



Book Review: What the Bible Actually Teaches on Women

Description

What the Bible Actually Teaches on Women
Kevin Giles, Cascade, 2018

Kevin Giles delights in Australia and its ideal of being an egalitarian nation. This ideal is not always present and for Kevin the subordination of women, as taught in certain Christian communities in Australia, is one such exception. A deeply offensive one.

The teaching of the subordination of women upsets Kevin Giles deeply. He has advocated for equality between men and women for over 40 years. He has preached, spoken at conferences and written numerous books. He has at least 4 reasons for opposing the notion of women's subordination.

First, it is untrue. Kevin argues that nothing in modern life would indicate that God has given leadership abilities to men and not women. When it comes to intellectual ability, closely related to leadership ability, women excel. In most Western countries over 60% of graduates are women. Women judges, business leaders, heads of professional bodies, school principals, politicians, military staff and managers and carers within the home have all shown women have the ability to lead with distinction. To this list could be added women pastors and bible teachers, where their gifting is encouraged and recognised

Second, it demeans women and encourages intimate partner abuse. For a man to say to a woman "You should accept your subordinate status because it is given by God;" or, "It is what the Bible teaches", is to say to women you are not my equal.

Third, this teaching makes the proclamation of the Gospel much harder. To preach to modern Australians that women are the subordinate sex is offensive and an idea for most of us that makes no sense at all. Constant headship teaching from the pulpit furthermore makes for unhappy churches. It divides the body of Christ.

As his fourth objection, Kevin argues this teaching on women's subordination is not grounded in

scripture. It is like the appeal to the Bible in support of slavery and of Apartheid once made by evangelicals, an appeal to maintain power and privilege, and exclude the liberating message of scripture. A few verses can be quoted in support of the subordination of women but the very weighty texts that exclude this teaching are ignored and the interpretation of the few texts quoted can convince no one but the already convinced. God put first in our Bible what is of first importance; man and woman alike are made in the image and likeness of God, (same dignity and status); man and woman alike are to rule over this world side by side (not one over the other), and the family mandate is given to both (no role differentiation) (Gen 1:27-28). What could be plainer? Jesus was obviously of the same opinion. He said not one word in support of male "headship" and much to the contrary. For him, man and woman stood side by side, with heads erect.

Kevin's recently released book, *What the Bible Actually Teaches on Women* (Cascade, Oregon), is endorsed by 13 very well-known and able evangelical scholars. It is the fruit of my 40 years of studying and debating this question.

Date Created

22.01.2019

Author

cappleby

default watermark