

Topic	Real Men and Strong Women
Reference	1 Corinthians 11:2-16
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Speaker	Arnold Lim

A bit of clarification, we have been talking a bit about the body of Christ and the differences of them, Charismatics, Evangelicals, Catholics and Protestants. We do not endorse everything the Catholics do; in the same way we are not saying we endorse everything the Baptist do. We say that the body of Christ is big, we shouldn't judge people by labels.

During my time Madonna was considered as strong woman. She knew exactly what she wanted. I don't know whether she got what she wanted, whether she is happy, but is that what a strong woman is. How about man? What is the real man? Let me tell you what a real man is biblically. If you are a real man in the house, I want you to turn to the woman next to you and repeat after me, "You are a beauty queen from heaven".

This morning, we are going to talk about a difficult topic and in the church circle there is this debate going on. I want to give you the two terms, we are talking about grace among charismatics, evangelicals, protestants, Catholics, I want to give you this term in case you are not aware of it. The first terms is called complementarianism and this is the position FBC holds. It is a belief that a husband should be the spiritual head of the family, and that husband and wife will have different and complementary roles in their marriage. And let me suggest this is echoed in the church, because the family in the church mirror one another. Other churches practice egalitarianism – the belief that there are no separate gender roles in marriage, and that husband and wife will lead the family collaboratively.

Now I want to stress again this morning, let us have grace between those in our midst who believe in being egalitarian and let's have grace with those who believe it should be complementarian. Because I've been doing a lot of reading. People get very ungracious. They throw accusations and they badmouth one another but this is the topic we want to go about today but this has bearings in the church and the family. And there is an extreme you can go. If you are too complementarian, you basically become a chauvinist, the man decides everything. If you are too egalitarian, you become gender less, you become blended. It doesn't matter whether you are a man or a woman, you can do everything. So there is a danger of going everywhere.

So today, we are going to look at this. We are going to ask the question, at the end the service, what is the biblical definition about real man and a strong woman.

Whatever, I am going to say this morning is my view only, because this is a very-very divisive topic. It is not even FBC's official stand. I and Peter have spoken about this. This is one of the most divisive topics in the Bible. It is not so simple and Peter did a talk about it. I am going to revisit it from another angle, but I want to clarify that this is my view.

Number one, I want to give you this text. This is the principal text Peter went through and I added chapter 14, which he is going to go through later. Let me tell you, why it is so difficult. The first few verses I highlighted the word 'head'. The problem with it, the Greek word is called 'kalasi'. It has two meanings. It either means headship, authority or it means source and there is a equal debate about it. Why do they say source? Because when you go to verse 12, it says

¹² *For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.*

So the Greek word is disputed and is equally disputed amongst scholars. Number two, the perplexing verse is verse 7

⁷ *A man ought not to cover his head, **since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.***

Why only man is the image and glory of God? Why not woman? So that's the other complexing verse, and this verse, this is one of the key verses which a lot of, especially in the complementarian camp cannot understand, verse 10

¹⁰ *It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels.*

Why? And the language used here for angels, the Greek rendering actually is very clearly messenger. Actually, it is a same rendering when you talk about Rahab, the spies come to her. So the context here is about sending a message. Then it is complicated at the very end, because verse 14 from the veil he certainly goes to hair styles

¹⁴ *Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, ¹⁵but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.*

So is it about the veil or about the long hair? So there is a lot of confusion on that. Now added to the complication is chapter 14 because verse 5 says

1 Cor 11.5

⁵ ***But every woman who prays or prophesies** with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved.*

1 Cor 14:4

⁴ ***Women should remain silent** in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.*

So isn't Paul contradicting himself in three chapters. And let me just complicate it more so. He says, if

³⁵ *If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.*

What if the woman is not married? It is very complicated. Anybody who tells you they got clarity, I suggest needs to work on their pride. So we are going to unpeel this slowly because this is great bearings to us. I want to give you the context. Chapters 11, 12, 13 and 14 is about the church's worship service. He begins in the first few verses here about men and women in the church service, symbol veil. He then continues about rich and poor people in the church during the service, symbol the Lord's Supper. That's how the text ties. And then he goes to Chapter 12 about gifts in the church and chapter 13 anchors that you do everything in love. Meaning, 11 and 12 is tied to 13. This entire chapter is tied to 13. Then he goes back to 14 about prophesy in tongues and he ends that with this verse. So the whole thing is tied.

