

# EQUIPPED: Tough Questions

## Chapter 6

### What Does the Bible Say About Women and Feminism?

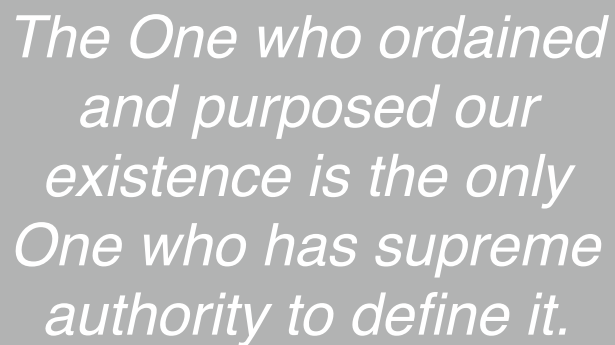
Women. You'd think that since I am a woman, I'd be ready to dive in head first. But let's face it, it's definitely a deep subject for a shallow mind. I'm just oh-so glad that I don't have to rely on my opinion about how to approach the vastness of the variety of women's issues that we face today.

God's Word has got this.

The thing is, before I ever pop open the pages of Holy Writ, I'm absolutely sure that this study about women may ruffle some modern day feathers. *Mine included.*

But, if we sincerely understand that the One who ordained and purposed our existence is the only One who has supreme authority to define it, then we will swallow our personal girl-power pride and embrace what is true.

He's the Potter. We are the clay. He's the Creator. We are His creation. We are His to define.



*The One who ordained  
and purposed our  
existence is the only  
One who has supreme  
authority to define it.*

There is a gamut of women's issues I would love to cover, but rather than use women's issues as are our springboard into the Word, we are going to use the Word to springboard into women's issues.

This winding, bumpy, and dangerous journey reminds me of when I went white water rafting at Cullasaja Falls.

I sat down thinking all was going to go well but then the ride began. Crashing into rocks, whirling and whipping around through the whitewater spin cycle when all of a sudden, I was thrown 5 feet up and out of the boat. Sucked up under the raft in rotating motion, I just knew I was going to meet Jesus that day. But, right when I thought I couldn't hold my breath another second, the guide reached down under the boat, grabbed my hands, and flung me into the boat like a rag doll.

Today's study comes with a warning. So, buckle up...it's going to be a wild ride. But you can place your heart at ease and trust that, our Heavenly Father - the ultimate Guide - knows exactly what He's doing.

In our journey, we'll explore what God's Word says about three specific areas that encompass a woman's life. Along the way, we will address the biblical response to modern day feminism.

- *God's Perfect Design for Women*
- *God's Intentional Call on Women*
- *God's Relentless Love for Women*

So, without further ado, let's get busy digging!

## God's Design for Women

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She wasn't an afterthought. She was the completion of His creation. Not from the dust, but from man's side. Not because God had to, but because He wanted to.

At the end of each day, God gazed at His creation and the Bible says, "God saw that it was good." But what God said *wasn't good*, was that man was alone.

*"It is not good that man should be alone;  
I will make him a helper comparable to him."  
(Genesis 2:18)*

Somewhere, in the midst of the Garden of Eden, God brought beasts, birds, and every living creature to Adam for him to name. But something was missing. It was the one thing that would make Adam complete. Someone like him but different. Someone who would help him. Not rule him. Not someone less than him. But someone who was comparable, complimentary, equivalent, and suitable.

Read Genesis 1:26-27 and answer the following:

- Whose image was man created in? \_\_\_\_\_
- Whose image was woman created in? \_\_\_\_\_

Like Adam, woman was made in the image of God. By Divine design, she was just as much an image-bearer as Adam was.

Read the detailed account of the creation of man Genesis 2:7 and woman (Genesis 2:18-25).

- What did God say wasn't good? \_\_\_\_\_
- What did the Lord choose to do to remedy man's alone-ness? \_\_\_\_\_
- What was the substance God used to create every living creature except for woman? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What did God form woman from? \_\_\_\_\_
- What did Adam name woman and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read Genesis 3:20. Woman's new name was Eve - "life, living, life-giver." What are some reasons that Adam may have chosen to grace Eve with that name in light of the circumstances? Share how you think woman's new name may have made her feel. (We don't have biblical evidence for the reason or how she felt, but sometimes, answering questions like this help us remember these were real people, with real lives, and real raw emotions.)

