

God the Father: The Author of Gender Differentiation, Gender Purpose, and Gender Beauty — Men and Women in the Realm of Employment

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PROLOGUE

God has revealed Himself to humanity in the Old Testament and the New Testament as one God in three Persons — the Trinity.¹ The members of the Trinity reveal that they relate with one another within the Trinity both differentially and hierarchically. This point will be described in considerable detail later. This treatise is built on the thesis that God has created His image bearers in the form of two genders, male and female, to not only “be fruitful and multiply” but to replicate the relationship between the members of the Trinity in the relationship between the male and female in the realms of worship and family. And the case will be made that the principles and instructions given in the Scripture regarding worship and the family are sufficient to guide the genders as they seek God’s will for themselves in the arena of ruminative employment outside the home.

GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF GENDER DIFFERENTIATION

A funny thing happened on the campus of Wheaton College in the summer of 1989. Or was it a very sad thing? The ServiceMaster Company, under the leadership of C. William Pollard, funded the gathering of business faculty from eighty-five of the Christian College Coalition² member schools to evaluate, discuss, and recommend any perceived needed changes to the proposed manuscript of *Business...Through the Eyes of Faith*. Over one hundred faculty members attended. The faculty were given a manuscript that was comprised of twenty chap-

ters. After four days of discussion and debate the manuscript emerged with nineteen chapters. Which chapter was eliminated, and why?

The chapter entitled, “Constructive Tensions That Shape Us,” was eliminated by a majority vote. It was the second chapter in the manuscript. My memory of the primary reasons offered on the floor for rejecting the chapter can be paraphrased as follows:

We don’t have any theological problem with the material presented, but we have never thought about *applying the doctrine of the Trinity* to business or how the relationship between the members of the Trinity provides insight into the relationship between employers and employees. We are afraid of getting in over our heads theologically in trying to make application of something as important as the Trinity when we have never considered such ideas.

This occurred twenty-two years ago. What was the faculty talking about? And why might their concerns be relevant when discussing gender and business?

The Genesis account of creation tells us that God is the author of our gender differences. And believing that God is infinitely wise, it is reasonable to believe that God had a perfect purpose in creating a male and a female image bearer who would be replicated through their progeny.

Furthermore, discerning God’s purpose for our life is not always as simple as some seem to think. Even the Scripture records that some “Pharisees and lawyers [unknowingly?] rejected God’s *purpose* for themselves”³ while “David...served the *purpose* of God in his own generation.”⁴ So what is God’s revealed purpose regarding gender delineation?

What were the “constructive tensions that shape us” that were set forth in Chapter 2 of the original *Business...Through the Eyes of Faith* manuscript that the evaluating faculty perceived to be to “new” and “unfamiliar” to them?

From the beginning God, in His infinite wisdom, created and ordained a number of “positive coworking tensions” that, when in proximity to one another in the fallen order, create what some people consider conflicting tensions. A “physical-law” example of “positive coworking tensions” is centrifugal force and gravity, which pull in opposite directions and so hold the earth in its designated relationship to the sun. Another example of a positive coworking tension (though it is often experienced in a negative form in our human experience) is our desire to be free of personal constraints while simultaneously recognizing our need for self-control. Who among us has not experienced *that* tension? We will examine five perceived “tensions” that exist in our interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships that are modeled perfectly for us in the relationships between the members of the Godhead. We can glean significant understandings about the wisdomembodied in God’s directives regarding how we should live together by examining God’s personal relationships in the Godhead.⁵

The “positive coworking tensions” unnamed in the quote above that are revealed in the Scripture regarding the interrelationship existing between the members of the Trinity, without tension, but which cause considerable tension between individual humans are: 1) equality/inequality, 2) authority/submission, 3) individual/community, 4) rights/responsibilities, 5) freedom/control. In the context of this article only the “equality/inequality” and “authority/submission” tensions will be discussed. First we will look at these two positive coworking tensions in the context of the Trinity.

Equality in the Godhead

There is absolute equality within and between the individual members of the Godhead. Each member of the Godhead is truly God. The members are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).⁶ Every attribute of God that is ascribed to a particular member of the Godhead is ascribed to the other two members of the Godhead.⁷ In their equality they are to be equally honored, worshiped, feared, adored, and devot-

edly served. There is no distinction in their worth. Neither is there any distinction possible with regard to their being of the same mind.⁸ The three are truly one God. The three are united in their eternal perfection. In their eternal perfection they share a perpetual equality as God.⁹

Inequality in the Godhead

Equality between the individual members of the Godhead is related to their essence, their inherent nature. But there is also a discernible inequality between the members of the Godhead as it pertains to their actions, their assumed roles. There is a true difference in the roles they have each assumed. These functional differences are often referred to in theology as the “economy of the Godhead.”¹⁰ God the Father, for example, has from all eternity been the Head of the Godhead.¹¹ God the Father is the author of all things — “from whom are all things...” (1 Corinthians 8:6). Christ the Son, on the other hand, is the creator of all things — “by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.”¹² But it is the Holy Spirit who brought form to the unstructured earth (Genesis 1:2) and who renews the face of the ground (Psalm 104:30).

The Head of the Godhead — God the Father — chose to reveal Himself to us in the role of the Father. God is called Father over 110 times in the Gospel of John alone.¹³ We are adopted into His family (Romans 8:12-17). The second person of the Trinity — God the Son — is the only member of the Godhead that took on flesh and came in the likeness of man (Philippians 2:5-8). Christ’s being like a “Son of Man” was first spoken of in the book of Daniel (Daniel 7:13). The Son of God obeys God the Father, not the other way around.¹⁴ Yet the Father gave a people and a kingdom to His Son, before times eternal.¹⁵

The Holy Spirit has been presented to us as the “*paracletos*,” the Helper, Comforter (John 14:16). He is the guide, teacher, comforter, and convictor of God’s children (John 16:7-15). The Holy Spirit represents Himself always as being subservient to the Father and the Son.¹⁶ He alone assumes this particular responsibility at this time in history.

