



Edited by
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YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED

is a supplement of *Precious Seed*, designed for those young in the faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live. YPS is published by *Precious Seed*, PO Box 8,829, Derby, DE1 0SY, UK, and is available separately from the main magazine.

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YOUNG.PRECIOUSSEED

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the August issue of YPS.

I hope the summer is going well. It's a time when many believers can take part in special outreach activities and enjoy the company of other Christians. If you have spare time, why not find out if there are opportunities near you for Christian service and fellowship? The summer is also a good time to catch up on reading, and I hope

that this issue of YPS will be a good resource for you.

We have a new series starting on the Book of Revelation, thanks to David McGahie. I trust you enjoy the issue and find it to be a blessing.

Andrew Dutton

Biblical masculinity and femininity in the local church

ANDREW DUTTON, NORWICH, ENGLAND

In previous articles we have considered the uniqueness of humans, created in the image of God, Gen. 1. 27, and the distinction between males and females. These together complement each other and can glorify God. However, because of our fallen creation, this partnership, designed by God, is not fully displayed and, instead, there is conflict and disagreement.

The local church is where God's order should be best seen in a world that has rejected Him and His word. It will not be perfect, because local churches are made up of saved sinners, who all still have the flesh! This article outlines some principles of biblical masculinity and femininity as they are expressed in the local church. We cannot address every aspect of the subject but provide a starting point for further study.

General principles

- **All believers are priests.** This subject is dealt with by Peter; he says that believers are an 'holy priesthood', 1 Pet. 2. 5. A priest is someone that has the privilege to enter the presence of God; in the Old Testament, this would be to offer sacrifices on behalf of God's people. In the New Testament, the role of all believers is to 'offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ', v. 5. Paul exhorted the Romans to 'present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God', 12. 1; the context is that believers, together in one body, should fulfil their spiritual gift, to prove the 'will of God', v. 2. Perhaps our most significant opportunity to offer spiritual sacrifices is in remembrance of the Lord Jesus at the breaking of bread; preparation is required by all believers in their worship of the Lord Jesus, expressed audibly by the males.

- **All believers are one in Christ.** 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus', Gal. 3. 28. Regardless of race, status in the world, or sex, Christians are equal in dignity and value, and are one in Christ.
- **All believers have equal responsibility.** Being priests and one in Christ Jesus brings great privilege and responsibility for all believers, male and female, old and young. It is a privilege to be part of a local church, but also a responsibility to study the word of God, pray, and serve the Lord daily in the priestly activities and work of the local church – not just when there is a meeting!
- **There are different spiritual gifts.**¹ God distributes gifts 'to each one individually as He wills', 1 Cor. 12. 11 NKJV, and has given individuals gifts to benefit the people of God, Eph. 4. 12. Some gifts are more prominent than others, but not more important – the unseen gifts of helps, 1 Cor. 12. 28, service, Rom. 12. 7, and showing mercy, v. 8, are vital for the wellbeing of a local church. Interestingly more than half of the ongoing gifts in the New Testament are unseen, compared to prominent gifts such as teaching.
- **There is an order of headship.** 'The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God', 1 Cor. 11. 3. The Corinthian church was not acknowledging the headship of Christ, and Paul was teaching God's order: God, Christ, man, woman. This is order, not inequality, as the Lord Jesus is 'equal with God', Phil. 2. 6. In the local church, this is shown in symbol form, the covered head of the woman and the



uncovered head of the man show the glory of Christ, as the man 'is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man', v. 7. Headship is also shown in roles, 'I will therefore that men pray every where', 1. Tim. 2. 8, they are commanded to lead audibly church gatherings in prayer (this is all men in the church, as prayer isn't a spiritual gift) while 'women keep silence in the churches', 1 Cor. 14. 34. This relates to what is audible – as we have already seen, the silent, spiritual prayer and worship of all believers is important.

Practical implications

So, what are the implications of the principles? First, because God has stated these things in His word, I can believe them, base my convictions on them, and seek to obey them. Second, I can appreciate the wonder of God's purpose and the dignity of serving as male and female together in the local church, for His glory.

¹ There are some recent articles in YPS on spiritual gifts, which may be helpful:

www.youngpreciousseed.org/articles/spiritual-gifts/ and

www.youngpreciousseed.org/articles/spiritual-gifts-continued/

Book of the Revelation – Part 1 – Introduction

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When asked to write this series on the book of Revelation, I thought of the great fascination that many have for the book. As the world hurtles towards the end of this current era, there is a growing interest in trying to understand the future as revealed by the eternal God.