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I find it beautifully ironic that the woman who had not yet conceived a child and who opened death's door for the whole human race would be graced with a name that means *life-giver*. Let's face it. It may have been the enemy who came clothed in a serpent's suit that fateful day, but it was Eve who fell, enticed her hubby, and ultimately brought death upon all of mankind.

Oh what grace laced within a name! Scandalously deceived to death. Yet gifted the life-giving name, *Eve*.

Created to complete man, yet, existing as her own unique being.

Eve was to become the mother of all living - designed to give life, partner, strengthen, encourage, support, explore the pure and untapped, touch the untouched, experience firsts, blaze trails, pave pathways, chart the uncharted... together. With man. With Adam.

Formed from his rib, Eve was exclusively and distinctly His one-of-a-kind creation.

Like Eve, you were created to be exquisitely different from man. On purpose. For a purpose. She was to be his helper. His *`ezer*. A word used to describe a mutual peer relationship of helping one another. But she was even more than man's helper... she was bone of his bones - flesh of his flesh. Equal in existence and value.

### So, what about equality? Feminism? And gender neutrality?

I was born in the 60's when women were burning their bras and entering the workforce at warp speed. Women like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Margaret Fuller, and Lucretia Mott had been leading the fight for social, religious, and political equality.

Like any movement, a mixture of ideas rarely mesh into one central theme when a multitude of personalities collide. Many, well-intentioned and reasonable women peacefully protested to create some much-needed change. Others were vehement and violent, spewing out their personal propaganda and veering from the main objective, which was equal rights.

Women's Suffrage gave way to Women's Lib and what started out with well-meaning minds morphed into a radical agenda-driven ideology.

Looking back on where it all started and where we are today, I couldn't help but wonder how far feminism has strayed from femininity and how misunderstood and devalued the role of a woman, a wife and a mother has become.

Somewhere along the way, the goal of establishing *equal rights* for women became a source of gender confusion. Equality is important...even biblical.

But *equal* does not equal *same*.

God intentionally created men and women with distinct differences. Equal, but different. Women have different needs. Different desires. Different emotions. Different strengths. Different weaknesses. And even different perspectives.

Those differences don't make us less than a man. They give man what he can't have without us. God created woman because it wasn't good for man to be alone ([Genesis 2:18](#)). She was created to be his helper because he obviously needed one. Not the other way around.

So, the idea of women being strong and capable is very biblical.

***Unfortunately, the feminist movement has minimized the power of a woman in an attempt to magnify it.*** And in the process, the true power and beauty of feminism has been completely misunderstood and misrepresented.

We are women because God ordained that we would be women. Seeking to be a strong and capable women actually accurately depicts who God created us to be ([Genesis 2:18-25](#)). But our strength and abilities should in no way cause us to lose our identity as women.

**In fact it's our identity as women who are born into the family of God that gives us the power to overcome catty, competitive, conflicts and insecurities. We should be each other's biggest cheerleaders. Not our most fierce competitors.**

Every one of your 23 pairs of XX chromosomes are premeditated and purposed by God. God doesn't make mistakes. Our race, our nationality, the era in which we are born, and our gender are all very intentional God-orchestrated components to our existence.

Gender is a non-negotiable, yet beautifully identifying, feature of who we are. Not something we should avoid, ignore, reject, or try to change. Your chromosomes define you as male or female.

**Read [Genesis 1:27](#), [Psalm 139:13-18](#), [Isaiah 43:7](#), [Isaiah 43:21](#), [Ephesians 2:10](#), [Colossians 1:16](#) and share what God's Word says about God's heart for His creation.**

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While [Ephesians 2:10](#) speaks specifically to those who have been born into the family of God (which is ultimately His will for all of us - [John 3:16](#), [2 Peter 3:9](#)), each verse above demonstrates that God's heart for His creation is that all of us, whether male or female, would glorify God, image Him well, understand we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and live our lives to praise His name.

**God’s design is that women function as women and men function as men. Equal in value. Different in essence. It is an affront to His intentional creation to defy our specific God-given genders and seek a life apart from His plan and His purpose.**

The confusion about genders is truly a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of Scripture.

Being a woman doesn’t mean we can’t be strong. It doesn’t mean we can’t be athletic and perfectly capable of taking care of ourselves. In fact, one of the signature qualities of a lady is her strength. Not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually, as well.

She seems like an unattainable ideal. But the Proverbs 31 woman is a mom’s version of the kind of woman she wanted her son to marry. God-loving. God-fearing. Strong. Loving. Loyal. Kind. Generous. Thoughtful. A hard worker. A good wife. A good mom.

