

Men and Women: Answering Evangelical Questions

Anyone who receives a broad-based theological education today, will quickly find that there are a number of issues upon which scholars, congregational leaders, and laypersons not only disagree about—but will starkly divide over. One of the biggest, divisive issues in contemporary evangelical Protestant theology, involves **women in ministry**. There are denominations which support females serving alongside of males as co-leaders of the assembly, ordained as pastors, and there are other denominations which strongly oppose females serving in such a capacity. When it comes to marital relationships, there are those who believe that a husband leads the family while the wife follows behind him, and there are others who support partnership marriages where husband and wife are co-leaders of the family.

More books, articles, analyses, refutations, counter-refutations, blogs, and op-ed pieces, have been composed on men and women in the Body of Messiah, than one frequently knows what to do with! Over the years, I have gathered and collected many pieces of information on debates over women in ministry, husbands and wives in marriage, and the differing and complex feelings of people involved—which have certainly overwhelmed me at times. As someone who likes to be well-informed and logically sort through the different perspectives involving a debate like how males and females should relate to one another in the community of God—I have had to definitely pace myself and choose my words carefully. Like many on both sides of the discussion, I have been affected by emotionalism, and cannot say that I have never been offended by some of the positions I have seen represented or opinions expressed. I have also wondered how in the world I should best present the relevant issues to those, who are not too familiar with the main components of the theological debate.

Evangelical Christian complementarianism (equal in value, separate in roles) is an ideology which on the whole, has been responsible for

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seeing many capable females being restricted from not only high leadership positions in the Body of Messiah, but also placed into a distant, secondary role in the family. Evangelical Christian egalitarianism (equal in value, open in opportunities) has helped to see many capable females raised up as leaders and teachers, and has also greatly enhanced the effectiveness of many marriages, where husbands and wives share leadership responsibilities, and look out for each other as equal partners. Each position, for sure, thinks that its point of view is the one which is more Biblical and edifying. Certainly, there are many different interrelated topics and issues associated with males and females in the Body of Messiah, regarding sexual conduct, dating and courtship, as well as divorce and remarriage. However, the considerable bulk of discussions involving men and women concern leadership and teaching within the *ekklēsia*, and how husbands and wives are to relate to one another within the family. Has a complementarian ideology truly aided contemporary evangelicalism, or is an egalitarian ideology something especially worthy of consideration?

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One of the biggest issues that has changed much of evangelical Protestantism over the past four to five decades (1970s-present) has been the steady acceptance of ordained female clergy, namely as those designated to pastor local churches, within a variety of denominations. While questions will always abound as to the quality and temperament of such female pastors—the same as they should for male pastors—it is witnessed from a panoply of perspectives, how various theologians and evangelical leaders of note, have transitioned from a complementarian perspective to an egalitarian perspective. Having been either reared in a spiritual tradition where males exclusively led and taught the people of God, and/or having once theologically defended a complementarian perspective which limited the role of females both in the assembly and in the home, there are prominent, broadly conservative theologians, who were steadily led to consider an egalitarian, inclusive perspective from the Holy Scriptures. Some of this came from diligent study and review of God's Word, some of this came from seeing capable females dismissed when their talents should have been utilized, and some of this even came out of various marital experiences.¹

¹ For a review of some of this, consult Alan F. Johnson, ed., *How I Changed My Mind About Women in Leadership: Compelling Stories from Prominent Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

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I recognize that for many who are complementarian, their immediate objection to using females in a greater capacity within the *ekklēsia*, is often based on bad experiences that many male leaders have had with females. The most frequent claim that tends to be issued against female leaders, though, is that it will mean that *liberals* will be appointed to leadership. But, the fact on the ground is that there are more liberal males serving as pastors, teachers, or professors of religion than anyone else in Protestantism. It is true that female pastors are going to be far more welcomed in liberal than conservative sectors, but it is hardly appropriate to stoke the fires of fearmongering, by suggesting that having women in positions of leadership and teaching in the local assembly will just open up the floodgates to an acceptance of homosexuality, LGBTQ, and that we might as well just tear the Bible to shreds.² The female Priscilla was used to help mentor the male Apollos (Acts 18:26), and as a First Century businesswoman was doubtlessly someone who embodied many of the characteristics complementarians like to laud from the Proverbs 31 woman.

Having had to wade through a great deal of data and “talk” over the debates involving women in ministry since the late 2000s, I have become innately familiar with how many egalitarians have overreacted, and have failed to be even-handed, in their interactions with complementarians. While egalitarians may rightly believe that they have been discriminated against by complementarians, I have not found your average evangelical complementarian man to be some kind of spiritual fascist. Many complementarian theologians and pastors believe in respecting and looking out for women. It is entirely unfair and unreasonable to stoke the fires of fearmongering, by automatically assuming that an acceptance of a complementarian ideology where males lead the assembly and husbands lead the home—with females in a secondary capacity—automatically means the widescale practice by husbands and fathers of wife beatings and daughter rapings.³

Males and females have anatomical differences in their reproductive anatomy, to be sure. But, do the differences between men and women relate to intellectual capacity? Are women more easily

² It is true that there are those who have moved from complementarianism to egalitarianism, who then have later embraced acceptance of homosexual marriage. A significant example of this would be the late Rachel Held Evans, author of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012).

³ It is true, however, that various persons who have held to a complementarian theology have been responsible for physical abuse of females. Consult Ruth A. Tucker, *Black and White Bible, Black and Blue Wife: My Story of Finding Hope after Domestic Abuse* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016).

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deceived than men? Are women less capable than men, especially in thinking and reasoning through issues? Complementarians and egalitarians will often divide over whether or not men and women have the same brain capacity, or whether men are intrinsically smarter than women. The fact is, persons of both genders are human, persons of both genders have made mistakes, and persons of both genders require the same grace and salvation available in Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah.

My own personal decision of identifying and adhering to an egalitarian reading of Scripture, is principally guided by my wanting to see all men and women in the Body of Messiah, be all they can be in the Lord. I believe quite strongly in “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Ephesians 1:18, NASU), and that every man and woman, created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), has particular gifts, talents, and skills to contribute to the well being of all within the faith community. I hardly believe that all complementarians are “unsaved,” because whether men and women work together on a level playing field or not, is not a salvation issue. Whether or not, as the Body of Messiah moves into the future, more and more people are willing to consider an egalitarian approach, is an effectiveness issue. Are we going to appreciate and implement the gifts and talents of skills of some people (men), *or* the gifts and talents and skills of all people (men and women)?

It does not take much to see that issues involving males and females in the Body of Messiah, is a huge, contemporary debate and divides many people. How does one best approach and gauge the different elements and components of men and women, how they should relate to one another, and what they can do in the *ekklēsia*? With the hundreds (and likely thousands, too) of pieces of information available on complementarianism and egalitarianism, how does a broadly conservative egalitarian, such as myself, best express his ideology?

I have been a part of the Messianic movement since 1995, which because of its association with Jewish outreach and evangelism, adhering to some position on validity of Torah, and simply being a rather new faith community on the scene—does not tend to be too familiar with the women in ministry debate. The majority of the people with whom I interact in Messianic ministry, would definitely identify with some form of complementarian ideology, and they have not looked at the subject matter on any sizeable academic level as I have. They do have legitimate questions and concerns about what an egalitarian ideology—which would see females included within the leadership and teaching structure of local congregations, and husbands

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and wives as co-leaders of the home. Yet I myself have legitimate questions and concerns about what a complementarian ideology will do to the future Messianic movement, if some serious changes are not implemented. What is the best way to address the questions and concerns?

The first part of this resource, *Men and Women in the Body of Messiah*, addresses the significant **Evangelical Questions** which dominate the main parts of the debate over male and female equality. These are the questions that a seminary student attending a Protestant institution today, either complementarian or egalitarian, would have to answer in some capacity, while preparing for ministry. The subject lines that I have prepared, serve as the major areas which are continually debated in the contemporary evangelical literature. I have tried to make this discussion as concise and readable as possible. Following in the second part of *Men and Women in the Body of Messiah*, various **Messianic Questions** can then be addressed, which focus on the unique dynamics that my family has encountered in our time spent in the Messianic movement.

Throughout all of our discussions we will be doing our best to trace a thread from Genesis to Revelation, on whether or not something significant was lost between men and women at the Fall in Eden, that something has been in the process of being restored to human beings via the process of salvation history, and most especially whether or not in the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) it is witnessed that there are examples of women being used in new and key capacities.

“Today, there are significant trends in the contemporary Church, which demonstrate that traditional gender roles are being challenged. Quite disturbing is how many individual churches incorporate not only females as leaders, but how various denominations are ordaining women to the pastorate.”

Why is the issue of gender roles for men and women so important to today's community of faith? It is hardly a surprise that debates over gender, who is a male and who is a female, and what a proper male and what a proper female are to do—has become quite divisive for anyone in Biblical Studies. For the purposes of complementarianism or egalitarianism, the debate mainly involves a huge clash between an

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“equal in value, separate in roles” *or* an “equal in value, open in opportunities” approach.

Both complementarians and egalitarians regard the issue of male and female roles as being important, and adherents of both ideologies tend to widely consider those of the other persuasion to be quantitatively wrong—at least on key points. Some believe that the answer to there being tranquility and effectiveness in the Body of Messiah, is via the exclusion of females from positions of authority in both the assembly and in the home. Some believe that the answer to effectiveness, peace, and a sense of belonging for people in the Body of Messiah, is the equal inclusion of males and females in positions of authority in the assembly, and co-leadership of husbands and wives in the home.

Unfortunately, like many different theological issues, discussions that can transpire about men and women in the Body of Messiah, can quickly get out of control. Egalitarians can especially be found, because of promoting some new interpretations and perspectives of Bible passages, at least at first, to be too dismissive of complementarians—without establishing enough common ground, and then, in as civil a manner as possible, discuss differences of approach.

Complementarians can be found to be quite defensive of their views as well, certainly because they are defending the traditional norm, but also because of some significant concerns that they have. These often involve approaches to marriage, parenting practices that encourage or discourage masculinity or femininity, a growing acceptance of homosexuality by contemporary evangelicalism, and what they consider to be non-Biblical female leadership in the assembly.

It is not as though egalitarians disagree with complementarians on absolutely everything. Conservative egalitarians are seen to oppose the homosexual agenda, as homosexuality is “against nature” (Romans 1:26, NASU), and is an abomination (Leviticus 18:22). Egalitarians would be in broad agreement that the relationship of husband and wife to one another in marriage, is to in some way represent the relationship of the Messiah and the *ekklēsia* (Ephesians 5:31-32).

There are legitimate concerns in the 2020s for sure, especially given the rise of trans-genderism, with how there can be various young boys or girls—who very clearly have male or female anatomy—but who may think of themselves as being of the opposite gender. This does involve dimensions of psychology and human biochemistry that go well beyond the scope of our intended discussions here. In terms of parenting and child-rearing, however, fathers and mothers do not need

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to permit their children to think that it is acceptable for a child of one gender, to think that they are actually of another gender, with that gender's anatomy. Of course, debates can ensue as to whether or not male children can cook in the kitchen, or female children can play sports like softball. There are a few aspects of child rearing, as we say in theology, that are subject to interpretation.

The main debate, which garners the most attention between complementarians and egalitarians, involves what complementarians consider to be non-Biblical female leadership in the assembly. All complementarians believe that senior positions in the assembly are to be reserved to those of the male gender. Some evangelical complementarians will be seen to permit various junior positions of leadership and teaching, to females, however. A number of complementarians, in terms of congregational leadership, while believing that males should occupy the offices of elder and deacon, also make the effort to see that the wives of elders and deacons play an active role in decision making. It is important that we recognize some of this diversity, as not all complementarians think that females should be excluded from all places of leadership in the assembly. It is witnessed that there are some who would call themselves "complementarian," who believe in the inclusion of females in just about every position of ministry in the contemporary church, except leaving the office of senior pastor to a male.⁴

Throughout the theological discussions and debates that complementarians and egalitarians have, it is frequently witnessed how their presuppositions and values can be so close sometimes, but also so far apart. Both groups are widely seen to appeal to the same Scripture passages to make their case. Consider how complementarians are seen to express an extreme displeasure at Genesis 2:23 being eroded: "The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man'" (NASU). Complementarians who believe in a strict and rigid differentiation of the sexes, see men and women serving as co-leaders of the *ekklēsia* and husbands and wives working together as co-leaders of the family, as a negation of Genesis 2:23. They read this passage as speaking to the *difference* that exists between man and woman.

⁴ This is largely the position seen in Craig L. Blomberg, "Women in Ministry: A Complementarian Perspective," in James R. Beck, ed., *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), pp 123-184.

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Obviously, males and females have different reproductive anatomy, and are not exactly the same. However, egalitarians look at Adam's exclaim of Genesis 2:23 another way. Far from highlighting the difference of man and woman, Adam recognizes that Eve came from him, and as such the two of them share a great deal in *common*. While Eve had different "equipment" than Adam had, Adam still calls her "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." This is a statement that emphasizes the similarities, and the intended bond and partnership, that Adam was to have with his wife Eve. A proper marriage relationship is to principally be focused on what binds a husband and wife together, not what makes them different.

Is it unbiblical to see women occupy positions of leadership in the assembly? Complementarians and egalitarians disagree over the inclusion or disclusion of women in positions of leadership in the assembly, and/or in the home. Complementarianism argues that only males should occupy the offices of elder or pastor in a local assembly, and that a husband should be the leader of his family. Egalitarians, in contrast, argue that females can occupy the offices of elder or pastor in a local assembly, and that a husband and wife should be the leaders of their family.

Certainly, both complementarians and egalitarians should agree that males who occupy positions of teaching and leadership within the Body of Messiah—yet who have no love, forbearance, patience, or self-control (cf. Galatians 5:22-23)—are not qualified to be leaders, and they may even be detrimental to the well being of the *ekklēsia*. Only males who are mature in the Lord, and can be able teachers (cf. James 3:1), should occupy positions of authority. Egalitarians, who believe in the principle that females should occupy positions of authority as well, would require any potential female leaders to be mature in the Lord, able teachers, and operating via the fruit of the Spirit—the same as any male leader.

Complementarians frequently conclude that the mere presence of females, in high positions of leadership within the Body of Messiah, is something that is a problem. Egalitarians would argue from what is witnessed in the record of the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament, that the presence of females occupying significant spiritual roles, requires a thorough reevaluation of limiting females from serving in positions of leadership and teaching. These include figures like Anna (Luke 2:36-38) and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:8-9), who were

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prophets. Priscilla was a teacher to Apollos (Acts 18:24-26), she was a facilitator of a home fellowship (1 Corinthians 16:19), and a co-worker of Paul (Romans 16:3). Phoebe was a deacon (Romans 16:1-2). Lydia was a facilitator of a home fellowship (Acts 16:13-15, 40). Euodia and Syntyche were co-workers of Paul (Philippians 4:2-3). Junia was an apostle (Romans 16:7).

If it is witnessed in the Apostolic Writings that there was a monumental spiritual shift following the arrival and resurrection of Yeshua of Nazareth, with the Holy Spirit poured out on “all flesh” (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17), and that presumably gifted females were taking on leadership responsibilities in the First Century *ekklesia*—then the well being and effectiveness of Body of Messiah today in the Twenty-First Century will be severely curtailed, if it chooses to have a closed approach to the women in our midst. Females have gifts and talents and perspectives that males frequently do not have, and far from seeing such things dismissed because of gender, many within today’s faith community need to seriously reconsider how the skills of women can be employed for the enrichment and betterment of us all.