However, this book frightens many people. There are two main reasons. First, the book has a mix of both symbolic language and literal descriptions, resulting in much debate about what it really means. Second, many of the events described are frankly terrifying, as we read about a time of great persecution and future judgement falling on Earth's population.

If you are curious about this book's message, but unsure how to unravel it, then I trust this series will help you discover that for those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ the theme of the book is extremely positive. Whilst challenging, there is no reason to fear it. We will go on a journey of exploration, taking us back into the past, through the present, and into the future. The Revelation is not only about what is commonly called 'end times'! It contains a lot that is directly relevant to us today.

How should we tackle it? As with any book of the Bible, it is worth trying to read it through in one go. It might take you a little more than one hour, but it is well worth it!

As you read, keep a pen and paper beside you, noting down things that seem strange, and phrases or things that seem to appear repeatedly.

When studying a book, we should note the reason why it was written. This book is the **'Revelation of Jesus Christ'** and it also shows **'things which must shortly come to pass'**, 1. 1. The first part is the most important. Throughout the book, the Lord Jesus is being revealed, and what is revealed is revealed by Him. So, in every difficult passage we should look to see how He is being revealed and what we are learning about Him. That is much more important than trying to work out practical details of how future events will unfold!

We see that the book is written to seven literal, first century churches, v. 4, and as local churches in the twenty-first century, it is directly relevant for us. There is also a blessing for those who read, hear, and **keep** what is written, v. 3. This emphasizes that it is not just for our intellectual interest but should impact our behaviour.

It is important to learn how to interpret the many pictures that are painted for us in the book. My clear recommendation is this: when the literal interpretation makes sense, don't turn it into some kind of symbol. The Bible is inspired of God, and His goal in communicating with human beings is to reveal Himself and provide clear guidance for our own good, not to confuse us. We can read Genesis literally, and we should read the Revelation literally, except where it is clear that the language is symbolic. John helpfully points this out on many occasions when he says that what he saw was 'like' something, indicating that it is not literal. The book talks about a literal sinful man who will be a great world leader, but when it describes him as a wild beast with seven heads and ten horns, 13. 1, we understand that this is symbolic, describing something about his origins and character. When interpreting symbolic pictures, we refer to other scriptures and avoid falling into idle speculation to fit our own preferred way of seeing things. Remember that John knew his Old Testament very well. Lots of the answers to difficult bits are hidden away there!

Some things might not make sense to us, but they will be very clear to the people alive at the time when they are happening. We should humbly accept that and pray for help to understand the relevance for us – just as with every other book of the Bible.

If we have the correct attitude – humility to accept our limits, faith to take God at His word, confidence that He has it all under control, and willing obedience to practise what we learn for ourselves – we will find that this book is rich, exciting, and challenging.

Christian basics – Responsibilities of assembly fellowship

STUART SCAMMELL, CARDIFF, WALES

'When, as a young teenager, I came into assembly fellowship, it was a momentous day that I look back on with fondness. Being in assembly fellowship is God's ideal and His plan. Twenty centuries ago, in Jerusalem, the first 'church' or assembly was formed. In Acts chapter 2 verse 42, we find the believers all meeting together and they continued that way. Being in fellowship is not something to be entered into lightly or, in fact, rejected lightly either. It is not membership of a club that you may have a passing interest in or something that you pick up and drop as your mood changes.

It is God's assembly, and as Paul writes to Timothy he uses phrases such as 'pillar and ground of the truth' and 'house of God', 1 Tim. 3. 15. First, this reminds us that it is God's possession and second, that there is a responsibility for the assembly to display God's character to the 'perverse generation' that we have been saved from, Acts 2. 40. These phrases do not refer to the buildings that we meet in, but the believers that assemble together to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Ground of the truth' refers to the foundations; not stone or concrete, but the truth of God's word that we stand on. A 'pillar' is something that is built to hold up. We are to maintain the truth that we have been entrusted with. Pillars were also used in the first century for display, and we, having learnt the truth of the gospel, should be displaying it to others.

Paul gives us his reason for writing: 'that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God', 1 Tim. 3. 15 NKJV. So, fellowship is not mere attendance, allowing things just to passively happen around us, it is so much more. In Acts chapter 2, we observe a very active group of new converts, without a New Testament to read. They had listened to Peter's preaching and responded with repentance and baptism, v. 38. This demonstrates that fellowship is for baptized believers only.

The statement at the start of verse 42 serves as a solemn challenge to us, revealing God's expectations, 'they continued steadfastly'. This means that they were not going to live as before; they were now going to be immersed in the things of God.

To live in any other way dishonours the name of the Lord Jesus and ruins the testimony of God's church. This has serious implications; it not only derails our lives for God, it also makes those observing us think that Christianity is disingenuous and false. They see no reality in our lives and discount the claims of Christ. This turns them away from the

gospel; they face eternity without Christ.

