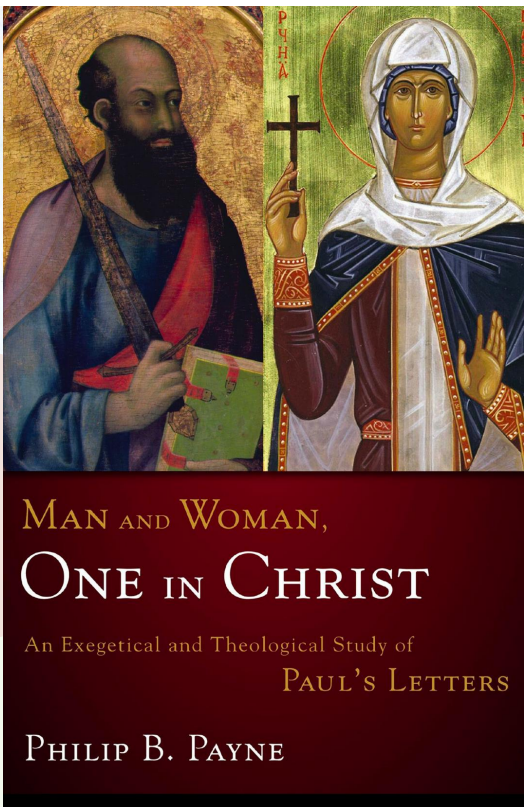
PAUL - THE EGALITARIAN

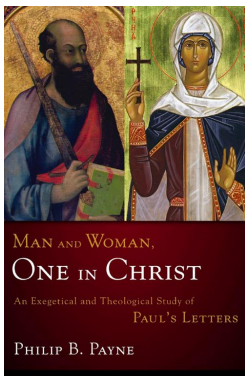


Payne, Philip Barton. *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, Zondervan Academic, 2015

"I have prayerfully wrestled for forty-one years with the texts' apparent contradictions on gender and can honestly say that the biblical texts themselves have transformed my understanding.

From creation to new creation, the bible's message about gender in the church and marriage consistently affirms the equal standing of man and woman."

Philip Barton Payne



Payne, Philip Barton. *"The Bible Teaches the Equal Standing of Man and Woman" Priscilla Papers ◆ Vol. 29, No. 1 ◆ Winter 2015*

Themes:

Countercultural stance.

Paul's teacher

Personal relationships

Paul openness about his affection for people

Focus on care for one another, valuing one another

The Spirit in all things

Themes:

Paul's Stance	Feminine characteristics
Countercultural Stance – equality	Countercultural Stance - equality
Paul's teacher challenging norms	Learning that challenges current systems – engage the unknown
Personal relationships important	Relationship basis in spirituality
Paul's openness about affection	Emotions / grounded experience
Focus on care for one another	Compassion –care for one another
The Spirit in all things	Mystery of the Spirit in all things

Greek Culture

- Plato (400BC) writes:

"Do you know, then, of anything practiced by mankind in which the masculine sex does not surpass the female on all these points?"

He warns that "whoso has failed therein [in life] shall be changed into woman's nature at the second birth"

Greek Culture

- Aristotle (350BC) writes:

"Do you know, then, of anything practiced by mankind in which the masculine sex does not surpass the female on all these points?"

Hebrew culture

"The dominant impression left by our early Jewish sources is of a very patriarchal society that limited women's roles and functions to the home."

And: "If one were to look at scripture alone, it would seem that marriage is a right exercised by a man and that a woman he marries is simply there for his use."

These perspectives reflect the viewpoint that male dominance in a society inevitably indicates female inferiority and subservience.

Carol Pratt Bradley, Women in Hebrew and Ancient Near Eastern, Studia Antiqua, 2003

Cultural influences

Paul's Jewish perspective was incompatible with his Christian insight into the equality of man and woman.

Paul himself sensed that the view of the man/woman relationship, inherited from Judaism, was not altogether congruous with the gospel he preached.

Payne, Philip Barton. *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, Zondervan Academic, 2015, p.37

Paul's Teacher

Paul's teacher

Gamaliel was known for his egalitarian approach to women*

Rabban Gamaliel I (the Elder) - Acts 5:34 as "a teacher of the law, who was honoured by all the people."

Gamaliel's affirmations of woman : "Before God all are equal: women and slaves, poor and rich"; "Whether Israelite or Gentile, man or woman, male or female slave—according to their works the Holy Spirit dwells also upon them."

Payne, Philip Barton. *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, Zondervan Academic, 2015, P.37

Paul's Relationships

Personal relationships

- **Rom 16 - Paul greets by name ten people he identifies as colleagues in Christian ministry. Seven of the ten are women.**
- **Romans 1.** *8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.9 God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you10 in my prayers at all times*

Paul's Relationships

Personal relationships

Phil 1: 4 *I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, [5] because I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. [6] I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. [7] Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.*

Paul's Relationships

Paul's teacher

- **Rom 16 - Paul greets by name ten people he identifies as colleagues in Christian ministry. Seven of the ten are women.**
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Paul open about his affection for people

Paul openness about his affection for people

Rom 12:19 "Do not not take revenge, **my dear friends . . .**"

Rom 16:5 'Greet **my dear friend** Epenetus . . .'

Rom 16:8-9 "Greet Ampilatus, **my dear friend** in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and **my dear friend** Stachys. . ."

Rom 16:12 "Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet **my dear friend** Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord".

Phil 4:1 "Therefore, **my** brothers and sisters, you whom **I love and long for**, **my** joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, **dear friend**s!"

Paul - "one another"

Romans 12:10

Be devoted to **one another** in **love**. Honor **one another** above yourselves.

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to **love one another**, for whoever **love**s others has fulfilled the law.

The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "**Love your neighbour** as **your**self."

Focus on care for one another, valuing one another

Paul - "love one another"

Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with **one another** in **love**.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the **love** all of you have for **one another** is increasing.

1 Cor 13: 1

If I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have **love,** I am nothing.

Focus on care for one another, valuing one another

Paul's focus on The Spirit

Gamaliel claims that he "saw directly by the holy spirit"

(t. Soṭah 9.15)

The Holy Spirit is also a key theme in Paul's letters, with "spirit" (πνεῦμα) occurring 143 times.

The Spirit in all things

Payne, Philip Barton. *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, Zondervan Academic, 2015, P.32

Paul's focus on The Spirit

Rom 16

25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with **the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past**, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

The Spirit in all things

Paul's Attitude to Women

Conclusion: Scripture's affirmations of the equality of men and women and its affirmations of women called by God to exercise authority alongside or over men are so clear and numerous . . . the totality of what the Scriptures affirm about the God-given equal authority of men and women is inescapable. The Bible teaches both men and women to exercise authority humbly as the Spirit leads and as Christ commands.

Philip B. Payne, "The Bible Teaches the Equal Standing of Man and Woman" Priscilla Papers ◆ Vol. 29, No. 1 ◆ Winter 2015

Paul's Attitude to Women

Biblical evidence for the equal standing of men and women in the life of the church is inescapable. It is not just the passages explicitly about women considered above. It pervades every "one another" passage and virtually every command and encouragement in the Bible—for its assertions and stories are for all of us, and God wants us to live into them wholeheartedly and without reserve, not out of fear of crossing a man-made gender-role - boundary that is alien to the Bible's teaching.

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