

## WOMEN IN THE CHURCH Part 2.

God, throughout the Old Testament, gave women rights and protected them but men chose to treat them as second class citizens. God used them as prophets and leaders and to save His people but men have systematically tried to suppress them since the beginning of time.

There may be some validity in their doing this in light of The Fall and some of the injunctions in the Old Testament but Jesus went to great lengths to raise the status of women to a place where all His people were equal and could become “all one in Christ”.

He seems to have deliberately chosen women to be the ones to announce most of His new initiatives. This is the role of a Prophet. Women were chosen to be the first to know He was coming (Mary), first to acknowledge Him (Elizabeth), second to announce Him (Anna), first miracle (Mary), first gentile to acknowledge Him and announce Him (Woman at the well), first missionary (woman at the well). The Marys were the first to know He had risen, first to announce His resurrection as well as many more.

We saw how in His interaction with Martha and Mary over the washing up, He “missed” the perfect opportunity to send Mary scuttling back to the kitchen to her role as a woman in subjection. Instead He used her to show Martha, and us if we listen, a “better way”.

But Scripture says “Women must remain silent and not usurp a man”. You can’t argue with that. The Bible is God’s word.

But the proof texts say

1Co\_14:34 Let your<sup>G5216</sup> women<sup>G1135</sup> keep silence<sup>G4601</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> churches:<sup>G1577</sup> for<sup>G1063</sup> it is not<sup>G3756</sup> permitted<sup>G2010</sup> unto them<sup>G846</sup> to speak;<sup>G2980</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> they are commanded to be under obedience,<sup>G5293</sup> as<sup>G2531</sup> also<sup>G2532</sup> saith<sup>G3004</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> law.<sup>G3551</sup>

1 Timothy 2:11 “Women must remain silent and not usurp a man”

and this speaks generally. Men over women in power, position and potential.

But.

We are supposed to be “all one in Christ”, all equals, each of us to “work out our OWN salvation, all sinners, all covered by His blood on the Cross. So if this is Christ’s model, why have women been treated so poorly for so long and still are in many places but more importantly, for us, the Church which seems to be the only place in our society that still supports this position.

Perhaps we can find an explanation, preferably a simple one to untangle this confusion.

## WORD STUDY

Our only source of guidelines for the Christian life, must be Scripture. We cannot incorporate the traditions of men even though it is so hard not to and most times we do this without actually realizing that we are doing that.

A word study can shed a new light on this issue, which in my opinion gives a logical balance to the situation. It is a bit boring but bear with me.

## WOMEN

A quick word study using the Greek word Strong's G1135, "*gune*" shows that "*gune*" appears 221 times in 200 verses in the New Testament. It is translated as follows:

"Wife"	76 times
"Wives"	12 times
"Woman"	84 times
"Women"	30 times

The same Greek word is used all the way, **only the translations differ.**

There are many times when it is obvious which English word should be chosen for the translation. In others, either woman or wife would make sense but the choice of word in translation changes the message, to us, dramatically.

In Matt 1:20 where the angel tells Joseph to take Mary as his "*gune*".

*Mat 1:20 And as he thought upon these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take to you Mary as your wife. For that in her is fathered of the Holy Spirit.*

The word could just as accurately be translated as "wife" or "woman", but to use "woman" would have cast Mary in a very adverse light of being less than a wife, perhaps a concubine. Here "wife" is the obvious translation

In the Matthew 19 regarding the divorce discourse, it is obvious that there can be no other translation but "wife", otherwise it does not make sense.

*Mat 19:3 Some Pharisees came to him in order to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?"*

*Mat 19:4 He answered them, "Haven't you read that the one who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female'*

***Mat 19:5 and said, 'That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?***

*Mat 19:6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must never separate."*

*Mat 19:7 They asked him, "Why, then, did Moses order us 'to give a certificate of divorce and divorce her'?"*

***Mat 19:8 He told them, "It was because of your hardness of heart that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives. But from the beginning it was not this way.***

***Mat 19:9 I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."***

In 1 Peter 3:1-2

**Likewise, wives, submit to your own husbands, so that if any do not obey the Word, they may also be won without the Word by the conduct of the wives,**

1Pe 3:5 For so once indeed the holy women hoping in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands;

The verse can just as accurately be translated as “women be in subjection to (their own) men” meaning all the males in their family.

It is absolutely clear that Peter is referring to the husband/wife relationship as he adds the words which are translated “own”. This forces the translation of the word “man” to be “husband” and no one, especially me, is questioning the hierarchical order of the marriage relationship.

## **MEN**

Let us do the same exercise on the word translated “man”.

This a bit more complicated. There are several words translated as “man/men/husband”.

## **No Noun Used**

In the Greek there are at least 40 cases where the word “the man” is used, no noun is actually in the text. Only the adjective is used. The “man” part is added in the translation. These examples include young (man), rich (man), good (man), blind (man), etc. What is translated as “the rich young man” could just as accurately have been translated as “a rich young woman”, like Joanna was.

Luk 8:2 and also certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven demons,  
Luk 8:3 and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered to Him of their possessions.

Obviously the context helps which word is chosen but the underlying assumption, based probably on tradition and mores of the society makes these people male. After all a woman would be at home barefoot and in the kitchen, wouldn't she?

## **“Anthropos”**

**G444** ἄνθρωπος anthrōpos *anth'-ro-pos*

The best translation of this word is “mankind”.

Many of our English words, which we use to apply to all people, are based on “anathropos” such as anthropology (the study of mankind), Anthropography, (study of the distribution of the language, customs, institutions of man), Anthropoid, resembling man; as in, the anthropoid ape, This word is used to cover all humans.

We grew up in a world where we used “man” and “woman” meaning specific people determined by the gender. But we also used “man”, to mean all of the people in the world or ever. The plural form (men) was also used as in “all men are created equal”. We understood that the term included women as well. It was confusing but we worked it out. Sometimes “man” was spelt with a capital M.

Political correctness has now insisted on “mankind” for the general term and “people” for the more intimate group and I think this is a positive thing and reduces a lot of confusion.

*Anthropos* appears 561 times in the New Testament and is translated

- “Man”

**Mat 4:4** But<sup>G1161</sup> he<sup>G3588</sup> answered<sup>G611</sup> and said,<sup>G2036</sup> It is written,<sup>G1125</sup> Man<sup>G444</sup> shall not<sup>G3756</sup> live<sup>G2198</sup> by<sup>G1909</sup> bread<sup>G740</sup> alone,<sup>G3441</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> by<sup>G1909</sup> every<sup>G3956</sup> word<sup>G4487</sup> that proceedeth<sup>G1607</sup> out of<sup>G1223</sup> the mouth<sup>G4750</sup> of God.<sup>G2316</sup>

- “Men”

**Mat 4:19** And<sup>G2532</sup> he saith<sup>G3004</sup> unto them,<sup>G846</sup> Follow<sup>G1205</sup> G<sup>3694</sup> me,<sup>G3450</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> I will make<sup>G4160</sup> you<sup>G5209</sup> fishers<sup>G231</sup> of men.<sup>G444</sup>

- “Man” as in “Son of Man”, all mankind.

