

152 Changing our minds VI – Thinking about sex

Apparently, men think about sex a lot; I know I do, and especially so these past few months. But I've been trying to think biblically: what does the Bible teach about sex, sexuality, gender? And today I'm thinking about gender in relation to leadership. **So what does the Bible teach?**

1 Timothy 3:12 *Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.*

1 Corinthians 14:34 *Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law.*

1 Timothy 2:12 *But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*

So the Bible is pretty clear, isn't it? Women should NOT lead in the church!

Yes, I know what the *world's culture* says, but ***we must not be swayed by what secular, godless society says!*** The Bible is clear, from end to end, Genesis to Revelation: men and women are to be *complementary* – neither more important than the other, but the male role is chiefly to lead.

(I based the above on a website, but I won't give you its reference – it wouldn't be good for your blood pressure!)

Sorry to be such a devil's advocate, but I feel it's really, really important when we come to interpret the Bible, that we first acknowledge just how strong our prejudices are.

The Bible was written, both OT and NT, within a male dominated society, so even though the Bible is *inspired* by God, it is still going to be *affected* by its society's views. Jesus' attitude to women was totally counter-cultural, and the fact that the NT seems to show some of the churches being led by women was revolutionary. That to me is the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

Indeed, we should be grateful that 'the world' has fought back against male domination; this has done the church a big favour, I feel. OK, the more extreme elements are less than helpful, but if we're humble enough, the church can *learn things from 'the world'*, can't it?! Does God want us to learn new things, as a church, things that will help us to improve human relationships? Or does (our interpretation of) the Bible have all the answers? "The Bible says it; that settles it!"

Now, there's a growing number of Bible-believing Christians who believe that, just as male dominated church leadership is a reflection of society's views in Bible times, saying that gay sex is a perversion (Rom 1:27) is not an immutable principle on which to base our sexual ethics.

But the really important issue here is how we, as Christians, relate to one another if and when we disagree.

Let us pray, be humble, and be gentle with one another.

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