

Treat Women with Honor

If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. (Deuteronomy 21:18-19)

Women and the Image of God

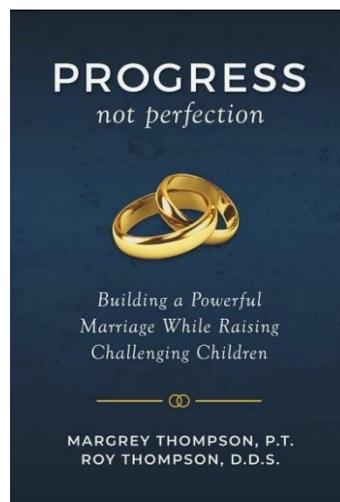
In most places and in much of human history, women have faced more discrimination and hardship than men, but wherever Christianity has gone, women _____. Because men and women complete each other and share the image of God, we treat women with honor.

Protecting the Rights of Women (Deut. 21:10-21)

- **Deut. 21:10-14. Captives.** The Israelites did not have the resources to maintain POW camps, so captives were distributed among the victors as workers. **Take her as your wife.** Unlike in other Bronze Age cultures where male captors were allowed to abuse female servants, in Israel, if a captor wanted a female POW, he had to marry her and respect her rights. **Shave her head.** The woman was allowed to mourn the loss of her family before marriage. **Let her go.** If the couple divorces, the man has to give the woman her freedom.
- **21:15-17. Two wives.** Polygamy was not God’s ideal, but it was allowed as a means of expanding the family and protecting women. Americans marry for happiness; ancients married for survival. Bigger families had a greater chance of survival. Polygamy was a form of _____. **Rights of the firstborn.** To prevent one’s estate from being diminished by constantly dividing it between heirs, the bulk of the inheritance stayed with the firstborn male (called *primogeniture*). A polygamous man could not give his inheritance to a son just because he favored that boy’s mother.
- **21:18-21. Stubborn and rebellious son.** Children owe their parents obedience and honor, and a culture that consistently dishonors its parents _____. **Father and mother.** Mothers are to be honored as well as fathers—a remarkable law in an age where women were largely invisible.



Bedouin women today live lives similar to women of the OT. This colorized photo of a Bedouin woman from c. 1900 reveals her strength and confidence. (Colorize My Past, <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com>)



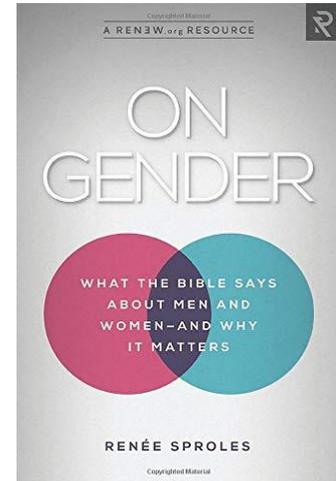
Our own Roy and Margrey Thompson on how to raise children while enjoying a great marriage. Available at Amazon.

Thinking Aloud

- Women in ancient Israel were generally wards of men, but one should not assume that they resented this arrangement or that it made them weak. The women of ancient Israel were _____.
- Many OT laws about marriage sound strange to us, but they are actually legal protections for women against abuse. If we are to understand these laws, we should read them in the cultural milieu of the Bronze Age.
- Jesus teaches us that many OT laws about marriage were made in concession to human weakness. God’s standard for marriage is one man and one woman committed to each another for life (Matt. 19:1-9).
- Women are partners with men in the work of the Gospel. In the NT, women prophesied (Acts 21:7-9), prayed (Acts 1:14), taught (Acts 18:24-26), hosted church (Col. 4:15), served as missionaries (Rom. 16:3), and appear to have served as deacons (Rom. 16:2).

Biblical Ways to Treat a Woman

10. If you are a child, _____ (Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:1-3).
9. If you are an older woman, train younger women to live by Christian virtues (Titus 2:3-5).
8. If you are a man, _____ to see in women the holy image of God (1 Thess. 4:3-6).
7. Be considerate of women (1 Peter 3:7).
6. Treat women with respect (1 Peter 3:7).
5. Practice _____ with women (Eph. 5:21).
4. Encourage women in ministry (Mark 14:6-9; Rom. 16:3-5).
3. Bless women and praise them (Prov. 31:28).
2. Love women as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25-29).
1. Recognize the beauty of men and women jointly sharing in the inheritance of God's grace (Gen. 1:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 Cor. 11:12; Gal. 3:28).



Our own Renée Sproles discusses what the Bible says about men and women. Available at Amazon

The OT Laws: Not as Strange as they Seem

- OT laws are based on timeless precepts, but the individual statutes of the OT address circumstances unique to ancient Israel.
- Many OT laws presume the social system of *wardship*, where people submitted to others for protection and provision (see p. 43). Wardship was a necessary social system for survival in the harsh days of the Bronze Age, but for Americans wardship can be difficult to appreciate.
- When compared to the laws of other Bronze Age cultures, the laws of the OT were liberating and humane. Most laws have to do with protecting the rights of others.
- Christ fills full the OT law, and only in Christ can we find the precept of a law.
- Many OT statutes were offered as concessions for the fallenness of humanity. This includes marriage laws. (Matt. 19:8).
- Many OT laws are *casuistic* (“what to do if”) rather than *apodictic* (“moral absolutes”). Casuistic laws do not necessarily approve of actions; they only describe what to do if an action should occur.
- Just because the OT relates an event from Israelite history doesn’t mean God approved of the event. Some OT stories are not intended to be role model stories.
- If you find OT laws strange, consider some of the laws of the U.S. In America, federal law provides hundreds of millions of tax-payer dollars for organizations that specialize in killing babies. Whose laws are barbaric?

Answers: have been elevated, social security, cannot survive, strong smart and bold, obey your mother, look past sex, mutual submission