To summarize: each member of the Trinity has assumed a different role as they associate with the created order while simultaneously remaining absolutely equal with the other members of the Godhead. God has modeled for us a perfect illustration of the unity and harmony that can exist between equality and inequality (diverse and unequal roles). Each member of the Godhead accepts His role without resentment or jealousy regarding the other members’

roles. Our fallen psyche, however, has considerable difficulty holding these two realities in equilibrium.

We delight in the notion of equality in some situations and find it offensive in others. The same is true in our reflections about human inequality. We give lip service to its appropriateness in one situation and chafe about it in another. Pride and arrogance seem to foster perspectives on equality and inequality that differ from those generated in a humble and self-effacing heart. And who among us has not discovered that both arrogance and humility inhabit our heart?¹⁷

Authority in the Godhead

Jesus Christ is the eternally begotten Son of the Father.¹⁸ It is only the Father who has authority over the Son.¹⁹ The Father's authority was exercised when He sent His Son to become the incarnate, savior God (John 17:3, 8). Furthermore, the works the Father wanted the Son to do (in His humanity) were first demonstrated and/or taught to Him by the Father.²⁰ The Father assigned the works that Jesus did (John 17:4; 4:34). The Father also had the authority to give His Son an inheritance – those who were to be saved.²¹ It was God the Father who had the authority to give His Son all authority over mankind (John 17:2). The Father also gave everything in creation to His Son.²² The Father had full authority to do these things as they were first His, and He had the right to give them to His Son.²³

God the Father also exercises His authority regarding the work of God the Holy Spirit. It is the Father who sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in and with His children.²⁴ The Holy Spirit could, but He does not speak to God's children on His own initiative (John 16:13).²⁵ He speaks, teaches, guides, etc., according to what He hears from the Father and the Son.²⁶ He presents Himself as being subservient to them (John 14:16).

God the Father is the "First Person" of the Trinity. God the Son is the "Second Person" of the Trinity. God the Holy Spirit is the "Third Person" of the Trinity. This concept of a ranking in the Trinity is an ancient formulation reflecting the "economy" within the Godhead. It represents a positional hierarchy that has existed throughout eternity. (Both 2 Timothy 1:9 and Titus 1:2 – conclude with the Greek phrase "before times eternal," so we can infer that the "positional hierarchy" has always existed.) If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live and work in the context of a "positional hierarchy," it is logical to believe that all members of the Trinity would want us to live in

unity and harmony in the context of some type of hierarchical structure. And so God has revealed to us His mind regarding a "family structure" and a "church structure." It is amazing, however, how many people want to alter God's declared structure and set up a different one in the name of "more modern thinking." Hermeneutical debates rage over the interpretation of God's revealed will in these two foundational areas of life.²⁷

Submission in the Godhead

God the Son voluntarily, and with delight, submitted to the will of the Father.²⁸ Christ came to do the will of the Father, not His own. Yet in His humanity (not His divinity) Christ acknowledged that the will of the Father was difficult to rejoice in during specific trials.²⁹ The Father, indeed, on more than one occasion sent a ministering angel to strengthen Jesus in His agony.³⁰ But Christ perfectly submitted to the Father's will on all occasions. Indeed, Christ said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34). The implication is that Jesus derived inner, spiritual strength from doing the Father's will.

The Father asks us to emulate Christ and to do His will. Christ even asks us, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). And He warns us, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter" (Matthew 7:21). God has revealed to us the submission that exists between the members of the Godhead as an example for us. We too are to learn how to live lives that are submitted to the will of others above us. I am afraid that we too often pick and choose whom we will submit to rather than learning and following God's prescription.

God the Holy Spirit also lives in submission. He, upon the determination of the Father and the request of the Son, goes to reside in the lives of the individual children the Father has given the Son.³¹ The Spirit's work is to glorify Christ and not Himself.³² He is the one who superintended the writing of the Scripture.³³ It is He who takes the Word of God and cleanses us through its use.³⁴ It is He who brings us to Christ. It is through faith in the finished work of Christ that we are saved. We are not saved through faith in the Spirit's work although we do have faith that the Spirit both dwells in us and is at work in us. He is subservient to Christ and the Father (John 14:16).

A life lived in godly submission is not the life of a "substandard person." Our culture and our old nature

both tell us that a submissive role is a demeaning role. Does the Holy Spirit have a demeaning role? The question demands an immediate and loud “NO!” answer. The Holy Spirit is truly God and shares an eternal and infinite equality with the other members of the Godhead. His submissive role can only add to His glory. His work may not seem as glamorous and attention-grabbing as the work of Christ or the Father, but His work in our lives is every bit as meaningful and significant as the work of the other members of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is our “tutor,” “trainer,” and “comforter.” He is God with us. He is Christ in us. Oh, how eternally grateful all Christians will be for His patient, long-suffering, kindly work with us, “for it is with difficulty³⁵ that the righteous is saved.” The Holy Spirit works hard to save us!³⁶

Why Did God Send Christ as a Man?

As stated above, there is a hierarchy within the Trinity. Who do theologians refer to as being the first, second, and third person of the Trinity? Why is God the Father referred to as the first Person of the Trinity? Because Christ is His eternally begotten Son, not created but begotten of the Father before times eternal. Hence Christ is called the second person of the Trinity, having been begotten of the Father. And the Holy Spirit, who has eternally proceeded from the Father and the Son,³⁷ is thus referred to as the third person of the Trinity. Is the Father more God than Christ, or Christ more God than the Holy Spirit? No, they are equally God, but they do live and work in a hierarchical relationship as they perform different roles. God lives in perfect harmony in the Godhead. As it pertains to their eternal equality/inequality, and their authoritative/submissive roles, there is no tension, anxiety, or conflict within or between the members of the Trinity as there is in our lives.

As we continue to lay the biblical groundwork upon which to examine the gender tensions that exist in the lives of God’s image-bearers in the context of the church, marriage, and the workplace,³⁸ one additional topic will be looked at: Why has the first person of the Trinity, who is a spirit, chosen to have himself referred to as our Father rather than as our “mother”? Why did He send Christ to be incarnated in a body as a man rather than as a woman? In other words, why has God chosen to identify himself through the use of masculine nouns and pronouns rather than feminine or gender neutral descriptions?

