



# Seek The Old Paths

*“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”*  
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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## WOMAN’S WORK IN THE CHURCH

*James W. Boyd*

***The belief and teaching that says men and women are to be equal in all matters is as foolish as contending that up is the same as down, and right is as proper as left. God describes their roles, not man.***

No religion or philosophy places womanhood on the pedestal as does the religion of Jesus Christ. This is because the faith of which Christ is the author places woman where God intended when He created her. After God had created everything else, including the man, He made a very special creation to be a “help” that was “meet” or suitable unto man. He created her with distinctive abilities and roles that would be peculiar to her and could not be accomplished by any other of all His creations. Her role was designated as distinctive, one of honor, nobility, when it is rightly understood and performed. Her position in life is God-ordained. Whereas paganism, modernism, heathenism, atheism, has reduced woman to be nothing more than property, a slave, an instrument to be used and discarded, only the bearer of children. Christ restored her to the side of man where God had originally placed her.

### WOMEN ARE EXCEPTIONAL

The role of women has been exceptional in the religion of Christ. Jesus was born of a virgin. Among His disciples were many women. The last to leave the cross were women. The first to His tomb were women. Women showed respect for Him in His burial.

Inasmuch as the Gospel is for all, we would expect, and we find, women

in the church of the Lord. If it were not for the spirituality of Christian women, the church would not be as strong as it is, nor would it even exist in many places. Women, like their brothers in Christ, have a mission, a work, a role in the Lord’s church. This lesson proposes to consider what her work is.

### THERE ARE LIMITATIONS

We begin by observing a teaching that must be remembered throughout the study of the woman’s role in the church. Whether people like it or not, whether it suits their thinking or not, God has placed certain limitations on the work of women in the church. Those who believe in God and accept His word and wisdom will not attempt to set the Lord’s will aside. In our world we hear much of freedom, emancipation of women, equal rights, and such things. None who is informed would deny that there has been much abuse of women in many areas where there ought to be fairness and equality, such as equal pay for equal work, the right to vote, the right to own property, etc. But the doctrine that says that men and women are to be equal in all matters is as foolish as contending that up is the same as down, and right is as proper as left. Some have taken this idea of across-the-board equality into the realm of religion. But it does not exist in the realm of

true New Testament Christianity. Christianity keeps both man and woman in the role for which God created them. We rather think God knows best for that which He designed and brought into being. Some in the church have evidently tired of standing with God in this matter. A few years ago one church bulletin had an article written by a woman in that congregation that contended the role of women in the church is exactly what is the role of men, no more and no less. (Gospel Advocate, 1974, p.649). The Highland church in Abilene, Texas, conducts a radio program that includes instrumental music and with women doing much of the preaching. All of this might be acceptable in the denominational world, but not if you respect the word of God.

### NOT TO ASSUME AUTHORITY

What are the limitations that God has placed on women? *“Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence”* (1 Tim. 2:11-12). This is simply stated and with apostolic authority. She is not to assume a position of authority or leadership over the man. Whatever she does must be done in consideration of this restriction.

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**Woman’s Work...**



## Guest Editorial

# TO CHANGE OR NOT TO CHANGE

Randy Kea

***Thinking you know God and actually being approved of God (by doing his will) are completely two different things. Changing God's word to suit the "times" is not acceptable with God. His word does not change.***

**E**ven in the first century there were those who claimed they knew God when they did not. Consider these passages: *"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent"* (John 17:3). *"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* (1 John 2:3-4). *"He that sayeth he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked"* (1 John 2:6). John 12:42 *"...Among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God"* (John 12:42-43).

The same is true today, many claim they believe in Jesus and the Bible, but upon close scrutiny, they really do not believe the Bible is from God, nor do they believe it has absolute authority. In other words, they do not respect the authority of the Scriptures. Many are concerned with pleasing the masses and being popular. Others claim to believe the Bible but try to soften or change its teaching by pointing out that culture has changed. They reason that an ancient book cannot be relevant in our time.

### THINGS THAT WILL NOT CHANGE

The nature of God will not change. *"I am the LORD, I change not"* (Malachi 3:6; cf. James 1:17, Numbers 23:19, Psalm 102:27).

Jesus will not change. *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and*

*for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines..."* (Heb. 13:8-9; John 8:58).

Man's needs will not change. *"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23; Rom. 3:23). *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths"* (Prov. 3:5-6).

