

***By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (Psa 33:6)***

There is a distinct and defined order to things – all things in all of creation. This might seem like a very simplistic and unnecessarily obvious thing to say, but this is something I want you to keep coming back to as you consider the discussion today.

This idea of a specific order isn't just an abstract concept to consider, a thing to remind ourselves of in times of trouble

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Rom 8:28)*

It isn't just a point of argument to make against free will-ism and false religions. This is a critical component of God's creation that should occupy our thoughts regularly as it forms our understanding of God and His sovereignty.

Jesus included this idea in His model of prayer

*“And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.**” (Luk 11:2)*

God not only set the order of things in motion at the very beginning, and gave us a reminder of His order, its constancy, unchangeableness and dependability **literally every single day**; consider these verses from Genesis 1 and 2 in that light

*“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were **the first day.**” (3-5) And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were **the second day.** (8) And the evening and the morning were **the third day.** (13) And the evening and the morning were **the fourth day.** (19) And the evening and the morning were **the fifth day.** (23) And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were **the sixth day.** (31) And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (2:2-3)*

You can say all you want about orbital dynamics and the physics of the universe and galactic spin driving star-centric orbits of planetary bodies. Or you can acknowledge and praise the simple but clearly defined order that God established and put right in

front of our faces. It is right there to remind us literally every single day that the entirety of creation was put in motion and is controlled by His hand.

The world hates this notion of ceding control of anything to God. Men refuse to acknowledge that which they know to be true:

*“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” (Rom 1:20)*

I submit to you this Tweet from just a couple of days ago showing how little regard worldlings have for the very obvious sign God has placed in the heavens and caused to repeat itself for nigh on 6,000 years:



Yes! The sun rises and sets every single day – telling us His order and His mercy are still in effect! You disregard and disrespect that obvious sign of His sovereignty and His established order at your soul’s peril. The fact you can calculate when an eclipse will happen isn’t a sign of your genius, it’s a sign of God’s definitive order!

Acknowledging these truths is so uncommon that to do so is marked as a sign of faith

*“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Heb 11:3)*

There is a reason this formation of the universe is the first element of faith Paul lays out in Hebrews 11. This “understanding” of how the worlds were made includes acknowledgement and submission to the truth and defending it as truth; Thayer’s says the Greek for “understand” means “to ponder”. Pondering, or meditating on God’s creation and offering praise to Him over it is part of how we worship Him, and sets a foundation for everything else.

The crazy ideas that the world promotes to explain the origin of the universe and the things we can see in the heavens are as entertaining as any big-budget studio production. I mean seriously, the “Big Bang” which wasn’t seen, can’t be reproduced at any scale and has no discernible explanation as to what triggered it is their best answer? Even though none of them make any sense, they are treated as indisputable

facts. The simple answer of God's order sits right in front of them but they will not acknowledge it as truth.

It is not only an act of faith to acknowledge the order God has created, but we are called upon explicitly to thank Him for the mercy of it

***“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever: The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever: The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.”*** (Psa 136:1-9)

God's order provides great comfort and patience when under affliction

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* (Rom 8:28)

We should also be giving due consideration to this established order when not in distress, letting it drive our thoughts and daily actions.

The world around us is at war with that patient consideration and faithful understanding God's people operate under in regard to the order God has established and maintains throughout all of the universe at all times. The carnal, fleshly mind is not able to, absent the regenerating grace of God, to be obediently subject and properly reverent toward God, including His ordering of all things.

*“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”* (Rom 8:7)

As I was being pummeled these last few weeks about the wonders of International Women's Day and how important it is to bow down to men cosplaying as women while applauding their heroism, it occurred to me that there is maybe no other place in our society that this hatred of God's order displays itself than in the role of women.

It occurs to me that there is no other part of the creation that God has given us insight into His reasons for creating it. We don't know His purpose behind the platypus, or jellyfish or stink bugs. We don't know why roses are red or kale tastes so bad. We do know that all He created met His purposes and everything is created precisely as He designed:

*“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good...”*(Gen 1:31)

About the creation of woman, though, we are given considerably more information regarding His reasoning

*“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” (Gen 2:18)*

Keep the right perspective on this – the creation of Eve wasn’t an afterthought, an “oops, maybe I overlooked that little detail” moment. This was part of God’s perfectly laid out and executed plan. We’re given this language precisely to explain the order and roles that God has established.

God gave Adam dominion over His creation, and could have in that dominion established an order whereby other creatures served him in ways suitable to address his needs. He could have endowed them with faculties that allowed for higher order reasoning and communication. But He did not. It made God’s creation “very good” to fashion this “help meet” for Adam – one given the faculties of reason, understanding, language and emotion; she is a creature with body, soul and spirit the same as Adam.

Adam was alone in the sense that he had no one to speak with of the things of God, to consider God’s greatness with and to join together with in the praise of His name. There was no creature fitted to walk that path with him. There was no creature appropriate to expanding the race with Adam. In at least these ways he was alone, which would have made the creation unfinished. Instead, the creation of woman brought to a finish the creation of our world and race.

