficiently than rebellion, particularly rebellion against the authority of God.

For a biblical woman, "authority" is not a dirty word because she has a soft heart toward God. The seed of the Word can take root in her heart and bear fruit. A biblical woman thrills at Isaiah's description of how he saw God, and wants this experience, too.

Isaiah 6:1—In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

You may want to continue reading in Isaiah 6 through verse 5. These additional verses demonstrate Isaiah's response to authority, which is an example of the proper response one should have to the authority of God.

F. Postmodern Tenet 6—Deconstruction of Truth

1. The Tenet

"What is truth?" is the question asked by Pilate (John 18:38). The postmodernist would answer: "There is no truth."

If there is no truth, there are no absolutes; therefore, there are no limits. Truth is to be denied and taken apart brick by brick (deconstructed) until it no longer exists.

2. The Tension

When my heart is not rebellious but accepting of God's ultimate authority, and I trust that He wants and works for my best interest, I can then take my stand on His truth.

The Bible is either true or it isn't. I cannot pick away at it. I cannot choose only those things that appeal to my natural passions. The biblical woman accepts the truth of the Bible. She understands that the truth of the Scriptures fits together from beginning to end, and that it builds precept upon precept.

Our culture tells us that it is arrogant to be sure of Truth, but it is exactly the opposite of arrogance. Arrogance is thinking that I know better than God. I will be the judge of what truth is or is not.

Acceptance of ultimate truth (*norma normans non normata*) is, in fact, a position of humility. I accept that I don't know it all. I accept that God knows more and knows better than I do. I love Truth, and I build my life on Truth.

Our culture tells us that the Bible has too many rules, it's restrictive and heavy. But the truth is, ***“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”*** (John 8:31b-32). What freedom!

John 8:31b-32—“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

We must guard against becoming the 2 Timothy 3 woman who is so prevalent in our culture. We must not allow ourselves to become weak women who are weighed down by their sins and led astray by their passions, who are always learning, but never able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth.

No, Truth exists, and we can find it. And when we do we will be strong and free!

G. Postmodern Tenet 7—Relativism

1. The Tenet

Effects of Relativism in Many Spheres

What is so stunning about this pervasive relativism is that it has sophisticated advocates in virtually every sphere of learning and life. Nowadays, it is usually called postmodernism. Gertrude Himmelfarb (Emeritus Professor of History at the City University of New York) describes the effect of postmodernism on four areas:⁴

- In literature, there is no objective meaning that gives what the author intended any priority over what the reader claims to see; and no standard that makes the great books preferable to comic books.
- In law, the meaning of the constitution is not controlled by what the founders intended it to mean, but by what contemporary judges say it means, or what society needs for it to mean.
- In philosophy, language itself has no sure reference to reality. Language doesn't faithfully describe what is there. It doesn't submit to reality; it creates reality. And therefore, it is an instrument of power, not a servant of truth.

4. Himmelfarb, Gertrude. “Tradition and Creativity in the Writing of History,” *First Things*, No. 27, November, 1992, p.28.

- In history, the past has no fixed reality. It is only what creative historians choose to make of it.
- And, of course in political scandals, we see this pervasive relativism played out not only in the sense that objective right and wrong seem to be lost categories, but also in the very existence of so-called “spin-doctors:” What is a sexual relationship? Well, what do we need it to be, or not to be? We will make it be what we want it to be.

And so on.

Now how serious is this pervasive relativism? Well, let me read what Michael Novak said in 1994 when he received the Templeton prize for Progress in Religion:

Vulgar relativism is an invisible gas, odorless, deadly, that is now polluting every free society on earth. It is a gas that attacks the central nervous system of moral striving. The perilous threat to the free society today is, therefore, neither political nor economic. It is the poisonous corrupting culture of relativism.⁵

2. The Tension

It’s very immature to be a relativist. It’s child-like. A biblical woman is a grown up. She’s mature and lives her life worthy of the Gospel.

She’s a thinking woman. She’s strong and courageous. She has fearless tranquility.

When I love Truth and stand on Truth, I will not be swayed by every wind of doctrine. We are called in Ephesians 4:14-15 to *grow up*.

Ephesians 4:14-15—...that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Summary Statement

After examining these seven tenets of our postmodern culture, it’s not hard to understand why we are in tension with our world. We are in this world, but we are not of it.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 5.**)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

5. “Awakening from Nihilism,” *First Things*, No. 45, August/September, 1994, pp. 20-21. Excerpt from sermon “The Spirit of the Age and the Reality of the Risen Christ,” by Pastor John Piper, April 12, 1998. © Desiring God. desiringGod.org

A biblical woman is a countercultural woman.

Does this mean we are fighting all the time?

Does it mean we are constantly in a state of anger or fear? No!

It means we build our lives on the Truth, rest in that Truth, and take the consequences.

Sometimes those consequences will be difficult.

Many times they will be very joyful.

And almost always, satisfying.

You want to take the previous points made regarding the tension with postmodern tenets, and give some examples of how this applies more specifically to current life. I will give you some brief examples under each of the categories listed in the Student's Guide. I've divided the examples into what we find in the culture and what the biblical truth is. Use these examples to stir your own thinking. You may want to use other examples that are more current to the time when you're teaching. Don't spend too much time here, because you want to be sure to cover the Six Distinctives of a Biblical Woman, which concludes this lesson.

Direct the women to the space for taking notes in the Student Guide during this part of the discussion.

III. Practical Application of Biblical Womanhood in the Culture

Now let's look at some specifics from our culture, and compare what we are seeing and hearing in the culture with biblical truth.

A. Home and Family

1. Culture

- Husband/wife roles confused
- Definition of "family" whatever you want to make it
- Parents ridiculed for taking authority, or won't accept their responsibilities

2. Biblical Truth

- Clear teaching on roles within marriage
- Marriage is one man/one woman. Genesis 2:24—***Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.***

- Ephesians 6:1-3—***Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.***

B. The Church

1. Culture

- Words have lost historical meanings
- Can't be too certain about doctrine
- Modernism (Truth without God)—liberal church
- Postmodernism (God without Truth)—emergent church
- Evangelical feminism

2. Biblical Truth

- Every word of the Bible is God-breathed and must not be changed
- We can and must be certain about doctrine
- It is possible to have Truth with God
- The Bible is clear on roles and responsibilities of men and women in home and church. This is good.

C. The Arts, Literature, Etc.

1. Culture

- Books, films with no meaning (e.g., *The Painted House* by John Grisham; *Magnolia* with Tom Cruise)
- Digital manipulation of photography
- No boundaries in art

- Political candidates spin who they are
- No right answers, no proper authority in educational system
- General confusion that makes us feel uncomfortable

2. Biblical Truth

- The Bible has meaning with a beginning and end
- Yes is yes; no is no (James 5:12)
- There are boundaries to right and wrong
- We must connect the dots between belief and behavior
- There is truth
- The Truth brings with it clarity and freedom

D. Two Specific Examples of Tension

1. Tension in the Area of Sexuality

There is confusion in our society, and no where is this more pronounced than in our sexuality.

We can focus in on two examples of confusion in our culture regarding women and their sexuality.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 6.**)

Sexual behavior and sexual aggressiveness.

