



MEN
&
WOMEN
IN MINISTRY

.....
COMPLEMENTARIANISM
AT BRIDGEWAY
.....

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Men and Women in Ministry: Complementarianism at Bridgeway

Sam Storms

Who Believes What?

There's simply no way to escape the fact that the question of women in ministry and leadership and the way male and female relate to each other in both the home and church is an issue of considerable controversy and importance. Bridgeway's position on this issue is known as *Complementarianism*. It is briefly summarized in article 12 of our Statement of Faith.

12. We believe that both men and women are together created in the divine image and are therefore equal before God as persons, possessing the same moral dignity and value, and have equal access to God through faith in Christ. We also believe that men and women are together the recipients of spiritual gifts designed to equip and empower them for ministry in the local church and beyond. We also believe that God has ordained the principle of male headship in both the home and in the local church and that certain governing and teaching roles are restricted to men (primarily the office of Elder) (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-7; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

What I propose to do in this booklet is to demonstrate that this is the position most consistent with Scripture. What follows is by no means an exhaustive treatment of every biblical passage or related issue. It is, rather, a summary of the more important questions in this debate.

What grieves me almost as much as the theological differences between Egalitarians and Complementarians is the inexcusable disdain with which each side treats and speaks of the other. May I begin with a plea for Christian civility in our discussion with one another? May I suggest that we expend every effort to portray the other side in the best possible terms, and that we avoid caricature, sarcasm, and misrepresentation? May I suggest that we respectfully disagree with each other without calling into question the other's orthodoxy or love for God? May I ask that we commit ourselves to the sort of dialogue that will honor Christ and enhance rather than tarnish the image of the church in a society that already regards us as our own worst enemy?

All too often we make the mistake of thinking that someone is launching a personal attack under the guise of a hermeneutical decision. In other words, we tend to react to another's approach to biblical interpretation as if they embrace that interpretation because they don't like us or think that we are inferior or have some grudge against us that is best vented by endorsing a contrary position on a controversial topic like the relationship of men and women. I hope that such is not the case, but if it is, I ask that we together commit ourselves to forsaking it.

I'm not suggesting or asking that anyone embrace and articulate his/her beliefs with any less intensity of conviction than you feel is warranted by Scripture. In other words, my suggestions are not designed to invalidate or undermine fervent and heartfelt interaction. I'm just asking that we speak the truth, however we conceive that truth, in genuine love.

Are there Complementarians whose primary motivation is self-serving, who insist upon male headship in church and home as a way of compensating for their own insecurity and holding on to the power and resources of the church? Yes. Tragically. Are there Egalitarians whose commitment is driven by a radical feminist political agenda and who bristle with resentment at the mere thought that men and women, by God's design, may be different? Yes. Tragically.

I'm not so naïve as to think that none of us is tainted by unbiblical and self-serving motives. I'm simply calling for mutual generosity and patience as we together explore God's best for those created in his image.

Foundational Principles

Let me begin by articulating five foundational principles that must govern all dialogue on this topic, and then provide a brief summary of Complementarian beliefs.

- (1) Both Complementarians and Egalitarians agree that men and women are equally created in the image of God, and that neither is more or less the image of God than the other.
- (2) Both Complementarians and Egalitarians agree that men and women are equal in personal dignity, that neither is more or less worthy or of more or less value as human beings.
- (3) Both Complementarians and Egalitarians agree that men and women should treat each other with kindness and compassion and love, and that any and all forms of abuse or disrespect or dishonor must be denounced as sin and resisted.
- (4) Both Complementarians and Egalitarians believe that women should be actively involved in ministry. Complementarians agree with Egalitarians and celebrate the fact that women, for example, served as "co-workers" with Paul and held the office of deacon.
- (5) Where Complementarians and Egalitarians disagree is whether women can serve as the Senior Pastor or as a Ruling Elder in the local church, what I call senior governmental authority. Egalitarians believe the Bible permits women to hold such positions of leadership, while Complementarians do not.