**Mat 8:20** And<sup>G2532</sup> Jesus<sup>G2424</sup> saith<sup>G3004</sup> unto him,<sup>G846</sup> The<sup>G3588</sup> foxes<sup>G258</sup> have<sup>G2192</sup> holes,<sup>G5454</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> birds<sup>G4071</sup> of the<sup>G3588</sup> air<sup>G3772</sup> have nests;<sup>G2682</sup> but<sup>G1161</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> Son<sup>G5207</sup> of man<sup>G444</sup> hath<sup>G2192</sup> not<sup>G3756</sup> where<sup>G4226</sup> to lay<sup>G2827</sup> his head.<sup>G2776</sup>

A specific person, Matthew.

**Mat 9:9** And<sup>G2532</sup> as Jesus<sup>G2424</sup> passed forth<sup>G3855</sup> from thence,<sup>G1564</sup> he saw<sup>G1492</sup> a man,<sup>G444</sup> named<sup>G3004</sup> Matthew,<sup>G3156</sup> sitting<sup>G2521</sup> at<sup>G1909</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> receipt of custom:<sup>G5058</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> he saith<sup>G3004</sup> unto him,<sup>G846</sup> Follow<sup>G190</sup> me. And<sup>G2532</sup> he<sup>G3427</sup> arose,<sup>G450</sup> and followed<sup>G190</sup> him.<sup>G846</sup>

### **Women are included.**

Obviously we understand that in most cases the word means “mankind” which includes women. No one would consider claiming that the following verses refer to anything other than all mankind, men and women. We automatically make the mind-switch to the non-gender based concept.

**Mat 12:35** A good<sup>G18</sup> man<sup>G444</sup> out<sup>G1537</sup> of the<sup>G3588</sup> good<sup>G18</sup> treasure<sup>G2344</sup> of the<sup>G3588</sup> heart<sup>G2588</sup> bringeth forth<sup>G1544</sup> good things:<sup>G18</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> an evil<sup>G4190</sup> man<sup>G444</sup> out of<sup>G1537</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> evil<sup>G4190</sup> treasure<sup>G2344</sup> bringeth forth<sup>G1544</sup> evil things.<sup>G4190</sup>

**Mat 12:36** But<sup>G1161</sup> I say<sup>G3004</sup> unto you,<sup>G5213</sup> That<sup>G3754</sup> every<sup>G3956</sup> idle<sup>G692</sup> word<sup>G4487</sup> that<sup>G3739</sup> G<sup>1437</sup> men<sup>G444</sup> shall speak,<sup>G2980</sup> they shall give<sup>G591</sup> account<sup>G3056</sup> thereof<sup>G4012</sup> G<sup>846</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> the day<sup>G2250</sup> of judgment.<sup>G2920</sup>

No right-minded person would claim that women would not have to give an account of every word or not have treasures in their heart. The choice of word in translation is obvious and we just know that the word here means all people, ie mankind.

### **Road To Emmaus**

We all know the story of the two disciples walking home after the Crucifixion. Again, there is no literary evidence that the two “disciples” on their way to Emmaus were both men as we have traditionally accepted.

Luk 24:13 On the same day, two of Jesus' followers were walking to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

Luk 24:14 They were talking with each other about all these things that had taken place.

Luk 24:15 While they were discussing and analyzing what had happened, Jesus himself approached and began to walk with them,

Luk 24:16 but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

Luk 24:17 He asked them, "What are you discussing with each other as you're walking along?" They stood still and looked gloomy.

Luk 24:18 The one whose name was Cleopas answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know what happened there in the past few days?"

Luk 24:19 He asked them, "What things?" They answered him, "The events involving Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in what he said and did before God and all the people,

Luk 24:20 and how our high priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and had him crucified.

Luk 24:21 But we kept hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel. What is more, this is now the third day since these things occurred.

Luk 24:22 Even some of our women have startled us by what they told us. They were at the tomb early this morning

Luk 24:23 and didn't find his body there, so they came back and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who were saying that he was alive.

Luk 24:24 Then some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. However, they didn't see him."

Luk 24:25 Then Jesus told them, "O, how foolish you are! How slow you are to believe everything the prophets said!

Luk 24:26 The Messiah had to suffer these things and then enter his glory, didn't he?"

Luk 24:27 Then, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them all the passages of Scripture about himself.

Luk 24:28 As they came near the village where the two men were headed, Jesus acted as though he were going farther.

Luk 24:29 But they strongly urged him, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the daylight is nearly gone." So he went in to stay with them.

Luk 24:30 While he was at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it in pieces, and gave it to them.

Luk 24:31 Then their eyes were opened, and they knew who he was. And he vanished from them.

We know that one was Cleopas but where does it say the other was a man? I think it is more likely that this person was his wife Mary?

**Joh 19:25 And His mother stood by the cross of Jesus, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.**

She was a very strong disciple who supported Jesus financially and travelled with Him and they did stay in the same house in Emmaus that night. The choice of word makes little difference to the message of the cameo. But the fact that they were actively discussing the events as equals, does make an enormous difference to our perception of the role of women.

There is the underlying traditional assumption that they were both men but there is no basis for this. Maybe this is because they were debating the events they had just witnessed and women are obviously not capable of doing this. But Cleopas' wife was at the foot of the cross when He died and would probably have known more about the incidents than Cleopas himself would have. Women do tend to remember more details and understand things better after the initial stress of an event has passed.

We unwittingly carry this traditional concept that they were both men without even thinking about it.

**“Aner”**

Now the important word for this study is G435 “*aner*” which is translated man/men/husband/husbands, fellow, sir, sirs and so is “equivalent” to G1135 “*gune*”.

G435 “*aner*” appears 215 times and is translated as follows:

Man	77
Men	79
Husband	39
Husbands	12
Sirs	6
Fellows	1

Both *gune* and *aner* refer to individual people, male and female.

