

Sermon Title: Women – Equal, but different.**(Various Bible readings as we go through this subject)****Introduction**

Today we are going to search the Bible to discover what God Himself teaches about Women.

The “**gender debate**” as it is called is not to be taken lightly.

It affects our humanness, our sexuality, our ministry opportunities, the marriage relationship, family life, and life in ministry at O.I.C. and all other Churches world-wide.

Today, if you are a man, this teaching is important for you too.

As men we need to know what to expect from a Biblical woman.

The influence of secular culture on Christian thinking when it comes to women in the Church is so strong that many women prefer to ignore God’s clear teaching on this subject.

They claim to hold an **evangelical feminist view which fits in well with modern culture.**

Although there are professing Christians who hold different views on the subject, I hope that you will be persuaded, not by me, but by God’s word, to understand the truth on this hotly debated subject.

It is important that here at O.I.C. we follow God’s word, because that is what the OIC constitution says that we do. **We obey God’s teaching on all subjects.**

Compromise in this area has resulted so far in the breakdown of Christian marriages, and the lack of men, taking leadership roles in the Church today.

Secular society never influenced what Jesus Christ taught on the subject of women.

What the Bible teaches about women, is what we need to know today.

What Jesus Christ says determines what is right and wrong in this debate.

Also what the Apostles of Jesus Christ taught, supported what Jesus said.

So let us begin at the beginning.

Matthew Chapter 19: v. 3-5. In N.K.J.

³The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?”

⁴And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?”

When responding to the Pharisees’ male-centred divorce practice, Jesus declared “from the beginning it was not so.” (Matt.19 :v. 8 – N.K.J.)

Jesus told them to go back to the Genesis account of creation, back to God’s word where they would discover God’s design for marriage.

The same is true for us at O.I.C. today. If we want to understand God’s will for the sexes, we must follow the example of Jesus.

Stephen B. Clark wrote a very large book entitled Man and Woman in Christ, and I quote from that book here;

“Other New Testament writers, especially Paul, followed Jesus’ lead. Most of the important passages on men-women roles in the New testament refer back either **explicitly or implicitly** to the **first three chapters of Genesis**. It is not possible to understand the New Testament teaching on men and women without understanding how it is **founded on the creation of Adam and Eve and on God’s purposes as revealed in the creation of the human race.**”

Therefore, we will firstly explore three essential passages in Genesis.

This will provide us with a foundation for all of the Bible’s teaching on the subject of women.

Genesis 1: v. 26-28

²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2: v. 7-25

⁷ And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

⁸ The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four river heads. ¹¹ The name of the first *is* Pishon; it *is* the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold. ¹² And the gold of that land *is* good. Bdellium and the onyx stone *are* there. ¹³ The name of the second river *is* Gihon; it *is* the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river *is* Hiddekel; it *is* the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river *is* the Euphrates.

¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, "*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." ¹⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. ²⁰ So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

²³ And Adam said:

"This *is* now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis 3: v. 1-9.

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

⁹ Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where *are* you?”

These verses teach us three important things.

1. Men and women are created equal in God’s image. (Gen.1: v. 26-28)

From these three verses we are taught 4 things by God’s word.

- a) God created the human race male and female - God created two sexually distinct human beings. God had a purpose in mind when He did this. One purpose was to teach His people spiritual truths concerning His relationship with us. (read later Eph. 5: v. 29-32)
- b) God created both the man and the woman in His image. - This teaches us that both male and female are equally necessary and important to God’s design for the human race.
- c) God commanded both the man and the woman to multiply and rule the earth. Therefore, both the man and the woman have a part to play in obeying God’s command.
- d) God named the human race **“Man”**. - God chose to use the name of one of the sexes, man, to designate the whole human race.

2. God created men and women equal but yet different – Genesis Chapter 2: v.7-25.

This passage is used by Jesus and His Apostles when they teach on marriage and gender roles.

Genesis chapter 2 presents 6 truths that are essential to our understanding of the New Testament teaching on this subject.

