

## I Still Have Questions

(Questions from a friend and my answers)

### 1. Explain more fully 1 Timothy 2:11-15 (NIV)

*A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety. 15 But she will be saved through childbearing, if she continues in faith, love, and holiness, with good sense (Holman Christian Standard Bible)*

God told Paul to write “women will be saved by having a baby and being good.”(or with good sense, if you are reading the SBC Holman Bible).

The Ryrie Study Bible New King James Version has this explanation:

*2:15. Saved in childbearing. This may mean: (1) brought safely through childbirth; (2) saved through the birth of a Child, Jesus the Savior; or (3) that a woman’s greatest achievement is found in her devotion to her divinely ordained role: to help her husband, to bear children, and to follow a faithful, chaste way of life. (Does this give her salvation?)*

Let’s just say we don’t know what God, through Paul or whoever wrote it, meant by those words. Maybe he meant all of those three things.

First, we know that Godly women died in childbirth so that explanation seems unlikely.

Second, hopefully it did mean that the blood of Jesus would save a woman, just as it saves a man. One of the greatest joys the Pharisees got was to go to the market place and argue over whether or not a woman had a soul. Paul just said she does, if we accept that as the explanation.

Third, a woman today can have all of those things and still be a woman in leadership roles. She can help her husband, bear children, and live a Christian life. But those things do not provide salvation to a woman.

### 2. The Bible tells women to submit to their husbands. Ephesians 5:22-33 (NIV)

*Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish; but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body. For this reason a man*

*will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

**What a liberating statement Paul has just made to the congregation!** I can imagine every woman rejoicing and looking at each other and going up to Paul and saying, “God bless you. Thank you so much for what you just said.”

But wait, you say. Paul told her to submit to her husband and you are calling that liberation? Absolutely!

A girl was married to a man of her father’s choosing, and his father was paid money or animals to take this girl into their family. They bargained over her like so much livestock. Once the deal was made and the girl was married, her husband had full authority over her. She had no say in financial matters, spiritual matters, how to raise “his” children, and if he decided to take another wife into his bed, she was moved out. He had the “God-given” right to beat her to make her obey or just because he wanted to. He could divorce her and leave her penniless and destitute and he could take the children away from her. She had absolutely no rights. Just as women in many parts of the world today have no rights.

But now Paul is saying something new and something that gave her hope in this new Christian faith. He told her husband to love her, to treat her as he would treat his own body, and to a woman that meant only one thing – for her husband not to beat her.

Paul goes on to say that he would liken a marriage of a man and woman to that of how Christ feels about the church. He loves the church body and will take good care of it. He can be trusted to act in the best interests of the church, just as a husband would act in the best interest of his family.

**But wait a minute. We still have that troublesome word “submit.”** So we will deal with it. But we must back up to do so. Go back one verse to where Paul is telling the congregation what their relationship must be to one another because of Christ. *Read Ephesians 5:21 “submitting to one another in the fear of God.”*

That word ‘submit’ is an extremely harsh word. It means to give in to authority, to obey, to surrender your will, to bow down to. Paul used that word in telling them how to behave toward each other. Then he needed to clarify something because the way the scripture reads, the women were to submit to other men in the congregation. Being a good Jew, he knew that would never do, so he said in Verse 22: “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” Paul said that he wasn’t telling the women to submit to everyone. But he did tell the men that they had to submit to everyone (verse 21) and he did not back down from that or clarify it. Read it for yourself

Paul said that it was a great mystery (Ephesians 5:32) but that the best example he knew to give about Christ’s love for the church, was to compare it to that of a husband’s love for his wife. But in the thinking out of his example, he remembered that men don’t always love their wives and that they beat them and mistreats them – so he threw in that about how a man should treat his wife.

One point I would like to make is that God breathed the words to Paul or somebody, but the King James Version was produced in 1611 and it is not known if God breathed the words into the minds of the men King James put on his commission to translate the Bible. I have 6 Bibles sitting on the floor beside this desk and they say things in a different way (if they didn't, there would be not a reason for someone coming up with a new translation).

