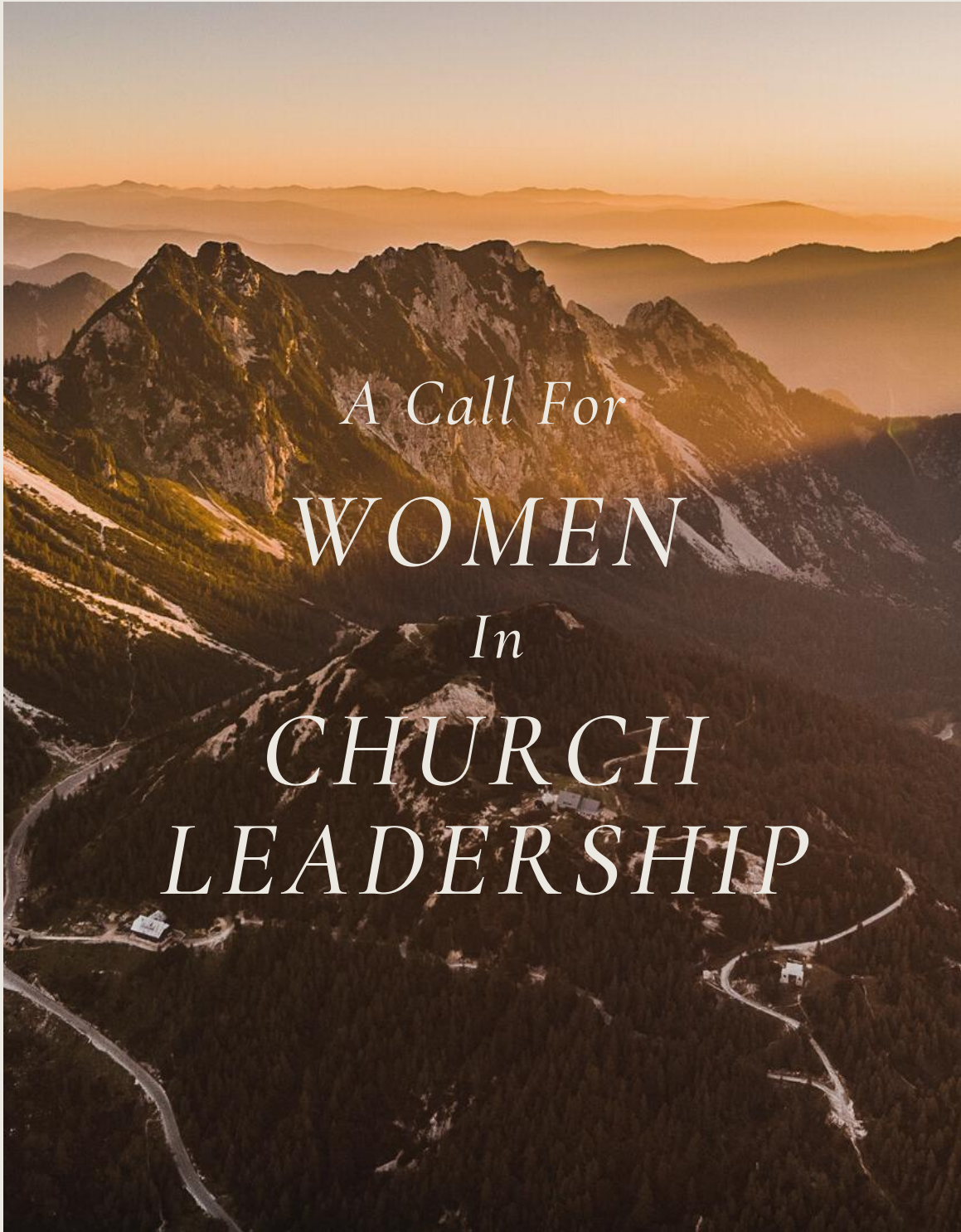

E-Publication



A Call For
WOMEN
In
CHURCH
LEADERSHIP

By
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IF GOD IS MALE
THEN MALE IS GOD.

- Mary Daly



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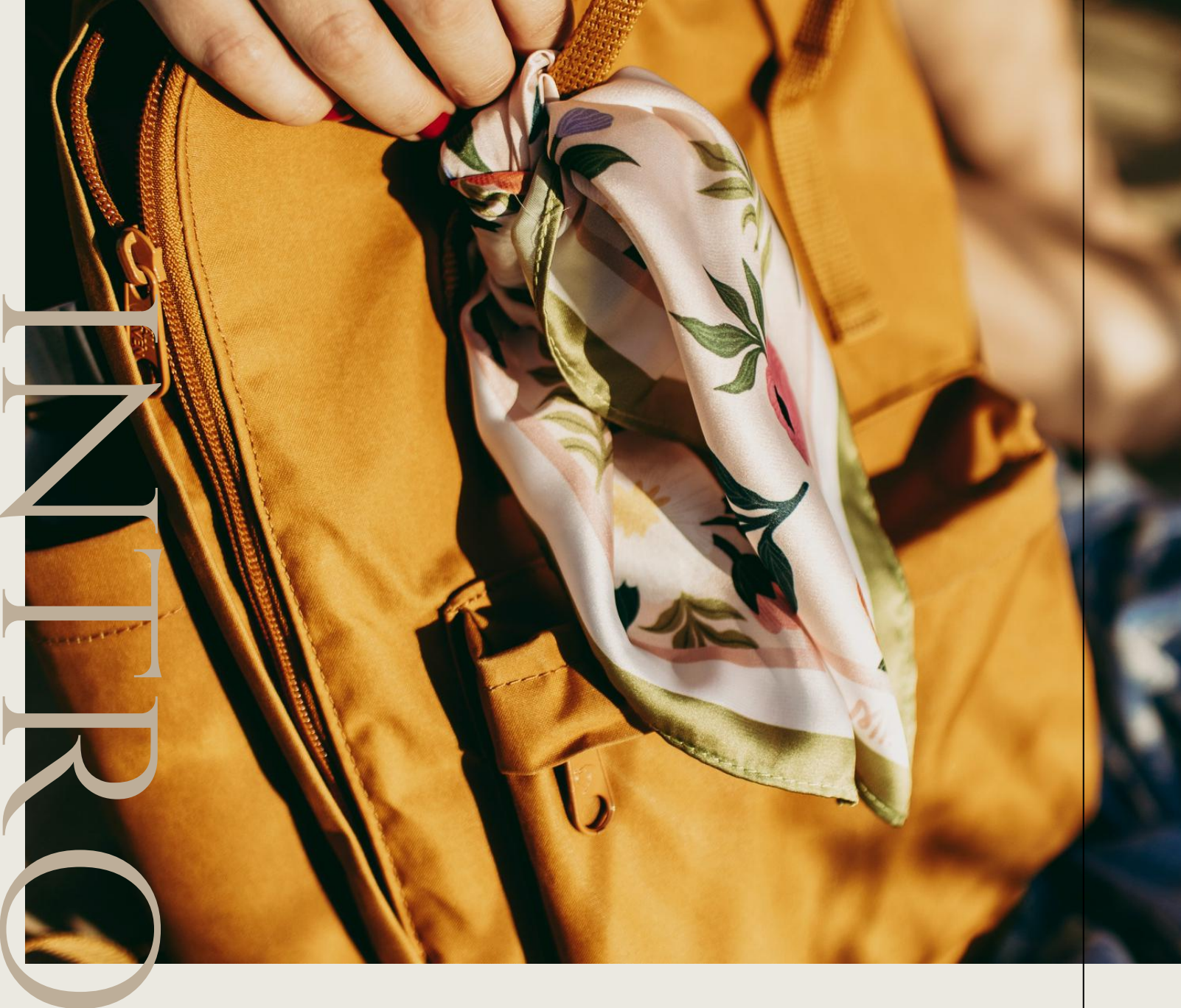
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*"I AM NOT AFRAID;
I WAS BORN FOR THIS."*

- Joan of Arc





INTRO

If you've found your way here,

I imagine you are beginning to ask some questions about your faith. Maybe you've heard about the complementarian vs. egalitarian argument and you want to learn more. Maybe until recently you never knew that some churches (possibly including your own) prohibit women from preaching and teaching, and you're grappling with that idea for the first time. Maybe you're in full-blown deconstruction mode and you're looking for resources to help you reconstruct.