- a) God made Adam the central character. God speaks to Adam and gives him instructions, the animals are brought to him to be named, the woman is made for the man, and the man names the woman. Every part of Genesis chapter 2 is focused upon the male, that is Adam.
- b) God created Adam first. Before Eve was formed God commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, lest he die. (2: v. 16,17)
(1 Timothy 2: v. 12, 13)
¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.
- c) God formed the woman out of the man. The woman’s **source of origin was out of the man.** This clearly demonstrates **role differences.**
Paul uses Genesis 2: v. 22 as a way of teaching the doctrine of headship.
(1 Cor. 11: v.3, and 7.)
³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.
⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.
- d) God created the woman for the man. It was God who decided that a helper for man should be created. **It was God’s idea and plan.** The woman was made to **complement** the man, to help him populate and rule the earth, and to **unite with him as a loving companion-partner.** This is the first statement in the Bible concerning the woman’s role, **she is to be a help to the man.**
- e) God gave the man the right to name the woman. The one who names a person or thing has the authority and power to name that person, just as parents do today with their children. This suggests that Adam had special authority in the relationship. When Adam first saw Eve, he called her a Woman, (Gen.2:23) it was only after the fall that she was called Eve. (Gen. 3:20)
- f) God created man and woman equal in nature. (v. 23) The woman was taken out of Adam’s side, and she shared his nature, and had the image of God. She was not inferior like the animals.

3. When sin entered human nature, the battle began with men and women.

Genesis 3: v. 1-9.

In Genesis chapter 3 we learn that both the man and the woman sin against God.

They disobey God's command and eat from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil". Their disobedience and its resulting judgement is called the "Fall".

Genesis chapter 3 explains why men and women labour and have conflict all of their days until they die.

The "Fall" has **changed male-female relations for the worse.**

The concept of male headship was introduced in Genesis chapter 2 and the "fall" corrupted this headship. It is important that we understand this point.

We need to consider 3 issues from Genesis Chapter 3.

- a) **Eve's Deception** - It was not by chance that Satan tempted the woman first, rather than the man. Satan realised that the woman would be the more susceptible of the two sexes for subtle deception.

He was right.

In v. 13 the woman admits to God that she was deceived.

Satan not only attacked what God had said about not eating the fruit from a certain tree, **he also attacked God's order in the couple's relationship.**

- b) **Eve's penalty** - As a result of her sin, Eve would be afflicted with pain in her chief roles as **Mother and wife.** (v. 16)

The second penalty was in her **marriage relationship.** Here the man/woman relationship is distorted and the woman becomes frustrated. Something has gone wrong.

- c) **Adam's penalty** - God curses the ground because of Adam's sin. It will now involve hardship to provide food for themselves. Adam will die and return to the ground along with Eve.

Adam's headship is highlighted by the way in which God called Adam to account for their disobedience.

(Romans 5: v. 12)

¹²Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Even though it was Eve who sinned first, Adam is held responsible because he is the head person.

Summary

Genesis chapter 1&2 reveal to us that men and women are created equally in the image of God but are **different in function and relationship roles.**

The rest of the Old Testament illustrates these gender based differences in a fallen world.

Although there were exceptions because of context, disobedience and special situations, **all of the God appointed heads were male.**

The women still had a big role to play in God's plan of redemption.

Now we have covered the three main Genesis passages that are **quoted by Jesus, Paul and other New Testament writers,** we can embark on the New testament teaching.

New Testament Teaching

Jesus Christ appointed Male Leadership for His Church who gave instruction on Marriage and matters relating to women concerning equality and role differences.

1. Male leadership for Jesus's Church.

- a) **Jesus had to be a man**

Jesus had two natures. He was fully divine and also had a full human nature. However, He was one person. Jesus had to be either male or female.

Jesus took on a male human nature and came into this world as the Son of God, not the daughter of God. The God of the Bible reveals and defines Himself in Holy Scripture almost exclusively as a male.

b) Jesus appointed 12 male Apostles

During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ personally trained and appointed 12 men. He called them Apostles. (Luke 6:13)

Jesus spent the whole night in prayer to His father before He made this choice.

(Luke 6: v. 12-13)

¹² Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. ¹³ And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself*; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

the Greek word 'apostolos' literally means "one who is sent out".

These men were not volunteers. They were chosen by Jesus and by God, to be representatives and accredited teachers of God's word.

Because the Apostles spoke God's word by the power of the Holy Spirit, John could say the following words in **1 John 4: v. 6. (in N.K.J.)**

⁶ We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Paul was chosen by Jesus to be an Apostle to the Gentiles, that is us. He was also a male and wrote many of the New testament letters.