See Resources for Lesson 7: “Girl Power—Aggressive Women”

The sexual revolution has produced a generation of girls who are brazen in their sexuality. We’ve come to a time when girls are offered the choice between being brave and sexual, or timid and modest. Culture teaches that it is acceptable to wait to engage in sexual practices as long as you feel you are unprepared. It is those who are comfortable with their bodies who flaunt their nakedness, while those who hide their bodies



are ashamed. Hence it is the weak who wait and the strong who engage. And countless numbers of girls are engaged, even from a young age.

As girls become increasingly sexual at an increasingly young age, they also become aggressive. Girls have long been taught that traditionally feminine qualities, such as niceness and gentleness are a sign of weakness.

Girls are encouraged to be tough, to stand for their perceived rights. And girls do this. Bullying among girls has become commonplace in schools.

The girls who are nice will be trampled on and will be left behind.

The Scriptures tell us that women are to be self-controlled, pure, and kind (Titus 2:4-5); to have a gentle, quiet heart, and to be protected by men. (1 Peter 3:4,7)

2. Women in Military Combat

John Piper's opinion on women in *combat* military roles is based on 1 Peter 3:7. This is an excellent example of thinking biblically about a cultural issue.

1 Peter 3:7—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.

The whole idea of women in combat is part of a feminist agenda grounded in an ideology that denies the existence of nature. One wonders if our society is ready to accept the consequences of this agenda. The noblest side of men leads them to place their lives in danger to ensure the safety of women and children. Deliberately putting at the point of greatest risk the very thing men are fighting to protect undermines men's finer side. It ignores the deeply rooted masculine sense that he bears a special responsibility to protect a woman when she is threatened in his presence, not consider her a warrior equally at risk."⁶

Keep in mind that women have been in the military for a long time filling important roles of support, such as nurses, drivers, etc. The point here is a woman being on the front combat lines.

In your preparation to teach the following material regarding women working outside the home, review the material on this topic from Lesson 5.

6. Piper, John, "Combat and Cowardice." *World Magazine*. November 10, 2007.

IV. Women in Leadership Roles

A. In the Workplace

Whenever we discuss our relationship to the culture (and critical to thinking through our own personal priorities), we must examine the issues of women in leadership roles and women working outside of the home.

It is important to understand that the Bible does not prohibit a woman from working outside the home or from leadership positions outside of the home or local church. If we go that far, we are adding prohibitions that simply are not there. But, we can and should take the biblical teaching and apply it to every situation.

Piper deals with these questions in his book *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood According to the Bible*. The following excerpts give a summary of his advice.

A mature woman will interact even with a male subordinate in ways that signal to him and others her endorsement of his mature manhood in relationship to her as woman. [She should demonstrate]...culturally appropriate expressions of respect for his kind of strength, and glad acceptance of his gentlemanly courtesies.⁷

B. Examples of Leadership Roles

There are many examples of where a woman can serve in a leadership role.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 7.**)



There are several arenas where women often serve in leadership roles: politics, education, business, medicine, law, media, and the arts.

Women and Leadership Roles (from *What's the Difference?*)

Prime Minister

Principal

College Teacher

Bus Driver

Bookstore Manager

Staff Doctor

Lawyer

Judge

7. Piper, John. *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood According to the Bible*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2009), 42.

Police Officer

Legislator

T.V. Newscaster

In all of the above roles or, in fact, any time we interact with men we, as biblical women should follow Piper’s advice in the following quote (similar to the one above).

There are ways for a woman to interact even with a male subordinate that signal to him and others her endorsement of his mature manhood in relationship to her as woman. (she should demonstrate)...culturally appropriate expressions of respect for his kind of strength, and glad acceptance of his gentlemanly courtesies.

*John Piper, What’s the Difference?*⁸

Summary

We have only scratched the surface, of course. But you get the idea.

We live in a culture that affirms women in almost the exact opposite way than the Bible teaches.

When our opinions and lives are molded by the Scriptures, there’s no question that a biblical woman is a countercultural woman.

V. Living with the Tension

As Christians, we live in a constant tension with our culture.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 8.**)



A. We are in the world, but not of it.

John 17:14-18—...because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

8. Piper, John. *What’s the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood According to the Bible.* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2009), 42.

B. We are called to participation and separation.

Matthew 5: 13-16—You are the salt of the earth,...You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

1 John 2:15—Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (See Leviticus 20:26)

C. We are to adapt and confront.

1 Corinthians 10:32-33—Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. (See 1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

Titus 1:13—This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.

This tension witnesses to our Spirit that we belong to Him.



D. How do we live?

Knowing the Truth of the Scriptures and understanding our times we are still left with the question, “How do I then live?”

Francis Schaeffer was an expert on answering this question. His quote gives us some idea on how to live worthy of our calling.

...when we accept Christ as Savior, we must also acknowledge and then act upon the fact that if he is our Savior, He is also our Lord in all of life. He is Lord not just in religious things and not just in cultural things such as art and music, but in our intellectual lives and in business and our attitude toward the devaluation of people's humanness in our culture.⁹

VI. Six Distinctives of a Biblical Woman

Here are Six Distinctives of a Biblical Woman that will reflect God's glory to her world. Each distinction is supported by a corresponding Scripture.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 9.**)



A. A biblical woman is transformed by a renewed mind.

This is a woman who thinks biblically, not culturally. A biblical woman examines the Scriptures daily (Acts 17) to see if things line up with God's Word.

Romans 12:1-2—I appeal to you therefore, brothers by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing, you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

B. A biblical woman is content, not complacent.

This is a woman who will rise to the occasion, pray and repent, seek the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and make a difference. Complacency is a result of lukewarm faith. When things are going well, she's indifferent. When things are going bad, she is resigned and has a "whatever" attitude. We know what God thinks of lukewarm faith (see Revelation 3:16). Contentment is white, hot, boiling faith. (see Philippians 4:11-13)

Isaiah 32:9—Rise up, you women who are at ease, hear my voice; you complacent daughters, give ear to my speech.

C. A biblical woman contends for the faith.

This is a woman who, out of a contented heart, contends for the faith without being angry.

9. Schaeffer, Francis, and C. Everett Koop, M.D. *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1983), 402.

We are not excused from speaking, just because the culture and society no longer rests as much as they once did on Christian thinking. Moreover, Christians do not need to be in the majority in order to influence society.¹⁰

Jude 3—Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

D. A biblical woman has perspective, because she has hope.

This is a woman who can be bold, because she has hope. She understands that there is a metanarrative, and she knows the beginning and the end of the story. (See 2 Corinthians 3:12.)

This is a woman who follows the pattern of Lamentations 3. When she is discouraged she focuses on God.

Lamentations 3:19-24—Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

2 Corinthians 4:17-18—For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Romans 8:24b-25—...Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

E. A biblical woman is filled with joy.

This is a woman who abides in Christ. In her heart dwells a deep joy in the Lord.

John 15:11—“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

10. Schaeffer, Francis. *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005), 256.

F. A biblical woman possesses the light of Christ in an earthen jar.

This is a woman who knows who she is, and that she isn't perfect. But the beauty is, she doesn't have to be perfect! His light can shine through the cracks in our jar. And, from God's perspective, in Christ we are without blemish; we will shine as lights in the midst of our crooked and twisted generation.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7—For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

Summary Statement

If you carry these six distinctives, the world will wonder.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 10.**)



A biblical woman reflects God's Word and His glory to the world around her!