I should point out that some would broaden this debate to whether or not women should be involved in any form of ministry, whether that be the leading of worship or personal evangelism or church planting or celebrating the sacraments. You should know from the start where I stand on such matters.

I am extremely reluctant to place restrictions on anyone of either gender or any age in the absence of explicit biblical instruction to that effect. In other words, if I am going to err, it is on the side of freedom. In my opinion, the only restrictions placed on women concern what I call *senior governmental authority in the local church*. I have in mind, as noted above, (1) the primary authority to expound the Scriptures and enforce their doctrinal and ethical truths on the conscience of all God's people, and (2) the authority to exercise final governmental oversight of the body of Christ.

Therefore, unlike a number of other Complementarians, as long as the principle of male headship is honored in the above two respects, I believe women can lead worship, can assist in the celebration of both baptism and the Lord's Supper, can serve as deacons (or deaconesses), can chair church committees, can lead in evangelistic and church planting outreach, can (and should) be consulted by the local church Eldership when decisions are being made, and can contribute to virtually every other capacity of local church life. Women should be encouraged to pray and prophesy in corporate church meetings (1 Cor. 11) and should be given every opportunity to develop and exercise their spiritual gifts.

So, when I ask and answer the question below: "What do Complementarians believe?" you should understand that I am speaking only for myself. Although I rely heavily on the work of such well-known and widely-published Complementarians as Wayne Grudem, Bruce Ware, and John Piper, one should not immediately assume that I am representing their convictions or that they are responsible for everything I believe or the way in which I make practical application to life in the home and the church.

What do Complementarians believe?

Complementarianism asserts that God has created both men and women (1) in his image, of equal value and dignity as human persons, but (2) with a distinction in the roles and responsibilities each is to fulfill in both church and home.

Complementarianism asserts that (1) and (2) above are perfectly and practically compatible with each other. Complementarianism asserts that *functional differences* between men and women in church and home, as expressed in the biblical terms “headship” and “submission”, do not diminish or jeopardize their *ontological equality*.

Complementarianism believes that submission to rightful authority, whether wives to husbands or children to parents or Christians to elders in the church or all citizens to the state is a noble and virtuous thing, that it is a privilege, a joy, something good and desirable and consistent with true freedom, and above all honoring and glorifying to God.

In the discussion that follows, I will provide brief explanations of why I believe what I do. I will also try to respond to a number of objections that Egalitarians have brought against this view, as well as address the more difficult and controversial texts that come up in the course of this debate.

The Meaning of Headship

There is a sense in which I address this issue with a measure of reluctance and hesitation. It isn't because I'm in doubt about what Scripture says on the subject or because I'm uncertain about my own beliefs. It has to do with the widespread misunderstandings about headship and submission.

Many think that headship and submission mean that a wife must sit passively and endure the sin or the abuse of the husband, as if submission means she has no right to stand up for what is true and good or to resist her husband's evil ways. Perhaps some of you come from families in which the husband was an insensitive bully and where it was assumed that it was the wife's “duty” to tolerate this silently. God's Word does not call upon a wife to acquiesce to brutality or thievery or abuse.

Some of you may think that a husband can get away with whatever he wants in the name of headship, as if that word or concept endorses and encourages his sinful behavior, such that the wife has no recourse but to “submit” to his dictatorial and destructive ways. I (and I trust, all Complementarians) utterly reject and grieve over such a terrible distortion and misapplication of the principles addressed in this study.

I know that there are both men and women who look at someone like me or other Complementarians and say to themselves, or perhaps even say to others, “My dad is a mean and abusive bully who belittles my mom and ignores her needs and those Complementarians hold to a view that says that's ok or that there's nothing she can do but quietly ‘submit’ and put up with it; after all, he's the head of the house.”

