

## #1 - God’s Universal Love

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).*

## #2 - God’s Universal Love

*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).*

## #3 - God’s Universal Love

God loves all people equally. Men and women, girls and boys are equally important to God and are identically saved by Christ. God’s gifts in the areas of intelligence, skills and abilities are distributed to both men and women in varying degrees.

#4 - While all people are equally important to God, God has given men and women different roles. God is not a male chauvinist. The roles he has assigned signify neither superiority nor inferiority. They simply express an order God has established. The order God established at creation is that man is the head and woman the helper. This order also carries over into the church, where God has instructed not only that women not take authority over men, but that men cheerfully and willingly take up the responsibilities of congregational leadership which God has assigned them.

The scriptures have much to say on these issues.

*Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).*

*The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18).*

*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband (Ephesians 5:21-33).*

*Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers (1 Peter 3:1-7).*

*A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner (1 Timothy 2:11-14).*

*For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. (1 Corinthians 14:33-37).*

#5 - The word order of 1 Corinthians 11:3 helps us to understand that terms such as submission or subordination, as the Bible uses those terms in the context of man and woman roles, do not carry any negative connotations. If the man is to willingly submit to Christ, and if Christ, according to his human nature, willingly submitted to his heavenly Father, the woman’s submission to the man who is her head is to take place willingly as a recognition that this is a loving God’s desire and arrangement.

#6 - Two of the most visible applications of these principles in a WELS congregation:

1) the pastoral office

Evangelical practice still requires women to honor the headship of men by not seeking the pastoral office. Certain forms of the public ministry carry with them the responsibility to exercise authority over male and female members of the church (e.g., the parish pastorate, district and synodical offices). Women will not, therefore, seek the pastoral office because they want to uphold the principle of the headship of man.

2) voters’ assemblies

In a desire to affirm the headship of men, our congregations withhold voting privileges from women in the governing assemblies. The Christian woman knows that if she were to demand the right to vote and to govern the congregation, she would be exercising authority over the man who is to be her head. Thus she will forego seeking such decision-making in the congregation.

#7 - At this time the lesson will include initial discussion of the passages read and the points made.

#8 -

“Male and Female He Created Them” Genesis 1:27

The Spirit In Which We Apply The Scriptural Roles Of Man And Woman

Rev. Walt Beckmann

### ***IN THE HOME***

There probably isn’t a better place to go to begin to understand the scriptural relationship of man and woman than to your own church where a bride and groom are standing before the altar and are about to be joined together in marriage. The pastor reminds them, from God’s Word, that marriage is a loving companionship created by God Himself, a companionship which He promises to bless and for which He gives His own counsel and direction.

The pastor reminds the husband of God’s specific direction to him: that he is to love his wife as Christ loved His bride the Church and even laid down His life for her. *“In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives,”* Ephesians 5:28. The husband is the head of the wife. He will exercise that responsibility by loving, cherishing, protecting and supporting the wife the Lord is giving to him and seeing to it that the home they are establishing is a truly Christian home in which Christ is always the unseen head and the Word is taught to all in love and in truth.

The pastor then reminds the bride, from the same Word of God, that she is to submit to her husband as

Christ's bride, the church, submits to Him. She is to live for her husband who is ready to die for her. She is to be a God-pleasing helper, working with her husband to establish a Christian marriage and home.

Since both husband and wife have their sinful human natures, they will at times fail in their marital responsibilities and will not always show each other the love and respect they should. To keep this from tearing apart what God has joined together they will daily turn to God's Word for forgiveness and for the strength to improve their own marital commitment and to forgive each other for Jesus' sake.

Strengthened by that Word they will live together as heirs of the gracious gift of life (I Peter 3:8), and their home here on earth will become, more and more, a blessed foretaste of our eternal home in heaven. They will realize how true that catechism verse is:

*"Let each his lesson learn with care,  
and all the household well shall fare."*

### **IN THE CHURCH**

It should come as no surprise that when Christians leave their homes and gather for worship, fellowship, and instruction in God's house, God doesn't abandon or reverse the order He has established for the home but prescribes it also for the Church. (1 Corinthians 14:33-35). Those who have been given headship and responsibilities in the home have that same position in the church - under Christ, of course.

Christian men consider their church to be their spiritual family. They regard the female members of their congregations as their sisters in Christ. If there is a considerable age difference, they will even treat them with the love and respect which a Christian son ought to show his mother (1 Timothy 5:2).