Scripture is chock full of exemplary examples of ladies living out God’s design for women in real life. But no other passage is as concise and complete as Proverbs 31... so let’s be the brave women we say we are and dive head first into the life of a woman who may make us feel like we’re drowning in our own insufficiencies.

Not so that we will feel insufficient. But to cause us to rise up. To be. To live. To experience *strong* in a whole new way. To embrace who we are and who we are called to be with courage and tenacity. To fight for who we are. Not carbon copies of the double X chromosomes. But individually who God created us to be. Women. Different. Strong. Beautiful. Unique.

**Below I’ve provided Proverbs 31:10-31 with the passage on one side and a blank space on the other. Please take a minute and write every quality, temperament, or character trait that you see within the context of each verse.**

\* Remember, if you click the verse link above, it will take you to where the passage is listed both in the New King James Version and the Amplified Version. Looking at the passage in both versions will lend depth to your study, as well as your understanding. So, I’d like to encourage you to look at both versions if you are able.

**What was the most surprising thing you discovered about the illusive Mrs. P 31?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Would you describe her as strong or weak and why?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PROVERBS 31:10-31	QUALITY / CHARACTERISTIC
10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth <i>is</i> far above rubies.	
11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain.	
12 She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.	
13 She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands.	
14 She is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar.	
15 She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants.	
16 She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard.	
17 She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms.	
18 She perceives that her merchandise <i>is</i> good, and her lamp does not go out by night.	
19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hand holds the spindle.	
20 She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.	
21 She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household <i>is</i> clothed with scarlet.	
22 She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing <i>is</i> fine linen and purple.	
23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.	
24 She makes linen garments and sells <i>them</i> , and supplies sashes for the merchants.	
25 Strength and honor <i>are</i> her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come.	
26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue <i>is</i> the law of kindness.	
27 She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.	
28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband <i>also</i> , and he praises her:	
29 "Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all."	
30 Charm <i>is</i> deceitful and beauty <i>is</i> passing, but a woman <i>who</i> fears the Lord, she shall be praised.	
31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.	

The Proverbs woman wasn't sinless, but she was strong. She was the epitome of the ideal woman who left such an impact that those who knew her best called her blessed. That's the kind of woman King Lemuel's momma wanted him to marry. The kind of woman we want our sons to marry. The kind of woman I want to be.

God's design for women is summed up in this power-packed passage of Scripture. Whether a woman is married or not, these are traits and temperaments that don't *make* her strong, but reveal that she already is. ***There's a strength within every woman longing to be set free but it can only be fully realized when she gives her life to Christ.***

It's then that she's secure in her identity as a woman. She works hard, loves her family, cares for her community, manages her home, sees to it that her family is fed well and dresses decent, and she runs a business in her *spare* time.

God's design for women is not that we are militant mobilizers but, instead, that we are gracious, godly, and strong examples of biblical womanhood. We have the power to initiate change. But we don't have to change who we are to create change in our world.

We don't have to love lace to exude grace. We don't have to be domestic divas to communicate how feminine we are. We can love sports, enjoy hunting and fishing, like cool cars, driving trucks, and getting our hands dirty. We are no less woman when our bents lean towards things typically attributed to men.

But liking *guy* things doesn't change our gender. We can't lose who we are because we're prone to do or like certain activities or jobs that men like. You can be a tomboy through and through and still embrace your womanhood.

So, sweet friend, breathe in your God-given intentional identity as *woman*. Your gender is not neutral. It's part of who you are. You are woman. Embracing who you are is more than okay. It's good...very good!

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## God's Intentional Call on Women



I remember taking my boys to the local theater to watch a play. Everyone actor had their part but there was only one leading role. Only one star.

Every role significant to the master plot. Each actor's presence necessary for the pieces to fit, for the story to unfold, and for the lines to flow fluidly. But every scene was deliberately designed to direct attention to the star.

We all have our part in the grand theater of life - but Jesus is the star of this eternal show. He's the Creator, Writer, Director, and Producer, as well.

He gets to determine what our part is in our temporary play on this planet.

Scripted in the pages of Scripture, God has given some pretty specific instructions as to what our role is to be. But have you noticed that when we talk about *roles* in this life, our current culture cringes?

Roles aren't intrinsically bad. It means we've been invited to be a part of the show. Not our version of it, but His show, played out His way. After all, He scripted it to the end. So, wouldn't it make sense to play this thing out on the grand stage of life the way that He intended?