Any serious consideration of God’s purpose underlying “gender differentiation” must of necessity consider the equality/inequality and authority/submission “positive

coworking tensions” that exist in the context of marriage, the church, and the workplace. Gender and the workplace is the end topic goal of the article but its theological roots rest in the revelation regarding gender as it relates to the incarnation of Christ, the family, and the church. We will begin with the incarnation of Christ.

We are going to address the question, “Why did God send his Messiah in the form of a son rather than in the form of a daughter?” It is not an impenetrable question; it is a foundational question. The *Christians Scholar’s Review*³⁹ put out a theme issue on “Jesus and the Academy.” Robert Wall of Seattle Pacific University (SPU) served as a guest editor in that issue and did a section titled “Faculty, Who Do You Say That I Am?”⁴⁰ that was taken from a transcript of the “Jesus Forum” held at SPU on November 12, 1998. Ten faculty members⁴¹ from a variety of universities participated in the dialogue as a panel before a large audience.

The stated intent of the conference was “to explore together the rich polyvalence [multiple coverings] of Scripture’s gospel traditions about Jesus — how our different academic interests and faith experiences might supply the rich textured topography [configuration] of a ‘world in front of the gospel which deepens our common understanding of the truth about Jesus mediated by these precious texts.’”

All ten panelists at the “Jesus Forum” were responding to a reading of the John 11 passage of Jesus going to raise Lazarus from the dead and the account of His relationship with Mary, Martha, and the others of Bethany who were present.

A sociologist was one of the ten panelists. The panel moderator asked the sociologist to... “talk a little bit about how the lens of sociology illuminates this story for you and especially the person of Jesus.” She responded:

Most of what we have talked about to this point looks at the actions and the behavior of the story; what people did. But I can’t understand the story unless I look at the social setting of those actions and behaviors. And, as I was reading through it, three dimensions surfaced that tell me more about the people in the story. One is *gender*, the second is social class, and the third is group behavior. I asked somebody on the way over this morning...*why is Jesus a male?* What did it mean for him to be male in his society? *God had a choice as to send Jesus as male or female.* So I ask God: *Why is Jesus a male*, and how does that fact guide my reading of this story as [the] word of God?⁴²

Three phrases/sentences that appear in the two paragraphs immediately above will now be examined: “lens of sociology,” “God had a choice as to send Jesus as male or female,” and “Why is Jesus a male?”

Lens of sociology: Examining the Word of God through any lens other than the lens of Scripture is hermeneutically⁴³ questionable. Only the Holy Spirit knows fully and exactly what truth a given biblical account has imbedded in it. He superintended its writing. And theologically, it is problematic if someone has a personal or private “interpretation” of any part of Scripture that calls into question the infinite wisdom of the Almighty. The best way to interpret Scripture is to let Scripture interpret itself by discerning its internal consistency. And how is that accomplished? Examine Scripture to see if it speaks about the same subject numerous times, and let the plainer, simpler passages give insight into the more complex and difficult passages. We see this procedure being followed by the Apostles Paul, Peter, John, and James in their epistles. All of them repeatedly draw upon the writings of the Old Testament to make important substantiating points in their letters.

Careful study and analysis of the truths contained in Scripture requires what theologians call *exegesis* — a careful contextual study to bring out the meaning of the text. In John 1:18, we read, “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has *exegeomai* [“explained” — exegeted] the Father. What is God the Father like? Study the life and works of Jesus, He has exegeted the Father — tells us what the Father is like. To bring our personal “lenses” to the interpretative process rather than the “lens” of Scripture is to run the risk of injecting our personal *eisegesis* — bringing one’s personal biases and untransformed⁴⁴ beliefs to the task of interpretation.

“God had a choice as to send Jesus as male or female”: A statement of this type might be referred to as an unreflected-upon assertion. No matter how it is labeled, the statement demonstrably overlooks a mountain of other connected revelation. Has God ever done anything without His infinite wisdom guiding Him? Has God ever made a mistake? Has God not declared the end from the beginning?⁴⁵ Is it conceivable that a gender reversal for Christ (He had been a female) would not have necessitated a reversal of male and female roles as they relate to equality/inequality; authority / submission; and accountability (another topic covered later)?

Those who might wish to hide behind simplistic

statements like, “God can do anything,” need to reflect on the reality that God is not free to do anything that would compromise or violate His nature, which is the very eternal standard of holiness, wisdom, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, goodness, faithfulness, love, mercy, righteousness, etc., etc. God the Father’s choice to have His only begotten Son assume the gender of a male reflects God’s infinite wisdom. It is our job to seek His mind to understand why this historic reality is so appropriate, wise, and loving. This I trust will become evident as we move toward the conclusion of our exploration of “gender in the realm of employment.”

“Why is Jesus a male?” Was Jesus to be crucified, taste death, and then resurrected in the mind of God before the creation of the universe? Yes, this was an immutable part of God’s omniscience before creation.⁴⁶ Did God ordain from the foundations of the earth that He would create His image-bearers male and female? Yes, He did.⁴⁷ Was the male or female created first? The male was created first. Does this imply that the male is in some way superior to the female? Superior, of course not, in Christ there is neither male nor female.⁴⁸ To which of God’s image-bearers did He give the command, “...but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat...”?⁴⁹ The command was given to Adam⁵⁰ and there is no record of God having repeated the command to Eve. Eve had heard the command, we presume, from Adam, but she embellished it by adding the words “or touch it”⁵¹ when approached by Satan, whereupon he lied to her,⁵² and deceived her.⁵³ Eve ate the fruit, and then gave it to Adam and he ate, and they both immediately became self-conscious reflecting their new fallen nature.⁵⁴

Why are these biblical details so important? They should be important to us because they have been eternally important to God. These details contain the reason God sent the Messiah in the form of a son and not a daughter. God held Adam responsible for the fall of our first parents, not Eve. She was deceived. But Adam listened to his wife,⁵⁵ failed to follow God’s command, and is held responsible for the fall of humanity by God.