So we are talking about woman in church, that is the context. So we are only going to give two points

- Women's rights, Men's rights and Paul's views on rights.
- The image of God and gender roles in the church.

Is it the responsibility of Makarios Home kids to wash the chairs of FBC alone? No. Let's just say, one day the church ran out of budget and the church says, okay all you fine gentleman and woman here after service today go and wash the chairs. Do you think you should do it? Why I am telling you this, because we forget the previous chapters that ties to this and it is something that goes all the way back to chapter 6. You see Paul's thinking is tied. Chapter 6, there is a lawsuit going on, it tells the believers, give up your right to sue a brother for the sake of others and then in 8, 9 and 10 he talks about rights. The first right is the right to eat meat offered to idols. And he says if it stumbles someone else, give up that right. That's chapter 13, that's love. Then he goes to chapter 9, rights of an apostle. He says, I am going to stumble you, going to give up that right. Then he goes back to chapter 10. Food offered to idols, give up right.

What is Paul saying? Paul is talking about a Christian gives up his rights. You see, he is going from food offered to idols to rights of apostles to gender differentiation. Because when you talk about gender roles, is always about rights. My right as a woman, my right as a man and he uses this as the verse to tie into the chapter. No

1 Cor 10:23-24

²⁴ *No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.*

In this particular case, man you should seek the good of woman, woman should seek the good of man. So when we see things like this in this debate on prolife and prochoice. They say, it is my right, my body, you narrow-minded Christians are very patriarchal, you man are trying to control me. You know what Paul would say, yes you are right, you don't have a right over your body, you husband has and all the women go and fight and then he flips it. He says in the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body. So Paul would say what right, woman's rights, man's rights, you have no rights. That is our fertile ground. Why you have no rights? Because the moment you talk about rights, you become God. You are God of your life, I control my body, my destiny, I do what I want, I am king of my life but the Christian faith is about a savior who gave up his rights, who being very much in the nature of God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. So that is our grounding, that's the gospel and if you are not a Christian here today, we encourage you to look at this from that perspective. Because in the end, it is not about man or woman, we all want to be gods in our lives, but Christ loved us so much, He died for us, so that He can be king of your life.

Here is the way we should approach this. All of you husbands give up your rights, because you love your wife. All wives give up your rights because you love your husbands, and this is much harder to do than in practice. That's why today's talk is mainly about the church.

When a Pakistani woman comes into our church they will put on the veil, because it is in their culture. So in Pakistan they call this dupatta.

1 Cor 14.5

⁵ *But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved.*

They understand it. But to us today if we apply to FBC we will say what logic. This is a cultural issue. So let me tell you about this and Peter talk a little bit about honor and shame. I want to go a larger. It is called what we call a collectivism culture. Where the culture of the society is very homogenous and the expectations of that. Let me just tell you the main context. The context about maintaining gender distinctions is culturally appropriate ways while ministering in a worship service. That's a mouth full but that is really what the text is. It is not about the home, it is not about gay issues or woman being bossy or man leading, it isn't really about that and he says something which Peter brought up, which I want us to reinforce.

³ *But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*

So this parallel running is coming on. Man is the head of woman; God is the head of Christ and then he gives two cultural context. Verse 4 is about the veil, verse 14 is about hairstyles. Why? Because that is very much the context of Corinth. Let me give you an example. Last week, there was this incident about this Indian family who stole things from Bali. Now what was interesting was the response from the Indian people. An Indian TV call it national disgrace, because Indians has as collectivism culture. So when you go to Bali and steal things you represent India, you shame India.

My point is this, in certain cultures, what you do represents the tribe or the family. So let me give you the difference. In Corinth culture, it is collectivism.

