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God created men and women in His image and calls them both to be co-laborers through Jesus Christ. In Genesis 1:26-28, one reads how God created humanity in his image, both male and female. In this passage one reads how God calls humanity to be fruitful and multiply, to subdue and have dominion. Both male and female share in the responsibility to be stewards of God's creation and to partake in creation. The blessing that God gives Adam and Eve prior to the command is a blessing given to both of them. After the Fall, when God casts out Adam and Eve, he lays punishment on both of them. While their physical pains will be different, one in child labor and one in the laboring of the land, it is the labor of their work that will give them both pains and it is a consequence that they will share as one family. Also before Adam and Eve are cast out, they are clothed. It is this gift of mercy and grace that God gives to each.

It is after the fall, that one sees how the culture of the Ancient Near East impacts and shapes the people of Israel, whether it be by a response to outside cultures or through their culture itself. After the fall, we read how God is continuing to shape Israel to be His missional people. It isn't until Christ comes into the picture, through his life and ministry, that so much of the cultural structures of Israel are turned upside. While awaiting the Messiah, we read how women and men both held roles of leadership either by being prophet, judge, proclaimer, etc. We see it in 2 Kings 22:12-20 and we see in Judges 4 and 5, Deborah who is both a prophet and a judge. There is Esther, a queen who saves the people of Israel and Jael who uses a tent peg to kill Sisera to save Israel from enemy troops in the book of Judges.

Throughout scripture God uses both male and female language to describe who He is, to describe His attributes. It is not that God is of a gender, it is that God uses both languages to express characteristics that are of God. The perfect example is that of wisdom, wisdom is

attributed as a female identity and wisdom is attributed as being from God, of God, and Christ in the book of John. Cultural structures that God had continually challenged Israel on, that God was continually reclaiming before Christ came, however it is when God incarnate comes into the world to bring the Kingdom of God that the shifts begin more dramatically, for everyone.

Women financially supported Jesus, women were the ones to go and proclaim the resurrection of Christ. Both women and men were the ones at Jesus' feet taking the posture of a disciple. One also reads in Scripture how whole households were being baptized, men and women were discipling others, opening up their households to gather together for worship, and both being called as co-laborers in the Kingdom of God. We see this in Acts where the Spirit of the Lord fell upon men and women. The reflection that the church has to have is one that asks what is prescriptive and what is descriptive. What is it that God is saying and doing and what are we imposing or interpreting it to be?

Women are called to be disciples, to proclaim, to be stewards of God's creation and participate as created beings called to create. Women are called to be pursuant in the Kingdom of God as a reality here on earth, for all of humanity. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul is teaching how each person in the Kingdom of God has a unique gifting, that each person may have one gift stronger than the other, one gift during one season than another but that each of those gifts is part of the Kingdom of God. Each of those gifts belong to the body of Christ. It is the people of God, young and old, male and female, that are united as one under Jesus Christ, though each is unique and different, each is equal as one because of, through and in Christ Jesus, both women and men alike.