It's hard not to be offended by such a horrible distortion of the truth. I assure you of this one thing: that is **not** biblical headship; that is **not** biblical submission.

On more than one occasion I've had women tell me horrible stories of neglect, tyranny, abuse, abandonment, and even adultery on the part of the man, the husband, and then say: “How could you possibly embrace Complementarianism, a view that permits and perhaps even encourages such sinful behavior.” Let it be said once and for all: I don't! Can Complementarianism and the notion of male headship be perverted and distorted by selfishness and sinful oppression? Yes. Even as Egalitarianism and the denial of male headship can be perverted and distorted into a rejection of any differences between male and female.

My prayer is that if nothing else is accomplished in this study, perhaps I may be of some help in clarifying the meaning of these ideas and how they actually work within a marriage.

A good place to begin is with the meaning of marriage (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; Eph. 5:31). I would define marriage as ***the enjoyment of spiritual and physical unity based on a life-long, covenant commitment.***

Marriage is a unity of both *flesh* and *spirit*. It is a mutual commitment in which husband and wife share their bodies, their spirits, their possessions, their problems, their insights and ideas, their goals and gripes, their sadness and happiness. Ideally, nothing should stand in the way of this mutual experience. As Wayne Mack explains:

"The wife promises that she will be faithful even if the husband is afflicted with bulges, baldness, bunions, and bifocals; even if he loses his health, his wealth, his job, his charm; even if someone more exciting comes along. The husband promises to be faithful even if the wife loses her beauty and appeal; even if she is not as neat and tidy or as submissive as he would like her to be; even if she does not satisfy his sexual desires completely; even if she spends money foolishly or is a terrible cook. Marriage means that a husband and wife enter into a relationship for which they accept full responsibility and in which they commit themselves to each other regardless of what problems arise."

In order for true, biblical unity to occur, both husband and wife must understand what the Bible means by *headship* and *submission*. The failure to appreciate these truths has contributed immeasurably to *disunity* and eventual *dissolution* of countless marriages.

Headship

"Headship" (*kephale*) has three meanings in Scripture: (1) a physical head (1 Cor. 11:7); (2) source or origin (Col. 1:18); and (3) a person with authority (Eph. 1:22).

A. Misconceptions about the Nature of Headship

1. *Husbands are never commanded to rule their wives, but to love them.* The Bible never says, "Husbands, take steps to insure that your wives submit to you." Nor does it say, "Husbands, exercise headship and authority over your wives." Rather, the principle of male headship is either asserted or assumed and men are commanded to love their wives as Christ loves the church.
2. *Headship is never portrayed in Scripture as a means for self-satisfaction or self-exaltation. Headship is always other-oriented.* I can't think of a more horrendous sin than exploiting the God-given responsibility to lovingly lead by perverting it into justification for using one's wife and family to satisfy one's lusts and thirst for power.
3. *Headship is not the power of a superior over an inferior. Human nature is sinfully inclined to distort the submission of the wife into the superiority of the husband.* That some, in the name of male headship, have done precisely this cannot be denied, but it must certainly be denounced. We must also remember that the abuse of headship is not sufficient justification for abandoning it. Rather, we must strive, in God's grace, to redeem it and purify it in a way that honors both Christ and one's spouse.
4. *Headship is never to be identified with the issuing of commands.*
5. *Headship does not mean that the husband must make every decision in the home.* Unfortunately, some men have mistakenly assumed that it undermines their authority for their wives to take the initiative in certain domestic matters. This is more an expression of masculine insecurity and fear than it is godly leadership.

B. Identifying the Essence of Headship

1. *Headship is more a responsibility than a right.* A “right” is something we tend to demand or insist upon as something we are owed. This can all too often make for an authoritarian and self-serving atmosphere in the home. When headship is viewed as a sacred trust in which the husband is “called” by God to lead and honor and sacrifice for his wife, the tone and mood of the home is radically improved.