Whatever the means that brought you to this page, I'm glad you're here.

My purpose in writing this document isn't that it would provide all the answers for you. This topic has many layers, and it has been thoroughly published, researched, and debated by many people who are qualified and more learned than myself (see the list of recommended further reading at the end of this document.) I am deeply convicted and resolute about this issue, but I will be the first to admit that I do not have all the answers. I just want you to have a place to *start*.

When I began the process of deconstructing (and reconstructing) my faith, which was largely, although not entirely, initiated by issues in the complementarian church I was attending at the time, I felt pretty lost, lonely, and overwhelmed. As I've said, there is a ton of scholarship and resources out there, but trying to find it and tackle it on my own felt huge and daunting. As someone who didn't even know this issue existed before my late 20's, I truly did not know where to start when trying to untangle this seemingly complex theological debate.

In the very beginning, we (my husband and I — we were on this learning journey together) first tried talking to our friends at our church, especially other women. I wanted to know how others felt about the hardline stance taken in the church's membership handbook which stated beliefs in male headship in the home, male-only pastors and elders in the church, and that community groups which were mixed gender could only have a female leader if there was also a male leader present. Many of our female (and male) friends expressed discomfort with this stance, but it quickly became clear that they felt they did not have the knowledge or resources to challenge it. Unease with the complementarian stance was like a whisper throughout the church; people heard it, felt it, repeated it, but the volume never got loud enough to actually change anything.

Next we tried talking to the deacons of the community group we were attending. Our community group met once a week to pray together, study Scripture, and discuss the Sunday sermons and it had always functioned in an egalitarian fashion. The married couple who led and hosted the group both spoke and taught, as did others in the group, including myself. When I brought up the complementarian values of the church, I was met with sympathy and even commiseration, but still no real willingness to push back against these values at a higher level.

A photograph of a hand holding a small bouquet of dried flowers, positioned in the upper right corner of the page. The hand is open, palm up, and the flowers are a mix of light and dark colors, possibly lavender and white. The background is a plain, light color.

UNEASE WITH THE COMPLEMENTARIAN STANCE WAS LIKE A WHISPER THROUGHOUT THE CHURCH...

We also talked to some of our friends who were on staff at the church. We learned that they had actually brought up similar concerns to the church board (to be sure, a fine line to walk when the church is providing your paycheck). Frustrated by the lack of response and poor reception of their feedback, my friend advised honestly that if we felt that this was a major issue for us, it was better to leave the church. It was clear that the church would not be changing its stance and we would simply be left to fester in bitterness. These friends ended up leaving staff later that year as well.

Finally, my husband and I sought out conversations with the church pastors. We met with the head pastor who had founded the church and who we heard was the main driver behind the complementarian structure. Before the meeting, we sent him some articles we had read and podcasts we had listened to which had theological discussions on the complementarian vs. egalitarian issue. When we showed up for our meeting at a coffee shop, he told us he had not had time to read or listen to any of the material. The message was clear: he had heard it all before and was not open to having a discussion. Indeed, the next hour was more about him defending his position than it was about a pastor consoling concerned parishioners.

Later we met with another pastor. He took our inquiry much more seriously. He showed up with printed copies of the articles we had sent which he had clearly read, highlighted, and taken notes on. He listened to our concerns and took the time to explain the different theological stances behind the two perspectives. Ultimately, he said, it came down to interpretive differences of a few passages of Pauline scripture. What stuck with me most about this meeting is that this pastor was also clearly uncomfortable with the church's stance. Although he was careful to never directly contradict any of the church's values, I could tell it pained him. He did, however, tell us that if we were waiting in hopes that the head pastor would eventually be moved toward a more egalitarian position, we would be waiting forever. That was it for me.

We decided to leave the church. We didn't make a lot of noise during our exit. No bridges were burned.

Many of our friends from that community group are still our close friends today. But I felt that I could no longer follow the leadership of people who believed that women were less qualified for certain things due solely to the factor of gender. Less fit to lead than men. Less knowledgeable than men. Less called by God than men. I could no longer continue supporting — financially or emotionally — an institution that proclaimed those values. I could not accept that I would never hear a woman preach at that church. There would never be a single Sunday where I saw a woman standing behind the pulpit. And no matter how qualified a woman was, if there were men present in the room, she would be passed over in favor of a male teacher, regardless of how *unqualified* he may be.

I couldn't explain *why* yet from a theological or biblical stance, but I knew in my bones and my very soul that this was not how God saw me or any other woman.



I knew in my bones

*and my very soul that this was not how
God saw me or any other woman.*

I needed to understand where this perspective came from

and how it was taught to so many pastors. My questions were not getting answered and very few people were even willing to engage in the conversation with me including, apparently, the head pastor of my church. I did not accept that what was being taught to me about women by mostly white, middle-aged men was the ultimate truth. I knew there had to be more to the story, other conversations, other perspectives. I needed to learn what they had learned and read what they had read for myself and see if the truth they were proclaiming still qualified as the truth.



So I went to Seminary and got a Master's Degree in Theology.

And I'm here to tell you — my church was wrong.

COMPLEMENTARIAN *and* EGALITARIAN



DIFFERENT VIEWS

Generally, complementarians believe that the Bible establishes male authority over women, both in the home and in the church. God created men and women with distinct and inherent differences and these differences were made to “complement” one another. Male leadership and female submission are God-ordained and biblical standards. This is often referred to as male “headship,” and men are called to be “spiritual leaders” (in church, in relationships, especially in marriages).

It is often the view that those who do not believe in these roles are “sidelining” biblical mandates in order to “appeal to cultural developments.”¹



Complementarian views are often, but not always, supported and promoted by evangelical and reformed Christian churches, organizations, and leaders.

Complementarian VIEWS

For example, the official statement approved by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in 1998 reads, “A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.”²

The Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) relays in the Statement of Faith on their website that, “In the home husbands are lovingly to lead their wives and wives should intelligently and willingly submit to their husbands. In the church, some governing and teaching roles are restricted to men....In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands’ authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands’ leadership.” Their website also states that the CBMW “exists to equip the church on the meaning of biblical sexuality.”³



Generally, egalitarians believe that leadership is not determined by gender but by the gifting and calling of God and the Holy Spirit. All believers are called to first submit to God, and then to one another in love and respect.⁴

Of course, these are sweeping definitions. Just as there are a diversity of believers and theologies, these views can differ and vary in intensity and importance from denomination to denomination, church to church, and person to person.





Patriarchy is not
GOD'S DREAM
for humanity.

What is patriarchy? You may have heard a lot about it lately as it is a popular buzzword, but let's make sure we know what we're talking about clearly.

"Patriarchy is not God's dream for humanity."

– Sarah Bessey, *Jesus Feminist*



Historian Judith Bennett describes patriarchy throughout history as having three main meanings in English.

3 MAIN MEANINGS OF PATRIARCHY:

01

Male ecclesiastical leaders, such as the patriarch (the archbishop of Constantinople, for example) in Greek Orthodoxy.

02

Legal power of male household heads (fathers and husbands).

03

A society that promotes male authority and female submission.⁵

According to the definitions, complementarianism is Christian patriarchy rebranded.

While complementarians like to smooth the edges by saying that the authority of men is a metaphor for the loving authority of Christ, that the submission of women reflects the submission of the church to God, and that these “equal but distinct” roles create a “loving relationship,”⁶ by definition, they are the same system.

When author Sarah Bessey wrote in her book *Jesus Feminist* that “Patriarchy is not God’s dream for humanity,” she was correct. Let’s talk about why.

Patriarchy has been around for a long, long time. Genesis 3:16 is often used in defense of gender hierarchy because it is seen as proof that patriarchy was part of God’s design even for the first humans.

A traditional interpretation* of Genesis 1-3 tells the story of Creation and the Fall. God creates the earth, animals, and humans and all three live in perfect harmony with one another and with God until the serpent (Devil) tricks Adam and Eve into eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (which was expressly forbidden by God). This disobedience subsequently releases sin into the world for the first time. Paradise is lost, humans are cursed with hardships, and Adam and Eve are kicked out of the Garden of Eden.

If we look closely at where gender roles and patriarchy come into the story though, we see that it is, in fact, only after the Fall. Nothing in the text before Genesis 3 suggests any kind of hierarchical relationship between the man and woman.



