

Biblical Gender Roles – Part 2

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Brethren, last time we started a multiple-part sermon series on the subject of biblical gender roles. As I mentioned last time, it's going to be a multiple-part series because it's a very large topic. What I'd like to do today is pickup on part 2 of this series. If you'd like a title for this sermon, it is:

Biblical Gender Roles - Part 2

As I mentioned last time, this is a very large topic that we're certainly not going to cover in a single sermon or two. It's going to take multiple installments to do this, because, again, it's a very large topic with lots to cover. Last time I covered what I defined as the problem. As we know, this is a very large topic and there has never been a time in history where any society has really practiced gender roles the way God intended, followed His instructions, and had things work out the way He intended. That's never been the case.

In terms of defining the problem, I chose to focus on, as I said, the feminist movement that has been the primary cultural push in the US and other western nations for the last forty to fifty years. Again, the reason I focused more on establishing the foundation for that because this has been the primary pervasive issue in our culture over the last decades. As I demonstrated last time, we see this throughout our entertainment and in our educational system. It's very pervasive in our culture. As I quoted last time, the stated objective of this movement has been literally the removal of biblical gender roles from our entire culture. It hasn't been just to try to get us off track a little bit, but, again, to completely remove the concept.

The way it has been done is basically through a two-pronged approach. The whole cultural push that it has brought about has really been in two different ways of approaching this. One is by convincing our culture that masculinity is in one way or another inherently pathological or problematic. Therefore, men need to be feminized for the safety of mankind. They have also taken the approach of convincing us that taking a feminine role inherently equates with oppression and victimization. Of course, nobody would want to be a victim and that, then, convinces women that they need to take up a masculine role and compete with men for a masculine role in that regard or otherwise it's going to equate with victimization. What you have now is taking both sides and teaching them that they should completely abandon the roles God intended and take a completely different role.

As I demonstrated last time, you can actually chart from the 1960s forward the devastating results of this. If you look at the statistics, what you're going to see is a skyrocketing divorce rate, a dropping marriage participation rate, and a skyrocketing illegitimacy rate. We're looking now across the board in every demographic in the US. Between about forty and fifty percent of new births of children are today born into

homes where marriage is not even in the equation for the parents at the time the child is born. You get societal breakdown. So, you can see what's happening here is basically tearing apart the family in America.

What I'd like to do today is pickup on part 2 and continue forward establishing the foundation for this series. As I mentioned, the objective they have for approaching the subject is not just teaching us and brainwashing us to take these roles out of our culture, they also try to demonize anyone who would ever even suggest that biblical gender roles as God defines in the Bible are a good idea and something we should follow.

One of the core philosophies put across to demonize anyone who would talk about this idea is based upon the concept of equality. You will see this idea of equality extant in our culture today. As I mentioned last time, it's the sales pitch for the feminist movement, for socialism, for multiculturalism and it is very pervasive in the philosophies of our culture today. As this idea pertains to gender roles of individuals, it's the idea that everything about roles should be exactly the same and interchangeable. And, if it's not equally interchangeable in every way possible, then that's viewed as inequality. Therefore, based upon this philosophy, that equates with the idea that someone must be victimized or oppressed because they're being cheated out of equality. Again, it's a very flawed idea. What we're also going to see as we go through this sermon is it's oftentimes a very cherry-picked idea, but I'll get back to that later to tell you exactly what that means.

First, I think we need to understand that this concept of equality—again, defined from the idea that everything about roles is exactly interchangeable, exactly the same, and if that's not the case, then some grave injustice of inequality exists—is a very flawed idea. I want you to see that is not how God works with people. It is very common in terms of how God works with people—much larger than just the roles of men and women—to place people in different roles for different purposes with different responsibilities and different parameters around those roles. We'll also see that typically every role comes with an upside and a downside. We can't look at it from a cherry picked point of view, which is selectively pulling certain facts to create a narrative.

Let's first just look at the idea that this is very common of how God works with people. He doesn't place everyone in interchangeable exactly the same roles. Let's turn over, first of all, to 1 Corinthians 12 to see a general principle of how God works. This is the apostle Paul talking about how God works with the church. We'll start in verse 12.

1 Corinthians 12:12. *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*

13) For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

14) For in fact the body is not one member but many.

- 15) *If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?*
- 16) *And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?*
- 17) *If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?*
- 18) *But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.*
- 19) *And if they were all one member, where would the body be?*
- 20) *But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.*
- 21) *And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."*
- 22) *No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.*
- 23) *And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty,*
- 24) *but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,*
- 25) *that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.*
- 26) *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*
- 27) *Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*
- 28) *And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.*
- 29) *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?*
- 30) *Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?*
- 31) *But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.*
(NKJV)

If you notice in those last couple of verses, he's asking a lot of rhetorical questions. The answer to every one of them is obviously "no." Paul's asking, "Are all in the same role?" No. "Do all have the same gifts and talents?" No, because God has assigned them differently, again, for the overall good of everyone. Realize this doesn't mean that anyone has been cheated or anyone is a second-class citizen or has been oppressed. Paul is saying that God has done this for the overall good of everyone. God has given different responsibilities and different roles to different individuals, again for their good and for the benefit of the whole. We need that for the overall collective good. Realize by virtue of how this is described that they're not all exactly the same and interchangeable. It's not some inherent crime that one doesn't have the exact same role as the other.

The way I like to look at it is kind of like this. The Bible refers to God as our Father. He's the dad and we're His children. He has all these little kids on the playground here on planet earth. What He's doing is supervising all the little kids on the playground and He gives them all different sandboxes to play in. Everybody has their own sandbox and their own toys to play with and He's assigned them accordingly as He sees fit, again, for the overall benefit of everyone.

