

# How Newness of Life in Christ Entails Sharing Authority and Leadership 1

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In Paul's teaching, the new creation entails the equal standing of man and woman in Christ not only in their spiritual standing before God but also in their practical standing in the church.

Galatians 6:15 "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the **new creation**."

2 Corinthians 5:16 "16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. ... if anyone is in Christ, the **new creation** has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (NIV 2011)

## Reasons **Galatians 3:28** should not be divorced from actual life in the church:

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.: It is "not speaking of relationships in the family and church, but of standing before God."

### Its specific cultural context require practical application (84–85):

Early Jewish prayer: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast not made me a heathen ... a bondman ... [or] a woman." Jews excluded these groups from required study of the Law. Paul's repudiation of these distinctions must entail the opposite: full inclusion in church life.

### Its specific historical contexts require practical application (82–83):

Galatians 2:11–14 "I [Paul] opposed him [Peter] to his face, because he stood condemned ... [of] hypocrisy ... [and] not acting in line with the truth of the gospel" (NIV 2011), actual discrimination.

### Themes in Paul's teachings on new life in Christ imply men and women sharing authority/leadership:

1. The gifts of the Spirit are for all believers, including the gift of teacher as exemplified in Priscilla (Acts 18:26), of apostle exemplified in Junia (Romans 16:7), and the gift of prophecy as exemplified at Pentecost, in Philip's four unmarried daughters (Acts 21:7), and in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and 1 Corinthians 14:1, 3–5, 24, 26, 29–32, 39. (73–74)
2. The priesthood of all believers. (73)
3. Mutual submission in the church (Ephesians 5:21). (71)
4. The nature of church leadership as service, reflecting Jesus's servant leadership. (70–71)
5. Mutual submission in marriage (1 Corinthians 7; Ephesians 5:21). (71–72)

### Six Factors in the literary context of Galatians 3:28 demand practical application:

1. "Transformed Life" theme of Galatians 1:4; 2:19–20; 3:2, 5, 14, 28; 4:3, 5–7; 5:1, 19–26; 6:15. (103–104)
2. The entire book of Galatians is a frontal attack against favored status or privileges for Jews. In this context, the negative form of this assertion shows that Paul intended Galatians 3:28 to prohibit excluding Gentiles, slaves, or women as a group from any privilege or position in the church, for that would divide them.
3. The absence in Christ of division between Jew and Gentile is the foundation on which Paul denies the need for circumcision, the central practical issue of Galatians. This demands that Paul did **not** intend the application of Galatians 3:28 to be restricted to spiritual status, but intended it to have real life application.
4. "You are all one body in Christ Jesus" in 3:28 implies church life. The adjective 'one' implies a noun, 'body.'
5. "For" (γάρ) in both Galatians 3:26 and 27 shows Paul intended to give **reasons** why believers are no longer under Law (23–25, e.g. "purity regulations" with real life application) but are sons of God through faith. (26)
6. Galatians 2:6 affirms that God does not show favoritism. This requires equal treatment of women.

## **Four factors in the wording of Galatians 3:28 demand practical application:**

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1. “No Jew-Greek division” must apply to life in the church since their equal standing is the issue. (89–90)
2. The male-female division does not exist in Christ (85–86, 92–94). Logically, then, since the male-female distinction does not exist in Christ, this division should not restrict privilege in his church.
3. Each of these three groups specifically identifies social standing, so to say that they have nothing to do with social standing is to deny the most obvious application of this language. It is irresponsible to interpret Paul’s repudiation of ethnic, economic, and gender ranking in Christ as compatible with continued ethnic, economic, or gender ranking in the church.
4. “You are all one body in Christ Jesus” implies a social unit and so should not be limited to the spiritual state of individuals but must apply to church life (90–92). These barriers do not divide the social community of the church. Status-based discrimination and special privilege is contrary to the unity of Christ’s body. (94–96)

## **Passages parallel to Galatians 3:28 specify practical application:**

Galatians 5:6; 6:15; Colossians 3:9–12; 1 Corinthians 11:11; 12:12–27; Ephesians 2:14 and 19–22.

