



The Resolved Church

P.O. BOX 16714 • San Diego, CA 92176 • (619) 393-1990 • www.theresolved.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED © THE RESOLVED CHURCH | Permissions: you are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material provided you NOT alter the wording in any way and you do not charge a fee. For web posting a link to this document is preferred.

The Resolved Church | www.theresolved.com | contact@theresolved.com | (619) 393-1990

Complementary Role of Women in the Bible

by Pastor Duane Smets

Prolegomena

- The purpose of this work is to record both my thoughts and my study concerning the subject of women in the family and ministry.
- The two primary positions on this subject, within evangelicalism, are the complementarian view and the egalitarian view. The complementarian view is that men and women are different both physically and non-physically in their makeup as human persons and that these differences are intended to complement each other in human relationships and communities. The egalitarian view is that men and women may be different physically but internally are not different in any way and that such a makeup intends for men and women to function in any role they desire.
- I knowingly enter this discourse aware that there are a significant number of Godly men and women scholars¹ on both sides of this issue. Due to this fact, I believe this subject ought to be approached in much humility and much charity with a fervent commitment against dogmatism.²
- I also enter into this discourse with the craving intent to allow Scripture and reason to have the first and foremost authority subjugating to their final say whatever emotions, experiences, and presuppositions I may have or have ever had. To their final say it is my prayer that I would pour contempt on all my pride and humbly bow my head before the holy instruction of God in heaven. On any issue the whole counsel of God's Word ought to be both our goal and commitment.
- In light of the above statements, I would also like to add that I consider this issue adiaphora, a matter of non-essentialness. Essential relativity³ is a misnomer⁴ in matters of doctrine. I consider matters of essentialness to strictly be matters pertaining to salvation. I believe that in all areas of non-essentialness that fellowship and instruction may and ought to take place within the unity we have as the body of Christ (sometimes the common quip "to agree to disagree" and love one another is also used to describe this friendship and bond that differing Christians may have). In addition, I believe areas of non-essentialness ought never to divide or disjoin believers in Christ, but we ought always to "*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Eph 4:3).*"

¹ just because a "scholar" may say something does not necessarily make it true. within scholarship exists a wide range of stances varying from conservative to liberal. those who have a predisposed bias against something will often attempt to heap up for themselves teachers that will say what their itching ears want to hear (2 Tim 4:3). when referencing a scholar as an authority, one should take into account who the scholar is and what their position is on other issues of doctrine. for example, one ought to take great caution regarding the statements of Clark Pinnock who is not only an advocate of egalitarianism but also religious pluralism and open theism (also known as openness of God theology).

² dogmatism in the sense of an assertion and dedication to an opinion regardless of and intolerant of even hearing or studying another view; not dogmatism in the sense of a defense of a doctrinal position.

³ the notion that what is essential depends upon the particular person, place, and time. the converse to essential relativity is essential objectivity, that what is essential is essential for all people in all places in every time/age.

⁴ to even say that what is essential is relative is an essential statement. essential relativity commits the fallacy it condemns.

- The contour of this study appears first in the form of 37 reasons why I have been persuaded from a previous position of egalitarianism to a complementarian position, followed by 15 responses to the arguments/objections of the egalitarian position.

37 reasons for a complementarian position

1) A woman and a man both equally have the image of God stamped within their very beings. to be in the image [*tselem*] of God is to be like God and represent God morally (right/wrong), spiritually (we have an eternal spirit/soul), mentally (use of language and creativity), emotionally and relationally (fellowship with God and others). thus, God sees both woman and man equally in His sight (Gen 1:26-28; 5:1-2).

2) a woman and a man are intended to complement one another. *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh (Gen 2:24).”* neither two men together, nor two women together can have a baby. being equal in God’s sight does not mean women and men have identical functions. a man cannot have a baby. a woman cannot urinate standing up. a man cannot breast feed. a woman cannot get an erection or produce sperm. in no way do these differences devalue either the man or the woman and neither sexes ought to ever feel that God regards them differently because there are some things that each can and cannot do.

3) Within the functions of man and woman each have different responsibilities. The woman was commissioned to be a helper [*ayzer*] for the man (Gen 2:18).

