

## ISSUES IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

### A Guided Study

Virgil Warren, PhD

Below are six items for thought and research on women's studies. Some points may be referred to in Hermeneutics: Getting the Point; check the scripture index for locations. As much as possible, consciously integrate into your write-up the principles studied in the course.

Some items involve work with the original languages and may not seem fully understandable to those who have not studied Greek. There is no expertise in biblical languages required, however, since the exercises are vocabulary items that can be looked at through *Englishman's Greek Concordance to the New Testament*. On some questions students may want to consult Dr. Warren's "Preliminary Essays on Women's Studies."

The project should equal ten to twelve typed pages. These exercises are intended to be interpretation exercises rather than research projects. Nevertheless, if you felt you had to use some resource to "get you started," after the question indicate any secondary source(s) you used to prepare your answer.

The biblical texts most applicable to women's studies are Genesis 2-3; Exodus 15:20-21; Acts 2:18 (< Joel 2:28; cp. Judges 4:1-5:31; 2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22; Nehemiah 6:14; Isaiah 8:3; Luke 2:9; Acts 21:36-38; 2:41-45 + 46-55); 18:24-26; Romans 7:1-3; 16:1-2, 3-5a, 6, 7, 12, 15); 1 Corinthians 7; 11:2-16; 14:33b-36; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:21-6:9 [= Colossians 3:18-4:1 = 1 Peter 2:13-3:7]; Philippians 4:3; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 5:1-16; 2 Timothy 3:14-15 + 5:1; Titus 2:1-3:15.

A. Make a charted comparison of elements between the "household teaching" texts: Ephesians 5:21-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1; 1 Peter 2:13-3:7 (1 Timothy 2:8-15). From this layout, note similarities and differences that seem appropriate to questions about marriage and the home, particularly as to whether marriage is a purely egalitarian/equalitarian/ interpersonal arrangement or a hierarchical one. Are the issues entirely homogeneous that are mentioned in these blocks? (Note the work on "Comparative Method" in the Interpretation Section of this *Christian Internet Resources*.)

B. Look at all the passages where "one another" (*allēlōn*) occurs in the New Testament. If you have not studied Greek, use *The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*, under *allēlōn*, pp. 29-30. Do not use a concordance for an English translation—*Strong's*, *Young's*, or *Cruden's*; they do not give you all the passages that apply here, because the Greek term is translated in more than one way ("each other," "one another," "one to another," etc.). If you have taken Greek, you can use Moulton and Geden's *Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, pp. 43-44.

The task is to identify all uses of the word as to whether it is reciprocal between individuals (A to B to A) or can also be one-directional within a group (A to B, X to Y, Q to R). In the first format, one person does to the second what the second person does back to the first: "one another." The second format pictures a group within which one individual acts in a certain way toward a second, a third person acts that way toward a fourth, and so forth. Unlike

the first pattern, it does not picture the second person of each pair as turning around and doing the same thing back to the first person; in English we could reserve the expression “one to another” for this format.

The point of this exercise is to evaluate the notion of “mutual submission” in marriage as based on Ephesians 5:21, “*Submit yourselves to one another.*” Besides the information gathered in the concordance exercise above, (a) what considerations affect which meaning that “one another” has in this statement? (b) Does scripture ever tell husbands to be subject to their wives?

C. Is it a fallen condition described in Genesis 3 when God tells Eve that her desire will be toward her husband, and he will “rule” [*mashal* = Masoretic Text; *kyrieuō* = Septuagint] over her? Does Genesis 3:16 describe a fallen condition that Galatians 3:28 reverses? In this respect, was the Adam-Eve relationship before the Fall different from this hierarchical relationship after the Fall? How is the Genesis text used in the New Testament to answer this question? (Note Romans 7:1-3?; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:8-15.)

D. Is Galatians 3:28 an absolute statement when it says that in Christ there is neither male nor female? (a) Does immediate context, the New Testament generally, or the nature of the case limit the application of the principle? (b) Are there any senses in which there is a difference between male and female? (c) What is Paul’s subject, or “frame of reference,” in the context of Galatians 3:28? (d) What thing(s) is/are common to the three sets; that is, to what extent are male-female, bond-free, circumcised-uncircumcised alike? If the positive comment addresses one item common to three classes that differ otherwise, further considerations must determine whether those other distinctions may exist if they do not interfere with the reason Paul mentioned them together.

E. (a) How can we reconcile the implications of Paul’s directives to the Corinthians about women prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (note also other places where they prophesy) and his prohibition against women “speaking” (*laleō*) in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36? (b) What does context include in “not speaking” in 1 Corinthians 14:34? (c) Is it likely that “speak” could mean “*rattle on and on*,” or “*prate*”? (d) What variable might explain the difference between 1 Corinthians 11 and 14? Consider the following possibilities:

church service vs. outside church services  
 unmarried vs. married women  
 teaching (ch. 14) vs. prophesying (ch. 11)  
 official/normative vs. unofficial  
 prophesying to women-plus-children vs. prophesying to mixed audiences  
 a localized prohibition vs. a universal or permanent injunction  
 chapter 14 is specific to tongue speaking whereas chapter 11 is broad to other matters

F. What “custom” is Paul talking about in 1 Corinthians 11:16, wearing a veil or not wearing a veil?