Are only males supposed to be leaders (pastors and elders) in the assembly? The most frequent Scripture passages referred to by those defending a complementarian view, tend to be: 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:34-35. Along with this, complementarians argue quite strongly from Ephesians 5:22-33 that the husband is the “head” and thus “leader” of the family.

Any responsible reader of the Epistles of either 1 Timothy or 1 Corinthians should concede that before modern applications of these letters can be deduced for God’s people today—that it first behooves us to understand what was communicated by Paul to his original ancient audiences. Unfortunately, too few when encountering passages like 1 Timothy 2:11-15 would even think that Paul was writing to First Century Ephesian circumstances and conditions, and not directly to Twenty-First Century Westerners—much less recognize that there might even be some translation issues from the Greek source text into English, which are explored in not only technical commentaries, but also various study Bibles accessible to the layperson. (There has been strong debate over the authenticity of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 among textual critics for several decades.) Significant discussions have also ensued regarding the proper approach to the term *kephalē* in Ephesians 5. While *kephalē* literally means “head” (as in the physical head of a

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person or animal), it is intensely disputed whether “head” is always akin to “leader,” or can instead mean “source” or “origin.”

Liberal Protestants have been seen to just outright dismiss the instruction of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as somehow being deutero-Pauline, having been written two to three generations after Paul’s death. Conservative egalitarians are seen to accept 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as genuinely Pauline, considering it to be instruction addressed to a complicated false teaching that had circulated in the vicinity of Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:4-5; 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:18), involving some deceived females, which Timothy had to see resolved—with some translation issues definitely needing to be evaluated. Conservative egalitarians consider 1 Timothy 2:11-15 to be situational to 60s C.E. Ephesus, and not universal for all times and places. 1 Corinthians 11:3, which conservatives and liberals alike agree is genuinely Pauline, is given in the context of some form of head ornamentation on both men and women, and has not always been approached as representing some rigid hierarchy.

A majority of evangelical Protestant laypersons are not aware of discussions involving *kephalē* meaning something other than “leader” in Ephesians 5. But more challenging to our ongoing evaluations, is that too many people frequently cannot diversify their English vocabulary enough to think that a term like “head” does not automatically mean “leader.” So, it can indeed be rather difficult, and at times impossible, to dialogue with many complementarians, about passages such as Ephesians 5:21-33 and whether or not *kephalē* means “source” or “origin.”

“There is a Creation order detailed in Scripture, where the man was created first, and hence the man bears the responsibility of leadership in both the home and the church. Woman was created to be the man’s helpmate.”

Eve was created to be Adam’s helpmate. Does that not mean that a wife is to serve in a secondary, submissive role to her husband? All of us, in our reading of Genesis ch. 2, have encountered where Eve was created by God to be Adam’s “helpmate” or “helper,” and as has been seen in much traditional or customary Christian thought, this implies that Eve was to be Adam’s subordinate. This is a position which

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continues to be held by most complementarians. Egalitarians frequently challenge the conclusion that “helper” means a subordinate or inferior.

Adam, the first human, is seen giving names to all of the animals brought before him (Genesis 2:19). It is then narrated, “And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:20, NASU). As Adam was encountering all of the different animals, he saw both male and female of various species, and had to wonder if he would be the only of his kind. It has been recognized that it was not good for Adam to be alone (Genesis 2:18), and so a deep sleep falls upon the man, and the first woman or Eve is created from his rib or side (Genesis 2:21-22). Adam is ecstatic at the arrival of the woman, noting how she came from him: “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Genesis 2:23, NASU). Both complementarians and egalitarians should agree on the ontological equality of men and women from Adam’s statement in Genesis 2:23.

When Genesis 2:20 communicates, “but for Adam no fitting helper was found” (NJPS), was Eve intended to be Adam’s subordinate as the *ezer kenegdo*? TWOT offers some rather general options:

“While this word designates assistance, it is more frequently used in a concrete sense to designate the assistant. (Cf. Gen 2:18, 20 where Eve is created to be Adam’s help[er].) As to the source of the help, this word is generally used to designate divine aid, particularly in Psalms (Cf. Psa 121:1, 2) where it includes both material and spiritual assistance.”⁵

At one side of the spectrum, the Hebrew term *ezer* is used to describe Eve being the “helper” of Adam, and at the other side of the spectrum the term *ezer* is used to describe God as some kind of a helper. Complementarians, while rightly recognizing the infinitely higher value of the woman in contrast to the animals, do widely conclude that the woman as the man’s “helper” means that she is a secondary assistant to him, and not an equal partner. Egalitarians, believing that the first man and the first woman were created by God to tend the Garden together, as equals, would stress how *ezer* or “helper” is used in contexts where an obvious superior force comes to the aid of another. Consider the following thoughts offered by Alice Mathews in *Gender Roles and the People of God*:

⁵ Carl Schultz, “*azar*,” in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:661.

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“The first Hebrew word, transliterated *ezer*, appears twenty-one times in the Old Testament. When we look at all of these occurrences together, we get a sense of its meaning. In two cases, it is used to describe the woman Eve (Genesis 2:18, 20), and three times, it refers to nations to whom Israel appealed for military help when faced with a powerful enemy (Isaiah 30:5; Ezekiel 12:14; Daniel 11:34). In the remaining sixteen cases, it refers to *God* as our help {Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29; Psalms 20:2; 33:20; 70:5; 89:19; 115:9, 10, 11; 121:1, 2; 124:8; 146:5; Hosea 13:9}. God is the one who comes alongside us in our helplessness. Any idea here of inferiority is untenable. God is not subordinate to his creatures...While many Christians see Eve’s function as a subordinate, the word *ezer* does not support that idea. Eve was not created to serve Adam but serve *with* him.”⁶

It is impossible to argue that Eve as “helper” was created to be Adam’s superior, even though God as the “helper” of Israel or of people generally is as the Eternal One obviously superior. However, the common complementarian view that Eve being created as Adam’s “helper,” means that she was only a secondary assistant, can easily be challenged. Earlier in Genesis 1:27-28, it is narrated how the creation of human beings involved not only both male and female being created in the image of God, but also both male and female were to subdue and exercise dominion over the Earth jointly. To egalitarian readers, man and woman were originally intended to rule over the Earth as equals, thus Eve being Adam’s “helper” meant that she was to be his significant ally, indeed serving along with him:

“God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’” (Genesis 1:27-28, NRSV).

Is it not true that those of the male gender, who were created first, were given a unique role in leadership and teaching? Complementarians are seen to take the instruction of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as being universal to the Body of Messiah, and from it deduce that the man being created first, gives him a unique role in leadership and teaching in the *ekklēsia*.

⁶ Alice Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God: Rethinking What We Were Taught about Men and Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 39.

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In significant contrast, conservative egalitarians do not read 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as universal instructions, but instead would be quite keen to emphasize circumstances local to First Century Ephesus, as requiring the restrictions seen on female leadership and teaching.

A false teaching in Ephesus had negatively affected many women (1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Timothy 3:6), and also advocated that the general resurrection had taken place (2 Timothy 2:18). The false teaching prohibited eating meat and marriage (1 Timothy 4:1-5), and likely supported some return on the part of Believers to an Edenic pre-Fall lifestyle—as eating meat and sexual intercourse were thought to be results of the post-Fall period. That the figure of Eve likely bore some significance to the female adherents of this false teaching, can also be assumed. For sure, various females in Ephesus took upon themselves the role of teacher, for which they were not qualified. Recognizing what 1 Timothy 2:11-15 communicates in light of these wider issues, is important, especially per what 1 Timothy 2:12-13 communicates. How might egalitarians read 1 Timothy 2:11-15 with localized, First Century Ephesian circumstances in view?

In First Century Ephesus, the male leaders of the assembly would have been educated. Unfortunately, too many of them found themselves in a place of seeing various females deceived by the false teaching, and such uneducated females would have assumed the role of teacher. Paul's answer was not to see the females put away into a dark corner and kept in ignorance, but instead to see them properly educated. As he directs, "A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness" (1 Timothy 2:11, NASU). Paul's priority to Timothy in Ephesus, was not to see females restricted or limited in their spiritual growth; Paul's priority was to see the Ephesian females properly trained and educated.

Yet, while Paul's priority is to see the Ephesian females learn, in an appropriate manner, he issues a restriction: "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet" (1 Timothy 2:12, NASU). Almost all complementarians take the prohibition of 1 Timothy 2:12 to be a universal moratorium on females serving as leaders and teachers in the assembly. Liberal interpreters often take the prohibition of 1 Timothy 2:12 to be deutero-Pauline, and thus representative of circumstances two or three generations after Paul's death. Conservative egalitarians, however, who approach 1 Timothy 2:12 as authentically Pauline, are often seen to draw attention to the Greek verb *authentēō*, which is not the standard term for exercising authority. Indeed, as the KJV rendered 1 Timothy 2:12: "But I

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suffer not a woman to teach, nor **to usurp authority** over the man, but to be in silence.” This is an important clue that a specific circumstance is being addressed.

A scholastic lexicon like *BDAG* does define *authentēō* as “**to assume a stance of independent authority, give orders to, dictate to,**”⁷ followed by a more classical lexicon like *LS*, having “*to have full power over.*”⁸ *AMG* actually defines *authentēō* as being related to the noun “*authéntēs...murderer, absolute master, which is from autos...himself, and éntea (n.f.) arms, armor. A self-appointed killer with one’s own hand, one acting by his own authority or power.*”⁹ At one’s disposal are lexical definitions which would support how authority in general terms is *not* the issue Paul is addressing in 1 Timothy 2:12. The rather negative verb *authentēō* only appears in one place in the Greek Apostolic Scriptures (and not in the Greek Septuagint either), whereas the noun *exousia* and verb *exousiazō* are used throughout the Pauline letters to describe “authority” in general.¹⁰ In 1 Timothy 2:1, “all who are in authority” (NASU), is described using the term *huperochē*. Elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles, *exousias hupotassethai* is used to represent “authorities” in Titus 3:1.

If the verb *authentēō* actually means something along the lines of to usurp, domineer, or coerce, then 1 Timothy 2:12 is reflective of localized, First Century C.E. Ephesian circumstances and includes no universal prohibition on women having authority or teaching men in the assembly. There is, however, a specific prohibition on the Ephesian women usurping the position of recognized male leaders in their congregation, so that they as females can take their place and teach instead.

Yet, what does Paul say in 1 Timothy 2:13? Complementarians believe this supports a Creation order of males leading, and females following, but egalitarians would stress that a closer reading is required. As it appears in the NASU, “For it was Adam who was first **created**, and then Eve.” In the RSV, in notable contrast, this verse appears as, “For Adam was **formed** first, then Eve.” In Genesis 1:27, describing the creation of male and female, the Hebrew verb *bara*, was rendered in the

⁷ Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, third edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 150.

⁸ *LS*, 132.

⁹ Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 288.

¹⁰ Cf. *LS*, 276; *BDAG*, pp 352-354.

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Greek Septuagint as *poieō*, to make or to create. In Genesis 2:7-8, the Hebrew verb *yatzar*, to form or fashion, was rendered in the Greek Septuagint as *plassō*. AMG offers the fairly general definition of, “To form, fashion, mold, with reference to any soft substance, as a potter does the clay.”¹¹ In a classical context, the verb *plassō* means “generally, to mould and form by education, training” (LS).¹² The verb *plassō* is not the normative term for “create,” but instead speaks of the forming of the human person, most notably via education.

Why was Eve deceived in the Garden of Eden? “And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Timothy 2:14, NASU). Was Eve deceived by the serpent, because she was a female, and those of the female gender are less intelligent than those of the male gender? In the dialogue of Genesis 3:3, Eve tells the serpent, “God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die’” (NASU), actually adding to God’s word, which was that only eating the fruit was forbidden (Genesis 2:16-17). One might actually say that Eve was having to reason with the prohibition, demonstrating some degree of higher thought. Yet, the serpent deceived her with the word, “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5, NASU). Eve did not know what this meant.

What was Adam’s advantage over Eve? Was his advantage being male, and seemingly less susceptible to deception? Or was Adam’s advantage over Eve, one of Adam’s being formed first? Far from this being some kind of complementarian Creation order of males leading and females following—Adam had a greater understanding of who God was, what the Garden was, what the forbidden fruit was, what the dangers were of eating the forbidden fruit, and just more experience in growing in his knowledge and relationship of God and His Creation—than Eve had. *Adam was educationally formed first*. When it is recorded, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you...” (Genesis 3:17, NASU), Adam’s mistake was failing to use the situation of Eve having eaten the fruit—as she did not fully know what she did, being deceived—to correct her, informing her of what she had heard from the serpent and did wrong, and in immediately crying out to the Creator God for His mercy. Instead, Adam obviously wanted to eat the fruit (Genesis 3:6).

¹¹ Zodhiates, *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, 1166.

¹² LS, 643.

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Adam was formed first, and had more knowledge than Eve of the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit. Adam's mistake was in failing to convey more of his knowledge to Eve, resulting in Eve being not only deceived by the serpent—but in being under-formed or under-developed in her understanding of the Creation.

On the surface, in a version like the NASU, it seems to imply that a woman's salvation will come via motherhood: "But *women* will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint." Even the best complementarians know that a woman's eternal salvation and redemption from sins does not come from motherhood, especially as many women are barren and cannot have children. So, some will say that the sphere of a woman's salvation is intended to be motherhood, homemaking, and domestic affairs. However, when the clause *dia tēs teknogonias* is literally translated with the article, it becomes clear enough that 1 Timothy 2:15 is making a connection to Genesis 3:15: "and she shall be saved **through the child-bearing**, if they remain in faith, and love, and sanctification, with sobriety" (YLT).

The ultimate answer to the sin committed by Adam and Eve was, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Genesis 3:15, NASU). The salvation of woman was to be found not in the empty promises of the Ephesian false teaching, but instead through the Child-Bearing (1 Timothy 2:15, Grk.), meaning the Incarnation of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah, the Seed promised to crush the head of the serpent.

"Old Testament examples of women operating in leadership were intended to shame weak-willed men who should have been leading, but failed to do so."

Is it not true that when God raised up females as leaders, that it was only because there were no males who were willing to stand up and lead? Complementarians frequently conclude that examples witnessed of females in prophetic or leadership roles in the Tanach or Old Testament, are to be taken as isolated incidents when males were derelict in their responsibilities, and hence females had to be raised up, to at least partially show such males that they had failed.

A common example appealed to from the Tanach, of a female in a significant position of leadership, is the judge Deborah. In Judges 4:4

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she is labeled to be a *nevi'ah* or “prophetess,” who “was judging Israel” (*shoftah et-Yisrael*). Deborah is featured prominently in Judges chs. 4-5. It has to be fairly recognized how the period of the judges was a very complicated time in Ancient Israel, and that righteous men *or* women were quite scarce.

When other examples of female prophets are witnessed in the Scriptures, complementarians may be seen to stress how a figure like Huldah had a widely private, not public ministry (2 Kings 22:14-20). Anna the prophetess is depicted as fasting and praying in the Temple (Luke 2:36-27). Yet, complementarians also do tend to be reasonable enough to recognize how it is not as though God might use women; complementarians do recognize how God uses women, even if they choose to conclude that it is in relatively limited capacities.

Egalitarians should be honest enough with the record of Scripture to acknowledge that the examples of females serving as prophets and leaders up until the arrival of Yeshua of Nazareth and the First Century C.E., are piecemeal. In a pre-resurrection era example of Deborah, living in a staunchly patriarchal Ancient Near East, the opportunities for females to be raised up by God as leaders would almost only be witnessed when the standard male leaders were an abysmal failure. But, rather than taking Deborah’s word, “for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman” (Judges 4:9, NASU), as being an indictment against the males of the time, egalitarians would instead take it as being a prompt to such ancient patriarchalists that God will not only use women, but that in the future many more women would be used by Him.