Adam’s Accountability

Adam to whom God gave the command regarding “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” — not Eve — is held accountable for humanity’s having descended into a state of self-centeredness that causes us all to “miss the mark” (sin), which is a state of “being,” that a holy, pure, and perfect God cannot abide in His presence.

Sin is the antithesis of God's nature and character. This brought about the need for Christ's substitutionary death whereby God manifested the truth that He is both "just and the justifier."⁵⁶

The answer to the next question is critical in understanding the importance of gender delineation and God's choosing to position the male and female as He has in the family and church structures. The answer also provides the basis for the gender positions regarding equality/inequality; authority/submission and accountability. Question:

If Adam is accountable for the fall, why did God choose males to be heads of families and the primary overseers (under the Holy Spirit's guidance) of His church – the "bride of Christ?"

Embodied in the answer to this question resides the key to two other critical subjects. The answer requires an examination of two incompatible historic positions espoused in the wider church regarding: 1) the genesis of the human spirit; and 2) from whom does the infant derive his or her sin nature. Both historic positions have a number of biblical references they appeal to as they exegete the Scripture. From this author's perspective, though, the first position set forth below does not take into account "the whole message of this life"⁵⁷; and it incorporates the Platonic idea of spirits falling from heaven into babies in the womb.

Genesis of the Human Spirit: 1) Doctrine of Continuing Creation

The position taken under this doctrine is that each human spirit is individually created by God and placed in a baby's body in the womb after its conception. The Scripture that is referred to in support of this belief are: Numbers 27:16; Job 34:14; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Isaiah 42:5; 57:16; Zechariah 12:1; and Acts 17:25. Questions to be answered: Does God create "fallen" spirits and place them in the bodies of babies while in their mothers' wombs? If so, is God the creator of sin? If not, does the "body of flesh" into which the spirit is placed cause the new incarnate spirit to become sinful? If so, is our flesh inherently evil? Or are all infants born without a sin nature and subsequently make bad choices like Adam and Eve and thereby fall into sin after birth? And how does this last question square with the Psalmist's statement: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5). Surely the Psalmist isn't implying that his mother's one flesh union with his father Jesse the Bethlehemite was ungodly.

In the case of the Roman Catholic Church this doctrine has led them into a position of defending a non-biblical proclamation regarding Jesus' mother Mary. They officially hold and teach that Mary was also immaculately conceived by the power and work of the Holy Spirit. Their logic is as follows: Mary had to be sinless if she was to give birth to a sinless son, Jesus. This presumes that mothers, Mary in this case, are inherently involved in passing humanities' sin nature on from generation to generation to their children.

Genesis of the Human Spirit: 2) Doctrine of Traducianism

The teaching associated with this doctrine is that the human spirit is brought into being through the natural means of procreation. The biblical support for this position is found in: Hebrews 7:9-10; Genesis 15:4; Genesis 46:26; 2 Samuel 7:12; 2 Samuel 16:11; Psalm 51:5; and Romans 5:12-19.

The "Doctrine of Traducianism" holds that the sin nature we are all contaminated with from conception onward is passed on from the father to the child, and that the mother is not a transmitter of the sin nature to her child. The mother is a sinner as is the father; the mother is a carrier of the sin nature as is the father. But like so many other "diseases," one may be a carrier of an illness (spiritual illness in this case) without being a spreader of the illness.

The strongest biblical case for this position is found in Romans 5:12-19. Here we read in verse 12: "...just as through one man sin entered into the world..." And the message that sin came through Adam is repeated six more times in verses 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19. In eight verses we are told seven times that through one man sin entered the world. In these same verses, Christ is spoken of in the juxtaposition five times as the One whose obedience will lead to eternal life for those who have faith in Jesus Christ. (Traducianism is the author's belief.)

Addendum: There is yet a third position regarding the transfer of the humans' sin nature to the child in the womb. It is a position that defines Adam as the "Federal Head" (representing all people) of the human race and accountable before God as the "father of our fall into sin." The Federal Headship position rejects the idea that the sin nature comes from the father alone. They believe that the sin nature comes from both the father and the mother, but in the case of Jesus' immaculate conception by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit also miraculously removed or

blocked Mary's sin nature that would have been present in her egg from being transferred to the baby Jesus in her womb. There is one Scriptural line of reasoning for this position. The Scripture quoted to support the mother's participation in the transmission of the sin nature to her children is Luke 1:35 — "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." The "Federalists" maintain that the Romans 5:12-19 passage provides insufficient biblical evidence to justify the position taken by the Traducianist that the father is the sole transmitter of the sin nature to his children.

GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF GENDER PURPOSE

A brief recap of all that has been covered up to this point regarding God's infinitely wise establishment of a gender differentiation is in order before addressing God's purpose in establishing two genders. 1) The members of the Trinity are all fully God: there is absolute equality in their divinity. 2) There is at the same time role diversity or inequality between the roles each member of the Godhead assumes. 3) The same type of diversities also exist between the members of the Godhead with regard their authority and submission relationships as they work with the creation. 4) There is no tension whatsoever between the members of the Trinity regarding this ordering of their relationship with one another. 5) Humans on the other hand were created with gender differences and subsequently had to live with a fallen nature. 6) Their fallen nature gives rise to real tensions as we seek to understand and live with equality/inequality, authority/submission, and accountability while trying to understand and live out our God appointed purpose in life.

Then the discourse turned to focus on question 7: Why the individual members of the Godhead had chosen to be identified in masculine terms when the eternal Triune Spirit has no gender. 8) Why Jesus came in the form of a male was asked, discussed, and resolved as being a part of the infinite wisdom of God, and in the accountability God placed on Adam, the first image bearer, for the fall. 9) In defending this position, the two doctrines related to the "genesis of the human spirit" were examined — the doctrines of "Continuing Creation" and "Traducianism."

