

Does the Bible Demean Women?

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The Bible does not demean women. Scripture honors women of all walks of life, including single women, widows, wives, mothers, homemakers, businesswomen, and spiritual leaders like Deborah. Unfortunately, many people have taken Bible passages out of context in order to control and abuse women. This exploitation contradicts the Lord's plan for his people and deeply grieves his heart.

God created Eve as the finishing touch of his creation. He took part of Adam's side and specially crafted Eve from it as a "helper corresponding to him," a perfect counterpart for him (Gn 2:18). The Bible says God created men and women in his image, according to his likeness (Gn 1:26-27). Men and women are equal in God's kingdom, yet they possess distinct roles and strengths.

In the garden of Eden, the serpent deceived Eve, and she ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam ate also. As part of the curse for this sin, God announced to Eve, "Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you" (Gn 3:16). Throughout history, passages like this have been wrongly used to suggest that women are inferior to men. Commonly abused texts include:

- "The man is the head of the woman" (1Co 11:3).
- "It is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church" (1Co 14:35).
- "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord" (Eph 5:22).
- "I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; instead, she is to remain quiet" (1Tm 2:12).

While wives are instructed to respect and submit to their husbands, husbands are also instructed to love, lead, protect, and provide for their wives. The husband's leadership is not to be domineering, but loving, as Christ loves the church and gave his life for it. Sharon James notes, "The Bible explains the meaning behind gender distinctions. Masculine strength can be for protection and provision. Many women are gifted with a 'helper design,'—relational capacities to nurture and care" ("Does the Bible Demean Women?" in the *CSB Apologetics Study Bible*).

The Bible mentions many influential, godly women who held crucial roles in ministry. Some supported Jesus and the disciples; others furthered the gospel through prayer, financial support, acts of mercy, and other ministries. All of these women were commended for their important contributions to God's kingdom work. They include:

- Anna
- Phoebe
- Dorcas (Tabitha)
- Lydia
- Joanna
- Susanna
- Mary Magdalene
- Lois and Eunice, Timothy's mother and grandmother

To fully answer the question, "Does the Bible demean women?" we really must ask, "Did *Jesus* demean women?" He was God incarnate, and he did not demean women. Rather, he powerfully affirmed their worth. He demonstrated love and compassion to women and engaged them in discussions about relationships and other significant issues (Mt 9:22; Jn 4:7-29). In fact, the level of interaction he had with women shocked his disciples and the religious leaders of his day. Jesus Christ valued and affirmed women, and he is our ultimate example.