Egalitarians properly raise the issue of what the intended trajectory of the people of God is, which complementarians often do not do. Egalitarians believe that there was an equality of the sexes lost at the Fall (Genesis 3:16), something restored by the work of Yeshua the Messiah (Galatians 3:28). Egalitarians also decisively believe in the prophetic oracle of Joel 2:28, “I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (NRSV), something which was not a dynamic in full play until the day of *Shavuot*/Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21). Only in the post-resurrection era, with the Holy Spirit being poured out on “all flesh,” would it be viable to see many more females empowered as leaders within the Body of Messiah—as most of the significant examples of women in leadership, are witnessed in the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament.

“While there is ontological equality of men and women in Christ, it is also clear that there are distinctions maintained in Scripture.”

Does Paul’s statement of Galatians 3:28 solely concern the universal access of salvation to all people of both genders? Galatians 3:28 is certainly a verse which has generated a wide number of conclusions over many centuries: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua” (NASU). Egalitarians do give a significant amount of importance to the claims of Galatians 3:28, and will conclude, based on their trajectorizing of Scripture, that Galatians 3:28 restores a gender equality lost at the Fall (Genesis 3:16). Egalitarians will not base all of their conclusions on “equal in value, open in opportunities” from this verse, but are witnessed to give Galatians 3:28 a significance that complementarians are not witnessed as giving it.

Complementarians, in their reading of Galatians 3:28, are seen to only stress how this verse states, “for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (ESV). Thus, the only matter that Paul is emphasizing is the equal access to salvation that all nationalities, social classes, and both genders have. Galatians 3:28 is not read by complementarians to represent the initiation of some new, post-resurrection era, where an equality of men and women lost at the Fall has now been restored.

There is significant background to Galatians 3:28, from both Second Temple Judaism and Greco-Roman classicism, which egalitarians consider in their evaluations for Galatians 3:28, leading them to conclude that an equality lost at the Fall has now been restored by the Messiah’s sacrifice and resurrection.

Paul’s argument in Galatians not that the natural ethnic, social or employment, and gender barriers and distinctions present among people all go away, because they do not. Instead, Paul’s argument is that a strong degree of unity should prevail, considering that *all human beings* are naturally sinners in the eyes of God and require the atonement of His Son for salvation. Jews are still Jews, and Greeks are still Greeks. Some have a high socio-economic status, and others a low socio-economic status. Males certainly do not stop being males, nor do females stop being females. But the Messiah and who He is, are to be the focus of one’s faith or spiritual experience, and all are to be unified around the common hope we have in Him.

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Paul's words, favoring this kind of "radical" unity for Believers in Yeshua, take on great significance when viewed against the backdrop of knowing that proselytes to Judaism were not often treated as equal members of the Synagogue. The Mishnah indicates a common occurrence, that "when he [the proselyte] prays in private, he says, 'God of the fathers of Israel.' And when he prays in the synagogue, he says, 'God of your fathers'" (m.*Bikkurim* 1:4).¹³ Paul's attitude runs completely contrary to this when he tells the Corinthians, a mixed group of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers, "our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1, NASU). The Patriarchs of Israel are considered to be the "ancestors" (NRSV) of the non-Jewish Believers, every bit as much as the Jewish Believers. Whether the redeemed in Yeshua be of physical Israel or not, all who look to the God of Israel partake of the great spiritual heritage of Israel, and are considered as though they participated in the Exodus. For as the Lord told Pharaoh, the plagues He dispensed upon Egypt were for the entire Earth to understand (Exodus 9:14).

The kind of unity of which Paul speaks in Galatians 3:28 had little precedence in either a First Century Jewish or Hellenistic context. One does not have to go that far to see that a common prayer in the Jewish *siddur*, often recited during morning prayers, follows the exact same categories of nationality, socio-economic status, and gender—and in the same order—that Paul lists in Galatians 3:28—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female—for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua" (TLV). A statement originally appearing in the Tosefta indicated,

"R. Judah says, 'A man must recite three benedictions every day: "Praised [be Thou, O Lord...] who did not make me a gentile; Praised [be Thou, O Lord...] who did not make me a boor; Praised [be Thou, O Lord...] who did not make me a woman" (t.*Berachot* 6:18).¹⁴

Based on these sentiments, the observant Jew proclaims, as it appears in a relatively modern resource like *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*,

¹³ Margaret Wenig Rubenstein and David Weiner, trans., in Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 167.

¹⁴ Jacob Neusner, ed., *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew With a New Introduction*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 1:42.

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Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast not made me a **heathen** [*nakri*].

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast not made me a **bondman** [*aved*].

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast not made me a **woman** [*ishah*].¹⁵

While men are to declare the third stanza, women are to instead declare, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe who hast made me according to thy will [she'asani k'retzunu]."16

To an egalitarian reader of Galatians 3:28, Paul counters and subverts all three of these categories, saying that to a significant degree that they are unimportant to the Lord, as all people have been affected by the death and resurrection of the Messiah (Galatians 3:26-27). *The work of the Lord overrides any over-inflated opinions that human beings have of themselves, or their presumed status.* A Jewish person, reading Paul's letter to the Galatians, should have had a very good idea about the kind of equality and unity Paul was advocating. At the same time, a non-Jewish Greek or Roman could have also been impacted by this as well. A statement attributed to Thales and Socrates is seen in the classical work *Vitae Philosophorum* (1.33), and says,

...that I was born a human being and not a beast, next, a man and not a woman, thirdly, a Greek and not a barbarian...¹⁷

Noting the distinctions seen in the traditional Jewish prayer, F.F. Bruce indicates in his Galatians commentary, "It is not unlikely that Paul himself had been brought up to thank God he was born a Jew and not a Gentile, a freeman and not a slave, a man and not a woman. If so, he takes up each of these three distinctions which had considerable importance to Judaism and affirms that in Christ they are all irrelevant."¹⁸ G. Walter Hansen also concludes in his Galatians commentary, how "This radical affirmation of unity and equality in

¹⁵ Joseph H. Hertz, ed., *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, revised (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1960), pp 19, 21; also Nosson Scherman and Meir Zlotowitz, eds., *Complete ArtScroll Siddur, Nusach Ashkenaz* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1984), 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁷ Richard N. Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary: Galatians*, Vol. 41 (Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 1990), 157.

¹⁸ F.F. Bruce, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 187.

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Christ is a deliberate rejection of the attitude expressed by the synagogue prayer in which the worshiper thanks God for not making him a Gentile, a slave or a woman.”¹⁹

Lest we think Paul is railing against his own Jewish heritage as somehow being meaningless, his remarks also affected some pagan Hellenistic views of distinctions among people as well. Paul desired a great unity among all human beings because of the sacrificial work of Yeshua the Messiah for sinners—Jewish and non-Jewish, slave and free, male and female—that as of his time would largely have not been considered possible in whatever sphere one was living. Yet, as special and unique creatures made in His image (Genesis 1:26; 9:6; James 3:9), every person has a great value which is to now be fully realized that Messiah Yeshua and His salvation have come! Surely, the fact that Paul is seen to directly subvert ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman prejudices in Galatians 3:28, should mean that Paul’s claim bears more significance than solely emphasizing universal availability of salvation. Egalitarians conclude that any restrictive instructions regarding the service of women in the assembly, is to be read as secondary, to the principal thrust of Galatians 3:28.

Is it not inevitable that an acceptance of an egalitarian ideology, with males and females serving as co-leaders, will later lead to an acceptance of homosexuality and the LGBTQ agenda? While it is not true of all complementarians in their interactions with egalitarians, many complementarians are witnessed to say things to the effect that if men and women serve as co-leaders of the home and the Body of Messiah, then the door has been opened wide for a later acceptance, or at least tolerance, of homosexuality. One does not have to go far in complementarian literature, to see this opinion expressed. In their short publication *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood*, John Piper and Wayne Grudem state the following:

“[W]e believe that by minimizing the differences in sexual roles, feminists [i.e., egalitarians] contribute to the confusion of sexual identity that, especially in the second and third generations, gives rise to more homosexuality in society. Some evangelicals who once

¹⁹ G. Walter Hansen, *IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 113; Payne, pp 84-85.

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disapproved of homosexuality have been carried over by their feminist arguments to the approval of faithful homosexual alliances.”²⁰

Here, two prominent evangelical complementarians, forthrightly conclude that evangelical egalitarians (who they pejoratively call “feminists”) who believe that there is a leveling of leadership roles in the post-resurrection era, are facilitating an acceptance of homosexuality and gay marriage. In their resource, they mention a variety of examples, of mainly academic Christian people—a number of whom were reared in conservative and evangelical homes—who are witnessed as having adopted an egalitarian position of men and women as equal leaders in the *ekklēsia*, and later are witnessed to have accepted homosexuality as a valid lifestyle.²¹ To be fair, they also recognize that there are evangelical egalitarians, who while believing in male and female co-leadership in the home and the Body of Messiah, also stand against homosexuality and the LGBTQ agenda. Yet, it is the conclusion of many evangelical complementarians that an egalitarian ideology of leadership roles among men and women, skews masculinity or femininity.

Ongoing discussions and debates between complementarians and egalitarians, certainly involve the implementation of either ideology in the contemporary, Twenty-First Century *ekklēsia*, confronting the negative forces of liberal post-modernism. However, traditional perspectives of “Biblical masculinity” being an active force, and “Biblical femininity” being a passive force, are not only seen to fluxuate between complementarians and egalitarians and their reading of Scripture—but can be said to be effected just as much by changing dynamics in the world economy. While traditionally the role of the man has been one of economic provider for the family, and traditionally the role of the woman has been to be a mother or homemaker—evangelical complementarians know that in the complex economy of the Twenty-First Century, fathers have to sometimes stay at home, and mothers have to go work. Some of that is simply because a father may have lost his job, but the mother can procure employment.

Egalitarians believe that a husband and a wife are to serve as co-leaders of the family, in a partnership marriage. In such a partnership, a husband and wife may need to make decisions for the provision and well-being of the family, where a father stays at home and a mother

²⁰ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood*, 64.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp 65-67.

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goes out to the workplace. Yet this too can be affected by changing factors in the economy, as many today work out of their home offices and/or have home-based businesses. There are decisions to be made by a husband and wife, that can only be determined on the case-by-case disposition of one's family. And, evangelical complementarians are certainly seen to be flexible and understanding regarding many of these matters.

Do masculinity and femininity get jettisoned, if a husband and a wife serve as co-equal partners, in a heterosexual marriage relationship? In an egalitarian partnership marriage, both a husband and a wife are to actively participate in the interests of the family, in terms of child rearing and economic income. In traditional complementarian models, where a father goes off to a job and brings home a paycheck, and a mother stays home and keeps house—how often does a father actively participate in the spiritual and emotional well being of his children? It cannot be avoided that traditional models where the husband and father is the sole provider of economic income, means that all of the pressure for paying bills is on his shoulders. And, what this too frequently manifests in, is that when a husband and father returns home from work, he is so exhausted that he has little or no time to pay attention to the needs of either his wife or children. His sole attention becomes focused on making money, or more likely, making ends meet.

Egalitarians stressing that a husband and wife need to share the responsibilities in leading the family, is something that must manifest in a father taking more interest in the needs of his children. And what is more important, the perceived status that comes from a husband and father being the sole “breadwinner” for the family, or a husband and father taking an active interest in the spiritual and emotional needs of his wife and children? An egalitarian partnership marriage will spread out more responsibilities between husband and wife in family affairs. Hopefully, children who are reared in such an environment can learn respect for the place of father and mother, and not be resentful or bitter because while their mother was at home, their father had to be away at work and on business trips all the time.

Many complementarians recognize that both a father and a mother have to take an active role in the interests of one's family, and that today traditional positions of the father going out to the workplace and the mother staying at home, are not always tenable. Far from an egalitarian partnership marriage skewing masculinity and femininity, an egalitarian partnership marriage can see that a father and a mother are both taking an interest in raising their children.

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The main concern issued by evangelical complementarians, is how it is witnessed that there are egalitarians who once opposed the homosexual lifestyle and gay marriage, who now accept its legitimacy. Is it inevitable that everyone who supports an egalitarian ideology of husband and wife as co-leaders of the family, and males and females serving together as leaders in the Body of Messiah, will tread such a path?

A leveling of the field for both men and women does not at all open the door to, and it certainly does not require, an acceptance of homosexual practice and gay marriage. There are many egalitarians, who would argue that while in the post-resurrection era, an equality lost in Eden (Genesis 3:16) has been restored by the work of Yeshua (Galatians 3:28), and that some traditional interpretations of passages designed to limit women should be reevaluated (1 Timothy 2:11-15), certainly affirm that the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament **absolutely prohibit homosexual practice** (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10; cf. Leviticus 18:22; 20:13).

Complications have erupted since the legalization of homosexual marriage in the United States in 2015, particularly among evangelical people who went through a process of transitioning from some form of complementarian to an egalitarian position regarding men and women, to then being challenged to “go further” and accept the legitimacy of homosexual marriage. More often than not, this has been spurred among those from the Millennial generation, and not older evangelical egalitarians. Complementarian critics of men and women serving together as leaders in the Body of Messiah, while recognizing that there might indeed be egalitarians who oppose homosexuality, have observed how “we have not seen a substantial presence of young egalitarians speak against same-sex marriage” (Owen Strachan).²² And indeed, to some extent, such complementarians would be correct, as egalitarian voices do not tend to *unite* in order to oppose the homosexual agenda.²³ Instead, what seems to be found is that (older) conservative theologians and scholars who are egalitarian, are usually known for their opposition to homosexual practice (among other sins) based on how they approach

²² Owen Strachan. (2015). *City Church and the Affirmation-only Gospel. The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. Retrieved 28 October, 2015, from <<http://cbmw.org>>.

²³ The only major resource I have seemingly found by egalitarians *directly* addressing whether an acceptance of females as leaders and teachers within the assembly, will inevitably facilitate homosexual acceptance, is: Catherine Clark Kroeger. “Does Belief in Women’s Equality Lead to an Acceptance of Homosexual Practice?” *Priscilla Papers* Vol. 18, No. 2, Spring 2004.

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and disagree with liberal handlings of Romans 1:26-27 or 1 Corinthians 6:9, which would often argue in favor of both passages speaking of either homosexual prostitution or pederasty. The egalitarian organization Christians for Biblical Equality (<http://cbeinternational.org>), is clear to emphasize in their Statement of Faith: “We believe in the family, celibate singleness, and faithful **heterosexual marriage** as God's design.” Yet, there are (mainly) younger people who have been involved with CBE, who have later capitulated to the homosexual agenda.

Why have there been various egalitarian people, favoring females as ordained leaders and teachers, who have later embraced homosexual intercourse as not being prohibited by the Scriptures, and gay marriage? Much of this is likely contingent on life circumstances which have affected each individual. Many younger Christian people from the Millennial generation, who have embraced homosexual legitimacy (although themselves being heterosexual), were not raised in liberal and permissive homes. Many of these young people were actually raised in fundamentalist and rather strict Christian homes, where complementarianism was enforced, the men were superior to the women, and the women were demeaned as inferiors.²⁴ Seeing a number of significant flaws, and perhaps even abuses at play, with women not being too encouraged to exercise their spiritual or intellectual gifts, once out of the home, such persons were naturally very open to evangelical egalitarian viewpoints of mutuality (Philippians 2:4-5; Ephesians 5:21) and examples of females in leadership in the Holy Scriptures. When these people embrace the concept of men and women being equals as leaders and teachers in the assembly, they tend to face a great deal of rejection, particularly from various complementarian denominations and institutions. It is usually from such rejection and dismissal that people can later go from being egalitarian in terms of men and women in the assembly, *to then* feeling enabled to consider liberal theological perspectives on homosexuality in the Bible.