2. *Headship is the authority to serve.* John Stott explains:

"If headship means 'power' in any sense, then it is power to care, not to crush; power to serve, not to dominate; power to facilitate self-fulfillment, not to frustrate or destroy it. And in all this the standard of the husband's love is to be the cross of Christ, on which he surrendered himself even to death in his selfless love for his bride" (232).

3. *Headship is the opportunity to lead.* If Jesus is our example of biblical leadership, it will help to take note of how he led his disciples.

- Jesus led by *teaching* his disciples (cf. 1 Cor. 14:35)
- Jesus led by setting an *example* for his disciples (John 13:15)
- Jesus led by spending *time* with his disciples (Acts 4:13)
- Jesus led by *delegating authority* to his disciples (Luke 10:1-20)

4. *Headship is Scripturally circumscribed. Husbands have never been given the authority to lead their families in ways that are contrary to the Bible.* On a related note, if a wife is ever asked or told by her husband to do something that violates Scripture, she is not only free to disobey him, she is obligated to do so.

5. *Headship does entail the responsibility to make a final decision when agreement cannot be reached. This final decision, however, may on occasion be to let his wife decide.* No, contrary to what you may think, this latter option does not undermine the husband’s authority.

6. *Headship entails gentleness and sensitivity.* See Col. 3:18-19 where Paul exhorts husbands not to be "embittered" against their wives. The idea is that of "friction caused by impatience and thoughtless nagging" (Moule).

7. *Headship does not give men the right to be wrong.* Simply because God has invested in the husband the authority to lead does not give him the freedom to lead in ways that are contrary to God’s Word.

8. *Headship means honoring one's wife.* See 1 Peter 3:7.

9. *Headship means loving and caring for one's wife as much as we love and care for ourselves.* See Eph. 5:28-29.

10. *Headship means loving and caring for one's wife as much as Christ loves and cares for us.* See Eph. 5:25-27. Christ's love for us has several characteristics:

- It is **unconditional** (Rom. 5:8)
- It is **eternal** (Rom. 8:39)
- It is **unselfish** (Phil. 2:6-7)
- It is **purposeful** (Eph. 5:26-27)

"Christ 'loved' the church and 'gave himself' for her, in order to 'cleanse' her, 'sanctify' her, and ultimately 'present' her to himself in full splendour and without any defect. In other words, his love and self-sacrifice were not an idle display, but purposive. And his purpose was not to impose an alien identity upon the church, but to free her from the spots and wrinkles which mar her beauty

and to display her in her true glory. The Christian husband is to have a similar concern. His headship will never be used to suppress his wife. He longs to see her liberated from everything which spoils her true feminine identity and growing towards that 'glory', that perfection of fulfilled personhood which will be the final destiny of all those whom Christ redeems. To this end Christ gave himself. To this end too the husband gives himself in love" (Stott).

- It is **sacrificial** (Eph. 5:25)
- It is **demonstrative** (Rom. 5:6-8)

The way Jesus related to women in general is a model for all men:

"They [women] had never known a man like this Man – there never has been such another. A prophet and teacher who never nagged at them, never flattered or coaxed or patronized; who never made jokes about them, never treated them either as 'The women, God help us!' or 'The ladies, God bless them!'; who rebuked without querulousness and praised without condescension; who took their questions and arguments seriously; who never mapped out their sphere for them, never urged them to be feminine or jeered at them for being female; who had no axe to grind and no uneasy male dignity to defend; who took them as he found them and was completely unself-conscious. There is no act, no sermon, no parable in the whole Gospel that borrows its pungency from female perversity; nobody could possibly guess from the words and deeds of Jesus that there was anything 'funny' about women's nature" (Dorothy Sayers).

The Meaning of Submission

"Submission" (Gk., *hupotasso*) carries the implication of voluntary yieldedness to a recognized authority. Biblical submission is appropriate in several relational spheres: (1) the wife to her husband (Eph. 5:22-24); (2) children to their parents (Eph. 6:1); (3) believers to the elders of the church (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12); (4) citizens to the state (Rom. 13); (5) servants (employees) to their masters (employers) (1 Pt. 2:18); (6) each believer to every other believer in humble service (Eph. 5:21).