Complementarians point to the Hebrew words *ezer kenegdo* in Genesis 2:20 which often get translated into English as “helper” or “helpmeet.” This understanding of *ezer kenegdo* has led to the first woman being seen as a submissive assistant of man, a dutiful wife who plays a secondary role by simply supporting her husband.

But this is a poor translation of the original biblical text in Hebrew.

Ezer can be translated as helper, but not with the same meaning as an assistant or attendant. The word *ezer* occurs twenty-one times in the Old Testament and has three contexts: the creation of woman, Israel’s plea for military aid, and in reference to God as Israel’s help in military situations (this is the most common reference, occurring sixteen times.)⁷

Kenegdo is trickier. Personally, I think it’s one of those words that simply doesn’t translate into English well at all. According to the Hebrew-English Interlinear Old Testament, *kenegdo* translates literally as “that which corresponds.”⁸

*I want to emphasize that this is a traditional/classical interpretation of Genesis 1-3. There are a variety of different interpretations out there as well. One of my personal favorites is by Dr. Jon Berquist in his work "Reclaiming Her Story: The Witness of Women in the Old Testament" where he presents a very compelling and redemptive alternative reading of this passage.

Bible scholar Victor P. Hamilton writes, “[Kenegdo] suggests that what God creates for Adam will correspond to him. Thus the new creation will be neither a superior nor an inferior but an equal. The creation of this helper will form one-half of a polarity, and will be to man as the South Pole is to the North Pole.”⁹ Furthermore, commentary in the Jewish Study Bible notes that “the creation of the woman after the man and from a part of his body need not imply the subordination of women to men.”¹⁰

Don't miss it — the same word (*ezer*) that is used to describe Eve is also used to refer to God, and it is also the word that complementarians utilize in order to argue woman's ordained submission to man.

Would we dare describe God in the same way? Submissive. Passive. Secondary. Or, do we describe God as a mighty, faithful, powerful, and independent-minded warrior?



Don't miss it!

The same word that is used to describe Eve is also used to refer to God.

Ezer and GOD

The verses below have italicized words where the root *ezer* is used:



DEUT. 33:29

“Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your *help*, and the sword of your triumph!”



PSALM 70:5

“But I am poor and needy; hasten to me O God! You are my *help* and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay!”



DEUT. 33:26

“There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your *help*, through the skies in majesty.”



PSALM 121:1-2

“I lift my eyes to the hills. Where does my *help* come from? My *help* comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

So if God's plan for creation was for men and women to exist as equals, what went wrong?

According to the timeline of Genesis 3, gender hierarchy only came into play after sin entered the world. Patriarchy is a result of sin. We now live in a fallen world with not only pain, suffering, death, and chaos — but also patriarchy. This is not how it was meant to be.



The upside down GOSPEL OF JESUS

You may know that the gospel (*euaggélion* in Greek) literally means “good news” in English.

Presbyterian minister and author Frederick Buechner defines the gospel like this: “What is both good and new about the Good News is the wild claim that Jesus did not simply tell us that God loves us even in our wickedness and folly and wants us to love each other in the same way and to love him too, but that if we will let him, God will actually bring about this unprecedented transformation of our hearts himself.” He goes on to say, “Jesus lives on among us not just as another haunting memory but as the outlandish, holy, and invisible power of God working not just through the sacraments, but in countless hidden ways to make even slobs like us loving and whole beyond anything we could conceivably pull off by ourselves.”¹¹

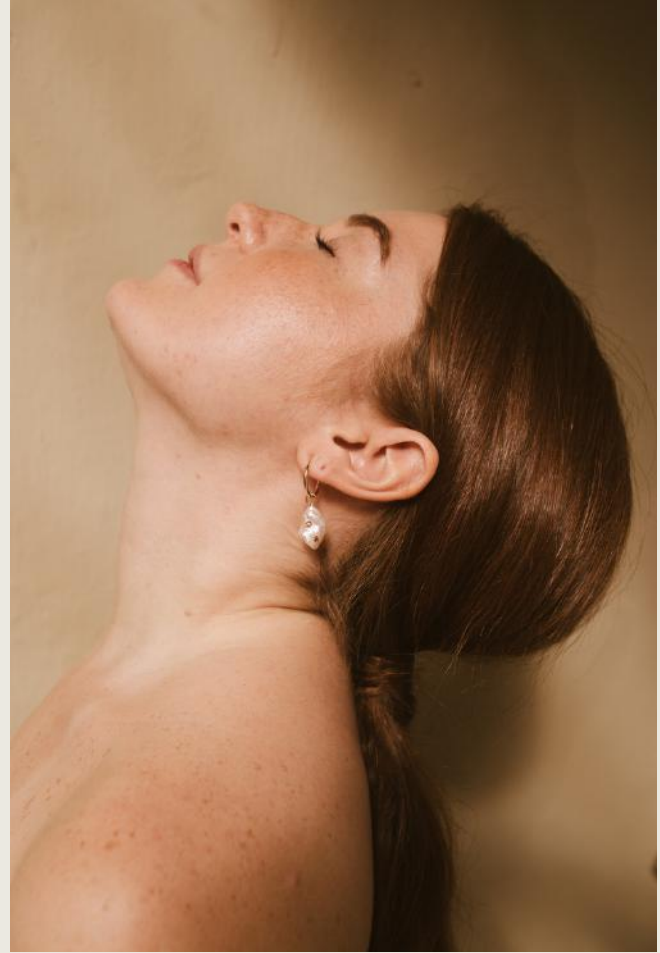
The gospel is the news of God's complete and transforming love for us.

When we place our hope in God, we embody that love, towards God and towards others. This sweet message communicates that we are all meant to be fully loved and fully “whole.” Complementarianism does not allow all women to be fully themselves or fully whole.

I want to emphasize that I don't think it is in any way wrong if a woman finds her highest calling as a wife and/or mother. I think when someone discovers their true calling and lives authentically in it, that is something to cherish and celebrate. But having a say makes all the difference. If a woman chooses to be a full-time stay-at-home wife and mother rather than work outside the home because that's what she truly wants and feels called to, then that's wonderful. But if she finds herself in that position because it's something she feels she should do as a result of messaging or pressure from others, then she is not able to live out the true calling God has for her.

Listen to the intimate words of Psalm 139:

“O Lord, you have examined me and know me. When I sit down or stand up You know it; You discern my thoughts from afar. You observe my walking and my reclining, and are familiar with all my ways...It was You who created my conscience, You fashioned me in my mother's womb. I praise You for I am awesomely, wondrously made; Your work is wonderful; I know it very well. My frame was not concealed from You when I was shaped in a hidden place, knit together in the recesses of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed limbs; they were all recorded in Your book; in due time they were formed, to the very last one of them.”



God creates each person uniquely and individually, in an intimate and involved way. God creates beautiful diversity in everything, from the giraffe to the sunflower, each living according to its unique purpose. God endows people with individual gifts and talents, minds and hearts that become doctors, dentists, lawyers, teachers, artists, parents, psychologists, preachers, and more.

How can we possibly believe, then, that God has the exact same calling for every woman on earth? That literally half the population was assigned the singular role of wife/mother? What about unmarried women, or widows? What about women who physically cannot have children? Are they missing their calling? Are they worth less in God's spiritual economy? Of course not. Men cannot determine a woman's calling. Only God can do that, and Scripture tells us that God does so intimately and uniquely.

Along with the good news of the gospel, part of the Christian faith is a call to live counter-culturally. People sometimes refer to this as the “upside down” Kingdom of Jesus because Jesus flipped traditional hierarchies and societal norms on their head during his ministry. Scripture tells us that Jesus had some pretty radical world views. He said that the first would be last and the last would be first (Matt. 20:16). The meek would inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5). Turn the other cheek when someone strikes you (Matt. 5:38-40). He welcomed little children alongside him and blessed them as heirs of heaven (Matt. 19:13-15). He shared meals and his time with prostitutes and tax collectors, and instead of lecturing them, he reproached the *spiritual elite* for their lack of care (Matt. 10:9-13).

He also welcomed women into spaces that were typically reserved for men. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and learned from him as a disciple.

When her sister Martha reprimanded her for not helping with domestic service, Jesus replied, “Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, and it will not be taken from her” (Luke 10:38-41).

It will not be taken from her.

