

## Recommended Reading Resources

### Male & Female Roles in Ministry and Home

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This annotated list recommends books exploring biblical, hermeneutical and/or historical issues associated with women in church ministry, women in marriage, and female roles in society.

#### Basic Reading (Generally Accessible to All Levels of Readers):

- Rich Nathan with Insoo Kim, Both-And: Living the Christ-Centered Life in an Either-Or World (InterVarsity 2013), in chapter 10, pp. 160-171. Everyone in the Vineyard should own this; Chapter 10 summarizes how gender equality better reflects God's Word than restrictions on women. If you read nothing else on this subject, this 11-page chapter on women-in-ministry gives a great basic understanding of the issues. **Overall Rating: 99%**
- Kristina LaCelle-Peterson, Liberating Tradition: Women's Identity and Vocation in Christian Perspective (Baker Academic 2008). A nice overview of biblical interpretation, Bible passages and themes, women in early church and church history, and thoughtful discussions of the egalitarian approach to women in ministry and the home. I agree with almost everything the author says; a complete summary of the topic, both evangelical and thought-provoking. **Overall Rating: 97%**
- Alan F. Johnson, Gen. Ed., How I Changed My Mind About Women in Leadership: Compelling Stories from Prominent Evangelicals (Zondervan 2010), 265 pages. These powerful, easy to read stories by well-known leaders in modern evangelicalism tell how they came to egalitarianism. Contributors include Ruth Haley Barton, Bill & Lynne Hybels (Willow Creek), Howard Marshall, Stanley Gundry, Ron Sider, Gilbert Bilezikian and more. You can easily read ones you like and skim those you find less compelling. The introduction by Dallas Willard is particularly outstanding! **Overall Rating: 96%**
- John G. Stackhouse, Jr., Finally Feminist: A Pragmatic Christian Understanding of Gender (Baker Academic 2005), 129 pages. An easier-to-read version of William Webb's Slaves, Women & Homosexuals (discussed below in "Intermediate Readings"), Stackhouse deftly explains that, though God designed women as equal to men, He worked through patriarchal culture in biblical times. A great introduction to biblically

thinking about gender and to understand why egalitarians and complementarians so often misunderstanding and mistrust each other. **Overall Rating: 95%**

- Gilbert Bilzeikian, Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says About a Woman's Place in Church and Family (Baker 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2006), 181 pages. Perhaps the best synopsis of Bible texts on women in ministry and home, this book changed Willow Creek to egalitarianism. Surprisingly easy to read, the footnotes interact with James Hurley, Men and Women in Biblical Perspective, exposing weakness in his complementarian arguments. The appendix in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition proves Greek *kephale* in 1 Cor. 11.3/Eph. 5.24 means 'source' or 'fountainhead,' not 'authority;' the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition has a less helpful Study Guide instead. A good read and great reference; a must-own for those pursuing these questions! **Overall Rating: 95%**
- Stanley N. Gundry & James R. Beck, Gen. Eds., Two Views on Women in Ministry (Zondervan rev. ed. 2005), 344 pages. Egalitarians Linda Belleville and Craig Keener interact with complementarians Craig Blomberg and Thomas Schreiner showing the differences in how to interpret biblical passages on gender. This the best book giving *all sides* in the debate. It is irenic, without name-calling. In addition to Keener and Belleville giving egalitarian views, the book shows differences among complementarians; Blomberg the 'soft complementarian' (women subordinate at home but serve in church in all but high leadership roles') contrasts with the 'hard complementarianism' of Thomas Schreiner (women not only are subordinate at home but restricted from church ministry over men). A fair summary of each side of the debate! **Overall Rating: 95%**
- Dorothy L. Sayers, Are Women Human? Astute and Witty Essays on the Role of Women in Society (Eerdmans 1971), 69 pages. Dorothy Sayers was a sometimes part of the Inklings at Oxford with C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien in the 20s and 30s. The first female graduate of Oxford, Sayers' two essays on how unredeemed society sees women are witty and insightful. The essays are only 49 pages (19 pages are an unremarkable introduction by someone else); you can read them in an hour. The book is over \$9.00 new; it's an expensive read but if you like C.S. Lewis' wit you'll love Sayers' handling of the issue. **Overall Rating: 94%**

