

UNIVERSITATEA „AUREL VLAICU” DIN ARAD  
ȘCOALA DOCTORALĂ INTERDISCIPLINARĂ  
FACULTATEA DE ȘTIINȚE UMANISTE ȘI  
SOCIALE  
DOMENIUL DE DOCTORAT „TEOLOGIE”

# TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT

## REZUMAT

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ARAD

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# **DYNAMIC BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD:**

An Academic Perspective on the Necessity  
of Differing Gender Worldviews  
to Accomplish Theological Balance

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# **DYNAMIC BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD**

## **SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS**

### **THESIS METRICS**

- 12 chapters
- 209 bibliographic resources
- 711 footnotes
- 203 total pages
- 83158 words

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND SUBJECT DEFINED**

#### **1.1. MOTIVATION**

Within the last century, four prominent positions have emerged as worldviews regarding women: traditionalism (also known as patriarchy or fundamentalism), feminism (secular and Christian), complementarianism, and egalitarianism. Each view takes a definitive stance on gender philosophy which affects more than what a woman should or should not do. They produce a standard of thinking and behavior



which requires adherence to the dogma of the group. The voices of the group focus attention on what makes their code of belief correct while discrediting or overtly attacking the other groups.

Ironically, each of the four views has the same concerns and feelings. Each side bases their view on a biblical foundation, often using the same verses as their opponents. Each side feels strongly that God is on their side, blessing them and their ministry, and giving them grace to face persecution. Books, articles, debates, conferences, and sermons closely examine Scripture in its original languages, delve into biblical context and traditions, and cross check verses about women with other portions of the Word. Therefore, much time is given over to proving which side is right and which one is wrong. Both extremes imply the other view is at best misguided, and at worst heretical while they both point to the Bible as their foundation. However, as fallen beings, Christians are still prone to picking and choosing which parts of Scripture they want to prioritize and follow and which parts they ignore or explain away. To fully incorporate the full dogma

taught by a specific view with intolerance of the others leads to a dangerous path.

## **1.2. IMPRACTICAL SOLUTION**

While such divisive behaviour may be accepted in the secular realm, believers, those who share the same Spirit through adoption into the family of God, should strive to understand and appreciate fellow sisters who observe a different viewpoint. In an effort to bring unity, a new movement is attempting to create a fifth group, tentatively labeled as “gender humility” or “covenantalism,” which represents a middle ground between complementarians and egalitarians. This author believes such an attempt is futile. Creating another dogma, no matter how inclusive it begins, will inevitably lead to lines drawn and positions manned for battle against those it excludes. There are definite lines that define the crossing point. The gender of final authority in the home and society divides the traditionalists from the feminists. The gender of final authority in the church divides the complementarians from the egalitarians. These lines cannot be crossed. A

marriage can claim to have a partnership, but ultimately there needs to be the final authority. A woman cannot be both a pastor and non-pastor at the same time. It sounds politically correct to state that a center, inclusive group is possible, but that is semantics, not reality. Once a new gender group is created, it will encounter the same challenges currently faced – believing their view is right and everyone else is wrong.

The gender debate cannot be simply ignored or downplayed. God has allowed this discussion to continue because women are important and make up not only half the church, but half the world. The theological ramifications that take place in the church directly affect public theology in global humanity. The question to address is why does God tolerate the existence of these contrasting views? Why did He allow ambiguity in His Word? Why does God not move the church to form a final council that declares unbiblical views on women as heresy and put an end to the discussion? Historically this has not occurred, and God allows the discussion to continue, but the question of “why” remains. This thesis is an attempt to convince

the reader of the “why,” and to show a better way to approach this challenge.

### **1.3. DYNAMIC BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD’S DEFINITION AND CONTRIBUTION**

Dynamic Biblical Womanhood is defined as the freedom to consider, prayerfully and humbly, the strengths and weakness of each of the existing views and to choose, with the Spirit’s guidance, to follow the specific calling God has given to each individual woman. God has made each woman unique, just as He has made each man unique. For example, not all men are called to be pastors, though that is a high and worthy calling. Likewise, not all women were called to be wives and mothers, though that is also a high and worthy calling.

Dynamic Biblical Womanhood is a challenge for a woman to explore, for herself, the strengths and weaknesses of each differing view. She approaches and openly dialogs with the various viewpoints with the mind of a student, not the mind of a dogmatic teacher,

and begins to allow God's direction to structure the strengths and correct the weaknesses in her own personal view.