4) God designed and intended some women to serve and function as a helper under the Levites in the doorway of the Tabernacle (Ex 38:8; 1 Sam 2:22).

6) God designed and intended women to serve and function as a helper in the role of a prophetesses for both women and men (Miriam - Ex 15:20; Deborah – Jdgs 6:4; Huldah – 2 K 22:14; 2 Chr 34:22; Anna Lk 2:36; Pentecost – Acts 2:17; Philip’s four daughters Acts 21:8-9; in the church – 1 Cor 11:5).

7) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper in the role of prayers for both women and men (Hannah - 1 Sam 1:9-2:10; Acts 1:14, 12:12; 1 Cor 11:4-5, 13).

8) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper in the role of song (Miriam – Ex 15:21; Deborah – Jdgs 5; the temple choir – 1 Chron 25:5-7; Neh 7:66-67; Virgin Mary Lk 1:46-55;).

9) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper exemplified by women that accompanied and served Jesus on His ministry tours (Lk 8:1-3; Matt 27:55; Mk 15:41).

10) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper in the role of evangelism and discipleship (Matt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15; Acts 1:8).

11) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper in the role of giving hospitality (Dorcas – Acts 9:36; Mary mother of Mark – Acts 12:12; Lydia – Acts 16:14-15).

12) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper in the role of helping to explain the Word of God (Priscilla with Aquila (Acts 18:26-28).

13) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper in the role of teaching younger women and children (Prov 1:8; 2 Tim 1:5 with 2 Tim 3:14-14; Tit 2:3-5).

14) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper in the role of service (Romans 16 [29 commended for service 10 women, no distinctions in service or status stated]; Euodia and Syntyche – Phil 4:2-3).

15) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper, exemplified by their giving of guidance to Israel (Deborah - Jdgs 4-5; Ruth 1-4; Esther 1-10; Miriam – Mic 6:4).

16) God designed and intends women to serve and function as a helper, exemplified by the key roles they have played in God's revelation of Himself to all people (Rahab, Virgin Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene's anointing of Jesus as King - Lk 7:37-39; seeing and reporting the risen Jesus Christ first – Mk 16:6-8; Lk 24:10-11; Jn 20:11-18).

17) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's creation of man first (Gen.2:7). God could have created woman first and called the human race woman but He did not.

18) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's forming of Eve by taking out of Adam's body (Gen 2:21-23). in this sense woman belongs to man. this belonging is also reiterated in Eph 5:22 "*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*" The Greek word "*hupotasso*" can be translated as belong, submit, or subject.

19) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's commissioning of man to rule over every living creature (Gen 1:28), which we see exercised in his naming of them: the animals (Gen 2:20) and Eve (Gen 3:20).

20) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's purpose of the "birthright" only belonging to men regardless of whether or not a woman was born first (Gen 25:27-34, 35:23, 38:27-30, 49:3-4; Deut 21:15-17; 1 Chron 5:1-2).

21) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's instruction that only males be permitted to appear before the Lord at the three great feasts of each year (Deut 16:16-17).

22) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's instruction that only males be permitted to serve as priests before the Lord (Ex 28-29; Lev 8-9).

23) God designed and intends man to serve as leader, exemplified by the fact that God incarnate is a man, Jesus Christ.

24) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by the fact that Jesus chose men to be His apostles.

25) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by the fact that Jesus only sent out men when He sent out the seventy (Lk 10:1-6).

26) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by the fact that the office of the elder ([*episkopos*] – Acts 20:17,28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1,2; Tit 1:5,7, translated as "bishop" and "overseer" refers to the same role as the "elder" [*presbyteros*] – 1 Tim 5:17 and the "pastor" or "shepherd" [*poimanos*] – Jn 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Pet 5:1-2) is restricted to one who is "the husband of but one wife (2 Tim 3:2)." a woman cannot be the husband of one wife.

27) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's identification of men as the heads of any local expression of Christ's church based on the created order (1 Cor 11:3-7).

28) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's identification of the man as the head of the marriage relationship (Eph 5:23).⁵

⁵ Paul argues that the headship of man in marriage is analogous to the relationship of Christ and the church. Christ and the church do not mutually submit, nor is the church the head but rather the body under the head. the church is the bride and Christ is the bridegroom. in marriage both man and woman do mutually serve each other, but only one is the head.

29) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's validation of the Old Testament teaching of men being the spiritual leaders (1 Cor 14:34).

30) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, exemplified by God's instruction that women are to have an authority over them in the church (1 Tim 2:12).

31) God designed and intends man to serve and function as leader, as exemplified by the hierarchy in the nature of the Godhead, the Trinity. Never does the Father receive commands from the Son or the Spirit. never does the Son or the Spirit send the Father. Never does the Father submit to the will of the Son or the Spirit.

32) God designed and intends woman and man to complement one another as leader and helper as equals in the sight of God, exemplified by the New Testament affirmation that in Christ there is "*neither male nor female (Gal 3:28).*"

33) God designed and intends woman and man to complement one another as leader and helper as equals in the sight of God, exemplified by the New Testament affirmation that both women and men obtain salvation by faith (Eph 2:8-9; 1 Pet 1:18-19) as "*heirs together of the grace of life,*" despite the physical limitations a woman has as one who has "*the weaker vessel (1 Pet 3:7).*"⁶

34) God designed and intended woman and man to complement one another as leader and helper as equals in the sight of God, exemplified by the New Testament affirmation that both are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19-20; 1 Cor 12:13).

35) God designed and intended woman and man to complement one another as leader and helper as equals in the sight of God, exemplified by the New Testament direct statement that both have been "*justified through faith,*" "*have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*" and "*have gained access by faith into this grace (Rom 5:1-2).*"

36) God designed and intended woman and man to complement one another as leader and helper as equals in the sight of God, exemplified by the New Testament affirmation that both enjoy the privileges and responsibilities of being part of the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2:5,9; 3:7; Rev 1:6) and as such both have ministries to fulfill.

37) God designed and intended woman and man to complement one another as leader and helper as equals in the sight of God, exemplified by the New Testament affirmation that both receive spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7,27-28; Rom 12:6; 1 Pet 4:10) for ministry.

15 Responses to the Arguments/Objections of the Egalitarian Position⁷

1) Objection: Recognizing that men and women are unique and complementary biologically does not necessarily mean that they are unique and complementary in their functional roles spiritually in the family and in ministry.

Response: Men and women are dichotomist beings (two parted: a physical person [body] and a spiritual person [spirit/soul]).⁸ Throughout Scripture these two parts of people are interrelated, the physical being is fused with the spiritual being and they have effect upon one another (examples: effect of sin on the physical body, relation of physical and spiritual death).

⁶ one example of the weaker nature of a woman's body is that even with the aid of steroids etc., no woman has ever been able to amass the strength and size of a man.

⁷ the contour of this portion will consist of first stating the objection then a response.

⁸ proven not only scripturally but also philosophically in the concept of substance dualism (we have both a body and a mind). the mind is a non-physical reality. no one can put someone's brain under a microscope and see a person's thoughts. the mind as an aspect of the human's spirit/soul.

2) Objection: God temporarily acquiesces to many things He does not approve of in order to gradually move the world into a direction He does approve of. The example given is: polygamy to monogamy.

Response: Polygamy is clearly corrected in the Bible, there is no debate about this. It is agreed that God has worked with people throughout history in different ways according to the different progressive revelations/dispensations of His grace. However, the New Testament excludes any new revelations (Gal 1:8; Rev 22:18-19).⁹ It clearly teaches that in Christ all truth has been revealed, corrected and completed (Mt 5:17; Lk 4:21; Acts 2:14-36) and that our task is solely to carry the completed revelation to the ends of the world (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15; Acts 1:8). Therefore, we must concur that the direction God desires for history has already been fully stated in the New Testament and that He did not leave anything out by acquiescing to the culture of the New Testament. Indeed, Jesus was perfectly willing to be radically countercultural when He wanted to correct something (examples include: all His statements concerning the law - Mt 5:21-48, the Sabbath - Mk 3:1-6, His conversation with a Samaritan woman - Jn 4:7-26, His permission of Mary to sit at His feet and learn - Lk 10:42, and His redress of legal situations which were weighted against women - Mt 19:9-10, Mk 10:11-12). Yet Jesus never addressed a supposed misconception that men were to serve and function as leaders and women were to serve and function as helpers. The fact that both the 1500-year span of the culture of the Bible and our current culture are patriarchal is merely a descriptive statement and not an argument against patriarchalism. If God intended to correct our patriarchalistic cultures, there we would both expect a clear injunction in the New Testament and a rectification in history. Yet, rather than rectifying patriarchalism God has reiterated His designed order of the leadership of men in the family and in the church (as demonstrated in the arguments for complementarianism above).¹⁰

