

THE KEY ISSUES IN THE MANHOOD-WOMANHOOD CONTROVERSY, AND THE WAY FORWARD

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KEY ISSUE 1: MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUAL IN VALUE AND DIGNITY

Very early in the Bible we read that both men and women are “in the image of God.” In fact, the very first verse that tells us that God created human beings also tells us that both “male and female” are in the image of God:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

—GEN. 1:27, emphasis added

To be in the image of God is an incredible privilege. It means *to be like God* and *to represent God*.¹ No other creatures in all of creation, not even the powerful angels, are said to be in the image of God. It is a privilege given only to us as men and women. We are more like God than any other creatures in the universe, for we alone are “in the image of God.”²

¹For further discussion, see Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, and Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 442–450.

²God created us so that our likeness to Him would be seen in our moral judgment and actions, in our spiritual life and ability to relate to God who is spirit, in our reasoning ability, our use of language, our awareness of the distant past and future, our creativity, the complexity and variety of our emotions, the depth of our interpersonal relationships, our equality and differences

Any discussion of manhood and womanhood in the Bible must start here. Every time we look at each other or talk to each other as men and women, we should remember that the person we are talking to is a creature of God who is *more like God than anything else in the universe*, and men and women share that status equally. Therefore we should treat men and women with equal dignity, and we should think of men and women as having equal value. We are *both* in the image of God, and we have been so since the very first day that God created us. “In the image of God he created him; *male and female he created them*” (Genesis 1:27). Nowhere does the Bible say that men are more in God’s image than women.³ Men and women share equally in the tremendous privilege of being in the image of God.

The Bible thus almost immediately corrects the errors of male dominance and male superiority that have come as the result of sin and that have been seen in nearly all cultures in the history of the world. Wherever men are thought to be better than women, wherever husbands act as selfish dictators, wherever wives are forbidden to have their own jobs outside the home or to vote or to own property or to be educated, wherever women are treated as inferior, wherever there is abuse or violence against women or rape or female infanticide or polygamy or harems, the biblical truth of equality in the image of God is being denied. To all societies and cultures where these things occur, we must proclaim that the very beginning of God’s Word bears a fundamental and irrefutable witness against these evils.⁴

in marriage and other interpersonal relationships, our rule over the rest of creation, and in other ways. All of these aspects are distorted by sin and manifest themselves in ways that are *unlike* God and are displeasing to Him, but all of these areas of our lives are also being progressively restored to greater Godlikeness through the salvation that is ours in Christ, and they will be completely restored in us when Christ returns.

For a fuller discussion of what it means to be in the image of God, see Bruce Ware’s chapter, “Male and Female Complementarity and the Image of God” elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 2).

³In 1 Corinthians 11:7 Paul says, “A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.” He is not denying here that woman was created in the image of God, for that is clearly affirmed in Genesis 1:27. Nor does he say that woman is the image of man. Rather, Paul is simply saying that *in the relationship between man and woman*, man in particular reflects something of the excellence of the God who created him, and woman *in that relationship* reflects something of the excellence of the man from whom she was created. Yet Paul goes on almost immediately to say that men and women are interdependent (see vv. 11-12), and that we could not exist without each other. He does not say in this passage that man is more in the image of God than woman is, nor should we derive any such idea from this passage.

⁴A tragic example of male dominance was reported on the front page of *USA Today: International Edition* (Sept. 6, 1994): “No girls allowed: Abortion for sex selection raises moral questions” was the caption on a photo of a doctor performing an ultrasound on a pregnant woman in India. The cover story, “Asians’ Desire for Boys Leaves a Deadly Choice,” reported that according to

Yet we can say even more. If men and women are equally in the image of God, then we are equally important *to God* and equally valuable *to Him*. We have equal worth before Him *for all eternity*, for this is how we were created. This truth should exclude all our feelings of pride or inferiority and should exclude any idea that one sex is “better” or “worse” than the other. In contrast to many non-Christian cultures and religions, no one should feel proud or superior because he is a man, and no one should feel disappointed or inferior because she is a woman. If God thinks us to be equal in value, then that settles forever the question of personal worth, for God’s evaluation is the true standard of personal value for all eternity.

Further evidence of our equality in the image of God is seen in the New Testament church, where the Holy Spirit is given in new fullness to both men and women (Acts 2:17-18), where both men and women are baptized into membership in the body of Christ (Acts 2:41)⁵, and where both men and women receive spiritual gifts for use in the life of the church (1 Cor. 12:7, 11; 1 Pet. 4:10). The apostle Paul reminds us that we are not to be divided into factions that think of themselves as superior and inferior (such as Jew and Greek, or slave and free, or male

Dr. Datta Pai, a Bombay obstetrician, “99% of those found to be carrying female fetuses aborted their unborn children” (2A). The story explained that “modern technology, the strong cultural desire for boys and pressure to reduce population have joined forces in a deadly combination in India, China and much of Asia to produce a booming business in sex selection . . . the practice of aborting female fetuses appears common judging by emerging statistics that show lopsided sex ratios throughout Asia and into North Africa. Nor is the practice of sex selection limited to abortion. Female infanticide, the abandonment of baby girls, and the preferential feeding and health care of boys contribute greatly to the imbalanced ratios” (1A-2A). The story goes on to quote Harvard professor Amartya Sen as saying that there are now more than 100,000,000 women “missing” in the population of the world, including 44,000,000 fewer women in China and 37,000,000 fewer in India than should be alive according to normal sex ratios at birth (2A).

This is a tragedy of unspeakable proportions. In addition to the harm of these lost lives, we must think of the destructive consequences in the lives of those women who survive. From their earliest age they receive the message from their families and indeed from their whole society, “Boys are better than girls,” and “I wish you were a boy.” The devastation on their own sense of self-worth must be immense. Yet all of this comes about as a result of a failure to realize that men and women, boys and girls have equal value in God’s sight and should have equal value in our sight as well. The first chapter of the Bible corrects this practice and corrects any lurking sense in our own hearts that boys are more valuable than girls, when it says we are both created in the image of God.

⁵The fact that both men and women are baptized stands in contrast to the Old Testament, where the outward sign of inclusion in the community of God’s people was circumcision. Circumcision by its nature was only administered to men. By contrast, both men and women are baptized in the New Testament church. In this way, every baptism should remind us of our equality in the image of God.

and female), but rather that we should think of ourselves as united because we are all “one” in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

By way of application to marriage, whenever husbands and wives do not listen respectfully and thoughtfully to each other’s viewpoints, do not value the wisdom that might be arrived at differently and expressed differently from the other person, or do not value the other person’s different gifts and preferences as much as their own, this teaching on equality in the image of God is being neglected.

Speaking personally, I do not think I listened very well to my wife Margaret early in our marriage. I did not value her different gifts and preferences as much as my own, or her wisdom that was arrived at or expressed differently. Later we made much progress in this area, but looking back, Margaret told me that early in our marriage she felt as though her voice was taken away, and as though my ears were closed. I wonder if there are other couples in many churches where God needs to open the husband’s ears to listen and needs to restore the wife’s voice to speak.⁶

A healthy perspective on the way that equality manifests itself in marriage was summarized as part of a “Marriage and Family Statement” issued by Campus Crusade for Christ in July 1999. After three paragraphs discussing both equality and differences between men and women, the statement says the following:

In a marriage lived according to these truths, the love between husband and wife will show itself in listening to each other’s viewpoints, valuing each other’s gifts, wisdom, and desires, honoring one another in public and in private, and always seeking to bring benefit, not harm, to one another.⁷

Why do I list this as a key issue in the manhood-womanhood con-

⁶I realize there is an opposite mistake, in which the husband “listens” so much and the wife has so great a “voice” that in effect the wife becomes the governing partner in the relationship. I am not advocating that mistake either, and in what follows I will argue for the necessity of a male leadership role in decision-making within marriage.

⁷Policy statement announced and distributed to Campus Crusade staff members at a biannual staff conference, July 28, 1999, at Moby Arena, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. The statement was reported in a Religion News Service dispatch July 30, 1999, a Baptist Press story by Art Toalston on July 29, 1999 (www.baptistpress.com), and an article in *World* magazine September 11, 1999 (32), and it was also quoted in full in James Dobson’s monthly newsletter *Family News from Dr. James Dobson* (Sept. 1999, 1-2). The statement is also reproduced and discussed in Dennis Rainey, *Ministering to Twenty-First Century Families* (Nashville: Word, 2001), 39-56.

troversy? Not because we differ with egalitarians⁸ on this question, but because we differ at this point with sinful tendencies in our own hearts. And we differ at this point with the oppressive male chauvinism and male dominance that has marred most cultures throughout most of history.

Why do I list this as a key issue? Because anyone preaching on manhood and womanhood has to start here—where the Bible starts—not with our differences, but with our *equality* in the image of God.

And to pastors who wish to teach on biblical manhood and womanhood in their churches, I need to say that if you don't start here in your preaching, affirming our equality in the image of God, you simply will not get a hearing from many people in your church. And if you don't start here, with male-female equality in the image of God, your heart won't be right in dealing with this issue.

There is yet one more reason why I think this is a key issue, one that speaks especially to men. I personally think that one reason God has allowed this whole controversy on manhood and womanhood to come into the church at this time is so that we could correct some mistakes, change some wrongful traditions, and become more faithful to Scripture in treating our wives and all women with dignity and respect. The first step in correcting these mistakes is to be fully convinced in our hearts that women share equally with us men in the value and dignity that belongs to being made in the image of God.

KEY ISSUE 2: MEN AND WOMEN HAVE DIFFERENT ROLES IN MARRIAGE AS PART OF THE CREATED ORDER

When the members of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood wrote the “Danvers Statement” in 1987, we included the following affirmations:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood.

⁸Throughout this chapter, I use the word *egalitarian* to refer to those within the evangelical world who say that no differences in the roles of men and women should be based on their gender alone. In particular, egalitarians deny that there is any unique male leadership role in marriage or in the church. Sometimes I use the phrase *evangelical feminists* to mean the same thing as egalitarians.

2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart.

3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin.⁹

The statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in June 1998 and affirmed (with one additional paragraph) by Campus Crusade in July 1999 also affirms God-given differences:

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to his people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. *He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.*¹⁰

By contrast, egalitarians do not affirm such created differences. In fact, the "statement on men, women and Biblical equality" published by Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) says:

1. The Bible teaches that both man and woman were created in God's image, had a direct relationship with God, and *shared jointly the responsibilities of bearing and rearing children and having dominion over the created order (Gen. 1:26-28)*. . . .

5. The Bible teaches that the rulership of Adam over Eve resulted from the Fall and was, therefore, *not a part of the original created order*. . . .

10. The Bible defines the function of leadership as the empowerment of others for service rather than as the exercise of power over them (Matt. 20:25-28, 23:8; Mark 10:42-45; John 13:13-17; Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet 5:2-3).

⁹The Danvers Statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood meeting in Danvers, MA, in December 1987. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in Wheaton, IL, in November 1988. See Appendix 1 for the full text of this statement.

¹⁰The entire statement in the form adopted by Campus Crusade for Christ is available at www.baptistpress.com, in the archives for July 29, 1999 (italics added).

11. The Bible teaches that husbands and wives are heirs together of the grace of life and that they are bound together in a relationship of mutual submission and responsibility (1 Cor. 7:3-5; Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:1-7; Gen. 21:12). The husband's function as "head" (*kephalē*) is to be understood as self-giving love and service within this relationship of mutual submission (Eph. 5:21-33; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7).¹¹

So which position is right? Does the Bible really teach that men and women had different roles from the beginning of creation?

When we look carefully at Scripture, I think we can see at least ten reasons indicating that God gave men and women distinct roles before the Fall, and particularly that there was male headship in marriage before the Fall.