Then what was God's *purpose* in creating a male and female image-bearer? In answering this question, we must never forget that both the male and the female were created in the image of God — in their capacity to possess

epignosis (true knowledge) of the kind God has and that His adopted children can come to have [sufficiently, not exhaustively],⁵⁸ in their capacity to become righteous both by God's attribution of Christ's righteousness to them and in actually increasing in their ability to do what is right and just,⁵⁹ and in their capacity to become holy (becoming purer and separated from evil over time — an alteration and redirection within the heart).⁶⁰ The "bride of Christ" (the church: males and females) is being renovated and restored and advanced toward a state of perfection — becoming His virgin bride.

God revealed that His purpose for His image-bearers would be comprehended and realized in the context of three intertwined spheres of life: worship, the family, and work.⁶¹ The ordering of these three spheres of life became a challenge to God's image bearers after the fall. We will examine them in the following order: worship, family, and work. This is done because God has explicit directions pertaining to worship and the family components when it comes to our gender roles. There are no explicit gender role delineations revealed in God's Word pertaining to the sphere of work, **but whatever is undertaken in the arena of work cannot undermine, alter, or set aside the Bible's clear revelation regarding the *worship* and *family* spheres of life.**

God Established a Male Led Church

Postmodernism, rooted in secular humanism, has raised its head to public view in many of the mainline protestant denominations in two areas, both gender related: "Are practicing homosexuals/lesbians eligible to hold a leadership position in Christ's church?" and "Are women eligible to hold the role of pastor or ruling elder in Christ's church?" These are two big issues being contested in the neo-orthodox churches — those churches that believe the Bible is to be interpreted in the light of the changing culture.

The theological cancer that underlies these two questions is a *hermeneutic* (biblical interpretation) problem. But the real engagement is between: "What does the 'whole council of God' tell us?" (good *exegesis*), and "How can I find, combine, and adjust selected pieces of Scripture and construct a position that appeals to my personal sense [existential] of what love and justice ought to look and feel like in today's culture?" ("creative" *eisegesis*). Is God's Word authoritative as it appears in its original form, or is it a "word" that needs adjusting to meet the realities of the contemporary world condition? The answer to this question drives the public debate.⁶²

It is simply not enough to say that Christ ministered to women on a higher plane — elevated their value — than they were six centuries prior to His incarnation and then assume that His “elevating of women” was intended to continue rising and rising after the close of the Canon. That is a presumption and presupposition for which there is no biblical warrant. It is *eisegeisis*: saying what the Word does not say. Human presumptions could then trump any of God’s revelation. Postmodernism would prevail — the human alone must determine what is right and wrong.

The biblical evidence is consistent throughout; both the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) bear witness to God’s exclusive use of men in the leading of those in the wilderness, those in the OT synagogues, in the temple, and in the NT church. The councils of the Pharisees and Sadducees were all male. The NT church was given detailed instruction regarding the selection of male leadership — the overseers/elders.⁶³

The NT also recognizes the “office of deacon” (Greek: *diakonos* — one called to serve). This is not a leadership position but a servant position. Both men and women occupied this position in the NT church.⁶⁴

God’s Word does contain the record of one female judge, Deborah,⁶⁵ leading Israel during a time of its falling away from God, and she was a prophetess to whom God spoke, and through her to Israel in a time of Israel’s disobedience. Scripture also records that at other times of disobedience the judgment rendered was the oppression of Israel by women.⁶⁶ One might infer that female “headship over men” is an indication that God decreed (permitted) the leadership reversal to shame the people — “You have turned your back on My ways.” Male leadership in the church is the biblical norm.

God’s Establishment of a “Marriage Trinity”

“It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper⁶⁷ suitable for him.” (Genesis 2:18) The man was called “*ish*,” meaning “to be,” corresponding to God who has identified himself as: “I AM” or “I AM THAT I AM.” The woman was called “*ishshah*,” meaning, “out of ‘to be.’” (Genesis 2:21-23) The woman was taken “out of” the man. She was to “compliment” and “harmonize” with the man, but be different psychologically and physically.

The fall perverted the man and woman’s understanding and acceptance of their God-prescribed roles and interrelationship as they relate to worship, family, and work. Questions relating to equality/inequality, author-

ity/submission, and accountability became ensnared in matters related to gender, personal preferences, the perversions fostered by political correctness and the sin nature that affects us all.

Fewer and fewer people in the broader church, where the allegiance to Scripture is diminishing, have their world/lifeview materially shaped today by the Word of God. The consequences are easy to see: divorce, which God hates,⁶⁸ is rampant, and every couple that gets a divorce is telling their children, “It is alright if you get divorced someday, too.” Sexual promiscuity, in and out of the church is becoming insidious. “Christian” men by the millions are addicted to pornography. And “recreational drugs” are no small matter either.

Who is to be the “head” of the one-flesh union God has sanctified?⁶⁹ “Christ is the head of every man, and the man is head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:3) And Ephesians 5:23 makes the same point regarding Christ, the husband, and the wife: “For the husband is the head of the wife...” God has told His adopted children they are to marry “only in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 7:39) If obeyed, this places Christ at the head of the newly constituted family.⁷⁰ And we are instructed, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers...” (2 Corinthians 6:14) This Triune union — Christ, husband, and wife — establishes the most fundamental building block in the social order called the “community.” And it is the gathering together of these individual Christ-centered family units, along with all others who trust in Christ’s atoning death and resurrection for them, that constitute the “body of Christ” — the church.

Sin: the Perverter of Gender Beauty

Oh, how nice it would be if we could simply by reading the truth revealed in God’s Word live our lives in conformity with His revealed wisdom. But we can’t. We are infected with sin. Our spirit can, with the strength and help of the Holy Spirit, be brought under control. Sin can be “put off” and the “fruit of the Spirit put on,” but not without much training (discipline) and patience. “He...is better than the mighty...who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.”⁷¹ Control (self-control) over the “old nature” is what is so desperately needed, and for this to be realized, the training and help of the Holy Spirit is required.

“Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church...so husbands ought also to love their

own wives as their own bodies...nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself" (Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33).