While each group's existing literature, sermons, and debates continue to tear down the weaknesses of their opponents, Dynamic Biblical Womanhood brings an important contribution to knowledge. The purpose of this dissertation is to encourage women to step outside the comfort zone of their theological group and appreciate the God-given strengths of the other worldviews. Promoting such dialogue between views and individually determining how God uniquely gifts provide the confidence to stand before Christ with a clear conscience and serve Him as the Spirit leads. Dynamic Biblical Womanhood proposes that women no longer be imposed to accept the stigma and dogma of a group but make a stand by biblically addressing and answering individual topics without being labeled into a category.

## **2. STRUCTURE OF THESIS**

### **2.1. THE TRAMPOLINE AS AN ANALOGY FOR DYNAMIC BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD**

Dynamic Biblical Womanhood will primarily focus on the concept of embracing a transforming (not rigid) worldview of God's purpose for all women. The goal should not be to develop a label that incorporates and applies to every woman (as the current standard of gender views where one either belongs or not), but rather the appreciation that God has a unique purpose and role for each member of the church body.

Instead of expecting or creating a false sense of unity, Christians need to embrace and respect the philosophical differences. Opposing viewpoints point out the danger, hypocrisy, and blind spots in one's personal stance. This author proposes that God allows these groups to remain so that working together through *tension*, women (and thus mankind) may be drawn into a deeper relationship more focused on Christ. God has not placed tension in the gender wars to pull the church towards a breaking point; instead, He allows the tension

to remain so that women and men can understand and more fully appreciate the depth of His character and love for mankind. To demonstrate the proper tension of Dynamic Biblical Womanhood, the analogy of a trampoline will be used.

This paper will take the reader through the traditionalist and Christian feminist arrangement on this trampoline. The reader will consider the frame, the springs, the bounce mat, and the side pads. Each of these items are necessary for the opportunity to jump high. The following is a description of each section.

### ***2.1.1. Attachment to the Biblical Framework***

To begin, there is a presupposition that a *biblical* frame is securely in place. While there are other religious beliefs and secular cultures that provide opinions on the identities and purpose of women, this paper will mainly focus on the Christian view. This security of the safety and dependability of the framework rests in the belief that both the Old and New Testaments contain the true and revealed Word of God.

To attach springs, notches are drilled into the secure and unmoving biblical frame. These notches represented the presuppositions or doctrinal lens that each group uses as they view the various portions of Scripture. Understanding the group's theological foundations is essential as the underlying postulations of approaching the texts differ and significantly affect the interpretation.

The springs are analogous to key Scripture passages and theological doctrines utilized by each group as the means to attach their section of the bounce mat to the frame of the trampoline. Volumes have been written by each of the four groups highlighting areas of foundational Scriptures and defending their biblical interpretations. These "attachment" sections are not intended to be an extensive overview of hermeneutics, but a brief introduction to each groups' biblical proof texts.

### ***2.1.2. The Weave of the Bounce Mat***

The bounce mat is the first thing people think of and the most visible component of a trampoline. The



fabric of the mat is tightly woven and understanding it requires effort and investigation. Dynamic Biblical Womanhood challenges women to inspect the mat based on how each gender view creates its own weave. Four strands of the weave will be considered: the woman's identity, the woman's purpose, the woman's sphere, and the woman's influence.

There are two sides to the bounce mat. The top side is the most visible and worn. The top side chapter will describe the practical ways in which the group's philosophies and doctrines are applied. This is the area that is most often criticized by outsiders. The bottom side is out of sight and generally unnoticed by the public. That chapter will discuss what makes the applications so attractive and welcoming to the ones who subscribe to that viewpoint.

The purpose of a bounce mat on a trampoline is to allow one to jump high. This requires movement around the trampoline and towards the center. A temptation and tendency when categorizing women is to keep them jumping as close as possible to the side. The feeling of safety occurs because the risk is

lessened, the feeling of control is more secure, and the springs and framework are clearly seen providing comfort. Dynamic Biblical Womanhood asserts that if women are willing to venture away from the safety of their side and openly explore and evaluate the beliefs of the other views, they will gain the confidence to bounce higher in their personal relationship with God and their ministry and service towards others.