Give the women as much time as possible to reflect and fill out their Personal Application box. As always, pray before dismissing the women. As you pray, please ask God to send His Holy Spirit to apply the truths, principles, and distinctives to each life. Only He can make the perfect application.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 11.**)



Lesson 7

Resources

Outline of Lesson 7:

Biblical Womanhood in the Culture

Fellowship (10 minutes)

Opening Session (30 minutes)

—Welcome (10 minutes)

—Introductory Remarks (20 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Broadening the Focus—Coming Full Circle

B. A Critical Choice

II. Review

A. Who We Are

B. Where We Are

Move to Discussion Group (50 minutes)

Teaching Session (50 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Tension with Our Culture

B. Overview of Teaching Session

1. Examination of Tension with Culture

2. Discovery of Six Distinctives of a Biblical Woman

II. Tension with Our Culture

A. Postmodern Tenet 1—Unlimited Variation of Words

1. The Tenet

2. The Tension

B. Postmodern Tenet 2—No Rules of Logic to Govern Dialogue

1. The Tenet

2. The Tension

C. Postmodern Tenet 3—No Limits to Defining Meaning

1. The Tenet

2. The Tension

D. Postmodern Tenet 4—No Netanarrative

1. The Tenet

2. The Tension

E. Postmodern Tenet 5—Defiance of Authority

1. The Tenet

2. The Tension

F. Postmodern Tenet 6—Deconstruction of Truth

1. The Tenet

2. The Tension

G. Postmodern Tenet 7—Relativism

1. The Tenet

2. The Tension

III. Practical Application of Biblical Womanhood in the Culture

A. Home and Family

1. Culture
2. Biblical Truth

B. The Church

1. Culture
2. Biblical Truth

C. The Arts, Literature, Etc.

1. Culture
2. Biblical Truth

D. Two Specific Examples of Tension

1. Tension in the Area of Sexuality
2. Women in Military Combat

IV. Women in Leadership Roles

- A. In the Workplace
- B. Examples of Leadership Roles

V. Living with the Tension

- A. We are in the world, but not of it.
- B. We are called to participation and separation.
- C. We are to adapt and confront.
- D. How do we live?

VI. Six Distinctives of a Biblical Woman

- A. A biblical woman is transformed by a renewed mind.
- B. A biblical woman is content, not complacent.
- C. A biblical woman contends for the faith.
- D. A biblical woman has perspective because she has hope.
- E. A biblical woman is filled with joy.
- F. A biblical woman possesses the treasure of Christ in an earthen jar.

The Decisions We Face

Personal Application (10 minutes)

Girl Power—Aggressive Women

The mantra of Helen Reddy's 1970 smash-hit song—"I am strong, I am invincible, I AM WOMAN! (Hear me ROAR!)"—has now been integrated into popular culture and into the collective female psyche. Women definitely have, in the words of the popular Marlboro ad, "come a long way, baby!" Today's young women are domineering and demanding. They use their "girl power" to dominate, lure, control, use, and punish men. The "National College Health Risk Behavior Survey," undertaken by the federal Centers for Disease Control just prior to the new millennium, indicated that 67 percent of female and 56 percent of male college students were sexually active in the three-month period leading up to the survey, with 5 percent of women and 10 percent of men reporting they had engaged in sex with three or more partners in that period of time. What is astonishing about this study is that the sexually active women outnumbered the sexually active men by more than 10 percent.

Woman's liberation has empowered women to be brash and bold and sexual without inhibition. The girls have gone wild...

—Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*, Crossway Books, 2005 page 285. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

Postmodernism and Culture

Postmodern art is intended to be jarring and disassociative. It is meant to have no meaning leaving interpretation up to the viewer. The drive behind postmodern entertainment is subversion and conglomeration. The prevailing trend in postmodernism expression and entertainment is to take any or all known previous styles of the genre and put them together. This is seen in music, movies, art, and architecture.

Postmodernism does or soon will effect ever(y) facet of life. The push of postmodernism is one of transgressing all boundaries. Sex and gender studies are the largest growing classes in universities nationwide. These same universities are pushing and giving greater and greater support to magazines and papers dealing with sex and "exploration" across the firmly established boundaries we have known until recently. The constitution has become one of the greatest documents up for interpretation. Under postmodern thought there is no longer anything keeping people from interpreting it at their will and finding rights and freedoms that were never there nor were they intended to be there, and once these rights have been found, they will never be given up.

Ultimately postmodernism hits home with the family. Under postmodern thought the family unit is completely undermined and destroyed. The function and authority of the parents is denied and removed in favor of children's rights."

—The above quotes are taken from ligonier.org. This is a summary of a talk by Dr. Al Mohler on Postmodernism and Society. The quotes have been copied word for word, including spelling and grammatical mistakes.

Women in Culture

The lie of the world is that women have to "be all things to all people" and "be superwoman." If we allow this lie to rule us, we will live a very unfulfilled life. Christ redeemed us so we could glorify Him in the roles he created us for (helpmates and homebuilders). This looks different for each of us in different seasons of life and as our husbands lead us in various ways. As soon as we start to look at the "importance" of our roles according to culture we will grow weary and bitter. If we view them through God's eyes, as a beautiful picture of His place of rest and protection for us, we will know the kind of peace that passes understanding that guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phillip. 4:7).

Does what the Bible say about women really apply to us today in this culture (submission, can't be a pastor, weaker vessel, more easily deceived, etc.)? Yes, God created us to submit, not because He hates us, rather because He loves us enough to protect us. Doesn't it make us too vulnerable to our husbands?...Doesn't it limit our ability to demonstrate our gifts? No. We can lead children and women, which is what a Titus 2 woman should desire. God doesn't give us gifts unless he provides righteous opportunities to use them...Doesn't it make us less of a human to just stay at home with the kids or take care of our husband? No. We were created in the image of God and that is where our value comes from, not in what we do...The Proverbs 31 woman is a crown for her husband and her children rise up and call her blessed. That is a privilege that we either embrace from the Lord or reject in sin. These ideas are only antiquated because our culture has labeled them as such. But we find favor in the eyes of our Lord when we seek His good and perfect will. "Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." (Pro. 31:30).

I hope this encourages you to go against the lies of the culture and trust God that created you and knows every hair on your head. He is the only one that can give you the strength to glorify Him through submission and faith in His sovereign plan.

—Grace Driscoll, Acts 29 Network, copyright ©2004, www.acts29network.org

The Deep Significance of Biblical Womanhood

GOALS FOR LESSON 8:

- Understand Trinitarian roots of complementarity
- Desire a life that magnifies God's Word
- Embrace male/female equality of value and distinction of roles/responsibilities
- See eternal (past and future) significance of belief and behavior
- Satisfaction in God

FELLOWSHIP FOR LESSON 8:

(10 minutes)

Opening Session

This is your last lesson! Your opening remarks should be quite brief, and your instructive teaching time will be a bit shorter than usual. The women should have extra time in their small groups this session. Instead of the usual 40 minutes in groups set aside 50 to 55 minutes. Your teaching time will be about 40 minutes.



(DISPLAY SLIDE 1.)

Welcome (10 minutes)

Thank the women for their efforts in making this a successful class. Hopefully, they have been faithful in completing their personal homework questions and consistent in their attendance. Commend them for these things.

Introductory Remarks (10 minutes)

I. Purpose Statement



(DISPLAY SLIDE 2.)

Refer to the statement on Slide 2, which is the purpose of *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture*, and read it together.