# **1 Corinthians 11:2–16**

1. **There is widespread agreement among complementarians and egalitarians that Paul here affirms women praying and prophesying in church.**
2. **Is there a garment head-covering custom in all churches?** v.16 “We have no such custom.”
3. **What was disgraceful?** Men put a garment over their heads as a sign of reverence. Abundant graphic evidence shows it was not disgraceful for a woman to be in public without a garment over her head. Vv. 14–15 identify what the shameful head coverings are: “Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, 15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.” (141-73)
4. **1st key cultural insight: women’s hair let down loose was regarded as disgraceful in Paul’s day and symbolized “undisciplined sexuality.”** (147–166)
  - The background to 11:6 is the Numbers 5 “bitter water” ordeal: a priest lets down the hair of an accused adulteress, and if she is convicted, he cuts it off.
5. **2nd key cultural insight: it was disgraceful for men to display effeminate hair.** (141–46)
  - Livy 39.13.10-12 says of Dionysiac initiation rites “There were more lustful practices among men with one another than among women.”
6. **10 key reasons favor interpreting “head” (κεφαλή) as “source” rather than “authority.”** (115–39)
  - The standard Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible hardly ever uses the word “head” (κεφαλή) when the Hebrew word for “head” meant leader. (119–21)
  - It is simply not true that “authority over” was a well-established meaning of “head” (κεφαλή) in Greek literature. (121–23)
  - “Source” is an established meaning for “head” (κεφαλή) listed from the earliest Greek lexicons to the present. (123-28)
  - The items listed in 1 Cor 11:3 are not listed in a descending or ascending order of authority, but they are listed chronologically: man came from Christ’s creative work, woman came from “the man,” Christ came from God in the incarnation. (129)

- “Source” fits better than “authority” as the meaning of κεφαλή in “the Christ is [ἔστιν] the “head” (κεφαλή) of every man” (1 Cor. 11:3). (129–30)
  - “Source” fits better than “authority” as the meaning of “head” (κεφαλή) in “the man [with an article] is “head” (κεφαλή) of woman.” (130–31)
  - “Source” fits better than “authority” as the meaning of “head” (κεφαλή) in “God [with an article] is the “head” (κεφαλή) of the Christ.” (131–36)
  - This passage discusses disgraceful head-covering practices in worship, not hierarchical roles. The only reference to authority affirms the woman’s authority. (141–87)
  - This passage says nothing about man’s authority but rather affirms woman’s authority. Paul recognizes her authority to pray and prophecy in 11:5, her authority over her own head in 11:10, and her equal standing with man in 11:11–12. (181–98)
  - Much early Greek commentary on 11:3 specifically interprets κεφαλή to mean “source.” Cyril of Alexandria’s *De recta fide ad Arcadium et Marinam* 5<sup>2</sup>.63E: “The source [ἀρχή] of man is the Creator God [τὸν ποιήσαντα Θεόν]. Thus we say that “the head [κεφαλή] of every man is Christ,” because he was made [πεποιήται] through him and brought forth to birth.... And the head [κεφαλή] of woman is man, because she was taken from his flesh and has him as her source [ἀρχή]. Likewise, the head [κεφαλή] of Christ is God, because He is from Him according to nature.” Theodore of Mopsuestia, Saint Basil, Athanasius, Eusebius, Photius, Ambrosiaster say “head” means “source.” (136–37)
- 7. Verse 3 lays out the underlying logic for the whole passage:** Men in the church should show respect to Christ (their source since He created them) by not repudiating the way He created them as men. Therefore, men should not display long effeminately styled hair. Women should show respect to man since woman had her source in the man, Adam (repeated in v. 8, 9,12). Therefore, women should not symbolize repudiation of their marriage vows by letting their hair down loose. (115–17)
- 8. Paul begins v. 11 with the standard word for “breaking off a discussion and emphasizing what is important”** (BDAG 826 c). In every occurrence in Paul’s letters, “Nevertheless” (πλὴν) points to the matter of his central concern, and in each case it indicates a change in perspective. “But woman is not separate from man, nor is man separate from woman in the Lord.” Verse 11 expresses the theological basis for Paul’s judgment in 11:5 that women as well as men may pray and prophecy in the church. (189–90)
- 9. The central question about the meaning of verse 11 regards the word χωρίς (“separate from”).** “Independent” is not listed regarding persons in standard Greek dictionaries. It “adds a nuance which goes beyond the adverb χωρίς” (Thiselton). Nor is interdependence distinctively “in the Lord.” (190–95)
- 10. A translation like, “But woman is not separate from man, nor is man separate from woman in the Lord”** fits all but four of Paul’s 16 uses of this word. Most important, it fits this context perfectly. It affirms that, in spite of the created differences between man and woman (which should be upheld in this life), Paul’s key point is that the barriers that separate man and woman have been overcome in Christ. (189–95)
- 11. Verse 12 further argues that both men and women should respect the other as their source.** “For just as woman is from man, so also man comes through woman, and all this is from God.” (195–98)
- 12. Verses 11–12 clarify that Paul is *not* attempting to derive a hierarchy of authority of men over women** from his “head” statements in verse 3 or excluding women from being in “the image of God” in 7. (189–98)
- 13. This passage, therefore, affirms women leading worship in prayer and prophecy** and justifies this since “woman is not separate from man, nor is man separate from woman in the Lord.”
- Thus, it applies the Galatians 3:28 principle of no male-female division to church leadership.

