

Is God a Male Chauvinist or does He actually honor women? (Part 1)

Both men and women have a role to play in the church. Is one role demeaning and the other superior? The first thing we must acknowledge is what God clearly says about men and women in the church: one is supposed to be in authority and the other under that authority. God says, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man.” Second, the reasons He gives for this have nothing whatever to do with ability, education, culture, the Greek language, or any such thing. His reasons go back to the beginning of creation. God ordained that man would be in authority over the woman, which is why he was created first, then Eve. And because the man was created first, he was supposed to lead and the woman was to follow. But Adam failed miserably; he relinquished his authority and leadership, which left Eve in charge. She unwittingly led and it was disastrous for the entire human race. This is why God doesn’t want women in positions of authority over men; it goes against His ordained authority structure and when men and women violate this, terrible things happen. Therefore, God encourages women to willingly acknowledge their role as follower instead of leader, which is exemplified by their role as mothers. That is, if they respond with faith, love, holiness and self-control to God’s authority structure through one of the central signs of a woman’s submission—motherhood—then God will deliver them from their frustration and desire to lead, i.e., they will teach and have authority over their children, i.e., over the future women *and men* of the church and the world.

Why do some women (and men) struggle with 1 Timothy 2:12? Because they think it demeans women (which implies that God demeans women). However, nothing could be further from the truth. God honors women tremendously. The fact that God placed men as the leaders and protectors of women doesn’t mean that they’re weak or incapable. God’s ideal woman is strong and independent (Proverbs 31:10-31) yet she acknowledges the authority structure God set in place (Proverbs 31:11-12, 23—note that Proverbs 31 are the words of a mother to her son, 31:1). Women played key, important roles in the Lord’s and Paul’s ministry (Luke 8:1-3; Acts 16:14-15; Romans 16:1-4; Philippians 4:2-3). The first ones to see Jesus after His resurrection were women (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:9). This is significant because in that day and culture the testimony of women was not taken seriously; the Lord was declaring that women were no longer to be discriminated against (Galatians 3:28). Men and women were to be seen as equals, something that was clear from the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:27). However, though they are equals, they each play different roles in God’s creation.

“She will be saved through childbearing” why is this offensive today? First, what does Paul mean by it, how can a woman be saved through childbearing? Childbearing represents motherhood and motherhood represents a woman’s willingness to respect God’s authority structure, i.e., she acknowledges that she is the “helper” who will help the man fulfill one of God’s mandates: “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28; 2:18). And in her role as mother, she’ll get to teach and have authority over the next generation of women *and men* who will lead the church and the world. Second, how does today’s feminist culture see childbearing? As something that demeans, enslaves, and robs women of their rights and dignity. Today’s culture teaches women that they’re equal to men in every way; they too should be able to have a family and a career. But if family gets in the way of career, then family comes second or not at all. This is a philosophy that foolishly ignores even a woman’s biological reality: she’s the only one who can have the babies and nourish them in the beginning years! Are men and women equal? Yes, but not in function (Genesis 1:27; 2:18) and babies are a giant example of this: when it comes to babies, they don’t play the same role.