"You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife...but as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything...and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband" (Ephesians 5:22, 23, 24, 33).

"In the same way, you wives be submissive to your own husbands...as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior...with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God...thus Sarah obeyed Abraham..." (1 Peter 3: 1, 2, 4, 6).

God lives comfortably within the Trinity with equality/inequality (in their "roles"), and with authority/submission (in their relationships) but we, His image-bearers, struggle with our "roles" before God, before the watching world, and before the members of our family. *Why?*

A personal testimony: Shirley and I have been married a little over fifty-five years, and I would, with heartfelt joy, go back and marry her again tomorrow. Next to Christ, she is my greatest blessing and friend. When invited to a rehearsal dinner before a wedding, I frequently tell some version of the following story to the assembled guests:

I would like to share a story that is a bit embarrassing to tell but may be of some interest to someone here who is married...or may be thinking about marriage...or is about to be married. Shirley and I had been married a few years when it suddenly dawned on me that the tensions and upsets I experienced sometimes in our relationship were of my making...the distresses were self-induced...they were my fault. They grew out of my self-centeredness, my selfishness, the putting of myself first. I concluded that the only real problem in our marriage was *me*. This proved to be a major,

positive adjustment to my mental state and my new perception that "things are good." [Christ heard my confession and helped me become more "Shirley focused" – other focused.]

And not too long after this epiphany had taken root, another mind bending realization emerged in my consciousness. I needed every one of Shirley's imperfections as much as I enjoyed her perfections. Without her imperfections I would be denied the opportunity to grow and mature in Christlikeness. Her imperfections prove to be an aspect of God's perfect and loving plan for my maturing in Christ.

So those who are willing to hear and believe my story should remember, our self-centeredness, selfishness, and unwillingness to take up our cross every hour and follow Christ are at the root of our marriage difficulties.

The ubiquitous character of sin is that which pesters Christians throughout their lives. It is not the equality/inequality or authority/submission aspects of our relationships that are at the heart of our tensions and problems. No, at the heart of our problem is our heart.⁷²

We too quickly forget that God is the potter and we are His clay.⁷³ Everything we have — our intellect, our talents, our energy, and our gender — have all been ordained and given to us.⁷⁴ Remember, Moses did not want to return to Egypt and confront Pharaoh. He told God, "I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." But God responded, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"⁷⁵ God is not saying He causes someone to be dumb, blind, or deaf. He is letting Moses and everybody who reads the account know, if we care to, that He is absolutely sovereign over everything. God's decreed will (permissive will) and revealed will (active will) are both accomplishing His perfect, sovereign purposes.⁷⁶ We were known by God and assigned our gender before times eternal.⁷⁷

God's Precept: "Be Fruitful and Multiply"

The natural and normal "fruit" forthcoming from God's created and blessed one-flesh union consummated in marriage is the birth of God's image bearers. They arrive with a "fallen nature." They are self-centered. Oh yes, they behave like angels one minute, and then like the child of the devil the next. We are to love them in this state just as Christ loved us when we were dead in our trespasses and sins.⁷⁸ We are to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.⁷⁹ (When studying the biblical references listed

under footnote #79, it should be noted that the accountability before the Lord for the rearing of children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is placed upon the father, the head of the family.) The responsibility /accountability fall on the father, but the mother is to be deeply involved in the process of nurturing and teaching her children and managing the home.⁸⁰

The “Trinity Principle” that is operative in the home — 1) Christ, 2) husband, 3) wife — is clear from a biblical perspective. Inferred⁸¹ in this revelation (along with the fact that the mother is the third person in the hierarchy) is the reasonableness of perceiving a parallel between the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of the mother. Obviously, only the Holy Spirit can regenerate the child’s heart, but the Holy Spirit is our helper, comforter, teacher, discipliner, and guide. Doesn’t the mother, along with and under the father’s mantle of accountability, face the same nurturing/loving challenges in overseeing the rearing of the couple’s children under the Holy Spirit’s guidance? We know that mothers can neglect, even forget, their infant children⁸² and that fathers at times have turned away from their children,⁸³ but neither parent is excused before God (they may be forgiven) for such un-Christ-like behavior.

The revelation of Scripture is clear: God is the author of procreation, God blesses child bearing, God loves children, and parents are responsible and the husband accountable for their godly rearing. Any behavior on the part of the parents to set aside God’s prescribed means of rearing their children in a right fear of the Lord undermines God’s purposes.

The family unit is also the most fundamental means by which the church is populated – by the coming of age and public profession of faith of the children of those who hold a true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.⁸⁴

The “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23) – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control – is the comforting balm parents are to apply to their family. But the discipline (training, not punishment⁸⁵) that must take place in a home that loves God and loves children is another matter all together. Fathers especially need to read carefully, and digest the “tough love” spoken of in Hebrews 12:4-11. Every Child that is loved needs loving discipline.

Men and Women in the World of Employment

About a decade ago a statistic was brought to my attention that reported 73% of all married women employed outside of the home are “at their job” because

their husbands want them to be there. When asked what motivated their husbands to want them to work outside the home their responses were related to the size of the home and neighborhood they could live in; the quality of the cars they could drive; and the upscale vacations they could enjoy – a totally materialistic motivation. (The report from which this information was gleaned did not distinguish between Christen and non-Christian women who were working and surveyed.⁸⁶)

The feminist movement has also encouraged younger women to believe in themselves: you are as capable as men; you can compete on any and every front with the best of men. And this is undoubtedly true. (The sole exception to this reality seems to be in the area of “raw muscle power,” per pound — and some women are taking this field on as a challenge.)

But enough of the postmodern perversions. What does God desire? What is best for His Christian image-bearers? What brings glory to His name? Why has God been so silent regarding women and the field of employment? Little is said in the Bible about women working outside the home. Women gleaning in the fields are mentioned in the book of Ruth. Women bringing sheep to the well for water is mentioned in Genesis. Etc., etc. So many young Christian women who still desire to demonstrate their competency in the marketplace look for biblical support and many believe Proverbs 31:10-31 “fits the bill.” These twenty-two verses are sometimes referred to as the “Description of a Worthy Woman.”