**The word is generic and is the single word used in the Greek. The only difference is the choice of English word in the translation**

Mat 1:19 Then<sup>G1161</sup> Joseph<sup>G2501</sup> her<sup>G846</sup> husband,<sup>G435</sup> being<sup>G5607</sup> a just<sup>G1342</sup> man, and<sup>G2532</sup> not<sup>G3361</sup> willing<sup>G2309</sup> to make her a public example,<sup>G3856 G846</sup> was minded<sup>G1014</sup> to put her away<sup>G630 G846</sup> privily.<sup>G2977</sup>

Mat 7:24 Therefore<sup>G3767</sup> whosoever<sup>G3956 G3748</sup> heareth<sup>G191</sup> these<sup>G5128</sup> sayings<sup>G3056</sup> of mine,<sup>G3450</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> doeth<sup>G4160</sup> them,<sup>G846</sup> I will liken<sup>G3666</sup> him<sup>G846</sup> unto a wise<sup>G5429</sup> man,<sup>G435</sup> which<sup>G3748</sup> built<sup>G3618</sup> his<sup>G848</sup> house<sup>G3614</sup> upon<sup>G1909</sup> a rock:<sup>G4073</sup>

Mat 14:21 And<sup>G1161</sup> they that had eaten<sup>G2068</sup> were<sup>G2258</sup> about<sup>G5616</sup> five thousand<sup>G4000</sup> men,<sup>G435</sup> beside<sup>G5565</sup> women<sup>G1135</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> children.<sup>G3813</sup>

**Joh 4:18** For<sup>G1063</sup> thou hast had<sup>G2192</sup> five<sup>G4002</sup> **husbands;**<sup>G435</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> he  
 whom<sup>G3739</sup> thou now<sup>G3568</sup> hast<sup>G2192</sup> is<sup>G2076</sup> not<sup>G3756</sup> thy<sup>G4675</sup> husband:<sup>G435</sup> in  
 that<sup>G5124</sup> saidst<sup>G2046</sup> thou truly.<sup>G227</sup>

Throughout the Gospels and Acts, it is quite obvious how “aner” should be translated.

## PAUL’S WRITINGS

So we are left with the writings of Paul.

This is where this dichotomy seems to arise and where our proof-texts are found. Not only must we examine these verses within the same parameters as the Gospels but also within the context of the society of the day where, prior to Christ, women were in a place of subservience.

As we have seen, the word for woman, G1135 or gune, can be translated woman, women, wife, wives. One must operate on the basis that we can assume that the people involved were not “living in sin” and were actually married or were single, widowed or divorced.

## HUSBAND/ WIFE

Again, most contexts make this translation choice obvious and the word “wife” or “husband” is used.

**Rom 7:2 For a married woman (gune) is bound by the Law to her husband (aner) while he is living, but if her husband (aner) dies, she is released from the Law concerning her husband (aner).**

1Co 5:1 It is actually reported that sexual immorality exists among you, and of a kind that is not found even among the gentiles. A man is actually living with his father's wife (aner)!

## MAN/HUSBAND – WOMAN/WIFE

In some cases, the same Greek word is used but translated differently. Here the sense is obvious as to which word is to be used

**1Co 7:1 Now about what you asked: "Is it advisable for a man (aner) not to marry?"**

**1Co 7:2 Because sexual immorality is so rampant, every man (aner) should have his own wife( gune), and every woman should have her own husband (aner).**

1Co 7:3 A husband(aner) should fulfil his obligation to his wife, and a wife should do the same for her husband.

1Co 7:4 A wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband doesn't have authority over his own body, but his wife does.

**1Co 7:10 To married people I give this command (not really I, but the Lord): A wife must not leave her husband. (gune and aner)**

1Co 7:11 But if she does leave him, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. Likewise, a husband must not abandon his wife.

1Co 7:12 I (not the Lord) say to the rest of you: If a brother has a wife who is an unbeliever and she is willing to live with him, he must not abandon her.  
1Co 7:13 And if a woman has a husband who is an unbeliever and he is willing to live with her, she must not abandon him.  
1Co 7:14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified because of her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.  
1Co 7:15 But if the unbelieving partner leaves, let him go. In such cases the brother or sister is not under obligation. God has called you to live in peace.  
1Co 7:16 Wife, you might be able to save your husband. Husband, you might be able to save your wife.

**1Co 9:5 We have the right to take a believing wife with us like the other apostles, the Lord's brothers, and Cephas, don't we?**

**Eph 5:22 Wives(gune), submit yourselves to your own husband (aner) as to the Lord.**

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of his wife as the Messiah is the head of the church. It is he who is the Saviour of the body.

**Col 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is appropriate for those who belong to the Lord.**

**Col 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.**

1Ti 5:9 A widow may be put on the widows' list if she is at least sixty years old and has been the wife of one husband.

Tit 1:6 An elder must be blameless. He must be the husband of one wife and have children who are believers and who are not accused of having wild lifestyles or of being rebellious.

1Pe 3:5 After all, this is how holy women who set their hope on God used to make themselves beautiful in the past. They submitted themselves to their husbands,

## **HUSBAND/MAN**

In the following pivotal verse, which is the truth text for male domination over female

**1Co 11:3 Now I want you to realize that the Messiah is the head of every man, and man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of the Messiah.**

Can just as accurately translated

**Messiah is head of every man and the husband the head of the wife, and God is the head of the Messiah**

We will come back to this later.

## **INFLUENCE OF CUSTOMS OF THE TIME**

But then Paul goes on to talk about head covering and hair styles, all of which use gune and are translated women. This is understandable as covering the head of women was the custom of the time.

Paul uses this custom, and he admits that it is a custom of that time, to show the hierarchy of male and female. The translators use the word “Men” and “women”, quite accurate grammatically, but this choice of words conveys that all women are under domination/control by all men.

**1Co 11:4 Every man who prays or prophesies with something on his head dishonours his head,**

**1Co 11:5 and every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head, which is the same as having her head shaved.**

1Co 11:6 So if a woman does not cover her head, she should cut off her hair. If it is a disgrace for a woman to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her own head.

1Co 11:7 A man should not cover his head, because he exists as God's image and glory. But the woman is man's glory.

**1Co 11:13 Decide for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?**

**1Co 11:14 Nature itself teaches you neither that it is disgraceful for a man to have long hair**

**1Co 11:15 nor that hair is a woman's glory, since hair is given as a substitute for coverings.**

Paul admits that this argument is based on a custom of their times.

**1Co 11:16 But if anyone wants to argue about this, we do not have any custom like this, nor do any of God's churches.**

## WOMEN'S FASHIONS

Paul asks in verse 13, “Is it comely for a woman to pray unto God with her head uncovered?”

Well, in their society it was not comely. This still applies in those societies living in that region (if women are actually allowed to pray) but it doesn't really work for our society. We don't have any problems with that now. No woman in our society has her head covered unless she is on the beach or at the races.

Is it a shame in our society for a woman to be shorn as it was then? Well, no. In fact it can be very fashionable and many choose to do it in solidarity with those who are facing chemotherapy. So this section applies totally within the context of the society of Paul's day.

## MEN'S HAIR

In verse 14, Paul asks “Does not “nature” itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame to him?”

Well, no actually it doesn't. That was what they thought in their time but we know now that “nature” actually shows the opposite. The male of the species has the long

hair for courtship display and the female is drab. Consider lions, roosters etc. Even men in their natural state before the hair removal of today, have much more hair than women. Nature does not teach that women should have long hair. The tradition and custom of Paul's time taught that men should have short hair and women should have long hair, and it should be covered as a token of her submission.

I certainly think that women should dress and behave modestly within the mores of their society, especially in church but I see this as an expression of her respect for Christ, His values and an expression of her righteousness and how she expresses herself in Christ. It is not the product of the customs of society. She is also showing respect for her husband. She chooses to do this because of respect for others and herself but it doesn't need to involve covering the head.