A. Misconceptions about the Nature of Submission

1. *Submission is not grounded in any supposed superiority of the husband or inferiority of the wife.* See Gal. 3:28; 1 Pt. 3:7.

The concept of the wife being the "helper" (Gen. 2:18-22) of the husband in no way implies her inferiority. In fact, the Hebrew word translated "helper" is often used in the OT to refer to *God* as the "helper" of mankind. Surely *HE* is not inferior to us! Rather, this passage means that (1) the husband, even before the fall into sin, was *incomplete* without his wife; (2) the husband will never reach his full potential apart from the input of his wife.

2. *Submission does not mean a wife is obligated to follow should her husband lead her into sin.*

The biblical principle that we owe obedience to God first and foremost applies to Christian wives as well. If there must be a choice between obedience to God and obedience to the state, God is to be obeyed (Acts 5:29). The same would apply in a marriage. However, as Susan Foh has pointed out,

"This qualification of the 'traditional' concept of wifely submission does not mean that the wife has an excuse to follow her 'better judgment' when she disagrees with her husband. The wife's submission to her husband is qualified by God's commands, not her own preferences, opinions, or even expertise."

3. *Submission does not mean the wife must sacrifice her freedom.*

4. *Submission does not entail passivity.* See Prov. 31. Note especially the emphasis on her initiative, creativity, tireless industry, etc. There is no biblically prescribed “personality” for wives, anymore than there is one for husbands. **Husbands who exercise godly leadership can be introverts and wives who submit can be extroverts.**

5. *Submission does not entail silence.*

Many mistakenly think a wife is unsubmitive if she ever:

criticizes her husband (constructive criticism that is lovingly motivated and corrective in nature is not inconsistent with godly submission)

makes requests of her husband (in particular, that her husband and family act responsibly in private and public; submission of the wife is not an excuse for sin or sloth or sloppiness in the husband)

teaches her husband (cf. Prov. 31:26; Acts 18:26; it is not inconsistent with godly submission that a wife be more intelligent or more articulate than her husband; on a personal note, I’ve probably learned more from my wife than from any other living soul)

6. *Submission does not mean that everything a wife does must be directly dependent upon or connected to her husband.*

Submission does not mean the wife can never do anything for her own benefit or for the benefit of others or that she should never become involved in activities or ministries outside the home. See Prov. 31. "It does mean, however, that she ought never to do anything which would be detrimental or harmful to her husband or that would cause her to neglect her primary ministry of helping her husband [Prov. 31:12]" (Wayne Mack).

B. **Identifying the Essence of Submission**

1. *Submission is the disposition to honor and affirm a husband's authority and an inclination to yield to his leadership.* John Piper puts it this way:

"[Submission] is an attitude that says, 'I delight for you to take the initiative in our family. I am glad when you take responsibility for things and lead with love. I don't flourish when you are passive and I have to make sure the family works.' But the attitude of Christian submission also says, 'It grieves me when you venture into sinful acts and want to take me with you. You know I can't do that. I have no desire to resist you. On the contrary, I flourish most when I can respond creatively and joyfully to your lead; but I can't follow you into sin, as much as I love to honor your leadership in our marriage. Christ is my King.'"

2. *Submission is fundamentally an attitude and act of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.* See Eph. 5:22.

3. *Submission is a commitment to support one's husband in such a way that he may reach his full potential as a man of God.* This may involve several things:

- making the home a safe place, free from the sinful influence of the world
- striving to be dependable and trustworthy (Prov. 31:11-12)
- providing affirmation and encouragement

- building loyalty to him in the children (differences of opinion about discipline should be settled in private, away from the children, lest she be seen as taking sides against her husband)
- showing confidence in his decisions

C. **Submission when the Husband is an Unbeliever**

See 1 Peter 3:1-7.