Yet, not every sandbox is the same. Different sandboxes have different sizes, maybe different shapes, different colored sand in them, and different toys that He gave all of us but He assigned us these for our benefit and for our overall good. He tells us to play in our own sandbox with our own toys.

Yet, as human beings, we're carnal and we deal with envy and lust and greed and such. Sometimes what we do while we're playing in our sandbox is we'll look over at the kid in the sandbox next to us and we think, "He's got some shiny toys in that box. That looks cool. I'd like that toy." Then we say, "I'm just as good a kid as he is. I deserve that too." And we want to reach over in that sandbox and take that toy. What we don't realize first of all is we're stepping across the boundary lines here because oftentimes we're cherry picking. What we're going to see also is it's not just an issue of he's got those particular toys in that sandbox, oftentimes there is different maintenance that comes with that sandbox as well. There are different responsibilities you might say. The point I'm getting at is there are different upsides and downsides that come together and we can't cherry pick.

It's our human nature oftentimes to want to step across that boundary line and think, "I want their toys." Sometimes we get really greedy and think, "I want both sandboxes. I want to rule my sandbox and I want to rule their sandbox too because I think I just deserve it." We want to step over there and take over someone else's sandbox.

What we're going to see today is God responds to this typically very negatively. He can have a very negative response to this. Typically, not only will He just slap us down sometimes and tell us to get back into our own sandbox, but also sometimes, He gets very ticked off and says, "Okay, you won't play in your own sandbox. You get no sandboxes and you get no toys." And He takes it all completely away. We'll see some examples of that today.

We also need to realize the concept of different roles and people having different responsibilities and different parameters around those roles is not unique to the idea of men versus women. Oftentimes, this subject gets looked at from those that want to put down the Bible as a sexist, archaic, anti-women book. It's a cherry picked view and they're looking at it, again, just from selective facts to create a narrative. If you look at this, God assigns people many different roles and, again, that is not inherently oppressive. That's for the overall good of everyone and we need to play according to the roles that God has given us and how He's assigned those because, again, the consequences of that can be severe.

We also need to realize the basic human tendency to cherry pick. What I mean by that is oftentimes, to use the analogy, we'll look over at someone else's sandbox and we say, "I want the benefits they have." Oftentimes what we want to do is we want to grab the benefits but we're not so concerned about the downside. "You can keep the downside. Just give me the perks." That's oftentimes how we tend to look at it.

Yet with roles, there often comes an upside and a downside and they come as a package. Let's first of all notice that this is a biblical principle. Turn over to Mark 10:35. What we're going to see here is a conversation of James and John, who oftentimes are referred to as the sons of thunder because of their personalities. They're making a request here to Jesus Christ. As we're going to see here, they are cherry picking in terms of their view of things.

Mark 10:35. *Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." (NKJV)*

That's a loaded way to start a conversation. "I want you to do whatever I want."

36) And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

37) They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." (NKJV)

Now notice what they're focused on. "We want all the perks. We want the chief seats. We want the glory and all the benefits and that sounds great to us." Notice Christ's immediate response.

38) But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask.... (NKJV)

In other words, "You're cherry picking. You're only looking at one side of the story, but let Me tell you what comes with this."

38b) ... [Can] you ... to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (NKJV)

What Christ is pointing out to them is "You're being human and carnal. You're just focused on the glory and the upside, but let me tell you, there is a nasty downside that comes with that and you can't take just one without the other. It's a package deal. Do you want the whole deal?" Basically, that's what He's asking.

39) They said to Him, "We [can]." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40) but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." (NKJV)

In other words, "You have to earn that deal. I can't promise you that outcome, but if you want the downside, we can arrange that. I can give you that one." Think about it.

Christ winds up in the chief seat and the world admits He's King of kings and LORD of lords, but what did He go through to be placed in this role? He was taken captive. He was beaten, tortured, humiliated, and then violently murdered. Basically, what Christ says to them is, "Do you want to receive the same thing?" Think about how most of the apostles died. Most of them went through harsh trials. They died violent deaths, being martyred fulfilling God's will. This is what Christ points out to them. "You want the chief seats? There is a nasty downside that comes with this and you can't cherry pick. You can't just take the part that you want. You get the whole deal." That's very important to realize when we look at roles. Oftentimes there is an upside and a downside.

Our human tendency is to think, "I want all the perks." Oftentimes that's our definition of equality. Think about it like this. This whole concept of equality, as I mentioned, is also the sales pitch for socialism. This is a little bit off the subject, but I think this will illustrate where I'm going with this.

The idea of socialism is based upon the concept of the redistribution of wealth. The idea of equality is everyone has the same financial resources, the same standard of living, and if someone doesn't, that means there's inequality and they've been oppressed. What you'll hear oftentimes is the concept of, "I want equality. I want my fair share." And what they typically want their fair share of is the profits and the wealth.

And oftentimes what you don't hear is people demanding their fair share of all the work, the sacrifice, the risk that came in producing that wealth. "No, you can keep all the work and the sacrifices. Just give me a fair share of the profits." That's not equality. That's not a fair share. That's a cherry picked view. We have to keep in mind that's what we, as carnal human beings, tend to do when we look at subjects.

What I want to do now is go through a couple of examples from the Bible, again looking at the concept of roles. I want you to see several things in this. For starters, this concept of God placing people in different roles with different parameters around them and different responsibilities, different upsides and downsides is not unique to the concept of men versus women at all. There are many contexts where God places people in different roles with different responsibilities in many different contexts. This by no means makes anyone oppressed or cheated or either unequal or oppressed or a second-class citizen in any way; this is a common concept.