## WOMEN MUST KEEP SILENT

We are told that women must keep silent in church

**1Co 14:34** Let your<sup>G5216</sup> women<sup>G1135</sup> keep silence<sup>G4601</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> churches:<sup>G1577</sup> for<sup>G1063</sup> it is not<sup>G3756</sup> permitted<sup>G2010</sup> unto them<sup>G846</sup> to speak;<sup>G2980</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> they are commanded to be under obedience,<sup>G5293</sup> as<sup>G2531</sup> also<sup>G2532</sup> saith<sup>G3004</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> law.<sup>G3551</sup>  
**1Co 14:35** And<sup>G1161</sup> if<sup>G1487</sup> they will<sup>G2309</sup> learn<sup>G3129</sup> any thing,<sup>G5100</sup> let them ask<sup>G1905</sup> their<sup>G2398</sup> husbands<sup>G435</sup> at<sup>G1722</sup> home:<sup>G3624</sup> for<sup>G1063</sup> it is<sup>G2076</sup> a shame<sup>G149</sup> for women<sup>G1135</sup> to speak<sup>G2980</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> the church.<sup>G1577</sup>

**1Ti 2:11** Let the woman<sup>G1135</sup> learn<sup>G3129</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> silence<sup>G2271</sup> with<sup>G1722</sup> all<sup>G3956</sup> subjection.<sup>G5292</sup>

How can one argue with this?

## WORD STUDY

**1Co 14:34** Let your<sup>G5216</sup> women<sup>G1135</sup> keep silence<sup>G4601</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> churches:<sup>G1577</sup> for<sup>G1063</sup> it is not<sup>G3756</sup> permitted<sup>G2010</sup> unto them<sup>G846</sup> to speak;<sup>G2980</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> they are commanded to be under obedience,<sup>G5293</sup> as<sup>G2531</sup> also<sup>G2532</sup> saith<sup>G3004</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> law.<sup>G3551</sup>

**G4601**, **σιγάω**, sigao̅, see-gah'-o

From **G4602**; to *keep silent* (transitive or intransitive): - keep close (secret, silence), hold peace.

Luk\_9:36 And<sup>G2532</sup> when the<sup>G3588</sup> voice<sup>G5456</sup> was past,<sup>G1096</sup> Jesus<sup>G2424</sup> was found<sup>G2147</sup> alone.<sup>G3441</sup> And<sup>G2532</sup> they<sup>G846</sup> kept it close,<sup>G4601</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> told<sup>G518</sup> no man<sup>G3762</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> those<sup>G1565</sup> days<sup>G2250</sup> any of those things<sup>G3762</sup> which<sup>G3739</sup> they had seen.<sup>G3708</sup>

Luk\_20:26 And<sup>G2532</sup> they could<sup>G2480</sup> not<sup>G3756</sup> take hold<sup>G1949</sup> of his<sup>G846</sup> words<sup>G4487</sup> before<sup>G1726</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> people.<sup>G2992</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> they marvelled<sup>G2296</sup> at<sup>G1909</sup> his<sup>G846</sup> answer,<sup>G612</sup> and held their peace.<sup>G4601</sup>

Rom\_16:25 Now<sup>G1161</sup> to him that is of power<sup>G1410</sup> to stablish<sup>G4741</sup> you<sup>G5209</sup> according<sup>G2596</sup> to my<sup>G3450</sup> gospel,<sup>G2098</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> preaching<sup>G2782</sup> of Jesus<sup>G2424</sup> Christ,<sup>G5547</sup> according<sup>G2596</sup> to the revelation<sup>G602</sup> of the mystery,<sup>G3466</sup> **which was kept secret<sup>G4601</sup>** since the world began,<sup>G5550 G166</sup>

Again this word is used in other places with a gentler meaning

Act 15:12 Then<sup>G1161</sup> all<sup>G3956</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> multitude<sup>G4128</sup> **kept silence,**<sup>G4601</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> gave audience<sup>G191</sup> to Barnabas<sup>G921</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> Paul,<sup>G3972</sup> declaring<sup>G1834</sup> what<sup>G3745</sup> miracles<sup>G4592</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> wonders<sup>G5059</sup> God<sup>G2316</sup> had wrought<sup>G4160</sup> among<sup>G1722</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> Gentiles<sup>G1484</sup> by<sup>G1223</sup> them.<sup>G846</sup>  
Act 15:13 And<sup>G1161</sup> after they<sup>G846</sup> **had held their peace,**<sup>G4601</sup> James<sup>G2385</sup> answered,<sup>G611</sup> saying,<sup>G3004</sup> Men<sup>G435</sup> and brethren,<sup>G80</sup> hearken<sup>G191</sup> unto me:<sup>G3450</sup>

Speaking in tongues without an interpreter,

1Co 14:28 But<sup>G1161</sup> if<sup>G1437</sup> there be<sup>G5600</sup> no<sup>G3361</sup> interpreter,<sup>G1328</sup> **let him keep silence<sup>G4601</sup>** in<sup>G1722</sup> the church;<sup>G1577</sup> and<sup>G1161</sup> let him speak<sup>G2980</sup> to himself,<sup>G1438</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> to God.<sup>G2316</sup>

Prophecy was managed in an hierarchical way with one submitting to another to not speak in order to maintain order.

1Co 14:30 <sup>(G1161)</sup> If<sup>G1437</sup> *any thing* be revealed<sup>G601</sup> to another<sup>G243</sup> that sitteth by,<sup>G2521</sup> let **the<sup>G3588</sup> first<sup>G4413</sup> hold his peace.**<sup>G4601</sup>

This word is used simply means “keep quiet in order to listen or retain order, either at a public gathering or in Church. We can just as accurately use the translation “hold her peace in deference” instead of “in silence with all subjection”, where the words take on a totally different concept. One conveys subjection and dominance and belittling. The other conveys respect and submission and unity and acceptance in love.

Same word. Different translation.

## SO WHAT WAS HAPPENING

So why would Paul have to write this? Why is Paul telling women to shut up?

Well, there could be several reasons.

## GOSSIP

Maybe they were just gossiping among themselves and creating noise.

In the past, they had attended Temple but were not allowed in the Inner courts and certainly had no voice. They could not take part in the service as they may be unclean or just dumb. So they would just gossip, as women do, while they waited for their men to offer the sacrifice for them.

They were not allowed to participate in any study of the Torah, which was the only Scripture for 20-30 years until the New Testament was written and so had no way of

understanding what was going on. Obviously this would change but initially this was a real problem for them.

I should imagine they carried this custom of not participating onto the Church situation and gossiped among themselves either from behind the partition that separated them or within the congregation depending on the format of the place of worship.

Of course this would be disruptive and not acceptable in any society,

### **FREEDOM FOR WOMEN**

A second reason is that they may have revelled in their new-found freedom and wanted to participate in the debates and learning. They did not have the Four-Hymn-Sandwich with a sermon that we do. Learning was “at the feet of” a Master, just as Paul did with Gamaliel, Mary did with Jesus and Jesus did with the elders when He was twelve.

