



## Women's Righteousness

**Lesson Aim:** Christians should look to inspired Scripture for truths regarding the great issues of modern times.

**L14. Date:** March 1984. **Text:** Genesis 1:26-28; 2:21-23; 1 Peter 3:1-4.

**Topic:** Woman: Creation of; Woman: Righteousness of; Women: Rights of.

We live in a generation that is consumed with concern for its "rights." A flood tide of demand has deluged us.

There is a cry for rights of minorities, rights of children, rights of criminals, rights of perverts, and a great flurry of advocates for "women's rights."

The Bible recognizes that every person has certain rights. The primary one is that every person has the right to do what is right. No one has the right to do what is wrong.

This study deals with the subject of "women's rights." The comments which follow will deal with the place of women, according to Bible teaching. Then it will make brief application to the feminist movement abroad in the United States today.

Watch for this truth in the following comments: "Like man, woman is free to serve God and others within the guidelines of Scripture."

### I. WOMAN AS THE IMAGE OF GOD (Genesis 1:26, 27)

**A. God created man and woman in His own image** (verse 26). That does not mean they are exactly alike, but that they have the same nature.

"*Let US make man,*" indicates there is a difference in Father, Son, and Spirit. Yet, they are one.

"*Image of God*" indicates there is a "*likeness*" to God in which both man and woman share ("*Image*" and "*likeness*" are two terms which refer to the same thing.) God made all humans, male and female, to be like himself.

Man and woman are in the “*image of God*” in that they are threefold in their nature. The body is the world-conscious part of a person (Genesis 2:7). The soul is one’s self-conscious part (Genesis 2:7). The spirit is one’s God-conscious part (Job 32:8, Ecclesiastes 12:7; II Corinthians 4:16).

“*Image of God*” also indicates personality. Human beings have mind, emotion, and will just as God has mind, emotion, and will.

Both the woman and the man are capable of bearing holiness before God (Leviticus 20:7; 19:2; Hebrews 12:14) and likeness to God (I Corinthians 15:49; I John 3:2; Romans 8:29).

**B. All members of the human family, male and female, are in the image of God.** God is referred to in the masculine gender (“He”) in the Bible, but woman bears His image even so (Genesis 1:26, 27).

## II. WOMAN AS THE RULER OVER CREATION (Genesis 1:26, 28)

**A. Dominion over all creation was given to both the man and the woman in the original plan** (verses 26, 28; Psalm 8:4-8; Hebrews 2:5-8; James 3:7). There was no indication that either had more authority than the other. Before sin entered human experience, the man and the woman were absolutely equal in their exercise of authority over all animals and things.

Dominion indicates equality. God said, “let them have dominion” (verse 26). That very dominion became the occasion of the human fall into sin.

**B. Failure to exercise dominion brought sin into human experience** (Genesis 3:1-24). The devil came to Eve in the agency of the serpent and encouraged her to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She had dominion over the serpent. She could have put it in its place with her work of authority, but she did not. She surrendered her dominion to the serpent and followed Satan’s suggestion through it. Because she surrendered her power to exercise dominion, she was placed under her husband’s dominion (Genesis 3:16). That is where the whole issue of “woman’s rights” centers.

Woman’s relationship to man today is God’s assignment as a consequence of human sin.

## III. WOMAN AS THE COMPANION OF MAN (Genesis 2:21-23)

Man is incomplete without the woman and woman is incomplete without the man (I Corinthians 11:11). God knew that and said, “*It is not*

*good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him”* (Genesis 2:18).

God made the woman to complement man, to complete him. She came from his body. God took a rib from Adam, made a woman, “*and brought her unto the man”* (Genesis 2:22). Adam recognized that this new creation (whom he afterwards named Eve) bore his exact nature. He exclaimed, “*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man”* Genesis 2:23).

Woman completes man’s personhood as man completes woman’s personhood. She is in no way inferior to him as a person. Both bear God’s image. Both share the same human nature. Both need each other to be complete. That is perfect equality.

#### IV. WOMAN IN SUBMISSION TO MAN (I Peter 3:1)

**A. Woman’s submission to man is decreed of God** (verses 1, 5). He was the one who inspired Peter to command, “*Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands”* (verse 1). He was the one who said to Eve concerning Adam, “*He shall rule over thee”* (Genesis 3:16). He inspired writers of sacred Scripture to repeat that rule (I Corinthians 11:3; I Timothy 2:11, 12; Ephesians 5:22).