The Bible will not change. *"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you"* (1 Peter 1:24-25). *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"* (Matt. 24:35; 2 John 2).

Man's accountability to God and His Word will not change. *"...We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Rom. 14:10-12). *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). God will *"render to every man according to his deeds"* (Rom. 2:6).

### THINGS PEOPLE HAVE SOUGHT TO CHANGE

Many have sought to change the Bible. Modern versions/translations is certainly an example. Men change and write into the text of the holy

Scriptures things they want to be true, but are not true. For example: The **Revised Standard Version (RSV)** changes "virgin" to "young woman" in Isaiah 7:14 which removes Jesus' deity and makes him no better than any other man. Matthew 1:23 is an inspired commentary on Isaiah 7:14 and declares "virgin" is the correct translation. Both Isaiah and Matthew were inspired. Such examples are multiplied throughout modern speech versions.

Many have sought to change the essential features of the church of Christ such as its *name* (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2); its *doctrine* (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Cor. 11:13-15); its *organization* (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 20:28); its *worship* (singing Col. 3:16; praying Acts 2:42; Lord's supper Acts 20:7; preaching Acts 20:7; giving 1 Cor. 16:1-2); and its *mission* (Matt. 28:19-20).

Clearly, many have changed the one true plan of salvation by inventing the so-called "sinner's prayer" or "inviting Jesus into your heart to be your personal savior." The New Testament does not say anything about either of these things. Sinners are never told to pray anything. The Bible says men must *believe* (John 8:24), *repent* (Acts 2:38), *confess* (Acts 8:37), and be *baptized in water* (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21) in order to be saved.

Even though God says, *"my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways..."* (Isa. 55:8), man ignores what God says and follows his own way. It is not uncommon to see churches advertise what they call a *traditional service* (more in line with the Bible) and a *contemporary service* (according to what people like). Seeking to draw the crowds, their philosophy is to make their worship a "have it your way" religion. Forget what God wants, we will do what we want. They fall for the devil's lie that the Bible is not what people need. He would have us believe we need to spice things up and give people what they like.

### THINGS WE SHOULD CHANGE

A closed mind. *"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them"* (Matt. 13:15).

Unbelief. *"Faith cometh by hearing,*

and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb 3:12). “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20).

A stubborn will. “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (John 5:40). Jesus said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not” (Matt. 23:37)!

### MANY CLAIMS TODAY

Many claim to believe the Bible but do not believe *Jesus built the church* and that *all saved people are in that one church* (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4; 5:23-25).

Many claim they respect the Bible but do not accept Bible teaching on the *one true plan of salvation* (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom 6:1-6, 17-18).

People claim they believe the Bible but have rejected what it says about the *role of women in the church and the home* (1 Cor. 11:3,7-11; Eph. 5:22-32; 1 Tim. 2:8-15).

A growing number of people claim they believe the Bible but because of modern culture have *redefined marriage* by saying it includes both *heterosexual* and *homosexual* unions (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:2-9; 1 Cor. 7:1-5). Homosexual/Lesbian beliefs and practices are a perversion of God’s creation of Adam (man) and Eve (woman). It is an abomination so great that God wiped the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah off the face of the earth because of it. Their sin was exceedingly grievous to God (Gen. 13:13; 18:20; 19:4-7, 23-29).

Conclusion: Some things must never be changed because of their divine and eternal nature. Some things should be changed in order to please God. We must not adjust the Bible to meet the demands of culture. We call upon all to adjust their lives to be in harmony with the Bible. We do not change the Bible; we allow it to change us. “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and

receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

God’s Word and only his Word is TRUTH (John 17:17). “Then said Jesus

to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**” (John 8:31-32).

## MAY GOD GRANT US GREAT BOLDNESS!

Ivie Powell

**W**hen people are in favor of killing (murdering) a child 6 minutes before birth, and even if the child survived the abortion, they also give full consent to kill (murder) the baby, they stand under the condemnation of Almighty God! “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18).

The condition of the Gentiles is vividly set forth as well as God’s attitude toward sin in Romans 1:18-32. Of special interest is verse 28, “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (fitting, ASV). A “reprobate mind” is one that casts God out of their mind. Their depraved mind was due to the fact “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.” This is the root problem of all who advocate aborting (murdering) babies! It is indeed a warped mind to sing “Oh how I love Jesus on Sunday,” and consent to murdering babies on Monday!