## 7 of the 10 people Paul calls co-workers in ministry in Romans 16 are women (61–68) 4

Phoebe, “deacon of the church of Cenchrea” (Romans 16:1) “leader of many, including myself” (Romans 16:2); Junia, “outstanding among the apostles” (16:7) Eldon J. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* Fortress, 2005 Prisca, “my fellow worker (συνεργός) in Christ Jesus” (Rom 16:3; cf. Philippians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 16:16 calls believers to submit to all συνεργοῦντι), “leader of many including myself” Priscilla taught Apollos Acts 18:26. Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis “worked hard (κοπιᾶω) in the Lord.” Romans 16:6, 12.

1 Corinthians 16:16 calls believers to submit to all who work hard (κοπιῶντι). 1 Thessalonians 5:12 identifies “those who work hard (κοπιῶντας)” with “those who have charge over you in the Lord.”

Paul names the wives of Aquila and Andronicus, two of the three men here, highlighting their shared authority.

Origen of Alexandria in the AD 100s and 200s, the first great textual scholar, Bible commentator, and systematic theologian clearly states that Romans 16: “teaches that there were women ordained in the church’s ministry by the apostle’s authority. ... Not only that—they ought to be ordained in the ministry, because they helped in many ways and by their good services deserved the praise even of the apostle.”

Archbishop Chrysostom: “Even to be an apostle is great, but also to be prominent among them—consider how wonderful a song of honor that is... How great the wisdom of this woman that she was even deemed worthy of the apostle’s title. ... How can it be that yet another woman is honored and proclaimed victorious! We men are put to shame yet again. Or rather, we are not merely put to shame; we have a different honor conferred on us. For it is an honor to have such women as these among us, though we are put to shame in that we are left so far behind them... Mary worked hard among them, because along with teaching she performed other ministries besides. ... The women of those days were more spirited than lions, sharing with the apostles their labors for the gospel’s sake.” *Homilies on Romans* 31. NPNF<sup>1</sup> 11:554, Epp, *Junia*, 79; ACCS 6:371–72.

## 1 Corinthians 7 mutual authority and reciprocity between husband and wife

7:2: “Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.”

7:3: “Let the husband fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.”

7:4: “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but his wife does.”

7:5: “Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent.”

7:10–11: “A wife must not separate from her husband ... and a husband must not leave his wife.”

7:12–13: “If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not leave her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not leave him.”

7:14: “For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her husband.”

7:15: “But if the unbeliever separates ... the believing brother or sister is not bound.”

7:16: “How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?”

7:28: “But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned.”

7:32, 34a: “An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord... An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord ...”

7:33, 34b: “But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided... But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.”