Realize it's a natural human tendency for people to want to step over into someone else's role. You'll notice a number of examples here where God responds very negatively to that. People are slapped down hard when they're trying to step across that boundary line, take over someone else's sandbox and take their toys. God responds very negatively to that.

Let's turn first to Numbers 12 and we'll start in verse 1. We're going to go through a very familiar story to many of us here. This is the story of Miriam and Aaron questioning Moses. What we're going to see here when we go through this is all three of these people have very specific roles that God has placed them in. They're all in spiritual

leadership roles that God has designated for each of them. Nobody here has been minimized or has been cheated or treated as a second-class citizen or oppressed in any way, shape, or form. Yet, even if they had, that doesn't justify them stepping across those boundary lines and trying to take someone else's role, trying to take over their sandbox. We're going to see God responds to that very negatively.

Numbers 12:1. *Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2) So they said, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the Lord heard it. (NKJV)*

Notice this is the dialogue between Miriam and Aaron. They're saying, "Aren't we in leadership roles too? Don't we have just as much right?" We're going to notice a little later that there is some truth to that claim. They are both in designated leadership roles that God has placed them in. So, about their claim of "Does God work through us too", yes, He does. There is validity to that. That doesn't justify them trying to step across the line of Moses' role. This is what they are slapped down for. Miriam and Aaron are trying to say, "Aren't we equal? Aren't we just as good to tell Moses what to do?" They're trying to step over into Moses' role to tell him how to run his life. God doesn't respond to this very well.

Notice here in verse 4:

4) Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out. 5) Then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. 6) Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. 7) Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. 8) I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" (NKJV)

What's happening here is God's reaching down and slapping their hands saying, "This is not your sandbox. These are not your toys. You need to get back in your own sandbox and play with the toys I gave you because you have no business here and you are overstepping your boundary lines. What is happening is Miriam and Aaron decided, "Aren't we equal? Aren't we just as good as Moses is?" They're trying to step over and take over Moses' role. God is not a fan of this. Notice what has happened here. Let's pick up in verse 9.

9) So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them, and He departed. 10) And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.

11) So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned.

12) Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!" (NKJV)

Whenever I read this story, I have to chuckle a little bit that Aaron's jumping in, pleading for mercy for Miriam. I'm sure he's concerned about his sister, but realize he was involved in the crime as well and he's been corrected as well. For all he knows, he's getting leprosy next. So, of course, Aaron wants Miriam to get mercy. He wants this to go away because for all he knows is he's about to get leprosy too. Let's pick up again here in verse 13.

13) So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"

14) Then the Lord said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again."

15) So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again. (NKJV)

We're going to come back here in a minute to talk about the concept of why Miriam might have been the person singled out to receive the leprosy. You notice Miriam and Aaron were both involved in the crime. They both are corrected, but Miriam was singled out for the harsh punishment. We'll come back to that in a minute.

Remember we started with this: They both mentioned, "Does the Lord not work through us too? Aren't we important too? Aren't we in leadership roles? Don't we get our say?" I want you to realize that, for starters, there is some truth to those statements because no one here has been marginalized or who is a second-class, oppressed citizen in this scenario. All of them have very important roles. Again, that doesn't justify Miriam and Aaron trying to take over Moses' role, but they both have very significant roles that they're placed in.

Let's notice first the roles that both Miriam and Aaron have been placed in. Let's turn over to Exodus 15 where we'll start in verse 20.

Exodus 15:20. *Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.*

21) And Miriam answered them: "Sing to the Lord, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!" (NKJV)

Notice it directly mentions here that Miriam is a prophetess. So when she and Aaron make the claim "Doesn't God work through us too", yes. Yes, He does. They are both in leadership roles as well as Moses. Again, that doesn't justify their actions, but I want you to see here that nobody is a downtrodden, second-class citizen who has been marginalized. They both have significant roles. That doesn't justify them stepping

across the line trying to take over somebody else's role. You have to play in your own sandbox with your own toys.

Let's also notice in Exodus 28, the same thing is true of Aaron. He's in a very significant role as well. Exodus 28 and we'll start here in verse 1.

Exodus 28:1. *"Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.*

2) And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

3) So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to [sanctify] him, that he may minister to Me as priest.

4) And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest. (NKJV)

God is talking about the establishment of the Levitical Priesthood here, which we oftentimes also refer to as the Aaronic Priesthood because, again, they are the descendants of Aaron.

Notice again here, when Miriam and Aaron make the comment, "Doesn't God work through us as well," yes. Yes, He does because they both have significant roles. We see that Miriam was prophetess and Aaron is a priest. In fact, we're going to see that he is high priest. He has a very special role and his sons are priests as well.

Let's also keep in mind that roles come with an upside and a downside. We can't just look at them as cherry picking in terms of "They get to have this special role." As we're going to see here concerning Aaron and his sons, yes, they are Levites and they are given a special role in the Tabernacle that they get to fulfill. Yet, we're going to see that Aaron has a very special role and he is the only one in Israel that gets to go into the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement to do the two goats ceremony. Still, there is a downside that comes with this as well.

Let's turn over to Leviticus 16:1 and look at that.

Leviticus 16:1. *Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the Lord, and died; (NKJV)*

Notice this. In fulfilling their roles as priests, they didn't follow God's instructions the way He wanted them to and they were killed for it. So, it wasn't just the issue of they're the priesthood and they get to do this special role in the tabernacle. They are also the ones who get to be killed if they do it wrong. As a rule, God takes the point of view "to whom much is given much is required." In other words, if God gives special

responsibilities, there is oftentimes a downside, an accountability, that comes with that. We can't just look at it as they get all the perks and they get this special robe. No, they also get to die if they do it wrong.