In that loving spirit, they will assume their God-given responsibility in the church for the good of all the members. They will cheerfully, even sacrificially, give of their time and energy to oversee the business of God's House, to see to it that God's Word is taught in truth and that programs of Bible study and instruction in sound doctrine are made available to all members of their spiritual family. They will foster good stewardship and fellowship, promote and participate in energetic programs of outreach and evangelism, and show loving concern for the physical and spiritual welfare of every member. They will strive to be men full of the Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3) and will seek that Spirit and wisdom from the Holy Scriptures.

Just as Christian husbands strive to bring joy into the lives of their God-given wives, so Christian men in the congregation will consider the spiritual needs of their sisters in Christ and will strive to do all in their power to make their worship and fellowship edifying and delightful. They will also do all they can to recognize the gifts of their spiritual sisters, seek their input, develop programs in which those gifts can be used in a God-pleasing way in the service of the Lord and of His Church, and encourage them to joyfully participate in such service.

Just as in the Christian home so also in the Christian Church, Christian women will recognize the headship of their brothers in Christ. They will cheerfully help and serve in any way they can and, in loving obedience to Christ the true head of the church, accept the scriptural restriction that they *are not permitted to teach or have authority over the man*. (1 Timothy 2:11-12). For the strength to do this they too will turn to Christ, to the Word, and to the Spirit.

As Christian men and women worship and serve together in this way in the church, they will experience what Paul speaks of in Ephesians 4:16: *"From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."*

## ***IN THE ORDER OF CREATION***

As brother and sisters in Christ, we also realize from God's Word that our roles in the home and in the church rest upon God's ancient order of creation. (1 Timothy 2:13, 1 Corinthians 11:8-9). That order was perfect. It was created for our good, and if man and woman had not fallen into sin and lost the image of God, they would have been able to live according to God's order. Sin, however, destroyed their perfect relationship with God and with one another. When the Holy Spirit, by the power of the Gospel, brings people to faith He also begins to restore that lost image of God in their hearts and lives, By the power of the Gospel they also begin to grow in the ability and desire to live in their God-assigned roles for Jesus' sake.

## ***IN THE WORLD***

Unlike the Christian home and the Christian Church the unregenerate world is not motivated by the Gospel or guided by God's will. In fact, to the world that all seems rather foolish.

Our great commission regarding the unregenerate world, which is lost in unbelief and living in spiritual darkness, is that we first of all go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, to seek thereby to win them for Christ and for salvation. Accepting God's will regarding Christian living and role relationships is not something which can precede saving faith but must come as a result or a fruit of it.

Therefore, we do not try to force our morality upon the world (1 Corinthians 5:12), but will seek to influence the world by being witnesses for Christ and by letting the light of our good works shine.

Just how do we as Christians allow our light to shine before the world on this particular issue? The Table of Duties in our Catechism reminds us that we do this by submitting to all civil authorities that God has placed over us and by obeying all who are over us in the work place, just as we obey Christ. When we, as Christian men and Christian women, are placed into positions of authority in the world, we will try to administer that authority in Christian love and concern for those who are under us, always remembering that the Lord and Master of us all is in heaven and has told us that the humble, loving, serving mind which was in Him should also be in us in all our relationships with one another.

Since the unregenerate world is often cruel, self-centered and even godless, Christian women, who must live and work in that environment, will not have the protection of the Gospel's influence as they do in the Christian home and in the Christian Church. In Luke 22:35-36 Jesus told His disciples that they would soon be going out into an environment where they would find it necessary to carry a purse, and even a sword. Christian love and concern will keep us from imposing undue restrictions upon, and binding the consciences of, Christian women when they must go out and live, work, manage their property, fulfill their responsibilities as citizens, support themselves and their families, and defend themselves, in a sinful hostile environment.

In another document on this subject we stated that, "We reject the opinion that all women are always subject to all men as an exaggeration of what the Scriptures teach." The roles of man and woman is an application of God's Law, but it is an application which must always be made in love, for as Scripture clearly teaches, "*Love is the fulfilling of the Law.*"

Finally, there's a way in which Christian men in particular can allow their light to shine. The love and concern they show for the women in their homes and churches, the love and concern which they show to all people with whom they come into contact in every way in their daily lives, is a love and concern which they should always strive to show towards all women. They should be concerned about the women's feelings and well being, always striving to do all they can to keep them from being used and abused in this sinful world.