### **Intermediate Reading (Somewhat More Advanced Study)**

- Rich Nathan, Women in Leadership: How to Decide What the Bible Teaches (2006, download at [www.richnathan.org](http://www.richnathan.org)).<sup>1</sup> A more detailed account than in Both-And. Rich reviews complementarian teaching and shows its confusing rules on what women can and

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<sup>1</sup> Go to [www.richnathan.org](http://www.richnathan.org), find the article "Why Vineyard Columbus Encourages Women to Preach, Pastor & Church Plant," and click on the link at the bottom of the page directing the reader to Rich's full article.

supposedly cannot do in ministry are inconsistent with spreading the Gospel, briefly but brilliantly explaining why egalitarianism more effectively reflects the Bible's concerns and missionally spreads the gospel in the west today. Every Vineyard person wanting to further explore these issues should read this article! **Overall Rating: 99%**

- Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality (Baker 1997), 242 pages. Groothuis interacts in detail with complementarian ideas and shows complementarianism is inconsistent with the broader message of biblical equality. She examines each complementarian proof-text, smartly explaining why egalitarianism makes more biblical sense than the traditionalist/complementarian view. In this volume Groothuis convincingly addresses each issue on the topic. Highly recommended. **Overall Rating: 98%**
- William J. Webb, Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis (IVP Academic 2001), 278 pages. Identifies Scripture's "redemptive hermeneutic," in every situation treating women *better* than the surrounding culture, treating slaves significantly *better* than the surrounding culture, but in each case *restricting* homosexual acts *despite* permissive surrounding cultural mores. Webb builds a strong case for biblical egalitarianism, proving to treat women the same as men is the sole logical conclusion of biblical teaching. Excellent discussion of the slavery analogy. **Overall Rating 98%**
- Manfred T. Brauch, Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible (IVP Academic 2009), 256 pages. Brauch shows complementarian misreadings of Scripture on gender roles illustrate the right approach to sound biblical interpretation. An excellent introduction on how to study and interpret Scripture; a treasure-trove of explanations of how to rightly interpret biblical texts on gender roles in church, home and society. It also helpfully evaluates how many evangelicals misread Scripture to minimize the import of social justice issues. Not too technical in nature; highly recommended! **Overall Rating 98%**
- Stanley J. Grenz & Denise Muir Kjesbo, Women in the Church; A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry (InterVarsity 1995), 233 pages. Two articulate complementarians cover key issues on women in ministry and marriage; similar to Discovering Biblical Equality discussed below but easier to read. Gives positive examples of women in church history, analyzes treatment of women in Paul's letters and the Genesis creation narrative, and gives an excellent, detailed overview of relevant issues related to female leadership. Highly recommended! **Overall Rating: 97%**
- Ronald W. Pierce & Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, Gen. Eds., Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy (IVP Academic 2005), 507 pages. A

compendium that covers all aspects of the egalitarian/complementarian debate with a comprehensive analysis of women in church history, esp. 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; each applicable biblical text; how egalitarianism should work in practice; and more. Contributors are a who's-who in evangelical scholarship: Ruth Tucker, Linda Belleville, Gordon Fee, Craig Keener, Howard Marshall, Peter Davids, Walter Liefeld, Stan Grenz, Kevin Giles, William Webb, Roger Nicole and more. The problem is the book is so long and so diverse it is impossible to read cover to cover; it is better to use as a resource to consult on specific issues. **Overall Rating: 93%**