Ten Reasons Showing Male Headship in Marriage Before the Fall

1. *The order:* Adam was created first, then Eve (note the sequence in Gen. 2:7 and Gen. 2:18-23). We may not think of this as very important today, but it was important to the biblical readers, and the apostle Paul sees it as important: He bases his argument for different roles in the assembled New Testament church on the fact that Adam was created prior to Eve. He says, "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men. . . . For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Tim. 2:12-13). According to Scripture itself, then, the fact that Adam was created first and then Eve has implications not just for Adam and Eve themselves, but for the relationships between men and women generally throughout time, including the church age.¹²

2. *The representation:* Adam, not Eve, had a special role in representing the human race.

Looking at the Genesis narrative, we find that Eve sinned first, and then Adam sinned (Gen. 3:6: "she took of its fruit and ate; and she also

¹¹The entire statement is available from the website of Christians for Biblical Equality, www.cbeinternational.org (italics added as quoted above). I should add that the CBE statement regularly portrays a non-egalitarian position in pejorative language such as "the rulership of Adam over Eve" and fails to even mention a third alternative—namely, loving, humble headship. (For a discussion of repeated ambiguities in the CBE statement see John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "Charity, Clarity, and Hope," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 403-422.)

¹²Bruce Ware adds yet another reason related to this temporal priority in creation—namely, that woman was created "from" or "out of" man. See his discussion elsewhere in this volume, Chapter 2. Although I have not listed it separately here, this could be counted as an eleventh reason along with the ten I list.

gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate”). Since Eve sinned first, we might expect that the New Testament would tell us that we inherit a sinful nature because of Eve’s sin, or that we are counted guilty because of Eve’s sin. But this is not the case. In fact, it is just the opposite. We read in the New Testament, “For as *in Adam* all die, so also *in Christ* shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22). The New Testament does not say, “as *in Eve* all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”

This is further seen in the parallel between Adam and Christ, where Paul views Christ as the “last Adam”:

Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. . . . The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. . . . Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

—1 COR. 15:45-49 (see also ROM. 5:12-21,
where another relationship between
Adam and Christ is developed)

It is unmistakable, then, that Adam had a leadership role in representing the entire human race, a leadership role that Eve did not have. Nor was it true that Adam and Eve *together* represented the human race. It was *Adam alone* who represented the human race, because he had a particular leadership role that God had given him, a role that Eve did not share.

3. *The naming of woman*: When God made the first woman and “brought her to the man,” the Bible tells us,

Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

—GEN. 2:23

When Adam says, “she shall be called Woman,” he is giving a name to her. This is important in the context of Genesis 1—2, because in that context the original readers would have recognized that the person doing the “naming” of created things is always the person who has authority over those things.

In order to avoid the idea that Adam’s naming of woman implies male leadership or authority, some egalitarians (such as Gilbert

Bilezikian) deny that Adam gives a name to his wife in Genesis 2:23.¹³ But his objection is hardly convincing when we see how Genesis 2:23 fits into the pattern of naming activities throughout these first two chapters of Genesis. We see this when we examine the places where the same verb (the Hebrew verb *qārā'* ["to call"]) is used in contexts of naming in Genesis 1—2:

Genesis 1:5: "God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night."

Genesis 1:8: "And God called the expanse Heaven."

Genesis 1:10: "God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas."

Genesis 2:19: So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name."

Genesis 2:20: "The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field."

Genesis 2:23: "Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'"

In each of these verses prior to Genesis 2:23, the same verb, the Hebrew verb *qārā'*, had been used. Just as God demonstrated His sovereignty over day and night, heavens, earth, and seas by assigning them names, so Adam demonstrated his authority over the animal kingdom by assigning them names. The pattern would have been eas-

¹³See Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990), 259, where he says, "No mention of 'giving a name' is made in reference to the woman in verse 23." He also says, "The contrast between Genesis 2:23 and 3:20 bears out the fact that there was no act of naming in the first instance. When Eve actually receives her *name*, the text uses that very word, 'The man called his wife's *name* Eve'" (261).

Bilezikian apparently thinks that where the word "name" (the Hebrew noun *shem*) is not used, no act of naming occurs. But he takes no account of the fact that the noun *shem* is not used in Genesis 1:5, 8, or 10 either, where God names the "Day" and the "Night" and "Heaven" and "Earth" and "Seas." The idea of naming can be indicated by the verb *qārā'* without the noun "name" being used.

ily recognized by the original readers, and they would have seen a continuation of the pattern when Adam said, “she shall be *called* Woman.”

The original readers of Genesis and of the rest of the Old Testament would have been familiar with this pattern, a pattern whereby people who have authority over another person or thing have the ability to assign a name to that person or thing, a name that often indicates something of the character or quality of the person. Thus parents give names to their children (see Gen. 4:25-26; 5:3, 29; 16:15; 19:37-38; 21:3). And God is able to change the names of people when He wishes to indicate a change in their character or role (see Gen. 17:5, 15, where God changes Abram’s name to Abraham and where He changes Sarai’s name to Sarah). In each of these passages we have the same verb as is used in Genesis 2:23 (the verb *qara*’), and in each case the person who gives the name is one in authority over the person who receives the name. Therefore when Adam gives to his wife the name “Woman,” in terms of biblical patterns of thought this indicates a kind of authority that God gave to Adam, a leadership function that Eve did not have with respect to her husband.

We should notice here that Adam does not give the personal name “Eve” to his wife until Genesis 3:20 (“the man *called* [Hebrew *qārā*] his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living”). This is because in the creation story in Genesis 2 Adam is giving a broad category name to his wife, indicating the name that would be given to womanhood generally, and he is not giving specific personal names designating the character of the individual person.¹⁴

4. *The naming of the human race*: God named the human race “Man,” not “Woman.” Because the idea of naming is so important in the Old Testament, it is interesting what name God chose for the human race as a whole. We read: “When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and *named them Man* when they were created” (Gen. 5:1-2).

In the Hebrew text, the word that is translated “Man” is the Hebrew word *’ādām*. But this is by no means a gender-neutral term in

¹⁴Similarly, because God is having Adam examine and name the entire animal kingdom, it is likely that Adam gave names to one representative of each broad category or type of animal in Genesis 2:19-20 (such as “dog,” “cat,” “deer,” or “lion,” to use English equivalents). We hardly expect that he would have given individual, personal names (such as “Rover” or “Tabby” or “Bambi” or “Leo”), because those names would not have applied to others of the same kind. This distinction is missed by Gilbert Bilezikian (*Beyond Sex Roles*, 259-261) when he objects that Adam did not name Eve until Genesis 3:20, after the Fall. Adam did give her a specific personal name (“Eve”) after the Fall, but he also gave her the general category name “Woman” before the Fall.

the eyes of the Hebrew reader at this point, because in the four chapters prior to Genesis 5:2, the Hebrew word *'ādām* has been used many times to speak of a male human being in distinction from a female human being. In the following list the roman word *man* represents this same Hebrew word *'ādām* in every case:

Genesis 2:22: "And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man." (We should notice here that it does not say that God made the rib into another 'ādām, another "man," but that He made the rib into a "woman," which is a different Hebrew word.)

Genesis 2:23: "Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman. . . .'"

Genesis 2:25: "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

Genesis 3:8: ". . . and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God . . ."

Genesis 3:9: "But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'"

Genesis 3:12: "The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.'"

Genesis 3:20: "The man called his wife's name Eve."

When we come, then, to the naming of the human race in Genesis 5:2 (reporting an event before the Fall), it would be evident to the original readers that God was using a name that had clear male overtones or nuances. In fact, in the first four chapters of Genesis the word *'ādām* had been used thirteen times to refer not to a human being in general but to a male human being. In addition to the eight examples mentioned above, it was used a further five times as a proper name for Adam in distinction from Eve (Gen. 3:17, 21; 4:1, 25; 5:1).¹⁵

¹⁵There are actually more than thirteen instances where the Hebrew word *'ādām* referred to a male human being, because prior to the creation of Eve there are twelve additional instances where references to "the man" spoke only of a male person whom God had created: see Genesis 2:5, 7 (twice), 8, 15, 16, 18, 19 (twice), 20 (twice), 21. If we add these instances, there are twenty-five examples of *'ādām* used to refer to a male human being prior to Genesis 5:2. The male connotations of the word could not have been missed by the original readers.

We are not saying here that the word *'ādām* in the Hebrew Bible always refers to a male human being, for sometimes it has a broader sense and means something like “person.” But here in the early chapters of Genesis the connection with the man in distinction from the woman is a very clear pattern. God gave the human race a name that, like the English word *man*, can either mean a male human being or can refer to the human race in general.

Does this make any difference? It does give a hint of male leadership, which God suggested in choosing this name. It is significant that God did not call the human race “Woman.” (I am speaking, of course, of Hebrew equivalents to these English words.) Nor did he give the human race a name such as “humanity,” which would have no male connotations and no connection with the man in distinction from the woman. Rather, he called the race “man.” Raymond C. Ortlund rightly says, “God’s naming of the race ‘man’ whispers male headship.”¹⁶

While it is Genesis 5:2 that explicitly reports this naming process, it specifies that it is referring to an event prior to sin and the Fall: “When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man *when they were created*” (Gen. 5:1-2).

And, in fact, the name is already indicated in Genesis 1:27: “So God created *man* in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

If the name *man* in English (as in Hebrew) did not suggest male leadership or headship in the human race, there would be no objection to using the word *man* to refer to the human race generally today. But it is precisely the hint of male leadership in the word that has led some people to object to this use of the word *man* and to attempt to substitute other terms instead.¹⁷ Yet it is that same hint of male leadership that makes this precisely the best translation of Genesis 1:27 and 5:2.

5. *The primary accountability*: God spoke to Adam first after the Fall. After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from the Lord among the

¹⁶Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr. in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 98.

¹⁷It is interesting to notice that several gender-neutral Bible translations have changed the word “man,” which was standard in earlier English translations. The word “humankind” is used in the *New Revised Standard Version* in Genesis 1:26-27. The *New Living Translation* uses the word “people,” while the inclusive language edition of the *New International Version* uses the phrase “human beings.” In Genesis 5:2, various gender-neutral substitutes replace the name “man”: “humankind” (NRSV), “human” (NLT), or “human beings” (*NIV—Inclusive Language Edition*, CEV, NCV).

trees of the garden. Then we read, “But the LORD God called to *the man* and said to *him*, ‘Where are *you*?’” (Gen. 3:9).

In the Hebrew text, the expression “the man” and the pronouns “him” and “you” are all singular. Even though Eve had sinned first, God first summoned Adam to give account for what had happened. This suggests that Adam was the one primarily accountable for what had happened in his family.

An analogy to this is seen in the life of a human family. When a parent comes into a room where several children have been misbehaving and have left the room in chaos, the parent will probably summon the oldest and say, “What happened here?” This is because, though all are responsible for their behavior, the oldest child bears the primary responsibility.

In a similar way, when God summoned Adam to give an account, it indicated a primary responsibility for Adam in the conduct of his family. This is similar to the situation in Genesis 2:15-17, where God had given commands to Adam alone before the Fall, indicating there also a primary responsibility that belonged to Adam. By contrast, the serpent spoke to Eve first (Gen. 3:1), trying to get her to take responsibility for leading the family into sin, and inverting the order that God had established at creation.

6. *The purpose:* Eve was created as a helper for Adam, not Adam as a helper for Eve.

After God had created Adam and gave him directions concerning his life in the Garden of Eden, we read, “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him’” (Gen. 2:18).

It is true that the Hebrew word here translated “helper” (*ezer*) is often used of God who is our helper elsewhere in the Bible. (See Ps. 33:20; 70:5; 115:9; etc.) But the word “helper” does not by itself decide the issue of what God intended the relationship between Adam and Eve to be. The nature of the activity of helping is so broad that it can be done by someone who has greater authority, someone who has equal authority, or someone who has lesser authority than the person being helped. For example, I can help my son do his homework.¹⁸ Or I can help my neighbor move his sofa. Or my son can help me clean the garage. Yet the fact remains that *in the situation under consideration*, the person doing

¹⁸I am taking this analogy from Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 104.

the helping puts himself in a subordinate role to the person who has primary responsibility for carrying out the activity. Thus, even if I help my son with his homework, the primary responsibility for the homework remains his and not mine. I am the helper. And even when God helps us, with respect to the specific task at hand He still holds us primarily responsible for the activity, and He holds us accountable for what we do.