The purpose of this study is to “encourage and equip you by explaining the truth about biblical womanhood, so you can joyfully live out this truth in your personal life and clearly articulate this truth to others.”

A. Encouraged and Equipped

Hopefully by now you *do* feel both *encouraged* and *equipped* to not only live out the principles of biblical womanhood, but to live them out joyfully.

And, hopefully, you’ve been encouraged and equipped to *clearly* explain the principles of biblical womanhood to others.

B. Prepared

The prayer is that this class has been a fulfillment of 1 Peter 3:15-16 for each one of you.

1 Peter 3: 15-16—but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Summary Statement

Reinforce the idea that this class has been foundational and hopefully has given them tools to take with them as they live out biblical womanhood.

Encourage them to use their Student’s Guide as a resource and review it often.

Pray for God’s blessing on this class time, and dismiss the women to go directly to their groups.

Move to Discussion Groups (55 minutes)

Teaching Session (50 minutes)

I. Introduction

We will conclude our study with two foundational points.

- Biblical womanhood is deeper than most people think.
- Biblical womanhood is more significant than most people think.

II. The Depth of Biblical Womanhood

A. Not about the 1950s

Very often, when one talks about being the “Titus 2 Woman,” or being a submissive wife or a woman who is mindful of the needs of men to be respected in the workplace or operates under a structure of male leadership in the church, we are told that we are going back to the 1950s.

But the truth is a biblical woman does not live her life based on the 1950s.

The foundation of her life is eternal truth.

A biblical woman builds on the rock of biblical truth, and not on the shifting sands of culture.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 3.**)



B. Biblical Womanhood has Deep Roots

Hopefully, we’ve come to understand that biblical womanhood is *deeply* rooted in eternity.

When thinking of the depth of biblical womanhood we can make three statements.

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

- Biblical womanhood is deeply rooted in eternity.
- The biblical woman lives her life based upon eternal truth.
- Biblical truth takes us all the way to the Trinity.

III. The Trinitarian Design of Biblical Womanhood

Much of biblical womanhood revolves around the issue of roles and responsibilities in relationship to men.

In this regard, biblical womanhood takes the complementarian position. Let’s examine “why” this position is taken by reading a quote from Dr. Bruce Ware.

A. Bruce Ware Quotes

Bruce Ware’s quote from his book *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* is a good reminder for us.

God is good. His ways are good. And his design for human life and relationships is good. And here we see from the doctrine of the Trinity that both equality of essence and differentiation of role are good. Just as God is in himself one in essence, and that one essence is possessed equally, fully, infinitely, and eternally by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so we cherish the reflection of this reality as God created man as male and female, both fully and equally in his image. But that's not all. Just as God is in himself three in person, so that each relates to the others according to an eternal taxis or order of authority and submission within the Godhead, so we cherish the reflection of this reality as God created authority-submission structures as his purposeful design for many kinds of human relationships.¹

God is good, and his ways are good. Given this, we will experience the joy and satisfaction of human life only when we embrace, not resist, his created design. And as this good and wise created design is lived out in human relationships, as wives and husbands, as congregations and elders, as people living with one another in community, we can be confident that when we live out what God is like we will enter into the good that he has designed for us to know.²

Ware helps us grasp the depth of biblical womanhood.

He helps us understand and embrace the foundation of the complementarian position. Being made in God's image, we reflect the reality of our Triune God—the reality of equality and the reality of authority-submission.

B. The Foundation of the Complementarian Position

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 4.**)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

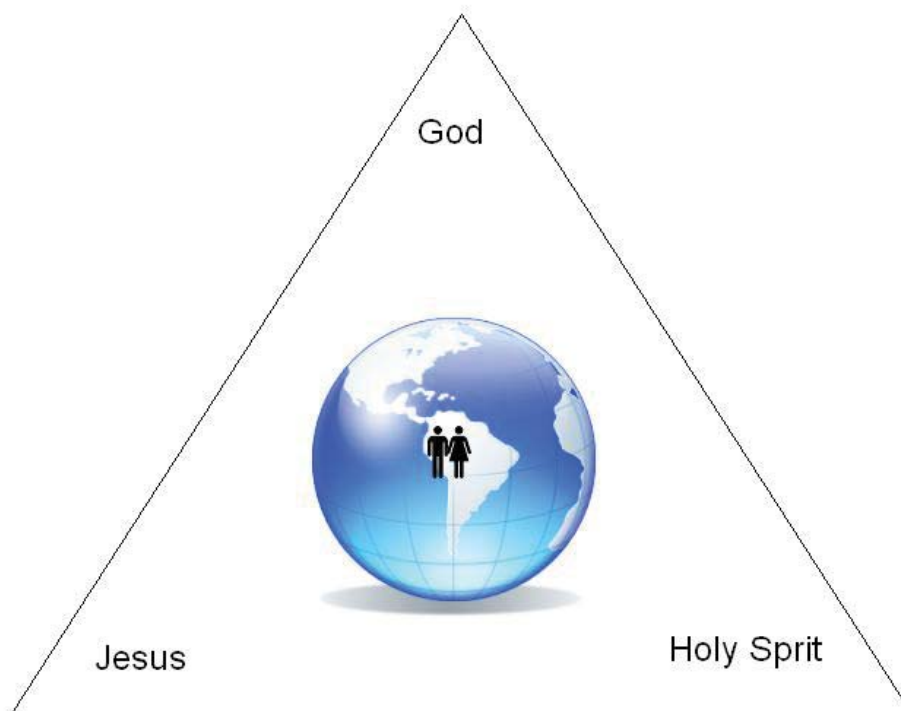
The design of full equality complemented by role distinctions is an eternal reality.

This is the Trinitarian design—the relationship of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Complementarity is rooted in the Trinitarian design, not in some particular culture or time period.

1. Ware, Bruce A. *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005), 155-156. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

2. Ibid.



IV. The Trinity

As Bruce Ware reminds us, the three persons of the Trinity are never in conflict of purpose, and never jealous or prideful.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each have distinct roles in relation to one another.

They each have distinct tasks and activities that they carry out in complete harmony of activity and unity of purpose.

Think of the beautiful sound when a chorus sings in harmony, rather than in unison. The harmony of the various parts creates a richness of sound.

A. The Eternal Trinity

We know from the Bible that God has eternally existed as the Trinity.

John 17:5— “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.”

In John 17:5, Jesus is recorded as saying that he was with the Father and shared in His glory *before the world existed*.

John 17:24—“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

Jesus confirms in John 17:24 that the Father loved him *before the foundation of the world*.

Before the world existed, Jesus and the Father were together along with the Holy Spirit in the Trinity.

B. The Trinity at Creation

We get the first glimpse of the Trinity actually working together in creation.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 5.**)



1. Creation of the Universe

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

When the universe was created:

God the Father spoke the powerful creative words that brought it into being.

God the Son was the divine agent who carried out these words, and

God the Holy Spirit was active “moving over the face of the waters.”

These comments are all supported in the context of Scripture.

Direct the women to the space for taking notes in the Student Guide on the following Scriptures.

Genesis 1—And God said...

John 1:3—All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

1 Corinthians 8:6—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Hebrews 1:2—but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

Genesis 1:2—The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

2. Creation of Man

Read carefully the word God spoke before He created man.

When God created man, there is even a more pointed reference to the Trinity.

Genesis 1:26—Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

The implication here is that more than one person is involved in the making of man.

