

ROMANS SERIES TWENTY-THREE
LADIES FIRST
Dr. Roger Barrier
Romans 16:Gen. 3:14-17; I Cor. 11:11-13

REVIEW “strong-weak” Christian question from Ladies Retreat yesterday.....

SLIDES: TOP 10 FEMALE DRIVERS

How many of you think that a woman took those pictures? No, of course not! Men making fun of women.

SLIDE: Call it battle of the sexes. It goes on in every culture.

Barbara Bacon stuck her head into my office several years ago: "What is the Greek word for 'woman'?"
"Gune.' Why do you want to know?"

"I was in Gary Shrader's office (Gary of the 4 box fame of the last two Sundays) and he told me it was
'YakYak.'"

Barbara left office and returned: "What is the Greek word for 'man'?"

I thought a minute: "courageoso."

Barbara was gone about 7 seconds: "No, it is not. I think it is 'Ego Ego.'"

But, in some ways, the battle is no joke.

How many of you believe that women are treated in our society with the same equality as men?

How many of you believe that women receive the same pay for the same amount of work as men?

How many of you believe that women are treated equally and fairly in the Christian church?

This ought not to be!

Why the ongoing battle?

SLIDE: Genesis 1-3 Reveals God's Original Design.

SLIDE: GENESIS 2:18: The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper
suitable for him."

“Helper Suitable:” woman is the counterpart of man: interlocking fingers

Man and woman are to work together like two finely meshed gears.

Then—the Fall into sin.

SLIDE: Genesis 3:14-15: *So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*

Is Genesis 3:16 is a Curse on Satan—but, no curse on the women or the man.

SLIDE: Genesis 3:16: *To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*

Not a curse, it is a consequence: This is not God's design and it doesn't have to be this way. Show you what is happening here.

Desire--"You are Turning" God says, "You have turned from me and now you are turning to your husband. He is going to rule over you.
"Supposed to turn to me and desire me: Love Lord God with all your heart."
Now look what you have done! No more harmony. No more counter part.
Forever after men are justified to rule over women. This is the consequence for first eating the forbidden fruit.

Fall also has a consequence for men.

SLIDE: Genesis 3:17: To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

The ground is cursed—not Adam—but he has to bear the consequences.

In Christ, God's desire is for men and women to be restored to the place they had before the fall. The glory of Christianity is restoration.

SLIDE: No one is more concerned with restoring women to their proper place than the Apostle Paul.

SLIDE: Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Do you see the restoration? Probably the most profound New Testament insight regarding the respective status of men and women in the Christian community.

In the society of Paul's day women had little or no standing whatsoever.

BLACKBOARD: Jewish Society:

A woman was forbidden to learn the law

Women had no part in the Synagogue service; they were shut apart in a section where they could not be seen, and were allowed no share in the service.

Greek Society

The respectable Greek woman lived a confined life. She never appeared on the street alone; she never went to any public assembly; much less ever speak in an assembly.

In those days education was the privilege of the men.

The Greek language had a special word for almost everything—but there was no special word for "wife."

Same word, "gune" (γυνή) use the context.

(By the way, we get our English word, "goon" from this word! Just kidding!)

SLIDE: 1 Corinthians 11:11-13: "In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12 For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God."

The companionship between man and woman is broken all over the globe. Paul leaves no doubt through Christ, God has every intention of bringing restoration to the male-female relationship.

SLIDE: PAUL'S RESTORATION OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN IS SURPRISING BECAUSE MANY CONSIDER HIM A CHAUVENISTIC SEXIST.

1 Corinthians 14:33-35 women can't speak in church.
Yet: 1 Corinthians 11:5 talks about a woman praying and preaching in church.

Talking about rules for tongues.
Integrating cultural practices with liberating Christian truth.

SLIDE: 1 TIMOTHY 2:11-15: A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. 15 But women will be saved through childbearing-if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Egnamatic passage: Misunderstanding brought hurt, confusion and bondage to women.

There is a sudden change from "women" in verses 9-10 to "woman" in verses 11-15.
The Greek makes no distinction between "woman" and "wife."
In Martin Luther's German version verse 12 reads "I permit not a wife to teach nor to have dominion over her husband," implying that this is simply a family matter; it has nothing to do with church worship.

"Let a women learn..." (culture where they were forbidden to learn) and then he goes on to give Timothy the reason why. His mind goes back to Eden, and he remembers how Eve through her innocence and immaturity had fallen victim to the wiles of the devil and had become "thoroughly deceived."

Yes, she was once deceived, so teach her!
She has been restored through the work of Christ on the cross.
Let's get back to headship and counterparts as I designed it.

