

3 April, 2022

# Human Sexuality, Gender, and the Gospel

Forestgate Presbyterian Church

## Lesson 4: God's Design and Role for Women

**Goal for this class:** to discuss biblical womanhood with a focus on Paul's view of women in society/family/church, including his robust affirmation of them as fellow-workers

### 1. Why focus on women? Why focus on Paul's letters?

*"Shameful for a woman to speak in church"*

*"Not permit a woman to teach/exer. authority"*

*"Young women...work at home...submissive"*

*"Wives submit to your husbands"*

*"Deceived first...saved through childbearing"*

*"...Head uncovered dishonors her head"*

*"office of overseer...the husband of one wife"*

Paul's letters include some difficult (meaning: they take work) passages on women.

### 2. Egalitarian vs Complementarian

### 3. BLUF: What do we believe/practice at Forestgate?

### 4. Difficulty in many other scenarios

## 5. Women in the family structure

**1 Cor 11:11–12**—Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman.

Mutual interdependence in procreation.

**Eph 5:30–31**—We are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

Oneness as the controlling image

**1 Cor 7:2**—Because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Treated equally in terms of right/calling to marry or stay single. Level playing field.

**1 Cor 7:3–5**—The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 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. Do not deprive one another...

Each spouse’s body belongs to the other.

**1 Cor 7:10–13**—To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband...and the husband should not divorce his wife...

Marriage and divorce laws apply to both husband and wife

**Rom 1:26–27**—For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another.

Sexual immorality is equally bad for men and women

**Eph 6:1–3**—Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”

**1 Tim 5:4, 8, 16**—But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents.

Women deserve respect in the family structure

## 6. Women in society

**Rom 16:2**—I commend to you our sister Phoebe...for she has been a patron (*prostatis*) of many and of myself as well.

**1 Cor 1:11**—Those of Chloe's household... (=“those of Chloe”; she is managing a household)

**Acts 16:14**—Lydia, from Thyatira, a seller of purple goods.

**Acts 18:3**—They [Priscilla & Aquila] were tentmakers by trade.

Women's engagement in the workplace is affirmed.

How do these passages (though few in number) help correct any misconceptions about women in the sphere of work/commerce/etc.? What are they saying and not-saying?

## 7. Women in the church

**Phil 4:3**—These women have fellow-labored with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow-workers.

**Rom 16:3**—Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ.

**Rom 16:6**—Mary, who has worked hard for you.

**Rom 16:7**—Andronicus and Junia...my fellow-prisoners.

**Rom 16:12**—Workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa.

**Philem 1–2**—Philemon our fellow-worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and the church in your house.

Women who serve in ministry are commended as fellow workers in the gospel.

**1 Cor 12:4–11**—To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

The Spirit gives women spiritual gifts to edify the church.

**1 Tim 5:10**—...Having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

**Tit 2:3–4**—Older women likewise are to...teach what is good, and so train the young women.

**1 Tim 3:8–11**—Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued...“Women” likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.

Women have very important responsibilities in church life

**1 Tim 5:1–3**—Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. Honor widows who are truly widows.

Women of all stages/situations in life are to be honored in the church

**Phil 4:2**—I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

\_\_\_ Relational unity among women demonstrates their importance to the body

**8. A few footnotes:**

- Paul clearly holds deep convictions about the dignity of women as image-bearers.
- We should focus not so much what women *can't* do, but what women *should* do, what we *need* them to do!