

God bless godly Christian women. Where would many of us be without them? The role of a godly Christian woman in the church, in the home, and in society is of vital importance. I have personally never known of a godly Christian woman who did not appreciate the role God has given to her. She does not chafe against her role, nor charge God foolishly of sexism. She loves God above all things, and loves the role that God has given to her.

God created man, and established the church (Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2). Christ is the head of His church (Ephesians 5:23). It is Deity's prerogative to establish the framework wherein we are to function. He has not delegated that right to us or anyone else. It is a serious matter to tamper with God's will and foolish indeed if we listen to other sources concerning our place before God.

True Christians will always teach the Word of God concerning any matter of faith and practice. Among such matters would be the role of women in God's scheme of things. The church of Christ seeks diligently to teach the truth on all subjects, including women's role. Tragically much of the media exposure the church receives relates to false concepts of the role of women, the idea that women are mistreated and belittled, etc. The charge has been leveled that the church of Christ degrades women, in that we teach the limitation of women in public service. In this writer's opinion, it is not because we teach the limitation of women in service, but that we teach the limitation of women in public service. I believe and teach that godly Christian women are some of the greatest servants the church has ever known. I have never known anyone in the church personally to have taught otherwise. If the church of Christ teaches the truth on the subject of women's role, and one charges such teaching as degrading women, to whom is the charge actually leveled?

There is an important need in our day and time to discuss the role of women in the church, and as always in the church of Christ, use God's word as our source of authority.

### **God's Role for Women in Creation**

From the beginning of time, the woman has occupied a special position in God's creation. After God created man and placed him in the garden of Eden, He saw that

man needed a companion. God caused a deep sleep to fall upon man and from man's side, he created woman (Genesis 2:20-24). He created her with distinctive abilities and roles that would be peculiar to her and could not be completed by any other of all His creation. Her role is one of honor and of nobility when it is rightly understood and performed.

God created woman as a help meet for man. God said, "It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). God be thanked for the wonderful blessing of giving man a help meet. By Divine decree, man is to be the "head" of the woman. Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:22-24, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." This, along with the creation story (Genesis 2:18-24), shows that the woman was made for the man, and not the man for the woman. These facts do not suggest that women are inferior to men, but it does teach that women are to be in subjection to men.

The idea of subjection/submission goes back to the idea to adopt yourself to your mate, to depend upon your spouse. Does that mean women cannot do anything for themselves? That they can't make decisions for themselves? Absolutely not! Let's not let the world tell us what to believe with regard to our relationship with our mates. The submission of the wife to her husband is a principle that dates all the way back to the garden (Genesis 3:16, "...and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."). The wife's submission to her husband grows out of her submission to Christ (Romans 6:16-18). If she is submissive to Christ, she will be submissive to her husband. When the Lord's church teaches the truth on women's role, and the charge is made that you are degrading women, to whom is the charge really leveled?

### **God's Role for Women in the Church**

Paul is writing by direction of Deity in 1 Timothy 2:8, 11-12: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting...Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over

the man, but to be in silence."

The restrictions here are fourfold. (1) The Greek word used here for "men" is the word – *aner* – and is specific, referring only to the male part of the human race. Men are to pray in public. Women must, therefore, willingly and respectfully abide by God's decree. (2) In the presence of man she is to be in silence or subjection. Men are to be in charge or as leaders. (3) She is not to teach over men, still understood as in the public arena. That she can teach a man privately is seen in the example of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28). (4) She is not to usurp authority over the man. It would preclude her appointment to any official capacity where she would have authority over the man. It would prohibit her from serving as an elder, deacon, preaching when men are present, or presiding in public worship assemblies, etc.

Paul shows that this command is not cultural in nature, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (verses 13-14). By creation man has a natural position of authority over the woman in the church as well as in the home.

### **Degrading Women?**

God's role for women to be in subjection to men would be no more degrading than Christ's subjection to God the Father. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:3, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." Keep firmly in mind the fact that this is not the writing of a male chauvinist as some are inclined to claim. Paul was writing by the direction of Deity, which makes this message inspired without question. Paul makes the headship of Christ over man the basis, or principle, on which he says that the man has headship over the woman. It was well, before mentioning the headship of man over woman, to remind the man that he also is a servant of Christ. This relationship of man and woman should be parallel to the headship of God over Christ, and suggest that there should be between husband and wife a unity of will and purpose similar to that which exists between the Father and the Son.

Is it degrading for a woman to be in submission to the man who loves her as much as Christ loved the church

and is willing to give himself for her (Ephesians 5:25)? Is it degrading to submit to a man who honors you (1 Peter 3:7)? Is it degrading to be submissive to one who loves you more than his own body (Ephesians 5:28)? To submit to one who does his best to provide for you (1 Timothy 5:8)? You might be thinking, "It's a shame that doesn't describe my husband!" But the shame would be on the husband, not on God! God's ways are above our ways and His thoughts above our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8). God has provided protection to the woman through His ways.

### **Women's Submission Is Parallel to Christ's Submission**

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:1, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives." It is interesting that he would start the passage with the word, "Likewise." He is saying, "Based on what I have said already, here is what you should do." What is it that Peter has said that we need to look at and consider carefully? We look back to the example of Christ in chapter 2:21-25. Notice the faithful obedience of Christ, that even though He faced the torture and suffering of the cross, He still threatened not (v. 23), but committed himself to Him that judges righteously. Peter is saying, "Go back and consider what I've just said about the supreme and ultimate example of submission from Christ. Consider what Jesus did and that you are to follow in His steps." It's not politically correct to say that women are to be in submission, but it is what the Bible says. In the context of showing about Christ and His submission to God, he says in this regard, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands..." Does that mean that the husband is the master, and the wife the slave? No. Does it say that the woman is inferior? No, the Bible has them on equal footing. But the Bible has certainly given us varying responsibilities. Let's not let the world tell us what to believe with regard to our relationships.

Regarding the husband, Peter will say in verse 7, "Likewise, ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." Does this "likewise," go back to the wife, and if she is in

subjection then the husband is to do this? No! This goes all the way back to Christ and His submission to the Father, and "likewise" husbands are to do these things.

Will we let the world tell us what a woman ought to do and be? Will we let the world tell us what a man ought to do and be? Or, will we let the Bible tell us the truth about the matter?

### **Conclusion**

Women hold a tremendous place in the church of the Lord. In times past we read of women ministering to the Lord of their substance (Luke 8:3); Dorcas was known for her good deeds (Acts 9:36); Priscilla assisted her husband, Aquila, in teaching Apollos the way of the Lord in private (Acts 18:26); and Paul mentioned repeatedly of the church in their home (1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3-4). We read of Phoebe who was a servant of the church in Cenchreae (Romans 16:1-2); Mary who worked among the Romans (Romans 16:6); and Tryphaena and Tryphosa who labored in the Lord (Romans 16:12). Since that time we continue to know of great, godly women who labored and suffered for the cause of Christ in the role that God has given to them. If it were not for such godly, Christian women, the Lord's church could not exist in this or any generation. We give thanks to godly women who love the Lord and fulfill their roles in His church.

The teachings of the church of Christ regarding women's role is nothing more or less than the Bible's teaching. The charge of those who claim that it actually degrades women is really a charge against God and a lack of knowledge of His word.

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the  
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To hear or view the complete lesson go to  
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**"They Shall Be Turned  
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# **"The Church of Christ Degrades Women!"**

by  
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