This is the spirit in which we apply the roles of man and woman in the various phases of our lives. May God give us all that spirit for Jesus' sake.

## #9

Helpful Comments from [The People’s Bible](#)

Ephesians 5:22-27 Armin Panning

To understand these verses one needs to arrive at answers to two questions: What does it mean to “submit” and why should a wife submit to her husband? In English it is hard to reflect the more neutral tone of the Greek verb we translate as “submit.” All our English verbs tend to convey some negative connotations. The root meaning of the Greek verb means simply “to rank people or things in order under some specific pattern.” It does not imply inferiority or lesser value, as our English verbs too easily suggest. To “be subordinate” might come closest to reflecting the Greek.

All comparisons limp, but a situation from the sports world can perhaps bring us a step closer to grasping the meaning of “submit.” Take the case of a pitcher and catcher on a baseball team. Both are on the same side and have the same objective; both want to make their contribution to winning the game. But the things they do are quite different!

Usually it’s the catcher who decides what pitch should be thrown. The pitcher “submits” to that decision. That doesn’t mean he can’t ever “shake off” a pitch or that there might not be an occasional conference at the mound, but in general, the catcher calls the pitches. Does that mean the catcher is better than the pitcher? Is the pitcher inferior because he submits to the catcher’s selection of pitches? Not at all! That’s simply the way things work best. They both recognize that each can’t be doing his own thing if they want to win the ball game. Somebody has to decide whether a fast ball or a change-up is more likely to strike Casey out. It’s a matter of assigned roles, a designated order of things. That’s the essence of team play.

Marriage is certainly a team project. The God of order who instituted it has designated the manner in which it will be most harmonious and function with the greatest blessing. In his wisdom he has delegated headship, or the leadership role, to the husband. “Submission” on the wife’s part is simply acknowledging that God-given role relationship.

“But why should a wife submit to her husband?” some grumble. By nature all of us are inclined to inject our notions of equality and our ideas of “fairness” and conclude God is imposing an unfair arrangement on women. But Paul is not talking to natural man or unregenerate people here. He is confident that his readers are filled with the Spirit and are people who understand when he urges them to submit “out of reverence for Christ.” He is confident the feeling of unfairness will flee when he brings Christ into the picture.

Christ is the head of the church, and as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands. In the next section addressed to husbands, Paul will say much more about Christ’s gentle and loving treatment of the church. For the moment it’s sufficient for him to draw the parallel and assume that everyone will reach the proper conclusion: The church’s submitting to Christ is not a demeaning thing but something that brings great blessing. Such is the case also in a marriage where the wife accepts the headship of her husband.

Unfortunately, even at their best, husbands can’t begin to hold a candle to Christ’s love for the church. But the pattern, the model of what a Christian husband should be, is clearly indicated. Paul now proceeds to enlarge on what Christ has done for the church and urge it as a pattern and guide for husbands to follow.

As it is the wife’s duty to recognize the leadership role of her husband, so it is the husband’s duty to love her. It is important to recognize that we are here again dealing with that beautiful and highly significant Greek word for love, *agape*. Greek has a number of words for “love.” One designated mutual love between friends; another, physical attraction. Then there was *agape*, the unselfish, one-way love we previously discussed—God’s totally unselfish love for us (2:4,5; 4:2). God’s *agape* moved him to give us great and precious blessings, not because we could return and requite his love but simply out of his boundless goodness and mercy. His unselfish love moved him to do all that for us.

Now Paul says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Christ showed the ultimate in unselfish love by what he was willing to do for the church. He gave up his life to win her for himself. However, he not only purchased her for himself at the price of his life blood, but he raised her to a most enviable position. He “cleansed her by the washing with water through the word.” Through the means of grace, Word and sacrament, he cleansed her of her many transgressions, forgave her sin, quieted her conscience, gave her peace with God, and assured her of security in his protecting hand.

But what he has done for her on earth is only a small foretaste of what he still has in mind for her. On judgment day he will present her as a bride—not to someone else, but to himself. Then she will be a “radiant church,” without any stain from the outside or wrinkle developed on the inside. She will not have any blemish but will be “holy and blameless.”