As we have discussed, patriarchy has been around nearly as long as human history. It has been ingrained in cultures from antiquity through modernity. But to this point, historian and Christian author, Dr. Beth Allison Barr asks, “Instead of being a point of pride for Christians, shouldn’t the historical continuity of a practice that has caused women to fare much worse than men for thousands of years cause concern? Shouldn’t Christians, who are called to be different from the world, treat women differently?”¹²



Mary has chosen

the good portion, and it will not be taken from her (Luke 10:38-41).

If we as Christians are called to live counter-culturally

(in a way that brings more life and more freedom to this world), and patriarchy has been ingrained in cultures for millennia, then an egalitarian church isn't a byproduct of "appealing to cultural standards," but rather a rejection of cultural standards.

Many evangelicals fear that Scripture gets manipulated or pruned in order to support cultural agendas (like feminism, God forbid) rather than adhering to the true Word of God. Yet, Barr makes an excellent point about how Scripture has already been reconsidered in light of its context in order to bring about a world that better reflects the Kingdom of God. For example, "When we rightly understand that biblical passages discussing slavery must be framed within their historical context and that, through the lens of this historical context, we can better see slavery as an ungodly system that stands contrary to the gospel of Christ. How can we not then apply the same standards to biblical texts about women?"¹³

In fact, there are many other passages of Scripture that both complementarians and egalitarians no longer adhere to today. Take the Deuteronomic laws for example. How many Christians today work on Sundays (Deut. 5:12) or eat shellfish (Deut. 14:10) or have bacon for breakfast (Deut. 14:18)? Or how about the qualifications for priesthood in 1 Timothy 3? The text says an overseer must be "the husband of one wife" and "keep his children submissive." Shouldn't this mean that men who have been divorced and remarried cannot be pastors? Or that pastors must have children?

I certainly know of male pastors who have been divorced and they apparently still qualify for the job. There has also been many a male "Youth Pastor" fresh out Seminary, unmarried and without children.



AN EGALITARIAN CHURCH ISN'T A BYPRODUCT OF "APPEALING TO CULTURAL STANDARDS" BUT RATHER A REJECTION OF CULTURAL STANDARDS.

Yet, regardless of these deviations from Scripture, men will still get the title "Pastor" while women are named only as "Directors" or "Coordinators" on the grounds that 1 Timothy 3 apparently does not include women in the priesthood.

Biblical literalism simply does not hold up to the Christianity of today.

Whatever your denomination or views on gender, all of us have already gleaned Scripture and made exceptions. And that's okay. Context matters, and on top of being the inspired word of God, the Bible is *also* a contextual piece of literature. Applying discernment to the text has helped us move toward a more loving, wholesome world in some ways. Scriptural interpretation has not remained unchanged. But it cannot be argued that complementarianism is defending the Word of God by reading certain passages in a plain and simple way, and then turn around and perform critical analysis of the same text in order to make exceptions for continued male power. It cannot be both ways.



“Patriarchy may be a part of Christian history,
but that doesn’t make it Christian.”¹⁴

How is patriarchy HARMFUL?

*"PEOPLE SHOULD
NEVER BE THE
COLLATERAL DAMAGE
OF YOUR THEOLOGY."*

- Sarah Bessey



When we talk about patriarchy and Christian complementarianism, both systems "place power in the hands of men and take power away from women. Both systems teach men that women rank lower than they do. Both systems teach women that their voices are worth less than the voices of men."¹⁵ These teachings are not based on qualifications or merit, but on gender alone. Complementarianism insists on the simple fact that a person's chromosomes and genitalia alone judge whether someone is qualified by God for certain callings or not. Does that sound like the Kingdom of God to you?

I think it is critically important to point out that while I discuss the harm of patriarchy towards women here, women aren't the only ones who suffer under patriarchy.

I read a criticism of the early feminist movement once that has stuck with me. It said that the first wave of feminism focused almost exclusively on the struggles of white women and neglected the oppression of others.

For example, in 1970 African American author, Linda Larue, wrote of the alleged "common oppression" of African Americans and white women, saying, "Is there any logical comparison between the oppression of the black woman on welfare who has difficulty feeding her children and the discontent of the suburban [white] mother who has the luxury of protesting the washing of the dishes on which her family's full meal was consumed?"¹⁶

Women of color, who often fare the worst in systemic forms of oppression, have pushed back and carved out spaces to discuss their experiences and fight for better treatment. Womanist theology is often thought of as a byproduct of this movement, although Professor Nyasha Junior would remind us that Womanism is also a part of a larger "distinct tradition of African American women's engagement with biblical texts."¹⁷

The LGBTQIA community has also suffered greatly under patriarchy and complementarianism as gender "norms" are redefined.

My discussion here is mainly about patriarchy and *its effect on women in a Christian setting*, but I acknowledge that there are many layers to the topic. Biblical scholar Clarice J. Martin keenly states that “while patriarchy defines the boundaries of women’s lives, it also denies ‘subjugated peoples and races as the others to be dominated.’ Patriarchy walks with structural racism and systemic oppression, and it has done so consistently throughout history.”¹⁸

If this all sounds too theoretical and abstract, consider some of the real-life effects patriarchy has had on women. Women have historically been paid lower wages than men, even for the same jobs. According to the 2022 State of Pay Equity Report, “Women who are doing the same job as a man, with the same exact qualifications as a man, are still paid one percent less than men at the median for no attributable reasons. The closing of the controlled gender pay gap has been extremely slow, shrinking by only a fraction of one percent year over year.”¹⁹

Women have historically been prevented from participating in civil liberties that (white, upper-class) men have always had access to - from education, to voting, to finances. For example, Ivy League universities only started accepting female undergraduate students within the last 50-60 years. Yale University did not accept female undergraduates until 1969, and at the time, just 48 out of the 817 faculty were women, and only two had tenure.²⁰ Brown University did not admit female undergraduates until 1971, and Dartmouth didn’t until 1972. Columbia University held out until 1983.²¹


Women have been prevented from obtaining economic freedom or controlling their own finances. In the United States, it wasn’t until the Fair Credit Opportunity Act was passed in 1974 that a woman could get a credit card in her own name, without a male co-signer.



“PATRIARCHY WALKS WITH STRUCTURAL RACISM AND SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION, AND IT HAS DONE SO CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT HISTORY.”

Previously, even if a woman was able to obtain a credit card (usually with the signature of her husband) the amount she could borrow was often smaller than what a man could get with the same credit and financial profile.²²

Women also experience physical and sexual violence at a higher rate. According to several nation-wide studies conducted by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1 in 4 women (25%) compared to 1 in 9 men (11.1%) “experience severe intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner sexual violence, and/or intimate partner stalking with impacts such as injury, fearfulness, post-traumatic stress disorder, use of victim services, contraction of sexually transmitted diseases etc.”²³



*Historically,
patriarchy has
stacked the odds
against women*

and those odds have created a deficit.

Because of the economic, educational, and political bars that have been placed on women throughout time, women statistically lag behind men in their finances, careers, education, and even their personal health and safety. Patriarchy does not exist in the abstract. It is here and dangerous and has real effects on the everyday lives of women and men.

WHAT *about* PAUL?



WHY I FEEL SYMPATHETIC TOWARD PAUL

Oh Paul...I recently read an 800-page book on the life and letters of Paul, and I still have mixed feelings about the guy. Mostly though, I feel sympathy for him. I believe that Paul truly believed everything he said and wrote.

Do I believe that the ideas of this one man, read in a very modern and literal way, are a prescription for the Christian life today and forevermore? Absolutely not.

I feel sympathetic towards Paul because I think much of his writing and ideas have been misconstrued and used in ways he would have never intended them to be used. Context — both historical and literary — matters.



Someone is reading something out loud to you...

They describe a strange creature with markings that they've never seen before. This creature is as tall as a full-grown man, with multiple legs, and has the ability to blend into its environment. They say it's the wildest thing they've ever seen.

You are perplexed. Is this a *New York Times* article about some strange new animal the scientific community has just discovered? Or is it your five-year-old nephew's description of seeing a zebra at the zoo for the first time?

Context matters. And to read the Bible, we have to look through *several layers* of context.

Take, for example, the fact that the English Bible you might have has gone through, at the absolute minimum, four different translations across thousands of years: Hebrew to Greek, Greek to Latin, Latin to Old English, Old English to modern English. Taking into account scribal errors, mistranslations, decay, destruction, lost pages, and a variety of other factors, it is a true miracle that we even have these texts available to us at all. I don't say this to make you doubt the veracity of Scripture; my point is that whenever we think we may have the only, or the best, understanding of the text, we may need to think again. This work requires humility.