Any woman is free to read these God-breathed verses and conclude that they are indeed a description of a “super woman.” A careful review of what biblical theologians have written regarding this passage, however, will reveal that there are four sound hermeneutic paths that can be traveled. The passage is describing the “worthy work” of: 1) an individual woman, 2) the work that the women in a particular church are to undertake, 3) the work women collectively across the universal church are expected to undertake, and 4) the many “she” references are describing what the “Bride of Christ” — the church universal (men and women) — is to undertake under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

Can a legitimate — biblically defensive — conclusion be drawn regarding parental employment outside of the home?

- Men and women may both be employed outside of the home.

- The husband is accountable to God for the godly maintenance of a loving, nurturing home in which his wife is loved as Christ loved the Church.
- The husband is accountable to God for the godly maintenance of a loving, nurturing home in which he and his wife serve before the Lord as godly parents, modeling, training, disciplining, and nurturing their children in the ways of the Lord and with great care regarding the “world.”
- Children have a longer need for bonding, incorporation, training, learning, and maturing than any other “created creature” on earth. Inappropriate rearing can damage and pervert any of the “life-giving-promoting” inner-connective stages of human development. Parenting takes lots of love, patience, time, self-sacrifice, and support of the Holy Spirit. **The father’s employment and/or the mother’s employment, that retards, perverts, or harms the child’s nurture in the Lord undermines God’s revealed will for the family.**

GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF “GENDER BEAUTY”

Has God ever required anything of His image-bearers that He has not done Himself? I am not aware of any such thing. God has assumed equality/inequality and authority/submission positions and roles within the Godhead. God has identified Himself in a gender role — male. God has manifested himself in every conceivable posture as a servant and as a leader. God is tender, and God is harsh.

What is the human predicament? Satan challenged the authority, position, and power of God. Rather than destroy him, God has permitted Satan to do only what God foreknew would initiate a series of repercussions that God would either providentially (decree, permit) or direct (cause) to work toward the transformation of those He would adopt into the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:28-29). That transformation works toward sanctification — being set apart for the purposes of God.⁸⁸

God has purposed us all to be either a female or a male. And God has ordained specific roles for the male and the female within the context of the family and the church.

It is the “world” that assigns the genders to particular positions in the realm of employment, albeit under God’s permitted (decreed) sovereign rule. Gender roles outside the family and church are designated, assigned, acquired or assumed as the “world” deems best. And the “world”

has no interest in what God’s purposes are or what is best for a family. It is helpful to remember who the “prince of this world” is, even though he works under the sovereign rule of God.

Those who choose to marry are commanded to “only marry in the Lord.”⁸⁹ And as they have children, their employment commitments are to be regulated so that together their children are protected under the guidelines outlined in the two sections entitled: “God’s precept: ‘Be fruitful and multiply’”; and “Men and Women in the World of Employment.”

So, “...work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”⁹⁰ Our salvation has a past, present, and future dimension to it. Paul’s exhortation is intended to emphasize the seriousness of seeking, discerning, and following God’s revealed will. When there is a conflict between what we know and what we desire, we tend to rationalize. And the rationalization tends to pull us toward what we desire. Do not let this occur when making employment decisions. It can only lead to our hurt and the hurt of those we love.

Worship, family, and work are all pre- and post-fall mandates. God has given us much instruction for each area, but His revelation regarding gender in the context of worship and the family is explicit. Let His explicit revelation in these two areas give guidance as the area of work is prayed over and contemplated.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The Trinity is recognizable in the Old Testament (OT) after the fuller revelation in the New Testament explains.
- ² The Christian College Coalition changed its name to the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities later.
- ³ Luke 7:30. Emphasis added.
- ⁴ Acts 13:36. Emphasis added.
- ⁵ Chewning, Richard C., *Becoming Partakers of the Divine Nature*, Chapter 5 “The Trinity: Our Model and Mentor,” an unpublished manuscript being edited by Great Rock Publishing, Quarryville, PA: expected publication date: 2013.
- ⁶ Also see: Matthew 3:16,17; 22:41-46; Mark 1:10-11; John 1:1, 2, 14, 18; 16:7-15; 17:5, etc.
- ⁷ Edward Henry Bickersteth (1825-1906), while engaged in addressing the heresies of “Unitarianism” in his day, penned

a series of papers that he later compiled into a book: *The Trinity*. [Bickersteth, Edward Henry (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications), 1959.] This is “must” reading for anyone desiring to explore the “equality” of the members of the Godhead. Christians, too, believe in the “unity” of the Godhead, but Christians also hold a strong belief in the three distinct persons of God who, in absolute and perfect harmony, comprise the Unity of God – the Godhead – even while revealing Themselves in diverse roles. The mystery of the oneness and diversity of the Trinity, while inscrutable, is reasonable, believable, and quite essential to the “nature of God” as revealed in Scripture – and hence to the validity of this treatise.

⁸ John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:28-29.

⁹ See Footnote 5.

¹⁰ See Kenneth Scott Latourette’s, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1953, pages 145-146) where he describes the original works of Tertullian (born near the middle of the second century A.D.) as they pertained to the economy of the Trinity: “Here is unity of substantia [status in a community], but a unity distributed in a trinity; a unity of substance, but a trinity in form and in aspect” (page 145).

¹¹ John 1:14; 6:37; 17:1-6; 14:26; 15:26.

¹² 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16; John 1:3.

¹³ Also see: Psalm 89:26; Isaiah 63:16; 64:8; Jeremiah 3:19; 2 Samuel 7:14.

¹⁴ John 5:26; 6:57; 8:16-18; 14:28.

¹⁵ Matthew 11:27; Luke 22:29; John 6:37; Titus 1:1-2 and 2 Timothy 1:9.

¹⁶ John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14.

¹⁷ See Footnote 5.

¹⁸ John 3:16, 18; Psalm 2:7.

¹⁹ John 10:29; 14:28.