The fledgling church in Acts chapter 2 was genuine. Despite challenges, they were together as often as possible. They did not absent themselves from meetings, they gathered to break bread, pray, and to hear the apostles' teaching. They also continued in fellowship. Biblical fellowship is multifaceted; the Greek word is *koinonia* – it means that they were together in belief, care, social interaction, support, and work.

The church was very dynamic, and so should it be today. Times were difficult and some of the early church would have been poor servants with evident needs. The church had a common interest, they were now brothers and sisters in Christ and all their needs were met fairly.

Koinonia (fellowship) has contained in it the idea of working in partnership. We are called to take the gospel to others, Mark 16. 15, by doing the work of an evangelist, 2 Tim. 4. 5. In Acts chapter 2 verse 46, the early church displayed unity and were living out the gospel before their peers. They earned the right through consistency to tell it out. They had found Christ as Saviour; they were transformed and wanted to tell others. This is not easy, but it is our responsibility as those in fellowship in God's church.

Their faithful activity was rewarded. Verse 47 is a wonderful statement of God's faithfulness, 'the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved' NKJV. If we are part of a local assembly, we need to ensure our lives are honouring to God, and we are gathering together to learn from God's word and to pray. We must have the interest of God's people at heart and be active in telling others of Him, whom we love.



Saints' CVs: Corrie ten Boom

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

CORRIE TEN BOOM 1892-1983

Corrie ten Boom was the youngest daughter of Casper and Cornelia ten Boom. Corrie's father was a watchmaker, based at Haarlem in the Netherlands. To assist with the family business, Corrie became the first registered female watchmaker in the Netherlands in 1922.

Their Christian faith was an important part of the ten Boom family life. Corrie herself became a born-again believer at the age of five. The family frequently prayed 'for the peace of Jerusalem', Ps. 122. 6, recognizing the Jews as 'God's ancient people'.¹

In May 1940, during World War Two, the Nazis invaded the Netherlands and proceeded to occupy the country. As in Germany, Dutch Jews suddenly became a prime target for persecution by the Nazi authorities. Corrie and her family sought to protect Jewish people by hiding them in their large family house. The Dutch resistance built a secret room for the ten Booms to shelter Jews. This hiding place was concealed behind a false wall in Corrie's bedroom; the secret location was well used for many months. The ten Boom family is credited with helping hundreds of Jews evade capture by the Nazis.

In February 1944, Casper and his two daughters, Corrie and Betsie, were arrested by the Gestapo and interrogated. They were accused of sheltering Jewish people in their home. The elderly Casper died after only a few days of imprisonment. Corrie and Betsie were eventually transported to a women's concentration camp in Ravensbrück, Germany. There they endured terrible treatment and forced labour.

Tragically, Betsie died at Ravensbrück in December 1944. Before her passing, Betsie whispered to her sister: '[We] must tell people what we have learned here. We must tell them that there is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still'.² A few days later, Corrie was released from the concentration camp, although she was not sure why she had been granted freedom. Later she discovered the usually efficient Nazi guards had made an administrative error in approving her release. After the end of the war, she publicly forgave her former captors. One of the most famous moments in her later life involved meeting a former Ravensbrück guard who approached her after she had given a speech in Munich. He asked for forgiveness, explaining that he had become a Christian since the war. Her response was 'I forgive you, brother



... with all my heart!'³ Corrie related this incident as an example of Christian forgiveness in action, as she travelled the world telling people about her experiences and her faith in God.

One of her most memorable comments was on Micah chapter 7 verse 19, 'Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea'. Corrie explained how our sins are 'forgiven and forgotten and to warn the accuser He puts a sign saying "No fishing allowed"'.⁴

Corrie was honoured by the state of Israel in 1968 with recognition as 'Righteous Among the Nations' for risking her life to save Jews during the Holocaust. The building where her family lived in Haarlem is now a museum known as the Corrie ten Boom House. Visitors can participate in guided tours around the building and see the hiding place where the ten Booms helped to save Jews from danger.

As a trained watchmaker, Corrie appreciated precision engineering where every piece of an intricate mechanism must be in exactly the right place for the watch to work properly. Corrie similarly understood the sovereignty of God, working in her life so every piece fell into place perfectly, according to His will, allowing her to serve Him effectively.

¹ CORRIE TEN BOOM, *A Prisoner and Yet*, SPCK, 1959, pg. 96.

² *Ibid*, pg. 160.

³ CORRIE TEN BOOM, *Clippings from my Notebook*, SPCK, 1983, pg. 78.

⁴ *Ibid*, pg. 84.