Paul's letters are no exception.

Dr. Barr summarizes the issue well when she writes,

“Paul has been used against [women] as [women] have been told to be silent (1 Corinthians 14), to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5), not to teach or exercise authority over men (1 Timothy 2), and to be workers at home (Titus 2). [Women] have been taught that God designed women to follow male headship (1 Corinthians 11), focusing on family and home (Colossians 3; 1 Peter 3), and that occupations other than family should be secondary for women, mostly undertaken out of necessity or after their children have left the house.”²⁴

Yet, leading Pauline scholar Beverly Roberts Gaventa laments that “evangelicals have spent so much time ‘parsing the lines of Paul’s letters for theological propositions and ethical guidelines that must be replicated narrowly’ that we have missed Paul’s bigger purpose. We have reduced his call for oneness into patrolling borders for uniformity; we have traded the ‘radical character’ of Christ’s body for a rigid hierarchy of gender and power.”²⁵

What if we’ve missed the point of those lines in Paul’s letters? In passages like Colossians 3 and Ephesians 5, which say *wives be subject to your husband*, we immediately hear a call for masculine authority. But there is strong evidence to believe that Paul’s first-century audience would have heard the opposite: *Husbands love your wives and never treat them harshly...Husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies*.

For example, take Paul’s words in contrast with the ideas of Aristotle (384-322 BCE), whose philosophical ideas were the golden standard in Greco-Roman times. His written work *Politics* would become one of the most prominent household codes in Western culture.²⁶



“WE HAVE TRADED THE RADICAL CHARACTER OF CHRIST’S BODY FOR A RIGID HIERARCHY OF GENDER AND POWER.”

Aristotle taught sole male authority: “The inequality [between male and female] is permanent...The courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying.”²⁷ The Greco-Roman gaze was solely directed at men, including how men should rule and why they have a right to rule. We hear no mention of societal “inferiors” such as women, children, or slaves.

In contrast, “the Christian household codes address all the people in the house church... everyone is included in the conversation.”²⁸ While Aristotle wrote to men in order to promote and justify male authority, Paul begins by saying, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21) and then addresses wives *before* husbands — a quite shocking detail considering the societal hierarchy of the time. Paul also includes considerations for women, children, and slaves. In contrast to the Aristotelian way of thinking and the Roman household code, Paul’s words are certainly counter-cultural. He pushes back against the Roman societal hierarchy instead of condoning it. We see here again the upside down Kingdom of Jesus: “Jesus, not the Roman paterfamilias, is in charge of the Christian household.”²⁹

But didn't Paul tell women to be silent in church?

This view comes mainly from two verses (1 Corinthians 13:34-35) which have traditionally, like many of Paul's words, been taken quite out of context. First, note that most Bibles title this section something like "Orderly Worship" — not "Unruly Women" or "A Woman's Place in the Church" — and that is because, aside from these two verses, the entirety of chapter thirteen discusses displays of spiritual gifts, in particular, speaking in tongues. It is not a manifesto about church authority or the impertinence of female involvement. In fact, I find it hard to believe that if Paul really felt strongly about female silence and submission, he would have written much more about it than two sentences thrown into the middle of a letter about a completely different topic. It's almost as if he didn't intend for it to be that important...and yet these are the verses that many evangelicals herald as proof of a timeless gender order meant for eternity.³⁰

Bible scholars and historians have a different view. Commentators of the NIV Study Bible write, "Others maintain that Paul's concern here is that the church be strengthened by believers showing respect for others and for God as they exercise their spiritual gifts....There were occasions though — even in their culture — for women to speak in church. For example, in 1 Corinthians 11:5 Paul assumes that women pray and prophesy in public worship. Thus his purpose, according to this view, was not to define the role of women but to establish a fitting and orderly way of worship."

The commentary continues, "Still others say that in this context Paul is discussing primarily the disruption of worship by women who become involved in noisy discussions surrounding tongues-speaking and prophecy. Instead of publicly clamoring for explanations, the wives were to discuss matters with their husbands at home. Paul does not altogether forbid women to speak in church. What he is forbidding is the disorderly speaking indicated in these verses."³¹

"His purpose was not to define the role of women

but to establish a fitting and orderly way of worship."



The NIV commentators are right to point out that just a few chapters earlier, Paul clearly recognizes that women can speak in church: “But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head — it is the same as having her head shaved” (1 Corinthians 11:5). Apart from the fact that Paul would probably take issue with my own asymmetrical hair cut, we do not see Paul taking issue with women praying or prophesying during public worship. Leading Pauline scholar, E.P. Sanders, writes “It is absolutely impossible to reconcile [the] command that women should be silent with the view that when they prayed or prophesied in church they should cover their heads.”³² Interestingly, Sanders goes on to say, “I regard it as a reputable scholarly position to hold that this passage is a secondary addition to Paul’s letter...Thus we have the *one true contradiction* in Paul’s letters of which I am aware.”³³



Paul — and Jesus — were both supported by, and worked alongside, many women in the Bible.

It seems highly plausible that Paul’s vision for the future of the church did not include female silence and submission. Not only can we gather this from studying the context of his letters, but also by looking at the example he lived. Sanders writes, “The view that women must be silent in church is also hard to reconcile with the fairly important role [women] play in Paul’s churches and mission.”

For example, “Would he tell his patron Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2), or Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11), or Junia, who was ‘prominent among the apostles’ (Romans 16:7), or the other female fellow workers mentioned in Romans 16, that in church they had to remain silent?”³⁴ Paul — and Jesus — were both supported by, and worked alongside, many women in the Bible.

Let's take a look at these leading ladies....



Female Leadership IN THE BIBLE

If we think that the Bible holds resounding proof that women were never meant to be spiritual leaders, we need to look again: →

Old Testament scholar and professor, Dr. Jon Berquist, notes the many ways that women have played crucial roles in the church and yet have also been forgotten throughout Christian history when he says, “Our tradition did not preserve the writings of any of the early women leaders of the church, despite Paul’s repeated mention of women who were active in all forms of leadership and faith...The early church soon forgot the myriad of ways that the transformative power of Jesus’ teachings and actions had changed life for women by including them in every phase of faith and church life.”³³



**"I AM NO LONGER
ACCEPTING THE
THINGS I CANNOT
CHANGE. I AM
CHANGING THE
THINGS I CANNOT
ACCEPT."**

- Angela Davis

Deborah

Judges 4-5

Deborah was a judge, military commander, and prophet. She led men in battle, and with the help of another woman, Jael, the enemy's commander was defeated.

Miriam

1 Chronicles 5-6

Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, saved her brother Moses from death when he was just an infant. Her famous celebratory song is recorded in Exodus after the Israelites successfully flee Egypt, and she is acknowledged as a prophet in Exodus 15:20. She is also included in the genealogy of Levi.

Huldah

2 Kings 22:14-20

Huldah was also a prophet. "In the days of King Josiah, when priests found an ancient and sacred book hidden away in the temple, the chief priest Hilkiah sought out the prophet Huldah for an explanation. Huldah was able to understand the book and to discuss its ramifications with the priests, and they carried her message back to the king. This woman understood the deep matters of faith and proclaimed them in ways that made even chief priests and kings take notice."³⁶

Phoebe

Romans 16:3

Phoebe supported Paul and other apostles, and some scholars believe she delivered Paul's letter to the church in Rome.³⁷

Junia

Romans 16:7

Junia was an apostle of the early church. In Romans, Paul writes, "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was."

