

Royer: Anytime there is some disagreement on an issue, it is best to go right to what Jesus said and demonstrated.

Helvig: And since we're discussing male and female roles, let's consider what Jesus said and did.

What did Jesus teach and demonstrate regarding the role of women?

Griffith Look how Jesus handled women. From the woman at the well to Mary Magdalene, to the woman that touched his garment. He didn't patronize them. He didn't say "Well, that was a miracle, but now if you would go tell your husband and your brother and your father and your son and see if it's OK if you go tell everyone in the town." He never said that.

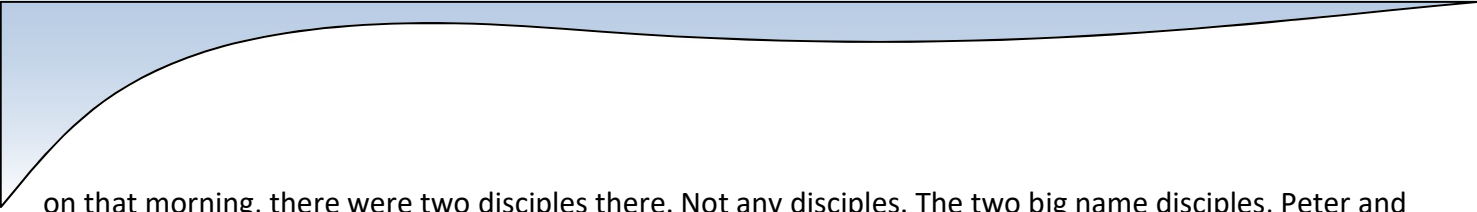
He said to Mary Magdalene when he, on the third day when he was rising, he didn't go up to her and say "Let's just wait right here, Mary, and we'll see Peter and John running here in a minute." He said "You go tell them."

Haddad Scripture over and over again surprises us with putting these amazing people in positions of leadership that we would never have predicted. Like when Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well, of Sychar, holding the longest (recorded) conversation he had with anyone in the New Testament.

Jesus seeks her out intentionally, lonely, and outcast as she is. She is the first person to receive the good news that Jesus is Messiah. And she recognizes this. And like any Samaritan or Jew who encounters the Lord they have been waiting for, she drops her jar, she dashes and she tells her community "Could he be one we are waiting for?"

Zaki I read Scripture passages and I look at Jesus' life and I think to myself, he was one of us. He was a Middle Eastern man. And he had the courage to go against what was acceptable, to go against what was known, to go against what was justifiable, because he had the kingdom of God on his mind. And the kingdom of God is one that said from the very beginning he created us male and female, equal in his image.

When I read about Mary, who sat at his feet, a term clearly known and recognized back then as the position of a disciple at a rabbi's feet. Paul uses that when he describes his relationship with his teacher, Gamaliel. He said "I sat at his feet, I was his disciple." Mary sat at Jesus' feet. When I see that on his resurrection Sunday



on that morning, there were two disciples there. Not any disciples. The two big name disciples, Peter and John. And yet he waits for them to leave and go home and he calls the Magdalene to become the first witness in a culture where her testimony was half the value of a man's testimony. But he chooses her.

Does the fact that there were twelve Jewish male original disciples mean only men should lead?

Zaki He also came and allowed women disciples in his presence. I know, this is one of the arguments against women ordination is that among the 12 disciples there were no women. I get it. But I also understand that those 12 disciples were representing the 12 tribes of Israel. And I think if there was a sister in those 12 tribes, if there was a female head of a tribe in the Old Testament, God would have put a female disciple. Because, he was trying to say he was the fulfillment of the whole picture, bridging the Old Testament to the New Testament, bringing the blessing that came to Israel now to bless all nations. But I don't want to speculate about things here. What I have is full evidence when I read things like women were with him and they funded his ministry. Who does this but disciples? In what Middle Eastern culture would it be acceptable for women to travel from village to village and town to town and this happened 2000 years ago, even though we cannot comprehend it now in our modern day Middle East. But it happened. That is how radical he was to influence and train and transform the culture, according to the principles of the kingdom of God. Not the kingdom of the culture of the Middle East.