But Genesis 2 does not merely say that Eve functions as Adam's "helper" in one or two specific events. Rather, it says that God made Eve for the purpose of providing Adam with help, one who *by virtue of creation* would function as Adam's "helper": "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'" (Gen. 2:18).

The Hebrew text can be translated quite literally as, "I will make *for him* [Hebrew *lo*] a helper fit for him." The apostle Paul understands this accurately because in 1 Corinthians 11 he writes, "for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake" (v. 9, NASB). Eve's role, and the purpose that God had in mind when He created her, was that she would be "for him . . . a helper."

Yet in the same sentence God emphasizes that she is not to help Adam as one who is inferior to him. Rather, she is to be a helper "fit for him," and here the Hebrew word *kenegdô* means "a help corresponding to him," that is, "equal and adequate to himself."¹⁹ So Eve was created as a helper, but as a helper who was Adam's equal. She was created as one who differed from him, but who differed from him in ways that would exactly complement who Adam was.

7. *The conflict*: The curse brought a distortion of previous roles, not the introduction of new roles.

After Adam and Eve sinned, God spoke words of judgment to Eve:

To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

—GEN. 3:16

The word translated "desire" is an unusual Hebrew word, *teshûqâh*. What is the meaning of this word? In this context and in this construction, it probably implies an aggressive desire, perhaps a desire to conquer or rule

¹⁹This is the definition given in Frances Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 617.

over, or else an urge or impulse to oppose her husband, an impulse to act “against” him. This sense is seen in the only other occurrence of *teshûqâh* in all the books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), and the only other occurrence of *teshûqâh* plus the preposition *’el* in the whole Bible. That occurrence of the word is in the very next chapter of Genesis, in 4:7. God says to Cain, “Sin is crouching at the door, and its *desire* is for you, but you must master it” (NASB). Here the sense is very clear. God pictures sin as a wild animal waiting outside Cain’s door, waiting to attack him, even to pounce on him and overpower him. In that sense, sin’s “desire” or “instinctive urge” is “against” him.²⁰

The striking thing about that sentence is what a remarkable parallel it is with Genesis 3:16. In the Hebrew text, six words are the same and are found in the same order in both verses. It is almost as if this other usage is put here by the author so that we would know how to understand the meaning of the term in Genesis 3:16. The expression in 4:7 has the sense, “desire, urge, impulse *against*” (or perhaps “desire to conquer, desire to rule over”). And that sense fits very well in Genesis 3:16 also.²¹

Some have assumed that “desire” in Genesis 3:16 refers to sexual desire. But that is highly unlikely because (1) the entire Bible views

²⁰The ESV margin translates *teshûqâh* plus *’el* in Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 as “Or *against*.” This seems to me to be the most accurate rendering. The preposition *’el* can take the meaning “against,” as is clear from the next verse, Genesis 4:8, where “Cain rose up *against* (*’el*) his brother Abel and killed him.” BDB gives sense 4 for *’el* as: “Where the motion or direction implied appears from the context to be of a hostile character, *’el = against*.” They cite Genesis 4:8 and several other verses.

²¹The only other occurrence of the word *teshûqâh* in the entire Hebrew Old Testament is found in Song of Solomon 7:10 (v. 11 in Hebrew): “I am my beloved’s, and his *desire* is for me” (emphasis added). There the word does not indicate a hostile or aggressive desire but indicates the man’s sexual desire for his wife.

I have previously argued elsewhere that a positive kind of “desire to conquer” could be understood in Song 7:10, whereby it indicates the man’s desire to have a kind of influence over his beloved that is appropriate to initiating and consummating the sexual relationship, an influence such that she would receive and yield to his amorous advances. This sense would be represented by the paraphrase, “His desire is to have me yield to him.”

However, I am now inclined to think that the word *teshûqâh* itself does not signify anything so specific as “desire to conquer,” but rather something more general such as “urge, impulse.” (The word takes that sense in Mishnaic Hebrew, as indicated by David Talley in the following footnote.) In that case, Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 have the sense “desire, urge, impulse *against*,” and Song 7:10 has the sense, “desire, urge, impulse *for*.” This seems to me to fit better with the context of Song 7:10.

The difference in meaning may also be signaled by a different construction. The Genesis and Song of Solomon examples are not exactly parallel linguistically, because a different preposition follows the verb in Song of Solomon, and therefore the sense may be somewhat different. In Song 7:11 [10, English], *teshûqâh* is followed by *’al*, but it is followed by *’el* in Genesis 3:16 and 4:7.

(The preposition *’al* is misprinted as *’el* in Song 7:11 [10, English] as cited in BDB, 1003. BDB apparently does this because it follows the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* editors (1934), who in the margin suggest changing the Hebrew text to *’el*, but this is mere conjecture with no

sexual desire within marriage as something positive, not as something evil or something that God imposed as a judgment; and (2) surely Adam and Eve had sexual desire for one another prior to their sin, for God had told them to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28), and certainly in an unfallen world, along with the command, God would have given the desire that corresponded to it. So “your desire shall be for your husband” cannot refer to sexual desire. It is much more appropriate to the context of a curse to understand this as an aggressive desire *against* her husband, one that would bring her into conflict with him.

Then God says with regard to Adam, “and he shall *rule* over you” (Gen. 3:16). The word here translated “rule” is the Hebrew term *māshal*. This term is common in the Old Testament, and it regularly, if not always, refers to ruling by greater power or force or strength. It is used of human military or political rulers, such as Joseph ruling over the land of Egypt (Gen. 45:26), or the Philistines ruling over Israel (Judg. 14:4; 15:11), or Solomon ruling over all the kingdoms that he had conquered (1 Kings 4:21). It is also used to speak of God ruling over the sea (Ps. 89:9) or God ruling over the earth generally (Ps. 66:7). Sometimes it refers to oppressive rulers who cause the people under them to suffer (Neh. 9:37; Isa. 19:4). In any case, the word does not signify one who leads among equals, but rather one who rules by virtue of power and strength, and sometimes even rules harshly and selfishly.

Once we understand these two terms, we can see much more clearly what was involved in the curse that God brought to Adam and Eve as punishment for their sins.

One aspect of the curse was imposing *pain on Adam’s particular area of responsibility*, raising food from the ground: “cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you. . . . By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground” (Gen. 3:17-19). Another aspect of the curse was to impose *pain on Eve’s particular area of responsibility*, the bearing of children: “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children” (Gen. 3:16).

manuscript support. The LXX confirms the difference, translating with *pros* for 'el in Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 but with *epi* for 'al in Song 7:11 [10, English], which is what we would expect with a very literal translation.)

In any case, while the sense in Song 7:10 (11) is different, both the context and the construction are different, and this example is removed in time and authorship from Genesis 3:16 and must be given lower importance in understanding the meaning of the word in Genesis. Surely the sense cannot be “sexual desire” in Genesis 4:7, and it seems very unlikely in the context of Genesis 3:16 as well.

A third aspect of the curse was to introduce *pain and conflict into the relationship* between Adam and Eve. Prior to their sin, they had lived in the Garden of Eden in perfect harmony, yet with a leadership role belonging to Adam as the head of his family. But after the Fall, God introduced conflict in that Eve would have an inward urging and impulsion to oppose Adam, to resist Adam's leadership (the verb *teshûqâh*). "Your impulse, your desire, will be *against* your husband." And Adam would respond with a rule over Eve that came from his greater strength and aggressiveness, a rule that was forceful and at times harsh (the verb *mâshal*). "And he because of his greater strength will rule over you." There would be pain in tilling the ground, pain in bearing children, and pain and conflict in their relationship.

It is crucial at this point for us to realize that *we ourselves are never to try to increase or perpetuate the results of the curse*. We should never try to promote or advocate Genesis 3:16 as something good! In fact, the entire Bible following after Genesis 3 is the story of God's working to overcome the effects of the curse that He in His justice imposed. Eventually God will bring in new heavens and a new earth, in which crops will come forth abundantly from the ground (Isa. 35:1-2; Amos 9:13; Rom. 8:20-21) and in which there is no more pain or suffering (Rev. 21:4).

So we ourselves should *never* try to perpetuate the elements of the curse! We should not plant thorns and weeds in our garden but rather overcome them. We should do everything we can to alleviate the pain of childbirth for women. And we should do everything we can to undo the conflict that comes about through women desiring to oppose or even control their husbands and their husbands ruling harshly over them.

Therefore Genesis 3:16 should never be used as a direct argument for male headship in marriage. But it does show us that the Fall brought about a *distortion* of previous roles, not the introduction of new roles. The distortion was that Eve would now rebel against her husband's authority, and Adam would misuse that authority to rule forcefully and even harshly over Eve.²²

²²The understanding of Genesis 3:16 as a hostile desire, or even a desire to rule over, has gained significant support among Old Testament commentators. It was first suggested by Susan T. Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire?" in *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (1975), 376-383. David Talley says the word is attested in Samaritan and Mishnaic Hebrew "with the meaning urge, craving, impulse" and says of Foh, "Her contention that the desire is a contention for leadership, a negative usage, seems probable for Gen. 3:16" (*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols., ed., Willem Van Gemeren, Vol. 4 [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991], 341, with reference to various commentators).

8. *The restoration*: When we come to the New Testament, salvation in Christ reaffirms the creation order.

If the previous understanding of Genesis 3:16 is correct, as we believe it is, then what we would expect to find in the New Testament is a reversal of this curse. We would expect to find an *undoing* of the wife's hostile or aggressive impulses against her husband and the husband's response of harsh rule over his wife.

In fact, that is exactly what we find. We read in the New Testament: "Wives, *be subject to your husbands*, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, *love your wives, and do not be harsh with them*" (Col. 3:18-19, NIV).

This command is an undoing of the impulse to oppose (Hebrew *teshûqāh*) and the harsh rule (Hebrew *māshal*) that God imposed at the curse.

What God does in the New Testament is reestablish the beauty of the relationship between Adam and Eve that existed from the moment they were created. Eve was subject to Adam as the head of the family. Adam loved his wife and was not harsh with her in his leadership. That is the pattern that Paul commands husbands and wives to follow.²³

9. *The mystery*: Marriage from the beginning of creation was a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church.

When the apostle Paul discusses marriage and wishes to speak of the relationship between husband and wife, he does not look back to any sections of the Old Testament telling about the situation after sin came into the world. Rather, he looks all the way back to Genesis 2, prior to the Fall, and uses that creation order to speak of marriage:

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." [This is a quote from Gen. 2:24.] *This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*

—EPH. 5:31-32, RSV

Now a "mystery" in Paul's writing is something that was understood only very faintly, if at all, in the Old Testament, but that is now made clearer in the New Testament. Here Paul makes clear the meaning of the

²³There was a foreshadowing of these New Testament commands in the godly marriages found in the Old Testament and the honor given to women in passages such as those in Ruth, Esther, and Proverbs 31. But in the unfolding of God's plan of redemption, He waited until the New Testament to give the full and explicit directions for the marriage relationship that we find in Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, and 1 Peter 3.

“mystery” of marriage as God created it in the Garden of Eden. Paul is saying that the “mystery” of Adam and Eve, the meaning that was not previously understood, was that marriage “refers to Christ and the church.”

In other words, although Adam and Eve did not know it, their relationship represented the relationship between Christ and the church. They were *created* to represent that relationship, and that is what all marriages are supposed to do. In that relationship Adam represents Christ, and Eve represents the church, because Paul says, “for the husband is the head of the wife *even as Christ is the head of the church*” (Eph. 5:23).

Now the relationship between Christ and the church is not culturally variable. It is the same for all generations. And it is not reversible. There is a leadership or headship role that belongs to Christ that the church does not have. Similarly, in marriage as God created it to be, there is a leadership role for the husband that the wife does not have. And for our purposes it is important to notice that this relationship was there from the beginning of creation, in the beautiful marriage between Adam and Eve in the Garden.

10. *The parallel with the Trinity*: The equality, differences, and unity between men and women reflect the equality, differences, and unity in the Trinity.