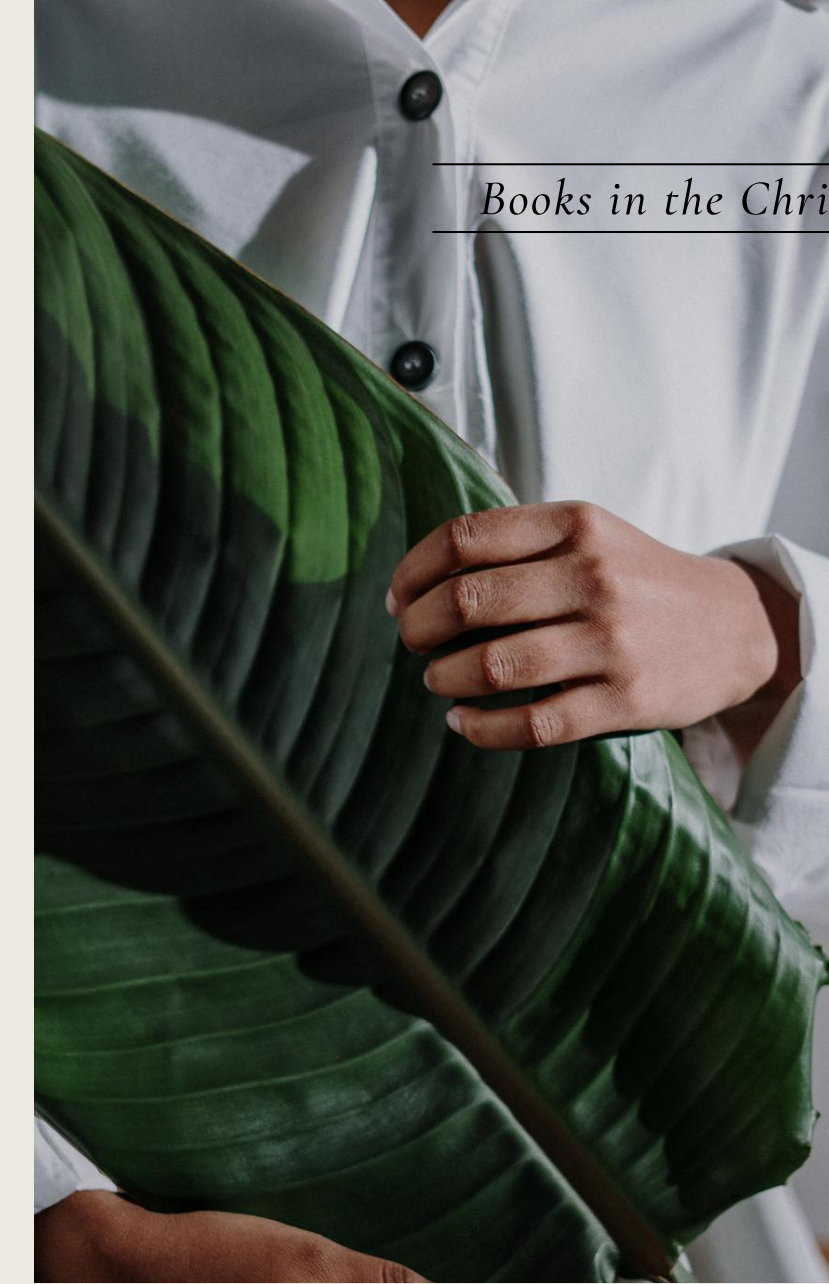
Priscilla

Romans 16:3-4

Priscilla is named as the wife of Aquilla. They were wealthy business people and together they hosted church in their home and assisted the well-known preacher Apollos.

women of the bible





Books in the Christian Canon Named After Women

Ruth

Ruth, who is one of my favorite female characters in the Bible, takes initiative to find security for both herself and her mother-in-law, Naomi, after famine kills the men in their family. The Book of Ruth tells the story of how a woman uses her intelligence, knowledge of Hebrew law, and femininity to secure a livelihood for her family when hope seemed lost. In the text, Ruth is called *hayil*, a Hebrew word which means that she is a woman of “strength,” and it is the same word that is given to the male protagonist of the story, Boaz.

Esther

Esther is a Jewish queen who saves her people from total destruction. In addition to Ruth, the Book of Esther is the second book in the Christian Canon that is named after a woman. Interestingly, God is never mentioned once in this book. Esther, however, harnesses her intellect, faith, and great courage to spare her people and family from being murdered. Every year, Jewish people celebrate the holiday of Purim in honor of Queen Esther.



“AS A MOTHER
COMFORTS HER
CHILD, SO I WILL
COMFORT YOU;
YOU SHALL BE
COMFORTED IN
JERUSALEM.”

Isaiah 66:13

Lydia

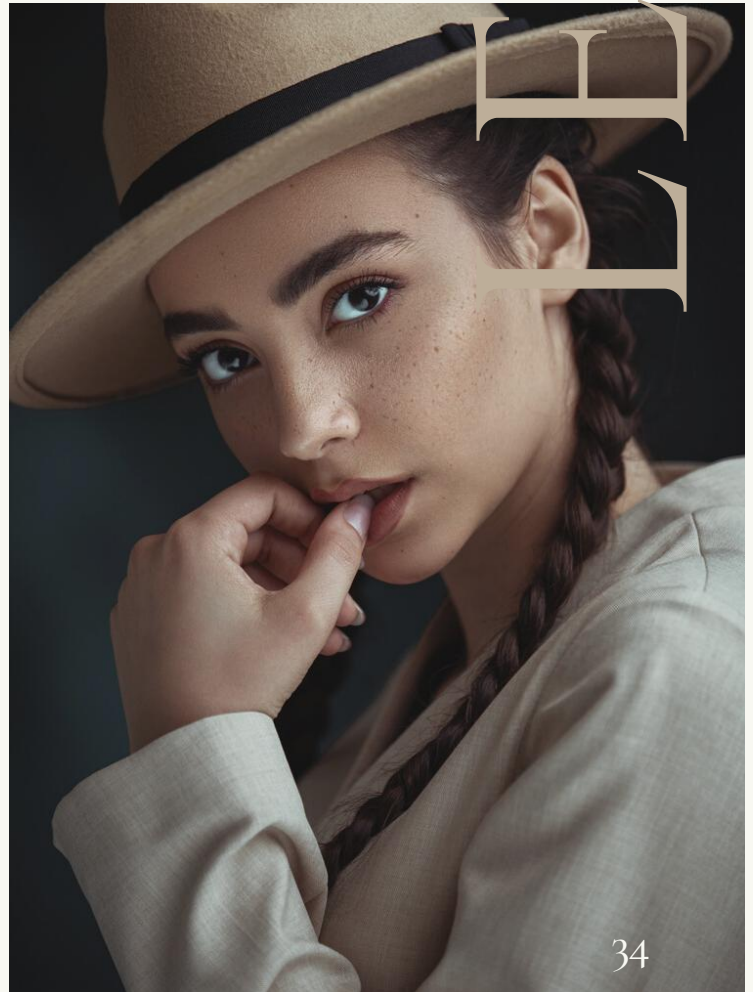
Act 16:11-15, 40

Lydia was a wealthy, likely independent business woman and a leader in the early church. She housed Paul and other apostles in her home, which became a central gathering place for the church in Philippi.³⁸

I love what author Sarah Bessey writes about Lydia: “I often think of Lydia when people argue over the false dichotomy of whether or not women should work. Women have always worked; they will always work — for their families, for their homes, for survival, for provision, for the good of their souls.”³⁹

women of the bible





leading and teaching

Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna traveled with Jesus, supporting him and his disciples with their own finances and resources (Luke 8:1-3).

There were also, of course, the sisters Mary and Martha who hosted Jesus in their home and, as we've seen, learned from Jesus as disciples (Luke 10:38-42, John 12:2).

Additionally, Paul names several other female coworkers throughout his letters: Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2-3), Mary (Rom. 16:6), and Tryphaena and Tryphosa (Rom. 16:12).

Women have always taught God's word,

proclaimed God's goodness, and done God's work. When we forget this and prevent women from fulfilling their callings as teachers, pastors, and leaders, we cut off half the church. "The church's harping insistence on the centrality of masculinity can never stop God's willingness to work through all people, both women and men. The task, then, is ours: we must learn how to recognize God's working through women. This is necessary for us if we are to know and experience fully God's work within the world. God works through women and men and we must see both."⁴⁰

While women's words and works have often been written out of history, or their roles simply forgotten in lieu of male leadership, Barr reminds us that evidence of women as spiritual leaders is abundant; the Christian church has simply forgotten its history. We need to remember.

In response to a comment by reformed pastor John Piper that it is "unequivocally not okay and never has been okay for women to teach men," Barr writes, "Because we lack a historical context in which to evaluate [Piper's] claims, evangelicals accept his teachings. By forgetting our past, especially women who don't fit into the narrative that some evangelicals tell [today], we have made it easier to accept the 'truth' of biblical womanhood. We don't remember anything different."⁴¹

As part of the solution, Bessey calls for women to tell their stories. "We simply need to tell our stories to our daughters and sons and to our friends, to each other here, and to our communities. The world could hear us rising up and calling them blessed in the city gates; we need to make room for the telling of [women's] stories."⁴²



"By forgetting our past

we have made it easier to accept the 'truth' of biblical womanhood. We don't remember anything different."

