

## My Casual Thoughts on Why Women don't Need to Push for the Pulpit and Other Offices Over Men

By Vicki Johnson

Eve. Dear, stupid, deceived Eve. The prototype of Woman. Handmade by the Lord to be a helper suitable for Adam. The cautionary tale we, as women, must take to heart. At the end of Genesis 2 we read this beautiful love sonnet Adam speaks in the presence of the Lord and his newly well-built wife,  
“This is now bone of my bones,  
And flesh of my flesh;  
She shall be called Woman,  
Because she was taken out of Man.” Genesis 2:23

Ironically, the next recorded words that Adam speaks to the Lord regarding Eve are found in Genesis 3:12, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” Clearly, the fault is with the woman. However, there seems to be an issue with the Manufacturer in Adam's mind. What happened between Genesis 2:23 and 3:12 to cause such a divide?

Let's jump into the Genesis account just after Adam's poetic praise at the end of Chapter 2 and the serpent's entrance in Genesis 3:1. Newly fashioned Eve seems to have entranced her husband, Adam, thus inhibiting his ability to take a stand and speak out when it mattered most. It was she, not her husband, who answered the door and handled the snake's confrontation. She did so without consulting her husband. The first words out of her mouth was a sermonette to the snake regarding the Good Rule God gave to Adam to live a happy and full life in the Garden of Eden. She had one chance to preach the Word of God truthfully, forcefully, and urgently, but she muffed it BIG TIME. She couldn't quote the command accurately. She added her own prideful self-righteous edit, maybe because she thought God's Word didn't go far enough.

Where was Adam when all this was going on? He was nearby. What was he doing? We don't know, but we do know that Adam was not sticking up for the truth of what the Lord directly commanded him. (Genesis 2:16)

Eve then fell for a hook baited to snag her in conscious rebellion. Mr. Snake confidently said, “You surely will not die! (OUTRIGHT LIE) <sup>5</sup> For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened (SURMISING ABOUT GOD'S THOUGHTS; WERE HER EYES CLOSED NOW?), and you will be like God (THE ULTIMATE PRIZE WITHELD BY AN “UNLOVING GOD”), knowing good and evil (EVE ALREADY NEW WHAT WAS GOOD [pleasing God] AND WHAT WAS EVIL [not pleasing God] AT THIS POINT).” (Genesis 3:4-5)

The situation deteriorated quickly when Eve not only didn't defend the true statement that they would die, but went on to reason out why she SHOULD go ahead to touch the fruit, eat it, AND offer it to her dead-beat hubby. There's so much sin involved in this exchange!

Genesis 3:6 is an interesting study in the problem of reason without checks and balances. Not a spoken word is recorded. We get a peek into Eve's mind as she comes up with 3 reasons why her next actions would be “good.” 1) The tree was good for food. 2) It was a delight to the eyes. 3) The tree was desirable to make one wise.

Who was there to argue her points? Not Adam, and God had already spoken on the matter. She thumbed her nose at the rebuke and correction she would get from God. So, she followed her heart's

desires for what was prohibited, and sided with the snake. In the one breath it took to read the first half of this verse, Eve 'intelligently' moved away from her Creator. In the next breath, we continue reading that she offered that contraband fruit to Adam, he took it and he ate it without protest. Mankind's tragedy in one act.

There are so many "would haves" and "could haves" in this sad chapter of humanity. But we can't change history - we can only learn from it. All of Eve's actions were rooted in pride, not humility.

Eve, in my estimation, operated alone. Irony when we know she was fashioned to be Adam's helper.

She leads with her mouth. It's very difficult to hear someone else, God's Word included, when we are always talking. Best to be informed by the Word of God and reiterate what God has already said.

She appraises truth with her eyes. Quick, surface assessment, not in-depth analysis.

She shows no restraint in her actions. Head smarts alone won't show you what is qualitatively good - Wisdom does. Truly good wisdom only comes from God. Self-control slows us down so we won't be rushed into bad decisions.