3) Objection: The Hebrew *ayzer*, translated “help” or “helper” (Gen 2:18) is most often used to refer to God as a “help” or “helper” (Ex 18:4; Deut 33:7, 26, 29; Ps 20:2, 33:20, 70:5, 85:19,20, 115:9, 121:1,2, 124:8, 146:5; Hos 13:9). We would not think of us functioning as leading God, therefore we ought not either think of Eve being Adam’s helper as following him as a leader.

Response: There is no real debate about the translation of this word, it barely holds any range of semantic meaning. Thus, we agree that the word means “help,” as some sort of assistance or aid. God clearly states His intention that Eve would be help for Adam (Gen 2:18). If one says that God is the help in this passage it does not rid the fact that the way God helps is by creating Eve *for* Adam. The fact that God is often called our “help” or “helper” can in no way overthrow the meaning of this passage otherwise all other actions or characteristics of God that He instructs humans to do would be negated (such as: loving, teaching etc.¹¹). The fact that God is our “help” adds great insight into what God intends the woman to be like, namely like Himself, the great helper, who is neither male nor female.¹² God created woman to be like Him, in His action and character, and to help man in his task of leadership.

4) Objection: Women were given the same command to “rule” over creation as were men (Gen 1:27).

Response: It is true that Genesis 1:28-30 is addressed to a plural “*them*.” However, Genesis 2:4-25, the detailed description of the creation of Adam and Eve, states more clearly both the order and the direction of God’s command in Genesis 1:28-30. God’s command in Genesis 1:28-30 is not necessarily chronological in time (much like many other portions of the creation account in Gen 1, such as first creating light but later giving more detail of how in the record of the sun and moon’s creation¹³). In Genesis 2 we discover that God gives the seed-bearing plants and the animals to Adam before Eve is created. Thus, we discover that the part of Gen 1:28 that is directed to both Adam and Eve is the command to “*Be fruitful and increase in number.*” The command to rule was directed to Adam alone, as

⁹ An objection to the current canon is beyond the scope here and is a different issue/debate.

¹⁰ interestingly, missionaries have reported great difficulties in non-patriarchal societies such as those that are found in many of the tribal clans of Paraguay.

¹¹ indeed, all the communicatable attributes of God.

¹² there are a number of texts that also use maternal metaphors concerning the nature of God’s character and behavior (Num 11:12; Deut 32:11,18; Is 42:14, 49:15, 66:13)

¹³ see studies in the Pentateuch concerning the forming and then filling of creation that show Genesis 1 is not necessarily chronological.

shown in Gen 2:15, 19-20, where Adam begins to subdue the earth by working in the Garden of Eden and to rule by naming the animals.

5) Objection: The Fall introduced distorted relationships, a man being the leader and authority is a sinful result of the fall.

Response: The created order establishing man to serve in the function of leader and authority was before the fall. The fall did introduce distorted relationships, such as both male and females sexually desiring their own sex (Rom 1:24-27), and women desiring to reject their role to serve and function as helper by attempting to make their role the same as man's.

6) Objection: God commanded Abraham to obey his wife, Sarah (Gen 21:12). If female submission was part of God's creational design, this command would constitute a violation of nature.

Response: Though *shama* can mean "obey," its primary meaning is to "listen," which is the way most all translations render this word in this passage. Abraham was commanded to listen to his wife, yet he was still required to make the final decision as the authority and leader of his home. A wise husband, as the leader and authority of his family, will extremely value and seek out his wife's input.