We must also note that Jesus honoured, defended, and lifted up women in remarkable new ways that went against the culture of that day.

However, Jesus never went against God's word concerning the role and responsibilities of women. It is important to note this.

2. Jesus gave instructions on marriage through His Apostles.

Before we start this section, I want to ask you a question.

Q. What makes a married woman look beautiful?

Your answer may include lots of things. It may involve an outward attraction through age, figure, hair, clothes, make-up etc.

However, the Bible teaches that the thing that makes a married woman beautiful, is **when she is in submission to her husband**, even if he is not a Christian.

Now you don't have to be married in order to be a beautiful woman in God's eyes. **You just need to be submissive to God's teaching on male headship.**

So whether you are married, or not married, if you want to be beautiful in God's eyes, pay attention to the following Bible verses.

1 Peter 3: v. 1-7. (N.L.T.)

In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over ² by observing your pure and reverent lives.

³ Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. ⁴ You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. ⁵ This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of their husbands. ⁶ For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.

⁷ In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

The theme of the entire section of Peter's letter is "submission".

Note the challenge of women who have husbands who are not yet Christians.

a) It is important that we understand this word "submission".

The reason why it is really important, it because for many people the English word submission has a negative meaning in our western culture today.

The Greek word for "be submissive" is "**hypotasso**".

The word always implies a relationship of submission to an authority.

Peter chose the correct word to communicate what he wants to say.

In every example in the Bible where this word is used it is always relating to a submission to an authority.

Examples

Jesus subject to His parents – Luke 2:v.51

Citizens subject to government – Romans 13: v. 1

Demons subject to disciples – Luke 10: v. 17

Universe subject to Christ – 1 Cor. 15: v. 27.

The Church subject to Christ – Eph. 5: v.24.

Unseen, heavenly authorities subject to Christ – 1 Peter 3: v. 22.

Believers subject to God – James 4: v. 7.

Believers subject to their spiritual leaders – 1 Cor. 16:15-16.

Christ subject to God the Father – 1 Cor. 15: v.28

Servants subject to masters – Titus 2: v. 5

Wives subject to husbands – Eph. 5: v. 23.

None of these relationships are ever reversed.

However, we need to understand that the above list involves different kinds of relationships.

The marriage relationship is a covenant relationship. In which two adults become one.

Within this union one partner lovingly takes the lead and the other willingly and actively supports that lead.

According to Genesis Chapter 2 the **wife's role is to affirm the husband in his leadership.**

This is an **active role and requires wisdom, social skills, insight, love and strength.**

For a Biblical example of this active positive role of a helper, please read **Proverbs 31: v. 10-31 later on this week when you can make time.**

b) Biblical Submission makes a woman attractive and beautiful

Peter says that the wife's submission to her husband is of a true lasting beauty in God's eyes. (v. 4-5)

Peter is not saying that a woman can't dress up, put on make-up and look nice. What he is saying is that **her real spiritual beauty that is attractive in God's eyes should come from a submissive heart.**

If you are looking for a **good attractive wife, find a woman who will submit to God's word!!**

c) Biblical submission is limited to Biblical principles.

A husband or any Christian man in leadership can't ask any women to be submissive to anything that God's word doesn't approve of.

In 1 Peter which focuses on submission, **Peter says that submission should be in an attitude of brotherly love. (1 Peter 3: v. 8-12.)**

Peter supports submission by quoting Sara, Abraham's wife.

(1 Peter 3: v. 5-6)

d) Biblical Submission has a theological reason

In Ephesians chapter 5 it explains why the wife should submit to her husband.

Eph. 5: v. 22-33. In N.L.T.

²² For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. ²⁴ As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

²⁵ For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. ²⁹ No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. ³⁰ And we are members of his body.

³¹ As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." ³² This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. ³³ So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Briefly these verses teach three important things.

Firstly, the husband is the head.

The Bible doesn't say that the husband **should be** the head of the wife, but **is the head of the wife**.

Secondly the husband's headship is based on **Christ's headship**.

It is not the culture of the day, that is the basis for the husband being the head of the family. It is **divinely planned by God and supported by Jesus Christ** who is the head of the Church.

The **relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church** is the **model for the relationship between the husband and the wife**.

Thirdly the wife's submission is based on the Church's submission.

In Christian marriage the wife represents the Church that freely and willingly submits to **Christ's headship**, and the **husband represents Christ**, the self-giving, loving head of the Church.

