

ARE WE WISE OR FOOLISH?

Women in Combat: A Biblical Worldview - Part 2

Have we developed a bad habit of turning social experiments into policy and code? What is a social experiment? Abortion and same-sex “marriage” are but two examples. Another is the “political correctness” of putting women into combat. A social experiment arrogantly opposes God’s created order. It has the look and feel of liberty but, in reality, puts human life at risk. Social experiments are reckless and foolish.

JESUS KNOWS MALE AND FEMALE

During His life on earth, Jesus honored and elevated women in remarkable new ways. Certainly, He could have chosen both men and women to serve as His apostles. But He did not. Jesus was very familiar with the created differences of male and female. He knew their different yet complementary roles and vocations. **Why would He know male and female so well? Read Genesis 1:26 and John 1:1-5; 14.** Equality does not mean that everyone does the same thing, but that male and female each have the opportunity to serve God and others according to created order and unique design.

In today’s culture, discussions about the roles of men and women bring with them emotion and strong opinion. So, if we’re going to have honest dialogue, let’s begin with some personal introspection. Do you confess that God created you? Are you His design for His purpose? But are you, like the first woman Eve, tempted to doubt the Creator and, in fact, position yourself as lord of your own life? Are your choices too easily influenced by personal feelings, circumstance, pride, envy, short-sightedness, and search for identity? In discussing women in combat, like any other life issue, it is important to acknowledge our own failure to trust God’s Word and desire for control. We need to contrast His created order with the chaos of the world and our own thinking.

How does God’s Word in Colossians 2:8 shed light on this particular discussion?

Read Genesis 2. Carefully find the passages that address the order of Adam and Eve’s creation, the way that each was created, and their specific vocations. How does knowing that God did not create Adam and Eve at the same time, in the same way, or for the same purpose shed light on women in combat?

Dr. Leroy Vogel, retired U.S. Navy chaplain and professor emeritus at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, writes, “While it may be argued that there is no specific Scriptural passage that forbids a woman to serve as warrior, the apparent accommodation of some within the Church to the spirit of the age that turns warrior into a unisex role would appear, at a minimum, to be a departure from the divine wisdom of the Creator regarding the differentiation of the sexes.”

What is the issue – sexual equality or ordered equality? Dr. Vogel notes that when we ignore the Biblical account of creation, sexual differentiation and roles are viewed as “social constructs and, if society has created the distinctions, society can abolish them.” To overturn the created order of differentiation and roles is to abandon Biblical faith. “Scripture is clear,” writes Dr. Vogel. “God made two sexes, equal but with assigned roles. Sexual equality is not the issue; ordered equality is. Scripture and the tradition of the Church assign to man the role of defender, protector, warrior. To woman is given the role of life-giver, nurturer, sustainer.” Dr. Vogel offers a curious Hebrew interpretation of a Deuteronomy 22:5 (NIV translation): “A woman must not wear men’s clothing . . . for the Lord your god detests anyone who does this.” Dr. Vogel submits that this verse is about more than cross-dressing. He explains that “men’s clothing” in Hebrew is translated *keli-gerber*. *Keli* denotes “equipment,” specifically a soldier’s equipment. The Hebrew noun *geber* denotes “mighty man” or “hunter” or “warrior.” So, writes, Dr. Vogel, “a legitimate translation of the phrase uses language of a decidedly military flavor: ‘No woman shall put on the gear of a warrior.’” It seems that the church fathers John Calvin and Martin Luther agreed. “Luther knew Hebrew,” writes Dr. Vogel, “and comments on the verse as follows: ‘A woman shall not bear the weapons of a man . . . it is improper . . . Through this law [God] reproaches any nation in which this custom is observed.’” (*Women in Combat: Two Views,* *The Lutheran Witness*, May 2003, p. 16-20.)

Let’s review Genesis 3:20. What is part of a woman’s created glory that exists even after sin distorted the world? Is it God’s design that woman bear and nurture life or destroy life? Woman’s glory is found in her God-given role as life-giver and nurturer. Dr. Vogel paraphrases Luther, saying that “women were created not to kill and destroy, but to be a vessel for life.” A culture that encourages women to destroy life is a culture that rebels against God’s design for His creation. A culture that doubts the created differences between the “defender” of life (male) and “bearer” of life (female) is a culture that has been deceived by Satan’s question: “Did God really say . . .?” (Genesis 3:1).

Sociologist George Gilder writes, “The ancient tradition against the use of women in combat embodies the deepest wisdom of the human race. It expresses the most basic imperatives of group survival: a nation or tribe that allows the loss of large numbers of its young women runs the risk of becoming permanently depopulated. The youthful years of women, far more than of men, are precious and irreplaceable.” (*Men and Marriage*, Pelican Publishing Co., Gretna, LA., p. 135). **What brings a society to the place where it forgets or ignores this truth? What does the future hold for such a society?**

IT’S A MATTER OF WORLDVIEW

There are two worldviews: God’s and all others. The Christian who trusts God’s Word can be confident that the Creator of life has a way that things of life work best.

Consider the words of God to Job (Job 38-41). God speaks His worldview to us through His Word – from Genesis to Revelation. He speaks His Word to us through Jesus Christ who, literally, is the Word become flesh (John 1:1-5; 14). But sometimes, when a people or nation is blessed with resources and peace on its home soil, men and women become

complacent and self-absorbed. Their hearts and minds are influenced more by the selfish pleasures of the world than the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:16-30). **What does the future hold for such a society? Read 1 John 2:15-17.**

Edwin Feulner, president of the Heritage Foundation, writes, “The reason we all know the idea of women playing pro football is absurd is because we’re serious about football. It’s tough game, and if you allow yourself to be distracted by irrelevant issues like ‘sexual equity’ when you should be making your team the toughest it can possibly be, you’re going to get creamed. So why are we letting feminists impose ‘sexual equity’ on an area that makes football look like a tea party; something that is not a game, but a matter of life and death for our nation as well as for the ‘players,’ namely, our military?”

How do you respond?

Dear Jesus, You were there at creation. You are the Creator! You know male and female full well. Please help us to trust Your design and purpose for our lives so that we might bring glory, not to ourselves, but to You. Do not let us be distracted by ideas of the sinful world or our own opinions. Instead, pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us so that we will be encouraged to live our different yet complementary roles as men and women. Help men stand tall in defense of home and country. Help women nurture life and provide good counsel to all who seek truth. Through the created order, strengthen our nation so that we might stand against enemies both foreign and domestic. AMEN.

This four-part study written by Linda Bartlett is adapted from a larger collection of studies entitled *Men, Women, and Relationships* first published in 1999 and revised in 2004. All four lessons may be downloaded from the “Resources” page of www.titus2-4life.org.