The debate was rigorous and the women would have had a different aspect and perception of what Jesus was telling them from the men. They probably needed a lot of stuff to be explained and maybe the women who had travelled with Him and been at His death and resurrection, probably had a different perspective to add. Jesus message was based on sacrifice and forgiveness, primarily feminine characteristics. The Law versus Love debate, discussed so strongly in Romans, is based on this new emerging teaching. As babes in Christ, they would not be hobbled with the traditions of the sages and could have had a simpler, clearer vision of what Christ was trying to teach.

But order needs to be retained by both genders, especially in God’s people and in services.

### **OVER-EXERCISING THEIR NEW GIFTS?**

Maybe the women were being enthusiastic in the exercise of their new gifts which is understandable. This, of course, must be done in an orderly fashion. It is interesting that the passage ordering women to be” silent” comes immediately after the instructions about order in the church services, the love chapter and how to manage the gifts and the hierarchy of the gifts.

### **SUBJECT TO MEN**

Not only must women keep quiet but they “are commanded to be under obedience as also says the law”. 1 Corinthians 14:34 tell us this

1Co 14:34 Let your<sup>G5216</sup> women<sup>G1135</sup> keep silence<sup>G4601</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> churches:<sup>G1577</sup> for<sup>G1063</sup> it is not<sup>G3756</sup> permitted<sup>G2010</sup> unto them<sup>G846</sup> to speak;<sup>G2980</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> *they are commanded to be under obedience,*<sup>G5293</sup> as<sup>G2531</sup> also<sup>G2532</sup> saith<sup>G3004</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> law.<sup>G3551</sup>

The first thing to note is that the phrase “they are commanded to” is totally added and this is obvious as the words are in italics

At least the ISV inserts “Oral Law” because by the time this translation came out, they realised that there was nothing in God’s Law to shut women up.

(ISV) the women must keep silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak out, but must place themselves in submission, as the oral law also says.

Even the good News Bible tell us

(GNB) the women should keep quiet in the meetings. They are not allowed to speak; as the Jewish Law says, they must not be in charge.

Each version tackles this controversial passage in a different way so why should I not have a go!!

The word used is **G5293** ὑποτάσσω *hupotassō* *hoop-ot-as'-so*

From **G5259** and **G5021**; to *subordinate*; reflexively to *obey*: - be under obedience (obedient), put under, subdue unto, (be, make) subject (to, unto), be (put) in subjection (to, under), submit self unto.

And is used 40 times.

The choice of the word in the English translation seems quite arbitrary and I guess one could do a study on this to discern subtle differences depending on who is doing the subjecting and the submitting.

## SUBJECT TO

Is used

- when Jesus “was subject to” His parents.

Luk\_2:51 And<sup>G2532</sup> he went down<sup>G2597</sup> with<sup>G3326</sup> them,<sup>G846</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> came<sup>G2064</sup> to<sup>G1519</sup> Nazareth,<sup>G3478</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> was<sup>G2258</sup> subject unto<sup>G5293</sup> them:<sup>G846</sup> but<sup>G2532</sup> his<sup>G846</sup> mother<sup>G3384</sup> kept<sup>G1301</sup> all<sup>G3956</sup> these<sup>G5023</sup> sayings<sup>G4487</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> her<sup>G848</sup> heart.<sup>G2588</sup>

- Demons were under the power of the disciples.

Luk\_10:17 And<sup>G1161</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> seventy<sup>G1440</sup> returned again<sup>G5290</sup> with<sup>G3326</sup> joy,<sup>G5479</sup> saying,<sup>G3004</sup> Lord,<sup>G2962</sup> even<sup>G2532</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> devils<sup>G1140</sup> are subject unto<sup>G5293</sup> us<sup>G2254</sup> through<sup>G1722</sup> thy<sup>G4675</sup> name.<sup>G3686</sup>

Luk\_10:20 Notwithstanding<sup>G4133</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> this<sup>G5129</sup> rejoice<sup>G5463</sup> not,<sup>G3361</sup> that<sup>G3754</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> spirits<sup>G4151</sup> are subject<sup>G5293</sup> unto you;<sup>G5213</sup> but<sup>G1161</sup> rather<sup>G3123</sup> rejoice,<sup>G5463</sup> because<sup>G3754</sup> your<sup>G5216</sup> names<sup>G3686</sup> are written<sup>G1125</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> heaven.<sup>G3772</sup>

- Humanity subject to dark side

Rom\_8:7 Because<sup>G1360</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> carnal<sup>G4561</sup> mind<sup>G5427</sup> is enmity<sup>G2189</sup> against<sup>G1519</sup> God:<sup>G2316</sup> for<sup>G1063</sup> it is not subject<sup>G5293</sup><sup>G3756</sup> to the<sup>G3588</sup> law<sup>G3551</sup> of God,<sup>G2316</sup> neither<sup>G3761</sup> indeed<sup>G1063</sup> can<sup>G1410</sup> be.

Rom\_8:20 For<sup>G1063</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> creature<sup>G2937</sup> was made subject<sup>G5293</sup> to vanity,<sup>G3153</sup> not<sup>G3756</sup> willingly,<sup>G1635</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> by reason of<sup>G1223</sup> him who hath subjected<sup>G5293</sup> *the same* in<sup>G1909</sup> hope,<sup>G1680</sup>

- Subject to God

Rom\_13:1 Let every<sup>G3956</sup> soul<sup>G5590</sup> be subject<sup>G5293</sup> unto the higher<sup>G5242</sup> powers.<sup>G1849</sup> For<sup>G1063</sup> there is<sup>G2076</sup> no<sup>G3756</sup> power<sup>G1849</sup> but<sup>G1508</sup> of<sup>G575</sup> God:<sup>G2316</sup> (G1161) the<sup>G3588</sup> powers<sup>G1849</sup> that be<sup>G5607</sup> are<sup>G1526</sup> ordained<sup>G5021</sup> of<sup>G5259</sup> God.<sup>G2316</sup>

Rom\_13:5 Wherefore<sup>G1352</sup> *ye* must needs<sup>G318</sup> be subject,<sup>G5293</sup> not<sup>G3756</sup> only<sup>G3440</sup> for<sup>G1223</sup> wrath,<sup>G3709</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> also<sup>G2532</sup> for conscience sake.<sup>G1223</sup> G4893

Heb\_12:9 Furthermore<sup>G1534</sup> we have had<sup>G2192</sup> fathers<sup>G3962</sup> of our<sup>G2257</sup> flesh<sup>G4561</sup> which corrected<sup>(G3810)</sup> *us*, and<sup>G2532</sup> we gave *them* reverence:<sup>G1788</sup> shall we not<sup>G3756</sup> much<sup>G4183</sup> rather<sup>G3123</sup> be in subjection<sup>G5293</sup> unto the<sup>G3588</sup> Father<sup>G3962</sup> of spirits,<sup>G4151</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> live?<sup>G2198</sup>