We can see this is true of Aaron's role as well because Aaron is the high priest. Now the high priest was the only individual permitted to go into the holy of holies. And he has to do it just once a year on the Day of Atonement because the instructions were very specific. "You can't go in there any other time. You can only do it on this day and you can only do it according to these instructions." And Aaron is the one who has the special privilege of doing all of this. He's also the one who gets to die if he does it wrong. It's a package deal. Let's notice in verse 2.

2) and the Lord said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. (NKJV)

Notice here, Aaron's given this and told, "You can come only on this one day. If you come any other time, I'm going to kill you." So again, Aaron gets the privilege of doing it. He also gets to die if he does it wrong.

It's not just a matter of the timing. It's also the details of how he's supposed to do the job. Glance over to verse 13, which refers to the instructions of what Aaron is supposed to do when he goes in on the Day of Atonement to do this ceremony.

13) And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die. (NKJV)

In other words, if Aaron doesn't follow the instructions and do it exactly the way God told him to, he's the one who is killed. So we understand again that roles come with an upside and a downside and they come together. We can't cherry pick and say "Well, I just want the benefits. Don't want the downside." It doesn't work that way.

Also notice this as well. This is a unique role that only Aaron as the high priest is allowed to play. Moses doesn't get to do this either. If Moses were to step across this boundary line and say, "I want to go into the holy of holies and I want to do this", that would be a good way to be killed. God said, "If anybody else does this, I'm going to kill them." So again, both Aaron and Moses have very special unique roles that they're supposed to play. This doesn't make anyone victimized, marginalized, or cheated out of equality. It's just how God has assigned the roles. And roles all come with an upside and a downside.

Now, let's look at the question: Why was it that Miriam was the one singled out for the leprosy? The Bible doesn't specifically tell us the answer to this. So we have to speculate a little, but the Bible directly tells us it was both Miriam and Aaron who were questioning Moses. They both were guilty of the crime and when God comes out to have the conversation with them and slaps them both down for it, He addresses both of

them. So, obviously, they are both guilty of this, but why is it that Miriam gets the harshest punishment? She gets the leprosy; she is kicked out of the camp for a week and not Aaron.

Some of the most common speculation I've heard throughout my life is that maybe Miriam was the ringleader. Maybe she was leading the charge to go down this road and was, therefore, more accountable in that regard. That's possible. We can't prove that. Again that's often speculated. Let me add a little more speculation that I think we can demonstrate more clearly because, again, in terms of the ringleader, we can guess at that, but how do you prove that? I think one of the things we can demonstrate from the Bible is the concept of cherry picking.

Think about it like this. What Miriam and Aaron both want is their say. They want to judge Moses in terms of how he's lived his life and tell him how to do things. God's slapping them down, saying, "He's in a special role. He's in charge of running the nation. You two just stay out of his sandbox. That's My job to be judging him." What they want is their equality and their say.

But think about it. To whom much is given much is required. Moses' role was more than just being the person in charge who had to dish out the instructions and tell people what to do. Yes, he was the man leading the nation who was oftentimes doing the delegating, making the judgments, and was in charge. He was also the one who had to deal with the people every time they were upset. Follow that one through the Bible. Every time Israel gets unhappy with their circumstances, what do they do? "And all Israel murmured against Moses." They are all ready to take him on. Or if they're getting real upset, ready to riot and ready to stone somebody, who are they ready to stone? It's Moses. So, his job is not just getting to be in the limelight, being in charge, and telling people what to do. He is the one who gets the headaches to deal with every time they're upset and angry. And every time they want to riot and kill somebody, Moses is the one they want to kill. And he has the headaches of dealing with all of this. So Moses has the upside and the downside.

Now, let's look at the concept of cherry picking. If you follow the examples throughout the Old Testament where it's mentioned that all of Israel gets upset and murmurs against Moses, there are a number of times you'll see Aaron's name mentioned as well. It's going to say, "All of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron." In other words, Aaron and Moses are lumped together by Israel. So, even though this doesn't justify Aaron trying to step into Moses' role, Aaron does take a good deal of the flack of the leadership responsibility with Moses by virtue of the fact that Aaron is mentioned.

There is not ever one time in the Bible when Miriam's name is mentioned in that context. You never see a situation where all of Israel was upset and they're murmuring against Miriam. That's never mentioned. Or Israel is all upset and wants to stone somebody and Miriam is the one they want to throw the rocks at. That never happens once.

So, what Miriam is doing here—she wants her equality and she wants her say. "Doesn't God work through us? I want to tell Moses how to do his job." She's not taking the flack. So, she's doing the most cherry picking.

Also notice this. Again, I'm not picking on Miriam. This is just human nature. Notice also when Miriam and Aaron want their say and they want to tell Moses how to do his job, "Doesn't God work through us too? Aren't we as good enough? We want our equality here." Do you ever see any example in the Bible where all of Israel is upset, ready to stone Moses, and Miriam is standing up saying, "Wait a minute! Doesn't God work through me too? Aren't I just as deserving of all of your anger and your hostility as him? Don't I deserve the rocks thrown at me too? Aren't I good enough for that?" You never see that because that's human nature. We generally don't fight for our equality for the downside. We want the perks. "You can keep all the people that are angry. I just want my say." It doesn't work that way.

The point is that oftentimes as human beings we want to cherry pick. We want to take just the part that's beneficial to us. You can keep the downside. Or sometimes if we want to characterize ourselves as the victim, we look at all the downside and somewhat ignore the benefits we might receive. It's human nature to want to cherry pick in that regard. Some of this is speculation, but you can demonstrate from the Bible that Miriam is never mentioned receiving the downside of this. Again, that's my opinion and speculation. I suggest that's probably why God singled her out for the leprosy. "Okay, you want the whole package? Let me show you the downside. This is what comes with it. You can't just get your say and not have the other side with it as well."