**3. I guess my being a woman stops me from being a Deacon is because the Scriptures say so...which I honestly don't have a problem with. Could you give me the scriptures that say I can be a deacon or a pastor? I would like to study them.**

They have been studied, argued over, fought over, denied, accepted, rejected, used to keep woman in her place, for 2,000 years. There is nothing I can say or add to the scriptures already put forth for the arguments, pro and con. I will not attempt to do so. Smarter people than you and I can't agree. Please read the arguments for women pastors and women deacons on my website under "Scriptural arguments for Women Pastors and Women Deacons" written by Dr. Todd Still, Associate Professor of Christian Scriptures, and by Dr. James Denison, Theologian in Residence at Baptist General Convention of Texas.

**4. I'm very interested in what you are saying. But before I form my opinion I want to be sure they are biblically-based. I guess I need to know more about what God says about the calling of Deacons and their position in a church.**

Why is the office of a deacon so great that only a man can fill it?" Because God said so? See above answer. Junia was a female deacon and at some point her name was changed to read in the male form. There were others. So if God says so, then he must have been upset with the Apostle Paul. **Read Romans 16:1-2** "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. 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." Ryrie Study Bible "Phoebe...a servant of the church. The word here translated "servant" is often translated "deacon." Which leads some to believe that Phoebe was a deaconess.

**5. Why do you talk so much about "equality?"**

The Southern Baptist Convention would have you believe two things: 1) women are equal; 2) men are superior. Doublespeak. How can a woman give birth to a son who is this complete male child of God, and give birth to a girl who is not?

The answer lies in the fact that it was believed that men did all the giving for a child (read sperm, or seed as the Bible says). They had no idea that a woman had an egg in her body like a chicken. Woman and man would have been shocked to find out that women had eggs. A woman gives just as much of herself to producing a child as a man does. But they did not see it that way. It was easy for them to see what a man contributed so they thought that he had contributed everything to make this perfect male child. They did not know that the perfect male child was produced from what the father gave and equally what the imperfect woman mother gave, so it was easy to think that a woman could give birth to one perfect male and one less than perfect female. The female child the man produced was inferior, and the mother was unclean for 14 days after this imperfect child came out of her body. But she was unclean for only 7 days when this perfect male child was born.

**6. You are referring to the Bible in 3rd person. "they didn't know that woman had eggs" Really? Well, "they" didn't write the Bible - God did. He knew. Every word in there is inspired only from Him. So it is not like men wrote their thoughts down on women - or that God was simply taking notes of what was happening...every single word is from Him. In Isaiah, among other books, it repeats that God is the creator of all and the beginning and the end. A person's belief of this instructs their belief in all other areas of life. Do you doubt the entire Holiness of the Lord?**

Now, where did that come from? I believe God created all and is Holy above all, but that doesn't have anything to do with the subject. The subject was that in all the scriptures it gives the man all the credit for fathering a child. In fact, the very word "seed" implies a completeness. No seed ever needs any other component other than what is actually in the seed itself. Of course it needs light, water, soil, but the seed itself contains all the DNA that is needed, and the other elements only allow for growth but not what it takes to make a bean a bean.

**7. I don't think that girls are not complete in God.**

I am glad to hear that. But others do. Many believe that God can never forgive woman for giving that apple to Adam to eat and that the sin of mankind rests on her shoulders. Never mind the fact that Apostle Paul said clearly that the fault was Adam's in Romans 5:14 "...Adam was a figure of the one who was to come. 15. But the two are not the same, because God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. It is true that many people died because of the sin of that one man."

**8. Explain why you say a woman was unclean longer after giving birth to a girl. I thought being clean and unclean after childbirth has to do with circumcision, not girls being unclean. They had to circumcise a boy in 7 days...they didn't have to do this to a girl.**

Ok, now about women being unclean for 14 days if she had a girl, and for only 7 days if she had a boy.

To agree with the concept that the boy had to be circumcised on the 8th day and that it was his uncleanness instead of the mother's, you must assume that the full time of her uncleanness was 14 days because that is what the time frame was if she had a girl.

The result is that she was forgiven her uncleanness for the time between the 8th day and the 14th day if she had a boy. Just like I said on my website. The mother was unclean for 7 days if she had a little boy and 14 days for a girl. But look, there is more. Her purifying is for another 33 days if she has given birth to a boy. But it is another 66 days if she had given birth to a girl. That has absolutely nothing to do with the circumcision of a boy. So just by giving birth to a boy she was made clean sooner.

Read the following scriptures.