- Subject to Christ

Eph\_5:24 Therefore<sup>G235</sup> as<sup>G5618</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> church<sup>G1577</sup> is subject unto<sup>G5293</sup> Christ,<sup>G5547</sup> so<sup>G3779</sup> *let* the<sup>G3588</sup> wives<sup>G1135</sup> *be* to their own<sup>G2398</sup> husbands<sup>G435</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> every thing.<sup>G3956</sup>

- Subject to laws of the land

Tit\_3:1 Put them in mind<sup>G5279</sup> G846 to be subject<sup>G5293</sup> to principalities<sup>G746</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> powers,<sup>G1849</sup> to obey magistrates,<sup>G3980</sup> to be<sup>G1511</sup> ready<sup>G2092</sup> to<sup>G4314</sup> every<sup>G3956</sup> good<sup>G18</sup> work,<sup>G2041</sup>

- Whole world subject to God

Heb\_2:5 For<sup>G1063</sup> unto the angels<sup>G32</sup> hath he not<sup>G3756</sup> put in subjection<sup>G5293</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> world<sup>G3625</sup> to come,<sup>G3195</sup> whereof<sup>G4012</sup> G3739 we speak.<sup>G2980</sup>

Heb\_2:8 Thou hast put all things in subjection<sup>G5293</sup> G3956 under<sup>G5270</sup> his<sup>G846</sup> feet.<sup>G4228</sup> For<sup>G1063</sup> in that he put all in subjection under<sup>G5293</sup> G3956 him,<sup>G846</sup> he left<sup>G863</sup> nothing<sup>G3762</sup> *that is* not put under<sup>G506</sup> him.<sup>G846</sup> But<sup>G1161</sup> now<sup>G3568</sup> we see<sup>G3708</sup> not yet<sup>G3768</sup> all things<sup>G3956</sup> put under<sup>G5293</sup> him.<sup>G846</sup>

- Servants under masters

1Pe\_2:18 Servants,<sup>G3610</sup> *be* subject to<sup>G5293</sup> *your* masters<sup>G1203</sup> with<sup>G1722</sup> all<sup>G3956</sup> fear;<sup>G5401</sup> not<sup>G3756</sup> only<sup>G3440</sup> to the<sup>G3588</sup> good<sup>G18</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> gentle,<sup>G1933</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> also<sup>G2532</sup> to the<sup>G3588</sup> froward.<sup>G4646</sup>

- Wives under husbands

1Pe\_3:1 Likewise,<sup>G3668</sup> *ye* wives,<sup>G1135</sup> *be* in subjection<sup>G5293</sup> to your own<sup>G2398</sup> husbands;<sup>G435</sup> that,<sup>G2443</sup> if any<sup>G1536</sup> obey not<sup>G544</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> word,<sup>G3056</sup> they also<sup>G2532</sup> may without<sup>G427</sup> the word<sup>G3056</sup> be won<sup>G2770</sup> by<sup>G1223</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> conversation<sup>G391</sup> of the<sup>G3588</sup> wives;<sup>G1135</sup>

1Pe\_3:5 For<sup>G1063</sup> after this manner<sup>G3779</sup> in the old time<sup>G4218</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> holy<sup>G40</sup> women<sup>G1135</sup> also,<sup>G2532</sup> who trusted<sup>G1679</sup> in<sup>G1909</sup> God,<sup>G2316</sup> adorned<sup>G2885</sup> themselves,<sup>G1438</sup> being in subjection<sup>G5293</sup> unto their own<sup>G2398</sup> husbands:<sup>G435</sup>

1Pe\_3:22 Who<sup>G3739</sup> is gone<sup>G4198</sup> into<sup>G1519</sup> heaven,<sup>G3772</sup> and is<sup>G2076</sup> on<sup>G1722</sup> the right hand<sup>G1188</sup> of God,<sup>G2316</sup> angels<sup>G32</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> authorities<sup>G1849</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> powers<sup>G1411</sup> being made subject unto<sup>G5293</sup> him.<sup>G846</sup>

## SUBMISSION

- Submitting to one another in the Church  
1Co\_16:16 That<sup>G2443 (G2532)</sup> ye<sup>G5210</sup> submit yourselves unto<sup>G5293</sup> such,<sup>G5108</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> to every one<sup>G3956</sup> that helpeth with<sup>G4903</sup> us, and<sup>G2532</sup> laboureth.<sup>G2872</sup>
- Wives to husbands  
Eph\_5:21 Submitting yourselves<sup>G5293</sup> one to another<sup>G240</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> the fear<sup>G5401</sup> of God.<sup>G2316</sup>  
Eph\_5:22 Wives,<sup>G1135</sup> submit yourselves<sup>G5293</sup> unto your own<sup>G2398</sup> husbands,<sup>G435</sup> as<sup>G5613</sup> unto the<sup>G3588</sup> Lord.<sup>G2962</sup>  
Col\_3:18 Wives,<sup>G1135</sup> submit yourselves<sup>G5293</sup> unto your own<sup>G2398</sup> husbands,<sup>G435</sup> as<sup>G5613</sup> it is fit<sup>G433</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> the Lord.<sup>G2962</sup>
- Submit to God  
Jas\_4:7 Submit<sup>G5293</sup> yourselves therefore<sup>G3767</sup> to God.<sup>G2316</sup> Resist<sup>G436</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> devil,<sup>G1228</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> he will flee<sup>G5343</sup> from<sup>G575</sup> you.<sup>G5216</sup>
- Laws of the land  
1Pe\_2:13 Submit yourselves<sup>G5293</sup> to<sup>(G3767)</sup> every<sup>G3956</sup> ordinance<sup>G2937</sup> of man<sup>G442</sup> for the Lord's sake:<sup>G1223 G3588 G2962</sup> whether<sup>G1535</sup> it be to the king,<sup>G935</sup> as<sup>G5613</sup> supreme;<sup>G5242</sup>

## OBEDIENT

- Women to men  
1Co\_14:34 Let your<sup>G5216</sup> women<sup>G1135</sup> keep silence<sup>G4601</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> churches:<sup>G1577</sup> for<sup>G1063</sup> it is not<sup>G3756</sup> permitted<sup>G2010</sup> unto them<sup>G846</sup> to speak;<sup>G2980</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> *they are commanded* to be under obedience,<sup>G5293</sup> as<sup>G2531</sup> also<sup>G2532</sup> saith<sup>G3004</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> law.<sup>G3551</sup>
- Wives to husbands  
Tit\_2:5 *To be* discreet,<sup>G4998</sup> chaste,<sup>G53</sup> keepers at home,<sup>G3626</sup> good,<sup>G18</sup> obedient<sup>G5293</sup> to their own<sup>G2398</sup> husbands,<sup>G435</sup> that<sup>G2443</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> word<sup>G3056</sup> of God<sup>G2316</sup> be not<sup>G3361</sup> blasphemed.<sup>G987</sup>
- Servants to masters  
Tit\_2:9 *Exhort* servants<sup>G1401</sup> to be obedient<sup>G5293</sup> unto their own<sup>G2398</sup> masters,<sup>G1203</sup> and<sup>(G1511)</sup> to please *them* well<sup>G2101</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> all<sup>G3956</sup> things; not<sup>G3361</sup> answering again;<sup>G483</sup>