### ***2.1.3. The Necessity of Side Pads***

Those who have jumped on a trampoline without side panels know that the closer they get to the edge, the more likely they are to slip between the springs. Each viewpoint has blind spots which can cause the jumper or others to stumble. Often, it is easier for jumpers to see the holes on the other side of the trampoline than the ones located near their feet. For one to acknowledge the faults and failings of their particular view, one must at least listen to what the other jumpers are saying. However, the best way to see the gaps and weak spots on one's own side is to venture out and explore the other side of the trampoline. As women

venture out towards the center and dialog with those from other views, they may discover parts of the woven material unnoticed before and change their position on the trampoline. Exploring the breadth of the trampoline does not mean that one will abandon their previous convictions. On the contrary, such an exploration should allow the individual woman to confront the dangerous gaps in her own side, understand the necessity of the tension provided, appreciate how the springs direct the elevation of her bounce, and discover where she can jump to give her the greatest height toward God.

The side pads are placed over the gaps in the springs to provide boundaries and protection. This author believes this is a vital reason God allows differing sides to continue. If there was no one to question or point out the errors and pitfalls of a particular view, the natural human tendency is to create a great danger, either by neglect or for selfish reasons. As this thesis explores each gender view, a side pad section will reflect the weaknesses and errors which opposing sides expose.

The application is not meant to disregard the importance of any side, but to encourage women to never be content in taking one side for granted. Dynamic Biblical Womanhood should inspire exploring, learning, and opening the heart to the Spirit's instruction. Seeing the Word explained through a different lens allows the discovery of springs that need replacing. Dynamic means constantly moving, not wildly jumping from side to side, but allowing the movement to drive godly women higher into the sky, nearer to God, and more visible to the flat, dark world around them.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

A common mistake in research methodology is to commit to one topic, create a plan or outline, and then find the sources to supply proof documentation. This author implemented a research-driven, exploratory approach, where the findings guide the author into determining the final outcome. The initial theme was how to present the gospel to each of the gender views. As the research progressed, the topic of Dynamic

Biblical Womanhood developed. Dynamic Biblical Womanhood does not take sides in the gender debate but rather demonstrates how dialogue and an understanding of each of the views may allow the believer to form convictions based on biblical and Spirit-led principles rather than on blind acceptance in the fixed dogma of a particular view.

The research strategy personally chosen for this topic was to be submersed in a particular worldview and to be placed under one view's beliefs and empathize with their frustrations. The plan began with traditionalism, to thoroughly research it for a within the time horizon of one year and then process the information. Once findings and applications were recorded, traditionalism was put to the side and Christian feminism was explored. Completing each position before moving on to the next one permitted the author to develop a single-mindedness in understanding the underlying motivations of that view and assessing each side's strengths and weaknesses without crossing into debate.

The tension between the two often directly opposing views of traditionalism and Christian feminism laid the foundation for the trampoline analogy. The woven tapestry became the bounce mat and the rest of the illustration, the biblical framework and the necessity of side panels, easily followed. The biblical framework was essential to give each side a solid foundation to jump upon. It allowed the comparison of Christian ideals, not Christian versus secular. The side panels were included to show the pitfalls of each side. It is easily assumed that each side is blind to their own faults, especially as much of their literature is spent on defending themselves and tearing down those that disagree.

Originally the research focus was heavily dependent on qualitative research such as interviews and opinions. As the topic was studied, one main characteristic appeared – the intent of groups to prove themselves right and everyone else wrong. At times, the assertions seemed vicious and personal. Some based their objections on Scripture and others on tradition. While interviews were not completely excluded from

the research, they were decidedly placed in a supplemental position.

The assessment was then made to focus on the published literature highly promoted and followed by each gender view. The desire to remain as neutral as possible shifted the primary attention to a mixed-method based research as a case study. Both the traditional and Christian feminist sections contain of a mixture of existing literature, sermons, and testimonies. The data was analyzed and sorted into key issues. The conceptual framework developed toward understanding and embracing the mindset of the personal views expressed in each field. The intent hoped to discover what made each view appealing to those who follow it and what specific positive influence did their gender view bring to God's overall plan for humanity.

To keep the research objective, sources were selected directly from acknowledged leaders and representatives in each category. This aided the author's understanding of her doctrinal and philosophical beliefs from her perspective. This also

provided a more professional and factual account, even though some publications were still emotionally charged. Resources were chosen based on the recommendations of leaders and cited literature within the various groups. For example, a number of Christian feminist authors cited Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* as an inspiration to their understanding of a feminist worldview. While Friedan's secular work would not have ordinarily been considered as within the scope of research for this topic, the number of recommendations required this work to be examined.