Though I list this here as the tenth reason why there were differences in roles between men and women from creation, I will not explain it at this point because by itself it constitutes “Key Issue #3” that I discuss below.

Conclusion: Here then are at least ten reasons showing differences in the roles of men and women before the Fall. Some reasons are not as forceful as others, though all have some force. Some of them whisper male headship, and some shout it clearly. But they form a cumulative case showing that Adam and Eve had distinct roles before the Fall, and that this was God’s purpose in creating them.

But How Does It Work in Practice?

Perhaps I could say something at this point about how male-female equality together with male headship work out in actual practice. The situation I know best is my own marriage, so I will speak about that briefly.

In our marriage, Margaret and I talk frequently and at length about many decisions. Sometimes these are large decisions (such as buying a house or a car), and sometimes they are small decisions (such as where we should go for a walk together). I often defer to her wishes, and she

often defers to mine, because we love each other. In almost every case, each of us has some wisdom and insight that the other does not have, and we have learned to listen to each other and to place much trust in each other's judgment. Usually we reach agreement on the decision. Very seldom will I do something that she does not think to be wise. She prays, she loves God, she is sensitive to the Lord's leading and direction, and I greatly respect her and the wisdom God gives her.

But in every decision, whether large or small, and whether we have reached agreement or not, the responsibility to make the decision still rests with me. I do not agree with those who say that male headship only makes a difference once in ten years or so when a husband and wife can't reach agreement. I think that male headship makes a difference in every decision that the couple makes every day of their married life. If there is genuine male headship, there is a quiet, subtle acknowledgment that the focus of the decision-making process is the husband, not the wife. And even though there will often be much discussion, and though there should be much mutual respect and consideration of each other, yet ultimately the responsibility to make the decision rests with the husband. And so in our marriage, the responsibility to make the decision rests with me.

This is not because I am wiser or a more gifted leader. It is because I am the husband, and God has given me that responsibility. In the face of cultural pressures to the contrary, I will not forsake this male headship, I will not deny this male headship, I will not be embarrassed by it.

This is something that is God-given. It is very good. It brings peace and joy to our marriage, and both Margaret and I are thankful for it.

Yet there are dangers of distortion in one direction or another. Putting this biblical pattern into practice in our daily lives is a challenge, because we can err in one direction or the other. There are errors of passivity, and there are errors of aggressiveness. This can be seen in the following chart:

	Errors of passivity	Biblical ideal	Errors of aggressiveness
Husband	Wimp	Loving, humble headship	Tyrant
Wife	Doormat	Joyful, intelligent submission	Usurper

The biblical ideal, in the center column, is loving, humble headship on the part of the husband, following Ephesians 5:23-33. The biblical ideal on the part of the wife is joyful, intelligent submission to and support of her husband's leadership, in accordance with Ephesians 5:22-24 and 31-33.

On the right side of the chart, the errors of aggressiveness are those that had their beginning, as we saw, in Genesis 3:16. The husband can become selfish, harsh, and domineering and act like a tyrant. This is not biblical headship but a tragic distortion of it. A wife can also demonstrate errors of aggressiveness when she resists and continually struggles against her husband's leadership, not supporting it, but fighting against it and creating conflict every step of the way. She can become a usurper, something that is a tragic distortion of the biblical pattern of equality in the image of God.

On the other hand, on the left side of the chart, are the opposite errors, the errors of passivity. A husband can abdicate his leadership and neglect his responsibilities. He does not discipline his children, and he sits and watches TV and drinks his beer and does nothing. The family is not going to church regularly, and he is passive and does nothing. The family keeps going further into debt, and he closes his eyes to it and does nothing. Some relative or friend is verbally harassing his wife, and he does nothing. This also is a tragic distortion of the biblical pattern. He has become a wimp.

A wife also can commit errors of passivity. Rather than participating actively in family decisions, rather than contributing her wisdom and insight that is so much needed, her only response to every question is, "Yes, dear, whatever you say." She knows her husband and her children are doing wrong, and she says nothing. Or her husband becomes verbally or physically abusive, and she never objects to him and never seeks church discipline or civil governmental intervention to bring about an end to the abuse. Or she never really expresses her own preferences with regard to friendships or family vacations or her own opinions regarding people or events, and she thinks what is required is that she be "submissive" to her husband. But this also is a tragic distortion of biblical patterns. She has become a doormat.

Now, we all have different backgrounds, personalities, and temperaments. We also have different areas of life in which sanctification is less complete. Therefore, some of us tend to be more prone toward errors of aggressiveness, and others of us tend to be more prone toward

errors of passivity. We can even fall into errors of aggressiveness in our own homes and errors of passivity when we visit our in-laws! Or it can be the other way around. In order to maintain a healthy, biblical balance, we need to keep reading God's Word each day and continue to pray for God's help each day and continue to follow Christ in obedience to God's Word as best we can.

The Man's Responsibility to Provide for and Protect, and the Woman's Responsibility to Care for the Home and to Nurture Children

There are other differences in roles in addition to headship and submission. Two other aspects of male headship in marriage are the husband's responsibility to provide for his wife and family and to protect them. A corresponding responsibility on the part of the wife is to have primary responsibility to care for home and children. Each can help the other, but there remains a primary responsibility that is not shared equally. These responsibilities are mentioned in both the "Danvers Statement" and the Southern Baptist Convention/Campus Crusade for Christ statement. I will not discuss these in detail at this point but simply note that these additional aspects of differing roles are established in Scripture. Biblical support for the husband having the primary responsibility to provide for his family and the wife having primary responsibility to care for the household and children is found in Genesis 2:15 with 2:18-23; 3:16-17 (Eve is assumed to have the primary responsibility for childbearing, but Adam for tilling the ground to raise food, and pain is introduced into both of their areas of responsibility); Proverbs 31:10-31, especially vv. 13, 15, 21, 27; Isaiah 4:1 (shame at the tragic undoing of the normal order); 1 Timothy 5:8 (the Greek text does not specify "any man," but in the historical context that would have been the assumed referent except for unusual situations like a household with no father); 1 Timothy 5:10; 1 Timothy 5:3-16 (widows, not widowers, are to be supported by the church); Titus 2:5. I believe that a wife's created role as a "helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18) also supports this distinction of roles. I do not think a wife would be fulfilling her role as "helper" if she became the permanent primary breadwinner, for then the husband would be the primary "helper."

Biblical support for the idea that the man has the primary responsibility to protect his family is found in Deuteronomy 20:7-8 (men go forth to war, not women, here and in many Old Testament passages); 24:5; Joshua 1:14; Judges 4:8-10 (Barak does not get the glory because

he insisted that a woman accompany him into battle); Nehemiah 4:13-14 (the people are to fight for their brothers, homes, wives, and children, but it does not say they are to fight for their husbands!); Jeremiah 50:37 (it is the disgrace of a nation when its warriors become women); Nahum 3:13 (“Behold, your troops are women in your midst” is a taunt of derision); Matthew 2:13-14 (Joseph is told to protect Mary and baby Jesus by taking them to Egypt); Ephesians 5:25 (a husband’s love should extend even to a willingness to lay down his life for his wife, something many soldiers in battle have done throughout history, to protect their families and homelands); 1 Peter 3:7 (a wife is a “weaker vessel,” and therefore the husband, as generally stronger, has a greater responsibility to use his strength to protect his wife).

In addition, there is the complete absence of evidence from the other side. Nowhere can we find Scripture encouraging women to be the primary means of support while their husbands care for the house and children. Nowhere can we find Scripture encouraging women to be the primary protectors of their husbands. Certainly women can help in these roles as time and circumstances allow (see Gen. 2:18-23), but they are not the ones primarily responsible for them.

Finally, there is the evidence of the internal testimony from both men’s and women’s hearts. There is something in a man that says, “I don’t want to be dependent on a woman to provide for me in the long term. I want to be the one responsible to provide for the family, the one my wife looks to and depends on for support.” Personally, I have never met a man who does not feel some measure of shame at the idea of being supported by his wife in the long term. (I recognize that in many families there is a temporary reversal of roles due to involuntary unemployment or while the husband is getting further education for his career, and in those circumstances these are entirely appropriate arrangements; yet the longer they go on, the more strain they put on a marriage. I also recognize that permanent disability on the part of the husband, or the absence of a husband in the home, can create a necessity for the wife to be the primary provider; but every family in which that happens will testify to the unusual stress it brings and to the fact that they wish it did not have to be so.) On the other hand, there is something in a woman that says, “I want my husband to provide for me, to give me the security of knowing that we will have enough to buy groceries and pay the bills. It feels right to me to look to him and depend on him for that responsibility.” Personally, I have never met a

woman who did not want her husband to provide that sense of security for her.²⁴

Some Egalitarian Objections to Male Headship in Marriage

Egalitarians raise a number of objections to the idea that men and women have different roles in marriage as part of the created order, different roles that should find expression in marriages today as well. At this point I will mention three of the most common objections:

1. Galatians 3:28 abolishes role distinctions in marriage.
2. Mutual submission in Ephesians 5:21 nullifies male authority in marriage.
3. “The husband is the head of the wife” (Eph. 5:23) does not indicate authority for the husband, because “head” means “source” or something else, but not “person in authority.”

I will consider these three objections briefly at this point, since they are treated more extensively elsewhere.²⁵

OBJECTION #1: GALATIANS 3:28 ABOLISHES ROLE DISTINCTIONS IN MARRIAGE

In this verse Paul says, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for *you are all one* in Christ Jesus.” Egalitarians frequently claim that if there is “neither male nor female,” then distinctions in role based on our gender are abolished because we are now “all one in Christ Jesus.”

The problem is that this is not what the verse says. To say that we are “one” means that we are *united*, that there should be no factions or divisions among us, that there should be no sense of pride and superiority or jealousy and inferiority between these groups that viewed themselves as so distinct in the ancient world. Jews should no longer think themselves superior to Greeks, freed men should not think themselves superior to slaves, and men should no longer think them-

²⁴For some further discussion, see John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 31-59. See also Dorothy Patterson, “The High Calling of Wife and Mother in Biblical Perspective,” 364-377 in the same volume.

²⁵See Richard W. Hove, “Does Galatians 3:28 Negate Gender-Specific Roles?” in this present volume (Chapter 4), and also his book *Equality in Christ? Galatians 3:28 and the Gender Dispute* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999).

selves superior to women. They are all parts of one body in Christ, and all share in equal value and dignity as members of one body in Christ.

But, as Richard Hove has demonstrated in detail elsewhere in this volume,²⁶ when the Bible says that several things are “one,” it never joins things that are exactly the same. Rather, it says things that are different, things that are diverse, share some kind of unity. So in Romans 12:4-5 we read:

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (emphasis added)

Paul does not mean to say that all the members of the body are the same, for, as anyone can see, a body has hands and feet and eyes and ears, and all the “members” are different, and they have different functions, though they are “one body.”

Similarly, using the same construction,²⁷ Hove found that Paul can say, “*Now he who plants and he who waters are one*; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor” (1 Cor. 3:8, NASB). Now planting and watering are two different activities done by different persons in Paul’s example. Those persons are not reduced to sameness, nor are they required to act in exactly the same way; but they are still “one” because they have a kind of unity of purpose and goal.

And so Galatians 3:28 simply says that we have a special kind of *unity* in the body of Christ. Our differences as male and female are not obliterated by this unity; rather, the unity is beautiful in God’s sight particularly because it is a unity of different kinds of people.

Surely this verse cannot abolish all differences between men and women, not only because Paul himself elsewhere commands husbands and wives to act differently according to their different roles, but also because marriage in Scripture from beginning to end is intended by God to be only between one man and one woman, not between one man and another man or one woman and another woman. If Galatians

²⁶See Hove, *Equality in Christ*, and his essay, “Does Galatians 3:28 Negate Gender-Specific Roles?” mentioned in the footnote above.

²⁷Hove ran forty-five computer searches on Greek literature near the time of the New Testament. He reports finding sixteen examples of Greek expressions from the New Testament and other ancient literature that use the verb “to be” (*eimi*) plus the number “one” (Greek *heis/mia/hen*) and finds that the expression is never used to indicate unity among things that are identical, but always among things that are different and have different functions but that also share something in common that gives them a kind of unity (72-76).