The doctrine of the Trinity is established in Genesis 1 and reinforced in Genesis 3:22—

Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil.

And again in Genesis 11:7, when God refers to the tower of Babel—

Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language.

Not only is the evidence of the Trinity existing and working together in Creation, but when God made man He established in *adam* the very essence of complementarity.

The eternal Trinitarian *design* is introduced into the human race from the very beginning.

When God made man (*a dam*) in his image, He made *adam* male and female. This creation declared the equality of man and woman. (See Genesis 1:27)

When we read the details, we discovered that the male was created first. (See Genesis 2:15-22.)

Why didn't God created man and woman at the same time?

What was his purpose of creating Adam first? It surely was not to show that Adam was more important. But it was to demonstrate a difference in role. The man was to be the leader and the woman his helper.

When God created the male first, He established his leadership position. (Genesis 2:23)

When He created the female to be the helper, He established her role as helper. (Genesis 2:18)

What we've discovered is that along with the equality of the man and woman, there was built into their relationship the Trinitarian design of authority and submission and differences in roles and responsibilities. (Genesis 1:27; 2:15, 16, 18, 22)

(For examples of the Trinitarian relationship of God the Father and the Son and the Spirit, see 1 Corinthians 15:28; and John 3:17; John 5:18b-30; John 6:37-39; John 10:17-18; John 10:25-30; John 14:25-26; and John 15:26.)

And He declared all of this to be very good! (Genesis 1:31)

Summary Statement

(DISPLAY SLIDE 6.)



Complementarity, the position of biblical womanhood, is rooted in the Trinity and established in Creation.

If we build our house on this rock, when the rains and winds come (and they WILL come) we will stand.

If we're rooted in the 1950s, our roots are too shallow. They will not hold us steady so we can withstand the storms of life.

V. Concluding Thoughts on the Depth of Biblical Womanhood

(DISPLAY SLIDE 7.)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

It is safe to say:

Biblical womanhood is much deeper than most of us ever thought.

And when we examine the significance of biblical womanhood we can say:

Biblical womanhood is also much more significant than most of us thought.

VI. The Significance of Biblical Womanhood

A. Significance Because the Stakes are High

The stakes are high, very high. Think back to the Dr. Al Mohler quote in Lesson 4, "... this controversy reaches the deepest questions of Christian identity and biblical authority."

Yes, the very authority of Scripture is at stake.

Of course, nothing (no one) can rid the Scripture of its authority any more than Nietzsche could make God dead by declaring him dead.

But, when we decide to pick away at the Scriptures and choose not only what to believe and not to believe, but what to obey and not to obey, we are in essence saying that the Bible has no authority and what does that say about the author?

When we attack the letter, we attack the writer of that letter. The authority of Scripture reflects on the character and very existence of the author, God Himself. This is no small matter. This is very significant.

Again, let's review a quote from an earlier lesson (Lesson 2) from Mark Dever.

...there are issues more central to the gospel than gender issues. However, there may be no way the authority of Scripture is being undermined more quickly or more thoroughly in our day than through the hermeneutics of egalitarian readings of the Bible. And when the authority of Scripture is undermined, the gospel will not long be acknowledged.³



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 8.**)

The authority of Scripture is at stake.

The character of God is at stake.

And we could even say: The Gospel is at stake.

The Gospel: God, the Father, because of His love for us, sent His one and only Son to die for us—to cleanse us with His blood, to wipe away the guilt, nailing our sins to the cross in order to reconcile us to the Father.

If His Word is maligned and His character slandered, why would anybody be drawn to the Father through Christ?

Biblical womanhood is significant because the stakes are high.

B. Significance Because There is a Metanarrative

Biblical women have significant lives because we play a significant part in this eternal metanarrative.

When we conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of our calling, we magnify His name. He can use us to draw others to Himself.

And so each of us must ask:

Will I magnify Him or malign His word? (Titus 2:5)

Will I adorn his doctrine making it appealing to others, or will I strip it bare making it appear ugly and uninviting? (Titus 2:10)

3. Mark Dever, as quoted in: Grudem, Wayne. *Evangelical Feminism—A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 2006), 19.

Once we grasp the depth of biblical womanhood and embrace the significance of biblical womanhood, then we must ask the question: How do I live?

VI. How We Live Today

Let's again go back and remember Titus 2:11-14.

Titus 2:11-14—For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 9.**)



Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.

We live between the appearance of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, and the coming of the glory of God when Christ comes again.

And in this present age we are to do two things:

- wait
- live

A. Wait

Wait in hope, and while we're waiting renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives.

When we wait in hope, we have a perspective that those outside of Christ don't have.

This kind of hopeful waiting creates a patience that confounds those around us. This hope while we wait makes us bold (not angry) to live and speak for Christ.

And while we're waiting—we live!

B. Live

Who would have thought that how we love our husbands and children, or show kindness, or keep ourselves pure, or demonstrate self-control, or graciously submit to male leadership in our churches would have eternal significance? But it does.

How we live our lives as strong women with soft hearts is very significant.

When we live in joyful obedience to the Word of God, we adorn the Bible and make it look inviting to others.

When we demonstrate our trust in God when things are difficult, we make Him look good.

When we know who we are and where we are because we belong to Christ, we reflect the light of the Gospel to a dark and dying world.

Our lives are very significant!

VII. A Final Challenge

A. In Our Present Age

- Our families are at a defining moment.
- The church is at a crossroads.
- The culture is at a hinge point.

And you and I can make a difference.

B. As Biblical Women

Direct the women to complete the following statements in the Student Guide.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 10.**)

- We can define the family according to God's design, beginning with our own family and then reaching out to others.
- We can make the argument for God's design for the organization of the church by living out that design in our own church with grace and joy.



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 11.**)

We can tip the scale toward God's Truth in our culture as we incorporate into our live "The Six Distinctives of a Biblical Woman" —

- transformed by a renewed mind,
- content heart,

- contending for the faith,
- filled with hope and joy,
- carrying the light of God's glory in our earthen jars.

A biblical woman is a significant woman.
There is deep significance to biblical womanhood.

VIII. On a Personal Note

I want to end on a very personal note and ask: What about you?

Biblical womanhood is not an abstract idea or theory. It's not just another philosophy or argument to add to the conversation. It's not just theology or doctrine.

Biblical womanhood is YOU AND ME.

How are you doing?

How's your heart now that you've completed this course?

Do you remember those questions (from week 1) that I said every biblical woman must answer?



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 12.**)

Do you trust the Bible?

Do you trust the Author of the Bible?

Do you like the way He made you?

Are you willing to bank everything on the authority of Scripture?

Are you willing to allow the Holy Spirit to continually mold your heart to be in line with His will for you?



(DISPLAY **SLIDE 13.**)

Not only does biblical womanhood strike at the very core of who God is—it strikes at the very core of who you are.

IX. Conclusion

If you've gained some clarity about how God made you—in His image with a nurturing nature and helping role.

If you've garnered some tools to give you confidence and courage to take a stand and not be swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine and empty philosophy and godless argument, however plausible it might seem.

If you've caught the vision that you have purpose and that purpose is to glorify God in all you do.

And if the phrase *He is most glorified in me when I am most satisfied in Him* has new meaning for you.

Then we've done our job. Thank you, Lord!

