

1 Peter 3:1-7

Women in the Kingdom: A Hybrid View of Women in Ministry (Complementarian in the Home; Egalitarian in the Church)

Rev. Jonathan M. Romig / May 8th, 2022

Today, we're finishing our three viewpoint sermons by looking at a hybrid understanding of women in ministry: complementarian in the home, egalitarian in the church. For most of you, this might be a rather new and unfamiliar viewpoint. I'm still learning about it myself, but it helps to go back to our three views.

	Complementarianism	Egalitarianism	Hybrid
Value	Believes men and women are of equal dignity and worth.	Believes men and women are of equal dignity and worth.	Believes men and women are of equal dignity and worth.
Church	Believes men and women have distinct roles in church. (1 Timothy 2:8-3:7)	Believes men and women have interchangeable roles in church. (Galatians 3:28)	Believes men and women have interchangeable roles in church. (1 Peter 3:1-7)
Home	Believes men and women have distinct roles in the home. (Ephesians 5:21-33)	Believes men's and women's roles are interchangeable in home. (Galatians 3:28)	Believes husbands' and wives' roles are distinct in the home. (Ephesians 5:21-33)
Creation	Believes gender distinctions are a result of Creation and Christ's redemption as a return to those distinctions.	Believes gender distinctions are a result of the Fall and Christ's redemption as removing those distinctions.	Believes marital distinctions are a result of Creation and Christ's redemption removes distinctions in church body.

But why look at this position? For some of us, we see God created distinct genders, and some roles do go with those genders. Paul seems to affirm those in places like Ephesians 5 within the home, but we think it is a little less clear when it comes to the church. We don't think complementarianism or egalitarianism has all the right answers and see this third position as a valuable and viable contribution to the conversation.

Hybrid – Complementarian in Home & Egalitarian in Church

If you have listened to any of Dr. Gordon Hugenberger's five-part sermon series on this topic or read his paper on women in church leadership, you know where I'm headed. He preached this interpretation at Park Street Church in Boston. Dr. Hugenberger calls this the "marital view" or "cruciform view" of women in ministry and the family. I just call it the hybrid view of women in ministry. Here's my **basic understanding** of this view's interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-3:7, "I do not permit a woman to teach...":

A. Paul is addressing marriage roles between husbands and wives, not gender roles between men and women. (1 Timothy 2:12-15)

The basic idea is that God has given husbands and wives roles within the family, which is why he made Adam and Eve different than one another, but both called to the same task of being fruitful, multiplying, and

filling the earth (Gen 1:26-28). When you enter into marriage, you do take on a unique role, the husband becomes the head of the wife, but it would be weird to say men are the head of all women. Instead, that leadership is limited to husbands and wives within the sphere of the family, what we might call household codes. Here's how one scholar translates 1 Timothy:

1 Timothy 2:11-12 (C.B. Williams)

A married woman must learn in quiet and perfect submission. I do not permit a married woman to practice teaching or domineering over a husband. She must keep quiet.

This interpretation means Paul is calling for the same kind of submissive spirit in wives as he does in Ephesians 5:21-33 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. But that submission is for the home. This does not mean women can't teach their husbands, but they are not to do so authoritatively (I have the knowledge, and you don't!) but humbly, meekly. Peter seems to back this up when he says:

1 Peter 3:1 (NIV)

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,

So, of course, wives can teach their husbands, but first through actions, conversation, never domineering teaching authority over a husband, which for most husbands wouldn't work anyways. I'm glad we've gone to Peter because I think Peter may be able to help us interpret Paul.

B. Peter acknowledges how difficult Paul is and potentially helps us interpret him. (1-2 Peter)

Did you know that Peter has this to say about Paul?

2 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV)

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶ He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

So even Peter, of all people, admits that some of the stuff Paul writes is confusing and can be distorted. Maybe, just maybe, Peter can help us interpret 1 Timothy 2:8-15. He says many similar things:

1 Peter 3:7 (NIV)

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

That's interesting. Peter seems to be addressing husbands and instructing them on how to pray. Does this sound like Paul at all?

1 Timothy 2:8 (NIV)

Therefore I want the men (husbands) everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.

