

Roles of Men and Women as Christians Inside and Outside the Church Assembly

It seems that nothing has changed from the beginning; Rebellion against God is as old as the prehistoric fall of Satan. The word of God has always existed and represents God's sovereign rule over everything He has and will create. The principle is that God Has a right over the clay to make whatever He desires for His own purposes and glory; just in the same way men will make things for their own purposes and Glory. To Explain this in more detail is important: We as people in the human race are always seeking good things, from primitive societies to complex societies we are all seeking to satisfy ourselves with something. Everything on earth has a cause, purpose and a desire to exist and prosper; we all have a definition of what we think our live should be. We all have standards good and bad. If a person believes in God then it's very likely that He will be impressed with God's skill put forth to create the heavens, the earth, and all their Hosts. The most basic thing any living creature needs to survive is water, yet if we were deprived of water for one week then death would be very likely. People tend to think of water as their most basic right of life; yet water has a value, if we're dying because of no water and there was a person who had enough water but withheld it, chances are we would resent that person or at least think of that person as being unjust. At some point in our lives we will think of ourselves as being deserving of something. What that something is is different from culture to culture and from person to person but for sure all of us want something from life. God on the other hand wants something from the human race; God wants a return for His labors; God wants His chosen ones to serve Him in Truth and not to lay aside the commandment in conformity to those who are against the truth. The most basic truth that God desired was for man's willing submission to His authority. God want us to take a stand for Him on earth. The idea here is that God wants especially Men of the human race to obey Him. When a good woman thinks that her man is being disobedient to the Lord She wants him to submit to the Lord, but scripture instructs the woman's submission to the man, and children are to submit to the Mother and/or Father. A Man can resent God's authority, a woman can resent the man's authority, and Children can resist and resent the parents authority, and when this starts happening on a larger scale the nation starts looking pretty ugly: something that God meant for love and beauty degrades into every kind of evil imaginable. God is always interested in saving things that are close to dying especially regarding His Own House i.e. Christians. A man should never laugh about being under God's authority, a woman should never laugh about a man's authority and children should not laugh or scorn the authority of adults. Because God Has Created us in Christ then we ought to respect the Lord and give the proper respect to whomever its due not for the purpose of eye service but from a pure heart. If men submit to God this pleases God, if women submit to their husbands this pleases the husband, and if Children obey their parents then this pleases the parents; with these principles functioning then and only then do Christians begin to knowing what it means to Love. Jesus said, "If you love me you will obey my commandments".

We live at a time when the truths of God's word are under attack like never before; many direct commandments in the Word are being explained away in the name of conformity to the world, the flesh and the Devil. The powers of darkness are creeping in to suffocate and destroy the true light of the Word of God in order to corrupt and enslave us all being caught in the bondage of sin and unrighteousness. God has better things for those who turn to Him and turn away from those who compromise the truth because of greed. We will pull some valuable principles from the **First Letter to the Corinthians** chapter 11; but first we will observe a pattern leading up to chapter 11 starting with chapter one.

The major issue held in the *First Chapter* is over divisions amongst the congregation because of bragging concerning the persons they were baptized by. Paul emphasizes rather than baptism being of issue the message preached about Christ was in fact the power of God to save. Paul stated this in order to restore unity among them also stating there's to be no boasting before God and that by His doings (i.e. not man's) we are in Christ Jesus. Paul's final emphasis in this Chapter is not to boast of men but of God.

The idea presented in *Chapter 2* is presented to defuse the arrogance related to self-importance. Paul illustrating that not even he came to them in a strong and persuasive manner but was continually beset with weakness while among them i.e. the reason the message is of value is because of power that of the Holy Spirit was involved and without that power all men would be left in their own darkness: John 1:9.

In *Chapter Three* Paul very candidly informs them of their carnality and once again touches on the issue of their bragging regarding other believers. He then set the issues straight regarding what his person was and was not to them in terms of ministry i.e. the major point being that those who had ministered to them were simply fellow servants of God. From verse ten of chapter three Paul states through metaphor that the Corinthians were to be careful how they ministered to each other otherwise they were to experience losses at the judgment pending for believers and for the third time comes around to the issue of not bragging of men: verse 21. The final conclusion in the chapter is Paul indicating that they all belonged to each other, Christ, and God.