The presentation of Dynamic Biblical Womanhood relied heavily on direct quotes and teachings from these group leaders. This ensured proper representation from their own verbiage. It also removed as much of the author's bias as possible. Readers are allowed to make judgements based on the proponents of each view. Despite one agreeing or disagreeing with these leaders, the purpose of this thesis is to gain appreciation for the necessity of their teachings as it maintains a theological gender balance.



#### **4. THESIS OBJECTIVE**

The goal of this dissertation is to compile a work where the strengths of traditionalists and Christian feminists are celebrated and not only judged. God has allowed each view to exist for a purpose, and this author believes that purpose is tension so that a woman can jump higher into His presence. This thesis hopes to provide the opportunity to appreciate the positive message each of these groups bring to the trampoline and the reason that God allows them to exist. This paper is not to convince someone to move to a different side, but to mutually understand the necessity of the viewpoints. If one side is removed, the whole trampoline would be affected. Therefore, God in His wisdom allows the divergences to continue. Sadly, the church is more focused on damaging the bounce mat than appreciating the tension and its allowance to bounce.

Understanding and listening to all the views is meant to help the Christian gain clarity about their own personal position rather than blindly following the dogma of their group. The focus of this thesis should

encourage discerning thinkers to turn away from adherence of strict requirements to belong to a particular group and become more individualized and Christ-focused. Dynamic Biblical Womanhood highlights the necessity of differing gender worldviews to accomplish a theological balance. It seeks to inspire women to no longer feel required to define their identity by the label of traditionalist or Christian feminist but as obedient followers of Christ.

## **5. CHAPTER SUMMARIES - TRADITIONALISM**

### **5.1. ATTACHMENT TO THE BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK**

Traditionalism passionately seeks to defend its conviction of what is clearly taught in the Scriptures, as they claim their doctrines are foundational to the Christian faith. To understand their teachings (bounce mat), one must consider how their dogmas attach to the biblical frame by notches and springs. The notches represent the presuppositions of a literal, common-sense view of the Scriptures. Traditionalists highly

value straightforwardness and recoil at the practice of twisting and redefining plain passages to fit culture. The remainder of the chapter discusses four springs, which are the key passages which support the mat. The springs include the creation account in Genesis 1-2, the fall of mankind in Genesis 3, teachings of the Apostle Paul, and God's revealed description.

The foundation for the traditionalist stance is a high view of Scripture. The plain words quoted in Bible alone, not culture or enlightenment, is the standard to define the roles and expectations of women. Thus, to the traditionalists, the framework is unmoving, the notches are solid, and the springs are securely in place.

## **5.2. THE BOUNCE MAT: THE VISIBLE TOPSIDE**

The doctrinal springs of traditionalism support a tightly woven bounce mat consisting of structured ideals, assumed rules, and expected behaviors. In common terms, the top of the bounce mat is the “how-to’s” that traditionalists affirm and outsiders observe. This section describes how their teachers and literature

form the traditionalist view by weaving together strands of the woman's identity, purpose, sphere, and influence.

The woman's identity was distinctive from creation. The differences are not simply biological and physical, but holistic, encompassing the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual. These differences are meant to be embraced, not erased. Femininity defines the identity of a woman.

The woman's purpose is stated clearly in the creation account in Genesis 2:18. If a woman is a helper to man, then she is a benefit to him. "Help meet" is the term adopted by traditionalists which gained popularity through Debi Pearl's book, *Created to Be His Help Meet*. However, Pearl clarifies that the term should not be labeled as a one-word description but as two separate words – help and meet. The woman's purpose as help and as meet are explained in the thesis chapter.

The woman's sphere is observed in three sections: her place in the home, her education, and her calling of motherhood. Domestic life is an honorable, high calling for a woman. It is there that she can be most

productive and thrive. A woman at home, caring for a family, allows her the best opportunity to inspire the next generation.

The woman's influence begins within her domestic sphere but reaches out to the community first and then the world. It begins with children, who are the hope and future of every society. This cannot be understated. When children are not taught godly principles, they turn away from the truth. It takes only one generation to fall away from God before society is affected.