Royer: Galatians 3:28 says

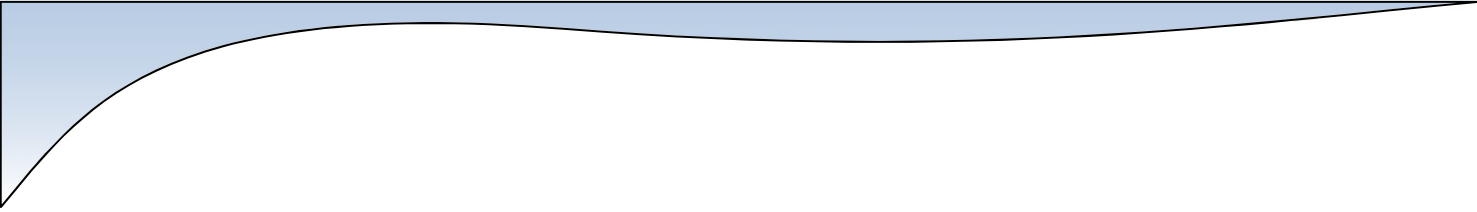
There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

That's pretty clear, right?

Helvig: Not necessarily. Some say this verse is only talking about salvation; we are equally saved. Still others believe the Galatians 3:28 passage, "one in Christ", has practical implications for our lives together and our roles.

Does being "one in Christ" refer only to salvation?

J. Roese So we got Jew and Gentile, it's like Palestinian and Israeli sitting at the table, right? Alright, you're all going to be one now. Right, they pull up. Now mind you it's not like "boom" they're just done with their prejudice behavior and all of a sudden, they love each other. Here they are. You've got master and slave. I always picture the master going over to the slave "Hey, could you get me a cup of coffee?" And the slave's



going “I’m at the table, I’m eating with you, I’m not working right now,” you know. And then you’ve got male, female, it’s like awkwardness. It takes a while for these people groups to come together and figure out how to let go of their perceptions and become one, right, the family becoming one. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, and it’s going to take that, right? The power of the Holy Spirit to bring these people back to one another, when they constantly defer to one another for holiness of each other, right? Jews, Gentiles, slaves, free, male, female, that’s what God’s after.

Pierce The response we often hear is that Galatians is just about salvation, spiritual being in Christ, and not about function. But Paul, I think, could not be concerned only with salvation. He’s writing to a church of believers. His concern isn’t that they get saved. His concern for, Peter, for example, who’s not willing to eat with the Gentiles. He’s not concerned about Peter getting saved. He’s concerned about Peter living out the very essence of his faith which is salvation by grace and a new community in Christ.

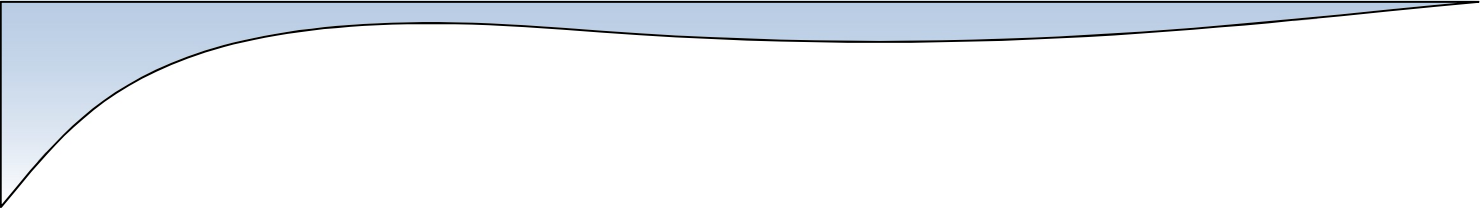
Mingo It’s not just men, I have to say this, who refuse or have a rejection of women in ministry. There are a lot of women who really have a concern, if I may say, about women being in ministry. A lot of the push-back comes from women.

Jesus never put us in any position where one person would be over another, be it a male or a female. We are all one in Christ.

Payne This book of Galatians was written for a very specific purpose. The people in Galatia had been enjoying Peter’s being with them and some of the people of the party of James came up from Jerusalem and convinced Peter he should not be having table fellowship with these Gentiles. So, he withdrew from table fellowship. And in Chapter 2 Paul says “I confronted Peter to his face. I said you’re a hypocrite. You’re acting contrary to the gospel.” And then he goes on to explain in chapter 3 the theological basis that in Christ there is no Jew/Greek division.

Well, does that have practical implication for life? You bet it does. There is no slave/free division. Does that have practical implication for life? You bet it does. There is no male/female division. Does that have practical implication for life? You bet it does.

Zaki I see Paul, who grew up in a Jewish culture, who knew very well how to pray “I thank you that I was born a man and not a woman.” And yet in Galatians 3 he says, “Done.” We’re done with these barriers. If you are in Christ we are finished with these barriers.