Paul in *Chapter 4*, still on the same general subject i.e. the people's interaction with each other, plus Paul's anticipation of rejection regarding the content of the letter. Paul asks them to withhold their own judgments allowing the Lord to do that in the future. The idea is they need to concentrate on the letter and not on judging Paul. Paul knows if they are ready to be against Him or Apollos they are ready to be against each other. The Corinthians were having an attitude of arrogance thinking they had become great. Paul illustrates his weakness, being treated very poorly in the world; stating this not to shame them but to cause them to have the proper heart towards Paul by whom they received the message of Christ. Paul moves on indicating that he had not singled them out for rebuke but states that he teaches the same things wherever he goes. Paul as with any pastor desires to be with them in peace rather than in harshness. The overwhelming theme of the first four chapters was that of internal relations i.e. the Corinthians attitudes towards each other; they were not to have jealousy and strife amongst them because of wanting to be better than the next guy. In *Chapter five* Paul shames them for their willing allowance of gross immorality among

them. He instructs them all to stop the old sinning so they would be able to celebrate in sincerity and truth. Paul states that we should not associate with so-called brothers that are practicing immorality but in fact to put them out of the assembly.

In *Chapter six* Paul states that all matters of law should be dealt with among the brethren when in fact both parties involved are Believers. Paul states that rather than going to court and taking things that far to rather be wronged and leave it in the Lord's hands. He also indicates that they are all involved in sin towards one another. He goes on and indicates the behavior of unbelievers to shame them so they would stop imitating the behavior of those that are destined for Hell. He reminds them of their Spiritual washing provided by God. In verse 12 Paul indicate that aside from sin there were many things that He could be doing but they would be unprofitable and not progress the plan of God for his life. He also demonstrates that there are legitimate things for the body though it be just temporal, and on the same note there are things that are not legitimate for us to do with our bodies because we are joined to the Lord. Paul once again aware they had not yet set aside their worldly lusts and engagements to sin reminds them of their responsibilities to God urging them to Glorify God in their bodies.

Moving on to *Chapter 7*, Paul indicates here, as he does further on in the chapter, that celibacy is a good thing for those who can accept it; otherwise sex is to remain only within the bond of marriage and is not to be intentionally withheld from a spouse. Only setting sex aside for a time of prayer and to satisfy those desires as often as necessary, so that Satan will not be able to tempt them to commit adultery. Paul again encourages celibacy, but stating it was not a command from the Lord. Then it is made clear that unbelievers can break the marriage but not the believer. The children become unclean in the case of the believing parent causing the divorce rather than remaining in the marriage. The idea here is that the children did not have the opportunity to see the truth at all because of believing parents rejection of Divine principles. A condition of liability remains on the guilty party and the children will be affected by the often-long-term discipline the parent is to receive from the Lord. This does not imply that the children are withheld any justice from God, in fact the opposite is true: justice was withheld from them by the parent; this in turn affects the children in a bad way. The discipline the parent receives will demonstrate to the children that God is ready to judge transgressors. Paul finishes the subject by putting an air of doubt over the possibility of the believing spouse being able to persuade their partner to trust in Jesus. It is quite possible he said these things to buffet those type of expectations so the believing partner does not rest on those expectations and therefore put unreasonable pressures on the unbeliever involved. Verses 17-24 reflect that a person should remain in the same disposition as when first made aware of one's spiritual gift, the exception to this is the person that becomes aware of their gift while under a slave-master relationship which Paul instructs to break if possible. Often believers will go years without being aware of their Spiritual Gift and are waiting for God to reveal it to them. The most predominant idea here is for some to remain unmarried because their spiritual gift was put into action by God first. Starting with verse 25 to the end of the chapter Paul does not include the pretext of being called so Paul is recommending these things rather than there being a divine principle involved. Verses 29-31 expose a great truth, that is things are so critical and down to the wire in the Church age that Paul is recommending a high level of Spiritual vigilance and