### **5.3. THE BOUNCE MAT: THE UNDERSIDE**

This chapter considers the underside of the bounce mat – the strong appeal that draws followers into this view, allowing them to find comfort, peace, and joy as they bounce. Again, this is considered through the four strands that weave the bounce mat together: the identity, purpose, sphere, and influence.

The concept of the woman's identity is attached to her created feminine differences. The identity of

women was created by God for a higher purpose as they symbolize the relationship of Christ and the church throughout eternity. Women are not subjected to a lower role but portray God's creative design. The value of the traditionalist's view of identity is summarized: it begins with God and ends with peace.

Traditionalists believe the value of embracing God's purpose design as "help meet" results in great blessings. Women who follow God's plan are loved and cherished, made fit for the kingdom, persuaded to follow His purpose for their lives, and may experience the best marriage available. Submission and obedience positively affect the woman's relationships with God, with men (primarily her husband), and with herself.

The highest call for a woman is to be a wife and mother, and her dominion is over the home. Women whose energies are reserved for keeping the home have time for the pleasures of life. They are not busy living a life that was not meant to be theirs, a life of stress, responsibilities, and concerns. The traditional woman's influence begins in the home and then God multiplies that obedient effort allowing it to affect society.

The real value of her influence is the spread of the gospel and is not bound by time. Her life in this world may be temporal, but her role, purpose, and accomplishments have an eternal application. She represents the gospel as her attitudes and actions portray a redeemed church toward its loving Savior. Additionally, the children under her care have immortal souls. The mother is privileged to lead them to eternal life.

Those who criticize traditionalism in broad statements such as misogynistic or degrading have not taken the time to understand and appreciate the value this view brings to the trampoline. Traditionalist women (and men) are passionate about the feminine attributes and roles because they find great honor in God's design. They are part of an eternal plan that is higher than human dictates. They feel joy, peace, and personal fulfillment. They experience order and purpose. They look forward to the praise of their Heavenly Father. This is the underside of the bounce mat and the reason the gender view still exists.

#### **5.4. THE SIDE PADS**

Similar to the athlete who jumps on the trampoline, the closer one gets to the edge of the bounce mat, the more likely she will slip and injure herself between the springs. This is the necessity of side pads. Differing views of gender roles have shed light on some of the weaknesses and areas of danger. They provide the warning and safety for traditionalist to stay away from extremes and bounce safely.

Traditionalists love the blessings they receive from God, including the peace and comfort of believing they are serving Him above all else. However, many women struggle with the applications of such principles. First because all mankind has fallen into sin, and second because God has made each woman unique. This chapter covers some of the potential dangers with traditionalist applications including: complete dependency on men, temptation to manipulating men for acceptance, comparison between women (and their drive to be the best wife/mother), the burden of responsibility for a perfect marriage/family, unrealistic expectations of self and men, and the inability to fulfill



the role if a woman remains single or barren. This chapter also briefly mentions wounded relationships with men who do not live in a godly manner.

## **5.5. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS**

The traditionalist view bases their doctrines on the literal words of Scripture, believing they are plainly written without additional context, experience, or cultural adjustments. Genesis clearly teaches the differing roles of men and women established before sin entered the world. The woman's identity is based on her community connections, first to her father and then to her husband. Her purpose, as God revealed before she was created, is to be a helper for man. This privilege is a high and honorable call. She is not inferior or less important, but a precious treasure for humanity. Women are called to obey God and be an example to mankind through their obedience and submission to God's ordained authority. The result of following God's Word is an inner peace and joy often followed by visible blessings.

The home is a protective sphere granted to the woman as her domain. There she has great influence on those within her walls as well as society. Children are a great blessing from God, and it is the mother's honor to train the immortal souls in her care in the ways of the Lord. Serving God according to His Word brings ultimate fulfillment to the traditional woman. She does not need to preach or have titles of authority to feel worthy or spiritual. She understands that the daily self-sacrifice of her own desires models Christ's own behavior. She also believes that her feminine example will encourage men to follow God's instructions for them.

This section concludes with a short survey of the reader's opinions towards traditional statements. After considering the biblical framework, bounce mat, and side pads from this worldview, the reader can decide their personal response. They can participate by answering whether they agree, disagree, or are unsure about traditional dogmas. The aim of the survey is to help readers discover the pros and cons of each viewpoint.