- Honor Shame tradition, what you do brings shame in particular to the father.
- Roles of husbands, wives, children, parents are clearly defined. You cannot say, you know what, I don't feel like working. I am going to go on a holiday for three years and then feel myself. They say hello your dad was a farmer; you are a farmer. No discussion.
- Generally patriarchal and hierarchical.
- Public dressing symbolizes the culture.

In Roman society, there is no such thing as equality. Woman cannot vote, woman cannot own property and if a woman of a low class try to marry a man from a higher class she has to be a concubine. Paul was a free citizen, they call it a free man and then they are freed people, slaves who became free. You are second class citizen. Roman society does not acknowledge everybody is equal, no such thing. So when the church

brings this up, there is neither male or female, slave or freed man, it is completely radical, because Roman society is hierarchical, and the most critical thing is the dressing symbolizes the culture. It is beyond the veil.

Today, in Western society

- What you do has no bearing on your family. You are solely responsible.
- Roles of husbands, wives, children, parents are individual choices.
- Leans towards inclusive equality.
- Public dressing is irrelevant to the culture.

This is why we have difficulty reading the text, because it seems very alien to us. The woman wore what is known as a stola, because it was the veil they put on when they worship. If you are a high-class man you wore a toga, if you are an ordinary citizen you wear normal dress. The dressing defines your roles, and have you noticed in the paterfamilias of the Roman family, the father had absolute power. So this is the context and the veil represented that. So the veil has two meanings. One, it is about the woman's place in society and the it also points towards the headship of the man and here is one thing a lot of people miss, it points to the head of the family as protector. So you got to get that in mind. Now he is appropriating a cultural tradition of that time but modifying its symbolism to a Christian context. That's the key, because Jews were doing it and the Romans when they went to the temple, they did the same thing. So Paul is doing something, he did in the Book of Acts when he came to the altar of an unknown God. He is taking a culture of that time, but he is taking what is good, thinking of what is bad, he is bringing it to the church, and he is pointing it back to creation order. that's what a lot of people miss.

So when you tie it today, you can see a way it flows, why because today women kick butt, women carry guns, women are CEOs, I mean a woman in Rome and a woman today is completely different, but there is a culture and what is the culture of today. It is a culture of inclusivity. Now, it is important to pick this up. Because I believe if Paul was alive today, he would have done the same thing. Why? Because as in the Roman culture certain parts of it was good, he took it to the church, and he modified it. There are things here which are very biblical.

Being inclusive is not bad, what is bad is when in being inclusive goes all the way where men becomes women. The veil has two symbols. The principal symbol is that woman is a glory of man. The secondary symbol is that, it points to the man as the image of glory of God. Keep this in mind, because the head of woman is man and the head of Christ is God and then Paul gives the proposition, he goes to Genesis

⁸For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; ⁹neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

¹⁸The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper(helpmeet) suitable for him." Genesis 2:18

How then is man in the image of God and glory alone. It comes from this earlier verse.

²⁷So God created mankind in his own image, *in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.* Genesis 1:27

So let's recap a bit, man and woman are equal, but there is a specific role for woman. Man got an ego, he thinks he can be alone, he can't. He needs a woman; he needs a helpmeet. Like an old song goes, it is a man's world, but it is nothing without a woman. And why is that? Because it points to God, because the head of Christ is God. So let me distillate it down for you. Man and woman are equal but where did this come from. It came from the dance of the trinity. Because in the nature of God, in the image of God is, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; equal but the head is Father. So you cannot now be complementarian because the image of God is already in hierarchy. Jesus is equal with God, but God is head.