not for us to put our rest and confidence in things that are destined to perish but giving priority to serving the Lord. Verses 33-34 concede to the fact that the married set their hearts towards the things of the world but Paul insists that an undistracted devotion to the Lord is the appropriate focus to have even if married. Verse 36-38: It looks here as though fathers were intending to dedicate their daughters to the Lord not allowing them to marry. The young men are being aggressive towards her probably because of signs of mutual attraction; Paul instructs that the father in this case to let them marry and by doing so he has done well. On the other hand, the father who is determined to keep his daughter will do even better. The last instructions allow a woman to marry anyone she wants providing her husband has died but Paul thinks she would be happier if she were to remain single.

In *Chapter 8* Paul instructs to maintain personal restraint for the sake of those who are going to be sensitive concerning taboos. Meat was sacrificed at heathen temples then sold later at the meat markets. Paul is telling them never to eat around people that will be offended; however, the major principle here is we need to maintain behavior that is above reproach, behavior that protects conscience of everyone we may cross paths with. To fail in respects to this is sinning against our Lord and surely severe discipline is in store for those who maintain careless behavior. The point is on earth Christians naturally will be judged by the consciences of other men.

In *Chapter 9* Paul needs to defend himself for the sake of principle so that the Corinthians would not be prone to erroneous thinking related to universally legitimate concepts. The Corinthians wanted to criticize Paul so he needed to set some very basic things straight. The apostles and the other brothers i.e. Christians all had a right to eat good food and drink good wine and also to take a believing wife if they so desired. The Corinthians also had a stingy attitude and were thinking that the preachers should all go get what they considered a real job even though none of them would have ever been able to endure the hostilities and hardships that Paul had endured in order to fulfill his ministry to them and others. The point is that preachers have a right to be paid by their congregation; yet Paul did not use this right with them because he anticipated their weakness in regards to these matters. From verse 19 to the end of the chapter Paul expresses his own self restraint regarding many different circumstances, this in turn enabling him to have the measure of success God intended for him.

Chapter 10 starts off with Paul impressing upon the Corinthians the oneness of Israel in relationship to Christ. He does this to remind them of unity yet indicates that they were at present following in the same pattern as Israel's failures. Paul is talking to them in terms of idolatry but is using this to illustrate all sin and failures related to lust and deception yet it includes the idea of literal idolatry in fact all sin is related to idolatry i.e. lust for anything that is contrary to God's will for our lives. Verses 15-18 reflect the interrelation we have in the body of Christ; Paul is warning them not to return to their idolatrous pasts indicating they would in fact be in participation with the demons which would in turn provoke the Lord to jealousy bringing punishment from the Lord upon themselves. Paul concludes in verse 23 that outside of sin he could do anything he wanted but concludes that much of it would be of no profit unless it was spiritually uplifting to those around us. Paul giving more examples concludes the chapter with his testimony of excellence seeking always the

profit of others so that the gospel be not hindered. Up to this point Paul has encouraged the Corinthians to be of one heart towards each other, defended his ministry to them because of them wanting to reject him, instructing them to lay aside the sins of the past, and to do nothing that would bring discredit to the word of God.