7) Objection: Phoebe is called a "deaconess" in Romans 16:1, yet 1 Timothy 3:8 states that deacons must be the husband of one wife. Thus, Paul did not intend to teach in 1 Timothy 3:8 that a woman cannot be a deacon.

Response: The word used in Romans 16:1 regarding Phoebe is *diakonos*, which can mean servant, helper, minister or deacon. It is clear in 1 Timothy 3:8 that Paul is talking about a specific type of ministry within the church and not making a general comment about all servants, helpers, or ministers. Paul states what Phoebe's deaconess ministry is in Romans 16:1, namely, having the church meet in her house. In Romans 16:1 Paul is not referring to the role of the deacon that he refers to in 1 Timothy 3:8. In addition, those who say 1 Timothy 3:8 does not intend to teach that a woman cannot be a deacon must explain what it does intend to teach and the how else to reconcile the contradiction that is then created between 1 Timothy 3:8 and Romans 16:1.¹⁴

8) Objection: Evidence shows that Junias, mentioned in Rom 16:7, was a woman and Paul says she is "outstanding among the apostles." An apostle is a leader and authoritative role. Therefore the New Testament cannot possibly mean to teach that women are not to have primary teaching or authoritative roles.

Response: The Bible teaches in Acts 1:22 and 1 Cor 9 that an Apostle must be one who has seen the resurrected Christ and that there were only thirteen: Peter, James son of Zebedee, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, Matthias (who replaced Judas), and Paul (1 Cor 15:7-8). A correct understanding of Ephesians 2:20 teaches us that there is a difference between capital "A" Apostles and capital "P" Prophets and little "a" apostles who have apostolic gifts and little "p" prophets who have prophetic gifts. Paul, who argues strenuously for his own apostleship in 1 Cor 9:1-18 and 2 Cor 12:11-13:3, demonstrates a high view of the apostolic office. If Junias is being called an apostle it is odd that Paul would not only call her an apostle but an "outstanding one" when she does not even meet the qualifications that Paul and the other "eminent apostles" (1 Cor 11:5; 12:11) laid out (see ref. above).

If Junias is being called an apostle she must necessarily be one of the little "a" apostles with an apostolic gift much like Agabus who was a little "p" prophet with a prophetic gift (Acts 11:28; 21:10), since the foundation of the church is not built upon apostolic and prophetic teaching of Junias and Agabus. Junias as a little "a" apostle would still have been subject to the authority of the capital "A" Apostles. Indeed, Paul seems to understand all the recipients of the letter to the Romans, including those listed in Rom 16, as under his leadership and authority as the writer of the prophetic revelation of God (Rom 16:25-26).

It seems to me that two important things must be recognized. First, the most basic common meaning of the Greek word, *apostolos*, is simply "one sent." The technical usage of *apostolos* as an authoritative leadership role is primarily a development in the New Testament. Even so, not all references

¹⁴ if one answers that contradictions are acceptable because the Bible is only infallible in matters of faith and practice, then see arguments for inerrancy.

to apostles in the New Testament are of the technical ministerial role. For example in Acts 10:17 the verb form of apostle, *apostello*, is used in when Acts speaks about the, “men that were sent (*apostello*) by Cornelius.” We would certainly not call these men apostles in the same sense as the ministerial leaders of the church and neither should we Junias, if she is being called an apostle.

Second, Romans 16:7 states that Junias was outstanding “among the apostles.” The preposition “among” is important for it certainly allows that Junias was merely someone who was flourishing under the Apostle’s ministry.

Therefore, it seems to me that the best understanding of Junias is that she is either being commended by Paul either for her completion of a task she was sent (*apostello*) to do or for being a very fruitful learner under apostolic ministry.

9) Objections: The explicit prohibitions in 1 Corinthians 11:5 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 are addressing cultural issues of that day and therefore no longer apply to us today. Why do those who understand these passages as authoritative for us today not also require women to wear head-coverings and not allow them to wear their hair braided, or wear gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, which are instructions given in the same context of these passages?