3. Through His Apostles, Jesus Christ taught Gender Equality and role differences in the Christian Community.

a) **Peter taught Submission and Understanding – 1 Peter 3: v. 1-7.**

b) **Paul taught Submission, Loving Headship and a One Flesh Union – Ephesians 5: v. 21-33 Colossians 3: v. 18-19.**

4. Women in submission to Male Leadership in the Church Family.

The main Bible passage concerning this is 1 Timothy 2: v. 8-15.
(in the N.K.J.)

⁸In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.

⁹And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. ¹⁰For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do.

¹¹Women should learn quietly and submissively. ¹²I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Let them listen quietly. ¹³For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve. ¹⁴And it was not Adam who was deceived by Satan. The woman was deceived, and sin was the result. ¹⁵But women will be saved through childbearing, assuming they continue to live in faith, love, holiness, and modesty.

We have already covered this passage a few weeks ago, so I will be brief here.

The main points are as follows;

a) Women need to wear appropriate clothing in Church.

b) Women must not be allowed to teach in the context of a worship service.

c) Women must not have authority over a man.

The application to OIC in order to obey God's teaching on authority is clear.

If we continue to have a Church Council and do not move on to appointing Elders and Deacons, then we **MUST always appoint a Male Elder/Pastor as the chair of the Council.**

If we do this, then we will not have any conflict over the spiritual and Biblical authority of an Elder/Pastor at O.I.C.

This could be done before the A.G.M. next year.

5. Women were valued by Paul for ministry within their gender role.

Although women **could not serve as Pastor Elders in the first Churches** that were formed, they were actively involved in serving in the Christian Community. They served as evangelists, supported Paul and many other missionaries, in their ministry.

They worked together with these men.

Paul mentions a number of women servants in Jesus at the close of his letter to the Romans. (Romans 16: v. 1-16)

Paul also mentions women in ministry with Paul in Philippians 4: v. 2-3, and in Acts 18: v. 24-26 he also mentions a husband and wife team called Priscilla & Aquila.

These Bible passages inform us that Paul had a high regard for women in ministry.

Paul praises these women for their courage, hard work, and love.

Paul valued them and acknowledged them.

What we need to understand is what these women did and how we can transfer similar ministries to contemporary Church life today.

If women obey God's teaching, they themselves will be blessed, **and the men in ministry will be helped to serve God better because of their help.**

This applies to women who are married and women who are single.

Phoebe is the first woman mentioned by Paul.

She was a "servant" of the Church in Cenchrea.

The Greek work "Diakonos" is used here and this can mean both an official position as a Deacon, or just a volunteer helper.

This lady was a helper of many people.

If Phoebe was an official New Testament Deacon she would be involved in a work of mercy towards the poor, and Christian widows, including the sick.

If she was not an officially appointed Deacon then she could have done lots of other things like

hospitality, financial giving, prayers, witness and teaching other women, counselling and visitation.

Therefore, we can easily transfer these ministries to modern day, without compromising God's order concerning women.

Some commentators feel that Phoebe was quite a wealthy woman and that she used her wealth to support many ministries.

I met a lady once who had a "ministry of giving money". I didn't know she had this ministry at the time that she gave me a personal gift of money.

However, about 3 months later, after I received this gift, I attended her funeral and discovered that she ran a garage and car business, just to make money to give away to Missionary Societies and Christians in need.

What a wonderful lady, and what a wonderful ministry she had, serving Jesus in this way.

Phoebe was a model of Christian love and service, just like the lady who I met in Scotland one day.

I also want to highlight two ladies who are called Euodia and Syntyche.

Philippians 4: v. 2-3.

In N.K.J.

² I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.

in the N.L.T.

² Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. ³ And I ask you, my true partner, to help these two women, for they worked hard with me in telling others the Good News. They worked along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are written in the Book of Life.

These two ladies were workers with Paul. Today they would be described as “Missionaries”

Over the last 70 years, 80% of all single missionaries have been women.

This statistic is based upon true gospel, and Bible honouring Missionary Societies.

So we can see that women still have a great part to play in supporting world mission. Their Biblical role is to work alongside men and support them, like these two ladies did with the Apostle Paul.

The final lady I need to bring to your attention is “Priscilla”.

Acts 18: v. 24-26. In N.K.J.