The real issue in view is not an egalitarian ideology that upholds heterosexual marriage of one man and one woman, as what is only permitted by the Holy Scriptures. The real issue in view is how evangelical complementarians have been seen to unnecessarily harass and reject those who have crossed the aisle from a complementarian to

²⁴ Some of this is detailed, in various degrees, in Rachel Held Evans, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood: How a Liberated Woman Found Herself Sitting on Her Roof, Covering Her Head, and Calling Her Husband “Master”* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012).

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egalitarian ideology, rather than maintain a reasonable and respectful tone with them.

“The teachings of the New Testament are clear: the man is to be the head or leader of the household. Only some creative, theological gymnastics can get around this certain teaching of the Scriptures.”

Is it not true from the Holy Scriptures that a husband is to be sole leader of the family? In the complementarian theological schema, the concept frequently labeled as “male headship” principally concerns the husband as the sole leader of the family. A variety of Scriptural passages do tend to be invoked as evidence in favor of such male leadership (Genesis 1-3; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7). Many while many complementarian theologians and examiners have been forced to reckon with egalitarian approaches to these passages, complementarian laypersons—many of whom may be seen to lead small group Bible studies, or teach Sunday school classes—have usually not.

Intelligent Bible readers of all varieties should be aware of how each of these passages have specific settings in mind. Genesis chs. 1-3 obviously involve the creation of Adam and Eve as the first two human beings, the Fall, and the effects of the curse that ensued, which involved severe tensions erupting between male and female (Genesis 3:16, Heb.). Both Colossians 3:18-19 and Ephesians 5:21-33 were written to Believers in Asia Minor, with the latter instruction including more details than the former. While many complementarians tend to focus on the submission of a wife to a husband (Ephesians 5:22, 33b), there is far more instruction delivered regarding the required actions of a husband to his wife (Ephesians 5:25, 28-29). 1 Peter 3:1-7 does involve a wife’s submission to her husband, but does this speak of a family of Believers or a family where the wife is a Believer and the husband is a non-Believer? Complementarian examiners do widely recognize that the submission in view in 1 Peter 3:1-7 concerns the right behavior a believing wife should demonstrate to a non-believing husband.

Egalitarian interpreters would be keen to emphasize that there are details in each of these passages which need to be considered, before a proper application can be made for the modern-day *ekklēsia*. While egalitarians hardly oppose husbandly leadership in the family, they are

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definitely found to support wifely leadership in the family as well, something which is to carry over to the assembly. Egalitarians are firmly guided by an ethos that the contemporary Body of Messiah **needs to be led by strong men and strong women together**, and are of the position that complementarianism frequently results in families and communities composed of strong men and weak women.

Should not an egalitarian ideology be opposed because it erases the place of the husband and father as the head of the family? All forms of complementarianism strongly stress the ideology known as “male headship,” which really means male leadership. Evangelical egalitarians would certainly agree with complementarians, in that husbands have various responsibilities as they involve leadership, protection, and provision within the family—but would also stress that wives too have a part to play in family leadership, protection, and provision within the family. One-hundred percent of all leadership responsibilities should not be placed upon the husband.

It is to be seen, though, that egalitarians almost universally dismiss the concept of “male headship,” as it is commonly labeled, and have some different approaches to passages such as 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:23. This widely involves egalitarian proposals of the Greek term *kephalē*, “head,” meaning something akin to “source” or “origin,” and **not** “leader.”

1 Corinthians 11:3²⁵ In 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 the Apostle Paul opens his argument about heads and hair on men and women in the assembly, in what has become a very dissected and debated statement in recent theological discussion. Not all are agreed that “covered” and “uncovered” are, actually, related to head garments, but instead ancient hairstyles that communicated either respectability or lewdness.²⁶

1 Corinthians 11:3 appears in most English Bibles along the lines of, **“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ”** (NASU). 1 Corinthians 11:3 is frequently viewed from the perspective of a hierarchical order to be present between God, the Messiah, males, and

²⁵ The material here has been adapted from the author’s commentary *1 Corinthians for the Practical Messianic*.

²⁶ For a specific review of that continuing issue, consult the Messianic Apologetics FAQ, “Headcovering Garments.”

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females.²⁷ A frequent conclusion drawn is that Yeshua the Son is permanently (or even eternally) subordinate to God the Father (often based on 1 Corinthians 15:28), and that females are permanently subordinate to males.

Within the past several decades, in evangelical examination of 1 Corinthians 11:3, there has been considerable disagreement as to whether Paul is even presenting some kind of hierarchical order. If a hierarchical order involving God and human beings were the issue, then why does 1 Corinthians 11:3 not include some kind of descending or ascending order, such as: God, Messiah, males, females? 1 Corinthians 11:3 notably **does not say**, “God is the *leader/authority* of Christ, Christ is the *leader/authority* of every man, and the man is the *leader/authority* of a woman.” Instead, what is encountered are three pairs of relationships expressed, which are intended to convey something to the Corinthian audience:

*hoti pantos andros hē kephalē ho Christos estin, kephalē de gunaikos ho anēr,
kephalē de tou Christou ho Theos*

Within discussions and debates over 1 Corinthians 11:3, no factor has become more pronounced than over the correct meaning of the Greek term *kephalē*, which would literally mean “head.” Obviously, in the various uses which follow in 1 Corinthians 11:4-16, that *kephalē* or “head” pertains to the physical head of a man or woman is contextually obvious. Strong debates take place in contemporary scholarship over what *kephalē* means in 1 Corinthians 11:3, specifically whether it means “authority” or “leader”—as the term “head” frequently can mean in English—or whether it means something else, particularly “source” or “origin,” akin to the “headwaters” of a river. An unambiguous term that Paul could have used, if “authority” were expressly intended in 1 Corinthians 11:3, is *exousia*, appearing in 1 Corinthians 11:10. Another term which could have been employed, witnessed in 1 Corinthians for sure (1 Corinthians 2:6, 8), is *archōn*, “a ruler, commander, chief, captain” (LS).²⁸

Most people you will encounter today, will just assume that there is no other meaning for “head” than “authority” or “leader”—especially

²⁷ There are indeed versions which reflect this, including: “But I want you to understand that Christ is supreme over every man, the husband is supreme over his wife, and God is supreme over Christ” (Good News Bible); “In a marriage relationship, there is authority from Christ to husband, and from husband to wife. The authority of Christ is the authority of God” (The Message).

²⁸ LS, 122.

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given widespread English usage of the term “head” akin to “leader.” However, a brief survey of some scholastic examination of 1 Corinthians 11:3 has demonstrated greater variance than the average reader may know. Some general resources for popular distribution, such as the 1996 *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, certainly does include some deliberation over whether or not *kephalē* means “authority over” or “source,” with “source” definitely preferred.²⁹ But, most of the discussion and debate regarding *kephalē* as “source” or “origin” is constrained to academic venues. The unabridged Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie lexicon, inaccessible to most, does include the definition “source, origin” for *kephalē*.³⁰ More accessible is the intermediate Liddell-Scott lexicon, which does state how *kephalē* can mean “the head or source of a river” (LS).³¹

There has actually been a considerable amount of ink spilled defending the view that *kephalē* should be viewed as “source” in some key Pauline texts describing gender roles,³² and strong rebuttals issued holding to the position that *kephalē* means “authority.”³³ Fairer discussions as to whether or not *kephalē* means “authority” or “source,” are more often to be found in 1 Corinthians commentaries, among other studies (also notably including commentaries on Ephesians 5:23), because the textual usage of *kephalē* has to be evaluated. As is seen, there are a fair number of examiners who are in agreement that *kephalē* does not at all have to mean “authority” in 1 Corinthians 11:3—and this will notably include complementarian theologians, who are widely disfavorable toward women serving on a more level playing field with men in the Body of Messiah.

F.F. Bruce was a relatively early commentator who remarked, “By **head** in this context we are probably to understand not, as has frequently been suggested, ‘chief’ or ‘ruler’ but rather ‘source’ or ‘origin’—a sense well attested for Gk *kephalē*.”³⁴ Leon Morris would also

²⁹ Walter C. Kaiser, Peter H. Davids, F.F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Brauch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), pp 599-602.

³⁰ *BibleWorks 9.0: LSJM Lexicon (Unabridged)*. MS Windows 7 Release. Norfolk: BibleWorks, LLC, 2011. DVD-ROM.

³¹ LS, 430.

³² “1 Corinthians 11:2-3: Head/Source Relationships,” in Philip B. Payne *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), pp 117-139; specifically his fifteen reasons on why *kephalē* does not exclusively mean “authority.”

³³ Wayne Grudem, “The Meaning of *Kephalē* (‘Head’): A Response to Recent Studies,” in John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), pp 425-468.

³⁴ F.F. Bruce, *New Century Bible: 1 and 2 Corinthians* (London: Oliphants, 1971), 103.

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have to indicate in his commentary, "'Head' was used of the 'source' (as 'head' of a river)...Paul is saying that the woman derives her being from man (Gn. 2:21-22), as man does from Christ and Christ from God. But we must be cautious in pressing these words, for none of the relationships mentioned is exactly the same as either of the others."³⁵ And other commentators, who to various degrees do believe in a hierarchical order present in 1 Corinthians 11:3, have had to acknowledge how *kephalē* could mean "source" or "origin."³⁶ In his 1994 volume in the *NIV Application Commentary* series, Craig Blomberg usefully indicates, "The order of the three parts of verse 3...proves significant. Some commentators stress that the sequence does not set up a chain of command, as if Paul had written, 'The head of the woman is man, the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.'" He goes on to conclude, though, "the vast majority of all church history has understood 'head' as 'authority'...[W]eighted arguments are needed to overthrow it."³⁷ The considerable bulk of data which has been put together, by mainly evangelical examiners, in support of the term *kephalē* meaning "source" or "origin," has been witnessed in the 2000s and 2010s.³⁸

While lexical debates over the meaning of the term *kephalē* will probably never end, what is notably changed if *kephalē* in 1 Corinthians 11:3 does not mean "authority" or "leader," as it has been traditionally approached? Gordon D. Fee draws out in his commentary how when *kephalē* is approached as "source" in 1 Corinthians 11:3, the relationships of the different parties, with one originating from another, are necessarily highlighted:

³⁵ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 149.

³⁶ Cf. David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 181.

³⁷ Craig Blomberg, *NIV Application Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 209.

³⁸ For a summary of views surrounding the term *kephalē*, consult C.C. Kroeger, "Head," in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), pp 375-377; Anthony C. Thiselton, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp 812-822; Alan F. Johnson, "A Meta-Study of the Debate over the Meaning of 'Head' (*Kephalē*) in Paul's Writings," *Priscilla Papers* Issue 20:4, Autumn 2006; Lynn H. Cohick, "Headship," in Joel B. Green, ed. et. al., *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), pp 349-350; Richard S. Cervin, "On the Significance of *Kephalē* (Head): A Study of the Abuse of One Greek Word," *Missing Voices: A special edition journal of Christians for Biblical Equality* 2014.

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“The metaphor itself is often understood to be hierarchical, setting up structures of authority. But nothing in the passage suggests as much; in that the only appearance of the word *exousia* (‘authority’) refers to the woman’s own authority (v. 10). Moreover, vv. 11-12 explicitly qualify vv. 8-9 so that they will *not* be understood in this way. Indeed, the metaphorical use of *kephalē* to mean ‘chief’ or ‘the person of the highest rank’ is rare in Greek literature—so much so that even though the Hebrew word *rō’s* often carried this sense, the Greek translators of the LXX, who ordinarily used *kephalē* to translate *rō’s* when the physical ‘head’ was intended, almost never did so when ‘ruler’ was intended....Paul’s understanding of the metaphor...and almost certainly the only one the Corinthians would have grasped, is ‘head’ as ‘source,’ especially ‘source of life’...Thus Paul’s concern is not hierarchical (who has authority over whom), but relational (the unique relationships that are predicated on one’s being the source of the other’s existence).”³⁹

With physical head ornamentation on men and women to be discussed in the verses which follow, “the man is the head/*kephalē* of a woman” expressing origins, necessarily directs people to how Eve came from Adam (1 Corinthians 11:8), and how there were gender distinctions to be properly maintained in the Body of Messiah, although there is notably also an interdependence of both genders (1 Corinthians 11:11-12). If particular sorts of physical head ornamentation conveyed an inappropriate message for the assembly—such as men identifying as homosexuals or females as prostitutes—than an affirmation on where human beings come from, and what they stand in relation to, should be in order. As Anthony C. Thiselton directs in his commentary,

“Paul’s concern is not with subordination but with gender distinction. He expresses no less disquiet (probably indeed more) about men whose style is effeminate with possible hints of a quasihomosexual blurring of male gender than about women who likewise reject the use of signals of respectable and respected gender distinctiveness.”⁴⁰

Of course, concurrent with woman originating from man, would be how *kephalē* concerns the relationship of Yeshua the Son to God the Father. While the Son is certainly witnessed in other passages as being submissive to the Father, particularly involving His agency—is the Son the Father’s permanent subordinate, and possibly a lesser supernatural

³⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp 502-503.

⁴⁰ Thiselton, 805.

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being than He, rather than His equal (cf. Philippians 2:6)? This does not need to be a conclusion drawn from 1 Corinthians 11:3. When *kephalē* is approached as “source” or “origin,” the statement “Messiah is the *kephalē* of every man” concerns the Messiah’s role in the Creation of Adam. When *kephalē* is approached as “source” or “origin,” the statement “God is the *kephalē* of Messiah” is more appropriately to be approached as “The Godhead is the source of Messiah,” given the presence of the definite article in *ho Theos*, and would be appropriately viewed as the Messiah’s Incarnation.

With *kephalē* approached as “source” or “origin” in 1 Corinthians 11:3, rather than some sort of hierarchical relationship involving God-Messiah-males-females, we instead see three pairs of relationships present, both beginning and ending with an emphasis on the Messiah. It begins with the place of the Messiah in creation, the origin of woman from man, and it ends with the place of the Messiah in His Incarnation and redemption. Between the Messiah as Creator and Redeemer sit the man and the woman, who indeed have Divinely-granted differences of gender. Evangelical egalitarians, who do interpret the Scriptures as presenting a trajectory of a level playing field for men and women as co-leaders in the family and the Body of Messiah, do not at all conclude that the Bible presents men and women as eventually merging into some kind of unisex. Woman does originate from man, but both genders are interconnected (1 Corinthians 11:11).

A rendering of 1 Corinthians 11:3, with all possibilities represented, is offered by Thiselton in his commentary: “However, I want you to understand that while Christ is preeminent (or *head? source?*) for man, man is foremost (or *head? source?*) in relation to woman, and God is preeminent (or *head? source?*) in relation to Christ.”⁴¹ The aptly titled *Source New Testament* by A. Nyland actually does have, “Now, I want you to know that the source of every man is the Anointed One, the source of woman is man, and the source of the Anointed One is God,”⁴² for 1 Corinthians 11:3. A recognition that *kephalē* can indeed mean “source” or “origin,” as such *ho Theos* or “the Godhead” is the origin of the Messiah’s Incarnation, should lead to 1 Corinthians 11:3 being legitimately approached as, **“But I want you to understand that the**

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 800.

