

Three Liberating Principles About God's Plan for Women

by J. Lee Grady

The Bible contradicts the traditional religious view that requires women to be weak and demands that they keep their mouths shut in church and at home. From my study I've learned three liberating principles about God's plan for women:

1. **God wants women to be strong.** Traditionalists like to quote 1 Peter 3:4, which says that women are to operate in a "gentle and quiet spirit." Or they remind women that the Bible calls them "the weaker vessel" (1 Pet. 3:7). But these verses cannot be used to promote the idea that women should act weak and spineless. Peter's words here simply affirm the fact that women are feminine—that they have a unique emotional nature and physical makeup that sets them apart from men.

It is ridiculous, however, to suggest that women cannot do anything daring or adventurous for God just because of their gender! The Bible gives us plenty of examples of women who stepped out of their own weakness to do bold things for God.

Deborah and Jael are perfect Old Testament examples of this. Their victory over Sisera's army (see Judges 4-5) was a foreshadowing of the way God would use another brave woman—the virgin, Mary—to deal a crushing blow to the devil's skull by giving birth to the Messiah.

God wants you to be a modern-day Jael. Wouldn't you like to be the woman who drives the spike through the head of the demonic strongholds that hold your generation in spiritual bondage? You can be that woman! If you have the power of the Holy Spirit and the weapons of faith, then you should run to the front lines of the battle and

find your position.

I'm thankful for all the brave women who have been used by God throughout church history—women who did not listen to the traditionalists' accusation that they had “stepped out of their biblical role.” Indeed, your role as the “weaker vessel” is to be a devil-chasing, fire-breathing, Holy Ghost-filled warrior who knows that because Christ dwells in you, you are strong even in your weakness!

2. **God wants women to be vocal.** There are so many examples in the Old and New Testaments of women who spoke boldly for God. Miriam, Huldah and Anna were gifted prophets. Esther was a timid girl, yet her cousin Mordecai told her, “You cannot remain silent, or deliverance will arise from another place” (see Esth. 4:14). Like a female Moses, Esther knew she had to speak on behalf of her people or they would perish.

In the New Testament, we are told that Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied. Paul affirmed the ministry of female prophets in his letter to the church at Corinth (see 1 Cor. 11:5). Priscilla was a skilled Bible teacher who traveled with Paul's apostolic team—and she was used by God to instruct a man, Apollos, who later became an apostle himself.

What about you? Have you been deceived into thinking that since you are a woman, you should remain silent while evil increases all around you? Are you waiting for your husband, your pastor or some other man to do the speaking for you? Are you one who believes that God uses women only in exceptional cases—as if they are second-string backups for men?

Don't believe that! Maybe God is waiting for you—not some man—to march into the ghetto and claim a cocaine den, start an orphanage or establish a drug rehab center. Maybe He is waiting for you to start a Bible

study at work.

Perhaps He is calling you to assume a staff position at your church. Are you willing to obey God even if it means religious people will call you a “Jezebel” behind your back because they think you are trying to steal a man’s role?

3. **God wants husbands and wives to function as equal partners.** To understand God’s original intent for the genders we must go back to the beginning—before sin tainted Adam and Eve’s relationship. When God commissioned the first couple in the Garden of Eden, they were told to rule creation together. God did not say: “Adam, you run the place while Eve stays home and does the dishes.” The man and the woman were called to co-labor as partners.

This partnership became dysfunctional after Satan’s ploy lured Adam and Eve into rebellion. They were banished from their perfect home, Adam was destined to grope in poverty, and Eve was cursed to live in a culture of male domination. God told her: “Your rule over you” (Gen. 3:16).

But God’s perfect will is not for Christian women to live in this type of subservience. Genesis 3:16 was canceled by John 3:16! Jesus came to liberate us from the curse!

In a Christian marriage, man and woman are graced to reclaim that place of intimacy, partnership and equality that was destroyed by sin. Yes, wives are required to respect their husbands, but husbands are required to treat their wives with tenderness, viewing them as equals in every respect (see Eph. 5:28).

I recently met Dr. Julianna Slattery, a Christian psychologist who wrote a contradictory response to Laura Doyle’s *The Surrendered Wife*. Slattery’s book, *Finding the Hero in Your Husband*, makes it clear that Doyle missed the boat when she told women to relinquish their

part of the marriage partnership.

"Dr. Doyle discusses a husband's need for respect and trust. I agree," Slattery says. "However, a husband has another imperative need. He needs the companionship of his wife. That includes her perspective, her opinion and her accountability."

I'll recommend Slattery's advice over Doyle's any day. I don't want my wife to be a doormat. I value her spiritual gifts, her natural talents and her opinions—and I don't think she is acting like my mother when she tells me what she thinks.

I also appreciate the many times she has stepped on my toes with a word of correction—spoken in a tender way that only she can because of the level of intimacy we share. I want my wife to be an equal partner—not a zombie who says, "Whatever you think," to avoid confrontation.

Are wives called to be submissive? Absolutely. And so are husbands (see Eph. 5:21). God does not endorse rebellion, domination or control—on the part of a wife or a husband. But remember that your first and most important act of submission is submitting to God's Word. And His Word has called women to be vessels of His love, strength, courage and supernatural power.

Women of God: Don't let religious people or secular "experts" like Laura Doyle talk you into becoming a doormat. I'll tell you what I tell my wife: Go for it. Preach it. You go, girl. I'm not standing in your way, and I'm not threatened by strong women who know they are called by God to nail the devil's skull to the ground.

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