## So what does the Bible say about our role as women in this world in which we live?

Read **Titus 2:3-5** and describe some of the roles, relationships and character traits found in this passage.

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I always say that Titus 2 is really about where the rubber hits the road in a woman's life. Roles and relationships, priorities and character. The day-to-day intertwining of where we live and who we influence.

What a beautiful expression of God-given responsibilities - and order - and submission...along with all the things our flesh flies hard against. Our desire to live as we want is sometimes contrary to what God calls us to do.

Even our cultural Christianity often steers clear of God's design for biblical womanhood.

Titus 2, in context, references women in relationship to the church. Paul is telling Titus what our roles should look like in order for the local church to be a clear expression and example of the Christian life.

Take a look at how each of the areas in Titus 2 deal with roles and character. In fact, look back at the Proverbs 31 chart two pages prior and write matching roles and/or characteristics beside the list below.

### **Older women...**

- Teach and live lives that honor God. \_\_\_\_\_
- They do express reverence \_\_\_\_\_
- They do behave themselves in a godly manner \_\_\_\_\_
- They don't slander \_\_\_\_\_
- They don't drink give themselves to drunkenness \_\_\_\_\_
- They do intentionally mentor younger women \_\_\_\_\_

### **Younger women learn from older women how to...**

- Love their husbands \_\_\_\_\_
  - Love their children \_\_\_\_\_
  - Be discreet \_\_\_\_\_
  - Be chaste \_\_\_\_\_
  - Be homemakers \_\_\_\_\_
  - Be good \_\_\_\_\_
  - Be obedient to their own husbands (Yes...it actually says be obedient. Yikes!) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

The Proverbs 31 woman and the Titus 2 instructions are just two passages that correlate clearly God's will for women. God created us to be wonderfully woven and beautifully complex.

We are women like Esther, born for such a time as this. Bold, strong, daring, insecure, fearful, fearless, called to serve God in our generation. With all our flaws and insecurities, God calls us to live risky lives, to impact this world with His blood-stained imprint of love, grace, and truth.

You are here for such a time as this. Not fully knowing and embracing the you God created you to be means you'll miss out on the significance insignificant humans can have.

So, my dear sweet sister, I want to take you on a little feminine ride that somehow is in symphony with, yet flies in the face of, modern day feminism. Join me as we navigate our way through the Word and discover God's design for women and how we can be all God created us to be.

**Below, I'm going to list an array of passages that identify what God's Word reveals about His very influential and intentional call for women. Beside each verse, please write out what it is you see women *doing* or *being*.**

DESCRIPTION	PASSAGE(S)
	<u>Proverbs 31:16, 24</u>
	<u>Genesis 29:9, Exodus 2:16</u>
	<u>Acts 16:14-15</u>
	<u>Ruth 2:3</u>
	<u>Judges 4:4-5</u>
	<u>Judges 4:6-10</u>
	<u>Luke 2:36-38, Exodus 15:20, 2 Kings 22:14-16</u>
	<u>1 Chronicles 25:5-6, Ezra 2:65</u>
	<u>Nehemiah 3:12</u>
	<u>Exodus 1:15, 16</u>
	<u>Romans 16:1</u>
	<u>1 Peter 3:5-6, Genesis 18:12</u>
	<u>Acts 6:36,39, Proverbs 31:20</u>
	<u>Proverbs 31:10,27-28, 2 Timothy 1:5</u>

The list above only gives us a snapshot of some of the important ways women worked, served, lead, and influenced communities and cultures throughout the ages. Societies rise and fall often based on the involvement - or the lack of involvement - of the women of its day.

Beautiful. Diverse. Smart. Savvy. Influential. World-changers. Peace-makers. Leaders. Homemakers. Strong. Bold. Courageous. Gentle. Faithful. Hospitable. Caring. Single women. Wives. Mothers. Sisters. Friends.

All born for such a time as this. All created to be women of distinction. Women with God-given value and purpose and power.

Recently, I was talking to a woman who believed every mother should homeschool her children and every wife should never work outside of the home. While she tried to use Scripture to support her personal convictions, the verses we reviewed in Proverbs 31 and the verses in the chart on the previous page completely debunk her stance.

Personal convictions don't always have an overarching biblical basis. But true personal convictions will always have a biblical basis.

**Here's what I mean:** The Word of God does tell women to be homemakers. But it also clearly shows women doing more than managing their homes. The Word of God unmistakably mandates that married women love and submit to their husbands and love and care for their children, but it also approvingly depicts women caring for others beyond the four walls of her home.