⁴² A. Nyland, trans., *The Source New Testament* (Australia: Smith and Stirling Publishing, 2007), 323.

source of every man is Messiah, and the source of the woman is the man, and the source of Messiah is the Godhead” (my translation).⁴³

The advantage of approaching *kephalē* from the perspective of it being “source” or “origin” in 1 Corinthians 11:3, is how it would decisively place the discussion of head ornamentation on men and women, within the venue of Creation-humankind-redemption. The relationship of man and woman in the Body of Messiah, involves a wider place for humanity’s relationship with the Messiah who created them, the same Messiah who took on humanity to be sacrificed for their sins. As Philip B. Payne excellently summarizes in his resource *Man and Woman, One in Christ*,

“‘God is the [*kephalē*] of Christ’ anchors Paul’s concern in the Godhead. This most naturally refers to Christ’s source as from God in the incarnation...This explains the order of these three [*kephalē*] (source) relationships as chronological: the creation of man, the creation of woman, and the incarnation...Preceding the statement, ‘the man is the source of woman,’ is an affirmation of Christ’s role in creation as the source of every man. Following it is an affirmation of Christ’s role in redemption, since this is implied by the reference to God as the [*kephalē*] (source) of Christ in the incarnation. This bracketing suggests that Paul desired the Corinthians to view the relationship of man and woman in light of two pivotal events, creation and redemption. These two pivotal events are the keys to understanding natural and special revelation. The creation of humankind in the image of God and God’s provision for redemption through his very Son provide the two pillars that uphold both the value of human life and the respect that people should show to each other.”⁴⁴

Ephesians 5:23 Ephesians 5:23 appears in most Bibles as, **“For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body”** (NASU). Many read this passage as speaking of the Messiah’s leadership of the *ekklēsia*, and hence also of the husband’s leadership of his wife. Your average layreader of Ephesians 5:23, with some minimal access to original language tools, might be able to access a resource like the *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, and would see a definition like the following for the Greek term *kephalē*: “Metaphorically of persons, i.e, the head, chief, one to whom others are subordinate, e.g., the husband in

⁴³ Other passages to be considered, where *kephalē* appears, would include: Ephesians 1:21-22; 5:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 2:10.

⁴⁴ Payne, pp 138-139.

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relation to his wife.”⁴⁵ Upon seeing a definition like this, the issue is closed; the husband is the leader of the wife.

While the term *kephalē* meaning “source” or “origin,” has doubtlessly been met with controversy—what might viewing *kephalē* as “source” or “origin” mean for Ephesians 5:23? If you can believe it, in the 2007 edition of *God’s Game Plan: The Athlete’s Bible* (HCSB), a study Bible published by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), one actually finds the following annotation made for Ephesians 5:23:

“The word ‘head’ when used today has the sense of ‘ruler’ or ‘authority.’ However, in Greek when ‘head’ is used in a metaphorical sense as it is here, it also means ‘origin’ as in the ‘source (head) of a river.’ Woman has her origins in man (Gen. 2:18-23) just as the church has its origins in Christ.”⁴⁶

The 1996 compilation *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, a resource intended for the investigative layperson, also expresses the position that *kephalē* should be approached as “source” for a proper understanding of the issues of Ephesians 5:23:

“Besides its literal, physical meaning (‘head of man or beast’), *kephalē* had numerous metaphorical meanings, including that of ‘source.’ It is this meaning that seems most suited to the texts...in which the relationship of husband and wife (or man and woman) is addressed.

“[There is an]...appeal made to Genesis 2, where the woman is created from the man...Paul...reminds them that, according to God’s design, the man is the source of the woman’s being; they were created for each other and belong together, as Ephesians 5:31, citing Genesis 2:24, underlines. Similarly (and here begins the analogy between husband/wife and Christ/church), Christ is the *kephalē* (‘source’) of the church’s life (Eph 5:23). His relation to the church is not expressed in ‘authority’ language, but in ‘source’ language.”⁴⁷

When Ephesians 5:23 is approached from the perspective, “For the man is the source of the woman” (my translation), with the origins of woman in man emphasized (Genesis 2:23), then it serves to highlight the appeal made by Paul, to those in Asia Minor, that husbands treat

⁴⁵ Zodhiates, *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, 860.

⁴⁶ *God’s Game Plan: The Athlete’s Bible 2007*, HCSB (Nashville: Serendipity House Publishers, 2007), 1149.

⁴⁷ Peter H. Davids, F.F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Branch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 641.

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their wives the same as their own bodies: “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Messiah also *does* the [assembly]” (Ephesians 5:28-29, NASU). If Adam was the originator of Eve, and indeed declared “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23, NASU), then this served as an indication of how valuable she was to him! Husbands have to look at their wives in the exact same way, and approach them with the utmost care, respect, and love. Unfortunately, history is replete with examples in religious history, both Jewish and Christian, where the exact opposite has taken place. As the commentary in *Hard Sayings of the Bible* further describes,

“Husbands were of course expected to have erotic regard for their wives. But within a culture in which women were often not more than doormats on which male supremacy could wipe its feet, and in a religious setting where Jewish males thanked God daily that he had not made them a Gentile, a slave or a woman—in such a context erotic regard for the wife more often than not became a means of self-gratification and control over the wife. That position of superiority is daringly challenged...”⁴⁸

Within the First Century Mediterranean, in either a Jewish or Greco-Roman context, women were not often looked at with the highest esteem. Frequently, wives were viewed as being nothing more than the means by which a husband’s sexual needs could be fulfilled, and at best wives were those who cleaned house, cooked meals, and raised children. *Wives were frequently ridiculed and abused.* It would have been absolutely scandalous in many settings to tell husbands to look at their wives in the same way as they would look at their own bodies (Ephesians 5:28-29)! The inevitable result of this, is that husbands were to look at their wives as their equals. Add to this the likelihood that in many First Century marriages, husbands were fifteen to twenty years older than their wives—and by virtue of their age having more life experience—and there is some significant subversion of worldly ideas present here.

Today in much of complementarianism, “the husband is the head of the wife” (Ephesians 5:23, NASU) means that the husband is to lead the family in a manner tempered by love and beneficence, per the model of the Messiah. There are complementarian families where the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 642.

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husband really does care for his wife and children. There are other complementarian families where the husband leads as an autocrat, and where he would not treat his wife the same as his own body.

The advantage of viewing *kephalē* as “source” in Ephesians 5:23, and its association with Ephesians 5:28-29 is self-obvious. A husband who approaches his wife the same as he would approach himself, is going to love his wife, cherish her, value her, and take her needs into definite consideration as it concerns the well-being of the family. A husband who approaches his wife the same as he would approach himself, is going to see that his wife is his most valued partner and ally, and will appreciate her counsel and advice—not to mention the fact that the effort will be expelled to insure that there is family cohesion and harmony. These are not always the virtues witnessed in complementarian marriages, but they are most frequently found in egalitarian partnership marriages.

“In spite of the compromising trend that promotes a doctrine of ‘mutual submission,’ godly wives are supposed to submit to their husbands as an act of obedience to God.”

What do complementarians frequently mean by emphasizing “wifely submission”? A complementarian ideology tends to be marked by its stress on the required submission of a wife to her husband, which is supposed to be reflective of the submission of the *ekklēsia* to the Lord. Complementarianism is also seen to emphasize how the submission of a wife to her husband is the proper result of a husband who models the sacrificial leadership and love of the Messiah. A complementarian ideology is based within Ephesians 5:22-33:

- **a wife is to submit to her husband, as the assembly is to submit to the Messiah:** “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands” (Ephesians 5:22-24, ESV).
- **husbands are to love and cherish their wives, nurturing them, modeling the service of the Savior:** “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having

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cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body" (Ephesians 5:25-30, ESV).

- **the union of one man and one woman is to teach God's people something about the mystery of the union of the assembly and the Messiah:** "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' [Genesis 2:24]. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband" (Ephesians 5:31-33, ESV).

It needs to be appropriately recognized that even though complementarianism is seen to widely stress the submission of a wife to her husband, that that such submission is to be reciprocated by the husband demonstrating love, care, and deep concern for the well being of his wife. A domineering or autocratic husband is hardly going to be facilitating the spiritual sanctification of his wife (Ephesians 5:26-27). To complementarianism, a wife's submission to her husband is to be an act of service to the Lord (Ephesians 5:24). Evangelical complementarians would not expect a wife, in her submission to her husband, to do anything that is contrary to the will and ways of God. Husbands are human beings, and as such are prone to error and often subject to the effects of sin.

Egalitarian criticism of a complementarian ideology, is often rooted in what is believed to be an inappropriate, one-way submission of a wife to a husband. Rather than loving and cherishing his wife, egalitarians frequently conclude that complementarianism promotes a husband treating his wife as an inferior, which will then give rise to all kinds of spousal abuse.

Egalitarians are too quick at times to respond to the complementarian model of one-way submission of a wife to a husband, without recognizing what at least some complementarians are trying to achieve in emphasizing male leadership in the home. In many complementarian church environments today, husbands and fathers

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take little or no interest or care in the affairs of the home. These husbands and fathers go to work, they bring in a paycheck, they come home, and they play absolutely no role in nurturing a loving relationship with their wives, nor do they take any interest in raising or disciplining their children—much less take any role in the spiritual well being of members of their families. In such a framework—where husbands and fathers minimally participate in family life—wives and mothers have to necessarily take a huge degree of responsibility in seeing important decisions made for the family, involving not only the daily responsibilities of child rearing, but also care for the spiritual well being of children, seeing that they are involved in a local faith community. Complementarians are correct to chastise and admonish husbands and fathers who are entirely passive in their marriages, and who leave their wives to do almost one-hundred percent of the child rearing and home management.

What egalitarians are seen to frequently come against, with complementarians often telling wives to submit to their husbands, is that husbands, by virtue of them being male, get to make all of the decisions for the family—usually without discussing significant matters with their wives. There are too many instances in complementarian families where the husband makes all of the decisions for the family, and once the decision is made and implemented, then his wife is expected to go along with what her husband has chosen. Many complementarians believe that females are too emotional, insecure, and unstable—with males being logical, practical, and reasonable. Many complementarians have been seen to say that it is not only irresponsible, but actually non-Biblical, for a husband to consider the advice, opinions, and counsel of his wife. And, all of us have probably seen married couples, where the husband clearly makes all, or at least most, of the decisions for the family—without considering the views of his wife, but perhaps instead considering the views of male friends—and this has resulted in considerable resentment and bitterness building up from the wife toward the husband. At the very least, it may require marriage counseling, but in far too many cases it actually does result in separation and divorce.

One of the reasons why many people cross the aisle from complementarianism to egalitarianism, is that they do not frequently witness husbands serve their wives with humility, much less husbands treating their wives as they would their own bodies (Ephesians 5:28). Instead, what is too frequently witnessed in complementarian venues, is an emphasis of the submission of the wife to the husband, with the

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husband as the sole leader of the family, often left to do as he pleases. Seeing much of the abuse which can and does take place in complementarian marriages, those who wish to see love of husband to wife *and* wife to husband, and honor and respect, to prevail, find egalitarian models of mutual service and submission to be very appealing.

What do egalitarians frequently mean by emphasizing “mutual submission”? An egalitarian ideology tends to be marked by its stress on what is frequently labeled “mutual submission.” This is something that not only involves the submission of a wife to her husband, but it is also something that involves the submission of a husband to his wife. An egalitarian ideology is based within Ephesians 5:21-33:

- **members of the assembly are to be in submission to one another:** “Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21, NRSV).
- **a wife is to submit to her husband, as the assembly is to submit to the Messiah:** “Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands” (Ephesians 5:22-24, NRSV).
- **a husband is to submit to his wife, loving and cherishing her, modeling the service of the Savior who gave up His life for the assembly:** “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body” (Ephesians 5:25-30, NRSV).
- **the union of one man and one woman is to teach God’s people something about the mystery of the union of the assembly and the Messiah:** “For this reason a man will

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leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' [Genesis 2:24]. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband" (Ephesians 5:31-33, NRSV).

The main difference between egalitarians and complementarians, is that complementarians start their reading of submission in Ephesians 5:22, and egalitarians start their reading of submission in Ephesians 5:21: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (NIV). Other key passages for egalitarians include Philippians 2:4, "do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (NASU), and Romans 12:10, "love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor" (NRSV).

A mutual submission where brothers and sisters in the Lord look out for one another, and consider the place of one another, is believed by egalitarians to be *the answer* to stopping suspicion, rivalry, bitterness, resentment, mistrust, and disrespect of persons toward one another in the Body of Messiah. Mutual submission promotes respect, honor, deference, interdependence, interreliance, and a pooling of the gifts, talents, and skills of men and women in the Body of Messiah for the work of God's Kingdom.

Mutual submission, while required to be demonstrated toward brothers and sisters generally toward one another, is most especially required to be demonstrated specifically of a wife to her husband *and* a husband to his wife. There are too many examples throughout contemporary evangelical complementarianism, where husbands make decisions without considering the thoughts of their wives—and where marital discord and tensions result. An egalitarian framework of mutual submission and decision making by the joint consultation and consensus of husband and wife together, should be seen as something which is to harbor far more cooperation, love, trust, and respect.

While it can actually be witnessed that there are areas of agreement between egalitarians and complementarians, egalitarians are widely seen to oppose the concept of "male headship," meaning "male leadership," offering an alternative approach to Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is the [source/origin] of the wife, as Christ also is the [source/origin] of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23, NASU modified). Egalitarians frequently conclude that the Greek *kephalē*, literally "head," does not mean "leader," but instead means "source" or "origin." The man being the source or origin of the

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woman in Ephesians 5:23, highlights the significance of Eve originating from Adam. Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Genesis 2:23, NASU). Egalitarians conclude that if a husband looks at his wife as though she originated from him, far from looking at her as his inferior, she should be greatly loved, cherished, and nurtured. Per the example of the Messiah as Savior (Ephesians 5:25-27), a husband should be willing to die for the needs of his wife. A husband needs to decisively treat and love his wife, the same as he would treat and love himself (Ephesians 5:28-29). Such will naturally lead to greater unity and tranquility in a marriage.

Does an egalitarian model of a husband and wife in mutual submission to one another, eventually see the wife become the sole leader of the home? This is an accusation frequently made by complementarians. An egalitarian model does not at all dismiss the necessary leadership of a husband and father within the family; husbands definitely need to play an active role in the lives of their wives and children, looking out for their well being, both material and spiritual. An egalitarian model would be seen to uplift the leadership of a wife and mother within the family, and would stress that significant decisions for the family should not be made exclusively by the husband, but by the mutual consensus of the husband and wife together, after significant discussion of an issue or matter. All of us have probably witnessed various scenes or incidents in religious settings, or from our interactions with various friends or extended family members, where primary male leadership has resulted in the distinct concerns and needs of females being completely disregarded. Egalitarians want the concerns and needs of all in the Body of Messiah, and in the family, to be taken into consideration—because they believe that it will result in a more unified, cohesive, and effective collective unity.

Husbands and wives regularly communicating with one another on the affairs of the home, expressing their close needs and concerns with one another, and praying with one another in unity for the deep seated issues of the other, would be obvious forms of mutual submission and uplifting that complementarians would be seen to widely endorse.

For many complementarian readers of Ephesians 5:21-33, the issue they have is not so much with a mutual submission model where the feelings of both men and women in the Body of Messiah are taken into consideration (Ephesians 5:21-22), even with consideration of others’ needs extended to other parties (Ephesians 6:1-9). The issue that complementarian frequently have, is how this is worked out on a wider

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level in the relationship that the *ekklēsia* has to the Messiah (Ephesians 5:24). Within a mutual submission framework, not only would the *ekklēsia* be seen to submit to the Messiah, but the Messiah would be seen to submit to the *ekklēsia*. How is this possible? Does this mean that God Himself actually has to do what the assembly tells God to do? **This would be a complete and total misunderstanding**, because the text of Ephesians 5:25-26 specifies the major act of submission performed by the Messiah to the *ekklēsia*:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the [assembly] **and gave Himself up for her**, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word” (NASU).