1. *Submission does not mean she must agree with everything her husband says.*

1 Peter 3:1 indicates that she is a believer and he is not. Thus she disagrees with him on the most important principle of all: God! Her interpretation of ultimate reality may well be utterly different from his.

This indicates that submission is perfectly compatible with independent thinking. The woman in this passage has heard the gospel, assessed the claims of Christ, and embraced his atoning work as her only hope. Her husband has likewise heard the gospel and "disobeyed" it. "She thought for herself and she acted. And Peter does not tell her to retreat from that commitment" (Piper).

2. *Submission does not mean giving up all efforts to change her husband.*

The point of the passage is to tell a wife how she might "win" her husband to the Lord. Strangely enough, Peter envisions submission as the most effective strategy in *changing* the husband.

3. *Submission does not mean putting the will of one's husband above the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Peter in no way suggests she should abandon her commitment to Christ simply because her husband is an unbeliever. This wife is a follower of Jesus before and above being a follower of her husband.

4. *Submission to an unbelieving husband does not mean a wife gets her personal, spiritual strength from him.*

When a husband's spiritual nurturing and leadership is lacking, a Christian wife is not left helpless. She is to be nurtured and strengthened by her hope in God (v. 5).

5. *Submission to an unbelieving husband is not to be done in fear but in freedom.* See v. 6b.

Does the New Testament teach "Mutual Submission"? Seven Objections to the Egalitarian understanding of Mutual Submission in Ephesians 5:21-33

[For a more in-depth treatment of this passage and the issues surrounding it, see Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth* (Multnomah, 2004).]

One of the principal arguments of Egalitarians is that whatever submission exists in a marriage relationship is to be **mutual**, not only wives to husbands but also, and equally, husbands to wives. This interpretation is based on a certain reading of Ephesians 5:20ff.

“giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
²¹ **submitting to one another** out of reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church,

his body, and is himself its Savior.²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.”

There are several reasons why I find this interpretation inadequate.

1. The context of Eph. 5 specifies the kind of submission Paul had in mind: wives to husbands (5:22-23), children to their parents (6:1-3), bondservants to their masters (6:5-8). These relationships are never reversed.

Ephesians 5:24 makes clear that the kind of submission wives are to exercise is like the submission of the church to Christ. The latter is not mutual submission. The church is submissive to Christ’s authority in a way that Christ cannot and never will be submissive to us.

2. We should also be aware of the absence of any command that husbands be submissive to their wives. While wives are often told to submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pt. 3:1-6), the situation is never reversed. If mutual submission were so essential to Paul’s or Peter’s or John’s view of the marital relationship, it is stunning that neither they nor any other biblical author explicitly or directly instructs husbands to submit to their wives

3. The word “submit” or “be subject to” (*hypotasso*) is always used for submission to an authority. e.g., Luke 2:51; 10:17; Rom. 13:1,5; 1 Cor. 15:27-28; 1 Pt. 3:22; 5:5; Eph. 5:24; Titus 2:9; 1 Pt. 2:18; Heb. 12:9; James 4:7. The submission is always one-directional.

4. No one has produced an example in ancient Greek literature where *hypotasso* (“submit”) is applied to a relationship between persons and it does not bear the sense of “be subject / submissive to” an authority.

5. The word translated “one another” (*allelous*) in Eph. 5:21 need not mean “everyone to everyone” but often means “some to others”. See, e.g., Rev. 6:4; Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 11:33; Matt. 24:10; Luke 2:15; 12:1; 24:32). In this case it would be wives to husbands, as Eph. 5:22 makes explicitly clear.

6. In other texts where wives are exhorted to be submissive to their husbands, nothing is said about submitting to one another. See Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1.