Response: We must be very careful if we ever say that any part of the Word of God does not apply to us today. 2 Timothy 3:16 very clearly states “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*” We must also beware of an often-practiced hermeneutical tool known as mirror-reading. Mirror-reading is an exegetical device, most often used by liberal scholars, that understands the most all writings of Scripture to be a mirror of a historical situation in need of correction.¹⁵ These scholars employ methods of deconstruction and reconstruction in order to determine the history behind the text. They assume that the Bible is composed of *geishichte* (myth) and *histoire* (history) and that our task is to demythologize the Bible. Historical information is very crucial for our understanding of the Bible but we must never go beyond what information we actually can find in historical documents. If *all* Scripture is useful for today then 1 Corinthians 11:5 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 must have some meaning for us today. The reason I understand the teaching of these passages as authoritative for us today and do not require women to wear head-coverings and not prohibit them from wearing their hair braided, or wearing gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, which are instructions given in the same context, is because of the reasons Paul gives in both these passages for making these statements.

In 1 Corinthians 11:5, the reason Paul gives that women should cover their heads is because of God’s pre-fallen, created design that man is the head of woman since woman was made from man and was created for man (as a helper), and thus ought to have an authority over her. Now we understand that in the culture of the New Testament, a woman having her head covered was a sign of authority, but today in western culture it is no longer a sign of authority, just bad style. However, the issue of authority still stands. Paul’s point is that it God’s eternal design is for women to have authority over them.

In 1 Timothy 2:11-14 the reason Paul gives for women to not wear braided hair, gold or pearls, or expensive clothes, is because of God’s pre-fallen, created design in forming Adam first and man and woman having different roles. Paul explains that the woman was the one deceived because she did not check with her husband’s leadership and authority first but instead usurped his function and role and then lead him into sin.¹⁶ Paul also explains that a woman’s role is a helper expressed in his example of a woman’s unique God-given ability to have a baby. Now we understand that in the culture of the New Testament, women who wore braided hair, gold, pearls, and expensive clothes were usually sexually promiscuous women. Thus these outer adornments were signs of a woman rejecting her husband’s role of leadership and authority over her. Today in western culture braided hair, gold, pearls, and expensive

¹⁵ the result of taking this method to its logical end are “scholarly” groups such as the Jesus Seminar who say that only about 4% of the New Testament is accurate and authoritatively true for us today (one example is their claim that the only part of the Lord’s prayer that is true and accurate are the two words “Our Father”). other examples include Rudolf Bultmann who claims there was no physical resurrection and Thomas Altizer who also says that Father God died in the incarnation and Jesus died on the cross, thus God is dead and only the spirit of Jesus lives on.

¹⁶ advocates against this interpretation must then explain the apparent contradiction any other interpretation lends since here in 1 Timothy 2:14 Paul says “*Adam was not the one deceived*” but in Romans 5:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 Paul clearly teaches that sin came into the world through the one man Adam. moreover, if one rejects that sin came into the world through the one man Adam they must also reject salvation coming to the world through the one man Jesus Christ (Rom 5:17-19; 1 Cor 15:22).

clothes are no longer signs of sexual promiscuity, just good style. However, the issue of authority still stands. Paul's point is that God's eternal design is for women to have an authority over them.

10) Objection: The word *hupotasso* in Eph 5:22-24 translated as "submit" could mean "be thoughtful and considerate," and thus the wife does not have any unique responsibility to submit to her husband's authority because both husband and wife need to be considerate and loving toward one another.

Response: *hupotasso* literally means "be subject to" or "belong to." This word always implies a relationship of authority (used of Jesus submission to his parents – Lk 2:51, the demons subject to the disciples – Lk 10:17, of citizens subject to government – Rom 13:1,5; Tit 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13, of spiritual powers subject to Christ – 1 Pet 3:22, of Christ being subject to God the Father – 1 Cor 15:28, of church members being subject to church leaders – 1 Cor 16:15-16; 1 Pet 5:5, of wives being subject to their husbands – Col 3:18, Tit 2:5, 1 Pet 3:5, Eph 5:22,23, of the church being subject to Christ – Eph 5:24, of servants being subject to their masters – Tit 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18, and of Christians being subject to God - Heb 12:9, Js 4:7).¹⁷

11) Objection: Would not the logic of appealing to the created order also require us to assume that animals have authority over humans, since they were created first?