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 14.**)



As always, you will want to allow time for the women to reflect and fill out the Personal Application box. Experience has shown that most women will take extra time after this last class to reflect. Allow as much time as possible. At the appropriate time, draw the quiet time to a close, give a personal word of encouragement and gratitude, and then pray. You will then dismiss your class.

The Decisions We Face

(DISPLAY **SLIDE 15.**)



Personal Application (10 minutes)

Lesson 8

Resources

Outline of Lesson 8

The Deep Significance of Biblical Womanhood

Fellowship (10 minutes)

Opening Session (20 minutes)

—Welcome (5 minutes)

—Introductory Remarks (15 minutes)

I. Purpose Statement

A. Encouraged and Equipped

B. Prepared

Move to Discussion Groups (55 minutes)

Teaching Session, (55 minutes)

I. Introduction

II. The Depth of Biblical Womanhood

A. Not about the 1950s

B. Biblical Womanhood Has Deep Roots

III. The Trinitarian Design of Biblical Womanhood

A. Bruce Ware Quotes

B. The Foundation of the Complementarian Position

IV. The Trinity

A. The Eternal Trinity

B. The Trinity at Creation

1. Creation of the Universe

2. Creation of Man

V. Concluding Thoughts on the Depth of Biblical Womanhood

VI. The Significance of Biblical Womanhood

A. Significance Because the Stakes Are High

B. Significance Because There is a Metanarrative

VII. How We Live Today

A. Wait

B. Live

VIII. A Final Challenge

A. In Our Present Age

B. As Biblical Women

IX. On a Personal Note

X. Conclusion

The Decisions We Face

Personal Application (10 minutes)

Notes on the Trinity

Excerpts from Father, Son and Holy Spirit

by Bruce A. Ware

An authority-submission structure marks the very nature of the eternal Being of the one who is three. In this authority-submission structure, the three Personas understand the rightful place each has. (pg 21)

We are made in the image of God, and so we can live rightly and best only when we mirror in our relationships the relationships true of the eternal God himself. Yes, we are called to be like God in character, but we also are created to be like God in relationship with one another. (pg 22)

An orthodox definition of the Trinity, taking from Augustine's and other church fathers' insights, then, would assert the following:

The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that God's whole and undivided essence belongs equally, eternally, simultaneously, and fully to each of the three distinct Persons of the Godhead. (pg 41)

And the three members of the Godhead work together in harmony. Not in unison, but in harmony. "Unison" expresses a form of unity, yet it has no texture and richness. "Harmony," however, communicates the idea of unified expression but only through differing yet complementary parts. (pg42)

For all eternity, the order establishes that God is the head of Christ; within the created sphere, there is an ordering such that Christ is the head of man; and within human relationships, the order establishes that man is the head of woman. Intrinsic to God's own nature is a fundamental taxis, and he has so designed creation to reflect his own being, his own internal and eternal relationships, in part, through created and designed relationships of taxis.

The egalitarian movement in our evangelical circles, sadly, seeks to deny this very taxis, both in God's Trinitarian structure of relations and in those elements of the created order that he made to reflect the same kind of taxis...To insist on egalitarian relationships where God has designed structures of authority and submission is to indicate, even implicitly, that we just don't like the very authority-submission structures that characterize who God is, and that characterize his good and wise created design for us...what we have chafed at is, at heart, the very nature of God himself. (pgs 72-73)


In short, we should look not only to the character of God, and to the commands of God, but also to the triune roles and relationships among the Triune Persons of God to see what it means to live our lives as his images. We are created to reflect

what God is like, and this includes a reflection of the personal relationships within the Trinity. (pg 133)

God is good. His ways are good. And his design for human life and relationships is good. And here we see from the doctrine of the Trinity that both equality of essence and differentiation of role are good.

... we will experience the joy and satisfaction of human life only when we embrace, not resist, his created design. And as this good and wise created design is lived out in human relationships, as wives and husbands, as congregations and elders, as people living with one another in community, we can be confident that when we live out what God is like we will enter into the good that he has designed for us to know. (Pgs 155-15)

—Ware, Bruce A. *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005). Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.



*So even to old
age and gray
hairs,
O God, do not
forsake me, until
I proclaim your
might to another
generation, your
power to all
those to come.*

—Psalm 71:18

APPENDIX I

Purpose Statement: Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture

The purpose of the Bible study titled Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture is:

- To encourage and equip women through the study of the Bible to embrace the truth about biblical womanhood, so they can joyfully live out this truth in their personal lives and clearly articulate this truth to others.

This is a significant purpose because:

- There are false teachers within the church today who are doing a good job of presenting the “plausible arguments” of evangelical feminism.

Colossians 2: 2-8—I want you to have a “full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments...as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

- As Christian women of the Word, we must guard against becoming 2 Timothy 3 women.

2 Timothy 3:1—But understand this that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

APPENDIX II

Recommended Reading List

Conrad, Angie, Janet Cox, Tammy Eagan, and Sandy Kershaw, Sandy. *At the Feet of Ordinary Women*. (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 2002).

Crittenden, Danielle. *What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us*. (New York: Touchstone, 1999).

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(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1991).

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James, Sharon. *God's Design for Women: Biblical Womanhood for Today*. (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2007).

Kassian, Mary A. *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1992).

Kassian, Mary A. *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005).

Kassian, Mary A. *Women, Creation and the Fall*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990).

MacArthur, John, Jr. *God's High Calling for*

Women. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1987).

MacArthur, John, Jr. *The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in the Age of Deception*. (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2007).

Mahaney, Carolyn, and Nancy Leigh DeMoss. *Feminine Appeal: Seven Virtues of a Godly Wife and Mother*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2003).

Peace, Martha. *Becoming a Titus 2 Woman: A Bible Study with Martha Peace*. (Bemidji, Minn.: Focus Publishing, 1997).

Peace, Martha. *The Excellent Wife: A Biblical Perspective*. (Bemidji, Minn.: Focus Publishing, 1999).

Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990).

Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem. *50 Crucial Questions about Manhood and Womanhood*. (Louisville, Kent.: The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, 1992).

Piper, John. *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990).

Ware, Bruce A. *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005).

Recommended Websites

Albert Mohler's Blog: <http://www.albertmohler.com/blog.php>

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: <http://www.cbmw.org/>

Carolyn Mahaney's blog: <http://girltalk.blogs.com/>

John Piper's Website, Desiring God: <http://www.desiringgod.org/>

APPENDIX III

The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

In December, 1987, the newly-formed Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood met in Danvers, Massachusetts, to compose the Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Prior to the listing of the actual affirmations that comprise the Danvers Statement, we have included a section detailing contemporary developments that serve as the rationale for these affirmations. We offer this statement to the evangelical world, knowing that it will stimulate healthy discussion, hoping that it will gain widespread assent.

Affirmations

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18).
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:12-14).
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Gen 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor 11:7-9).
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen 3:1-7, 12, 16).
 - In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
 - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7).
 - In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15).

7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2).
8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21).
10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

APPENDIX IV

Statement of Commitment

Because of the critical nature of this study's subject matter it is important that our group discussion leaders are in agreement with and support the foundational beliefs that underlie the material presented.

There is much confusion in our culture regarding the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the home and in the church. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you as a leader have carefully and prayerfully thought through what it means to be a biblical woman, so you can lead the women in your small group to the clear truth of the Bible.