Let's also notice a couple of other examples in the Bible of how people have stepped across boundary lines of their roles and how God responds to it. You can see with Miriam and Aaron, they were just slapped down and told to get back into their own sandbox. What we're going to see here are a couple of examples where God's judgment upon people after they do this is not just getting them back into their own sandbox but it's taking the sandbox they have away from them. God gets very upset at times when people step across this.

Turn over to 1 Samuel 13 verse 1 where we'll see the example here of Saul and Samuel. Now King Saul is the first king of Israel and his role is to be the civil leader of the nation. Again, what I want you to notice in this story is there are no marginalized, downtrodden victims here. No one is a second-class citizen. We're dealing with two individuals with very significant roles, but there is still the concept that God says, "I've given you this sandbox. I've given you these toys. You need to play in the sandbox I gave you. Don't be stepping over, trying to take over someone else's role." That's what happens here. We have Saul and Samuel. Saul is the civil leader of the nation as the king. Samuel is a prophet and his role is to be a spiritual leader. Again, there are different responsibilities, different parameters they're both given. Where Saul messes up here is what we're about to read as he tries to step over into Samuel's sandbox and take on his responsibilities. That doesn't turn out very well for him.

1 Samuel 13:1. *Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,*

2) Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent.

3) And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!"

4) Now all Israel heard it said that Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel had also become an abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal.

5) Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven.

6) When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits.

7) And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

8) Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel.... (NKJV)

We're going to notice here Saul had been told to wait for Samuel to come to do the sacrifices. Saul had been told, "That's not your job. That's Samuel's job. You need to wait for him to do that." This is where Saul messes up. He doesn't wait.

8b) ... But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

9) So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering.

10) Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him.

11) And Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash,

12) then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering."

13) And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

14) But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander

over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."
(NKJV)

Notice Saul was told to wait and he doesn't. Yes, Samuel doesn't show up exactly when he was expecting him, but again, Saul was told, "This is not your sandbox. These are not your toys. It's not your job to be doing the sacrifices. That's going to be Samuel's role." Well, Saul does not respect that and he steps across the line and thinks, "I can do that too."

God doesn't respond to this very well. He gets very upset with Saul, but notice what happens here. Samuel tells Saul, "You could have had your line (all of Saul's descendents) be the kings of Israel throughout generations." But because Saul did what Samuel was to do, God says, "No, I'm now going to replace you with David." If you notice what happens here, Saul has his own sandbox and his own toys to play with and he steps over and wants to take part of Samuel's sandbox. What happens? Saul just doesn't get slapped down and told to get back into his own sandbox. Saul ultimately loses his own sandbox because that could have been passed down throughout his generations. Now what happens after Saul dies is David becomes king and an entirely different line takes over. As you can see, there are harsh punishments here because Saul didn't respect the boundary lines.

Notice this whole concept of equality as it's put across in our society doesn't even fit. Again, because their roles are unique and different, no one is being cheated and no one is being oppressed. They just have unique and different roles, but stepping across those and thinking, "I can take someone else's role", God doesn't respond well to that. We have to play within the sandbox God has given us.

Now I want to ask a few questions here just to illustrate a point. I'm going to call these irrelevant questions because we're going to see I bring up some irrelevant issues here. I think you'll understand in a minute here why I'm demonstrating this but I want you to see this in an example that is off the subject.

As you notice here, Saul gets in a great deal of trouble for stepping over into Samuel's role and doing sacrifices. So, does this mean that Saul is not smart enough to do sacrifices? He's not capable enough? He's not a good enough person to do it or he's not physical capable of doing it? Is offering sacrifices just too complicated and Saul can't figure it out? Is any of that what we're saying here? Of course not. These are irrelevant questions.

We can trump up emotionally based issues associated with these questions but think about this practically. Can Saul kill an animal and do sacrifices? If Saul can lead an army into hand-to-hand combat (the way they fought back then), I think it's safe to assume that Saul can take an animal, slaughter it, and do a sacrifice. Is he not smart enough to figure out how to do it? I don't think Saul really needs a Ph.D. in how to sacrifice animals. None of that is the issue. It's not even relevant.

The issue here is God had told Saul, "This is not your role. This is Samuel's role. I've given this role to Samuel." So, in other words, we could try to make up an argument here saying Saul is being cheated and oppressed and there's inequality. Those are all irrelevant because the issue is God has assigned to Saul his role—and it was a very meaningful role. And God has assigned Samuel a different role. And God said, "You need to play in the sandbox I've given you and with the toys I've given you. Don't be crossing the lines because I've told you not to do that." Again, this had nothing to do with oppressing anyone or treating anyone as unimportant or a second-class citizen.

Let's notice another example here. Turn over to 2 Chronicles 26:16 where we'll look at the example of King Uzziah.

2 Chronicles 26:16. *But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord his God by entering the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. (NKJV)*

What we're talking about here is King Uzziah. Now, he is king of Judah and has a very significant role. He's the designated civil leader of the nation, but what he's doing is stepping into the temple trying to do the Levitical Priesthood's job. This does not go well. Look in verse 17.

17) So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the Lord — valiant men.

18) And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the Lord God."

19) Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the Lord, beside the incense altar.

20) And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he was leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the Lord had struck him.

21) King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord. Then Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land. (NKJV)

We're dealing with individuals here who are both in designated leadership roles. Everybody has an important function to fulfill, but Uzziah gets it in his mind, "Hey! I'm going to go take over their sandbox because I think I'm just as good as they are. And I'm equal and I'm going to go do that." What Uzziah does is step across the line and tries to take over the Levitical Priesthood's job. God does not care for this. What does Uzziah wind up doing? He winds up losing his own sandbox essentially because he winds up with leprosy. And it says Uzziah's son had to reign in his place for him.