7. Even if Paul meant complete reciprocity (wives to husbands and husbands to wives), this doesn’t mean husbands and wives submit to each other in the same way. Their “mutual submission” would be expressed in ways consistent with their distinctive roles and without compromising the headship of the husband.

After reading this material I encourage both men and women, but especially the men, to go back to what I wrote on headship and submission and carefully read it once again. It is all too easy, given our depraved proclivity for self-aggrandizement, to use the truths as a way of rationalizing a dictatorial and unkind and insensitive way of relating to our wives.

Ten Reasons why Male Headship Existed before the Fall

[I am dependent for the following, in large measure, on Wayne Grudem’s treatment of this issue in his chapter, “The Key Issues in the Manhood-Womanhood Controversy, and the Way Forward,” in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, edited by Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 19-68.]

Perhaps the most important argument put forth by Egalitarians is that the responsibilities of headship and submission in marriage were not part of the original creation but were imposed upon the race as part of the curse, consequent on human sin. They contend that since Christ came to redeem us from the curse and to reverse the effects of the fall, headship and submission should be abandoned. In other words, most

egalitarians argue that Paul's discussion in Ephesians 5 and 1 Timothy 2 and Peter's discussion in 1 Peter 3 and other similar texts do **not** reflect **God's original design** for how men and women are to relate to each other either in the home or in the church. Male headship and female submission, they argue, were **imposed** on the race subsequent to and consequent upon Adam's transgression. In Christ, and by virtue of the redemptive grace of the New Covenant, we are to strive to move beyond such distinctions in role and renew God's egalitarian design for all people.

In the following I list 10 reasons why it is far more probable that male headship was part of God's original design in the created order. That is to say, the evidence from Genesis 1-2 indicates that male headship preceded the Fall into sin. Sin, therefore, undoubtedly distorts the male-female relationship and leads both parties to pervert their God-given responsibilities. **But sin is not the cause of male headship.** The latter is not the penalty imposed on the race because of the former.

1. Adam was created first, then Eve (Gen. 2:7,18-23). See 1 Tim. 2:12-13; 1 Cor. 11:8. Note especially the text in Timothy and Corinthians where Paul grounds his exhortation concerning the male-female relationship in the order of creation. He could easily have linked it to the Fall, but does not. He explicitly links it with the original creation of male and female in the image of God.
2. Adam, not Eve, was the representative head of the human race. See 1 Cor. 15:22,45-49; Rom. 5:12ff.
3. God spoke first to Adam after the fall, suggesting that he was the one primarily accountable for what had happened (Gen. 3:9).
4. Adam named Eve (Gen. 2:23; cf. Gen. 1:5,8,10; 2:19,20,23).
5. God named the human race "man", not "woman" (Gen. 5:1-2; cf. Gen. 1:27).
6. Eve was created as a helper for Adam, not Adam as a helper for Eve (Gen. 2:18; cf. 1 Cor. 11:8-9).
7. The curse brought a distortion of previous roles, not the introduction of new ones (Gen. 3:16; cf. Gen. 4:7).

One aspect of the curse was the imposition of pain on Adam's particular area of responsibility (Gen. 3:17-19).

A second aspect of the curse was the imposition of pain on Eve's particular area of responsibility, namely, childbirth (Gen. 3:16).

Another aspect of the curse was the introduction of pain and conflict into the relationship between Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:16).

8. The salvation that comes with Christ in the New Testament reaffirms the creation order (Col. 3:18-19). Nothing in the NT suggests that male headship has been reversed by the work of Christ or that it cannot co-exist with full moral and spiritual equality between men and women.
9. From the beginning marriage was a picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:31-32, citing Gen. 2:24).
10. We should also take note of the parallel between the relationship within the Godhead (Trinity) and the relationship between men and women (1 Cor. 11:3). Male headship is likened to the headship of the Father over the Son.

Once again, these are but summary statements that need elaboration. I encourage you to read Grudem's extensive defense of each point in the two books I noted.