Parents need to teach their children that abortion is not “fetal tissue” or some kind of “blob of protoplasm,” but a real, live baby! Furthermore, babies are human and made “in the image of God” (Gen. 1:26). Jeremiah 1:5 states, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee.” An additional passage declaring that God recognizes a baby in the womb is Psalm 139:15-16: “My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” The Bible clearly states, “thou Shalt not kill” (Rom. 13:9)!

Another area many rigorously defend is **homosexuality**. Casting aside God and His inspired word, they call for legislation that would make it a “hate crime” to preach and write against the sins of the LGBTQ+ community. Our response is the same as that of Peter and John, “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word” (Acts 4:29).

My friends, homosexuality and lesbianism is an abomination in the sight of Almighty God (Lev. 20:13)! The word “abomination” is that which is detestable, disgusting and loathsome to God! Homosexuality, lesbianism and all perversion is condemned in Romans 1:24-32! Why did God give them up? Because they “changed the truth of God into a lie” (Rom. 1:25a)! God’s condemnation of all who participate in and give consent to those who live ungodly lives is seen in Romans 1:32, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in [‘also consent with’ ASV] them that do them.”

Remember Sodom and Gomorrah! “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly” (2 Peter 2:6). Of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jude also says they “are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7).

Yes, God loves all sinners, including LGBTQ+, and wants all sinners to obey the Gospel (1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 2:3-4). “O, earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord” (Jer. 22:29).

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## Woman's Work...

(Continued from page 41)

She is not to take dominion over man, nor allow herself to be involved in circumstances where she appears to have abandoned the required subjection to man.

God said to the woman that the man would rule over her (Gen. 3:16). *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God"* (1 Cor. 11:3). The reason for this ranking is given in 1 Timothy 2:13-14, *"For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."* This may not suit you. You may think you know better than God as to how things ought to be. But people have a history of showing themselves fools when they challenge the wisdom of God. It is when men and women alike will submit to God's will that things are as they ought to be. Deviation from God's word is to sin against God.

### WORSHIP

Because women are Christians, they are to worship as men are to worship. They are to sing, pray, partake of the Lord's supper, give, and study God's word. However, there is no authority to set aside God's limitations and allow her to take the lead in these activities. Some folks have the distorted idea that unless you are leading, you are not doing anything. A man who does not take the lead in worship still worships. So does the woman. The place and circumstance of that worship does not set aside what God has said. By this I mean that she must respect God's limitation whether it be in the public assembly, a home devotional, at the camp ground, wherever and whenever there be both men and women present, she must not assume authority over him.

We see one application of this principle even in Corinth and the subject of speaking in tongues. *"Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted for them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church"* (1 Cor. 14:34-35). We are

## *Whether people like it or not, whether it suits their thinking or not, God has placed certain limitations on the work of women in the church.*

aware this refers to a very special kind of service where miraculous gifts were used. We are aware that all women do not have husbands from whom they can seek information. But we are also aware that the limitations and restrictions of which Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2, were applied even to this situation in 1 Corinthians 14. Such a rule is repugnant to the modern, the liberals, the untaught and misguided innovators who think they know better than God. But such is given by God for her protection, her dignity, her uniqueness, not for her suppression.

Denominations, and some liberal members of the church, advocate women preachers, women song leaders, women leading in prayer in the presence of men. But we must recall that not everybody has a love for the truth either. Some contend that the only restriction on women is that they cannot be lady elders (Mission Magazine), but anything else is open to them.

The influence of this false doctrine is being seen in gatherings of young people where girls do the same as boys in worship. The young are often innocently mistaken because they are misled by the digressive adults. But they are in error. Some have contended that a woman can do whatever the elders will allow. They fail to appreciate the fact that even the elders are not permitted to set aside divine law. Advocates of such error cannot produce Biblical authority for what they preach and practice in this matter. It is a potential cause of division, and another step of the church going into denominational apostasy.

### TEACH

Women are to teach. Titus 2:3-5 tells us they are to teach young women. Obviously, if a parent, they are to teach children as did Eunice and Lois (2 Tim. 1:5). Teaching children, boys or girls, does not take authority from the man. No men are present. Women teaching in "bus programs" in the presence of men, and with puppets, etc. are violations of this Biblical teaching.