## PUT UNDER

- God over creation  
1Co\_15:27 For<sup>G1063</sup> he hath put<sup>G5293</sup> all things<sup>G3956</sup> under<sup>G5259</sup> his<sup>G848</sup> feet.<sup>G4228</sup> But<sup>G1161</sup> when<sup>G3752</sup> he saith<sup>G2036 (G3754)</sup> all things<sup>G3956</sup> are put under<sup>G5293</sup> *him, it is* manifest<sup>G1212</sup> that<sup>G3754</sup> he is excepted,<sup>G1622</sup> which did put all things under<sup>G5293</sup> him.<sup>G846</sup>  
Eph\_1:22 And<sup>G2532</sup> hath put<sup>G5293</sup> all<sup>G3956</sup> things under<sup>G5259</sup> his<sup>G846</sup> feet,<sup>G4228</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> gave<sup>G1325</sup> him<sup>G846</sup> *to be* the head<sup>G2776</sup> over<sup>G5228</sup> all<sup>G3956</sup> things to the<sup>G3588</sup> church,<sup>G1577</sup>

Php\_3:21 Who<sup>G3739</sup> shall change<sup>G3345</sup> our<sup>G2257</sup> vile<sup>G5014</sup> body,<sup>G4983</sup> that it<sup>G846</sup> may be fashioned<sup>G1096</sup> like unto<sup>G4832</sup> his<sup>G846</sup> glorious<sup>G1391</sup> body,<sup>G4983</sup> according<sup>G2596</sup> to the<sup>G3588</sup> working<sup>G1753</sup> whereby<sup>G3588</sup> he<sup>G846</sup> is able<sup>G1410</sup> even<sup>G2532</sup> to subdue<sup>G5293</sup> all things<sup>G3956</sup> unto himself.<sup>G1438</sup>

So we have an apparent mess of different translations of the same Greek word, the choice of which influences our perceptions of the concept depending on the circumstance.

All are accurate translations, but who decides which one to use? It seems to me that as soon as male/ female role is introduced, the choice of words used in the translation changes from 'submit' to be "in subject to" which puts an emphasis on a traditional picture of male dominance of female.

### **SUBMISSION VERSUS SUBJUGATION**

Subjection conveys the overtones of a king ruling his subjects with the power and authority coming down from above and can be done so in a forceful way. When one is being "subject to" one has no option but to acquiesce to the dominant power.

Submission is a voluntary act on the part of the underling. It is something they choose to do for whatever reason. No one can force you to be submissive unless you choose to do. If one is submissive because of force it is not a healthy thing and rebellion will eventually occur.

Subjection comes from above, submission from below.

### **HIERARCHY**

I want now to look at the concept of hierarchy.

### **ORDER**

In order for any human endeavour to be successful we need a hierarchy or chain of command. No one person is equipped or can do it all. There is always a boss or CEO or a President, a Prime Minister or Pope. The buck is supposed to stop somewhere.

Then, there are executives, department heads, team leaders, and workers or lower ranks. Each must contribute their part or the endeavour fails or is less efficient than it could be. Each person and rank needs to hold the same values and comply with the same protocols that have been decided by those higher up the ladder who are supposed to have a greater vision. Hopefully, in the human model, those at the top have reached that position by virtue of their achievements and contributions.

This is just common sense.

It also seems to be part of God's plan for mankind. It is part of human nature. Any society that has set out to be totally egalitarian, eventually winds up with people shuffling to different levels depending on abilities and motives. This is usually decided by violence or negative processes. Man needs a hierarchy to operate and we can choose the parameters that we operate in or have others force them on us.

## THE KINGDOM

In the Old Testament, God set up various hierarchies based on the family with the father as head. The succession was based on the oldest son who became the leader. Then came tribes with the leaders based on this hierarchy of eldest son, assuming that he toed the party line and was obedient, or else he could be deposed, as Reuben was.

Later the groups were led by Prophets, some of whom were women, who passed the policies to tribal leaders. Then a major leader, like Moses and Joshua, arose who led vast hordes of people.

Moses instituted executives and lesser officers,

**Exo 18:21** And you shall look out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain. And place *such* over them to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

Exo 18:22 And let them judge the people at all times. And it shall be, every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall judge. And make it easier for yourself, and they shall bear with you.

Miriam was Moses' 2IC, a position of great influence.

Christ had twelve disciples who were to become the leaders in setting up His Kingdom. He had many lesser followers who supported him. Many of these were women.

In Acts 6:1-5, the apostles chose seven men to co-ordinate the "good works" the growing church was doing. These people focused on one aspect of the Kingdom, that of caring for the physical needs and the apostles focused on their Spiritual needs.

**Act 6:1** And in those days, the disciples having multiplied, a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews occurred, because their widows were overlooked in the daily serving.

Act 6:2 And the Twelve called near the multitude of the disciples and said, It is not pleasing to us, leaving the Word of God, to serve tables.

Act 6:3 Therefore, brothers, look out among you seven *men* being witnessed to, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this duty.

Act 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

Act 6:5 And the saying pleased all the multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of *the* Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch.

From a worldly point of view, someone has to take the leadership role and make the final decision in a debate and this role, in Christianity, must be male. Leadership is male. God the Father is male. Christ is male.

## MARRIAGE

As a Christian, I cannot, and do not, argue that there can be anything other than a hierarchy within life and especially in marriage. For one, it cannot work otherwise and ends up in constant bluing. For another Scripture makes this totally plain.

**Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord.**

**Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of his wife as the Messiah is the head of the church. It is he who is the Saviour of the body.**

This is the bottom line. The husband is the head of the household.

We have a carefully spelled out hierarchy in the family.

**Eph 5:23 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.**

**Col 3:18 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as is becoming in the Lord.**

**Col 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter against them.**

**Col 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.**

**Col 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they be discouraged.**

**Col 3:22 Slaves, obey your masters according to the flesh in all things; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.**

God is head of Christ, Christ is head of the man, hopefully the Spirit of the man, the man is head of the wife. The children and slaves (employees) come next.

How the husband manages that hierarchy and his responsibilities, whether in love or power, is another issue and he will answer to God for his actions, just as the wife will for hers.

### **ALL ONE IN CHRIST**

But in Christ's Kingdom we are all one in Christ. Christian marriage is a partnership of equals with one making the final call on mutual decisions. A hierarchy of love. Christ chose to submit to His Father and is the example that all those further down the chain must follow.

In our conundrum of women being in subjection to men, if we translate the Greek as "wife and husband" here instead of "woman and man", these verses and the concept takes on another deeper perspective and fits with Christ's model of "all one in Christ". It is just an hierarchy of order. There is no confusion. We accept that this is a hierarchical concept of wife submitting to her husband.

