

Biblical Gender Equality

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Let me begin by clarifying what is meant by “gender.” Cambridge Dictionary’s first listing says, “the male or female sex, or the state of being male or female” (dictionary.cambridge.org). One certainly can find other definitions. However, this is how I am using the term. I mean male and female. I do not mean the one hundred or more genders, which some now imagine to exist (consider: BBC teaches kids there are ‘over 100’ gender identities by Jessica Chasmar – The Washington Times – Friday, September 13, 2019, [washingtontimes.com](https://www.washingtontimes.com)). “Male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27).

In the Home

God created the home (Gen. 2:18, 24) and He assigned different roles to the man and the woman. Man is to be the leader in the home (Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; Tit. 2:3-5). Woman is to be the helper of man (Gen. 2:18; 1 Cor. 11:8-9). God spoke to Eve about childbirth (Gen. 3:16), and to Adam about farming (Gen. 3:17-19). This seems to indicate a different focus. While a woman may help bring in income (cf. Pro. 31:16, 24), and a man can help with domestic work (cf. Gen. 18:1-8), there are differences in focus or emphasis (cf. Tit. 2:5).

The role of the man and the woman is to be respected. Children are to honor their fathers and mothers (Eph. 6:1-2). They are not to be despised, even in old age (Pro. 23:22). A virtuous wife should be greatly valued (Pro. 31:10, 28).

There is equality in spiritual value. “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them... as being heirs together of the grace of life” (1 Pet. 3:7). The Christian man should regard his Christian wife’s spiritual value. They are heirs together of the grace of life. They have different roles. However, there is equality in spiritual value.

In the Church

God created the church (Matt. 16:18 cf. Acts 20:28), and He assigned different roles to men and women. Men are to be leaders in the church (1 Tim. 2:8, 11, 12). They are to lead the worship (1 Tim. 2:8, 11, 12). It is qualified men who are to be appointed as elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9). God gave to woman a role that only a woman can fulfill (i.e. childbearing); even so, God gave to man a role that only a man should fulfill in a mixed assembly consisting of male and female Christians. However, there are many things that a woman may, and even should do. A woman may teach children and women (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15; Tit. 2:3-4). She may help explain the Bible to a man in a very private setting (Acts 18:24-27). She may teach by way of example (1 Pet. 3:1-6). She may do good deeds for others (Acts 9:36, 39). We should respect God’s sovereignty to make distinctions in the role of men and women in His church. These distinctions are not merely culturally based (1 Tim. 2:12-14).

The role of both men and women should be respected. Where would we be without the great things done by godly women? I suspect that many church building doors would have been shut long ago, if it were not for these godly women. Remember that women supported the ministry of our Lord (Luke 8:1-3).

Both genders should be treated with respect. Paul told Timothy to treat older members as fathers and mothers, and to treat younger members as brothers and sisters (1 Tim. 5:1-2). May we strive to do so.

There is equality in spiritual value (Gal. 3:26-29). Both men and women are eligible to become sons of God through faith (lit. the faith) in Christ Jesus. Thereby, one becomes an heir of the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:3b cf. Acts 3:25-26). Both men and women may be baptized (cf. Acts 8:12). There is equality in salvation's availability.

In Society

Both genders should be treated with respect. Jesus taught, "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matt. 7:12). The word "men" is generic. The NASB reads "people." The ESV reads "others." Jesus had compassion on a widow at Nain (Luke 7:13). He spoke to a woman at Samaria (John 4:27). He healed a woman who had a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:12). He allowed Mary to sit and learn at His feet (Luke 10:38-42). The resurrected Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene and then to other women (John 20:16 cf. Mark 16:9; Matt. 28:9). We are taught to "Honor all people" (1 Pet. 2:17). It literally reads, "Honor all."

We should understand that there are differences between men and women. Peter describes the woman as the "weaker vessel" (1 Pet. 3:7). The term "vessel" refers to the body (cf. 2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Thess. 4:3-4). Generally speaking this is true. Woman, not man, bears children (Gen. 4:1-2; Job 14:1; Matt. 11:11; 1 Cor. 11:11-12; Gal. 4:4).

There is confusion when differences are not recognized. One example is that females are now having their sports taken over by "transgender" men. Selina Soule, a Connecticut high school student said this after losing a track event to a "transgender" male, "We all know the outcome of the race before it even starts; it's demoralizing" (High School Athletes File Complaint over Transgender policy by AP, June 19, 2019, nbc.com).

In sum, God created both men and women. Men and women are different, and have been given different roles. These differences should not be denied, they are good. Both men and women have important roles. Both are to be respected. Both can be heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7).