3:28 truly abolished all differences between men and women, then how could anyone say that homosexual marriage was wrong? But homosexual conduct is surely forbidden by Scripture (see Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10). (And our egalitarian friends within the evangelical world agree that homosexual conduct is prohibited by Scripture.) Therefore Galatians 3:28 does not abolish differences in roles between men and women.

The egalitarian objection from Galatians 3:28, therefore, is not persuasive. Egalitarians are simply trying to make the verse say something it does not say and never has said and never will say. Galatians 3:28 tells us that we are united in Christ and that we should never be boastful or arrogant against others and should never feel inferior or without value in the body of Christ. But the verse does not say that men and women are the same or that they have to act the same.

OBJECTION #2: MUTUAL SUBMISSION IN EPHESIANS 5:21 NULLIFIES MALE AUTHORITY IN MARRIAGE

Ephesians 5:21 says, “Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ” (RSV). Egalitarians say that this verse teaches “mutual submission,” and that means that just as wives have to submit to their husbands, *so husbands have to submit to their wives*. Doesn’t the text say that we have to submit “to one another”? And this means there is no unique kind of submission that a wife owes to her husband, and no unique kind of authority that a husband has over his wife.

Sometimes egalitarians will say something like this: “Of course I believe that a wife should be subject to her husband. And a husband should also be subject to his wife.” Or an egalitarian might say, “I will be subject to my husband as soon as he is subject to me.” And so, as egalitarians understand Ephesians 5:21, there is no difference in roles between men and women. There is no unique leadership role, no unique authority, for the husband. There is simply “mutual submission.”²⁸

I have to affirm at the outset that people can mean different things by “mutual submission.” There is a sense of the phrase *mutual submission* that is different from an egalitarian view and that does not nullify the husband’s authority within marriage. If “mutual submission”

²⁸In fact, our egalitarian friends have a journal called *Mutuality*, published by the organization Christians for Biblical Equality.

means being considerate of one another and caring for one another's needs and being thoughtful of one another, then of course I would agree that mutual submission is a good thing.

However, egalitarians mean something so different by this phrase, and they have used this phrase so often to nullify male authority within marriage, that I think the expression *mutual submission* only leads to confusion if we go on using it.²⁹

In previous generations some people did speak about "mutual submission," but never in the sense in which egalitarians today understand it. In his study of the history of the interpretation of Ephesians 5:21, Daniel Doriani has demonstrated that a number of earlier writers thought there was a kind of "mutual submission" taught in the verse, but that such "submission" took very different forms for those *in authority* and for those *under authority*. They took it to mean that those in authority should govern wisely and with sacrificial concern for those under their authority. But Doriani found no author in the history of the church prior to the advent of feminism in the last half of the twentieth century who thought that "be subject to one another" in Ephesians 5:21 nullified the authority of the husband within marriage.³⁰

What exactly is wrong with understanding Ephesians 5:21 to teach mutual submission? I have addressed that question in some detail in another essay in this volume, but I could say briefly at this point that the egalitarian view is inconsistent with the patterns of submission to authority that Paul specifies in this very context (wives to husbands, children to parents, and servants to masters), does not fit with the strongly established meaning of *hypotassō*, which always indicates submission to an authority, is inconsistent with the parallel to the church's submission to Christ in Ephesians 5:24, and is inconsistent with the

²⁹When the Southern Baptist Convention was debating its statement on marriage and the family, I am told there was a motion from the floor to add "mutual submission" to the statement, and that Dorothy Patterson, a member of the drafting committee for the statement and one of the original members of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, spoke against the motion and explained how egalitarians have used it to deny any sense of male authority within marriage. The motion was defeated, and appropriately so. If "mutual submission" had been added to the Southern Baptist statement, in effect it would have torpedoed the whole statement, because it would have watered it down so much that people from almost any position could sign it, and it would have affirmed no unique male authority within marriage. (These events were reported to me by friends who were present when the statement was being debated on the floor of the Southern Baptist Convention in the summer of 1998.)

³⁰See Doriani, "The Historical Novelty of Egalitarian Interpretations of Ephesians 5:21," Chapter 6 in this volume.

other directives to wives to be subject to their husbands in Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:5, and 1 Peter 3:1.³¹

I conclude, in that longer study, that we can paraphrase Ephesians 5:21 as follows: “Be subject to others in the church who are in positions of authority over you.”³² I do not believe any idea of mutual submission is taught in Ephesians 5:21. The idea itself is self-contradictory if *hypotassō* means here (as it does everywhere else) “be subject to an authority.”

With respect to your own churches, if you want to add a statement on men and women in marriage to your governing document or publish it as a policy statement (as did the Southern Baptist Convention and Campus Crusade for Christ), and if in the process someone proposes to add the phrase “mutual submission” to the document, I urge you strongly not to agree to it. In the sense that egalitarians understand the phrase *mutual submission*, the idea is found nowhere in Scripture, and it actually nullifies the teaching of significant passages of Scripture.

How then should we respond when people say they favor mutual submission? We need to find out what they mean by it, and if they do not wish to advocate an egalitarian view, we need to see if we can suggest alternative wording that would speak to their concerns more precisely. Some people who hold a fully complementarian view of marriage do use the phrase *mutual submission* and intend it in a way that does not nullify male leadership in marriage. I have found that some people who want to use this language may simply have genuine concerns that men should not act like dictators or tyrants in their marriages. If this is what they are seeking to guard against by the phrase *mutual submission*, then I suggest trying this alternative wording, which is found in the Campus Crusade for Christ statement:

In a marriage lived according to these truths, the love between husband and wife will show itself in listening to each other’s viewpoints, valuing each other’s gifts, wisdom, and desires, honoring one another in public and in private, and always seeking to bring benefit, not harm, to one another.

³¹See Wayne Grudem, “The Myth of Mutual Submission As an Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21,” Chapter 7 in this volume.

³²It is interesting that the King James Version showed an understanding of the sense of *allēlous* in this passage. It translated the verse, “submitting yourselves *one to another* in the fear of God.” In fact, when *allēlous* takes the sense “some to others,” the King James Version often signaled that by phrases such as “one to another.”

OBJECTION #3: “THE HUSBAND IS THE HEAD OF THE WIFE” DOES NOT INDICATE AUTHORITY FOR THE HUSBAND, BECAUSE “HEAD” MEANS “SOURCE” OR SOMETHING ELSE, BUT NOT “PERSON IN AUTHORITY”

In 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul says:

Now I want you to realize that the head [Greek kephalē] of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. (NIV)

And in Ephesians 5:23 Paul makes this statement:

For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

It is important to realize the decisive significance of these verses, and particularly of Ephesians 5:23, for the current controversy. If the word “head” means “person in authority over,” then there is a unique authority that belongs to the husband in marriage and is parallel to Christ’s authority over the church, and then the egalitarians have lost the debate.³³

So what have egalitarians done to give a different meaning to the statement, “The husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church”? The most common approach has been to say that the word translated “head” (Greek *kephalē*) does not mean “person in authority over” but has some other meaning, especially the meaning “source.” Thus the husband is the *source* of the wife (an allusion to the creation of Eve from Adam’s side in Gen. 2), as Christ is the *source* of the church. The problem of this interpretation is that it does not fit the evidence.

In 1985 I looked up 2,336 examples of the word “head” (*kephalē*) in ancient Greek literature, using texts from Homer in the eighth century B.C. up to some church fathers in the fourth century A.D. I found that in those texts the word *kephalē* was applied to many people in authority (when it was used in a metaphorical sense to say that person A was the head of person or persons B), but it was never applied to a

³³I realize that a few egalitarians claim that Paul’s teaching only applied to his time in history and is not applicable to us today. This particular position is not affected by disputes over the meaning over the word “head,” but it is very difficult to sustain in light of the parallel with Christ and the church, and in light of Paul’s tying it to the statements about marriage before there was sin in the world (Eph. 5:31-32, quoting Gen. 2:24).

person without governing authority. Several studies took issue with part or all of my conclusions, and I have considered those in two subsequent studies, with my fundamental claims about the meaning of *kephalē*, it seems to me, further established by additional new evidence. I have given more detail on those studies in another chapter in this volume.³⁴

The fact remains that no one has yet produced one text in ancient Greek literature (from the eighth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D.) where a person is called the *kephalē* (“head”) of another person or group *and that person is not the one in authority over that other person or group*. The alleged meaning “source without authority,” now seventeen years after the publication of my 1985 study of 2,336 examples of *kephalē*, has still not been supported with *any* citation of *any* text in ancient Greek literature. Over fifty examples of *kephalē* meaning “ruler, authority over” have been found, but no examples of the meaning of “source without authority.”

The question is this: Why should we give *kephalē* in the New Testament a sense that it is nowhere attested to have, and that, when applied to persons, no Greek lexicon has ever given to it?

So the egalitarian objection also fails to be convincing, and we are right to conclude that the Bible gives husbands the responsibility of a unique leadership role, a unique authority, in the marriage.

KEY ISSUE 3: THE EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN REFLECT THE EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCES IN THE TRINITY

This point may sound obscure, but it is at the heart of the controversy, and it shows why much more is at stake than the meaning of one or two words in the Bible, or one or two verses. Much more is at stake even than how we live in our marriages. Here we are talking about the nature of God Himself.

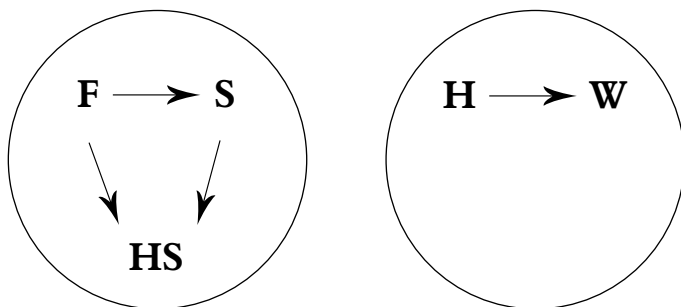
In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul writes, “But I want you to understand

³⁴For details, see Wayne Grudem, “The Meaning of κεφαλή (‘Head’): An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real or Alleged,” Chapter 5 in this present volume. That chapter is a reprint with only slight modifications of my article, “The Meaning of *kephalē* (‘Head’): An Analysis of New Evidence, Real and Alleged,” *JETS* 44/1 (March 2001), 25-65.

My two earlier studies on the meaning of *kephalē* were “The Meaning of *kephalē* (‘Head’): A Response to Recent Studies,” *Trinity Journal* 11 NS (Spring 1990), 3-72 (reprinted in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, 425-468) and “Does *kephalē* (‘Head’) Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples,” Appendix in *The Role Relationship of Men and Women* (rev. ed.), George W. Knight III (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 49-80 (also printed in *Trinity Journal* 6 NS [Spring 1985], 38-59).

that the *head* of every man is Christ, the *head* of a wife is her husband, and the *head* of Christ is God” (v. 3).

In this verse, the word “head” refers to one who is in a position of authority over the other, as this Greek word (*kephalē*) uniformly does whenever it is used in ancient literature to say that one person is “head of” another person or group.³⁵ So Paul is here referring to a relationship of authority between God the Father and God the Son, and he is making a parallel between that relationship in the Trinity and the relationship between the husband and wife in marriage. This is an important parallel because it shows that there can be equality and differences between persons at the same time. We can illustrate that in the following diagram, where the arrows indicate authority over the person to whom the arrow points:



Just as the Father and Son are equal in deity and are equal in all their attributes, but different in role, so husband and wife are equal in personhood and value, but are different in the roles that God has given them. Just as God the Son is eternally subject to the authority of God the Father, so God has planned that wives would be subject to the authority of their own husbands.