Before leading a small discussion group in *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture*, please reread each of the 10 affirmations from Danvers Statement (included in its entirety in Appendix 3 of the Student Guide) on the following pages and put your initials after each that you agree with and will support throughout this study and in your personal life. Following this statement, you will find a place to put your signature indicating your confirmation of the individual initialing.

If you have any questions or need clarification on any of the affirmations, please talk with your class teacher. If you'd like to know more about the Danvers Statement see footnote below the statement.

Have your class teacher sign off where her signature is needed. (Note: If this study is being taught as part of the ministry of a local church, we assume that you will be in compliance with the guidelines of that church as well as in agreement with the Danvers Statement.)

Thank you for serving the Lord through the study of *Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture*. May you be blessed as you are a blessing to others.

The 10 Affirmations of the Danvers Statement¹

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18). _____
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:12-14). _____
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Gen 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor 11:7-9). _____
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen 3:1-7, 12, 16)._____
 - In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.

1. For further information on the Danvers Statement go to www.cbmw.org

- In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15). _____
 6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse. _____
 - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7).
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 7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2). _____
 8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will. _____
 9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21). _____
 10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large. _____

After carefully and prayerfully reading the Danvers Statement along with the designated Bible references and discussing the statement with the teaching leader of this Bible study, I have verified my agreement with and full support of each of the 10 affirmations in the statement by putting my initials on the lines following each affirmation and signing on the designated line below.

Discussion Leader's Signature _____ Date _____

I have discussed the Danvers Statement with the discussion leader who signed above and am satisfied that she is in agreement with the statement and will fully support each of the listed affirmations.

Teaching Leader's Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX V

The Ultimate Meaning of True Womanhood

The following message from Dr. John Piper was given during the 2008 True Woman Conference *in Chicago, Illinois on October 9, 2008.*

My aim in this message is to clarify from God's word the ultimate meaning of true womanhood, and to motivate you, by God's grace, to embrace it as your highest calling. What I will say is foundational to the "True Woman Manifesto" which I regard as a faithful, clear, true, and wise document.

The Opposite of a Wimpy Woman

I would like to begin by stating one huge assumption that I bring to this task tonight. I mention it partly because it may give you an emotional sense of what I hope you become because of this conference. And I mention it partly because it explains why I minister the way I do and why this message sounds the way it does.

My assumption is that wimpy theology makes wimpy women. And I don't like wimpy women. I didn't marry a wimpy woman. And with Noël, I am trying to raise my daughter Talitha, who turns 13 on Saturday, not to be a wimpy woman.

Marie Durant

The opposite of a wimpy woman is not a brash, pushy, loud, controlling, sassy, uppity, arrogant Amazon. The opposite of a wimpy woman is 14-year-old Marie Durant, a French Christian in the 17th century who was arrested for being a Protestant and told she could be released if she said one phrase: "I abjure." Instead, wrote on the wall of her cell, "Resist," and stayed there 38 years until she died, doing just that (Karl Olsson, *Passion*, [New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963], 116-117).

Gladys and Esther Staines

The opposite of a wimpy woman is Gladys Staines who in 1999, after serving with her husband Graham in India for three decades learned that he and their two sons, Phillip (10) and Timothy (6), had been set on fire and burned alive by the very people they had served for 34 years, said, "I have only one message for the people of India. I'm not bitter. Neither am I angry. Let us burn hatred and spread the flame of Christ's love."

The opposite of a wimpy woman is her 13-year-old daughter Esther (rightly named!) who said, when asked how she felt about her father's murder, "I praise the Lord that He found my father worthy to die for Him."

Krista and Vicki

The opposite of a wimpy woman is Krista and Vicki who between them have had over 65 surgeries because of so-called birth defects, Apert Syndrome and Hypertelorism, and who testify today through huge challenges, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”; and this: “Even though my life has been difficult, I know that God loves me and created me just the way I am. He has taught me to persevere and to trust Him more than anything.”

Joni Eareckson Tada

The opposite of a wimpy woman is Joni Eareckson Tada who has spent the last 41 years in a wheel chair, and prays, “Oh, thank you, thank you for this wheel chair! By tasting hell in this life, I’ve been driven to think seriously about what faces me in the next. This paralysis is my greatest mercy” (Christianity Today, January, 2004, 50).

Suzie

The opposite of a wimpy woman is Suzie who lost her husband four years ago at age 59, found breast cancer three months later, then lost her mom and writes, “Now I see that I have been crying for the wrong kind of help. I now see, that my worst suffering is my sin—my sin of self-centeredness and self-pity. . . . I know that with His grace, his lovingkindness, and his merciful help, my thoughts can be reformed and my life conformed to be more like His Son.”

Wimpy Theology Makes Wimpy Women

Wimpy theology makes wimpy women. That’s my assumption that I bring to this evening. Wimpy theology simply does not give a woman a God that is big enough, strong enough, wise enough, and good enough to handle the realities of life in away that magnifies the infinite worth of Jesus Christ. Wimpy theology is plagued by woman-centeredness and man-centeredness. Wimpy theology doesn’t have the granite foundation of God’s sovereignty or the solid steel structure of a great God-centered purpose for all things.

The Ultimate Purpose for the Universe

So I turn to my to my main point, the ultimate meaning of true womanhood, and start by stating this great God-centered purpose of all things: God’s ultimate purpose for the universe and for all of history and for your life is to display the glory of Christ in its highest expression, namely, in his dying to make a rebellious people his everlasting and supremely happy bride. To say it another way, God’s ultimate purpose in creating the world and choosing to let it become the sin-wracked world that it is, is so that the greatness of the glory of Christ could be put on display at Calvary where he bought his rebellious bride at the cost of his life.

I base this statement of God’s ultimate purpose on several texts. For example, Revelation 13:8 where John refers to God’s writing names “before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.” So in God’s mind Christ was already slain before the creation of the world. This was his plan from the beginning. Why?

Because in being slain “to make a wretch his treasure”—to make a rebel his bride—the glory of his grace would shine most brightly, and that was his ultimate purpose according to Ephesians 1:4-6, “In

love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ . . . to the praise of the glory of his grace.”

The Glory of Christ at the Cross

From the very beginning, God’s design in creating the universe and governing it the way he does has been to put the glory of his grace on display in the death of his Son for the sake of his bride. “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her . . . 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” (Ephesians 5:25-27). The ultimate purpose of creation and redemption is to put the glory of Christ on display in purchasing and purifying his bride, the church.

True Womanhood: At the Center of God’s Purpose

Now where does this take us in regard to the ultimate meaning of true womanhood? It does not take us to wimpy theology or wimpy women. It is not wimpy to say that God created the universe and governs all things to magnify his own grace in the death of his Son for the salvation of his bride. That’s not wimpy. And it doesn’t lead to wimpy womanhood.

But it does lead to womanhood. True womanhood. In fact, it leads to the mind-boggling truth that womanhood and manhood—masculinity and femininity—belong at the center of God’s ultimate purpose. Womanhood and manhood were not an afterthought or a peripheral thought in God’s plan. God designed them precisely so that they would serve to display the glory of his Son dying to have his happy, admiring bride.

Created to Display Jesus’ Glory

Genesis 1:27 says, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking God created us this way, and then later when Christ came to do his saving work, God looked around and said, “Well, that’s a good analogy, man and woman. I’ll describe my Son’s salvation with that. I’ll say it’s like a husband dying to save his bride.”