### **SEMANTICS**

So the simple choices of English words in translation totally destroys this amazing concept and sets up a system where one type of human has dominated another type, supposedly in a relationship based on love, simply because of an accident of birth.

If we compare the sections in 1 Cor 11:3

**1Co 11:3 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.**

With

**Eph 5:21 submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God.  
Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord.**

**Eph 5:23 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 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.**

In the Corinthian passage the word G1135, gune, is translated “woman” and in the Ephesians passage the word “gune” is translated as “wife”. The only difference is that in the Ephesians passage the word “own” is now inserted before “gune” making it clear that the word should be understood as wife.

No one questions that the Ephesians verse applies to a husband and wife but trot out Corinthians to hold their big stick

It is probably worth noting that Ephesians was written about 5 years after Corinthians. Perhaps Paul had become aware of the risk of misunderstanding of this complex relationship within the mores of his society, and so added the word “own” to clarify the issue.

He repeats the “own” again when the concept is repeated in Col 3:18 which was written about the same time as Ephesians.

**Col 3:18 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as is becoming in the Lord.**

It is reiterated in 1 Peter 3:5

**1Pe 3:5 For so once indeed the holy women hoping in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands;**

**1Pe 3:6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.mnm,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,**

### **1 CORINTHIANS 11:3**

The choice of English word changes the whole concept of this “proof text” of women being denied a place in God’s church.

Compare

**1Co 11:3 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.**

with

**1Co 11:3 But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the wife is the husband; and the head of Christ is God.**

## 1 TIMOTHY 2:11-12

In 1 Timothy 2:11-12 we see the same thing. Change “man” to “husband” and “woman” to “wives” and you have a totally different concept which fits all of God’s parameters.

Compare

**1Ti 2:11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.**

**1Ti 2:12 But I do not allow a woman to teach, or to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence.**

with

**1Ti 2:11 Let the wife learn in silence with all subjection.**

**1Ti 2:12 But I do not allow a wife to teach, or to exercise authority over a husband, but to be in silence.**

In fact, as far as I can see, apart from these verses in every other place the word “gune” is translated “woman” and “aner” as man. All the other references to the male/female relationship are in the husband and wife context.

1Co 5:1 On the whole it is reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even named among the nations, so as one to have his father's wife.

1Co 7:2 But, because of the fornications, let each have his own wife, and let each have her own husband.

1Co 7:3 Let the husband give to the wife proper kindness, and likewise the wife also to the husband.

Co 7:10 And to the married I command (not I, but the Lord), a woman not to be separated from her husband.

1Co 7:11 But if she is indeed separated, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to leave his wife.

1Co 7:12 But to the rest I speak, not the Lord, If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is pleased to dwell with him, do not let him put her away.

1Co 7:13 And the woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is pleased to dwell with her, do not let her leave him.

1Co 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

1Co 7:15 But if the unbelieving one separates, let him be separated. A brother or a sister is not in bondage in such cases, but God has called us in peace.

1Co 7:16 For what do you know, O wife, whether you shall save your husband?

Co 7:10 And to the married I command (not I, but the Lord), a woman not to be separated from her husband.

1Co 7:11 But if she is indeed separated, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to leave his wife.

1Co 7:12 But to the rest I speak, not the Lord, If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is pleased to dwell with him, do not let him put her away.

1Co 7:13 And the woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is pleased to dwell with her, do not let her leave him.

1Co 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

1Co 7:15 But if the unbelieving one separates, let him be separated. A brother or a sister is not in bondage in such cases, but God has called us in peace.

1Co 7:16 For what do you know, O wife, whether you shall save your husband?

Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

Eph 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it,

Eph 5:26 that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,

Eph 5:27 that He might present it to Himself as the glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Eph 5:28 So men ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Col 3:18 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as is becoming in the Lord.

Col 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter against them.

1Ti 3:2 Then it behooves the overseer to be without reproach, husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, well-ordered, hospitable, apt at teaching,

1Ti 3:11 Even so their wives are to be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

1Ti 3:12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and households well.

1Ti 5:9 Do not let a widow be enrolled having become less than sixty years old, the wife of one man,

Tit 1:6 if anyone is blameless, husband of one wife, having believing children, not accused of loose behaviour, or disobedient.

Then we have a consistent message; consistent with God's plan; consistent with His hierarchy; consistent with love.

### **BRIDE OF CHRIST**

We need to also consider that the Ephesians verses follows straight on to the concept of Christ being the Head of the Church... i.e. The Bride of Christ. This is not an isolated concept dropped in the middle of another bigger one like an aside. It is an integral part of the new concept of the Church, the Bride of Christ.

It seems to me that Paul is using the well understood analogy of the hierarchy of marriage to teach how the Kingdom of God works. We know that The Lord does not dominate His family. He leads gently and lovingly and treats us as part of Him. We

chose to submit to God. He does not boss us about or wave a big stick.... unless we willingly and deliberately rebel.

We know that the transmission of the love and caring, the order and the stability of The Father's love comes to us through His son, Jesus Christ. He then transmits it to us, ideally within the context of a loving family via the husband and wife and then to the children.

This concept is beautiful and ordered and reflects the God of this world.

It is not an excuse for men to dominate women.

## CONCLUSION

God, throughout the Old Testament, gave women rights and He used them as prophets and leaders and to save His people.

Jesus went to great lengths to raise the status of women to a place where all His people were equal and could become "all one in Christ". He seems to have deliberately chosen women to be the ones to announce most of His new initiatives. This is the role of a Prophet.

We saw how in His interaction with Martha and Mary, He "missed" the perfect opportunity to send Mary scuttling back to the kitchen to her role as a woman in subjection. Instead He used this incident to show Martha, and us if we listen, a "better way".

We looked how the choice of a word in the translations we read, can influence the meaning that we receive. The word in the Greek "gune" can be translated woman, women, wife and wives. With "aner" for man, the translators can choose between man, men, husband, husbands.

We saw how simple assumptions and traditions can influence meaning. There is no grammatical reason why one of the people on the road to Emmaus when they met the risen Lord, was a man. More likely, it was Cleopas' wife, especially as they went to the same house.

So, we must strike a balance here between the culture of those times and ours, and search for the vein of gold that is running through the whole. We must not trap women in roles which stifle their God given talents. Neither should we encourage behaviours which step outside the model of propriety and love that God has given us.

We have to assume that God has allowed the present situation where the pendulum has swung too far towards the female side, but we don't have to agree with it. Maybe He has allowed this to happen to force us to see that women **can** contribute in an important way in all areas and that they will do so, if they are given a chance.

Women are equal to men, wives to husband. Christian wives choose to submit to their OWN husbands just as we all choose to submit to each other and to Christ in order, decency and love. This is the hierarchy God set up. Humans need hierarchies in order to function. God's hierarchy is God, Son, Spirit, husband, wife, children,

slaves; a cascade of equals in Christ who choose to submit to the one before them on the chain.

Next time we will look at this hierarchy in more detail and see just how simple and beautiful this concept is.