

Biblical Femininity

1. Let's start with what is obvious and incontrovertible.
 - a. Women are _____.
 - b. Women are _____ different from men.
 - c. Women have some inherent _____ differentiations from men (wombs and mammary glands).
 - d. These functional differences will necessarily result in differing _____ for men and women (childbearing and nursing).
 - e. Femininity corresponds to and begins with being _____.

2. Uncovering and uprooting underlying assumptions and corresponding accusations.

Assumption: Rank implies superiority/inferiority in essence.

Accusation: "If you say men have been given headship over women, you obviously think men are better than or superior to women."

Problem:

 - God assigned rank to men in His creation order and in His law.
 - Creation order: Genesis 2:18, 20/23, cf. 1 Tim. 2:13; 1 Cor. 11:3, 7, 8-9, etc.
 - Law: Exodus 18:25; Numbers 1:4; 3:39; 7:1-2; Deuteronomy 1:13, etc.
 - The Apostles assigned rank to men in the family and in the church.
 - In the family: Ephesians 5:23; 1 Peter 3:1f
 - In the church: 1 Corinthians 11; Timothy 2:11-14
 - Even our culture assigns rank among people without assuming essential inferiority.
 - In the military.
 - In government.
 - In business.

Assumption: Because women are capable of leading, providing, and protecting and in some cases are better at it than men, it would be wrong to say that women should not be the leaders, providers, and protectors.

Accusation: "If you believe that men have been given responsibility to lead, provide, and protect, you obviously believe that women are incapable of these things."

Problem:

- God commands that men be mustered for military service, yet Deborah excelled many men in military skill and courage.
- God charges men with the responsibility to protect, yet He uses Esther as a means of protection for the people of Israel, and Abigail keeps David from rash violence.

Assumption: It is always best to have the most capable person in leadership.

Accusation: "Male only leadership is foolish because it often keeps the most capable person out of leadership resulting in detriment to families, churches, and society."

Problem:

- The Lord chose uneducated, untrained men to be His Apostles.
- God called many who were not "wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble."
- God uses the foolish to shame the wise, the weak to shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:26-27).

Are there other assumptions and accusations?

3. Learning from Genesis 2:18.

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

- a. It is not good that the man be alone because this would preclude him from properly imaging forth God and from fulfilling his mandate to be fruitful, multiply, fill, subdue, and rule (1:28).
- b. The woman is designated his helper, meaning that her orientation is toward him in a task.
 - i. To give help is to give aid to another in his mission or work.
 - ii. The woman was given to Adam who had been commissioned with the specific responsibilities of cultivation and protection (2:15).
 - iii. Paul refers to this account to make clear that "the woman [was made] *for the man's sake*" (1 Corinthians 11:8-9).
 - iv. "Helper" cannot imply inferiority, as the same term is applied to God in Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7; Psalm 33:20, and many more.
- c. The woman is made "suitable for" or "corresponding to" the man.
 - i. She literally "faces him" as a complement to him.
 - ii. The animal kingdom had been named and evaluated for suitability before woman (2:19-20).
 - iii. She is created by God for *the purpose of help* due to correspondence (cf. "...there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the LORD..." (2:20-21).
 - iv. Her constitutional creation was for the purpose of helping the man in a mission.
- d. This helping orientation is confirmed in post-fall instructions.
 - i. Proverbs 31:12, 15, 23, 27-28.
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-9.
 - iii. Titus 2:3-5 (note "...so that the word of God will not be dishonored").
 - iv. Note that the focus of the curses issued by God in Genesis 3:16-19 indicate differing domains, responsibilities, and orientations.