Uzziah winds up losing the role that he had. Rather than being happy with what God had given him, Uzziah loses everything. This didn't work out very well for him.

Once again, let's ask some irrelevant questions. Is this saying that Uzziah isn't capable enough, or he's not smart enough to figure out how to burn incense? He's not physically capable of doing it? It's just too complicated for him to figure out. Of course not. How complicated is it to burn some incense? He doesn't need a Ph.D. in burning incense. I'm sure he can physically master the job and he's physically capable of doing it. None of those things is the issue. The issue is Uzziah has been told, "This isn't your role. This has been set aside for the Levitical Priesthood and this is their role. You shouldn't be stepping across this." That's what Uzziah gets in trouble for doing.

That's how we need to understand this when God assigns people different roles. Again, it isn't about putting someone down or they're second-class citizens or they're not capable of it. God is just saying, "This is what I've assigned to this person. This is what I've assigned to this other person." They both have upsides and downsides that come with them and God expects us to respect that.

Now with this foundation in mind, let's get back to material more directly relevant to the concept of biblical gender roles. Turn back over to 1 Timothy 2. We're now going to look at some scriptures that you might say are rather controversial in our culture today. Not necessarily so much within the Church of God. Yet, again, when we talk about these types of concepts from the Bible in our culture today, one of the first things you'll hear is "This is inequality and this is oppression. You must think women are second-class citizens and, therefore, there's oppression." This is one of the first things that typically will come up.

I want you to see here that this has nothing to do with anyone being a second-class citizen. It's simply about God assigning people different roles and assigning them different responsibilities. We have to keep in mind, again, roles come with an upside and a downside.

Notice here in 1 Timothy 2:11.

1 Timothy 2:11. *Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.*

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.

14) And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

15) Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. (NKJV)

Again, just mentioning these concepts in today's culture can quickly start an argument. One of the first things you need to realize about this particular scripture to understand what it's saying is that this is specifically referring to offices of leadership within the

church as we're going to see here in a minute, when we compare this to 1 Corinthians 14. Paul makes some very similar comments but you are going to see the words "in church" referred to in that scripture because Paul talks about teaching and having authority there. Again, what it's referring to is offices of leadership within the church.

We won't take the time to do it, but if you look at qualifications for the New Testament offices of the ministry and leadership of the church, one of the qualifications you will see listed is "the husband of one wife." Now it's difficult for a woman to be the "husband of one wife." So, that shows you this is a role that is specifically designated for men. It's something that God is saying, "This is for men. This is not for women."

This has nothing to do with saying that women are not smart enough to know their Bible or to study it or to have insights. I can tell you many times in my life in discussions I've had with women I've talked to who have taught me interesting things. They've seen interesting insights that they've dug out of the Bible that I had never even considered. I've been in a number of conversations where many times I literally had my jaw falling open when someone mentioned something and you think, "Wow! I never thought of that." That's happened to me a number of times talking with women.

So this is not an issue of women are not smart enough to know or don't have the responsibility to study their Bible and to be as well versed with it as men. They certainly do. We're all in training for the same job as firstfruits. Paul is saying God has assigned the responsibilities of leadership and teaching within the church as a role He's given to men. It's the same thing as dividing the role of the king from the role of the priesthood. It's just how God has assigned the roles. So understand this has nothing to do with making anyone a second-class citizen.

Let me also address one other thing in verse 15 here. Throughout my lifetime, I've heard what I'll just bluntly call "very goofy ideas" attached to verse 15. If you read this verse, it says:

15) Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. (NKJV)

One of the goofy ideas attached to this is that sometimes people have taken the viewpoint that this is saying that women are more inherently flawed than men are and the act of childbearing somehow redeems them from this. And a woman's value is, therefore, attached to childbearing. That has nothing to do with what this verse is saying.

This verse is referring back to Genesis 3:15.

Genesis 3:15. *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." (NKJV)*

Notice first that 1 Timothy 2:15 talks about "she" and then "they." "She" is referring to Eve, who is referred to in the prior verses. "They" is referring to all mankind. The verse refers to Eve who was the first one who sinned, who took part of the forbidden fruit.

When it talks about childbearing, the reference is to the fact that Christ will be a descendent of Eve. If you read Genesis 3:15, it talks about the "seed" descending from the woman. The seed is Christ and Christ is the one who redeems all mankind, but that salvation is conditional. That's why it says, "If they continue in faith, love, holiness, and self-control because salvation requires overcoming. It has nothing to do with saying that women are more flawed inherently than men are.

Turn over to 1 Corinthians 14:33 where we'll see a similar concept referred to there.

1 Corinthians 14:33. *For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*

34) Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.

35) And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. (NKJV)

Again, please notice the words "in church" in these verses. This is not saying, "The women just need to shut up and stay in the kitchen because they have nothing valuable to add." That is not what this is talking about. It's saying, "Positions of leadership and teaching in the church are male roles that have not been given to women," which means how God has assigned the responsibilities.

If you look at this not from a cherry-picked point of view, realize that there are two sides to every story. Oftentimes in our culture, we look at this and say, "This cheats women out of being in a leadership role and the perks that can come with that." Realize there is a downside that comes with that role as well and we have to look at both sides.

Turn over to James 3:1. As I mentioned before, God takes the point of view "to whom much is given much is required." In other words, "If I've given a person a lot, I also require a lot from that individual. It's not just about receiving perks. There are two sides to the story." In James 3:1, it says:

James 3:1. *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. (NKJV)*

In other words, yes, they may get the leadership. They also get the responsibility, the accountability and sometimes dealing with the flack similar to Moses' role. Moses was the one in charge and delegating the responsibilities. He also received all the negative emotion and upset when people were unhappy and he had to deal with those problems.