- Craig S. Keener, Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul (Hendrickson 1992; 2004 reprint has a new Preface), 279 pages. Keener examines Paul's letters regarding issues of women in marriage and ministry brilliantly. Keener is a seminary professor who wrote many leading evangelical commentaries on New Testament books, including the excellent IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament. Keener is among evangelicalism's most articulate spokespersons and a staunch egalitarian! The 2004 edition has a helpful new preface covering developments since the 1992 edition. Keener is a must-read to explore Pauline passages on women in ministry and in the home. **Overall Rating: 92%**
- Carla Ricci, Mary Magdalene and Many Others: Women Who Followed Jesus (Fortress 1994), 195 pages. Ricci, an Italian Catholic, compares Matthew, Mark and Luke to convincingly show by comparisons that Gospel writers typically only describe the presence of women with Jesus if it is crucial to plot development. Ricci establishes that women were present with Jesus throughout His public ministry, not only when explicitly discussed. She gives a fascinating historical overview of Bible scholars' and commentators' fascination with Mary Magdalene and their failure to take seriously Luke 8.1-3. This book is an excellent comparison of each Synoptic Gospel's discussion of women. The biggest faux pas is the anachronistic analysis of Mary Magdalene's demonization. Otherwise, well worth reading. **Overall Rating 92%**
- N. T. Wright, Surprised by Scripture: Engaging Contemporary Issues (HarperOne 2014), 217 pages. The book engages many contemporary issues; chapter 4 'The Biblical Case for Ordaining Women' analyzes women-in-ministry. Not surprisingly he is egalitarian, though Wright feels Galatians 3.28 does *not* teach females can engage in ministry! He is in the minority on that, but Wright shows egalitarians need not rely on Galatians 3.28 because many other Scriptures support egalitarianism. His analysis of 1 Timothy 2.9-15 is brilliant, showing Paul's concern in the controversial passage is women should *learn*, a radical idea in the first century; that they should forever be silenced is not what the passage truly says. **Overall Rating: 91%**

- R. T. France, Women in the Church's Ministry: A Test-Case for Biblical Hermeneutics (Wipf & Stock 1995), 96 pages. This is out of print; get it used at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). France says the issue in debating gender roles is hermeneutics, not biblical authority, and brilliantly explains how the early church's grappling with Gentile inclusion in Acts 15 parallels how the church today should reassess past readings of Scripture regarding women. The book ends with a strong argument for women in ministry, with special attention to the author's Anglican roots. **Overall Rating: 90%**
- Ruth A. Tucker & Walter Liefeld, Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present (Zondervan 1987), 471 pages. Tucker & Liefeld examine roles women play in the New Testament, in the early church and in church history. Both authors contribute to How I Changed My Mind About Women in Ministry; this book covers female contributions to the church, many of them unknown to modern Christians. The analysis of the New Testament period and New Testament texts are excellent and show insightful egalitarian approach. The disadvantage is the book's length and the inability to connect with so many persons throughout church history; more of a niche book. **Overall Rating: 88%**

#### Advanced Reading (For Those with More Theological Background)

- Philip B. Payne, Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters (Zondervan 2009), 463 pages. Another 'must-own' for theological students, examining in detail all Pauline texts on women, in each case showing the superiority of egalitarian over complementarian approaches. Payne expands Gordon Fee's argument (in Fee's 1987 1 Corinthians commentary) that 1 Cor. 14-34-35 is a later interpolation not originally by Paul, showing in 45 pages it is likely an early scribal interpolation. This is one of the best egalitarian treatments of biblical texts in print. Payne's handling of 1 Tim. 2.8-15 is particularly masterful, especially the perplexing "women shall be saved through childbirth," noting the Greek contains a definite article, i.e., "the child-bearing," so Paul means not that women will be "saved/protected" in childbirth but rather will be "saved" by the saving birth of Messiah to a woman, Mary. **Overall Rating: 98%**
- Cynthia Long Westfall, Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ (Baker Academic 2016), 315 pages. Westfall gives a comprehensive, strong evangelical study on Paul's and gender with fascinatingly different approaches to some texts, like that Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 11 *in favor* of women who wish to wear veils in worship, not the usual idea that Corinthian women *refused* to wear veils. In ancient culture, many women felt *honored* by being veiled; the Corinthian problem perhaps arose as *men* prohibited some women from wearing veils in home-church worship, as Westfall discusses in detail antiquity's veiling practices. The chapter on 1

Timothy 2.8-15 argues the whole passage, including “women will be saved through childbirth,” applies *not* to home-church worship but to husband-wife relationships, so “women saved through childbirth” opposes false teaching that urged wives to refuse sex in marriage. I still prefer Payne’s approach, but the discussion on female fears of childbirth in antiquity is great. Her chapter on Ephesian 5.18-31 is the best I’ve seen by an evangelical, showing Paul reverses traditional gender expectations with surprising commands to husbands. Finally, she treats 1 Corinthians 14.33-35 as *not* an interpolation, showing even if Fee and Payne are wrong the text cannot be an absolute prohibition of women speaking. Overall, it is a wonderful book for those seeking understanding about Paul and his teaching. **Overall Rating: 97%**.