It didn’t happen like that. God did not look around and find manhood and womanhood to be a helpful comparison to his Son’s relation to the church. He created us as male and female precisely so that we could display the glory of his Son. Our sexuality is designed for the glory of the Son of God—especially the glory of his dying to have his admiring bride.

In Ephesians 5:31, Paul quotes Genesis 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” And then he adds this, “This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.” In other words, from the beginning, manhood and womanhood were designed to display the glory of Christ in his relationship to the church, his bride.

A Distinctive Calling to Display the Glory of Christ

In other words, the ultimate meaning of true womanhood is this: It is a distinctive calling of God to display the glory of his Son in ways that would not be displayed if there were no womanhood. If there were only generic persons and not male and female, the glory of Christ would be diminished in the world. When God described the glorious work of his Son as the sacrifice of a husband for his bride,

he was telling us why he made us male and female. He made us this way so that our maleness and femaleness would display more fully the glory of his Son in relation to his blood-bought bride.

This means that if you try to reduce womanhood to physical features and biological functions, and then determine your role in the world merely on the basis of competencies, you don't just miss the point of womanhood, you diminish the glory of Christ in your own life. True womanhood is indispensable in God's purpose to display the fullness of the glory of his Son. Your distinctive female personhood is not incidental. It exists because of its God-designed relationship to the central event of history, the death of the Son of God.

So let me say a word about what that looks like if you are married and if you are single.

A Word to the Married

First, a word to the married. Paul says in Ephesians 5:22-24, "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."

The point here is that marriage is meant to display the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church. And the way it does this is by men being men and women being women in marriage. These are no more interchangeable than Christ is interchangeable with the church. Men take their cues from Christ as the head, and women take their cues from what the church is called to be in her allegiance to Christ. This is described by Paul in terms of headship and submission. Here are my definitions of headship and submission based on this text:

- Headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like, servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home.
- Submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts.

The point here is not to go into detail about how this gets worked out from marriage to marriage. The point is that these two, headship and submission, are different. They correspond to true manhood and true womanhood, which are different. And these differences are absolutely essential by God's design, so that marriage will display, as in a mirror dimly, something of the glory of the sacrificial love of Christ for his bride and the lavish reverence and admiration of the bride for her husband.

I know this leaves a hundred questions unanswered—about unbelieving husbands, and believing husbands who don't take spiritual leadership, and wives who resist their husbands' leadership, and those who receive it but don't affirm it. But if you—you married women—embrace the truth that your womanhood, true womanhood, is uniquely and indispensably created by God to display the glory of his Son in the way you relate to your husband, you will have calling of infinite significance.

But what if you aren't married?

A Word to Singles

The apostle Paul clearly loved his singleness because of the radical freedom for ministry that it gave him (1 Corinthians 7:32-38). One of the reasons he was free to celebrate his singleness and call others to join him in it, is that, even though marriage is meant to display the glory of Christ, there are truths about Christ and his kingdom that shine more clearly through singleness than through marriage. I'll give you three examples:

- 1) A life of Christ-exalting singleness bears witness that the family of God grows not by propagation through sexual intercourse, but by regeneration through faith in Christ. If you never marry, and if you embrace a lifetime of chastity and biological childlessness, and if you receive this from the Lord's hand as a gift with contentment, and if you gather to yourself the needy and the lonely, and spend yourself for the gospel without self-pity, because Christ has met your need, then he will be mightily glorified in your life, and particularly so because you are a woman.
- 2) A life of Christ-exalting singleness bears witness that relationships in Christ are more permanent, and more precious, than relationships in families. The single woman who turns away from regretting the absence of her own family, and gives herself to creating God's family in the church, will find the flowering of her womanhood in ways she never dreamed, and Christ will be uniquely honored because of it.
- 3) A life of Christ-exalting singleness bears witness that marriage is temporary, and finally gives way to the relationship to which it was pointing all along: Christ and the church—the way a picture is no longer needed when you see face to face. Marriage is a beautiful thing. But it is not the main thing. If it were, Jesus would not have said, “In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven” (Matthew 22:30). Single womanhood, content to walk with Christ, is a great witness that he is a better husband than any man, and in the end, will be the only husband in the universe.

In other words, true womanhood can flourish in marriage and singleness.

True Womanhood for the Glory of Christ

I commend to you this truth: The ultimate purpose of God in history is the display of the glory of his Son in dying for his bride. God has created man as male and female because there are aspects of Christ's glory which would not be known if they were not reflected in the complementary differences of manhood and womanhood. Therefore, true womanhood is a distinctive calling of God to display the glory of his Son in ways that would not be displayed if there were no womanhood.

Married womanhood has its unique potential for magnifying Christ that single womanhood does not have. Single womanhood has its unique potential for magnifying Christ which married womanhood does not have.

So whether you marry or remain single, do not settle for a wimpy theology. It is beneath you. God is too great. Christ is too glorious. True womanhood is too strategic. Don't waste it. Your womanhood—your true womanhood—was made for the glory of Jesus Christ.

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APPENDIX VI

Helpful Hints for Leading a Discussion¹

Personal Preparation Before Class

- Pray for sensitivity in your own heart to God’s leading regarding the women in your group.
- Pray for the women in your group—that they will have humble and teachable hearts; that they will thoughtfully prepare for each lesson by doing each week’s at home in the Student’s Guide; that they will be able to make application of God’s Word to their lives.
- Think through the lesson—which questions to expect best sharing, and which might be more challenging. Carefully read the Explanatory Notes
- Time Management—plan the approximate time you think you’ll spend on each question. Review Explanatory Notes, and then mark/highlight in your Student’s Guide the questions on which you want to spend time and others on which you can briefly touch.

Small Group Discussion Time

- Have nametags for everyone—every time.
- Give a warm welcome, then start on time—get right into the lesson!
- Welcome any latecomers (briefly), and tell them the question you are on.
- After a question is asked, be comfortable while the women read their answer.
- Smile and call on women if there is a lag/no sharing.
- Give short responses of appreciation for women’s sharing:
 - “Thank you, Anne. That was helpful.”
 - “I appreciate your perspective (or honesty) about that.”

Avoid Common Pitfalls

Teaching—Remember you are the facilitator of the discussion.

Talking too much—The more you talk the less the group can.

Gushing over someone’s answer—makes others not want to share

Allowing someone to dominate discussion

Answering the questions yourself—but some personal sharing may be appropriate

Long pauses—Repeat a phrase or question; or offer short comment: “What were your thoughts on this?” “Who will get us started?” “This was challenging, I’m eager to hear your thoughts.”

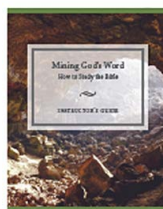
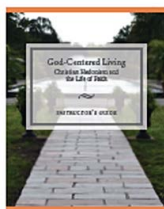
1. Thanks to Laura Lunger for these helpful hints.

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture

Standing on Truth in Our Shaky World

Biblical Womanhood in a Postmodern Culture: Standing on the Truth in Our Shaky World is an inductive Bible study designed specifically for women. The purpose of this study is to encourage and equip women through the study of the Bible to embrace the truth about biblical womanhood so they will joyfully live out this truth in their personal lives and clearly articulate this truth to others. The eight-lesson curriculum is adaptable for use with large or small groups and for use in women's ministries within the local church or in a private home setting. The curriculum may be taught as an eight-week course or can easily be expanded to a longer time frame. Personal homework, small group discussion and direct teaching are all important parts of this study.

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