In his book *As Christ Submits to the Church*, Alan G. Padgett appeals to the Philippians 2:6-11 hymn, as well as Ephesians 5:25-26, to support the view that the Messiah actually is seen to have submitted to the *ekklēsia* in His ultimate acts of humility and service, witnessed in His sacrificial death:

“[I]n the Christ hymn in Philippians 2...we read that, even though Jesus was ‘in the form of God,’ he did not hold onto his godly authority but humbled himself and took up ‘the form of a slave.’ He ‘became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross’ (2:6-8). The key question here is, to whom did Jesus become a slave? To whom did Jesus submit? The text itself does not say, and any specific answer will be speculative. For our purposes, what is important is the parallelism of the two phrases in verse 7: ‘taking the form of a slave’ and ‘being born in human likeness.’ In becoming incarnate, the Son also freely takes up the role of a servant. This role is, however, only a temporary one, for now Jesus is the highly exalted Lord of all. And in the larger context of the chapter, Jesus’ example becomes the basis for the teaching about mutual submission among believers in Philippians 2:1-4.

“Is it true that there is a mutual submission between Christ and the church? Does Christ ever submit to the church? The answer of the New Testament is yes. Jesus submits to the church by freely becoming a servant in his earthly ministry, especially in his passion and death for us. This is a mutual submission, not a permanent and external subordination. This loving service by Christ for humans can be found by those with eyes to see in Ephesians 5 as well. After calling for husbands to love their wives, Paul writes that this should be done ‘as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her’ (5:25). Jesus makes his bride holy and washes her ‘with the word,’ which makes her clean (5:26, a reference to being cleansed from sin). Here we find an echo of the Gospel narratives, in which Christ takes up the role of a servant in order to wash away or redeem us from the

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stain of sin. I have argued that this self-giving love, even unto death on a cross, is in fact that sort of mutual submission that Paul enjoins in Ephesians 5:21. The consistent teaching of the New Testament is that Jesus has indeed taken up the role of a servant out of love for us. A relationship of mutual submission exists between Christ and his bride, the church; therefore we should now love and serve one another out of reverence for this Lord who is also a servant."⁴⁹

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 serves as a concrete example of how a husband and a wife should submit to one another. Paul's instruction of 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, describes how both a husband and a wife, are to come to a mutual agreement and consensus in their sexual relations. This most especially concerns seasons when a husband and wife abstain from having sexual intercourse, with the explicit intention of using such time for prayer:

"The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Corinthians 7:3-5, NASU).

Egalitarians certainly think that 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 is a serious text for considering the relationship of a husband and wife—and not only for the mutual honor and respect they are to demonstrate to the other's body—but the mutual partnership they are to have in marriage.

In 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, the Apostle Paul speaks very favorably of heterosexual intercourse, for far more reasons than just procreation, as statements from major figures like Philo (*Special Laws* 3.36, 113) or Josephus (*Wars of the Jews* 2.160-161) demonstrate how many in Second Temple Judaism looked at sexual intercourse as mainly for producing children. Quite opposite to the widespread view among many of his Jewish contemporaries, that human sexuality was mainly for procreation, Paul recognized the value and intimacy of heterosexual intercourse in marriage.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Alan G. Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church: A Biblical Understanding of Leadership and Mutual Submission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), pp 64-65.

⁵⁰ The material here has been adapted from the author's commentary *1 Corinthians for the Practical Messianic*.

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Paul was significantly unique in emphasizing the role that both husband and wife play in heterosexual relations: “The husband should fulfill his wife’s sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband’s needs” (1 Corinthians 7:3, NLT). If a figure like Paul was a rigid patriarchalist, then he would have only mentioned the sexual needs of the husband—which he did not do! David Prior properly observes in *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, “Paul here nails any selfishness or inconsiderate excess in the physical aspects of marriage. This whole approach to equality and mutuality in the marriage-relationship was completely revolutionary in Paul’s day, remained so for many centuries afterwards, and continues to be so in virtually every modern culture.”⁵¹ **Sex was for the woman as much as it was for the man.** And, Paul’s statement here was especially vital for various Corinthians to keep in mind, as Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner state in their commentary, how it “would have been a pointed reminder to husbands who thought they were free to continue sexual relationships with household slaves, prostitutes, or consorts that they were not in fact free to do so.”⁵²

What Paul communicates in 1 Corinthians 7:4 is especially revolutionary, and continues to be in many religious settings, as it emphasizes the mutual relationship of husband and wife as one: “For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does” (ESV). Here, the verb of importance is *exousiazō*, “**to have the right of control, have the right/power for someth. or over someone**” (BDAG).⁵³ It is not just the wife who has to submit to the needs of her husband, but the husband also has to submit to the needs of his wife. *The husband and wife are to belong to each other.* Ben Witherington III draws the significant conclusion in his commentary, “[Paul’s] egalitarian treatment of the rights of each partner is remarkable and would have amounted to a serious qualification of the status quo. Few Romans could have conceived of arguing that the husband’s body belonged to the wife.”⁵⁴

Husband and wife are to be co-equal partners, looking out for one another, and gauging one another for certain in an important dynamic like sexual intimacy. Paul’s direction of husband and wife both having

⁵¹ David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 116.

⁵² Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *Pillar New Testament Commentary: The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 268.

⁵³ BDAG, 353.

⁵⁴ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 175.

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authority over the other, has not been emphasized to the degree that it should throughout most of religious history. Instead, even up until our present day, one is more likely to hear that the sexual needs of the man overwhelmingly trump the needs of the woman. As Gordon D. Fee comments in his 1 Corinthians commentary,

“[I]n responding as he does, with emphasis on the full mutuality of sexuality within marriage, Paul puts sexual relations within Christian marriage on much higher ground than one finds in most cultures, including the church, where sex is often viewed as the husband’s right and the wife’s obligation. For Paul the marriage bed is both unitive (cf. 6:16) and an affirmation that the two belong to one another in total mutuality.”⁵⁵

Too frequently in religious history, “A wife belongs to her husband instead of to herself, and a husband belongs to his wife instead of to himself” (1 Corinthians 7:4, Contemporary English Version), has not been a concept too widely emphasized. A failure to emphasize the mutual submission of husband and wife to each other—especially given the pressures of the modern world, and the easiness and frequentness of divorce—has most probably caused far too many unstable and unhappy marriages.

While Paul has described the importance of sexual activity within a monogamous marriage relationship (1 Corinthians 7:3-4), he does recognize that there is some value in a husband or wife abstaining from sexual activity for various, albeit limited, seasons of time. He issues the qualified word, “Do not withhold sexual intercourse from one another, unless you agree to do so for a time in order to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again. You must not let Satan tempt you through incontinence” (1 Corinthians 7:5, Moffat New Testament). A period of abstinence, and its duration, must be agreed upon by both husband and wife. This is represented by the clause *ek sumphōnou*, the term *sumphōnos* meaning, “agreeing in sound, in unison” (LS),⁵⁶ and also being the origin of our English term “symphony.”

Paul recognized the futility of a lack of sexual intercourse within a monogamous marriage relationship, a kind of “celibacy within marriage.” In a city like Ancient Corinth for sure, one spouse practicing abstinence with another having unfulfilled sexual needs, could very easily have led to a spouse seeking sexual fulfillment elsewhere. A

⁵⁵ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 280.

⁵⁶ LS, 765.

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period of abstinence, for prayer and spiritual pursuits, is only useful for a limited season—a season agreed upon by both husband and wife. This would be a season necessarily extending beyond the Torah prescriptions about abstaining from sexual intercourse during a woman's menstruation cycle (Leviticus 18:19).

The Apostle Paul recognized that periods of abstinence, between husband and wife, could only work for short periods of time, as biological urges would get the better of one of them. Once again, though, what cannot go overlooked is how Paul directs that both husband and wife had to agree together on a period of sexual abstinence. What would make this remarkable, is the frequent age difference that was present, with a much older husband having to often come to a consensus with a much younger wife. As Ciampa and Rosner describe in their commentary,

"The egalitarian orientation of Paul's instructions here is all the more remarkable in light of the discrepancy in ages between husbands and wives in the Roman world, with wives being significantly younger and less mature (and experienced) than their husbands. For a husband's will to be dependent upon his younger wife's agreement would be quite counterintuitive."⁵⁷

In an egalitarian marriage framework today, 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 would logically manifest itself in a husband and wife always keeping one another sexually accountable. Egalitarians would be seen to emphasize that a husband holding his wife sexually accountable *and* a wife holding her husband sexually accountable—will naturally lead to more interdependence and interreliance in a partnership marriage. While a husband has authority over his wife's body, so does a wife have authority over her husband's body.

⁵⁷ Ciampa and Rosner, 282.

“It is very true that Jesus and the New Testament writers treated women with a great deal of honor and respect. This does not mean, though, that they endorsed female leadership in the church.”

How should we approach the way in which the Messiah treated women? Did He not treat women with a substantial degree of honor and respect, that many within Second Temple Judaism did not? The Messiah’s basic orientation regarding leadership can be easily summarized in His statement, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:25-26, NRSV). The Messiah’s model of service for humankind is demonstrated clearly by the testimony lauded of Him in the *Carmen Christi* hymn, where He emptied Himself of His exalted glory in Heaven, was humiliated, and suffered death on a Roman cross (Philippians 2:5-11). Yeshua’s model of service was one of complete self-sacrifice.

Both complementarians and egalitarians find themselves often agreeing that within the First Century Mediterranean, females were not afforded many opportunities, and they were frequently looked down upon and abused by males. While this is especially true of the Greeks and Romans, it was also to a degree true by many in Judaism. Both complementarians and egalitarians can agree that Yeshua the Messiah did not treat women as though they were second class, but instead that they were valued human beings who were to make a sizeable contribution to the work of God’s Kingdom. And thankfully, one does not have to go that far in complementarian literature to see that it is indeed recognized how the Messiah demonstrated a great concern for the treatment of women. In their resource *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood*, Piper and Grudem offer the following, useful summary:

“We believe the ministry of Jesus has revolutionary implications for the way sinful men and women treat each other. His care for women was frequently evident: ‘And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond?’ (Luke 13:16). Everything Jesus taught and did was an attack on the pride that makes men and women belittle each other. Everything he taught and did was a summons to the humility and love that purge

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self-exaltation out of leadership and the servility out of submission. He put man's lustful look in the category of adultery and threatened it with hell (Matt. 5:28-29). He condemned the whimsical disposing of women in divorce (Matt. 19:8-9). He called us to account for every careless word we utter (Matt. 12:36). He commanded that we treat each other the way we would like to be treated (Matt. 7:12). He said to the callous chief priests, 'Prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you' (Matt. 21:31). He was accompanied by women, he taught women, and women bore witness to his resurrection life. Against every social custom that demeans or abuses men and women, the words of Jesus can be applied: 'And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?' (Matt. 15:3)."⁵⁸

Here are mentioned some major things about how the Messiah interacted with First Century women. Of particular importance is the appeal to the Lord's word from His Sermon on the Mount:

"[B]ut I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell" (Matthew 5:28-29, NASU).

Yeshua's forthright statements in Matthew 5:28-29 detail an uncomfortable truth that remains true even up to our present day: men are usually the major culprits of fomenting lust for women. The way you stop lust, is for men to be taught to look at women not as objects, but rather as human beings, as people made in God's image (Genesis 1:26) who are to be shown honor and respect. It is to be commended that there are indeed evangelical complementarians who recognize that women are not to be objectified by men—especially by those who are claiming to be followers of the Messiah. The pornography epidemic that has swept through the Western world, affects the contemporary church every bit as much as it does secular quarters. Complementarians are seen to be among those on the front lines trying to fight against it.

Differences of perspective do exist between complementarians and egalitarians, as it involves the Messiah's treatment of First Century women as valued human beings. While recognizing that the Messiah elevated First Century women to a high place as His disciples, complementarians do not believe that the Lord's concern for women should be taken as an indication that He would endorse females taking on places of leadership in the *ekklēsia*. The fact is, for both

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp 34-35.

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complementarians and egalitarians, is that Yeshua is widely mute in the Gospels on issues of male and female leadership. Egalitarians will interpret various actions of the Messiah, where He is seen to value the place of women in His ministry, rather than eschew women, and trajectorize that His succeeding followers should see to it that females played an important role in the service of the First Century *ekklēsia*.

Do we not see the Apostle Paul co-laboring with various women, and even lauding the role of women serving in the assembly? While complementarians and egalitarians have their differences, both are seen to widely recognize that there were various women who served alongside of Paul in ministry service, and were commended by for it. These notably include how Priscilla was a teacher to Apollos (Acts 18:24-26), she was a facilitator of a home fellowship (1 Corinthians 16:19), and a co-worker of Paul (Romans 16:3). Complementarians recognize how Phoebe was a some kind of a servant, although egalitarians consider her to be a deacon (Romans 16:1-2). Lydia was a facilitator of a home fellowship (Acts 16:13-15, 40). Euodia and Syntyche were co-workers of Paul (Philippians 4:2-3). Junia is recognized by complementarians as being looked at favorably by the apostles, although egalitarians consider her an apostle herself (Romans 16:7).

It should be immediately recognized that many evangelical complementarians do not think that females should be entirely restricted from places of ministry within the Body of Messiah. They properly recognize that there are many places where females can and should serve, and that the Apostle Paul valued the ministry service of women. They do not believe, however, that females should be permitted positions of eldership within the *ekklēsia*. Usually, it comes down to how 1 Timothy 2:12 is applied by complementarians to be a universal instruction for the assembly, and not a restrictive instruction for First Century C.E. Ephesus, as egalitarians widely conclude. In their review of those females who served along with Paul in ministry, egalitarians are quite keen to point out that they were hardly just facilitators.

It is witnessed in Acts 18:26, of the Alexandrian Jew Apollos, “and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (NASU). The verb *ektithēmi* notably can mean, “**to convey information by careful elaboration, explain, expound**”

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(BDAG).⁵⁹ Various complementarians have certainly had to reckon with the fact that the Jewess Priscilla is mentioned as playing some role in assisting the spiritual development of Apollos. Not all Bible readers would, in fact, affirm that Priscilla played any role in helping Apollos—but instead might simply claim that her husband Aquila did all of the talking, while she was working in the kitchen and serving them refreshments. Yet, complementarians are often seen to regard any teaching of Priscilla to Apollos to be in a private, and not public, venue, per their view of universal view 1 Timothy 2:12.

It is entirely fair to deduce from Acts 18:26 that Priscilla took a role in teaching Apollos, something which would have been irregular, for certain, in the patriarchal and male-dominant culture of both the Jewish and Greco-Roman Mediterranean. Of course, many evangelical complementarians would be quick to argue that Priscilla playing a role in the spiritual formation of the individual Apollos, does not all of a sudden mean that Acts 18:26 is endorsing ordained female clergy. However, it cannot go unnoticed that if one looks at the KJV rendering of Acts 18:26, taken from the Textus Receptus, we see that the name order of Priscilla and Aquila is actually reversed:

“And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when **Aquila and Priscilla** had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26, KJV).