LESSON HISTORY A QUICK



Throughout history, Christians have had ample opportunities to set women free and welcome their spiritual gifts and callings into the church at large.

So far, this has not happened.

In her book, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood*, historian and professor Dr. Beth Allison Barr provides an excellent insight into socio-religious history and its effects on women. My overview is largely based on the historical research presented in her book, although it is of course abbreviated here.

Antiquity

In antiquity, during first-century Roman rule, the Jesus Movement (not yet called Christianity) was beginning and it was quite egalitarian for its time. As we have already seen, in Paul's time, women were involved in the church as members, prophets, speakers, teachers, partners, organizers, and financial investors. In the beginning, the Jesus Movement was a small sect, either persecuted or largely ignored. But everything changed with the conversion of Emperor Constantine (273-337 CE) while on the battlefield in 312. After seeing a vision from God in the sky and subsequently achieving military success, Constantine adopted Christianity as the official religion of Rome.

This brought some benefits, as the Emperor “substantially advanced the religion by recognizing the authority of bishops and by financing the construction of churches, shrines, and other holy sites for the faith.”⁴³ Yet, this also meant binding the Roman Empire, Roman household codes, and the Roman way of life with Christianity. Christian women were once again second-class within the church and would, of course, not be permitted in the eyes of the state to hold positions of leadership among men.

Middle Ages

During medieval times, the church generally accepted women's roles as leaders, but was “nonetheless uncomfortable with women serving actively in those roles.”⁴⁴ Barr writes, “While medieval Christians couldn't forget the truth about female leaders in Christian history — Jesus made certain of that through interactions with Mary, Martha, and even the Canaanite woman — medieval Christians also couldn't accept female leadership as normative.”⁴⁵ And why was that?



Because the medieval world was also functioning off of the patriarchy of the Roman world. The Aristotelian views that women were simply defective or incomplete men, and that women were passive and weak compared to strong and active men, went on to mesh with Christian theology. Early church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria and Jerome would, in fact, describe spiritual maturity for women as *striving to become more like a man*.

Jerome wrote, “As long as a woman is for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, she will cease to be a woman and will be called a man.”⁴⁶ Women's options for a life of spiritual service included becoming celibate nuns, mystics, or virgins — in all cases, forgoing the (then) exclusively female ability to conceive and give birth. To be taken seriously in a role of service to God, women had to forsake their femininity.



Protestant Reformation

During the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation brought a pivotal change in Christian theology and thinking.

Christian leaders like Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Calvin began to rethink Christian life and doctrine and it spread like wildfire. The idea of *solo scriptura* (Scripture alone), which emphasized the Bible as the highest authority in Christian faith and that anyone (not just priests) could discern God's word from Scripture, highlighted the value of individual believers and could have meant that women were seen as equals in the family of God.

Yet, as Europe transitioned from a medieval society to the early modern era, political and economic ideas changed as well. While these shifts were already in effect before Luther's 95 *Theses*, "the changing political and socioeconomic landscape of Europe found a supportive partner in Reformation theology."⁴⁷

Barr writes that "while 'biblical womanhood' is rooted in human patriarchal structures that keep seeping back into the church...the emphasis in biblical womanhood on *being a wife* was strengthened and reinforced during the social changes wrought by the sixteenth century."⁴⁸ Thus, fueled by political, economic, social, and theological changes in European society, the idea of the "holy household" took shape and women's highest spiritual calling became the roles of wife and mother.

According to historian Lyndal Roper, "The heritage of Protestantism for women was deeply ambiguous. While it could have affirmed women's spiritual equality with men, the Reformation instead ushered in a 'renewed patriarchy' that placed married women firmly under the headship of their husbands."⁴⁹ In contrast to medieval women, who were considered closer to God the further away they were from maternal or sexual roles, the Reformation made the opposite true: "The more closely [women] identified with being wives and mothers, the godlier they became."⁵⁰

THE IDEA OF THE
"HOLY HOUSEHOLD"
TOOK SHAPE AND A
WOMAN'S HIGHEST
SPIRITUAL CALLING
BECAME THE ROLES
OF WIFE AND MOTHER.



Age of Enlightenment

With the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries, new ideas regarding reason and logic, as well as new advancements in medicine and science, once again changed and shaped society.

Women's bodies were no longer understood as deformed versions of men's bodies, but rather as human beings capable of rational thought.⁵¹ While society could have come to terms with the capabilities and gifts that women had to offer, the obsession with rationalization and naturalistic sciences was used instead to "scientifically" explain how women were less fit than men for certain endeavors. French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and famed biologist Charles Darwin were leading proponents. In Rousseau's famous text *Emile*, he wrote, "The search for abstract and speculative truths, for principles and axioms in science, for all that tends to wide generalizations, is beyond a woman's grasp; their studies should be thoroughly practical."

Charles Darwin also wrote in his work *Descent of Man* that desirable evolutionary traits were "transmitted more fully to the male than to the female offspring...Thus man had ultimately become superior to woman."⁵² Women, whose heads, brains, and bodies were biologically smaller and weaker than men's, were simply not fit for rigorous intellectual stimulation.


Industrial Revolution

Then, the 19th century brought the Industrial Revolution. While the Industrial Revolution did provide more opportunities for women to work jobs outside the home and garner some financial independence, this era also contributed to hardened gender divisions.



The Industrial Revolution created a job boom and many women were hired in similar positions and even formed labor unions. But most women's wages were abysmal compared to men's. Taking a page from the Enlightenment philosopher's book, arguments were made about why women deserved to be paid lower wages. For example, an 1833 British factory commissioner, James Mitchell, wrote "The low price of female labor makes it the most profitable as well as most agreeable occupation for a female to superintend her own domestic establishment, and her low wages do not tempt her to abandon the care of her own children. Nature therefore provides that her designs shall not be disappointed."⁵³

Paying women less at their jobs would encourage them to spend less time seeking work and more time at home, attending to their natural domestic duties. Apparently a fair wage was dangerous and might tempt women to abandon their children and families. Consequently, laws were passed throughout Europe that "shortened women's work hours, forced them to take unpaid maternity leave, and even — in some places — prohibited them from working at all."⁵⁴

A woman with long dark hair is lying down, resting her head on her hand. Her eyes are closed, and she appears to be sleeping or resting. The background is a plain, light-colored wall with a blurred green plant on the left side.

By the 19th century,
**THE CULT OF
DOMESTICITY**
was born.



Historian Barbara Welter first outlined the components of the "cult of domesticity" as follows:

01

Piety

Women are naturally more religious than men and more attuned to spiritual matters. This means they are better equipped than men to guide the spiritual education of children. It also means that women's education should focus on cultivating this trait.

02

Purity

Women are not naturally sexual creatures. Their minds and hearts are purer than men's are, and sexuality is important only because it allows women to be mothers. Women have to be covered and protected from danger of sexual predators.

03

Submission

Women are not designed to lead. They do not have the mental capacity or the emotional temperament to lead in the political or economic realms. They yearn to follow the lead of strong men.

04

Domesticity

Women are not designed to work outside the home. The Industrial Revolution moved work-for-pay outside the domestic space. Women were to stay home and manage the household while men went outside the home and earned the daily bread. This also meant that women's education should focus on improving domestic skills.⁵⁵

These qualities sound surprisingly similar to the qualities of “biblical womanhood” don’t they? Barr notes the stark connection as well: “Instead of biblical womanhood stemming from the Bible, it stems from a gender hierarchy developed in the wake of the Industrial Revolution to deal with the social and economic changes wrought by work moving outside the home.”⁵⁶

So, for example, when evangelical Christians like co-author couple John and Stasi Eldridge write books like *Wild At Heart* or *Captivating* which espouse ideals of “biblical womanhood” and “biblical manhood,” what they’re teaching isn’t actually *biblical*. Their ideas of gender roles are, in fact, based on the cult of domesticity and antiquated ideas about the biological inferiority of women — ideas which have now been sanctified. “It wasn’t until the early modern world that domesticity became linked with women’s spiritual calling. Instead of just being something that women usually did, domestic prowess in the home (centered on the family) now became something that good Christian women *should* do because it is what we are designed to do. It is our primary calling in this world. Domesticity, for evangelical women, is sanctified.”⁵⁷

You may be wondering,
if patriarchy is harmful
and if Christian
complementarianism
isn’t in fact biblical,
why are there so many
female advocates of this
system today?