If a woman's priorities aren't compromised because she is working, then she is still fulfilling God's Word.

What is a personal conviction for one person isn't always a personal conviction for another.

**Let me give you some examples of personal convictions based on Scripture:**

- June believes she should stay home and care for her family. [Titus 2:3-5, Proverbs 31:27](#)
- Jewel believes God is calling her to homeschool. [Deuteronomy 6:5-7, Proverbs 22:7](#)
- Julie has a conviction that she should wear dresses. [Titus 2:9-10, Deuteronomy 22:5](#)
- Jean believes God is calling her to the foreign mission field. [Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8](#)

God may be specifically and intentionally leading these women to do what they feel led to do. They have verses that support their personal convictions. But those verses are not exclusive mandates.

**Let me explain:**

**June's call to manage her home is an overarching call.** It's for all women. But that verse does not negate a woman's decision to work outside of the home. *In fact, many verses actually demonstrate that a wife can work outside of her home...provided that she can still manage her home well and not neglect her first and most important ministry...her family - her household.*

**Jewel bases her desire to homeschool her children on very valid verses.** But there are no verses in Scripture that specifically mandate that children are homeschooled. Not every mother desires to or can homeschool. Think of the single mom who would love to homeschool but is unable to because she has to work two jobs to make ends meet. What about the mom who has no notion of homeschooling but wants to make sure her children get a good education so she works a part time job to put them in private school? Or how about the mom who knows God has called her and her family to be salt and light in the public school system? Their calling is just as personal as Jewel's.

**And then there's sweet Julie, who has a personal conviction about wearing dresses.** The command is to not dress like a man and to dress modestly. Julie may believe that she is supposed to wear dresses to fulfill those commands. The verses support her but they are also not overarching truths that limit our attire to dresses. Julie's personal conviction isn't wrong if God is leading her heart. But it's also her personal conviction. The command in Scripture doesn't limit women's attire to dresses, rather that a woman should look like a woman and do so modestly.

**Finally, there's Jean.** Jean believes God is calling her to a foreign mission field and the verses provided give her reason to pack her bags and take that one-way trip. But making disciples and *going* is about being missionaries wherever our feet may tread. Her call may be real, but not all of God's people are called to a foreign land. All, however, are called to make disciples as we go.

God's calling on our lives as women is just as individual as we are. Just as unique as our fingerprints. Some are overarching. Some are personal. All should be biblical.

## So what does the Bible say about our role as women in the church?

I'm going to go ahead and tell you up front, some of you are going to buck at this with a fierceness. This study isn't about a personal opinion. It's about truly wanting to discover what God's Word says about today's hot topics. And this is one hot topic I would have rather avoided, but we can't. Not if we want to really know what God's Word says about a particular subject.

So, rather than dancing around the issue and eventually landing on what God's Word says about this sensitive subject, I'm going to go ahead and provide some verses for you to research on your own. I want you to navigate these culturally tumultuous waters for yourself.

Please read the verses below and answer the questions

Acts 12:14, Romans 16:1-6, Philippians 4:3

Did these women serve in the church? If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

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Luke 2:36, Acts 21:8-9

Did these women serve in the church? If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Corinthians 11:5, 1 Corinthians 14:3

What does the Bible say about women in regards to the gift of prophecy and how does 1 Corinthians 14:3 define prophecy? \_\_\_\_\_

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*\*The Jewish custom was for all women to cover their heads with a veil when they went outside their homes. To appear in public without a veil was a sign of immodesty and lack of virtue. To appear in a worship service without a veil was unthinkable.<sup>1</sup>*

1 Timothy 2:11-14, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

We can't avoid these verses. They show up on the pages of Holy Writ and are just as important as any other verse in the Word of God. In our modern feminist culture, they are hard to swallow...even hard to understand.

So, let's take a good hard look at what they mean. But first, take a minute and write out what these verses say about a woman teaching men in the context of the church. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Silence* in the Greek is the word *hēsychia*. It means *quietness*. And *submission* is the word *hypotagē* which means *subjection*.

How do you think the men were to learn? Titus 2:6-8 \_\_\_\_\_

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It's not always easy to be quiet when we don't understand something or when we don't always agree. But this is a call to be an eager and willing listener in contrast to an arguer or interrupter who isn't going to obey God's Word. If the women wanted to debate a teaching, they were to

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<sup>1</sup> Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary pg 359

do that in the privacy of their own home with their husbands. Not bring things up for debate publicly and cause a chaos and dissension in the church.