Response: No because man is directly commanded to rule over the animals (Gen 1:28). In addition, the point is not that God created man first, but the purpose of which He created woman for.

12) Objection: Women make effective leaders. There are numerous examples throughout history where God has greatly used women for accomplishing His purposes. What about Aimee Semple McPherson, the founder of the foursquare denomination?

Response: First, just because something works does not make it right (example: just because the Mormon's methodology works in winning converts does not make their church true or right), this is the epistemological theory of pragmatism and is a logical fallacy.¹⁸ Second, Scripture clearly declares that God works all things together for His purposes, despite the often-impure actions of men and women (Rom 8:28). Throughout biblical history God has shown that He will accomplish His will through imperfect, less than ideal circumstances (such as God's use of pagan kings, false prophets, rebellious and/or sometimes ignorant Israel, and women leaders/authorities). Third, I look up to Aimee Semple McPherson with great admiration both for her zeal and her commitment to winning souls. In her own biography she describes her initial calling as a burden for souls. There is no prohibition anywhere in the Bible against some types of women evangelists (in a non-authoritative role) but rather the opposite (the Samaritan woman – John 4:28-30 was a great evangelist). However, I would have to concede that according to the Scriptural evidence presented in this study, I believe that Aimee Semple McPherson stepped over Scriptural bounds when she became the head pastor of Angeles Temple and the president of Foursquare with no authority over her.

13) Objection: Not allowing women to function as leader and authority is the same thing as slavery.

Response: The New Testament often speaks of slavery metaphorically of our relationship to sin and after Christ to God. No verse in the New Testament makes any explicit references to the effect of commanding the abolishment of physical slavery. Not all slavery in biblical times was dehumanizing. Often times one would willingly subject themselves to slavery for safety and/or a good job. The New Testament does make explicit commands concerning master's treatment of their slaves (Eph 6:9) and likewise makes commands to slaves concerning treatment of their masters (Eph 6:5-8). Today, the abolishment of slavery is right and good because of the way slaves were most often treated. God values all humans equally and condemns any sin against them.

¹⁷ *hupotasso* is never used reversely in any of these cases (disciples never subject to demons, government never subject to citizens, Christ never subject to spiritual powers, the Father never subject to the Son, church leaders never subject to church members, husbands never subject to their wives, Christ never subject to the church, masters never subject to their servants, God never subject to Christians).

¹⁸ pragmatism is a bankrupt epistemology because it is missing a premise, a premise of cause. it takes a descriptive statement and changes it into a prescriptive statement without any premise in between. this is a non-sequitur, unsound argument that commits the fallacy of "false cause," philosophically speaking.

14) Objection: You are a man so you come to this issue biased and cannot read the Scriptures correctly because of your experience as a man.

Response: This is really more of a hermeneutical question than anything.¹⁹ My response is two fold: First, if my perspective as a man skews me from reading anything about men and women correctly, then I can never have a right understanding concerning anything in the Bible when a man or woman is mentioned. Thus, when the Bible talks about homosexuality being sin (Rom 1:27), I cannot understand that rightly and so I might as well believe it is okay and have sex with men; or when the Bible talks about husbands being considerate and treating my wife with respect (1 Pet 3:7), I cannot understand that rightly and so I might as well believe it is okay to be inconsiderate to my wife and disrespect her in whatever way I feel like. It is quite fashionable these days to talk about the presuppositions that we bring to the text. It is true that we are fallen beings who have been made perfect in the sight of God through Christ but between now and Christ's return or our death, we are in a process of being made perfect. We must recognize that even our capacity to reason is sometimes faulty due to the process we are in of having our minds renewed (Rom 12:2). However, while this is true I do not believe that because our minds are in a process of being renewed and because we have past experiences, that coming to an objective meaning of a text is impossible. Our task is to recognize our experiences and allow objective Scripture to shape us and correct us.

Second, though I am a male there are scholarly women advocates of the complementarian position (see Susan Foh, "Women and the Word of God: A Response to Feminism," and "Alvera Mickelsen, "Women, Authority and the Bible"). In addition, regarding the influence of one's life experience, those who are single women and reject a complementarian position ought to take great caution that they do not force Scripture to fit their feelings and/or possibly bad past experiences. Most married women will testify that they naturally desire their husband's support and strength as a fortress and a refuge (particularly in the area of raising children).