With Christ’s unselfish love for the church serving as a backdrop, Paul now says, “In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives.” Christlike leadership leaves absolutely no room for a husband to be a dictator or tyrant. As he looks to Christ’s example of headship over the church, he will find no basis to be selfish or domineering. Nor will he be unconcerned about his wife’s needs or unappreciative of what she brings to the marriage team.

It will be evident that if a husband is to fulfill his leadership role as Paul outlines it, he has his work cut out for him! Fortunately, Christ’s love is not only the pattern and example, but it also provides the motivation to do what God asks and the strength to put that resolve into practice. To be sure, every husband—sinner that he is—will be imperfect. But Christ’s love will compel him daily to strive for the ideal illustrated by our Savior’s love for the church. With God’s help husbands can begin to approximate that.

Helpful Comments from [The People's Bible](#)

## 1 Peter 3:1-7 – Mark Jeske

Here now is a third shocking way in which Christians show their new lives by submission: wives to husbands. Just as the selfish sinner in us does not particularly care to yield to the authority of governments or employers, so marriages will be troubled when women do not allow their husbands to function as head. And just as respectful Christian citizens and respectful Christian slaves make Christ look good, so do respectful and submissive Christian wives. Pagan Romans and Greeks who feared that Christianity would destroy society by destroying government, business, and family relationships were surprised to learn that Christians made the best citizens and workers and that Christian women made the best wives.

Men are not superior to women in God's world. They do not have greater worth, intelligence, or value. They do, however, have a different God-given *function* within marriage, and that is to be the head (see 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:23). The husband is to be Christ to his family, loving them and sacrificing himself as did Christ, using greater strength, authority, and leadership to honor God and provide for and protect them. Christian men are themselves submissive to Jesus Christ, who is their head. A woman has nothing to fear about submitting to a man who himself has submitted to the Lord, for the man will use his headship not to serve himself and make demands but to serve and bless his wife and children. This is why it is so important for Christian single people to seek a spouse who is a Christian.

But what if a woman comes to faith in Christ and her husband doesn't? Does the fact that he does not recognize Christ as *his* head mean that she doesn't have to recognize him as *her* head? No, says Peter. If he is an unbeliever, win-fling him over to Christ should be her first priority, and that will not happen if she withdraws from him, shows him that she despises him, or disrespects him publicly or privately. Then he would blame her Christianity for making their marriage miserable. God's way is for the believing wife to treat her husband well—in this way the silent testimony of her love and submission will make Jesus Christ look good, and the husband may later come to faith because of the wonderful way in which she treats him.

Fearful wives would call that marital slavery. Peter thought of it as liberating. He says, "Do not give way to fear." He reminded his readers of Sarah, the mother of all believers, who gave her husband, Abraham, her respect and submission, calling him master (Genesis 18:12). "You are her daughters if you do what is right." Sarah's daughters have God's blessing on their homes, and they have his promise of protection too when they choose to live his way.

Another destructive pressure that Christian women faced was the pressure from society to be beautiful. Then, as now, women felt relentlessly judged, valued, and graded on their appearance. Peter assured them that they didn't have to play that game, asking them whose approval they most sought. Instead of dressing to compete for the attention of men and the approval of other women, Christian women should ask themselves what God values. The holy women of the past who put their faith in God cared most about what God thought of them, and so they didn't allow their feelings of insecurity with their outward appearance make them feel miserable and drive them to fancy hairdos, cosmetics, jewelry, and designer clothes in the vain hope that that would make them somebody.

The kind of beauty that God values most is inward. He much prefers a gentle and quiet spirit to one that is loud and forceful. Verse 3 is not telling women today that braids, jewelry, and nice clothes are sinful, but that women (and men) should prize the beauty of character more than the beauty of fashion magazines. True beauty comes from the inside out, not vice versa.

The traps that Christian husbands might fall into were twofold: (1) using their headship and authority selfishly— to control, abuse, and dominate; (2) seeing their greater physical, and perhaps emotional, strength as making them superior, despising their wives for being weaker than they. Just as society measures young women and grades them on the basis of their beauty, society measures and grades young men on the basis of strength. Strong young *men without Jesus Christ tend not to respect people* they perceive as weak. In Christless relationships, the strong prey on the weak.