All modern versions today, translated from critical editions of the Greek New Testament, include the order “Priscilla and Aquila” (*Priskilla kai Akulas*). Textual critics of the Greek Apostolic Scriptures astutely indicate that the order was reversed to “Aquila and Priscilla” to diminish the role that Priscilla played in helping Apollos:

- Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*: “Apparently the Western reviser (D ^{its} syr cop^{sa} arm ^{al}) desired to reduce the prominence of Priscilla, for he either mentions Aquila first (as here) or inserts the name of Aquila without including Priscilla (as in verses **3**, **18**, and **21**). The unusual order, the wife before the husband, must be accepted as original, for there was always a tendency among scribes to change the unusual to the usual. In the case of Priscilla and Aquila, however, it

⁵⁹ BDAG, 310.

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was customary in the early church to refer to her before her husband (cf. **Ro 16.3; 2 Tm 4.19**).⁶⁰

- Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*: “The D-reviser (and the majority of witnesses, Maj-so KJV) reversed the order of ‘Priscilla and Aquila’ so as not to give prominence to Priscilla. One would then expect that his revision would have been thoroughgoing, but he did not change the order of ‘Priscilla and Aquila’ in 18:18. In any event, Priscilla was generally given prominence in the NT record by being mentioned first (see Rom 15:3; 2 Tim 4:19).”⁶¹

The oldest manuscript witnesses of Acts 18:26 read with “Priscilla and Aquila” and *not* “Aquila and Priscilla.” Why later copyists changed this order, was clearly to downplay or dismiss any role that Priscilla had in teaching and mentoring Apollos. If Acts 18:26 represents a trajectory of females playing a more significant and prominent leadership role in the Body of Messiah, in the post-resurrection era—then reversing the order to “Aquila and Priscilla” would clearly be a manipulative tactic to see that trajectory halted. Many of today’s evangelical complementarians do not tend to voluntarily discuss the variant readings of Acts 18:26, with the older textual witnesses favoring an egalitarian trajectory of males and females serving together in the spiritual development of brothers and sisters in the faith.

What does the placement a female apostle, Junia, do do the whole debate between complementarianism and egalitarianism? The identity of the second person mentioned in Romans 16:7, has been an ongoing debate in Biblical Studies since the second-half of the Twentieth Century. In my final class at Asbury Theological Seminary, Exegesis of Romans (Fall 2008), I had to give an oral presentation on the demographics of Romans ch. 16, with much attention focused on how scholars have approached and applied the issues presented by Romans 16:7. In the 1952 Revised Standard Version, Romans 16:7 reads with, “Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they are men of note among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.” In the 1989 New Revised Standard Version, a different reading

⁶⁰ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London and New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), pp 466-467.

⁶¹ Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), 409.

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appears: “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.”

There has been considerable debate over the gender of the second person listed in Romans 16:7, with the pendulum definitely having swung away from what is listed in lexicons as *Iounias* being a male, “Junias,” with now a significant majority in Biblical Studies recognizing “the strong probability that a woman named *Junia* is meant” (BDAG),⁶² *Iounia*. As one traces Bible scholarship from the 1960s to the present, older scholars considered this figure to be Junias, a male:

- “Grammatically it might be a feminine...though this seems inherently less probable, partly because the person is referred to as an apostle” (IDB).⁶³
- “The name may be masculine, ‘Junias,’ a contraction of Junianus, or feminine, ‘Junia’...In all probability this is the masculine” (ISBE).⁶⁴

At first, the possibility that this individual may be a female is disregarded because it would mean that there is actually a female apostle in the Scriptures. The second quotation seems to moderate just a bit as there are no editorial remarks. By the late 1990s to 2000s, Bible scholarship stands in contrast to this, favoring *Iounia*, a female:

- “The only woman who is called an ‘apostle’ in the NT...Without exception the Church fathers in late antiquity identified Andronicus’ partner in Rom 16:7 as a woman...Only later medieval copyists of Rom 16:7 could not imagine a woman being an apostle and wrote the masculine name ‘Junias.’ This latter name did not exist in antiquity...” (ABD).⁶⁵
- “Probably the wife of Andronicus; member of a husband-wife team who, like Paul, were Jews...The only woman called ‘apostle’ in the NT, Junia may have accompanied Jesus’ ministry, had a vision of the risen Lord...Paul

⁶² BDAG, 480; also Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), 476.

⁶³ F.W. Gingrich, “Junias,” in George Buttrick, ed. et. al., *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 2:1026-1027.

⁶⁴ S.F. Hunter, “Junias,” in Geoffrey Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 2:1165.

⁶⁵ Peter Lampe, “Junias,” in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:1127.

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approved of her role, calling her ‘outstanding’ among apostles” (*EDB*).⁶⁶

Major Bible versions today which employ the masculine “Junias” include the 1952 RSV, 1977 NASB, 1995 NASU, and the 1984 NIV. Versions produced over the past two to three decades or so will render Romans 16:7 with the female “Junia” (1989 NRSV, 2001 ESV, 2004 HCSB, 2005 TNIV).

The bulk of Romans commentaries, spanning the past four to five decades, almost uniformly identify the second person of Romans 16:7 as a female (C.E.B. Cranfield,⁶⁷ F.F. Bruce,⁶⁸ James D.G. Dunn,⁶⁹ James R. Edwards,⁷⁰ John R.W. Stott,⁷¹ Douglas J. Moo,⁷² Grant R. Osborne,⁷³ Ben Witherington III,⁷⁴ Craig S. Keener,⁷⁵ Colin G. Kruse⁷⁶). Each one of these examiners might have a slightly different view of the role that the figure of Junia might have played among the First Century Believers—and certainly have different views on women in leadership in the assembly today—but they all agree that this person was a female. **The significant majority of New Testament scholars accept the fact that Junia was a woman.** Andronicus and Junia were most likely husband and wife, but they could have been brother and sister.

What makes the rendering Junias (male) or Junia (female) significant is how Paul says, *eisín epīstēmoi en tois apostolois*, and how Andronicus and Junia “are outstanding among the apostles” (Romans 16:7 NASU, NIV). Egalitarian interpreters, who believe in the ordination

⁶⁶ Bonnie Thurston, “Junia,” in David Noel Freedman, ed. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp 756-757.

⁶⁷ C.E.B. Cranfield, *International Critical Commentary: Romans 9-16* (London: T&T Clark, 1979), 788.

⁶⁸ F.F. Bruce, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 258.

⁶⁹ James D.G. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans*, Vol. 38b. (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 38b:894.

⁷⁰ James R. Edwards, *New International Biblical Commentary: Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), pp 355-356.

⁷¹ John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 396.

⁷² Douglas J. Moo, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), pp 921-924.

⁷³ Grant R. Osborne, *IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), pp 406-407.

⁷⁴ Ben Witherington III, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), pp 387-390.

⁷⁵ Craig S. Keener, *New Covenant Commentary Series: Romans* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 186.

⁷⁶ Colin G. Kruse, *Pillar New Testament Commentary: Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), pp 563-565.

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of female clergy today, certainly welcome the perspective of Junia as a female apostle and leader within the First Century *ekklēsia*.⁷⁷ Complementarian interpreters, who do not believe in the ordination of female clergy, will, perhaps a bit begrudgingly, have to still recognize that the second person listed in Romans 16:7 is a female. But, complementarian interpreters may contest what it means for Junia to be *episēmos*, with a version like the ESV having, “They are well known to the apostles” (contra NRSV: “prominent among the apostles”). Such a perspective is represented by Thomas R. Schreiner in the *ESV Study Bible*:

“Some have said that the verse proves that Junia was an apostle, and thus women can fill any church office. The verse seems to be saying, however, that Andronicus and Junia were **well known to the apostles**, not that Junia was herself an apostle.”⁷⁸

That there were apostles, other than the Original Twelve, is witnessed in the New Testament (Acts 14:4, 14; 1 Corinthians 15:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:6). Paul himself was regarded as an apostle, and spoke in 2 Corinthians 8:23, “As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they are* messengers of the [assemblies], a glory to Messiah” (NASU), noting Titus to be among *apostoloi ekklēsiōn*. Andronicus and Junia serving as apostles, is much more likely in this context, in the sense of them being missionary-preachers, and not in the same dimension of figures like Peter, James, John, or perhaps even Paul. Given that they were Jewish Believers before Paul, they may very well have been among those in Jerusalem at *Shavuot*/Pentecost (Acts 2:10), or if native to Rome were immediately impacted by those Roman Jewish Believers who returned home after this.

Mentioning some of the work of Richard Bauckham in his *Gospel Women: Studies in the Named Women of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), Witherington draws attention to the proposal of how the female apostle Junia, was the Joanna listed in Luke 8:3. In his commentary on Romans, he describes, “Early Jews who had regular contact with the Greco-Roman world in one way or another often took Latin names, favoring those which sounded like their Jewish names if

⁷⁷ Consult the perspective represented by Scot McKnight, *Junia Is Not Alone: Breaking Our Silence About Women in the Bible and the Church Today* (Englewood, CO: Patheos Press, 2011).

⁷⁸ T.R. Schreiner, “The Letter of Paul to the Romans,” in Wayne Grudem, ed., *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 2184.

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possible, and Junia is close in sound to the Jewish name.”⁷⁹ If this is correct, then it would also explain how Andronicus and Junia were both Believers before Paul, but rather than being Jewish Believers native to Rome, they would instead have been Jewish Believers native to Israel or the province of Judea. N.T. Wright, who is among those who correctly acknowledge Junia as a female apostle, and working from egalitarian presuppositions, further adds in his Romans commentary, “though presumably others, such as Mary Magdalene, were known as such as well.”⁸⁰

Of course, if indeed Romans 16:7 is First Century evidence of a female apostle serving within the *ekklēsia*—as being an apostle would be regarded as serving in a higher office than that of a pastor or teacher—then egalitarians conclude how instructions traditionally interpreted as being universal prohibitions on females leading or teaching (i.e., 1 Timothy 2:12), as well as instructions regarding elders and deacons (i.e., 1 Timothy 2:9-15; 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9), all of a sudden become situational to First Century C.E. circumstances. The legitimate presence of a female apostle would require a definite reevaluation, if not overhaul, of the presuppositions and beliefs of many regarding men and women in the post-resurrection era. If Junia were a First Century apostle, then we should naturally see more females in positions of leadership and teaching in the Body of Messiah today. It would be entirely unacceptable, for example, to see congregations and assemblies led exclusively by males, without any females in the leadership structure and decision making process.

“Women played an important role in the New Testament church, but not as leaders or teachers. In fact, 1 Corinthians 14:34-45 explicitly tells women to keep silent.”

1 Corinthians 14:34 says that women should keep silent in the assembly, correct? 1 Corinthians 14:34 has certainly been used in many religious settings throughout history to issue blanket moratoriums on females speaking before an assembly of people, or even interjecting their thoughts and opinions in group discussions: “the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but

⁷⁹ Witherington, *Romans*, 388.

⁸⁰ N.T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” in Leander E. Keck, ed. et. al., *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:395-770., 10:762.

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should be in submission, as the Law also says” (ESV). Yet, it can indeed be witnessed how there are actually some complementarians, who hardly take 1 Corinthians 14:34 as a blanket prohibition against all females speaking in an assembly of Believers. Instead, there are complementarians who think that the context of 1 Corinthians 14:34 involves speaking in an assembly in a manner which would shame the male leaders. They find textual support for this, from 1 Corinthians 14:35 following: “If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church” (ESV).

Many evangelical complementarians will recognize how 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 has been the cause of a great deal of dismissal of the value of women in the contemporary church. All of us, at one point or another, have likely witnessed a deep thinking and accomplished female, shut down and told to be quiet, with 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 invoked. Still, even with various complementarians recognizing that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 should not be haphazardly applied, these verses are frequently appealed to, to limit the inclusion of women within the leadership and teaching structure of many evangelical Protestant institutions.

Egalitarians know the significance that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 have for complementarians. How do egalitarians approach 1 Corinthians 14:34-35? Some have approached it from the perspective of speaking against idle babble or gossip, and not reasoned or intelligible dialogue, taking place on the part of women. Some have approached it from the perspective of some undiscernible situation from First Century Corinth being in view. And, based on various proposals made in textual criticism, many evangelical egalitarians have concluded that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are not authentic verses to the Apostle Paul, but instead the interpolation of a later copyist.

Within the wider context of 1 Corinthians 14, the statement prohibiting women speaking in the assembly appears among instruction encouraging all to participate with a psalm, teaching, or revelation (1 Corinthians 14:26), the proper usage of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:27-28) and the gift of prophecy among those in the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:29-32), the need for there to be order (1 Corinthians 14:33), an acknowledgment from prophets that Paul’s word is from God (1 Corinthians 14:36-38), and that prophecy and tongues in the right order are not to be prohibited (1 Corinthians 14:39-40). Sandwiched between the need for there to be order for the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:33), and an acknowledgement from

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prophets that Paul's instruction is from God (1 Corinthians 14:36-38), is the admonition about women not being permitted to speak in the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:34-35).⁸¹

Significant controversies have been caused, from both professional scholars and lay readers alike, with how to view 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 in light of other statements within the letter of 1 Corinthians, which clearly do permit, even with some restrictions, females to speak in the assembly (1 Corinthians 11:5; 14:31). Recognizing that the Holy Spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:18; 21:9), the moving of the Holy Spirit, as asserted in 1 Corinthians 12:11 is universal: "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills" (NASU). There is no gender restriction to either males or females exclusively, then, to when a person is moved by the Holy Spirit to having "a psalm...a teaching...a revelation...a tongue...[or] an interpretation" (1 Corinthians 14:26, NASU). And so, given the universal availability and gender blindness of the Holy Spirit, why would it be prohibited for women to speak in the assembly, when it is to be anticipated that both men and women equally will speak (1 Corinthians 14:6, 31)?

Among examiners of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, there have been three major ways of approaching this instruction:

1. 14:34-35 are universal instructions, for all places and all times, forbidding women from speaking to the assembly
2. 14:34-35 are localized instructions forbidding First Century Corinthian women from speaking to the assembly
3. 14:34-35 are a non-Pauline interpolation, and are verses not authentic to Paul's original letter

The sizeable majority of both complementarian and egalitarian readers, of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, are actually going to advocate some kind of localized situation for the prohibition issued. Concurrent with this are various voices who urge caution in how to apply 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 in a modern setting, including complementarians, or those who do not believe in ordination of female clergy.

One popular view of the word, "The women are to keep silent in the [assembly]; for they are not permitted to speak..." (1 Corinthians 14:34a, NASU), is that talking in general or in public is not really the issue, but rather some kind of interfering chatter, perhaps even tied up

⁸¹ The material here has been adapted from the author's commentary *1 Corinthians for the Practical Messianic*.

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via the influence of ancient mystery cults.⁸² Some of this would be afforded by available lexical definitions of the verb *laleō*, “to talk, chat, prattle, babble” (LS),⁸³ with BDAG further explaining, “In older Gk. usu. of informal communication ranging from engagement in small talk to chattering and babbling, hence opp. of [*legō*].”⁸⁴

Concurrent with this, the closing statement in 1 Corinthians 14: 35b, “for it is improper for a woman to speak in [assembly]” (NASU), employs the word *aischros*, which is “A term esp. significant in honor-shame oriented society; gener. in ref. to that which fails to meet expected moral and cultural standards [opp. {*kalos*}]” **pert. to being socially or morally unacceptable, shameful, base**” (BDAG).⁸⁵ Various interpreters are convinced that the main issue in view, for disorderly conduct, are the various negative, social impressions that the Corinthian assembly of Believers would have given to outside Greeks and Romans, if women were frequently speaking aloud in various functions.⁸⁶ As is witnessed in the works of Plutarch, “[a woman] ought to be modest and guarded about saying anything in the hearing of outsiders, since it is an exposure of herself...womankind [must be] keeping at home and keeping silence. For a woman ought to do her talking either to her husband or through her husband” (*Advice to the Bride and Groom* 31, 32).⁸⁷

Recognizing that there is a range of views on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, which notably start by proposing that the talking being prohibited is some kind of gossip or chatter, and/or that First Century Mediterranean cultural taboos are being upheld for the sake of the greater good, is important—as there are other positions represented, or at least nuanced views taken, regarding 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 across the spectrum of those both unfavorable and favorable to women in ministry.

