

Biblical Femininity

What is a Woman? (Part Two/Three)

1. What is a woman?

A woman is a mature female disposed to live out her design and calling to help man fill, subdue, and rule the earth by bringing forth, caring for, and nurturing life and human flourishing in joyful, submissive partnership with a worthy¹ man and by affirming, receiving, and nurturing strength and leadership from all men in ways appropriate to her differing relationships.²

2. What is femininity?

Femininity is an acting out of the manifold expressions of womanly design and purpose.

3. How is femininity observed?

Femininity is observed in the manifold expressions of motherhood³, in the desire to bring forth, care for, and nurture life in submissive partnership with a worthy man, and in the joyful disposition to affirm, receive, and nurture strength and leadership from men in ways appropriate to a her differing relationships.

A example of how the world has influenced our thinking:

“For some women, embracing their femininity will mean they pursue careers in medicine, construction, or law enforcement because God has gifted them to serve in those areas. For others, raising children and making a home is a fulfillment of their God-given desires.”

4. What we can learn from 1 Timothy 5:14

Therefore, I want younger *widows* to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach.

- a. Younger widows is likely what Paul had in mind given the context. “Younger” is not defined.
- b. Get married (or re-married as it were).
- c. Bear children
- d. Keep house (oikodespoteō)—rule, be master, or manage the home.
- e. Give the enemy no occasion for reproach

¹ “Worthy” in this context is meant to be understood in the context of horizontal relationships, especially that of marriage and is not meant to suggest worthiness or merit before God.

² Adapted and expanded from John Piper’s definition of femininity found in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, John Piper and Wayne Grudem, p. 46.

³ This does not mean she must be a mother. The *expressions* of motherhood are observed in myriad ways as women seek to care for and nurture life within community. Not the least of these expressions would be the desire to bring about and nurture spiritual life such that she would become or serve as a spiritual mother.

5. What we can learn from Titus 2:3-5

Older women likewise are to be *reverent* in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

- a. Older women are to be...teachers of good
- b. **So that** they may encourage/instruct/bring back to wisdom (sōphronizō) the young women
- c. To love their husbands
- d. To love their children
- e. To be sensible (sōphrōn), pure, kind (good)
- f. Workers at home (oikourgos; compare Proverbs 31)
- g. Subject to their **own** husbands
- h. So that the word of God will not be dishonored.