God wants his men to *think* about the way they treat their women, to be considerate of them, to see the male and female differences as God-given and therefore having a purpose. The fact that women in general are weaker physically has always made them more vulnerable to assault, rape, and sexual exploitation. Dr. James Dobson has written extensively, on the basis of counseling hundreds of troubled marriage partners, that women also seem more emotionally vulnerable to insecurity and low self-esteem. Wives need their husbands to treat them with *honor* as the weaker partner not with disdain. Husbands need to remember that their wives are fellow heirs of heaven. God is watching his men and holding them accountable, deciding on how to answer their prayers by their behavior toward their wives.

Helpful Comments from The People’s Bible

I Timothy 2:11-15 Armin Schuetze

Paul looks at a teaching/learning situation. Since Christians have been instructed to teach “everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20), there will be many such situations in the church and among Christians. “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.” In speaking of submission, Paul is applying a general principle regarding the relation of man and woman to the specific teaching/learning situation. The principle and its divine origin he presents in the verses that follow.

“I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.” Here Paul states the principle and makes an application. The application is that a woman is not to teach; she must be silent. The principle is that a woman is not “to have authority over man.” Paul is not setting up a rule or law that prohibits all teaching by women. The concern is that she not teach when her teaching violates the “authority” principle.

What is the basis or origin of this principle? Paul refers to the time of creation. “For Adam was formed first, then Eve.” God showed that he was establishing this male and female relationship by the chronological sequence in which he created Adam and Eve. Genesis, chapter two, records the historical event: “The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. . . . The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’ . . . Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man” (2:7,18,22). Thus God created each, man and woman, for a specific role, that of head and helper. This relationship is violated if the woman were to teach and have authority over the man. That is contrary to God’s will as revealed in creation. This is the reason for Paul’s “I do not permit.”

Paul adds another point. He looks back to the next historical event recorded in Genesis, the fall into sin. “And Adam was not deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.” Our first impression may be that Eve’s weakness in being deceived is the reason she is not permitted to teach or to have authority over man. But to understand the point Paul is making we need to examine the historical account in Genesis, chapter three.

The account begins with the serpent (Satan) approaching Eve and deceiving her. “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.” The account continues: “She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (3:6). Adam was not deceived by Satan’s lies and promises. Nevertheless, he failed to provide leadership but rather followed the lead of Eve and took the fruit from her and ate. Although Eve initiated the sin, God held Adam, whom he had created first as the head, responsible for the fall. There was a reversal of the roles God had given to each. Eve took the lead and Adam followed. So God tells Adam: “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ Cursed is the ground because of you” (3:17). Thus, in writing to the Romans, Paul identifies Adam as the one man through whom “sin entered the world., and death through sin” (Romans 5:12). When Eve stepped out of her assigned role and Adam did not live up to his, the result was disastrous.

Although God held Adam responsible as the head, he also had a word for Eve, showing what the consequences of her action were for the woman: “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” (Genesis 3:16). The blessing God had pronounced on them when he said, “Be fruitful and increase in number,” would now involve pain and suffering. Because they were now sinful, the head and helper relationship would be seen and felt as one in which man was ruling over her. This relationship now was subject to abuse by man as the head and to resentment by the woman as helper.

Nevertheless, the will of God is still that man and woman each acknowledge the order God established in creation, and function according to it. Therefore Paul writes: “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over man.” Paul applied this principle for the same reason to the Corinthian congregation assembled for worship (1 Corinthians 14:34).

Having pointed out that the woman “was deceived and became a sinner,” Paul concludes this discussion with the words: “But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.” This verse has been called the most difficult in the pastoral letters and has received a number of interpretations. There is no need to consider them all. One that we can rule out, however, is that through bearing children a woman may gain salvation for herself. For women as for men, salvation is received by continuing in “faith, love and holiness with propriety.” Faith embraces the Lord Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all. It produces the fruit of love and holiness with propriety which is evidence of a living faith.

But how does “through childbearing” fit into the picture? Some commentators see in the “childbearing” a reference to the birth of a particular child, the Lord Jesus. This expresses a basic, important truth and would render a valid meaning. We may still ask, however, whether this is the meaning Paul had in mind. Paul has been speaking about the woman’s specific role as given in creation. She had stepped out of that role, had been deceived by Satan and became a sinner. She need not, however, feel deprived or inferior as man’s helper. Salvation is hers, living in the role God had assigned to her. Unique and special in that role is bearing children and the mothering that goes with it. Living according to her God-given role will not in any way deprive her of the salvation that we all have alone through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. A Christian woman will find genuine fulfillment as she conducts herself according to God’s plan.