²⁰ There is a mystery, unsolved by humanity, in the perfect unity in Christ of two complete natures — the divine and the human. As a human, Christ grew in stature, wisdom, and favor with both God and man (Luke 2:52). In His divinity, He had been infinitely perfected for all eternity (Colossians 1:15-20). Also see: John 5:19-20, 30; 6:38; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10.

²¹ John 6:37, 44-45, 65; 17:6, 9.

²² John 3:35; Luke 10:22.

²³ The Son was eternally begotten of the Father. The Father was not begotten of the Son.

²⁴ John 14:16, 26; 15:26.

²⁵ John 14:26 is to be read and interpreted in the light of John 16:13.

²⁶ John 15:26 and Galatians 4:6 reveal that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and therefore, by inference,

²⁷ See Footnote 5.

²⁸ John 5:30, 36; 6:38.

²⁹ Matthew 26:39, 42; Mark 14:34-36; Luke 22:42-44.

³⁰ Mark 1:13; Luke 22:43.

³¹ Luke 11:13; John 14:16; 15:26.

³² John 16:14; 7:39.

³³ 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Samuel 23:2; Acts 1:16.

³⁴ Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:26.

³⁵ In 1 Peter 4:18; the Greek word is *molis* – with difficulty, scarcely, with much work.

³⁶ See Footnote 5.

³⁷ The Eastern Orthodox Church broke away from the Roman Catholic Church centuries ago over this point. The Eastern Orthodox Church believes the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only, not the Father and the Son.

³⁸ Any consideration of “gender differentiation” will be limited to the “family” and “church” as the Scripture puts no restrictions on “gender in the marketplace other than those in the family and church are primary and take precedence over what is to be done in the marketplace. This will be discussed at length later in the paper.

³⁹ Volume XXVIII:4; Summer 1999.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Pages 522-531.

⁴¹ Five females and five males constituted the panel.

⁴² This quote is taken directly from the sources noted in Footnotes 37 and 38.

- ⁴³ Hermeneutics: the means one uses to interpret the Bible.
- ⁴⁴ Romans 12:2 — “And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,…”
- ⁴⁵ Isaiah 46:10.
- ⁴⁶ Hebrews 4:3. “...His works were finished from the foundation of the world.” Also see: Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20.
- ⁴⁷ Genesis 1:27; 2:7, 21-23. This reality took place thousands of years before the birth of Christ.
- ⁴⁸ Galatians 4:28. It is also appropriate to point out that when God’s adopted children are resurrected they will be neither male nor female but like angels. Matthew 22:30. There will be no gender delineation in heaven.
- ⁴⁹ Genesis 2:17. Also look at Genesis 4:17 where God says, “...eaten from the tree from which I commanded **you**...”
- ⁵⁰ Genesis 2: 16-17.
- ⁵¹ Genesis 3:3.
- ⁵² Genesis 3:4.
- ⁵³ Genesis 3:13; And see: 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14.
- ⁵⁴ Genesis 4:6-7.
- ⁵⁵ Genesis 4:17.
- ⁵⁶ Romans 3:26.
- ⁵⁷ Acts 5:20; 20:27.
- ⁵⁸ Colossians 3:10.
- ⁵⁹ Ephesians 4:23-24.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁶¹ Genesis 1:26-2:4. These are referred to as God’s creation *mandates*.
- ⁶² The same kind of debate surrounds the postmodern debate regarding the U. S. Constitution.
- ⁶³ 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.
- ⁶⁴ 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13 (men); and 1 Timothy 3:11; Romans 16:1-2 (women).
- ⁶⁵ Judges 4.
- ⁶⁶ Isaiah 3:10-12.
- ⁶⁷ Hebrew: ezer [Strong’s Lexicon # 5828] – “one who helps” or “a helper corresponding to him.”
- ⁶⁸ Malachi 2:16.
- ⁶⁹ God has only sanctified “marriage” between a man and a woman, not other gender combinations.
- ⁷⁰ A couple constitutes family unit, with or without children. They are to leave their parents, cleave to one another, and establish a union that is under the Lordship of Christ. (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31).
- ⁷¹ Proverbs 16:32.
- ⁷² The heart is the seat of our mind, passions, and will.
- ⁷³ Romans 9:19-21; Isaiah 29:16; 45:9.
- ⁷⁴ Ordained (lot in life): Psalm 16:5-6; All given to us: 1 Corinthians 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10.
- ⁷⁵ Exodus 4:10-11.
- ⁷⁶ Romans 8:28-30 brings great comfort to those who trust in Christ’s suffering and resurrection — God is sovereign.
- ⁷⁷ Ephesians 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9; Revelation 13:7-8 (a negative example).
- ⁷⁸ Ephesians 2:1-7; Colossians 2:13-14.
- ⁷⁹ Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 4:8-9; 6:7; 11:19; Psalm 78:4; Proverbs 22: 6; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21; 2 Timothy 3:15.
- ⁸⁰ Genesis 28:7; Proverbs 1: 8; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Timothy 5:14.
- ⁸¹ Biblical “inference” is to be used cautiously and sparingly. Eisegesis becomes its big challenge. But sound reasoning that is faithful, in its application, to God’s revelation is acceptable — the doctrine of the Trinity being an example.
- ⁸² Isaiah 49:14-16.
- ⁸³ Malachi 4:6; Luke 1:17.
- ⁸⁴ After the initial revival, the historic record of church growth shows that over 80% of the churches’ new members come from the children of believers. This was “quoted” to me some fifteen years ago by a “church growth” scholar.

- ⁸⁵ Christ bore the punishment due us; God trains us and disciplines us.
- ⁸⁶ I must apologize, the original source of this information is no longer recallable.
- ⁸⁷ Demonstrating biblically how these four alternative/collective applications of Proverbs 31:10-31 can be justified in both the temporal and spiritual realms as well as four alternative mixes of men and women transcends the objectives of this treatise, but solid exegesis substantiates the legitimacy of all four alternatives — the 4th being my choice.
- ⁸⁸ Matthew 4:8-10; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12.
- ⁸⁹ 2 Corinthians 7:39.
- ⁹⁰ Philippians 2:12.

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