Paul in *Chapter 11* begins by instructing them to follow in his examples of conduct and commends them for holding firmly to the ordinances. What is Paul referring to here? What does he mean and why would he now be commending them considering they have been entangled in many types of sin? The answer to this question is simple: The Corinthians up to this point had not entertained the false Gospel; nowhere in this letter is there any indication that the Corinthians had deviated in their thinking regarding what constitutes the true Gospel. If they had fallen in this way it would have represented the greatest problem of all and Paul certainly would have addressed that issue. Only several months after this Paul does refute their willingness to entertain people who were teaching a different Jesus: 2Cor 11:3-4. Because we see almost every other type of failure being addressed in the (first) letter it is reasonable to say that Paul was referring to the basic elements of our faith i.e. the Gospel. In order for the Corinthians to make greater use of their life with God Paul needed to give them new instructions related to the chain of command principle. The Corinthian men already had an antiauthority attitude and needed to recognize the authority of Christ before they were going to be able to move ahead spiritually. With Christ's victory on the cross the Father made our Lord Head over the Church and also all authority and power was given to Him in heavens and the earth. For any type of progress towards maturity to take place the Corinthian men were going to have to pick up their heads and look the Lord in the face and put the idea of submitting to Him at the very front of their mind. The only true leadership a Christian man can provide for his wife will be his undistracted devotion to the Lord, this in turn creates in him greater sensitivity to the woman's needs. A man in essence is blind until he's willing to surrender obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. The woman is accountable to the man and should set her face towards him, and Christ is accountable to God. And taking this one step farther: children are accountable to the parents. This represents a beautiful system, yet Christians having a chip on their shoulder i.e. sin, will resist this beauty. Another principle is: Christ seeks to please the Father, Men should seek to please Christ, Wives should seek to please their husbands, and Children should be taught to respect individuals who are vested with authority within a society. Verse four we find has been mistranslated to the masses ever since the translation of the King James Version some five hundred years ago. What is actually said in this verse is "Every man praying or prophesying with his head down dishonors his Head. This is meant to be taken literally but also is reflective of the attitude of soul. The point is that God does not give us favor because we have a defeated attitude. He wants us to pray in a state of humility but yet with confidence. The defeated attitude comes from a long pattern of failure in the Christian life. When we approach God we are to do so leaving the defeat of the past behind us forsaking the sins leaving them behind with a mind set on complete obedience to God. The point is a father does not want a whiney son with his head down making petitions for things; the father wants to see the son's face, to look eye to eye with him. This next verse reflects that in the Corinthian culture women were to wear a head covering; evidently some of the women were neglecting this custom while out in public places and were therefore bringing shame to their Husbands and also to the Corinthian Church. Paul indicates the women

neglecting this custom are one and the same as the one who is shaved i.e. a temple prostitute. Paul goes on to graphically explain that the woman is neither to have short hair or her head shaved; the point we are left with here is Christian women are to have long hair. Paul contrasts to the man being the image and glory of God so his hair is to be kept short and the woman is the glory of man. The idea here is that God desires for the man to serve Him and for the woman to serve the man. Before anyone is ready to reject this please bear in mind that this is something beautiful and furthermore has great significance. God made the man with a heart and capacity to lead; a man needs to do this in order to feel good about himself; the man needs that beautiful and powerful glory that the woman has to feel good about himself. The man needs this glory from the woman so he has some to pass onto the Lord. It is important that the man treat the woman well so it will be easier for her to give of her self in this way. The man who does not treat the woman well, loving her in a way that pleases the Lord, is hurting his own flesh and incapacitating his own ability to give glory to the Lord. There is nothing more saddening to see than this type of failure on the part of the man and should be avoided at all cost: the man needs to develop a willingness to sacrifice after the same principle as our Lord. Verses 8 and 9 continue with the principle with verse 10 reflecting that the angels learn about their roles in term of subordination to God from observing the behavior of the honorable woman. Verses 11 and 12 reflect the interdependence in the Lord, man, woman, God. Verses 13 thru 16 make it clear that God intends for men to have short hair, women to have long hair, this is not an issue of culture or custom, even nature testifies to this. Remember God created nature. Resistance to these truths is simply indicative of contentions towards Christ and His Body.

