

Is the Church Throwing Water on Your Fire?

Here's what I was taught in my early days as a Christian. As a woman:

- I am always to be under a man's covering or authority. If I'm unmarried or my husband is not around, I have to find a man to whom I will submit.
- I cannot teach a man under any circumstances—unless they are under the age of 13.
- Of course I can lead, but only through my influence on my husband.
- I can never hold any position of strategic influence or leadership in the church.
- Because Eve was deceived, I, as a woman, am more open to deception than a man.
- God only uses a woman when a man isn't available. (This permits women on the mission field.)
- My husband is the leader; I am there to serve his calling and vision. His destiny is the one that counts.
- My husband is the priest of our home.
- I have to be very careful about what I wear in case I cause a man to lust.
- A strong woman probably has a "Jezebel spirit."
- I shouldn't take the initiative but pray for my husband to do so in order that I can follow his lead.
- I always have to obey my husband, willing submitting even if I know he's wrong.
- If God uses me to lead/teach men in any way, it's like God speaking through Balaam's donkey—an aberration.
- God created Adam before he created Eve. Therefore men lead; women follow.
- Women are more likely than men to lead the church astray.

- Once I have children, my place is in the home.
- There are plenty of ministries I can be involved in—prayer and women's ministries, Sunday School and making the coffee. I should be content with this and not seek to use my gifting outside of those prescribed boundaries.

The obvious conclusion? God, for some divine reason, prefers men. Women are therefore inferior to men, comparatively unimportant in the bigger scheme of life in the kingdom.

A whole generation of women has been brought up to believe these things are true. We have become conditioned to living within these boundaries because we have been taught this is what the Bible says about us.

Is it any wonder that some of us struggle when we are given the freedom to take the initiative?

What has been your experience?

*Adapted from **Felicity Dale**'s blog, Kingdom Women. Felicity Dale is the author of numerous books including The Black Swan Effect and Simply Church. She is an advocate for women in the church and trains people to start simple, organic house churches around the world.*