The idea is image, that is what God made. The man led the woman. He went to the garden of Eden, he tried to open the Durian because ego, like that, the woman said don't be so stupid, cut it like that. Then the man climb up the garden of Eden, take the banana down. The man was not smart, the woman helped but the man led. And they had dominion over the earth. The man try to wrestle the animal, and the woman instructs to take caution. Then a serpent came to the woman and she made a fatal flaw. The serpent offered her a fruit, she is the helpmeet, what she is supposed to do, she is supposed to go back to the man and discuss. Suddenly, she takes over the role of the man, she eats and then gives it to the man. And then when the man is exposed, he relinquishes all his responsibility, say God not my problem, the woman did it. You put her here with me. Ever since then man and woman have been fighting. So God brought in Christ and by his death on the cross, he told man assume back your leadership and die for your wife, that's your leadership role. You want to submit, you die for her and in church you protect woman. And the cross, he tells woman, I son of God submitted to the father, so you submit to headship and we are now reimagined back.

Let's go for a bit of application. Because Timothy chapter 2:8-15 says this

1 Timothy 2:8-15.

¹¹A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Paul is arguing from creation. So when we look at this text, Paul is also arguing from creation and so here is the dilemma and I am going to give you my own view. The complementarians have a problem, they argue Timothy as universal, they argue Corinthian as cultural. That is contradictory. Both arguments are from Genesis. The egalitarian people are right, they are consistent. They are saying, both are cultural. Why? Because in the Timothy text Paul says I do not permit, he doesn't use the word 'God', it is cultural. The egalitarian argument is right. It is both cultural. So you have a deadlock. What is the solution? So Arnold Lim says the solution is 'the veil' and I suggest to you humbly the veil has a place today. What we don't realize up to the twentieth century, the church used veils and all major scholars, Martin Lloyd Jones, RC Sprout, Bruce Walkee, all support the veil.

In 19th century London woman had some rights, they are not like in first century Corinth, they veiled. But after the war, woman dropped the veil for many reasons. Now I tell you, why this make sense because the veil is the only way you can understand the angel. Because it is the mark of authority. The angel comes to the church, he sees a woman with a veil, he sends a message back to God, woman has authority to pray and to prophesize. To me, it is the only way the text make sense.

The veil has a place in the church. Now, I want to read you a testimony of a woman. She was from a Reformed Presbyterian Church, they are very bible based. She was in a church that did not veil, she read scripture, she struggle with scripture and she veil and this is what she said,

Do you struggle with the fear of what other people will think of you for covering your head? Most of us who cover probably have. When I first began to drape a scarf over my hair in church, I was petrified. I was the only one. While my husband and I were wholly convinced that this is what Scripture mandates and were glad to follow it, my personality is that of someone who strongly dislikes sticking out or doing anything that causes people to notice. Would I lose old friends? Repel potential friends? Be gossiped about? What would others think? Would they think I was legalistic, doing this because I believed it made me better in God's eyes? Would they think that I sat in judgment of women who didn't cover as I did? Neither of these was true, and the thought of it all made me sick to my stomach. The one thing that has most sustained me through these questions is to rest my eyes on the Savior, and to do it for love of Him.

Christiana Kuhlow, Head Covering Movement

Here is a woman who studied scripture. She was in a church that doesn't veil, came to a conscience decision that the veil mattered, and she came to church and she veiled. Angela Dekker tied Corinthians 11 to 13, she tied it to the love of others, which is biblically very true. I want to make a point. You look at the head scarf, doesn't it remind of something. Doesn't it remind you of the way another culture veils. It does. Now I will tell you this, if I am woman of that culture and I have been wearing that veil for a long time and it was a sign of subjugation and I came to a church where I saw a woman with a veil, her hair was exposed but it was a sign of liberation. What did the church just do? The church just builds a bridge for evangelism. To me that is the most powerful reason why we should not second guess the veil.

Angela Dekker describes to us the serenity and liberation she feels when wearing a head garment as well as the negativity she receives especially from other women. It is inspiring to watch as her dedication strengthens to remain veiled irrespective of the adversity she has faced. Sister Fransisca tells a tale of the sense of unity her veil brings to her and other Muslim women. Despite differing on religions, the covering of heads brings together different women from different cultures and societies as one liberating them from the subjugation of the lustful eyes of men allowing these women to be seen with an equal intellect, rather than an object of her beauty. Ahlulbayt Documentary, 2016

What I am telling you is that, it is a talking point. One day, all of us will go before God and God will ask us, did we minister to certain cultures and I pause it to you, the veil in the church is a very powerful symbol to connect to this culture. That's why this is Arnold Lim's view and it is a view I struggle with. I read many times. So

What is Arnold teaching today??? Is he asking women to veil in FBC??? Confused.....