The Greek word for men is also the same word for husbands (aner). Hugenberger argues that when you see the Greek word for "man/husband" in close proximity to "woman/wife" or Adam and Eve, it nearly always means "husband" and "wife," not "man" and "woman." If we go back to Peter's verse, we just read:

1 Peter 3:1 (NIV)

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,

We find a pretty close parallel in Paul:

1 Timothy 2:11-12 (NIV)

A woman (wife) should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman (wife) to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.

Peter even addresses Paul's part about what wives should wear and how they should not attract attention to themselves but put that focus on Jesus.

1 Peter 3:2-4 (NIV)

when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³ Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. ⁴ Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

And then, if we look to Paul:

1 Timothy 2:9-10 (NIV)

I also want the women (wives) to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

And look at all the parallels between Paul and Peter:

1 Peter 3:5-6 (NIV)

For this is the way the holy women (wives) of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, ⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

That's kind of a confusing passage, too, but Peter seems to be directing our attention to the Patriarch's wives, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. Paul does something similar with Eve.

1 Timothy 2:13-15 (NIV)

For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman (wife) who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

While, at first glance, this passage seems to be about roles within the church, it seems that Paul is now talking about "household codes" and how husbands and wives function. While it might have applications to church life, it is not primarily addressing that. Here are **several strengths** of this position:

a) It tries to stick to the text and lets scripture interpret scripture.

While we can pull in cultural elements from Ephesus and look at those too, it's not the starting point. Context is helpful, which Egalitarians really focus on, but the text is God's Word.

b) It is consistent with other passages about marriage roles and the big picture of the Bible.

I don't feel like I need to explain away marriage roles in Ephesians. Yes, husbands are called to be the head of their wives; and to love them sacrificially. Wives are called to submit. That's true here as well. I talked

with Hugenberger on the phone about his position, and while it was clear to me why he calls it the “marital” view, it wasn’t clear to me why he calls it the “cruciform” view, so I asked. He explained that this is how husbands are called to love their wives, by laying down their wants and desires for their wives, by picking up our crosses and dying to ourselves so that we might live for our brides. His example is if the husband wants to work in Florida, but the wife wants to live closer to her family, you live closer to her family.

Ephesians 5:25 (NIV)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

So when a husband and wife can’t agree on something, the husband lays down his preference for her. I think this looks like the gospel. Jesus laid down his life for his bride, the church, us, so that she, so that we, could join him in ruling and reigning over all creation (Ephesians 2:6). Jesus puts our needs first, so we as husbands put our wives' needs first to better look like Christ. So 1 Timothy 2 is just reminding us of what we already know about husbands and wives from Ephesians 5.

And if we were to go back to our **interpretive diagram**, I think this view doesn’t force you to choose between 1 Timothy and all the examples of women but allows for both to be true. They interpret each other.

c) It grants freedom outside the household codes, recognizing different spheres of authority.

Within the sphere of the home, God calls husbands to lay down their lives for their wives, and wives to submit willingly to their husbands. But outside the sphere of the home, there’s freedom, which we see in the stories of women throughout scripture.

Deborah was a judge, a leader of all of Israel, and potentially an elder.¹ But if her wifely submission is limited to her husband within the home, she can obey her God-given call to lead, shepherd, judge, and be prophetic outside the home. That means husbands, you can biblically lead your wives within the home and empower them to use their gifts to their fullest extent, even in preaching or church leadership. Your wife can be a Pastor or President. But we have **questions**:

a. How common is this interpretation?

Uncommon! You can read Hugenberger’s more academic paper for his sources, but the biggest source in church history is Martin Luther.² While Luther interpreted 1 Timothy 2 as being about the church, not just for the home, he did take this passage to be addressing husbands and wives.³ But this is a weakness of this position—that it is not popular. And anytime we hold a position that church tradition has not normally held, there’s a risk. But, if you cling to the text and Jesus, I think we can honor God in that.

I would also say that I’ve been reading Beth Allison Barr’s book, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood*, and I’ve been struck by how there has not been a uniform interpretation of male leadership throughout church history, but those have often been the loudest voices that have silenced other perspectives.

b. Is this really about the household? Isn’t 1 Timothy about church life?

I asked Hugenberger this question. He said it would be odd for Paul addresses family life somewhere in his letter. It would also be weird to talk about childbirth in church. Paul does seem to address the household in 1 Timothy 5, so why not here? He also points to 1 Timothy 2 addressing Adam and Eve and childbirth. Peter

¹ “In support of the supposition that the “judges” of the book of Judges, including Deborah, were in fact elders, cf. Deuteronomy 1, which melds together Exodus 18 (the appointment of the judges) and Numbers 11 (the appointment of the seventy elders) with the implication that these two chapters record the same event.” Gordon Hugenberger’s paper on women in ministry.