Scripture frequently speaks of the Father-Son relationship within the Trinity, a relationship in which the Father “gave” His only Son (John 3:16) and “sent” the Son into the world (John 3:17, 34; 4:34; 8:42; Gal. 4:4; etc.), a relationship in which the Father “predestined” us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29; cf. 1 Pet. 1:2) and “chose us” in the Son “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). The Son is obedient to the commands of the Father (John 12:49) and says that He comes to do “the will of him who sent me” (John 4:34; 6:38).

³⁵See my extended discussion of the meaning of *kephalē* as indicated in footnote 34 above.

These relationships are never reversed. Never does Scripture say that the Son sends the Father into the world, or that the Holy Spirit sends the Father or the Son into the world, or that the Father obeys the commands of the Son or the Holy Spirit. Never does Scripture say that the Son predestined us to be conformed to the image of the Father. The role of planning, directing, sending, and commanding the Son belongs to the Father only.

And these relationships are eternal, for the Father predestined us in the Son “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), requiring that the Father has eternally been Father, and the Son has eternally been Son. If the Father’s love is seen in that He “gave his only Son” (John 3:16), then the Father had to be Father and the Son had to be Son before He came into the world. The Father did not give someone who was just another divine person in the Trinity; He gave the one who was His only Son, the one who eternally had been His Son.

It was also this way in the creation of the world, where the Father initiated and commanded and created through the Son. The Son was the powerful Word of God who carried out the commands of the Father, for “all things were made through him” (John 1:3). The Son is the one “through whom” God “created the world” (Heb. 1:2). All things were created by the Father working through the Son, for “there is one God, the Father, *from* whom are all things . . . and one Lord, Jesus Christ, *through* whom are all things” (1 Cor. 8:6, emphasis added). Nowhere does Scripture reverse this and say that the Son created “through” the Father.

The Son sits at the Father’s right hand (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:3, 13; 1 Pet. 3:22; etc.); the Father does not sit at the Son’s right hand. And for all eternity the Son will be subject to the Father, for after the last enemy, death, is destroyed, “the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one” (1 Cor. 15:28, RSV).

We see from these passages then that *the idea of headship and submission within a personal relationship* did not begin with the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood in 1987. Nor did it begin with some writings of the apostle Paul in the first century. Nor did it begin with a few patriarchal men in a patriarchal society in the Old Testament. Nor did the idea of headship and submission begin with Adam and Eve’s fall into sin in Genesis 3. In fact, the idea of headship

and submission did not even begin with the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1—2.

No, the idea of headship and submission existed *before creation*. It began in the relationship between the Father and Son in the Trinity. The Father has eternally had a leadership role, an authority to initiate and direct, that the Son does not have. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is subject to both the Father and Son and plays yet a different role in creation and in the work of salvation.

When did the idea of headship and submission begin then? *The idea of headship and submission never began!* It has *always existed* in the eternal nature of God Himself. And in this most basic of all authority relationships, authority is not based on gifts or ability (for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in attributes and perfections). It is just there. Authority belongs to the Father not because he is wiser or because He is a more skillful leader, but just because he is the Father.

Authority and submission between the Father and the Son, and between both Father and Son and the Holy Spirit, is the fundamental difference between the persons of the Trinity. They don't differ in any attributes, but only in how they relate to each other. And that relationship is one of leadership and authority on the one hand and voluntary, willing, joyful submission to that authority on the other hand.

We can learn from this relationship among the members of the Trinity that submission to a rightful authority is a noble virtue. It is a privilege. It is something good and desirable. It is the virtue that has been demonstrated by the eternal Son of God *forever*. It is His glory, the glory of the Son as He relates to His father.

In modern society, we tend to think in this way: If you are a person who has authority over another, that's a good thing. If you are someone who has to submit to an authority, that's a bad thing. But that is the world's viewpoint, and it is not true. Submission to a rightful authority is a good and noble and wonderful thing, because it reflects the interpersonal relationships within God Himself.

We can say then that a relationship of authority and submission between equals, with mutual giving of honor, is the most fundamental and most glorious interpersonal relationship in the universe. Such a relationship allows interpersonal differences without "better" or "worse," without "more important" and "less important."

And when we begin to dislike *the very idea of authority and submis-*

sion—not distortions and abuses, but the very idea—we are tampering with something very deep. We are beginning to dislike God Himself.

Now this truth about the Trinity creates a problem for egalitarians within the church. They try to force people to choose between equality and authority. They say, if you have male headship, then you can't be equal. Or if you are equal, then you can't have male headship. And our response is that you can have both—just look at the Trinity. Within the being of God, you have both equality and authority.

In reply to this, egalitarians should have said, “Okay, we agree on this much. In God you *can* have equality and differences at the same time.” In fact, some egalitarians have said this very thing.³⁶ But some prominent egalitarians have taken a different direction, one that is very troubling. Both Gilbert Bilezikian and Stanley Grenz have now written that they think there is “mutual submission” within the Trinity. They say that the Father also submits to the Son.³⁷ This is their affirmation even though no passage of Scripture affirms such a relationship, and even though this has never been the orthodox teaching of the Christian church throughout 2,000 years. But so deep is their commitment to an egalitarian view of men and women within marriage that they will modify the doctrine of the Trinity and remake the Trinity in the image of egalitarian marriage if it seems necessary to maintain their position.

KEY ISSUE 4: THE EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN ARE VERY GOOD

This is a key issue because in today's hostile culture, we might be embarrassed to talk about God-given differences between men and women. We don't want to be attacked or laughed at by others. Perhaps

³⁶See Craig Keener's affirmation of an eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in “Is Subordination Within the Trinity Really Heresy? A Study of John 5:18 in Context,” *Trinity Journal* 20 NS (1999), 39-51.

³⁷For a fuller discussion of egalitarian tampering with the doctrine of the Trinity see Bruce Ware, “Tampering with the Trinity: Does the Son Submit to His Father?,” Chapter 8 in this volume. The primary statements by Bilezikian and Grenz are found in Gilbert Bilezikian, “Hermeneutical Bungee-Jumping: Subordination in the Godhead,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (JETS), 40/1 (March 1997), 57-68; and Stanley J. Grenz, “Theological Foundations for Male-Female Relationships,” JETS 41/4 (December 1998), 615-630.

A survey of historical evidence showing affirmation of the eternal subordination of the Son to the authority of the Father is found in Stephen D. Kovach and Peter R. Schemm, Jr., “A Defense of the Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son,” in JETS 42/3 (Sept. 1999), 461-476. See also Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester: IVP, and Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 248-252.

we fear that someone will take offense if we talk clearly about God-given differences between men and women. (However, there is more acknowledgment of male/female differences in the general culture today than there was a few years ago. A number of secular books such as John Gray's *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* have once again made it acceptable to talk about *at least some differences* between men and women, though the idea of a husband's authority and the wife's submission within marriage still seems to be taboo in the general culture.)³⁸

The fundamental statement of the excellence of the way God made us as men and women is found in Genesis 1:31: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, *it was very good.*" Just four verses after the Bible tells us that God made us "male and female," it tells us that God looked at everything He had made, *including Adam and Eve created in His image*, and His evaluation of what He saw was that it was "very good." The way God created us as men and women, equal in His image and different in roles, was very good. And if it is very good, then we can make some other observations about the created order.

This created order is *fair*. Our egalitarian friends argue that it's "not fair" for men to have a leadership role in the family simply because they are men. But if this difference is based on God's assignment of roles from the beginning, then it *is* fair. Does the Son say to the Father, "It's not fair for You to be in charge simply because You are the Father"? Does the Son say to the Father, "You've been in charge for fifteen billion years, and now it's My turn for the next fifteen billion"? No! Absolutely not! Rather, He fulfilled the Psalm that said, "I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8; compare Heb. 10:7). And of his relationship with the Father, He said, "I always do the things that are pleasing to him" (John 8:29). He said, "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38). The order of relationships within the Trinity is fair. And the order of relationships established by God for marriage is fair.

This created order is also *best for us*, because it comes from an all-wise Creator. This created order truly honors men and women. It does not lead to abuse but guards against it, because both men and women are equal in value before God. It does not suppress women's gifts and

³⁸See John Gray, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), and several other books written by Gray on a similar theme; see also Debra Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990).

wisdom and insight, as people have sometimes done in the past, but it encourages them.

This created order is also a *mystery*. I have been married to one very wonderful woman for thirty-two years. I cannot understand her. Just when I think I understand her, she surprises me again. Marriage is a challenge! And it's also fun. But in our relationships with each other as men and women, I think in this life there will always be elements of surprise, always elements of mystery, always aspects of difference that we cannot fully understand but simply enjoy.

This created order is also *beautiful*. God took delight in it and thought it was "very good." When it is functioning in the way that God intended, we will enjoy this relationship and will delight in it, because there is a Godlike quality about it. And in fact, though some elements of society have been pushing in the opposite direction for several decades, there is much evidence from natural law—from our observation of the world and our inner sense of right and wrong—that men and women have a sense that different roles within marriage are *right*. This is what we meant when we said in the "Danvers Statement," "Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God and should find an echo in every human heart" (Affirmation 2). God's created order for marriage is beautiful because it is God's way to bring amazing *unity* to people who are so *different* as men and women.

The beauty of God's created order for marriage finds expression in our sexuality within marriage. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). From the beginning God designed our sexuality so that it reflects unity and differences and beauty all at the same time. As husband and wife, we are most attracted to the parts of each other that are the most different. Our deepest unity—physical and emotional and spiritual unity—comes at the point where we are most different. In our physical union as God intended it, there is no dehumanization of women and no emasculation of men, but there is equality and honor for both the husband and the wife. And there is one of our deepest human joys and our deepest expression of unity.

This means that sexuality within marriage is precious to God. It is designed by Him to show *equality* and *difference* and *unity* all at the same time. It is a great mystery how this can be so, and it is also a great blessing and joy. Moreover, God has ordained that from that sexual union

comes the most amazing, the most astounding event—the creation of a new human being in the image of God!

Within this most intimate of human relationships, we show *equality* and *difference* and *unity*, and much Godlikeness all at once. Glory be to God!

KEY ISSUE 5: THIS IS A MATTER OF OBEDIENCE TO THE BIBLE

Why did the Southern Baptist Convention in June 1998, for the first time since 1963, add to its statement of faith and include in that addition a statement that men and women are equal in God's image but different in their roles in marriage?³⁹ Why, shortly after that, did over 100 Christian leaders sign a full-page ad in *USA Today* saying, "Southern Baptists, you are right. We stand with you"⁴⁰? Why did Campus Crusade for Christ, after forty years of no change in their doctrinal policies, endorse a similar statement as the policy of their organization in 1999?⁴¹

³⁹This is the text of the June 1998 addition to the Southern Baptist Convention's statement, "The Baptist Faith and Message":

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15, 17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8, 14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

In addition, in June 2000, the SBC also added the following sentence to Article VI, "The Church": "While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."

⁴⁰*USA Today*, August 26, 1998, 5D.

⁴¹See above for a discussion of the Campus Crusade policy statement.

All of this is because many Christian leaders are beginning to say, “The egalitarian view just *cannot* be proven from Scripture.”

Twenty-five years ago there were many questions of differences in interpretation, and both the egalitarian position and the complementary position were found within evangelical groups. Over the last twenty-five years, we have seen extensive discussion and argument, and we have seen hundreds of articles and books published.

But now it seems to me that people are beginning to look at the situation differently. The egalitarian viewpoint, which was novel within evangelicalism twenty-five years ago, has had great opportunity to defend itself. The arguments are all out on the table, and the detailed studies of words of the Bible, the technical questions of grammar, and the extensive studies of background literature and history have been carried out. There are dozens and dozens of egalitarian books denying differences in male and female roles within marriage, but they now seem to be repeating the same arguments over and over. The egalitarians have not had any new breakthroughs, any new discoveries that lend substantial strength to their position.

So now it seems to me that many people in leadership are deciding that the egalitarian view is just not what the Bible teaches. And they are deciding that it will not be taught in their churches. And then they add to their statements of faith. Then the controversy is essentially over, for that group at least, for the next ten or twenty years.