Let me give you a couple of real-life examples. I'll admit upfront these are severe examples, but these are real-life situations. I know because I knew the people involved

in these scenarios. I'm using these to demonstrate that being in a leadership role can have a significant downside as well. It's not just being in charge and getting to teach. Sometimes it's dealing with some severe problems. Both of these happened about twenty years ago, but this first example was in a congregation of about a hundred people or so, sizeable by today's standards.

There was a local elder who was up giving announcements one day. He didn't have the sermon that day. He was assigned for giving announcements. This was in the summer of the year and in the course of giving announcements, he talks about the church's summer camp they're having that year and a number of the teenagers in the congregation that would be attending the camp. He starts listing out this kid and this kid and this kid are going to be a part of it. He's not really working off a list. He's popping this off the top of his head remembering the names. He happens to miss one of the names. It wasn't anything on purpose. He just forgot to mention one particular teenager's name as he's listing it.

It so happens that the parents of the one teenager the local elder forgot to mention were, to put it bluntly, combative and argumentative individuals. Not only that, but there was an extended family of these parents in this congregation as well that all had similar personalities in that regard. Also, some history had led up to this in which other things had happened with this elder that rubbed the family wrong. Again, knowing all the parties involved, a number of the issues were as significant as forgetting to mention their kid's name in going to summer camp.

When the elder gets done making announcements, he steps down and goes back to his chair toward the back of the hall. Before he even gets to his chair, the parents meet him there and they want to talk because they're upset and offended. They took it very personally as if the elder did this on purpose as a personal insult to their child. They go out into the parking lot because they wanted to talk about it right now. Within a few minutes, this elder finds himself standing out in the parking lot with not only the parents in front of him but surrounded by the extended family. They are all severely upset with him over the situation. Again, there was more history than just this particular example.

Yet, this wasn't just a conversation of "I don't understand why you did this and you hurt my feelings," like having a rational conversation. This very quickly escalated into a screaming situation. They are all berating him, screaming at him and at least at one point the father of the teenager was threatening the elder with physical violence. "I ought to just punch you out." This kind of thing was what this conversation escalated into. This elder found himself for most of the sermon time during services standing out in the parking lot just trying to apologize for anything he could, trying to fall on his sword to calm down this situation that was escalating with an entire family around him.

Again, this is a severe example but I want you to see both sides of the picture. We can't just look at it like "Well, this is cheating women out of being in leadership roles." Yes, it's not just behind the pulpit teaching, you might be out in the parking lot being screamed at and threatened with physical violence.

Speaking of violence, let me give you another example. This situation actually happened to a church host. It wasn't an actual elder of a congregation. Again, I admit these are both severe examples but I'm picking them out for that reason. This was in a congregation about twenty plus years ago. It was a small congregation that played video tapes sent from their headquarters organization, and, primarily, just the sermon was being sent there. Locally many times they would do their opening and closing hymns, song leading, the prayers, and sometimes sermonettes as well. The host of the congregation made these assignments and organized these other activities.

There was one particular couple in the congregation where the husband had not been asked to be a part of the song leading and things of that nature. His wife took this very personally. She became very upset and thought this was a personal offense for them in that regard. She got into a heated discussion with the host as to why her husband had not been a part of that and she was greatly offended by that. This escalated to the point that she literally punched the host in the face in the church hall. It wasn't during services but it was at services. Again, this is a very severe example and I acknowledge that is such.

I want you to see that being in a leadership role, there are two sides to this. We can't cherry pick the views because, yes, God excludes women from being behind the podium being teachers, but God also excludes women from being out in the parking lot being screamed at or punched in the face. You have to realize there are two sides to this story and we can't just cherry pick the views.

Let's also look at one other scripture that's oftentimes considered very controversial and argued about on the subject of gender roles. Turn to 1 Corinthians 11:2. We'll come back to this chapter later in this series as we go into more detail about the roles of men and women. To cover what we're going to address today, we'll read verses 2 and 3.

1 Corinthians 11:2. *Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.*

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. (NKJV)*

Notice here these verses refer primarily to how gender roles play out in marriage where the husband is given the leadership authority role in the family. Again, if you mention this, oftentimes the reaction is "That's inequality. That's oppression." Notice it talks about God the Father being the head of Christ. Is Christ a second-class citizen in the God family? Does He have an insignificant oppressed role at all? He's the creator of all. He's King of kings, LORD of lords, and the savior of mankind. That's very significant. He has a very meaningful, very significant role. Yet, by virtue of the fact that the Father is head and has authority over Him doesn't marginalize Christ's role.

And there is another role. There is a lesson in this for husbands as well. How does God the Father treat Christ? Does He treat Christ as someone who just needs to shut

up, stay in the kitchen, and not have a role? No, not at all. They have a very collaborative relationship. The Father very much honors Christ's role, values that, and treats Christ with great respect in terms of how they interact with each other.

Yet, again, there is this issue of the Father being head. You see a number of times where Christ submits to the Father and the Father has made the final call on things but, again, that doesn't make Christ insignificant. It's important to realize with this issue of being the head, there are two sides to this story. Oftentimes, it's looked at as "He gets the say. He gets the primary role." There is also another side that comes with that and let's not cherry pick.

Turn over to Genesis 3. We'll pick up in verse 8, but let me summarize what's led up to this point so you understand what's happening here. I'm sure we're all familiar with the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. As you know, ultimately, they both wind up sinning. They take of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They wind up, as that symbolized, embracing Satan as the source to follow rather than God, which is symbolized by the tree of life.