Paul was writing Timothy about the order in which the local church should function. One of Paul's instructions was that women were not to teach or have authority over a man in the church. 1 Timothy 2:11-14

That wasn't solely a cultural mandate but a biblical mandate.

***But what about the fact that because of Christ, there is neither male nor female?***

Read Galatians 3:25-29 and explain what the context is of this passage? Who was he talking to and what was he talking about? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The context is clearly speaking about being saved and that Christ makes no distinctions or is a respecter of persons regarding gender or social status when it comes to saving the souls of an individual.

***But what about the fact that God used a donkey? Couldn't He use a woman?***

Read Numbers 22:21-33. How did the Lord use the donkey to speak to Balaam and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was it a public message to men in the local assembly? \_\_\_\_\_

***What other verse speaks to the issue of men leading the local church?***

Read 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Tim. 3:12 and describe who was given the qualifications of an elder, bishop, or deacon. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contrary to our modern day culture, a woman can't be the husband of one wife according to Scripture. Nor is she a man desiring the office of a bishop.

It's really a guy thing because that's the way God ordained it. He likened the church to a marriage. Ephesians 5:23 tells us the husband is the head of the wife and Christ is the head of the church. The church roles are men leading the church just as the husband and wife role is husbands leading the wives.

Acts 18:26

How did the teaching take place? \_\_\_\_\_

There really are no passages that even hint at women being in authority of a New Testament church as a pastor or teacher. ***In fact, one of the most powerful validations that it's not God's will is the fact that there is no biblical precedent in which we can find a woman pastoring a church in the Word of God.***

Based on Scripture, women are given a special place of honor. The New Testament gives great recognition and authority to women that prior generations had rejected to do.

Women served alongside of Jesus and church leaders. They opened their homes to host local churches. They disciplined others, including men, in a private setting. They were the first to see the empty tomb and the first to be spoken to by the resurrected Christ.

So, while women aren't to pastor a church, they are given spiritual gifts to be used in the context of the church, their homes, and their communities, just like men are. A woman's abilities and intelligence are never in dispute. It's simply about God-given roles in the local church that give order to the way the body of Christ conducts itself.

**Biblically, women are able to serve the Lord in a multitude of ways:**

- Women can teach and lead women
- Women can serve through personal evangelism and discipleship
- Women can teach and lead children and youth
- Women can serve on the mission field
- Women can serve in Christian education
- Women can serve as deaconesses (servant) ministering to women in the church

These are just a few ways women can biblically serve in the local church.

For some of you, reading this is making your stomach turn and your blood boil. You might not have even gotten this far. But if you have, please embrace what God has for you as a woman knowing that He is *for* you and His ways are always good and right.

God knows what He's doing. We just either submit to what His Word teaches or choose to disobey while justifying our own deep-rooted desire to have our own way. It's up to us.

## God's Relentless Love for Women

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As we conclude this lesson, I want to focus on the relentless love God has for women remembering that the lens that shapes our cultural concept of womanhood is very narrow. We live in a world where women around the globe do not enjoy the freedoms or opportunities that we have in the United States.

So, to add some perspective to what we have learned in Scripture today about God's intentional role for women, it's important to realize that in many countries, women...

- *aren't allowed to go outside, to the store, or even to church without a male family member*
- *not permitted to speak to men in any setting at all unless it is a family member*
- *not allowed to live on their own*
- *are forced to have abortions*
- *face female mutilation*
- *die at the hands of family members in 'honor killings'*
- *are bought and sold like a piece of property*

Our flesh may balk at God's Word placing the sacred calling of being a wife, mother, an homemaker on the front burner of our list of priorities. We may grapple with the truth that women aren't called to preach in a generation when women stand behind plenty of pulpits.

But, when we take time to step back and notice what other women are going through and how marginalized their lives are, it puts our western world issues in perspective. And ultimately we have to choose whether to believe and obey God or live according to the dictates of our own fallible hearts.

Because, the thing is, God loves us with a profoundly deep and infinitely wide inexhaustible love.

When Christ incarnate chose to place Himself on this planet, He chose a humble and vulnerable woman's womb. And when He rose from the grave, it was a woman He revealed Himself to first.

When the world wanted to whirl stones at a wayward woman, Jesus offered forgiveness and freedom and life.

When a shunned Samaritan woman came face-to-face with the all-knowing Christ she left with more than a bucket full of water. She left with a heart full of hope and a brand new heart.

