

I. The Doctrine of Gender Roles

This very simply comes down to 2 sides believing different things. One side says women are free to do everything men can do in the church. The other side says women are free to do everything men can do with the exception of 2 things: They cannot serve on the ruling Elder Board of the church and they can't teach men. Other than that they are free to do anything. So it comes down to this question: Can women preach and teach mixed groups of men and women? Can a woman hold the position of elder in the church?

Biblical Evidence

First let me say I think the biblical evidence is overwhelming supporting distinctive gender roles for men and women. Before I get to that, let's look at some things in general. **Slide #1.**

Now let's look at what God's Word says. **Slide #2-12.**

What about Today?

Today the belief is that if you are in a submissive role, you are inferior. Therefore to prove you are not inferior you need to be given equal access to all of the roles and positions the family and church has to offer. Christ is in a submissive role to the Father but He is not inferior (1 Cor. 11:3). Following Biblical gender roles is not confining but freeing to be the person God created you to be, in your specific gender, with all of your distinct talents and spiritual gifts. Women can teach, women can lead, there are all kinds of opportunities . . . it just can't be over men.

It's quite interesting to me that the feminist movement of the 60's & 70's first went to the secular universities when Bev and I were on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ, then found its way into mainline liberal protestant seminaries and churches in the 80's and now in the 90's and to this present time, has worked its way into the evangelical church. It has all been a part of the sexual revolution that this country has been undergoing for the past 50+ years. What is frightening is that when gender roles vanish it lays the groundwork for the next wave which is hitting us now, the Gay agenda, LGBT, where there are no gender distinctions. If you take the first step and blur the lines of men and women roles, the next step into the gay agenda is inevitable - ask the ELCA, ask the Episcopalians, ask the Methodists, ask the Presbyterian church USA. And I am hearing evangelicals make the same statements today that those liberal denominations made a few years ago. Don't think it can't happen. Who would have thought 10 years ago we would be where we are today in society and in the church. D. James Kennedy said before he died in 2007 that you won't recognize the evangelical church in 20 years. I think he was wrong - I think it will be shorter than that.

When I came to Wooddale in 1984 there were no women on the Elder Board. And a woman recently shared with us that she came to Wooddale about the same time we did. On the back of her registration card one Sun. she asked if she could teach at Wooddale. The reply she got back was that she could teach other women but not men. I hold in my hand a 14 page paper written and dated May 23, 1980 with the title "Women in The Christian Church". In the conclusion the author says this . . . Who wrote it? - Austin Chapman - Chairman of the Board of Elders here at Wooddale Church. Austin served in that position for 12 years and under his watch what he wrote in that paper was not violated. Austin now lives in Arizona and serves as a Council member for the organization, The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, an organization founded in 1987 by John Piper and Wayne Grudem to combat the advance of the Feminist Movement and agenda into the evangelical church in our country. I have asked repeatedly senior Wooddale members who have been at Wooddale 40 or more years, men who have served on the Elder Board and other boards and positions, if they have ever had a woman serve on the Elder Board. The answer has always come back, "Definitely not". Other boards that are not the ruling Elder Board yes, or a secretary to the Elder Board, but not the Elder Board itself.

That changed in 2009 when at the Annual Business Meeting the first woman was elected to the Elder Board. That has been followed with 2 other women elected to the Elder Board and women preaching from the pulpit, and teaching men in Bible study situations.

That leads to my second doctrinal issue, and these last 4 will all be brief.

II. The Doctrine of the Authority of the Bible

The gender-role issue, to me is a huge issue, but the ramifications of it as it relates to the authority of the Bible are even larger. Why? Because if you say the statements in the Bible are cultural and male dominated and you believe male domination is wrong, then you have laid a template over the Bible which points to the Bible being in error and fallible in the direction it leads us. If the Bible is wrongly male dominated then:

The Holy Spirit inspired the wrong writers of the Bible – only men.

Jesus Christ selected the wrong disciples – only men.

God selected the wrong Kings, Priests, Elders, Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, and pastors – who were only men.

So I end up with a Bible that has shown by its teaching and example to be wrong and fallible. Oh there is no doubt that the abuses by men and the prevailing arrogance and feeling of superiority of men over women is sinful and wrong, and are the result of the Fall and the curse. That will always be. We have it today. We will have it until we are rescued from this present sinful world. But this is a sinless God acting through His Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore I can trust the emphasis of Scripture. I can trust the clear statements of God's Word.

And just to mention one other point: If you can make 1 Tim. 2:12 which says, "I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man," to mean, "I do allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man," then you can make the Bible say absolutely anything. The Bible is being attacked today from every possible direction – some very blatant, some very subtle.