Even under certain conditions, a

woman can teach a man, as Priscilla and her husband Aquila, together taught Apollos the way of the Lord more perfectly. She did this without assuming authority over him. A wife can teach her husband and still be subject unto him. It would be impossible for a woman to conduct a public assembly without usurping authority, however.

But the place of women in teaching is not determined merely by whether it is public or private. A ladies' class may be considered public in that all ladies are invited. A woman is not to privately take authority over a man. The restriction is based on her respect of the man's authority over her and she is not to usurp that under any circumstances. For this reason she cannot lead songs, lead in prayer, preach, etc. in the presence of men. Women did not do so in the New Testament church and it was not simply because of the customs of the times. It was apostolic teaching behind it.

Philip had four daughters who prophesied. Prophesying means teaching. There is no indication of any violation of God's limitations on their part. Many women teach under circumstances harmonious with God's law and are careful to observe God's will while doing so. The **Today's English Version** of the New Testament reveals another of its many perversions when it says that Philip's daughters preached. That is not what they did. Preaching is a public proclamation of the word. This they did not do unless they violated the apostle's instructions.

### SERVE

Women are to serve. In Acts 9, we read of Dorcas, a woman full of good works and alms deeds (Acts 9:36). When she died and Peter was called, *"When he was come they brought him into the upper chamber, and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and the garments which she had made, while she was with them"* (Acts 9:39).

There are many acts of service for which she is especially adept, such as benevolent aid, caring for the sick,

visitation in the home, hospitality, showing sympathy. She is to bring up her children (1 Tim. 3:5), a task that has become repulsive to many modern women who prefer the so-called glamour of an out-of-the-home career. The most glorious career a woman can have is to serve her home as wife and mother. This is that for which she was especially made. How people can degrade this labor of love as some do simply shows their contempt for the dignity of homemaking and their contempt for God. Peter's mother-in-law rendered service to others.

Phebe (Rom. 16:1) was called a servant of the church. The word "servant" can also be translated "deaconess." But she is not a female deacon or the counterpart of a male deacon. The office of deacon is a permanent position indicating special appointment in an office. Not so with women who are servants of the church. Again, one does not have to hold some sort of official position to serve as God would have them serve.

#### EXAMPLES

Women are to be a Christ-like example in living properly. They are to be discreet and modest in their apparel (1 Tim. 2:9). This is a lost art with some women, even in the church. They are so impressed by the fashions of a sinful world that they fall for whatever style and fashion hits the clothing market whether it is modest or not. Christian women are not governed by the sinful things of this world. She can be attractive and stylish without being sinful. Christian women have always managed to do that.

She is to be an example in her behavior. *"Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they may also without the word be won by the conversation (manner of life) of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart,*

*in that which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands"* (1 Peter 3:1-5).

She is to be an example of proper submission to her husband as Sarah was before Abraham, *"Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement"* (1 Peter 3:6). She is to be an example of faith, as were those holy women of old time (Heb. 1; 1 Peter 3:5).

#### HELP TO HUSBAND

If a woman is married, she is to serve God by being a help meet to her husband (Gen. 2:18). For this she was created. When a woman is the proper help to her husband, she is fulfilling her prime purpose. The word "meet" means "suitable." Nothing else of God's creation was suitable for man, so He especially created woman. She does not take dominion over her husband, nor assumes the leadership in the home or church, but is a help to him. We all need to keep the distinction between being the head and being the help that is suited. It is Christ's will that the husband be the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church (Eph. 5:23).

Having pointed out the limitation God placed upon her, and telling why, we read further in 1 Timothy 2:15, *"Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."* There are various interpretations that people give to this verse. Some say it refers to the birth of the Savior by Mary. Certainly we are saved by the One born unto Mary. But that was an event of the past, and Paul says "is" which is present. It does not mean that physically bearing a child will produce spiritual salvation for the woman. Many women who are very ungodly have borne children. Furthermore, some of the most godly women in the Bible, and in our time,

have never borne children.

#### "CHILDBEARING"

That which makes more sense is to consider the word "childbearing" as representative of the distinctive role of women, and it stands for the whole of the role of women. Paul is saying, "If the woman is what she is supposed to be, she shall be saved." She was created after Adam, and she sinned first, but salvation can belong to her "if" she does what she is to do. Peter wrote, *"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered"* (1 Peter 3:7). She, like her husband, is a soul that is to be saved. She is also an heir of God and the eternal life offered through Christ. She can be saved when and if she does what God wants women to do.