## **6. CHAPTER SUMMARIES – CHRISTIAN FEMINISM**

### **6.1. ATTACHMENT TO THE BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK**

The difficulty in presenting Christian feminism lies with the problem that there is not a standard doctrine. Those that claim Christianity as their core belief usually adhere to the following framework. The notches of feminist theology originate in liberation theology, which insists that the study of God should not remain in a theoretical realm. Truth is not found solely in the Scriptures. The presupposition emphasizes God's choice to reveal the Word through the means of *human context*. Feminist theology places equal weight on experience; thus, each of the springs (biblical references) attaching the bounce mat are viewed through the lens of experience. The springs considered in this thesis are the creation of mankind in Genesis 1:26-31, the Garden of Eden as a picture of intended perfection, and the passages that highlight God's care for the oppressed. The essence of feminist theology is

relationship – relationship with God, with others, and with self.

## **5.2. THE BOUNCE MAT: THE VISIBLE TOPSIDE**

The bounce mat is the practical side of Christian feminist doctrines. It displays observable applications and common misconceptions, woven together with their view of a woman's identity, purpose, sphere, and influence.

The woman's identity is grounded in the realization that she is *imago Dei*. The concept that women are equally image bearers of God has profound implications on how women should be treated. This ignites the fire for the Christian feminist. Their goal is to overturn and correct androcentrism in order to restore women to embrace their original created purpose as divine image bearers.

The woman's purpose is to promote female autonomy, where women are free to govern and empower themselves while enjoying equal opportunity. Autonomy allows individuals to determine their life

choices regardless of their place in society. Christian feminism seeks to highlight how the Scripture respects and even empowers women. Liberation is freedom from bondage of sin. The Christian feminist purpose is to promote theology which liberates not only from sin itself, but also from the consequences of sinful domination.

The woman's sphere is not limited to their immediate family, but to the community, country, and world. God has created each man and woman as unique and for an ordained purpose. The options for their impact are varied, dependent on where God has placed them and how God has gifted them. This includes a partnership in the home, an opportunity to use talents in the workplace, and a commitment for society at large. The Christian feminists' primary focus is relationships. The right relationships of mutuality, justice, and love not only fuels the passion for aiding fellow humans but also strengthens the global sisterly connection through a common bond.

The woman's influence is driven by love and relationships. It is not only to support and encourage

differing races, economic classes, and sexual orientations, but also to appreciate the gifts that these groups bring to the church body. Thus, the influence of the Christian feminist is not simply a reformation of society, but a reformation of the church. It is prioritizing people over power, relationships over rules.

### **6.3. THE BOUNCE MAT: THE UNDERSIDE**

The significance and worth of women compel the motivations behind their identity, purpose, sphere, and influence. Looking at the underside the bounce mat, one can begin to understand and appreciate what inspires and drives the Christian feminist.

The understanding of *imago Dei* influences the way women must self-identify and the way society should rightly view and treat mankind; furthermore, the heart of *imago Dei* clarifies the essence of God. Thus, a strong motivation for the female identity is to reestablish an accurate reflection of the character of God, both as it portrays women and as it portrays the divine.

Christian feminists who embrace their purpose to promote female autonomy fight for those who cannot defend themselves. Voicelessness and invisibility lead to erasure of the minority groups from memory and history. History should not be silenced or forgotten. Thus, Christian feminists practice a hermeneutic of remembrance. Their purpose is driven by a desire to give women and other fringe/oppressed groups the attention and autonomous freedom deserved. Christian feminists understand that noise and visibility will bring about change, which inspires them to action.

Women belonging to patriarchal cultures have been essentially confined to working inside the home. Feminists claimed they were conditioned to believe that there was a limit to what they could accomplish because religion told them that God made them that way. Christian feminists desire to prove that this is not an accurate picture of Christianity, nor of the biblical truths which permeate oppressive cultures and break the bondage for women. The church must unite to acknowledge and admit its past reputation and strive to overturn its perception.

Christian feminists want to be role models to influence the next generation of women. They are motivated by a deep urge to make a difference in the world and cannot sit quietly by while oppression continues. Christian feminists understand that oppression comes from the fallen, sinful nature of mankind, and that the only hope can be found in Jesus Christ, the One who overcomes. This is the truth that will set the oppressed free. The motivation of the Christian feminist is not simply a reformation of society, but a much-needed reformation of the church, which includes influencing the next generation of women to be women of theology.