*Lev 12:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and borne a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days (7 days); according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.*

*Lev 12:3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.*

*Lev 12:4 And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.*

*Lev 12:5 But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks (14 days), as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.*

*Lev 12:6 And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest:*

*Lev 12:7 Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female.*

Turn it any way you want to, but the facts remain the same. The woman was unclean longer simply because she had a girl. If she had a boy, the length of days of her impureness was shortened.

Women, you have given birth to both boys and girls. Did you see any difference in the days of your purification?

### **9. The fact of the matter - women aren't inferior and God doesn't say that they are...that I can find. If you find this...please give it to me.**

Well, actually God does say a woman is inferior. Genesis 3:16 ".....Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." But that is after he gave woman the highest praise he could give her and also the highest praise he could give the man. Genesis 1:27 "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Ryrie Study Bible: "Genesis 1:27. Man. The word is used generically here, then amplified by the phrase male and female.")

Before you get too excited and say that God tells the woman the husband is to rule over her, look at this. Jesus is speaking. Mark 10:6-9 (NIV) "But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." Jesus said they were not to divorce because God had joined them together in one flesh. When the disciples asked him what this meant Jesus told them (verses 11-12 paraphrased) "if a man divorces his wife and marries somebody else, he commits adultery against his first wife." And then Jesus does something entirely unexpected. He gives woman equality in the next sentence "if the woman is the one who divorces her husband and marries another man, then she commits adultery."

It is unexpected because the Jews did not allow a woman to divorce her husband Josephus writes in Antiquities of the Jews Book XV, Vii, 10 "...she sent him a bill of divorce, and dissolved her marriage with him, though this was not according to the Jewish laws; for with us, it is lawful for a husband to do so; but a wife if she departs from her husband, cannot of herself be married to another, unless her former husband put her away." The explanation below that passage goes on to say "Here is a plain example of a Jewish lady giving a divorce to her husband, though in the days of Josephus it was not esteemed lawful for a woman so to do. However, the Christian law, when it allowed divorce for adultery (Matt v 32) allowed the innocent wife to divorce her guilty husband, as well as the innocent husband to divorce his guilty wife, as we learn from the Shepherd of Hermas, and from the Second Apology of Justin Martyr,

where a persecution was brought upon the Christians upon such a divorce. They saw the equality that Jesus gave women.

EQUALITY. They are of one flesh, they are equal, their sin is the same. Equality means that you submit one to each other, and not one to another.

The reason this is so important is that men have used these scriptures to demean women, to keep a woman from voting, buying and selling, holding a job, to take "his" children away from her, to beat women, to lord it over women, to make laws against women, to hold a woman's money from her. Read today's newspaper and see what is still going on in other countries where women have no rights and is under the rule of her husband, her sons, her father, her uncles, and any male in the family. Talk to any group of older women today in the United States and ask them what they have come from. Many will tell you that they were raised where the men ate before the women and children, and a host of other things that we consider ridiculous today. Even women who choose submission would not put up with what women have had to put up with in the past. They have forgotten what it used to be like in some homes. And might be again if women do not speak up.

Parents should be very careful whenever they advise their daughters to be submissive, because they are giving the husbands the rights to make the determination of what submission is.

The following quote was what I read that a professor at one of our Baptist Seminaries said when he preached at a church in Texas in 2008 – he said *'one reason men abuse their wives is because women rebel against their husband's God-given authority'*. Every father should have jumped up in that church and shouted "nobody has the right to abuse my daughter!"

You see, it is so important that a woman be an equal in the home, and an equal in the church. The church should be the first to champion a woman's equality.

I don't understand why the Southern Baptist Convention has decided to emphasize the rule of the husband over the woman in a marriage. Jesus didn't, and Baptists everywhere, even the SBC, have done away with many of the old laws of Moses. We are trying to fit a square peg (the Middle Eastern mindset about women) into a round hole (the non-Middle Eastern woman).

I have been accused by some readers of having anger. One person even suggested that I must have experienced this. A person doesn't have to personally experience everything they know about. It is extreme arrogance to think that women only learn from what happens personally to them. It is also denial because we choose to think that this animosity against women is because the woman brings it upon herself. We all learn by reading, and by hearing others' experience.

I appreciate the opportunity to answer your questions. One man likened me to being involved with witchcraft and then called me "Poor blind eyes." But I have received many letters from women who are dealing with their call to ministry and my heart weeps with them.

Shirley Taylor