The role of women in the church is not different from that of men in many instances, except in the limitation to which we have referred. She is to worship, teach, serve, live properly, be a good example, a good help for her husband, perform the wifely duties to husband and children and fulfill that special role for which she was created.

#### NO APOSTLES WERE WOMEN

It is significant that none of the apostles were women. We never read of women preachers, elders, deacons, public proclaimers. Men are told to pray everywhere, but not women (1 Tim. 2:8). There are places and circumstances in which she is not to lead in prayer.

Christians, loving God, and respecting women, do not wish to place women in a role for which God never created her. But all want women to be in Christ. When Paul wrote, *"there is neither male nor female ... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Gal. 3:28). He was not teaching that men and women are alike in all respects, or that they all have the same role and function, and their roles are interchangeable. He was teaching that the woman and the man are spiritual creatures and they both can be in Christ where there is salvation. Whether one be male or female makes no difference when it comes to benefiting from the sacrifice of the Son of God.

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# GOD'S BLESSINGS AND HOW TO KEEP THEM

Marvin L. Weir

**J**oshua was God's faithful servant. As he prepares to enter into the rest that awaits him, he calls together Israel's elders, heads, judges, and officers to remind them that faithfulness to Jehovah will always ensure His blessings. Let's learn from the speech of this godly warrior!

**How Israel's Possession was Secured!** It is clear that God is the Deliverer of His people, and not Joshua. The power of an evil Pharaoh had to be broken before Israel could escape their cruel taskmasters and travel toward the Promised Land. Moses and Joshua were influential and faithful leaders, but it is God who delivers His people. Joshua reminds Israel, "ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you" (Joshua 23:3).

Just as Israel had to be delivered from being bondservants to Egypt **before** traveling toward Canaan, people today must be delivered from the power and bondage of sin **before** having their minds set on Heaven. The power to do such comes from God and is found in obedience to the Gospel (Rom. 1:16).

Israel's enemies tried to keep them from enjoying what God had promised. There would be many temptations and stumbling blocks for Israel to endure on the way to the Promised Land. So it is with followers of Christ today! The devil, the world, and the flesh are bitterly opposed to one's soul claiming inheritance in that "house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). The same God that drove Israel's enemies from their sight (Josh. 23:5), guarantees that, if faithful, we too will be "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

**How Israel's Possession was Retained!** First, there could be no going back. Joshua reminds his people, "Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but

*they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you"* (Josh. 23:12-13). Israel was not allowed to return to Egypt or to the wilderness of sin. The principles that governed their former thinking and way of life had to be cast aside. Evil thoughts allowed to remain in their hearts would "be as pricks in their eyes" (Num. 33:55).

The New Testament warns Christians, "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). The old man (creature) that yields to the deeds of the world must be cast aside and the new creature in Christ must now reign (2 Cor. 5:17). Going back to worldly living will rob one of his blessings in Christ!

Second, Israel could have no fellowship with the enemy (Josh. 23:7,12)! Why would a follower of God desire to have fellowship with the Devil and his helpers? Let me reference a Scripture that most people want to **limit** to idolatry while **excluding** everything else. And, I fully understand the context, but I also understand the principle. Paul says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

An **unequal yoke** in any area is forbidden by God. When Israel associated with the Canaanites, it **never** improved the Canaanites, and it **always** brought misery to God's people. To fellowship evil is always wrong, and it is foolish to allow our associations to funnel us into something that is al-

ways unscriptural — an "unequal yoke."

**The Consequences of Going Back!** The children of Reuben and Gad were reminded that if they did not unite with their brethren in driving the Canaanites from the land of promise, their sin would find them out (Num. 32:23). Jehovah intended for His people to possess the land of Canaan, but He did not intend for them to associate with and marry the inhabitants of Canaan and become as worldly as they were.

Worldly people can become "a scourge in [our] sides, and thorns in [our] eyes" (Josh. 23:13). When such occurs, God does not have to bestow upon us the blessings He has promised to bestow if we remain separate and apart from the world.

We clearly see from Israel that disobedience to Jehovah will bring a loss of comfort and blessings. People who fail to follow God will become miserable failures instead of joyful conquerors! When one turns away from the light of God's truth, he will always wind up in the darkness of the devil's lies.

