

# Defending Doctrinal Distinctives: Complementarianism

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**Introduction:**

# **Defining Complementarianism**

**Definition: Men and women are equal in value before God but distinct in roles as ordained by Him.**

# **Equal Value of Men and Women**

**Core Truth: Men and women are equally created in God's image and equally valued.**

**Genesis 1:27–31** - So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

**29 Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; 30 and to every animal of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so. 31 And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.**

**Galatians 3:26–29** – For you are all sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

**Ephesians 5:18b-21** - but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father; 21 and subject yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.

# **Distinction in Roles Ordained by God**

**Core Truth: God has designed  
different roles for men and women.**

**1 Corinthians 11:3** - But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

**1 Timothy 2:11-13** - A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. 12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. 13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.

**Genesis 2:18-25** – Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” 19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the livestock, and to the birds of the sky, and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

**21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "At last this is bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called 'woman,' Because she was taken out of man." 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked, but they were not ashamed.**

# Roles in the Home

**Core Truth: Marriage is a picture of Christ and his Church.**

**Ephesians 5:22–33** - Wives, subject yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

**27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are parts of His body.**

**31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, as for you individually, each husband is to love his own wife the same as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.**

**1 Peter 3:1–7** - In the same way, you wives, be subject to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won over without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your pure and respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely the external—braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or putting on apparel; 4 but it should be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

**5 For in this way the holy women of former times, who hoped in God, also used to adorn themselves, being subject to their own husbands, 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; and you have proved to be her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. 7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.**

**Titus 2:3-5** - Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

# Roles in the Church

**Core Truth: We shouldn't approach service in the church from a restrictive perspective.**

**1 Timothy 2:11–12** - A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. 12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

**1 Timothy 3:1-7 (Titus 1:6-9) - It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching, 3 not overindulging in wine, not a bully, but gentle, not contentious, free from the love of money. 4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity**

**5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), 6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into condemnation incurred by the devil. 7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil.**

**1 Timothy 3:8-13** - Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not insincere, not prone to drink much wine, not greedy for money, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then have them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

**12 Deacons must be husbands of one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.**