One last point that should be understood before moving on is that verse 16 is the final conclusion to what Paul has previously said starting with verse two; verse 1 is actually the end of chapter 10. Paul was reflecting on the problems that had been reported to him; these instructions reflect disorderly conduct that had taken place outside the assembly whereas verse 17 reflects a transition where Paul turns his attention to problems related to the private assembly of the Church Body. This is not easily seen in most translations of the Bible but is clearly reflected in the Greek. What is ahead of us in this study is almost never a problem prior to God using a new nation to take the Gospel throughout the world. In almost all cultures in the world prior to Christianity having a major influence the men rule over the women in the marriage. This is right and proper and pleasing in the sight of God and agrees with the word of God. The problem is when there is teaching regarding a man's authority over the woman; then and there after it will eventually be Satan's prerogative to challenge the integrity of those marriages. The point is that Satan attempts to destroy Christian marriage and often does. Many of these marriages stay together despite the destruction Satan has caused; this always represents a victory for God; those staying together will be rebuilt into something even better than before. Tragically many marriages break up therefore loosing out on any opportunity to see the true power and outcome of God's dealings with those who endure the suffering related to this type of testing; those who do endure are going to see God in greater depths than was previously possible. It is important to remember that suffering is in our lives as a guide taking us to new and better places spiritually. Before a Christian marriage is going to improve the man needs to turn his face to the Lord and give that relationship the dedication it deserved before there were all the problems. This is not a part-time dedication; this is a full time dedication. The

problem with part-time dedication is it always involves compromise which amounts to hypocrisy: in other words, giving the Lord our second portion rather than the first. Rather than giving the Lord our best we tend to just give Him defective sacrifices. That's why in the old book it says to bring the whole ten percent. Now God requires more than ten percent, He wants our Heart complete and without defect. There will be a certain amount of pain in order to take us where He wants us, but when we get there it will be well worth it. Because a man is to love the wife as Christ loves the Church it calls for the man to care for the woman not only in a way that has her best interests in mind but also in a way that recognizes her freedom of self determination. The point is that dominating a woman is not loving a woman. If a man is to realize the true respect from a woman then he is to provide a standard of integrity from truth and wisdom. The point is a man can not expect the woman's confidence if he has betrayed the very confidence that women expect and in fact need to feel a sense of value and confidence. Good women can endure the betrayal of a man but this is no concession to faithfulness and it is horrifying that a man would put his wife to this test. When betrayal has stepped into the equation as it often does then the only consolation is forgiveness. For those who choose not to betray the spouse's confidence the scripture indicates that one must flee these situations otherwise failure is inevitable. Loving the wife unconditionally is the noblest cause a man will have from the Lord while on earth. On the other hand the woman's respect for the man is of a high nature, and represents the greatest thing the Lord will have for the woman before going to be with Him. The point is that God is glorified when a woman and a man obey these things and certainly the devil seeks to pervert everything that is sacred to the Lord. So then let's honor the Lord who has given us good things. In Eph 5:28-33 we have the command to love the wife as your own body. So many men read this and don't get what it means but now you will be without excuse. A man needs to treat the woman how he wants to be treated and any good thing that he would desire for himself should not be withheld from her; after all women like good things too. The wives are to respect and obey the men even if they are disobedient to the Lord. A good woman has the power from the Lord to win the heart of her man without being evil; in fact the woman that tries to control the man by means of evil mocks the Lord and there will be no rest in that house. Unbelievers will reject direct statement in the word of God because they are not able to see the beauty of God and all the good He has done. We don't instruct the Lord but He instructs us. There will come a time to gather the sheep that have been scattered because of shepherds allowing wolves and goats into the sheep fold; this they do in the name of greed and ignorance. The woman in the Church is not God's mouth piece to the rest of the body, and is to remain silent. This of course does not exclude women from singing or speaking to children that might be unruly; also this does not exclude them from social interaction before and after the gathering; but if there are any questions regarding what has been taught, the wives are to ask their own husbands when they get home. Paul uses the example of the Levitical law where only men were allowed to minister within the main meeting area; outside that area women are allowed and instructed to teach good things, it is also evident that women will play a great role in teaching the children outside of the main assembly. Because of these principles we know that women who want to pray should pray together in private and not using that occasion for the purpose of gossip. God has designed this plan: that a Christian husband needs to learn how to follow the Lord in a disciplined and faithful manner whereas the Christian wives should set their hearts to honoring the man.