**B. Woman’s submission to man will continue until the ultimate completion of redemption.** It was by woman’s sin that she was put under man’s authority. It will be by salvation provided through the Son of the woman (Jesus Christ) that she and all who believe will be delivered from subjection to any human authority into the glorious liberty of the children of God (I Timothy 2:15).

Those who resist those regulations are fighting against God. Those are not doctrines which man has decreed. They are principles which God has announced and which no person has authority to change.

#### VI. WOMAN IN TODAY’S WORLD

What should be the place of woman in our modern society? What guidelines does the Bible give concerning the place of woman today?

**A. Each woman should be held in highest esteem as a person who bears the image of God** (Genesis 1:26, 27; Acts 10:28, 34; Romans 10:12). Men must not look upon her as a sex object to be exploited, a servant to be used, or a goddess to be worshiped. Each woman has the right to be respected.

**B. Each woman should cultivate the qualities of an upright life.**

That includes the graces of modesty (I Timothy 2:9), purity (Proverbs 12:4, 14); 31:10), liberality to the church (Exodus 35:25), care for the poor (Proverbs 31:20; Acts 9:39), gifts to Jesus (Luke 21:2), and like graces.

**C. She should maintain a home.** The husband is the “head” of the home but the wife is its “heart.” She set it emotional tone. She should cook (Proverbs 31:15), bear children (I Samuel 1:11), be wise in finances (Proverbs 31:24), etc. the home reflects the mother of that home.

**D. She should serve God in the home by offering hospitality** (II Kings 4:10), **servicing in the church** (Romans 16:1-3, 6; I Corinthians 11:5), **and ministering many ways in the name of the Lord Jesus** (Romans 10:1, 2). The woman can serve God as effectively in her area as the man in his area.

**E. She should engage in spiritual ministries** (Mark 15:47; John 20:1; Matthew 28:8; Acts 16:13, 14) **and be responsible for secular duties only.** Women can pray, witness, teach children and youth, and serve God effectively.

**F. She should receive equal treatment before the law as God decreed** (Numbers 27:1-8). Some evil men have abused women through the years. But the Christian religion has done more to elevate the place of woman in society than any other single influence in human history. The laws of our nation guarantee equality and justice for the woman as well as the man.

Consider some of the laws passed to protect the rights of women in the United States. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1972, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 cover equal pay for equal work. The Fourteenth Amendment, the Higher Education Act of 1972, the Comprehensive Health Manpower Training Act of 1971, the Nurse Training Act of 1971, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973, and the Federal Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1975 assure equal treatment. Women do not need more laws passed. (That is why the Equal Rights Amendment was unnecessary and failed to be ratified.) Any injustice a woman suffers today can be dealt with in a court of law on the basis of statutes already on the books.

Why, then, does the feminist movement continue with such unabated strength? It is common in many nations of the world. But it is strongest in the United States, a country that provides the best possible conditions for women. Today, radicals in the realm of social change generally direct the movement.

In Dr. Tim LaHaye's book, *The Battle for the Family* (Revell), he discusses the harm feminism has done in its goal of "liberating" the American woman. He suggests the following:

Feminism (1) creates unnecessary competition between husband and wife, (2) blurs the distinction between the sexes, (3) creates unnecessary dissatisfaction with being a housewife and mother, (4) destroys femininity, (5) causes insecurity in men, and (6) results in an alarming insecurity among children.

Is that what the American woman wants? Is that what any Christian woman wants? Is that true freedom for a woman? Definitely not!

There is a distinct difference between man and woman. The difference is physical in the design of their bodies. The difference is emotional in their response to pressure. The difference is maternal as women instinctively yearn to nurture children. The difference is physical in that the male body is stronger than the female body. The difference is there because God put it there in His original creation.

Look on every woman you meet as a person of great value. She is made in the image of God. Respect her because you reverence Him. Follow the advice one father gave to his son: "Treat every woman as a lady, even if she is not, because you are a gentleman."

What an honor to be designed by God as a woman to complement man and fulfill a predestined purpose in the world. Be proud of your position under God.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why do we hear so much of "rights" these days?
2. What is meant by "women's rights"?
3. In what sense is woman in the image of God?
4. What was woman's original authority over creation?
5. What happened to woman's authority when she sinned?
6. In what sense is man incomplete without the woman?
7. Why should men respect every woman today?
8. In what areas can a woman serve today?
9. How do our laws guarantee the rights of women today?
10. How can you show respect for women personally?