James Dobson saw the wisdom of this. After Campus Crusade announced its policy in June 1999, Dr. Dobson’s newsletter in September 1999, on the front page, said, “We applaud our friends at Campus Crusade for taking this courageous stance.” He quoted the statement in full, and then he said:

It is our prayer that additional denominations and parachurch organizations will join with SBC in adopting this statement on marriage and the family. Now is the time for Christian people to identify themselves unreservedly with the truths of the Bible, whether popular or not.⁴²

Our egalitarian friends did not appreciate this statement by Dr. Dobson. In fact, they were greatly troubled by it. In the Spring 2000 issue of CBE’s newsletter *Mutuality*, there was an article by Kim Pettit,

⁴²*Family News from Dr. James Dobson*, September 1999, 1-2.

“Why I Disagree With Dobson and the SBC.” In the article she objected that “endorsement of the SBC statement by an increasing number of Christian organizations means dissenters are excluded as this becomes a confessional issue.”⁴³

Personally, I do not think that the SBC statement or others like it will mean that people who hold another view will be *excluded* from fellowship in the church. But I do think it means that people who hold an egalitarian view *will be excluded from many teaching and governing positions within the denomination*. Because I think that the egalitarian view is both harmful and contrary to Scripture, I think this is an appropriate result, and I think it is the one that was intended by those who added this statement to the “Baptist Faith and Message.”

People who are right in the middle of turning points in history do not always realize it. I believe that today we are in the middle of a turning point in the history of the church. Organizations right now are making commitments and establishing policies. Some organizations are affirming biblical principles, as the Southern Baptists did. Others are establishing egalitarian principles as part of their policies, as Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, Illinois, has done.⁴⁴ There is a sifting, a sorting, a dividing going on within the evangelical world, and I believe that institutions that adopt an egalitarian position on this issue will drift further and further from faithfulness to the Bible on other issues as well.

What is “the way forward” regarding biblical manhood and womanhood? I believe the way forward is to add a clear statement to the governing document of your church, your denomination, or your parachurch organization.

Why should we do this? First, because it affects so much of life. As Christians, we can differ over issues of the Tribulation or the Millennium and still live largely the same way in our daily lives. But differences over this issue affect people’s lives and result in “increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large,” to use the words of the “Danvers Statement” (Affirmation 10). Where biblical patterns are not followed, husbands and wives have no clear guidance on how to act within their marriages,

⁴³*Mutuality* (Spring 2000), 17.

⁴⁴See Wayne Grudem, “Willow Creek Enforces Egalitarianism: Policy Requires All Staff and New Members to Joyfully Affirm Egalitarian Views,” in *CBMW NEWS* 2:5 (Dec. 1997), 1, 3-6. This article also responds to Willow Creek’s main arguments.

and there is increasing stress that brings harmful and even destructive consequences to families.

The second reason I believe that organizations should add statements to their governing documents is that egalitarians have run out of new exegetical arguments, and they simply are not winning the debate on the basis of the biblical text. As a result, it seems that their books increasingly deal not with detailed analysis of the words and sentences of Scripture, but with broad generalizations about Scripture, then with arguments from experience or arguments from philosophical concepts like fairness, or from the supposed negative results of a complementarian position (such as spousal abuse, which they wrongly attribute to our position, but which we strongly oppose and condemn as well).⁴⁵ But it seems to me, and increasingly it seems to many others, that the egalitarian position has simply lost the arguments based on the meaning of the biblical text, and they have no more arguments to be made.

A third reason why I think organizations should add a statement on biblical manhood and womanhood to their governing documents is that I believe this is a “watershed issue.” Many years ago Francis Schaeffer called the doctrine of biblical inerrancy a “watershed issue” because the position that people took regarding inerrancy determined where their teachings would lead in succeeding years. Schaeffer said that the first people who make a mistake on a watershed issue take only a very small step, and in all other areas of life they are godly and orthodox; and this was the case with a number of scholars who denied inerrancy in principle but did not change their beliefs on much of anything else. However, the next generation of leaders and scholars who came after them took the error much further. They saw the implications of the change, and they were consistent in working it out with regard to other matters of doctrine and practice, and they fell into greater and greater deviation from the teachings of the Bible.

I believe it is the same with this issue today. This controversy is the key to deeper issues and deeper commitments that touch every part of life. Though many of our egalitarian friends today do not adopt the

⁴⁵I still regret, and still cannot understand, why the Board of Directors of Christians for Biblical Equality declined to issue a joint statement with the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood on the issue of abuse. CBMW adopted the statement in November 1994 and has continued to distribute it widely through its literature and its website: www.cbmw.org. The letter from CBE in which they declined to issue a statement jointly with us can be found in *CBMW News* 1:1 (Aug. 1995), 3 and is also available at the CBMW website.

other implications of their view, their followers will, and the next generation of leaders will go much further in the denial of the truths of Scripture or their failure to be subject to Scripture in other parts of life.

I said earlier that I believe one reason God allowed this controversy into the church at this time is so that we could correct wrongful male chauvinism in our churches and families. Now I need to say that I think there is another reason God has allowed this controversy into the church, and that is to test our hearts. Will we be faithful to Him and obey His Word or not? This is another reason God often allows false teaching to spread among His people: It is a means of testing us, to see what our response will be.

In the Old Testament, God allowed false prophets to come among the people, but He had told them, “you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams. *For the LORD your God is testing you*, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 13:3). Now I am certainly not saying that egalitarians are the same as those who advocated the serving of other gods in the Old Testament, for egalitarians within evangelicalism do worship Jesus Christ as their Savior. But I am saying that there is a principle of God’s actions in history that we can see in Deuteronomy 13:3, and that is that God often allows various kinds of false teaching to exist in the church, probably in every generation, and by these false teachings God tests His people, to see whether they will be faithful to His Word or not. In this generation, one of those tests is whether we will be faithful to God in the teaching of His Word on matters of manhood and womanhood.

A similar idea is found in 1 Corinthians 11:19: “For there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.” When divisions and controversies arise in the church, people who make the right choices about the division eventually become “recognized” or are made “evident” (NASB). Others make wrong choices and thereby disqualify themselves from leadership. Charles Hodge wrote about this verse, “By the prevalence of disorders and other evils in the church, God puts his people to the test. They are tried as gold in the furnace, and their genuineness is made to appear.”⁴⁶ Today, by the controversy over manhood and womanhood, God is test-

⁴⁶Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Wilmington, DE: Sovereign Grace, 1972; first published 1857), 125.

ing all of His people, all of His churches. The egalitarian alternative would be so easy to adopt in today's culture, and it can appear on the surface to make so little difference. But will we remain faithful to the Word of God?

KEY ISSUE 6: THIS CONTROVERSY IS MUCH BIGGER THAN WE REALIZE, BECAUSE IT TOUCHES ALL OF LIFE

I believe that the question of biblical manhood and womanhood is the focal point in a tremendous battle of worldviews. In that battle, biblical Christianity is being attacked simultaneously by two opponents with awesome power over the dominant ideas in the cultures of the world. Opponent #1, on the left, may be called No Differences, and its slogan would be, "All is one." Opponent #2, on the right side, may be called No Equality, and its slogan would be, "Might makes right."⁴⁷

The chart on the following pages (see pp. 62-63) shows how a biblical view of men and women ("the complementarian middle") stands in contrast to the opponent No Differences on the far left and to the opponent No Equality on the far right. In the middle column, a biblical view of God includes *equality* and *differences* and *unity*. God is a Trinity where the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have *equal* value and *different* roles, and They have absolute *unity* in the one being of God.

The Left Column—No Differences: On the far left, the differences in the persons of God are abolished, and the differences between God and the creation are abolished because "all is one." God then is viewed as equal to the creation, and people will worship the earth or parts of the earth as God (or as our "Mother"). Much New Age worship takes this form, as does much eastern religion where the goal is to seek unity with the universe.

When we follow the theme that there are "No Differences" into the area of manhood and womanhood, the attempt to obliterate differences leads to the emasculation of men and the defeminization of women. Men become more like women, and women become more like men, because "All is one."





Within marriage, if there are no differences, then same-sex "marriages" would be approved. Women who reject feminine roles will support abortion. Since there are no distinct roles for a child's father and

⁴⁷The groundbreaking ideas of Peter Jones and Daniel Heimbach, fellow members of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, provided the fundamental concepts that led to the following material. I am grateful for their contributions, though the specific applications that follow are my own. See the chapters (9, 10) by Jones and Heimbach in this volume.

mother within the family, there's really no longer any need to have children raised by the family; "society" can take care of raising children. Within the realm of sexuality, homosexuality and lesbianism will be approved. The chart goes on to detail how the idea that there should be "no differences" but that "all should be one" will also work out in feminized religion within churches, in hatred of authority (if someone has more authority, then all is not one), in no competition in sports (if we have "winners" and "losers," then all is not one), in no respect for authority and in the civil realm (with an increase in rampant crime), in attempts to abolish private property and equalize possessions (no one can be different, but all should be one), and in attempts to prohibit all-male or all-female schools or to prohibit educating boys and girls separately. These are the tendencies that follow once we adopt the conviction that "all is one" and there are no differences of persons in the being of God, and thus there should be no differences between men and women either.

The Egalitarian Column: Remove Many Differences: What concerns me about the egalitarian viewpoint within evangelicalism is that it tends toward this direction in many areas of life. It tends to remove or deny many differences between men and women. Egalitarians have begun to deny eternal personal distinctions among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Trinity and argue rather for "mutual submission" within the Trinity. They deny that there are any gender-based role differences in marriage.⁴⁸ Within marriage an egalitarian view tends toward abolishing differences and advocates "mutual submission," which often results in the husband acting as a wimp and the wife as a usurper. Because there is a deep-seated opposition to most authority, the drive toward sameness will often result in children being raised with too little discipline and too little respect for authority. Within the family there will be a tendency toward sharing all responsibilities equally between husband and wife, or to dividing responsibilities according to gifts and

⁴⁸There was an amusing but very revealing suggestion for a new title to the book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* in the CBE publication *Mutuality*: In an imaginary conversation in a bookstore, the writer suggested that a better title for a book about men and women would be, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus, But Some Men Are from Venus and Some Women Are from Mars, and All of God's Children Have Both Mars and Venus Qualities Within Them So Why Not Just Say That Men and Women Are from the Earth, and Let's Get About the Business of Developing the Unique God-given Mars/Venus Qualities That God Has Given All of Us for the Sake of the Kingdom* (article by Jim Banks in *Mutuality* [May 1998], 3). What was so revealing about this humorous suggestion was the way it showed that egalitarians seem to feel compelled to oppose any kinds of differences between men and women other than those that are purely physical.