² AJ Gordon does make reference to a husband and wife interpretation in his 1984 paper (audio reading).

³ See Gordon Hugenberger’s more academic paper here (read the footnotes): https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/35/35-3/JETS_35-3_341-360_Hugenberger.pdf

addresses the home in similar language, which we went through. And he points out that this call for the men (or husbands) to lift up holy hands is extended to “every place,” not just at church (at home too). It does seem like you’d be more likely to get in fights or quarrels outside of the church than inside it. But I still wrestle with this. It’s just not how I’m used to reading 1 Timothy.

c. How can we be complementarian in one place and not the other?

It seems messy and confusing to be complementarian in the home but not in the church. Is that even possible? Isn’t God a God of order?

We live 2,000-3,000 years after the Bible was written. In our time and place, we love to divide up scripture, systematize, categorize it, simplify it, and fit it into nice clean boxes, but that is not how scripture presents itself. It presents itself with tensions, paradoxes, and hard-to-understand words and passages. The Bible seems to affirm women’s giftings and callings but also male headship. This view tries to honor that tension.

So, where does this leave us? What should we believe?

Whatever we believe, we walk by faith and extend grace.

Each of these positions, complementarian, egalitarian, and the hybrid position, requires us to walk by faith in some capacity. We have to recognize in this life, we are not going to have all our questions answered. And at the end of the day, we trust God’s Word is true, but our interpretation is fallible.

And so, no matter what you believe, or I believe about this issue, we have to trust in Jesus, not our ability to figure out what’s correct, and that helps us extend grace to people with whom we might differ. And so I want to leave us with a couple of questions. How might we walk by faith and extend grace to each other in this issue? How can we make room for each other? How can we follow our consciences and enable others to do the same? Let’s pray.

Pastor Jonathan Romig preached this sermon at Cornerstone Congregational Church in Westford, MA. You can listen to other sermons at CornerstoneWestford.com.

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Service & Sermon

You can [watch the full service on Facebook](#) or [only the sermon on YouTube](#).

Discussion Time

Ice-Breaker – What’s the furthest distance you’ve ever traveled?

Prayer – Do you have a prayer or praise you’d like to share?

Bible – Read 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and 1 Peter 3:1-7. What are some common themes both Paul and Peter emphasize? What are some differences you notice?

Heart Issues – Why do we often emphasize outward appearance over inward beauty? Why does respect matter so much for relationships? What are some other heart issues we see within this passage?

Unity – Which position do you think is more difficult to hold in the opposite setting and why? How could we extend grace to each other to maintain unity?” ([see chart here](#))

Recap – What’s your one-sentence takeaway from today?

Follow-Up

Dear Church,

Thank you for engaging so well in our women in ministry sermon series. I have planned two more weeks to wrap up some closing themes. If you do have a question you’d like addressed, please reach out. While Andy, Monica, and I have not covered every aspect of this important topic, I have tried to provide a vast array of resources you can study further. All those are available on our website as well. See each week’s sermon or [Women in Ministry](#) under resources. Please find a few specific recommendations below. Thanks!

- Pastor Jonathan

Worship – When we’re uncertain, confused, or anxious, the best response is worship. I enjoy the song [King Jesus](#) by [Brooke Ligertwood](#). You might also enjoy [You’ve Already Won](#) by [Shane & Shane](#) (dedicated to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine).

Hybrid View – If you’d like to really go into Hugenberger’s hybrid view, you can [read his paper here](#). Or you could listen to his five-part sermon series (Parts 4-5 address 1 Timothy 2:8-15 most directly):

- Part I: 2 Timothy 3:14-17 <https://youtu.be/jukBmtjah4Y>
- Part II: Colossians 3:18-19 <https://youtu.be/YnES1Lo86wk>
- Part III: Colossians 3:18-19 <https://youtu.be/tWEFFR4SVc4>
- Part IV: 1 Timothy 2 <https://youtu.be/-gSQ6AW8EM0>
- Part V: 1 Timothy 2:8-15 https://youtu.be/4WJTFFXFf_I