This phrase “an help meet for him” does not indicate a servant or simply an advisor. It certainly does not indicate what some supposedly conservative Christians promote – that it means a husband owns his wife like property. That odious notion is wrong in more ways than I have time to consider today, and so I’m going to leave it at that.

The word translated “help meet” is an interesting one, really only used in this way here in Genesis. The word directly means “the front part of a thing opposite; a matched counterpart”. It comes from a root which means “to show, report, [a] messenger”. A couple of other examples of where it’s used help form this up

*“For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing **before** all Israel, and **before** the sun.” (2Sa 12:12)*

*“And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came **before** the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now there was a valley between them and Ai.” (Jos 8:11)*

So it seems clear that the word has in its teeth an element of something being right in front of you, so much so that it can’t be ignored because it consumes your entire field of vision. So then add to that the “matched counterpart” element and you can see a deeper meaning to Adam’s words

*“... This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (Gen 2:23)*

“This now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (the word “is” being interpolated) has a lot more depth if you consider that Adam is expressing something more than just “she was made from a part of me”. **Now** that she has the breath of life and is standing there in front of him, able to articulate her own thoughts about God and complement Adam in his pursuit of holiness, **now** he is completed by this crucial part of him. I believe the idea is that our wives fill our whole field of vision, not as though blocking your view but from a sense of seeing your complete self when you look at her. This view is part of what Paul is exhorting to when he tells us

*“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;” (Eph 5:25)*

Love her with the same completeness Christ loves the church. This is the order of things.

Indicated in “this is now bone of my bones...” is the idea that they are both complements to each other. I’m not suggesting some yin and yang philosophy. I’m suggesting to you that a man and wife cannot be “one flesh” if they are not complementary to each other. If you have found a wife and obtained favor from the Lord (Prov 18:22) you have found a complementing help for your life, and you are a complementing help to her.

Now, be very clear on this point – I’m not talking about this progressive doctrine preached widely today called “complementarianism”. This false doctrine teaches that men and women are created to complement each other and are, in fact equals, including in roles of authority. The doctrine is based in the false notion that for women to have value they must have equality in role, authority, etc.; it is a continuation of “in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods”.

That view is simply untrue, and improperly defines the value God placed on the woman, and bucks against His defined order. I’m not suggesting anything of that sort.

Husbands and wives absolutely complement each other, but this creation of a complementary “help meet” to Adam did not bestow upon Eve an element of **positional** or **authoritative** equality, even though Adam was likewise a complement to Eve, as all husbands are to their wives.

*“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;” (1Pe 3:1)*

I think this is an important point to have a firm grasp on given the number of young married couples we have in this body and the absolute poison the world spews at us

every minute of every day to oppose this truth. This is not a “cultural commentary” Peter is delivering here, and Paul’s explanation of this same point makes that clear

*“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.” (Eph 5:22-23)*

This is not about superiority or inferiority. Headship is not about women being inferior in the sense the world sees inferiority. Granted, women are said to be the “weaker vessel”, and proper respect being given to that fact is required in Christian husbands

*“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” (1Pe 3:7)*

But the “weaker vessel” isn’t a value statement, it’s a factual one. Do we not see an example of this almost every day now, when men invade women’s sport and you can with your own eyes see the stark physical differences between them? There is more to this “weaker vessel” that comes into play of course

*“For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” (1Ti 2:13-14)*

There was a spiritual weakness in Eve exposed when she fell to the temptation of Satan; I don’t think that can be denied.

But if you look at the fuller context of what Paul is telling Timothy here by way of instruction and pattern building, you see that he is **explaining the God-created order of things, not casting aspersions on women or creating an “oppressive patriarchy”**; he certainly isn’t just delivering social commentary. Pay close attention to this

*“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” (1Ti 2:8-15)*

“Notwithstanding” is an important word here. It makes the point that the order of things is not a value statement. In the order of things that God has created (“Adam was first formed, then Eve”) where headship or authority is given to the man, there is a role

women perform that is exclusive to them, critical to God's order. Performing this role is so critical it is an act of faith for a God-fearing woman, and is listed in the examples of faith Paul speaks of to the Hebrews:

*“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.”* (Heb 11:11)

This is no small thing, but we are utterly bombarded with hatred of this concept on an hourly basis. It makes this nation's drive to slaughter their unborn children all the more heinous, criminal and despicable when you put this into its proper context. Our generation sees no value in the roles God has established for each gender to play, in the bearing of children, the running and keeping of a God-fearing home, spiritual leadership, etc.

What God didn't establish is “one is better than the other”. He established an order; He defined roles to play and duties to perform. This populist mantra that Christianity promotes a philosophy that women are of lesser value and worshipping Christ equates to maintaining some sort of “oppressive patriarchy” is part of the victim narrative being used to push rebellion against God's “unfair” order. This victim narrative is used to rally rebels to the cause, and it is how this becomes the state of things

*“As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.”* (Isa 3:12)

When men abrogate their authority under some guise of “modernism”, “equity” or “progressiveness” it is just as much an affront to God as women inserting themselves into roles which are not set out for them to perform. When Paul tells Timothy that women aren't to teach from the pulpit because of God's established order, he doesn't say that there is no place for them in the church or that there is no role for them in declaring God's goodness in the earth.