Today I agree that the paradox is pretty astounding, although at one time I could very much understand — and relate to — how influential the world of evangelical Christianity can be. One (oversimplified) explanation is that when you’re only taught one perspective, that perspective becomes the unquestionable truth.

Personally, I think that evangelical women who may feel a natural inclination toward leadership or the spiritual gift of teaching find ways in which they can still exercise their gifts, even from within the confines of gender hierarchy. Historian Kate Bowler wrote an interesting book on this topic titled *Preacher’s Wives: The Precarious Power of Evangelical Women Celebrities*, where she examines how “conservative evangelical women have carved out religious authority in traditions that prohibit women’s leadership.”⁵⁸


It seems confusing that women themselves would be such loud advocates of a system that limits them and draws boundaries around their spiritual callings. Women like Stasi Eldredge, Ann Voskamp, Lauren Chandler, Allie Beth Stuckey and others — and these are women who have book deals, professional websites, earn commercial profits, and have amassed literally tens of thousands of followers on social media. These women have found ways to teach, preach, and lead — as long as they do so to a female-based audience and with messaging that reinforces complementarian doctrine.

Garnering this kind of platform comes with other conditions too. These women are upheld as shining public examples of “biblical women,” as long as they stay in their lane. In their bios, they do not call themselves preachers or church leaders, but identify first and foremost as “wife of so-and-so” and “mother of x number of children.” These caveats *allow* women to have a voice and an influence in a world that otherwise discourages female leadership.

To this effect, Barr poignantly writes, “God’s calling on women’s lives never seems justification enough for women to preach; they have to justify their right based on their historical context of patriarchy.”⁹⁹

Both Christians and society have had ample opportunities to set women free throughout history, whether that be during social or theological revolutions, advancements in science and technology, or increased economic freedoms. Yet, a large portion of the church has yet to do so.

Women have always represented themselves by pushing back and fighting tirelessly for their freedoms, and we will continue to do so. I believe that gender equality, harmony, and spiritual freedom is possible within our lifetime. Let it be our generation that makes it so.



*Let it be our
generation*

that makes it so.



As I have said from the beginning, this document is intended to be a place to start. This is not some kind of feminist manifesto or a step-by-step guide to dismantling the patriarchy (although that would be fun to write someday).

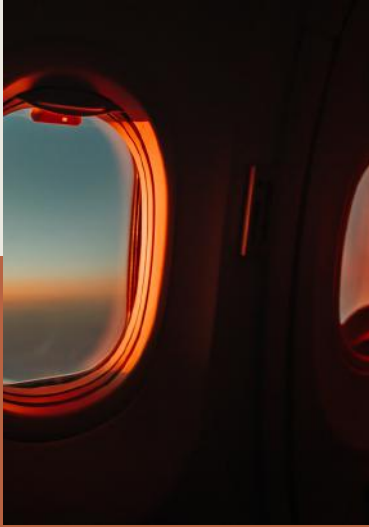
What NOW?

My intention here is not to shame you for your beliefs and not necessarily to convince you to leave your complementarian church. I am a big believer in honoring the journey and that you have to be ready to receive new information and ideas. A few years ago I was not ready. Even a year or two before I started deconstructing, I was still pretty steeped in the complementarian way of thinking. I also upheld more conservative Christian views on other traditional hot topics. Much has changed for me. But back then, I would not have received the things I learned in Seminary very well because I was not ready to. When I finally *was* ready, I was all in.

My hope for you — you who are starting to ask questions about your faith — is simply that you would not stop asking questions. I know that it can feel scary (SO scary), and that as you chip away at the beliefs you have built, it may feel like your identity is crumbling too. For me, when I tore it all down, there was a period of time when all I had left to stand on was the cornerstone of "I'm still here believing God is still good."⁶⁰ I rebuilt from there and my house of faith is now the strongest and most robust it has ever been. It's an entire castle.



The amazing therapist I was seeing all throughout Seminary would often say, “God gave us incredible brains, and God knew we would use them.” If our faith cannot withstand questions, doubts, and curiosity, is it a faith worth fighting for? Human brains have nearly unparalleled abilities of reason, logic, problem-solving, and creativity. God gave us brains that can build rockets, paint murals, create vaccines, and engineer technology the size of a grain of sand. Do we really believe that we weren’t meant to ask hard questions about the Bible? That we are simply meant to take Scripture at face value and accept a literal reading as the only option? I don’t think so. I think that if we want a faith that is resilient and not simply easy, we *must* ask the hard questions.



So I honor this journey you’re on. I can’t give you all the answers, but I trust that you will find what you’re looking for if you simply keep looking — and most importantly, if you refuse to look away when it gets hard.

*If you do two things only after reading this,
let me ask that they would be this:*



O1

Read *The Making of Biblical Womanhood* by Beth Allison Barr. Seriously, stop what you're doing and go order it right now. I'm begging you. It's a great follow up to this intro and Dr. Barr is an amazing scholar who condenses thousands of years of history into one impressive and well-informed book. You need this book in your life.

O2

Share this document with someone — maybe another sister, friend, or colleague who is also starting to ask questions. I'm not saying this so that I gain followers or acclaim. I literally created this because I wish I had these resources when I was first getting curious about the topic. My only goal is that people would have a place to start — a credible and approachable document that lays out the argument and explains the theology well. I hope I have done that here. You can send a link to this document via text or email. You can download it as a pdf and send it as an attachment, or print it out if you like. I wanted it to be easily accessible in all formats.

As I said before, I'm so glad you're here. I hope you will continue learning (see the recommended resources list!), asking questions, and having conversations. I pray that you lean into who God calls you to be, and that no one is allowed to dictate that for you.



*"I CAME THAT THEY
MAY HAVE LIFE AND
HAVE IT ABUNDANTLY."*

- Jesus of Nazareth⁶¹

RECOMMENDED

further

READING

The Making of Biblical Womanhood

by Beth Allison Barr

Reclaiming Her Story: The Witness of Women in the Old Testament

by Jon Berquist

The Women's Bible Commentary

Edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe,
and Jacqueline E. Lapsley

The Life and Letters of Paul

by E.P. Sanders

Christianity: A Global History

by David Chidester

Reading the Bible From the Margins

by Miguel De La Torre

An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation

by Nyasha Junior

A Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible

by Musa Dube

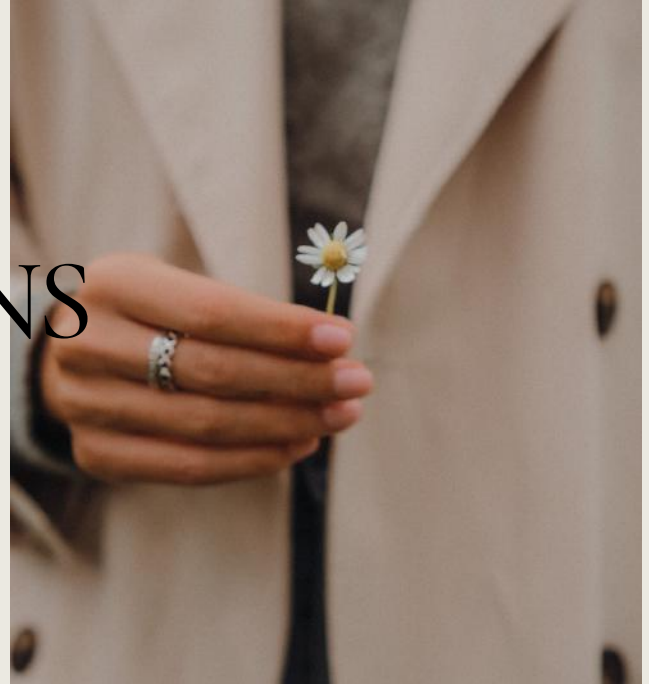
Jesus Feminist

by Sarah Bessey

A Year of Biblical Womanhood

by Rachel Held Evans

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61. John 10:10

*Thank you to my amazing husband
who has gone on this journey with
me and selflessly supported my
process and need to find the truth.*

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A Call For Women In

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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