If you're familiar with the details of the story, you know the order of what happened. Satan approaches Eve first. She is the first person who sins and takes of the fruit and she's instrumental in going to Adam and talking him into doing it. They both mess up and they both sin and are responsible for this. Again, technically speaking, who is the first person who did it? That was Eve. Not only is she the first person who did it. She's instrumental in getting Adam to do it. Who is the first individual called onto the carpet for it? Who gets the primary responsibility? Look here in verse 8.

Genesis 3:8. *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?"*

10) *So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."*

11) *And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"*

12) *Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."*

13) *And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (NKJV)*

Notice both of them are running for cover. Everybody is looking for an out. "It's not my fault. It's somebody else's fault." No one wants to take responsibility for their actions here. Notice the order that God has gone in. He went straight to Adam and says, "What have you done, Adam? You messed up." Adam wasn't the first one who did it. We know the order of the story. Notice what God is doing. He's going to the head, to the one who was placed in charge and he's the one being held first responsible. If you notice in the New Testament when we talk about sin entering the physical creation of

mankind, who takes the primary blame? Who is exclusively mentioned as the person responsible? That's going to be Adam.

Turn over to Romans 5:12.

Romans 5:12. *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned —*
13) *(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*
14) *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.*
15) *But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.*
16) *And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.*
17) *For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)*
18) *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's [righteousness] the free gift came to all) men, resulting in justification of life.*
19) *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's [righteousness] many will be made righteous. (NKJV)*

Notice here it's talking about sin entered the physical creation through one man and who is mentioned? Adam. Who technically was the first human who sinned? Eve. Do you notice her name is not mentioned? She's not being held up for this.

Think about it. Who was the head of the team? Think about it in terms of if you're on a work team, you're given a particular responsibility, and that team doesn't deliver. Something goes wrong and they mess up their responsibility? Who is the person who tends to be blamed the most for it? It's the manager or the team leader. Isn't it? It's the person who was made as the head. Or if a company is going off course and they're not doing well. The board wants to say, "We have to change this. We have to turn the direction of this company." Who tends to be fired? That's the president or the CEO. Isn't it? The person was placed in charge. The board says, "He's accountable. Even though there are many other folks under him who messed up as well, we're going to remove the head, fire him, and put somebody else in."

That's what's happening here. It's not just the issue of Adam being the head and getting to call the shots. He gets the accountability when it all goes wrong too. He gets the blame. It comes with "to whom much is given much is required." I want you to look at this and see, with our human nature's perspective of things, oftentimes we cherry pick.

Many times in our culture today, people will look at the subject of the Bible specifically as it does with gender roles. Again, they're coming from this whole perspective of equality. They look at the Bible as an outdated, ancient, sexist, anti-women book. What they're going to do is a cherry picked view. Typically, they're going to look through the Bible and find a perk, a right, or an upside that men receive that women don't or they're going to take anything that might be a downside that women receive but men didn't and say, "See! Inequality! It's oppression." Yet, oftentimes, it is a cherry picked view. They're not looking at both sides of the picture.

To cover one other concept here, turn over to Deuteronomy 20. Oftentimes, particularly in looking at the Old Testament what will happen is people will go through and, again, cherry pick the views of any particular right or privilege that men have that women didn't and say, "See, this is oppression and inequality." Often one of the things that you don't hear is a downside that women didn't have to deal with and that is the issue of military service in war. Turn over to Deuteronomy 20:1. What we're going to read here is the biblical rules of war.

Deuteronomy 20:1. *"When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.*

2) So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people.

3) And he shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them;

4) for the Lord your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'

5) "Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying: 'What man is there who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it.

6) Also what man is there who has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it.

7) And what man is there who is betrothed to a woman and has not married her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man marry her.'

8) "The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, 'What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.' (NKJV)

Notice here it never says any rules for the women in regards to going to battle. They weren't required to do that. War is an ugly thing. Having to go fight in battle where you could get killed or severely wounded and disabled for the rest of your life as a result of your injuries, or just the horror of the things you deal with in battles and war is a very

ugly thing. Notice the women didn't have to do that. This is something they were spared from.

Again, my whole point here is look at both sides of the picture because what tends to happen with human nature is like this, "I'm okay with missing out on the war part. They can take the battle, risk their lives and get killed. That's okay. Just give me the rights and the perks that they have. That's my idea of equality. I don't want both sides."

We have to realize life doesn't work that way. When roles are assigned, there is an upside and there is a downside and they both come together as a package. As human beings, our ideas of equality are often like the socialist's view. "My fair share, my equality, that's my portion of the profits. That's not my fair share of the work and the sacrifice and the risk and all the negative parts that come with that. That's just my fair share of all the profits and the money." It doesn't work that way. That doesn't even meet their definition of equality.

What I want you to see in all of this is the idea of equality as put across in our culture as a very flawed idea. If you look at Winston Churchill's description of the concept of socialism, he called it "the gospel of envy," because that's oftentimes what it is. It's a very human nature perspective of wanting to cherry pick. I thought it was important for us to establish this as a foundation as we go forward in looking at this. Realize that the cultural indoctrination that we've received on this subject has very much skewed our perspectives and our views on the subject of equality. I think that's important to look at.

I've established much of the foundation of this sermon series looking at the primary cultural indoctrination that's infested our culture over the last several decades. And, as we go forward looking at this subject, we're going to look first at the role of men and then at the role of women. We'll certainly cover other angles and other ditches that we can be in.

Next time we'll pick up in part 3 looking specifically at the role of men. I'll close today by saying, tune in next time for Biblical Gender Roles – Part 3.