15) Objection: Sexually biased men wrote the Bible.

Response: The Bible writers go out of their way to say that their words are not their own but the very Word of God. See arguments for inspiration and inerrancy.

¹⁹ There are three problems with this hermeneutical line of reasoning: first, it assumes that truth and hermeneutics are relative since they are not the same for everyone, but either individual or communal (this is known as "reader-response criticism," the hermeneutical theory of Stanley Fish); second, it assumes a *sakritic* hermeneutical theory which elevates certain passages above others (a canon within the canon); third, it assumes that the historical grammatical method of interpretation is created by man (rather than recognizing it as the method of Moses, Ezra, David, the Prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles, and thus is inherent in the Bible).

Postlegomena

- It is important to remember that being in a position of leadership and authority is not a position of lordship wherein a man can simply tell a woman to do anything he feels like and she must obey. A man should never lead a woman into known sin. A position of leadership and authority is above all a position of servanthood with a high responsibility. The man is to lead in his authoritative role of serving his wife just as Christ loved and served the church.
- It is important to caution oneself against a rebellious spirit. If something can be clearly proven to someone with Scripture and reason, and they still feel inside a sense of anger and resentment either against those passages of Scripture and/or the person presenting that case, one needs to be very careful that their attitude is not one of rebellious spirit for 1 Samuel 15:23 states that "*rebellion is the sin of witchcraft.*" Rebellion is closely related to pride, and both are what caused the great and beautiful angel, Lucifer, to fall from heaven.
- One must beware of the egalitarian and feminist agendas of our current culture. The egalitarian agenda of our culture is one that fights and strives for everything to be equal for everybody (such as homosexual marriages and parenthood etc.). The feminist agenda of our culture is one that fights and strives for all attempts to constrict women in any way to be overthrown (such as Mary Daly's claim that we need to "exorcise" and "emasculate" ourselves of the male term "God"). Both these philosophies are driven by an atheistic Marxist principle advocating the overthrow of any power and authority in order to be free and authentic. As Christians we must be careful that the philosophy of our world does not infiltrate and conform our thinking (Rom 12:2, Col 2:8).
- I firmly believe that women are a vital, indispensable gift and necessity to our families and our churches and we desperately need them. I advocate women involvement in ministry to its utmost extreme, serving in nearly every possible capacity, as long as there is a male leader in place as an authority. It seems to me, looking at the church as a whole, that we need far more women serving in our churches.
- Lastly, I would like to conclude with a note of sincere humility and gentleness on my part. I realize that my study presents a weighty argument for the complementarian position. It is not my intention to be harsh, mean, or cruel in any way, shape, or form. It is exceedingly far from my desires to use Scripture and/or my intellectual capacities in any abusive way as some sort of means to exercise an unjust authority or to put anyone in their place. Rather, it is the utmost desire of my heart to come before God and His Word and to humbly bow my head in submission to whatever it teaches. It is the yearning of my soul to appear before God as a servant who rightly divides the Word of Truth (2 Tim 2:15). I recognize that I have a sinful mind that is in the process of being made new (though positionally in Christ already fully made new) and sometimes reasons wrongly, thus I place myself under the accountability of my fellow sisters and brothers in Christ. If anyone was ever able to account for the 37 reasons and 15 responses I have recorded and show my conclusions in a reasonable way to be false or if some new evidence is uncovered, then I will gladly change my position once again. For whoever may read this, please hear my cry, I crave to serve you and love you with all that God has given me. May the words written here somehow enrich you and propel you in your knowledge and love of God.

Further Recommended Reading

Beck, James R. and Blomberg, Craig L. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

Foh, Susan. *Women and the Word of God: A Response to Biblical Feminism*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1978.

Grudem, Wayne. *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*. Westchester, Illinois: Goodnews Publishing, 2002.

Mickelsen, Alvera. *Women, Authority and the Bible*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986.

Piper, John. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. Westchester, Illinois: Goodnews Publishing, 1991.