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Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women: Fresh Perspectives on Disputed Texts

Book Review

Lucy Peppiatt, 'Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women: Fresh Perspectives on Disputed Texts 2019. Pp. 170. Price \$13.62 paperback/\$17.09 Kindle. ISBN 978-0-8308-5271-0

Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women: Fresh Perspectives on Disputed Texts, by Lucy Peppiatt, was published originally in 2019 in the United States. Lucy Peppiatt states in the acknowledgments that there were many people involved directly or indirectly, who helped her shape this book through either their insightfulness, corrections, suggestions, or comments. Lucy Peppiatt states that this book is about the interpretation of the bible and Christian practice (Peppiatt. 2019. Pg 2)

According to the Foreword written by Scot McKnight on page xi, "Lucy Peppiatt is both a wonderful theologian-author and a dynamic teacher-preacher. McKnight almost announces her in the same fashion that John the Baptist announces Jesus and says, hear ye him. Scot McKnight says to read her and listen to her.

This book was written to serve the purpose of interpreting the bible and Christian practices as it pertains to men and women and their ability plus freedom to hold positions of authority within the church as well as domestically within their marriages. The author explores different views of women and men as it relates to the roles and expectations within the church and scriptural interpretation which leads to the difference in opinions or perspectives. Within the introduction, Lucy maps out the path she will take in each chapter by reviewing nine fundamental questions.

These fundamental questions assist her in narrowing the book's intended focus. Lucy poses a question and then answers it by showing us evidence through scripture, through the writings of others like Katherine Bushnell, R.T. France, Tertullian, Augustine, Kevin Giles, Ali green, and more. Lucy takes us from beginning to end by displaying the progressive view of women. she unfolds it from the position of women within the bible, within society, and even within the domestic role and expectation. I believe this book was written for the church at large to break down the misconceptions and change our view toward women in leadership roles but also in how we may perceive how God views women.

Lucy brings to light that the general male narrative of the Bible is indicative of the predominant presence of males concerning God. The fact that the Bible was written by men, mostly obtains stories of men and is generally taught by men shapes the way men and women view God and the role of women within the church. She points out how ironically the presence of women within the Christian religion is dominant in the aspect of their attendance and followership. It is generally true that women are more religious than men, and worldwide there are more Christian women than Christian men (pg.11)

Lucy Peppiatt reveals to the reader the remarkable presence and role of women in the life of Christ. Mary the mother of Jesus, Martha, and the women who followed and funded the ministry of Jesus, the Samaritan woman, Tabitha, and Mary the sister of Lazarus. Lucy states that her hope is to demonstrate that the maleness of Jesus does not speak of the maleness of God in any essential fashion (pg.35) She uses the writings of N.T. Wright's explanation of Paul's message of inclusion, and she reiterates through scripture reference that Paul's message was not merely for social status but also for gender equality. There are no longer any physical or spiritual barriers between the Jew and Gentile, slave or free, male, and female (pg. 40).

I believe that Lucy Peppiatt is good at pointing out that the interpretation of text plays a huge role in how historically women and men have been viewed and thus treated. She undresses the view of women starting with creation and the headship debate to make a clear path to deal with women's role within the marriage relationship. Unraveling the view that women are inferior to men allows all to see that women are as equally important to God as men. She states that Augustine refused to read this as a hierarchical text in any real sense, as he resisted the idea that women were fundamentally inferior or subordinate to men (pg.65). I can also appreciate that Lucy deals with some of the most debated topics concerning women in the church, such as women as Apostles. She elaborates on the position and role of Junia and even quotes the writer of her foreword of this book, Scot McKnight. She was in essence a Christ-representing, church-establishing, probably miracle-working, missionizing woman who preached the gospel and taught the church (pg.120)

While I enjoyed this book immensely, I do believe that there are some points that could have been addressed to further support the thesis. The importance of women in the bible with no name but powerful stories, and pertinent mentions which were purposeful to God to have mentioned. Anything God made sure was written is something we should look at. Women like the Shunammite who was ready to die during the famine or the women who made room for the prophet. It is the stories of those women that show us how important women were to God which could have strengthened her point. Considering all Lucy Peppiatt did a wonderful job not only making it clear that the time to change the perspective on the female role is now. There has never been a greater time with the changes taking place within our society than now to rethink or reinterpret scripture without the blinders of gender significance. Respect for women in leadership positions is needed in this societal climate.

In conclusion, Lucy Peppiatt has a well-written argument and source for teaching and retraining leaders of today. This is a book that should be on every shelf of those who long to be closer to God and to study to show themselves approved. I believe it will inspire a change that has already begun but still has some roots left in the old male-dominant worldview. I would say this is a good book for leaders, and students of the gospel first. We cannot teach what we fail to first learn or appreciate and even hear.