This is not hard to understand. It doesn't take careful reading to see it, it's not some mysterious language you have to dig deep into to understand. When Paul tells Timothy “[I]n like manner also” in 1 Tim 2:9, it is in regard to women praying everywhere as the men are called to do in verse 8. He gives additional instruction to the women to do so in modest apparel, but there's no need to overly complicate this – Christ's church and it's ministry isn't made up only of men. Being a part of and caring for the ministry is not reserved to men, and I refer you to Ben's comments from just last week about Priscilla.

Take careful note of the fact that Christ had women amongst His followers from the very beginning of His public ministry, but He never gave instruction to them to do the things He did the Apostles. He never called any of the women to be an Apostle. He

didn't, however, tell them to leave or turn them away from the ministry. In fact, He honored a woman in a way He never explicitly honored one of the men

*“Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.” (Mat 26:13)*

The order of things, as He created them, explicitly does not call for women to fulfill certain roles, and Christ did not set that order aside – which He could have done. That He didn't makes clear that the direction of Paul and Peter is not some culturally based patriarchal bias founded in misogyny, or whatever feminist buzzwords you want to apply to it. Christ, who has the authority and ability to change the order, kept the order as it had been from the beginning. That should carry exceptional weight for anyone calling themselves a Christian.

Consider closely the case of Phebe. Paul writes to his brethren at Rome:

*“I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.” (Rom 16:1-2)*

This passage is frequently mis-applied, and if you followed the recent battle in the Southern Baptist Church over women being allowed to preach, you heard it wrested and abused a lot, being cited as a clear declaration that women are Scripturally allowed to hold offices of authority in the church.

The argument forms up around the word here translated as “servant”. That word is Strong's 1249, *diakonos* which in other places is translated, deacon, like here

*“Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;” (1Ti 3:8)*

False teachers argue that Phebe is called here a deaconess in the original. Consider that this same word is more frequently translated minister (20 times – action and office) or servant (8 times) than deacon (3 times). It is never translated deaconess. It is rarely translated to mean an office, more frequently to describe actions. The context of the original gives rise to the translation, and it was not the office Phebe is being described as holding.

Furthermore, Paul tells us the qualifications for the **office**, which clearly excludes women holding it

*“Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to*



*themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (1Ti 3:12-13)*

The same word (1249) is used here as “servants” which gives the sense of what the **action** entails

*“His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” (Joh 2:5)*

Servants do whatever is required of them by their master. Phebe wasn't holding the office of a deacon, she served and ministered to the body, making that the defining purpose in her life, which can be seen by the use of the word “succourer”. This word is a description of what she's been doing, and is unique to Romans 16:2. Thayer's tells us it describes a woman who is a patroness using her resources in service to others.

Phebe's behavior as a “succourer” is the embodiment of several attributes from the Proverbs 31 description of a God-fearing woman.

*“She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.” (Pro 31:15)*

*“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.” (Pro 31:20)*

*“She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.” (Pro 31:27)*

Phebe performed all these and more in service to her fellow pilgrims. She performed the duties of service, she wasn't placed into the office of deacon, and Paul is speaking of her service to the body at Cenchrea as a means of giving her proper introduction to those at Rome. This can't be much plainer.

Paul gives encouragement on how it looks for women to serve properly and faithfully in the church

*“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Tit 2:3-5)*

These are not subservient, lesser people to men, conducting less important activities. These are not activities reserved to women, either – we serve each other. These same charitable actions, motivated by brotherly love are required of all God's people.

We have examples beside Phebe and Priscilla in Mary, Martha and here with Tabitha

*“Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: **this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds** which she did.” (Act 9:36)*

Tabitha is named a disciple, which means a pupil. She was active in the ministry in her care of the poor, as noted by her *almsdeeds*. She wasn't some “head of the women's ministry” or a “youth deacon” or any other invented office in the church at Joppa. She wasn't an elder, bishop, deacon, or shepherd. She was a student of the truth, and a faithful follower of Christ. All those who follow Christ are His disciples – men and women.

The body of Christ is not exclusionary as to gender (real gender, not made up ones)

*“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:28)*

Women are called to and given the same grace from Christ as men. The established order does not regard involvement but authority and role

*“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” (1Co 11:3)*

This was written not in an abstract context, but a letter to a church that was clearly struggling with these matters, causing Paul to give help. And causing him to make the point that this is not a value statement making women of lesser value

*“ For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.” (1Co 11:8-12)*

In these times, having this understanding is important. It is critical not only to defend the prohibitive “I suffer not a woman to teach” (1 Ti 2:12) standard but also the right perspective on our wives, daughters, mothers and all women who are sisters in Christ – because they are sisters “in Christ”. While the world pushes toward its final destruction, undoing all right thinking and all right behavior, opposing all God's given order, we must hold it fast.

With all the noise we hear about “what is a woman”, the radical feminists screaming in our schools and workplaces and how the world just seems to be losing its mind, sometimes it is needful to step back and just look at a thing and see it for what it is. That's what I have tried to today and I hope it has been helpful.