	THE EFFEMINATE LEFT		THE COMPLEMENTARIAN MIDDLE		THE VIOLENT RIGHT
	NO DIFFERENCES "All is one"	EGALITARIANISM Removing or denying many differences between men & women	EQUALITY and DIFFERENCES and UNITY Emphasizing both equality and differences between men & women	MALE DOMINANCE Over-emphasizing the differences between men and women	NO EQUALITY "Might makes right"
God	God = creation God as Mother Sophia worship New Age worship	Mutual submission in the Trinity 	God as Trinity  Father, Son, Holy Spirit: equal value, different roles	Arianism (Son and Holy Spirit not fully God) 	God as one person, not a Trinity, not three persons. Harsh, unloving warrior-God (Allah)
Man Woman	Emasculatation of men Defeminization of women	No gender-based role differences in marriage (no "Mars-Venus" differences)	Equal value, different roles 	Men are better than women Excessive competitiveness to show women as inferior	Men as brutes Women as objects Dehumanization of women
Marriage	Same-sex "marriages" approved	"Mutual submission" Often: husband as "wimp," wife as "usurper"	Husband: loving, humble headship Wife: intelligent, joyful submission to husband	Husband as harsh, selfish, "dictator" Wife as "doormat"	Polygamy, harems, female infanticide
Children	Children murdered: abortion supported by women who reject feminine roles	Children raised with too little discipline, little respect for authority	Children loved, cared for, valued Children raised with discipline and love	Children raised with harsh discipline, little love or compassion	Children murdered: abortion supported by men who reject masculine responsibility for family
Family Responsibilities	No family—just "society"	All responsibilities shared equally between husband and wife, or divided according to gifts and interests	Husband: responsible to lead, provide for, protect Wife: responsible to help husband by managing household and nurturing children	Wives forbidden to have own job outside home, or to vote or own property, etc.	Men have all power, women and children are to serve them
Sex	Homosexuality Lesbianism	Men become un-masculine, unattractive to women Women become un-feminine, unattractive to men	Monogamous, equally fulfilling intercourse as deepest expression of differences and unity!	Pornography Lust Adultery	Violence against women Rape
	Violent opposition to God's plan for man and woman	Ambivalence toward sex	Delight in God's plan for sexual expression restrained by bonds of lifelong marriage	Excessive attention to sex	Violent opposition to God's plan for sex as only within marriage

Natural Desires	Temptation: unlimited same-sex sexual activity	Moving "contrary to nature" (Rom. 1:26)	Natural desires fulfilled Men and women have deep sense of acting as God made them to act	Moving in exaggeration and distortion of nature	Temptation: unlimited unequal sexual activity
Religion	Feminized religion in churches Pantheism	No governing or teaching roles in church reserved for men Suspicion of authority	Some governing and teaching roles in church restricted to men	All ministry done by men; women's gifts squelched; Crusades	Militant forms of Islam Religion advanced by violence
Authority	Hatred of authority	Suspicion of authority	Authority exercised within boundaries	Over-use of authority	Abuse of authority
Sports	No competition "everybody wins"	Anti-competition	Competition with fairness and rules Winners honored, losers respected	Excessive competition Losers humiliated	Violent harm to opponents Gladiators fight to death WWF wrestling
Crime	No respect for authority, rampant crime, especially by frustrated, angry men	Criminal seen as victim to be helped, not punished; punishment long delayed	Punishment is speedy, fair; aims at justice plus restoration of criminal	Repressive government, little freedom, debtors' prisons	Excessive punishment, dehumanization of criminals (cut off hand of thief); little crime, but no freedom
Property	No private property; all possessions equalized	No one is allowed to be very rich; large-scale dependence on welfare state and government	Laws protect private property and care for poor; more work and skill earns more wealth; equal opportunity for all	Women cannot own property	Slavery; dehumanization of the poor and weak; all property in hands of few
Education	All-male schools prohibited by law; prohibitions against educating boys and girls separately	Systematic pressure to make boys and girls do equally well in all subjects	Boys and girls both educated, but different preferences, abilities, and sense of calling respected	Boys given preferential treatment in schools	Girls not allowed to be educated
<p><i>Please note:</i> This chart contains many generalizations and is only meant to show broad tendencies. Most people and many religious systems hold mixed views and have inconsistencies in thinking. Moreover, conscience, social pressure, and the Bible often restrain people from adopting all aspects of non-biblical views. Therefore this chart certainly does <i>not imply</i> that every person or religious system within each column holds to everything in that column. <i>This chart may be duplicated for teaching purposes without charge.</i></p>					

interests, not according to roles as specified by Scripture. Within the realm of human sexuality, tendencies to deny the differences between men and women will often result in men becoming unmasculine and unattractive to women and women becoming unfeminine and unattractive to men. There will often be ambivalence toward sex.

The chart goes on to show how within the realm of religion the egalitarian view tends toward removing or denying many differences between men and women and would support the idea that no governing or teaching roles within the church should be reserved for men. Within sports, this viewpoint that attempts to deny differences would tend to be opposed to competition and think of it as evil rather than good. With respect to crime, the criminal would be seen as a victim to be helped and not punished, and punishment would be long delayed. As far as private property is concerned, because there are tendencies to abolish differences, no one would be allowed to be very rich, and there would be large-scale dependence on the welfare state and on government. Within education, there would be systematic pressure to make boys and girls participate equally and do equally well in all subjects and all activities, attempting to forcibly eradicate any patterns of natural preferences and aptitudes for some kinds of activities by boys and some kinds by girls. All of this would tend toward a denial of differences between men and women.

The Far Right Column: No Equality: But there are opposite errors as well. The opponent on the far right side of the chart is No Equality, and the dominant idea from this perspective is that there is no equality between persons who are different. Rather, the stronger person is more valuable, and the weaker person is devalued, for “might makes right.” In this view God is not seen as a Trinity but as one person who is all-powerful. Often God can be viewed as a harsh, unloving warrior God, as in a common Islamic view of Allah. In this perspective, since “might makes right” and the weaker person is viewed as inferior, the relationships between men and women are distorted as well. Men begin to act as brutes and to treat women as objects. This view results in a dehumanization of women. Whereas the No Differences error on the far left most significantly results in the destruction of men, this No Equality error on the far right most significantly results in the destruction of women.

Within marriage, the idea that there is no equality in value between men and women will lead to polygamy and harems in which one man will have many wives. There is no concern to value women equally, for

“might makes right,” and men are stronger. This view will also lead to female infanticide in which girls are put to death because people prefer to have boys. With regard to children, in this No Equality viewpoint, men who reject masculine responsibility to care for their families will support abortion, and unborn children will be murdered with the encouragement of men. Within the family, if there is no equality in value before God, men will have all the power, and women and children will simply exist to serve them. Within the realm of sexuality, the No Equality error results in violence against women and rape.

The chart goes on to explain how this viewpoint also works out in terms of religion, where religion is advanced by violence and force (as in militant forms of Islam). The view that there need be no equality of value between persons results in the destruction of people who have less power or less authority; so authority is abused as a result. Within sports, this viewpoint will lead to violent harm to opponents, and even to gladiators fighting to the death. (The increasing popularity of violent and harmful wrestling programs on television is a manifestation of this tendency.) As far as criminal justice, this viewpoint will lead to excessive punishment and dehumanization of criminals (such as cutting off the hand of a thief or putting people to death for expressing different religious beliefs). There will often be little outward crime in the society, but there will be little freedom for people as well. As far as private property is concerned, there will be slavery and dehumanization of the poor and weak, while all property is held in the hands of a few who are very powerful. In education, the No Equality viewpoint would result in girls not being allowed to obtain an education.

The Male Dominance Column: Overemphasizing the Differences and Neglecting Equality: There have been disturbing tendencies leading in the direction of No Equality and advocating that “might makes right” whenever a “male dominance” view has found expression within the church or society. This viewpoint would overemphasize the differences between men and women and would not treat women as having equal value to men; nor would it treat those under authority as having equal value to those who have authority. With respect to a view of God, this view, which might be called the “domineering right,” would be parallel to Arianism (the view that the Son and Holy Spirit are not fully God in the sense that the Father is God, but are lesser beings that were created at one time). In relationships between men and women, this viewpoint would have an attitude that men are better than women and

would result in excessive competitiveness in which a man feels he always has to win in any sport or any argument, in order to show that women are inferior.

Within marriage, this “male dominance” error would result in a husband being harsh and selfish and acting as a dictator or a tyrant, and the wife acting as a doormat.

Because there is too great an emphasis on authority, this viewpoint would tend toward a system where children are raised with harsh discipline but with little love or compassion. As far as family responsibilities, wives would be forbidden to have their own jobs outside the home or to vote or to own property, for there is no thought of treating them as equal.

Within the realm of sexuality, a “male dominance” view would result in pornography and adultery and hearts filled with lust. There would be excessive attention given to sex, with men focusing excessively on their own sexual desires. People may wonder why involvement with pornography often leads to violence against women, but this chart makes the connection clear: Pornography is *looking at* women as objects for sexual gratification, not as persons equal in God’s sight; violence against women just takes that idea one step further and begins to *treat* them as objects that are unworthy of being treated with dignity and respect.

The chart goes on to point out how “male dominance,” the view that overemphasizes differences between men and women, would work out in a religious system where all ministry is done by men, and women’s gifts are suppressed and squelched. This view would also lead to things like the Crusades, the mistaken military expeditions in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries that were carried out to regain control of the Holy Land from the Muslims by force. Within sports, there would be excessive competition, and losers would be humiliated. Within crime, there would be a repressive government with little freedom, and things like debtors’ prisons would dehumanize the poor. Within such a viewpoint, women would not be permitted to own property, and boys would be given preferential treatment in schools.

The Complementarian Middle: Equality and Differences and Unity All Maintained: In contrast to these errors in both directions, the biblical picture is one that emphasizes *equality* and *differences* and *unity* at the same time. In parallel to the equality and differences among the members of the Trinity, within a complementarian view men and women are equal in value but have different roles. Within marriage, a husband will manifest loving, humble headship, and a wife will manifest intel-

ligent, joyful submission to her husband's leadership. Children will be loved and cared for and valued, and they will be raised with both discipline and love. Children will respect the authority of their parents, but their parents will respect the dignity of children as having equal value because they are persons created in the image of God. Within the family, there will be a division of responsibilities in which the husband is primarily responsible to lead, provide for, and protect his family. The wife, on the other hand, will be primarily responsible to help her husband by managing the household and nurturing the children, though both husband and wife will often participate willingly in helping the other person with his or her area of primary responsibility.

In the realm of sexuality, a complementarian view will result in monogamous, lifelong marriage and in equally fulfilling experiences of sex as the deepest expression of a great "mystery" created by God: We are equal, and we are different, and we are one! There will be a delight in God's plan for sexual expression, but it will be restrained by the bonds of lifelong marriage and lifelong faithfulness to one's marriage partner. Men and women will have then a deep sense of acting in the way that God created them to act in all these areas.

The lower rows of the chart go on to explain how a complementarian viewpoint works out in religion, where some governing and teaching roles in the church are restricted to men, but women's gifts are also honored and used fully in the ministries of the church. In all areas of life, authority will be exercised within boundaries, so that the person under authority is treated with respect and dignity and as someone who shares equally in the image of God. Within sports, there will be an appreciation for competition with fairness and rules, and winners will be honored while losers are respected. Equality. Differences. Unity.

As far as crime is concerned, punishment will be speedy and fair and will aim at the satisfaction of justice as well as the restoration of the criminal. As far as private property, laws will protect private property but will also reflect care for the poor. People will be rewarded according to their work and skill, and there will be a desire to have equal opportunity for all in the economic realm. Within education, boys and girls will both be educated, but the different preferences and abilities and senses of calling that boys and girls may have will be respected, and no quotas will be imposed to force an artificial equality in the number of participants in every activity where that would not have resulted

from allowing boys and girls to choose activities freely of their own accord. Equality. Differences. Unity.

I realize, of course, that any chart like this has generalizations, and people who hold one viewpoint or another at some point on the chart may not hold all the viewpoints represented within a particular column. Nevertheless, I think the chart has significant value in showing that we will continually face two opposing challenges in trying to uphold a biblical view of manhood and womanhood. People on the domineering right will continue to think of us as weak and yielding too much to the demands of feminism. People on the egalitarian left will continue to see us as harsh and overemphasizing the differences between men and women. And we must steadfastly and patiently hold to the middle, with the help of God.

Now I think it is plain why I say that this controversy is much bigger than we realize. The struggle to uphold equality *and* differences *and* unity between men and women has implications for all areas of life.

Moreover, there are strong spiritual forces invisibly warring against us in this whole controversy. I am not now focusing on the egalitarian left or the domineering right, but on the far left column and the far right column, the effeminate left and the violent right. I do not think that we can look at those two columns for long without realizing that behind the attempt to abolish all differences and make everything “one,” and behind the attempt to destroy those who are weaker and make the stronger always “right,” there is a deep spiritual evil. At both extremes we see the hand of the enemy seeking to destroy God’s idea of sex, of marriage, and of manhood and womanhood. We see the hand of the enemy seeking to destroy everything that glorifies God and especially seeking to destroy the beauty of our sexual differences that wonderfully reflect God’s glory. We see the hand of the enemy who hates everything that God created as good and hates everything that brings glory to God Himself.

So in the end, this whole controversy is really about God and how His character is reflected in the beauty and excellence of manhood and womanhood as He created it. Will we glorify God through manhood and womanhood lived according to His Word? Or will we deny His Word and give in to the pressures of modern culture? That is the choice we have to make.