We add a few comments and applications. The world, steeped in humanistic, evolutionistic philosophy, tempts also the Christian woman to question the head and helper relationship that goes back to creation. She is told that it is something demeaning to woman and prejudicial. Increasingly, Christian, including Lutheran, churches are “reinterpreting” what God says so that it agrees with prevailing views about equality and rights.

Paul writes to the Galatians: “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (3:26). To emphasize the “all” he adds: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (3:28). Paul reassures men and women that their status and role in this present world in no way affects their being children of God through faith in Christ. Does this, then, do away with role differences in this life? Some make that claim. God’s word does not. In the chapter we have studied in this letter to Timothy, Paul expresses the same fact that Christ’s redemptive ransom was for all. Nevertheless, he states and applies the head and helper principle to the way Christians live together in the Christian church as it exists in this world. The truth about our redemption and relationship to God does not nullify God’s revelation of his will for our life during this time of grace here and now.

In his letter to the Ephesians (5:22-33), Paul applies the same principle to husbands and wives. In calling on the wives to submit to their husbands, Paul compares the husband and wife relationship to that of Christ and the church. Her submission thus is not something demeaning any more than the church’s submission to Christ, her Head. Husbands, however, on their part will avoid making it demeaning, by loving and caring for their wives as Christ does the church.

Peter similarly calls on wives to “be submissive to your husbands” (1 Peter 3:1). He holds out the prospect that the husbands may be won for Christ when they see the behavior of their wives, the purity and reverence of their lives (3:2). Surely there is nothing demeaning about a life that thus brings glory to Christ. Men at the same time are admonished by Peter not to take advantage of their wives as “the weaker partner.” They should be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect. This rules out every kind of abusive behavior, anything that might cause the wife to feel inferior. Christian husbands will remember that their Christian wives are heirs with them of the gracious gift of life, eternal life through Christ. What an incentive for men and women, husbands and wives, to serve the Lord Jesus according to his will!

Paul’s concern in writing to Timothy is that the male and female relationship may find application in the church, as it assembles for worship and work. Since it is based not on a local custom but on God’s order established at creation, its validity continues and requires application also today. “Women will not, therefore, seek the pastoral office because they want to uphold the principle of the headship of man... The Christian woman knows that if she were to demand the right to vote and to govern the congregation, she would be exercising authority over the man who is to be her head... The leaders of our congregations will constantly look for new areas to which they can properly direct the zeal and talents of dedicated women (Man and Woman in God’s World, NPH, 1985, pp. 19,20.)

#### Helpful Comments from The People’s Bible

I Corinthians 14:33-38 Carleton Toppe

In keeping with what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11 concerning the relation of woman to man, he forbids women to speak in the churches. They are to recognize the headship of men in the church. Men are to be in charge in church assemblies.

The Law requires this. The Law is the Old Testament, which records God’s will in this matter. 1 Timothy 2:13-14 quotes the Old Testament, whose record forms the basis for Paul’s instruction: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.” In the inspired record of Genesis 1-3 the Holy Spirit established the headship of man in the church as well as in the family. Church bodies that reject this order will have to answer to God for their disobedience. They will also have to answer to the history of human experience. The church and the home fare better when men accept and perform their God-given and God-ordained responsibilities.

Women are not even to raise questions in the public worship assemblies. If they want information, they should ask their “husbands” at home. The Greek word for “husbands” could also be translated “men folks.” Because the majority of women were married, however, “husbands” would be the typical males to whom they should bring their questions. Unmarried women or widows could go to men folks in their families. Paul uses the strong word “disgraceful” to describe the conduct of women who assert themselves in worship services even by asking questions, which could lead to discussions in which they would be tempted to take charge.

Paul told the women in the congregation in Corinth, and he tells women in the church today, that God’s Word must settle the issue of the role of women in the church. Paul is speaking to women’s liberationists and their supporters in every century when he asks them who gave them the authority to set aside God’s order: Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command.

As Christian women listen to the voice of God in scripture, they acknowledge God’s will in this matter. They will recognize that the efforts of feminists and their supporters in the church to justify changing the role of women in the church is not only vain; it is also dishonest manipulation of the Word of God. The problem is not that God’s Word isn’t clear. The problem is that respect for God’s Word is rare.