I am not saying that. I am saying, we need to have symbols or if there are no symbols we need to really remember the mandate of creation and the mandate of creation is woman you complete man, man you protect woman to the point of laying down your life. If every household did that, there will be less divorces.

So let me tell you about the glory of man. To some people they think a hot girl with an old man is his glory. That is not the glory. It is a terrible depiction of woman being the glory of man. A better picture is the woman is the crown of a man's head. The crown is beautiful, but she puts it on the head of a very balding ugly man, she completes him. So woman here are the crown, all of us losing our hair, you put on me you complete me. That's the sermon for today. You are the helpmeet in FBC and that's why today we had a lot of helpmeet coming up. So here is a role call of the things we need woman to do in FBC:

- Prayer warriors
- Prophetic gifting
- Church worship service announcers
- Bible study teachers
- Theologians
- Missionaries
- Deaconess
- Women specific ministries
- Ministries where women generally do better than men

Woman when they do this, they bring a certain grace. A woman comes and she does things very softly. A man paints a big picture, the woman fills in the details. So this morning we call all woman come forward and serve FBC because the harvest is plentiful, and the workers are few.

Man are not leader only; they are servant leader. Now here is the question. The servant leader points to Christ. He lays down his life for the flock and he protects woman.

If a woman is a victim of domestic violence where is a safe place she can shelter?
The right word is church.

If a woman is a victim of domestic violence who can she seek comfort from?
The right word is elder or pastor.

Do you think so? I will tell the evangelical church has been a colossal failure in this area. Paige Patterson is the president of the Southwestern Baptist Seminary. There is a recording of him counselling a woman and telling the woman, you need to submit, go back to your husband and the recording says, he says get ready he is going to get violent with you. That is completely unbiblical and here is the problem with man. We have taken the submission thing out of context and forgetting our roles as protectors.

That's why the movements like church tools, silence is not spiritual, this is the shame of the spiritual church because this comes out of a secular movement called 'me too'. The world is leading the church, that's the shame of the church. Because man have squandered their responsibility to protect woman. In

Asian culture it is worse, because Asian culture, there is a culture of shame, you don't bring it up. In his book 'Angry men and the Women who loved them' Paul Hegstrom says this

"Many times in a Church world, submission is held over the heads of women by men who are emotionally manipulative or abusive in order to get their way and maintain power and control."

So I want to say message to man and maybe I am going to take this to the household, you want a better marriage, you make sure your wife knows you are prepared to die for her and before your ego says, of course lah I am willing to do, hello, before you say you can die, give up your rights for your life, give up your TV rights, give up your golf rights, give up your all rights then your wife will be convinced you will die for me, either that, 'all talk lah'. Man protect. The statistics for domestic violence in Malaysia is going up and the church has to shine for Jesus in this area. This is the great commission. We need real men to lead the church in the following ways:

- Protect women from domestic violence- emotional, mental and physical.
- Uphold single mothers and fathers.
- Exalt singles.
- Give back dignity to divorcees.
- Have a lifestyle at home that demonstrates they are willing to die for their wives.
- Serve in any way in the church where you see the need and not get intimidated if your wife knows the bible better, is more visible than you in church, etc.

(this is how you are the image and glory of God)

So these are little things we do. So let me end with this, what is a real men and what is a strong women. I suggest to you, why does scripture not give a clear definition because the Bible is not interested in independence, the real word is, 'Real Men Loves Strong Women'. Piper say this

When men and women are together, more of God's glory shows than if we were all in little silos of individuality.
John Piper

What is the real man, what is a strong woman? It is when they are interdependent on one another, not overly dependent and not independent, interdependent and complimenting one another.