

5 Goals I Hope We Accomplish

1. I want to try and demonstrate the passages that Paul wrote regarding women are passages centered in living out the cross rather than clinging to the curse.
2. I want to try and demonstrate that the Husband/Wife relationship has the opportunity to be one of the greatest testimonies to cross centered living when lived out as “one flesh”.
3. I want to try and demonstrate that there are times for a woman to be silent, just as there are times for a man to be silent.
4. I want to try and demonstrate that whatever your view is on these very difficult passages, and they are difficult, it needs to bring the beauty of Christ to the world.
5. Highlight living out our gender roles in a way that empowers the men to be a man and the women to be a woman.

- The typical U.S. Congregation draws an adult crowd that's 61% female, 39% male. This gender gap shows up in all age categories. [1]
- On any given Sunday there are 13 million more adult women than men in America's churches. [2]
- This Sunday almost 25 percent of married, churchgoing women will worship without their husbands. [3]
- Midweek activities often draw 70 to 80 percent female participants. [4]
- The majority of church employees are women (except for ordained clergy, who are overwhelmingly male). [5]
- Over 70 percent of the boys who are being raised in church will abandon it during their teens and twenties. Many of these boys will never return. [6]
- More than 90 percent of American men believe in God, and five out of six call themselves Christians. But only one out of six attend church on a given Sunday. The average man accepts the reality of Jesus Christ, but fails to see any value in going to church. [7]
- Churches overseas report gender gaps of up to 9 women for every adult man in attendance. [8]
- Christian universities are becoming convents. The typical Christian college in the U.S. enrolls almost 2 women for every 1 man. [9]
- Fewer than 10% of U.S. churches are able to establish or maintain a vibrant men's ministry. [10]

Church is good for men:

- Churchgoers are more likely to be married and express a higher level of satisfaction with life. Church involvement is the most important predictor of marital stability and happiness. [11]
- Church involvement moves people out of poverty. It's also correlated with less depression, more self-esteem and greater family and marital happiness. [12]
- Religious participation leads men to become more engaged husbands and fathers. [13]
- Teens with religious fathers are more likely to say they enjoy spending time with dad and that they admire him. [14]

A study from Hartford Seminary found that the presence of involved men was statistically correlated with church growth, health, and harmony. Meanwhile, a lack of male participation is strongly associated with congregational decline. [15]

How, then, are we to
live the Bible
TODAY?

We must be brave enough to admit that all of us pick & choose what we are going to live out in our faith.

A few simple examples:

James 1:26-27 - sometimes we completely ignore what scripture says.

John 13:14-15 - sometimes we change it to a principle that is being taught.

Sabbath - sometimes we morph one thing in scripture into another thing.

Charismatic gifts - sometimes we say, “that was then, this is now.”

Surrendering Possessions - Luke 14:33 - sometimes we justify our actions by “those were special expectations for Jesus’ personal disciples or I know what it says, but that’s not really what it means.”

How many of us want to really admit that we are picking and choosing the *what and how* of living out the bible rather than being obedient to the whole word of God?

I am convinced that sometimes there is clear and logical reasoning behind the way we pick and choose, but I believe we need to become aware of what it is and tread carefully when demanding others to pick and choose with the same methods that we do.

How, then, are we to live the bible today begs the question, “How do we read the bible?”

Three simple categories that help demonstrate three methods:

Reading to retrieve - we return to the times of the bible in order to retrieve biblical ideas and practices that we implement in the same way today.

Reading through tradition - we take our group’s teachings and filter scripture through them.

An accurate list of steps on how we develop reading through tradition written by Scot McKnight:

1. We read the Bible.
2. We confront an issue and make a decision about what we believe about the issue turning it into a confession, a creed, a doctrinal statement. These can be written or spoken.
3. We fossilize our decision and it becomes tradition. (At some point in this step we become absolutely convinced our tradition is a perfect interpretation of the Bible.)
4. We are bound to our tradition. It is now traditionalism.
5. We are bound to read the Bible through our tradition. (At some point in this step we become convinced that God's Spirit led us to our tradition and that it is an accurate God-prompted conviction.)
6. Those who question our tradition are suspect or, worse yet, kicked out of our church.

This is not to say tradition is bad, often it is good giving us roots and identity. This is to demonstrate how people can come to the same text and have completely opposite interpretations and be passionate that theirs is correct. They have been trained by tradition to interpret passages to support their tradition.

The third method of how we read the Bible:

Reading with tradition - We read with profound respect for our past without giving it the final authority.

We must learn to recognize that God spoke from Genesis to Revelation eternal truths that will not change but that He spoke them in ways that each generation could understand and relate to.

Reading with tradition gives guidance to the reader but also gives freedom to differ.

This is, in my opinion, how the Restoration Movement read Scripture. They went back to read and retrieve scripture and compare it to the traditions that had been handed down to them. Then, where necessary, used their freedom to change their view of how to apply scripture.

How do we read the Bible?

Morsels of Law - it is a law book that tells us what to do or not do. We read looking for law.

Morsels of blessings and promises. - 1551 Robert Stephanus developed and printed the first bible to have chapters and verses.

Inkblots - We project what is important to us into the scripture.

Puzzle Pieces - we have a problem or conviction and pull random pieces from multiple places and try to develop a system of *this is what it says*, yet often ignoring the content and context those random pieces are pulled from.

The most frequent way we have of getting rid of puzzling or unpleasant difficulties in the bible is to systematize it, organizing it according to some scheme or other that summarizes “what the Bible teaches.” If we know what the Bible teaches, we don’t have to read it anymore, don’t have to enter the story and immerse ourselves in the odd and unflattering and uncongenial way in which this story develops, including so many people and circumstances that have nothing to do, we think, with us. *Eugene Peterson*