- Lucy Peppiatt, Women and Worship at Corinth: Paul’s Rhetorical Arguments in 1 Corinthians (Cascade 2015), 142 pages. Peppiatt’s book analyzes only 1 Corinthians 11.3-17 on women and hair coverings, a confusing text that confounds biblical scholars. Peppiatt gives a convincing explanation of Paul’s intent, concluding in 1 Cor. 11.4-10 Paul is quoting the Corinthians’ erroneous arguments back to them. Otherwise stated, 1 Cor. 11.4-5 and 7-9 may not be Paul’s advice to the Corinthians at all; he merely quotes their wrong-headed teaching back to them before giving his response in vv. 11-15. Peppiatt’s analysis makes better sense of this difficult passage than any other excursus I’ve seen. In the preface Dr. Peppiatt acknowledges the assistance of Simon Ponsenby, the Anglican vicar who is also a good friend of the Vineyard, for helping her reach her conclusions. **Overall Rating: 97%**
- Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Eerdmans 2002), 310 pages. By a first-rate evangelical scholar, a joy to read if you are patient with the detailed evidence from early church apocrypha and ancient inscriptions; you may want to skim some of it. But Chapter 5 on Joanna (Lk. 8.3) is a wonderfully convincing case that Joanna is actually Junia from Romans 16.7, and it is worth the entire book. Convincingly egalitarian, Bauckham leaves the reader convinced that Jesus’ approach explodes first century boundaries regarding women and their roles. The book’s length makes it somewhat tedious from time to time. **Overall Rating: 95%**
- Karen Jo Torjesen, When Women Were Priests: Women’s Leadership in the Early Church & the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity (Harper One 1993) 271 pages. Torjesen’s first two chapters are just okay, and her sympathies are not evangelical. But her analysis of first century cultural roles is detailed and outstanding and her discussion is brilliant on ancient views of ‘public-space’ vs. ‘private space’ in society and why they restricted women restricted from so-called public spaces. A must-read to understand the cultural background on first century ideas about gender roles. **Overall Rating: 93%**

- Kevin Giles, The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God & the Contemporary Gender Debate (InterVarsity 2002), 273 pages. Because of 1 Cor. 11.3, some complementarians say that as women are eternally subordinated to men, Christ must be eternally subordinated to the Father. Giles shows the Son's (supposed) eternal subordination to the Father is a heresy and one with a notorious history. Therefore, using 1 Cor.11.3 to teach the ontological subordination of women to men is wrong. Reviewing theological issues involving the Trinity, Giles gives an excellent overview of the entire egalitarian/complementarian debate. Giles' focus is largely on trinitarian theology, so the gender issues are often subordinated to that theological discussion. **Overall Rating: 91%**
- Bruce W. Winter, After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change (Eerdmans 2001) 301 pages. This book wonderfully summarizes the social and cultural setting of Paul's Corinthian letters. Winter examines female roles in the late 1st century B.C. and early 1st century A.D. and the Roman government's concern over women who flouted conventional norms and adopted loose sexual morals. The sociological context explains much of Paul's concern over women in 1 Corinthians. The analysis of 1 Corinthians 11 is exceptional! Also helpful is Bruce W. Winter, Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities (Eerdmans 2003), wherein Dr. Winter discusses in more depth these "new Roman women" and the social changes that led to Paul's comments on women in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. **Overall Rating: 90%**
- Willard M. Swartley, Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation (Herald Press 1983), 275 pages. Though somewhat dated, the book remains valuable in comparing hermeneutical approaches by pro- and anti-slavery exegetes with modern complementarians. Extensive summaries of biblical arguments made by 19<sup>th</sup> Century pro-slavery advocates show they eerily echo modern complementarians. Swartley's personal hermeneutical model is not ideal but his insightful critique of 1980's subordinationist literature is worth reading. He is more comfortable than I am saying that some New Testament texts are inconsistent with others, but his insightful analysis sides generally with egalitarianism. Discussions on the Sabbath and pacifism are also even-handed, showing the variety of hermeneutical approaches available to opposing positions. **Overall Rating: 85%**
- Greg W. Forbes and Scott D. Harrower, Raised From Obscurity: A Narratival and Theological Study of the Characterization of Women in Luke-Acts (Pickwick 2015), 219 pages. A bit tedious, this is a narratival commentary on all Luke-Acts. I'm not a big fan of narratival method (see Joel Green's commentary on the Gospel of Luke NICNT); but if you are, you'll like this book more than I did. The best part is the next to last chapter