Another perspective which has been offered, especially in view of the wider context and its themes regarding prophetic words and tongues, is that the prohibition regarding women speaking in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 actually pertains to the evaluation of prophecies issued to the

⁸² Norman Hillyer, “1 and 2 Corinthians,” in *NBCR*, pp 1049-1088., 1070; “The Role of Women in Religious Life in the Greco-Roman World,” in Duane A. Garrett, ed., et. al., *NIV Archaeological Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 1879.

⁸³ LS, 463.

⁸⁴ BDAG, 582.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸⁶ Prior, pp 251-252; David E. Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), pp 668-669.

⁸⁷ Plutarch: *Advice to Bride and Groom*, Loeb Classical Library edition (1928). Accessible online at <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Coniugalia_praecepta*.html>.

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assembly.⁸⁸ Added to this might be the thought that with prophecies perhaps being evaluated, what would have occurred would have been similar to what took place at the pagan oracle of Delphi, with various Corinthian women needing to be silenced. Witherington summarizes this in his commentary:

“During the time of the weighing of the prophecies some women, probably married women, who themselves may have been prophetesses and thus entitled to weigh what was said, were asking questions, perhaps inappropriate questions, and the worship service was being disrupted. Paul urges in vv. 34f. that Christian worship not be turned into a question-and-answer session...[I]t is very believable that these women assumed that Christian prophets or prophetesses function much like the oracle at Delphi, who only prophesied in response to questions, including questions about purely personal matters. Paul argues that Christian prophecy is different: Prophets and prophetesses speak in response to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, without any human priming of the pump. Paul then limits such questions to another location, namely home. He may imply that the husband or man who was to be asked was either a prophet or at least able to answer such questions at a more appropriate time.”⁸⁹

In some ways, it may be thought that a wife-prophetess cross-examining various prophecies issued to the assembly, corresponds to how Moses' sister Miriam contradicted her brother as the designated leader of Israel (Numbers 12:1-15).

A growing number of examiners, understandably egalitarian and favorable to females as ordained clergy and leaders in the assembly, feel that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are a later, non-Pauline interpolation or gloss of some kind. This does notably involve those who lean toward later letters, which include some kind of restrictive instruction on women (1 Timothy 2:11-12), as being Deutero-Pauline and the product of a later

⁸⁸ Blomberg, 281.

⁸⁹ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 287; also D.A. Carson, “Silent in the Churches: On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36,” in John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 152-153 who seems to favor such a view.

Craig S. Keener, *New Cambridge Bible Commentary: 1-2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 119 offers a similar proposal in terms of women being allowed to learn, but only at home, in a Greco-Roman culture where women were largely disparaged from learning at all.

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generation.⁹⁰ Yet, there are evangelical interpreters who hold to genuine Pauline authorship of all of Paul's attributed letters, who do not believe that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 were verses written by Paul.

Those arguing that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are inauthentic to this letter will appeal to the previous instruction of 1 Corinthians 11:2-26, which portrays women as being able to prophesy, and in the surrounding text of 1 Corinthians 14, each being able to contribute (1 Corinthians 14:26) or prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:24, 31), all speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5, 18, 23, 39). In the wider scope of Paul's letters, the place of various female leaders in the assembly is to be acknowledged, including: Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2), Prisca or Priscilla (Romans 16:3-4; cf. Acts 18:18-28), Junia (Romans 16:7), and Euodia and Syntyche (Philippians 4:2-3). It is widely thought that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 interrupt Paul's flow of thought among the wider selection of subjects addressed in 1 Corinthians ch. 14, with vs. 34-35 notably placed in parentheses () in the NRSV:

“What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is a God not of disorder but of peace. **(As in all the churches of the saints, women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. Or did**

⁹⁰ Jouette M. Bassler, “1 Corinthians,” in Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, eds., *The Women's Bible Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp 327-328; Richard B. Hays, *Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 247; J. Paul Sampley, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” in Leander E. Keck, ed. et. al., *New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:968-971; J. Paul Sampley, “The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians,” in Walter J. Harrelson, ed., et. al., *New Interpreter's Study Bible, NRSV* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 2056; Stephen C. Barton, “1 Corinthians,” in James D.G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson, eds., *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1345; Laurence W. Welborn, “The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians,” in Michael D. Coogan, ed. et. al., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: Fully Revised Fourth Edition, NRSV* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2019.

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the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?) Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized. So, my friends, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:26-40, NRSV).

In determining the intention of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, a significant challenge is presented to all readers, per the statement made "as the Law also says" (NASU). The specific instruction of the Pentateuch is appealed to as support for the silence and subordination of females in the assembly. This presents a serious hermeneutical dilemma, as the statement *ho nomos legei* appears elsewhere (Romans 3:19⁹¹; 1 Corinthians 9:8⁹²; 14:21⁹³) with some form of quotation or significant allusion to a Tanach or Old Testament passage. In 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, no such quotation or significant allusion is made.

Even with no direct quote present in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, this does not mean there have not been various thoughts issued regarding whether or not some aspect of the Torah or Tanach is being referenced. The most common thought issued about "they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says" (1 Corinthians 15:34, NASU), is that Genesis 3:16 is probably being alluded to. This verse details, "Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (NASU). and is taken by many to involve some kind of Creation order of men leading women. But this view of Genesis 3:16 and the *teshuqah* or "urge" (NJPS) women will have for men has been challenged by far too many, including complementarians, especially per its later usage in Genesis 4:7 in God's word to Cain: "sin is crouching at the door; and its desire [*teshuqah*; urge, NJPS] is for you, but you must master it" (NASU). Genesis 3:16 does not at all pertain to some kind of Creation order of women being ruled by men, but rather is a part of the curse incurred by the Fall involving women having a domineering urge to master men, and then men mastering women—the proverbial battle of the sexes. Such a curse, as implied by a passage like Galatians 3:28, is

⁹¹ Romans 3:10-18 includes a long litany of quotations from the Tanach, including: **Romans 3:10-12:** Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; **Romans 3:13:** Psalm 5:9; 140:3; **Romans 3:14:** Psalm 10:7; **Romans 3:15-17:** Isaiah 59:7-8; Proverbs 1:6; **Romans 3:18:** Psalm 36:1.

⁹² 1 Corinthians 9:9 following quotes from Deuteronomy 25:4.

⁹³ 1 Corinthians 14:21 quotes from Isaiah 28:11-12; Deuteronomy 28:49.

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supposed to have been decisively broken via the work of Yeshua the Messiah.

Other suggestions might be based on complementarian readings of Genesis 1:26-27 or 2:20-21, of the male being created before the female—but egalitarians would rightly counter this with noting that there is no hint of Adam and Eve being created as anything less than equals, and aside from their anatomical differences, both were created to rule over the Creation together.

Another suggestion can be made that “the Law” being referred to in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is not actually the Torah or Tanach (OT), but instead direction witnessed in the Oral Torah. It is actually witnessed in the Talmud, that women were supposed to be silent in the assembly:

“They said to him, ‘It was the week of R. Eleazar b. Azariah.’ He said to them, ‘And what was the topic of the narrative today?’ They said to him, ‘It was the passage that begins, *Assemble the people, the men and the women and the children* (Deu. 31:12).’ He said to them, ‘And what did he expound in that connection?’ They said to him, ‘This is how he interpreted it. “The men come to learn, the women to listen, but why do the children come? It is to provide the occasion for the gaining of a reward for those who bring them.”’ He said to them, ‘You had a good pearl in your hands, and you wanted to make me lose it! If you had come only to let me hear this one thing, it would have been enough for me’ [Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan XVIII.II.1]” (b.*Chagigah* 3a).⁹⁴

The real challenge to “the Law” being referred to in 1 Corinthians 15:34, involving the Oral Torah, is that normally—except for cases like Ephesians 2:15, *ton nomon tōn entolōn en dogmasin* or “the religious Law of commandments in dogmas” (PME),⁹⁵ or other places where “the Law” being referred to either involves “the Law of the Jews” (Acts 25:8, NASU) or the Romans speaking ambiguously of “your own law” (Acts 18:15, NASU)—most references to *nomos* in the Greek Apostolic Scriptures are to the Torah and/or Tanach (OT), and do not involve some kind of Jewish oral instruction or *halachah*.

Some, not believing that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 represents the view or instruction of the Apostle Paul, have actually proposed that 1 Corinthians 15:36 following, “Was it from you that the word of God *first* went forth? Or has it come to you only?” (NASU), is intended to be a

⁹⁴ *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*. MS Windows XP. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005. CD-ROM.

⁹⁵ “the law code of *mitzvot* contained in regulations” (TLV).

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refutation of what 1 Corinthians 15:34-35 communicate.⁹⁶ Here, Paul would be quoting an errant Corinthian slogan, and then providing his own response to it. While there are certainly other places in 1 Corinthians (i.e., 6:12; 7:1; 8:1, 4, 8; 10:13; 15:15) which bear signs of being a Corinthian slogan refuted or countered by Paul, none of them are as long as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

Egalitarians, who would argue for the full inclusion of women within the leadership structure of the *ekklesia* today, including ordination of females as clergy, would certainly benefit from the view that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are a later interpolation, and are not authentic to Paul's instruction to the Corinthians. One of the main areas of support for this view is seen in how a variety of 1 Corinthians manuscripts, vs. 34-35 have actually been transposed to follow v. 40.⁹⁷

The 1987 1 Corinthians commentary of Gordon D. Fee, appearing in the *New International Commentary on the New Testament* series, may have been the first major evangelical Christian resource to deny 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 as authentic to the letter.⁹⁸ One of the most recent and substantial evangelical arguments, against the authenticity of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, was offered in Philip B. Payne's 2009 book *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters*.⁹⁹ Payne has argued that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 appeared early as an interpolation sometime subsequent to the composition of 1 Timothy 2:11-15, and thusly before the collection of the Pauline corpus:

⁹⁶ A. Nyland, trans., *The Source New Testament* (Australia: Smith and Stirling Publishing, 2007), 330.

⁹⁷ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London and New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), 565.

Cf. Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th Edition* (New York: American Bible Society, 1993), 466; *Nestle-Aland Greek-English New Testament, NE27-RSV* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies/Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001), 466; Kurt Aland, et. al., *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1998), 601; Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th Revised Edition* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, 2012), pp 547-548.

⁹⁸ Gordon D. Fee, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp 699-708; against: D.A. Carson, "'Silent in the Churches': On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," in John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), pp 141-145.

⁹⁹ Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), pp 217-267; against: Adam D. Hensley, "'*signaō, lalēō, and hupotassō* in 1 Corinthians 14:34 in Their Literary and Rhetorical Context" in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Vol. 55 No. 2 (2012): 363-364.

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[Various] Manuscripts, do...attest to the omission [of 1 Cor 14:34-35], including the distigme-obelus in Vaticanus, Fuldensis^{Victor mg}, MS 88, and Clement of Alexandria.

The verbal parallels between 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-15 favor an interpolation date after the writing of 1 Timothy. It is unlikely, however, to have been made after the collected letters of Paul were being distributed in codex form since that should have resulted in more MSS without 14:34-35. *First Clement*, probably written in the last decade of the first century, alludes to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Revelation. Such extensive allusions are most easily explained if the codices of the NT or of Paul's letters were in circulation by then.

The gloss could have been entered into the margin of any manuscript that became the exemplar (or Vorlage of the exemplar) of the first copy of Paul's collected letters as a codex. The gloss could even have been written into the very first codex collecting Paul's letters sometime late in the first century. Since it was common for scribes to write text in the margin that they had omitted by mistake, subsequent scribes would insert 1 Cor 14:34-35 from the margin into the body text.

From that manuscript with 1 Cor 14:34-35 in the margin, at least two copies must have been made, one or more with these two sentences interpolated into the body text after verse 40 and one or more with these two sentences interpolated into the body text after verse 33. The manuscript(s) with 14:34-35 after verse 40 became the exemplar(s) of the Western text-type tradition. Manuscript(s) with 14:34-35 after verse 33 became the exemplar(s) from which all the non-Western text families descended...¹⁰⁰

Payne, as an egalitarian, may be said to be motivated, at least partially, on theological grounds to favor 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 as being inauthentic to Paul's letter. Taking a middle view is Philip W. Comfort, in his 2008 *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*:

[I]t seems fair to consider that 14:34-35 might be a gloss. If so, the point of Paul's passage is to urge the Corinthians to emulate the meeting behavior of the other churches (cf. 11:16). But if 14:34-35 is not a gloss—and there is no clear extant textual evidence to prove that it is—then we are faced with the challenge of exegeting the passage within the context of 1 Corinthians itself and the rest of the NT epistles. As such, it seems fair to say that Paul was not prohibiting all speech during a church meeting; rather, he was prohibiting female

¹⁰⁰ Payne, pp 266-267.

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participation in the teaching of Scriptures in the church at Corinth, for this was a role designated to the male apostles and elders.¹⁰¹

Ultimately for the Bible reader, the issue of whether or not 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are authentic verses written by the Apostle Paul, should be evaluated on theological grounds. **Is Paul being consistent with himself and the universal availability of the Holy Spirit to move both men and women of God?** Payne¹⁰² lists a number of significant theological reasons to be evaluated, for whether or not 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 should be considered legitimate, including:

- 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 contradict Paul's encouraging women to speak in the assembly (1 Corinthians 11:5, 13)
- 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 interrupt the flow of Paul's argument
- 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 conflict with the goal of instruction in the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:26, 31)
- 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are contrary to Paul championing the downtrodden, or a subordinate, weak social group (1 Corinthians 14:8-7-13; 10:31; 11:21-22, 33-34)

Within an evangelical Protestantism that is presently and widely debating complementarian and egalitarian views of women in ministry and gender roles, it seems probable that there will be a growing number of proponents who will agree that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are not authentic to Paul's letter, given various textual and theological data.

Complementarianism, Egalitarianism, and Messianics

Our discussion on **Evangelical Questions** has just summarized some of the main elements of the ongoing discussion and debate between complementarians and egalitarians in the venue of evangelical Protestant theology. Certainly, there are many topics and issues that are interrelated to this, which go beyond the scope of this article. Indeed, there are dozens of new books being written every year on complementarianism and egalitarianism, debates that exist among certain theologians, where they agree, where they disagree, how those of both sides can cooperate, why they cannot get along, etc. It is very daunting to try to stay up with this issue—an issue which will not be one-hundred percent resolved until the Lord returns.

¹⁰¹ Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), 519.

¹⁰² Payne, pp 253-265.

Men and Women in the Body of Messiah

For sure, there are issues and questions involving co-leadership that need to be considered and evaluated by the different parties involved. How should a husband and wife jointly agree on their responsibilities to one another, and to their children? How do such responsibilities involve the economic needs of the family, and who works, who does not work, or how both spouses work? What are the sexual expectations of a husband and wife toward one another? While it is true that there are husbands and men who often refuse to lead, it is also true that there are husbands and men who are domineering and autocratic toward their wives and women in general. What does a local assembly do, which has supporters of both complementarianism and egalitarianism? How can appropriate reforms and changes to existing structures be implemented?

Hopefully, I have gotten you up to speed with some of the significant components of the evangelical complementarian-egalitarian divide, but also with a distinct Messianic framework peering in. If we can have a better handle on how this issue has been approached by contemporary Christians, then we should then be able to navigate some of the Messianic movement's own unique, homespun challenges involving men and women.