The resulting verdicts/judgements/curses God proclaimed as a result of their sin forever altered the snake, Eve, and Adam spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally. Only God Himself could transform/reform what they rebelliously destroyed. In Genesis 3:16, we find God's sentence not only for Eve's disobedience, but for all women to come:

To the woman He said,  
"I will greatly multiply  
Your pain in childbirth,  
In pain you will bring forth children;  
Yet your desire will be for your husband,  
And he will rule over you." Genesis 3:16

According to Strong's the word "desire" means: stretching out after, longing, craving, as a woman for a man. Woman will desire what she can get from a man, even when it will cause her pain. What will she get in return? Multiplied pain in bearing children and a husband, whom she desires, that will rule over her. This is now an inherent trait with which all women must contend.

Eve's position before the fall was a face-to-face complimentary, cooperative relationship with Adam, designed as one who helps another. I like to envision a dove-tail joint where two pieces of wood are joined in such a way that each piece supports the other, like fingers entwined. Eve's position after the fall is a submissive subject, with her husband as ruler over her. Now, the hands are fistled in contention against each other. In the flesh, without the power of the Holy Spirit, this arrangement seems intolerable and oppressive. However, when both husband and wife subject, i.e. humble, themselves to the Lord, the arrangement is tolerable, freeing, and gives glory to the Lord who makes it possible.

As a woman, I see the solution to the curse that resulted from Eve's sin is to die to myself, my desires I keep reaching for, and live for Christ, desiring what He desires. When I do that, my grasp is loosened from the entrapment of the world and latched upon my Savior. In Paul's caution to the church, I am also faced with a personal caution to not be easily led by my own passions in 2 Corinthians 11:3 "But I am

afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

Truth be told, I don't want to personify the unregenerate Eve in my life. I want to reflect the character of Christ. When I practice any of the deeds of the flesh as are listed in Galatians 5:19-21, (many of which were evidenced in Eve) I will not inherit the Kingdom of God. The fruit of the Spirit should be my desire. Here is the ultimate goal for us all – to live and walk by the Spirit as we find in Galatians 5:24-26 “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.” All too often when I hear a woman talk about not being allowed to be ordained or sit on the board of a church, I hear echoes of Eve. Reaching, longing, and craving for desires that have been denied her. The deeds of the flesh fester and flourish in the unrepentant heart.

### **Specifically regarding the role of women in the church I see these verses:**

1 Corinthians 14:34 The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

1 Timothy 2:11-15 A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. <sup>12</sup> But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. <sup>13</sup> For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. <sup>14</sup> And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. <sup>15</sup> But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

In 1 Timothy and Titus the elders and overseers are described as husbands. Deacons, those who follow the orders of the overseers, have been recorded as being either men or women.

All this to say that although women are able and capable to do many jobs in various situations, the one thing the Lord has specifically addressed through His Word is that women should not step into a role where she will, in regards to the Word, instruct men in it, thus exercising dominion over them. In the case of the mission corporation's board, since they are advising pastors and ministry leaders in biblical principles regarding their respective mission endeavors, the teaching/instruction that inevitably occurs in those dialogues should come from godly men. I will gladly support men to dive deeper into God's Word, to meet with other men in the church to read and discuss God's Word, so that they will know the calling that God has on their lives as Christian men.

### **Final thoughts:**

Never have I ever...

Read that the Lord called a woman to lead. But **I have** read of women leading when men don't (Deborah; Jezebel).

Never have I ever...

Read that women with teaching gifts are to teach all the members of a church. But **I have** read that women are to have the teaching of kindness on their tongues with other women and children. **I have** read that the older women should teach the younger women how to love their husbands and children, and live so as to not dishonor the Word of God. **I have** read that mothers and grandmothers can impact future pastors by their sincere, humble, and devout lives.

Never have I ever...

Read that women are to speak only when spoken to. But **I have** read that women's words have changed the course of history (Abigail; Naomi, Ruth), given wisdom to those seeking judgements (Deborah), offered wise counsel to her son, the king (Bathsheba to Solomon in Proverbs 31)

Never have I ever...

Read that women don't provide any productive impact on the body of Christ because they are not behind a pulpit or making decisions on a church board. But **I have** read of many humble women who have greatly impacted the church and the world because they were willing to serve in a variety of ways – Lydia, Priscilla, Phoebe, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, Mary Magdalene, Susanna, Tabitha, Lois, Eunice, etc.

**What then should I desire? Here are additional verses for consideration:**

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13

<sup>1</sup> Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup> do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:1-11

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Ephesians 5:24

Titus 2:5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.