15 But women will be saved through childbearing-if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.
This doesn't mean that if she has kids and remains faithful and loving she can go to Heaven.
No, because of the promise that the Messiah would come through woman, because Christ has now come, she can be saved, restored to her proper place with her husband before the Fall.
Of course, if she turns from the faith, becomes selfish and unloving and lives an impure life, she will never know the intimacy of partnership God designed for her.

Paul Yonggi Cho in 1982 in Korea; church of 700,000. Speaking to a group of American pastors.
"Biggest hindrance of the American church is the under-utilization of the women in the church. Through a series of beliefs that are more cultural than theological you are attempting to advance the Kingdom of God on earth with one hand tied behind your back. You would double your power, resources, and effectiveness if you would allow women to lead and minister as God ordained them to do."

To that Paul would shout a hearty, "Amen!"

I know that is true because of how he commends some precious women as he closes Romans.

SLIDE: Romans 16:1-16: Of the twenty-nine people, nine are women.

Phoebe

Romans 16:1-2: I commend to you our sister, a servant [deaconess] of the church in Cenchrea. 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.

Letter of introduction: *sustatikai epistolai*. Phoebe was the bearer of the letter to the church at Rome.

"Great Help:" The word occurs no other place in the New Testament, but is the feminine form of the Greek word *prostatès*. According to Liddell and Scott's lexicon the literal meaning is "one who stands before, front rank man, leader, chief, protector, champion."

Priscilla

Romans 16:3-5: Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. 5 Greet also the church that meets at their house.

The order here is significant: The wife's name first, because she was foremost, no doubt. Could have been rich woman married to slave.

They risked their lives for him and that "all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them." We do not know how they risked their lives for Paul, but it may have been at Ephesus when the mob led by the makers of idols of the goddess Diana were rioting.

Mary

Romans 16:6: Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you.

Junias

Romans 16:7: Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

Imprisoned with Paul.

Crysostom in his exposition of Romans 16:7 (homily 31) comments: "Oh! how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the name of apostle!"

Tryphaena and Tryphosa

Romans 16:12: Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

They were very likely twin sisters – he wrote them with a smile.

The verb *kopian* (*copius*) means "to toil to the point of exhaustion."

Tryphaena and Tryphosa means respectively "dainty" and "delicate"!

It is as if Paul said, "You two may be called dainty and delicate; but you have worked your tails off for the sake of the church and for Christ."

Persis

Romans 16:12: Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

Here he uses the past tense. This probably means that Persis was old; her hardworking days were over. Yet although she could no longer work as she once had, what she did was remembered and she was highly regarded. Paul calls her "my dear friend".

Rufus' Mother

Romans 16: 13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

Her husband was Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross of Christ—became a Christian and led his family to Christ

Nereus Sister

Romans 16: 15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them.

Nerus and his sister were children of the man who implemented the death of Christians during the Neronian persecutions of the early 60s. Saw the testimonies of dying Christians and became Christians.

BLACKBOARD: New Testament tells us of women laboring in the four areas mentioned in Ephesians 4:7-13: pastoring and teaching evangelism, prophesy, acting as deaconesses and leaders in the early church, and even fulfilling the role of apostles missionaries in taking the gospel to foreign lands.

Letter From Pliny The Younger (Ad 62-113)

SLIDE: "I thought it the more necessary to inquire into the real truth of the matter by subjecting to torture two female slaves who were called "deacons," but I found nothing more than a perverse superstition which went beyond all bounds...."

Pliny chose these two "female slaves" to torture because they, like Phoebe, held some official position as deacons and could reveal what Christianity was all about.

SLIDE: PERPETUA was a young married aristocrat who lived in Carthage, North Africa. At the age of twenty-two she was tried before the procurator who asked, "Art thou a Christian?" "I am" she answered.

Her diary is preserved: "Then he passed sentence on the whole of us, and condemned us to the beasts.... Then because my baby was accustomed to take the breast from me, and stay with me, I asked my father for my baby. But my father refused to give him. And as God willed, neither had he any further wish for my breasts, nor did they become inflamed; that I might not be tortured by anxiety for the baby and pain in my breasts.

Then she summoned her brother and spoke to him: "Stand ye all fast in the faith, and love one another; and be not offended by our sufferings."

The story is finished by Tertullian: For the young women the Devil made ready a mad heifer...Perpetua was tossed first, and fell on her loins....Then, having asked for a pin, she further fastened her disordered hair. For it was not seemly that a martyr should suffer with her hair dishevelled, lest she should seem to mourn in her hour of glory.

So revolutionary was the power of the Gospel in early church times that Libanius, the heathen philosopher, exclaimed,

SLIDE: "What women these Christians have!"

SLIDE: Ephesians 5:21: Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. See the restoration...

EPHESIANS 5 RELATIONSHIP: Engaged couple volunteers to illustrate sun and moon.

SLIDE: Romans 16:25-27: Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him- 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.