God warned His people that disobedience and unbelief would cause them to "perish" from the land He had given them (Josh. 23:13). In turning away from God, the Israelites became day by day more unfit, as a nation, to keep possession of the Promised Land.

Backsliding is a process (Psalm 1:1) by which a Christian's appreciation for spiritual blessings gradually deteriorates until he finds himself living again according to the world. One who has been "raised together with Christ, [must] seek the things that are above, where Christ is..." (Col. 3:1). To keep God's blessings, one **must** "set [his] mind on things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3:2).

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# MALE AND FEMALE

Albert E. Farley

In recent Senate confirmation hearings for the new Supreme Court justice, Judge Jackson was asked, “Can you provide a definition for the word “woman?” She answered, “I’m not a biologist.” In the March 3 edition of USA Today, a reporter stated, “Scientists agree there is no sufficient way to clearly define what makes someone a woman.” Apple computers have even placed a logo of a pregnant man in its software! These efforts to destroy the distinction between men and women are certainly related to Satan’s and our society’s intensified efforts to condone and justify homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle — which it’s not!

What does the Bible teach concerning the divinely designed distinction between man and woman? Between male and female?

In the beginning God said, “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them*” (Gen. 1:26-27). The Lord made man(kind) in two sexes: male and female. The first man (human) was male. Afterward, from the first male’s body (Adam), God made the first female. “*And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man*” (Gen. 2:21-25). Later, Adam called his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living (Gen. 3:20). The Bible strongly teaches that it is God’s holy Will that males and females maintain and fulfill their created roles of life and service throughout time.

In the **Patriarchal Age** (the days of Abraham) we read of the destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the plains — God’s first punishment of homosexual sins (Gen. 19). Modern man has sought to ignore and misrepresent why the people of these wicked cities were destroyed, but honest people can readily see God’s hatred of homosexuality (cf.

Job 36:5-14).

In the **Jewish Age** (the days of Moses) under the Law, God continued to warn and condemn the blurring of the sexes. “*Thou shalt not lie with mankind [male], as with womankind [female]: it is abomination*” [loathsome, detestable]. “*If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them*” (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). The penalty for homosexuality/lesbianism was death. It was also an abomination for men and women to wear clothing that would intentionally make them appear to be of the opposite sex! (Deut. 22:5)

In the **Christian Age**, the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to reveal God’s truth, but the world rejected the truth, which is the same as rejecting God. This led the world to degenerate into homosexual sins. In Romans 1:18-32, Paul said the world did not want to retain God in their knowledge and was without excuse. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and God gave them up to uncleanness, lusts, and to dishonorable, vile passions. Women exchanged the natural use of their bodies for what is against nature and men left the natural use of the woman and burned in their lust for other men. Paul calls this sexual immorality (fornication) shameful, debased, not fitting, unrighteous, and wicked. After writing a long list of various sins, he wrote, “*Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them*” (Rom. 1:32). This accurately describes the world today — particularly, the United States. The New Testament of Christ declares that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is an example against all today who would live ungodly in giving themselves over to fornication, going after strange flesh, and suffering God’s vengeance of eternal fire. Read 2 Peter 2:6-8 and Jude 5-7.

Today, if we confess sinful decisions, repent, and come to God through Christ through faithful obedience to His Gospel, we can be forgiven. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, God wrote that

the unrighteous, including fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners, can be washed, sanctified, and justified! God did not make our bodies for fornication! (1 Cor. 6:13)

Dear friends, barring tragic abnormal and unnatural differences between men and women in the birth process, the Bible is clear concerning the distinctions and differences between men and women — in their physical forms and in their God-given general roles of service and life to God, to family, and to their fellowman.

In all matters where we are given choices to make, may we choose truth and righteousness based upon the Holy Word of God (cf. John 17:17; Rom. 10:17) and not our own thinking or culture.

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The articles in this issue deal with very appropriate topics of the day: 1) women’s role in the church, 2) the crusade to change God’s Word to meet the thoughts and feelings of the times, 3) the push to accept every kind of immoral and deviate behavior as acceptable and normal. Since God does not change, His Word, the Holy Bible, does not change. What was sinful in the beginning is still sinful today. We must make clear to everyone that man did not write the Bible, God did. He is the creator and giver of His Word. The Bible was given by the inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It furnishes the human race with “ALL things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). That only comes about through the knowledge that God reveals in His eternal Word. Read it. Learn it. Believe it. Obey it.

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