²⁴ Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Priscilla was married to Aquila and they worked in a husband and wife partnership to support the cause of the gospel.

They certainly both knew the gospel message well and were able to correct people who didn't fully understand the grace of God and the work of Christ on the cross.

To have a husband and wife team in ministry is great. The wife can speak with the women and the man can speak with the men.

In my 33 years in ministry, my wife Wendy has been immensely valuable in supporting me and dealing with women who have sometimes had extremely difficult problems.

Although Wendy's support has been great, what blesses me the most in my heart is that she has seen her priority in bringing up our four children, which is her Biblical role.

She devoted herself to this ministry until our youngest child was 12 years old.

(Approximately a 23 year ministry)

Many women today, and some Christian women, want to leave the responsibility of bringing up children to others and go back to work as soon as they can. Why do they do this? Well it is because it is really hard work bringing up one child.

It is never right for a woman to abdicate her responsibility in bringing up her child.

The biggest problem is that the major influence upon the child's life comes from other people and not from the parent.

If the parent is a Christian, then they lose the opportunity to obey God and bring up their child in a Christian way.

Over the last 50 years a great deal of the world's problems with children, teenagers and adults have come because of wrong parenting, and sometimes no parenting at all.

Husband and wife teams are great, but if they have children, **the wife must not neglect her responsibility in bringing up the children.**

Even in the case of Moses, God arranged it that his Mother would have the responsibility of bringing him up for the first 4-5 years.

(Exodus 2: v. 1-10)

The last thing that I want to say concerns single women.

The Bible doesn't treat single women any differently from married women.

If a woman chooses to remain single, or God has not ordained that she marry, then she can still be involved in ministries as stated in the Bible.

Having said this, I have personally discovered that single women have a deficiency in understanding and interacting with men on a deeper level.

Also some single women can resent men because they are not married.

Only the holy Spirit can help single women to overcome these challenges.

However, the Bible is very clear that single women must not be involved in any sexual activity with another female woman. (Romans 1: v.26)

They must of course not have sex with a male, until they are married to that person.

It is not wrong to be single as a woman and some women could do what God requires of them if they were married.

Conclusion

1. Women were involved and active during the first days of the Christian movement. **However, their involvement was accomplished in ways that did not violate the divine pattern of male headship in the Church.**
2. **Women, under the authority of male headship, were involved mainly in prayer, caring and supporting their husbands and children, teaching domestic skills and Bible doctrine to other women, serving the local church, actively witnessing and engaging in mercy ministries to needy people.**
3. **In God's eyes, the most beautiful women are those who are submissive to God's teaching concerning women.**

Application

1. **If the women members of OIC want to honour God in His teaching, then there will be a need to make changes in our leadership structure.**

I do believe that God always honours our step of "Faith" to honour His word.

God's teaching on women is never popular, and often not clearly understood.

I hope by giving you at least a small insight into the subject today, that you will at least be able to make an informed decision about the role and responsibility of Christian women.

2. I have researched Churches in the U.S. and the U.K. and those Churches that teach a truth that I have taught you today recommend that a women's ministry be set up in your Church to teach women how to understand and apply the Bible to their lives.
This is achieved when one or two women are fully trained in understanding the Bible correctly and are able to do expository teaching to other women.
This is the challenge for OIC. Are there any women gifted and able to train in God's word and teach it to other women.
There are great courses in the U.S. and the U.K. and maybe on-line too?
One of the best investments we could make in this area is to support somebody who can train other women, whatever the cost might be.

3. **There is an application here concerning MEN.**

This is very important. Over the last 35 years many Churches have struggled because **MEN did not take their God's ordained responsibilities to lead in the Church.** They were too busy working and left many of the Church related ministries to women.

Therefore, if we are going to be strong in our ministry at OIC, then **MEN will have to take on their God given role to lead** in the Church.

This will involve some men doing Bible Courses to improve their knowledge so that they can teach the Bible correctly.

There are very good and inexpensive Bible courses today that can be done over the internet.

I myself about 25 years ago did a Bible degree course by correspondence. This was before the internet. It took me four years, while I was in full-time ministry, so I know it is possible.

So MEN, you have a challenge!!!

God wants you to be involved in leadership responsibilities at OIC.

Is God challenging you today to do something to train you for a leadership ministry?

Don't delay, start today, see me after the service and I will pray with you.