**Notes for Warring over Womanhood (Various)**

May 11, 2025

* 2010- Congressional Election Cycle sees emergence of term “War on Women” as rallying point to describe limitation of access to abortion
* Some see Christian doctrine and traditions as oppressive, demeaning and a form of war on women
  + This is an unfortunate reality sometimes based in truth. It has been used at times to keep women in places that the Bible did not dictate
  + There are other times when this is a misunderstanding because things are interpreted outside of context and without a view of God’s redemptive plan.

1. The Excellence of Womanhood (Genesis 2:15-25)

* The creation story speaks to the value and excellence of womanhood
* Note the succession of God’s pronouncements through creation. Each day, it is “Good.”
* Note God’s observation partly through day six when it is “Not Good” for Adam to be alone
* God identifies man and woman together as the crown of creation and it is termed “very good”
* Woman is called helper. “ezer” in Hebrew
  + Used 21 times. (2 for women, 3 for military allies, 16 for God Himself)
  + Not derogatory or inferior
* God also determines that the helper must be “comparable” to Adam
* Notice the location of the construction
  + Not from head or foot, but side. (Adrian Rogers noted symbolism- not superior or inferior)

1. The Empowerment of Womanhood

* While the Bible has been used to subjugate and denigrate, in its proper context, it should actually liberate
* 1 Timothy 2:11-12- “Let a woman learn with silence in all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or have any authority over a man, but to be in silence…”
  + We immediately jump to the second half of the verse
  + That is due to our twenty-first century perspective
  + But focus on the breakthrough that comes at the beginning of that statement- “Let a woman learn”
    - That is a major change
    - Women could not go as far as men in the temple complex
    - They would not be formally taught theologically like men
    - This is reinforced by Jesus with Mary and Martha in Luke 10. Mary chose the good thing- not the cultural expectation
* Galatians 3:26-29- “…there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ…”
  + We all equally share in the redemptive work of Jesus
  + We are all equal heirs of God’s grace
  + There are no second-class citizens of heaven
* I Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4- lists of spiritual gifts
  + Spiritual gifts are given to all believers, regardless of gender, for the good of the body as a whole. It is supernatural empowerment for our good and God’s glory

1. The Examples of Womanhood

* We must be careful to differentiate between biblical and cultural expectations for womanhood
* Southern Christianity dictates that Christian women should be precious. Biblical women didn’t always fit that mold
* Rahab in Joshua 2, Joshua 6, and Hebrews 11-
  + Harlot in Jericho that was courageous enough to mislead her own authorities to hide foreign spies, Joshua and Caleb. For her work, she is spared in the destruction of the city. Matthew 1 lists her in the genealogy of Jesus. Hebrews 11 lists her amongst the giants of faith.
* Deborah in Judges 4-5.
  + She is a prophetess and judge. Only female named both. In small crowd to hold those two titles with Moses and Samuel. She is a physical, spiritual, and political leader in a period when Israel demanded a king from God. She commands Barak to go to war against Sisero. He is scared and will only go with her. She rides to the battle with him. Barak doesn’t receive the glory. Instead, another woman named Jael killed Sisero by nailed a tent peg through his temple.
* King Lemuel’s mother in Proverbs 31
  + This is the archetype that we push for godly women. She does and desires good for her family. She buys. She builds. She produces. She invests. She has the trust of her husband and the love and respect of her children. She manages her family well.
* Anna in Luke 2
  + She is a prophetess in the temple. She is noted for being very well advanced in age She gets to see Jesus when He is presented to Simeon. She is noted for her prayer and fasting.
* Priscilla
  + She and her husband Aquilla are partners in the gospel with Paul. They are tentmakers that move from Rome to Corinth. They mentored Apollos. They helped found churches in Ephesus and Corinth. They are commended multiple times by Paul in his letters. They started a house church in Ephesus. They are a picture of marital partnership in the gospel.
* Phoebe in Romans 16
  + She is believed to be the letter bearer to the church at Rome. She is in a position of leadership at the church at Cenchrea. While she is called a servant, the Greek is actually diakonos- the same word used for deacon or minister elsewhere. She is actively involved in Paul’s ministry whatever the official role may be.
* Tabitha in Acts 9
  + She is a woman noted in her community for her charitable works and good deeds. She is a seamstress that makes clothes for widows. When she dies, the entire community takes notice. When she is resurrected, even more take notice.
* Lydia in Acts 16
  + She is believed to be Paul’s first European convert. She is a woman of means that sells dyes for cloth. Her husband is never mentioned whether for death or divorce. Yet, she is instrumental in the early church. She convinces Paul and his missionary companions to stay at her home. The first church at Philippi met in her home. She is believed to be a key leader in that place.
* The Bible is full of stories of meek and mild mothers But it is also full of bold and powerful women. God can use different personalities and convictions when we are willing.

1. The Expectation for Womanhood (Colossians 3:23-24)

* I’ve been asked countless times about God’s plan for working outside the home, families, careers. Unfortunately, I don’t have a single answer. That is left to you and the Holy Spirit.
* But whatever conviction God gives, do it to the best of your ability because you are doing it for Him.
* Let me leave three final expectations that might seem traditional
  1. Simplicity
     1. The Bible warns against unnecessary physical additions that draw attention away from worship. But I believe this could speak additionally to a value of simplicity.
  2. Submission
     1. We must submit to the Lordship of Christ- and through that to the authorities that He dictates
  3. Sensitivity
     1. We operate with a sensitivity to the Spirit.
* These three expectations are not specific to women. They apply to all.