on Priscilla, Chloe and Lydia in Acts; the last chapter summarizes the book and functions as a good reference. Strongly egalitarian, the problem (other than the almost exclusive focus on narrative method) is too much time spent on the unrelated materials in Luke-Acts. **Overall Rating: 80%**

- Derek Morphey, Different but Equal: Going Beyond the Complementarian/Egalitarian Debate (Vineyard International 2009), 185 pages. This book seeks a third way beyond complementarian or egalitarian positions. A brilliant scholar, Derek cautions not to accept feminist analyses that argue from monistic worldviews. The biblical exegesis is brilliant; Derek is a friend whom I greatly respect. However, I disagree with his claim that “there is male leadership before the fall in Genesis 2.” Furthermore, it seems to me he is unable to decide what to do in practice with “greater male responsibility.” This is a very helpful book. However, I disagree with his position of what to me seems to amount to “ultra-soft complementarianism” instead of egalitarianism. It is true there is little *practical* difference between egalitarianism and Derek’s ultra-soft complementarianism, (my title, not his). **Overall Rating: 80%**
- Patricia Cox Miller, Ed., Women in Early Christianity (Catholic University of America Press 2005), 321 pages. This book examines women in church ministry through the fifth century. Like Daughters of the Church but more detailed, the book extensively quotes original sources unfamiliar to modern Christians. A fascinating entry is *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, a mid-2nd century fiction about supposed interaction between Paul and a female disciple named Thecla written in Asia Minor. Though fictional, the story reveals the Asia Minor church’s early fascination with virginity and shows 2nd century Christians had no qualms with women (like the fictional Thecla) publicly preaching and teaching. **Overall Rating: 75%**
- Carolyn Osiek, Margaret Y. MacDonald with Janet H. Tulloch, A Women’s Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity (Fortress/Augsburg 2006), 250 pages. More detailed analysis of evidence for women’s leadership in the church’s earliest centuries. The authors are not evangelicals; their conclusions must be weighed carefully. In general, however, the book shows women welcomed house church meetings into their homes and exercised substantial authority over the meetings as patrons and hostesses, exploding the complementarian myth of passive women in the early church. **Overall Rating: 70%**
- Amy-Jill Levine, Ed., with Marianne Blickenstaff, A Feminist Companion to Paul (Pilgrim 2004), 193 pages. This book is a series of unrelated essays by feminist theologians, some very hostile to evangelicalism. Essay collections are often quite uneven in quality and lack any common thread; this one is no exception. Only 3 of these 10 essays are worth reading: Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “Our Mother Saint Paul, Toward the Recovery of a Neglected Theme” analyzes Paul’s use of maternal metaphors to

describe his ministry; Richard B. Hayes, “Paul on the Relation between Men and Women” reprint a chapter in his excellent book The Moral Vision of the New Testament; and Margaret Y. MacDonald, “Virgins, Widows and Wives: The Women of 1 Corinthians 7” analyzes precisely whom Paul is addressing in that chapter. There’s also an interesting essay by Kathleen E. Corley on women’s inheritance rights in the first century, but the rest of the book is tendentious and/or uninteresting. **Overall Rating: 35%.**