

Conviction 7: Biblical Manhood and Womanhood in our Church

As we survey the Bible from beginning to end, we see God establishing two realities for men and women: spiritual equality before God AND role differentiation (for men and women) in the church and Christian families. This biblical view of manhood and womanhood is called a "complementarian" view of manhood and womanhood ("complement" = something that completes or makes perfect. This is a "completing" view of the genders). To diminish, ignore or blur one reality, or to fail to uphold both spiritual equality and role differentiation renders the church incomplete in its view of the genders. Let's examine the two realities God has established for men and women according to His word:

The Old Testament

- **Spiritual Equality:**

Man and woman are equally created in the image of God (neither one has more or less of God's image than the other). Man and woman are equally totaled by sin (neither one is more sinful than the other). Gn 1:26-27; Gn 3:16-19.

- **Role Differentiation:**

God created man first, then woman (God had an order in mind when He created; an order that is linked to their different roles.). Gn 2:18ff (1 Cor 11; 1 Tm 2). God both instructs AND confronts the first human pair through the man, revealing that order was determined before the fall and is not a result of the fall, Gn 2:15-17; 3:9. This order is linked to our roles, NOT to our spiritual equality (the order doesn't diminish our spiritual equality, it enhances and promotes our roles).

Jesus

- **Spiritual Equality:**

Jesus dramatically emphasized a woman's spiritual equality with man in the midst of a woman-demeaning Greek, Roman, and even Jewish culture. Jesus used illustrations and images familiar to and useful for women, Mt 13:33; 24:41; Lk 13:20-21; 15:8-10. Jesus revealed Himself as Messiah to women, Jn 4:25-26. Jesus taught women directly, Lk 10:38-42. Jesus touched women and allowed them to touch Him, Lk 8:43-48; 13:10-17. Jesus allowed women to travel with Him and His disciples, Lk 8:1-3. After His resurrection Jesus revealed Himself first to a woman, Jn 20:1-18. All of this is culturally unprecedented!

- **Role Differentiation:**

Jesus did nothing to exalt women to a place of spiritual leadership over men. If ever there was a time to correct the prior teaching and practice in regards to role differentiation – it was at this time through this Man! But Jesus didn't. Rather, Jesus affirms what revelation has already taught – that women are spiritually equal with men before God (in fact He elevated this out of the culturally sinful view of His day). Jesus also affirmed the God-given role differentiation from the older Testament.

The rest of the New Testament

- Spiritual Equality:

Women are spiritual equals with men in redemption. Gender was not taken into account when God designed and carried out redemption through Jesus' atoning work (Gal 3:28). Women shared in the struggle of advancing the gospel with Paul (Ph 4:2-3). Wives were to be viewed by their Christian husbands as "fellow heirs of the grace of life" (1 Pt 3:7).

- Role Differentiation:

Paul, under no less inspiration of the Holy Spirit than in the preceding verses, defines different roles for men and women both in the church and in the Christian home, 1 Cor 11:1-16; 14:34-36; 1 Tm 2:8-15; Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-21; 1 Pt 3:1-7. This means in Grace Bible Church we believe the role of pastor-elder is reserved for men alone. This is due to our role differentiations. This means also that the elders of Grace Bible Church encourage our marriages to reflect the spiritual equality and role differentiations of Scripture in our families.

As sinful genders who have come to taste God's glory and life transforming work through the cross of Jesus, we see something beautiful and exalted in our biblical manhood and womanhood. We do not tolerate a "patriarchal", out-dated view of the genders because that is what our tradition dictates. We embrace the spiritual equality AND the role differentiation given us from our sovereign God. Why? God has something to reveal about Himself through BOTH our spiritual equality AND our role differentiation. There is spiritual equality within the Godhead but role differentiation between Members as well (1 Cor. 11:3).

We understand the difficulty that this position creates in many people's mind in our culture today. However, we hold to this view of men and women unashamedly. We are eager that God be seen within our church family and our nuclear families as we rejoice in our spiritual equality at the cross as well as obediently embrace these distinct roles He has given us.

The sermons entitled, "Households for Christ" from Ephesians chapters 5-6, can be found at:

<http://www.gbcaz.org/category/series/ephesians-series/page/3/>