Royer: The comment often heard is that “women are equal and gifted, but they are just meant to use those gifts in different situations than men.”

Helvig: The problem with that concept is that those situations involve roles based on gender not gifting.

Can a woman have equal worth when given only subordinate roles?

Groothuis Some people who call themselves complementarians will say that they affirm the equal worth of men and women. But, men and women have God given roles that are quite different. Now what this comes down to is saying, that men and women have equal status before God. However, women are barred because of their gender from certain positions of leadership. Now that means that their lower place on the hierarchy is determined not by gifting or lack of gifting. It is determined by something they cannot change, which is their gender.

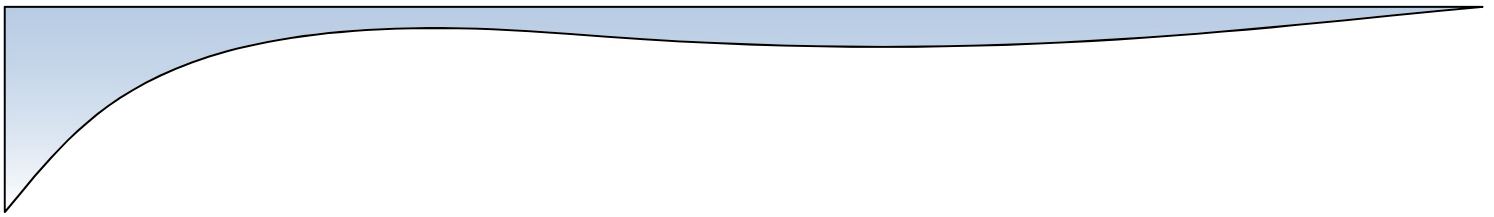
Certainly, hierarchy is significant in culture and God is not against hierarchy. I am a professor and I have students and I have a certain authority over them. Of course, I’m supposed to serve them. But the gender hierarchy idea is that women are always subservient to men in some way or another, not in all ways, simply because they are women.

Let’s say one of my students ends up being the dean of where I work. Then, I would be submitted to that person. But you see, that’s based on merit. And the traditionalist view, or the hierarchal view, says merit has nothing to do with it. It has to do with your being.

Haddad To say that women are equal in value and dignity, but unequal in role or authority, is interesting. We want to say “Oh yes, women and men are equal in value, equal in dignity, but they have different roles.” What does a role really mean? We’re not talking men doing the accounting and the shoveling and the plumbing and women do the cooking and child rearing. By role we mean one thing, and that is: men have authority over women the whole of life. That is not a role. That is a position of power and dominance. You can’t be equal, and be unequal in authority and power. Because, your only role in life is a disciple of Christ. Your role, once you accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, is to follow with every cell of your being.

How do we follow God’s calling?

Dallaire I started receiving interesting anonymous letters from concerned parishioners who wondered what I was doing as a woman pastor. It included the number of Scriptures such as 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 11 and about keeping the woman silent in the church, and they are not to speak, and they are to ask their



husbands at home. And I read this and they were all underlined in red, emphasizing, “We know what God wants for you.”

There are views, there are Scriptures, that are controversial. But, most of them are New Testament Scriptures that are often taken out of context, or the cultural context is not discussed.

But other people kept telling me, “There is a call on your life.” All I knew was I wanted to serve Jesus and the direction of my life was changing. So, as a woman, I ended up in full time ministry.

One thing I am aware of is that there are seminarians, even now, who will not take my class, my Bible classes, because I’m a woman. I bless them. I pray that whatever faculty member they choose to study under, their eyes will be open. That at some point they would see that it’s not about gender. It’s about the Lord and it’s about the Word of God and it’s about Jesus.

God is so faithful. He has shown himself to be so faithful. As a woman, in context where it’s not popular to be a woman, but realizing that life is about God and life here is short. And so, I need to make the most of every opportunity that is given to me, whether people agree with me or not. I will have to account to God for my life, for the decisions I have made in serving him. No one else is responsible for that. And I’m not responsible for the decisions they make. If God called me for a specific purpose, then, for the short time I have here, my responsibility is to follow that calling.

Helvig: Jesus was radical in his acknowledgement of women. And so was Paul, saying that in the body of Christ, we are one!

Royer: But Paul said other things that seem to really limit women. Like when he said “Man is the head of the woman.”

Helvig: Paul did say that. But what does headship mean? That is what we will be addressing in session 4.