

How Religion Twists the Role of Women in Ministry

I'm always amazed as I travel and minister that I still have women coming to me saying they are not accepted because they are a woman! "My church won't let me preach or teach or pray for people. They only let me serve in the kitchen or clean the church." I always say, "You need to look to God, not man, for open doors for your gift."

What does God really think about women? Long before He formed the woman's physical body from the rib of man, He had her in His heart. Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let *them* have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; *male and female* He created *them*. Then God blessed *them*, and God said to *them*, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Gen. 1:26-28).

In the New Testament we find the man, Paul, whom some quote as being against women, saying, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). God is talking about creating the physical woman, and Paul is talking in the spiritual realm. Personally, I think that covers it all!

It is very important to understand the beginning of mankind. Women, you are not an afterthought. You were clearly in God's heart before He formed you according to Scripture. Women have graced this earth with insight, sensitivity and beauty,

spiritually and physically. Eve entered the physical world not in a dominant or subservient role, but equal to man. "Let them" is repeated several times in Genesis.

It was God who said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Gen. 2:18). God created woman and brought her to man! Adam had nothing to do with her creation other than taking a nap!

When God formed woman, He took the feminine, the nurturing and tenderness of His nature that had already been breathed into Adam, and gave woman those strengths. Man was left with the stewardship of the earth; to guide, guard and govern; the disciplinarian, the tough one.

When we begin to understand how God originally created men and women, and the uniqueness that was placed within each one, then we begin to comprehend the problems we are facing in the world today. Men and women both have a uniqueness that needs to be fulfilled.

Unfortunately, religion has twisted the scriptures to their ideal to lift up men. In the Jewish culture, women were not treated much better than their Roman and Greek sisters. We know that God used women in the Old Testament with great influence, but in general, women were considered a commodity. Women were not permitted to learn, to speak to men in public, even to her own husband.

This is the world that Jesus, our Savior, walked into! When Jesus said, "...Mary has chosen the good part..." (Luke 10:42), it got the attention of everyone. Jesus shook the house!

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and to restore God's original design for men and women and their purpose in this world. When Jesus saw women crushed and hidden behind closed doors, He flung the door wide open! He took these abused female image bearers and put them center stage to play leading roles in God's redemptive plan for the world.

God made the way for mankind, including women. "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:11-12). You, men and women, are children of God if you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

No wonder women followed Jesus. He satisfied their uniqueness as women. He treated them as peers, and joint-heirs with Him. God created man and woman to be unique; and where that is impaired there is division, and division opens the doorway for deception.

Walk in your uniqueness as a Woman and Man of God. You are to honor God with the life He created in you. Men feel they have to perform and women feel they have to conform, but God says we are both to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. When we honor each other as we function in our divine purpose, God commands His blessing.

I thank God every day that my husband has given me the freedom to develop the gift that God has imparted within my spirit. He has encouraged me in every step of my ministry and supported me in everything God has called me to do. Have we had some disagreements? How can two become one without a few good disagreements, and yes, a little shouting!

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