#### **6.4. THE SIDE PADS**

Christian feminists have a voice and presence, not only in the home, but society at large. Despite their advances, the illustration must again be presented that the closer one is to the edge of the trampoline, the greater the danger of falling between the springs and obtaining injuries. This chapter discusses potential pitfalls within the Christian feminist perspective.



Challenges include: a temptation to compare themselves with men and man's standards rather than with God, creating God in their (female) image, a hyperfocus on victimhood instead of empowerment, an autonomy that is self-focused instead of community based, and placing experience over divine revelation.

The greatest pitfall Christian feminists may fall into is disproportionate time is given to correcting the narrative and defending women. Here the critical principle is clearly uncovered. Woman (and her status and treatment) tends to become the central focus of this religion. Christ is not the center, except in the way that the woman's nature projects the *imago Dei*/Christ image. The treatment of women becomes assessment tool to determine which parts of Scripture to attach to and what aspects should be reinstated from other religious sources. Thus, the gospel message may become lost amid all the rhetoric.

## **6.5. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS**

Christian feminism asserts that divine revelation is accomplished through the God-human

relationship. Since the Fall, women have generally been oppressed, disregarded, and underappreciated. The consequences of sin continue to damage and destroy, but God is One who fights for the oppressed and heals the brokenhearted. Jesus Christ came to earth, not only to save mankind from the chains of personal sins, but to bring redemption and restoration to all creation. This is a great encouragement to those who have been discriminated and used. Jesus provides hope.

The gospel grants freedom while requiring a heart of faith and love in return. Women are no longer bound by the legalistic rules of men but are free to pursue God without the necessity of being under a male representative. Christ's work frees women to follow their calling, whether it is in a marital partnership, in the use their talents and gifts, or in their practice of theology and ministry. The greatest calling for a woman is to serve God as she was created to be.

As with the previous traditionalist view, this section ends with a survey to reflect how one interacts with the Christian feminist statements. The reader may agree, disagree, or be unsure. The objective is to

challenge readers to see that they might not all agree or disagree with every dogma within a gender view.

## **7. GENERAL CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES**

### **7.1. DYNAMIC BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD'S NECESSITY**

Some Christian doctrines are like a tightrope. The cord is narrow, difficult, and to take one slip in either direction results in death. Salvation is such an example. However, many Christian doctrines are like a trampoline. There are paradoxes and areas of Christian liberty which present a larger area to move around without the fear of falling off. Dynamic Biblical Womanhood believes that the views on gender are like the trampoline. The gender debate would not be an argument if believers could understand how the different views *work together to maximize the trampoline*. Opposing sides bring tension to the bounce mat which challenges and strengthens one's personal position.

Dynamic Biblical Womanhood desires for women and men to jump in the center of the trampoline where they can soar the highest. To accomplish this, Dynamic Biblical Womanhood suggests a different way of thinking about gender roles. It is defined as the freedom to consider, prayerfully and humbly, the strengths and weakness of each of the existing views and to choose, with the Spirit's guidance, to follow the specific calling God has given to each individual woman. God has made each woman unique, just as He has made each man unique.

Dynamic Biblical Womanhood is about each individual finding their own identity in Christ. It is not promoting one side as correct or convincing a believer to let go of one edge and embrace another. The goal is to demonstrate the value of dialogue and learning. Understanding is shaped between an infinite God and uniquely formed individuals. Christians must develop an appreciation for the necessity of differing gender views. It is through this tension, still connected to a solid biblical framework, that Dynamic Biblical Womanhood allows a solid trampoline to form,

ensuring a theological balance which permits Christian women and men to jump higher in their relationship with God.

### **7.1. FUTURE RESEARCH**

Dynamic Biblical Womanhood opens up the door to further research possibilities. The first and most obvious direction is to give descriptions to the complementarian and egalitarian sides of the trampoline. Understanding their biblical framework, the topside and underside of their bounce mat, and the side panels needed for their protection and then writing on those views is a future goal of this author. However, other areas that need additional exploration are distinguishing ways to differentiate between tradition and convictions, discovering how to inspire men and women to listen and understand differing views, and developing a dynamic curriculum which can be taught within the churches. Gender views must not remain a divisive issue. Dynamic Biblical Womanhood is more than an academic argument; it should practically stimulate Christians to challenge personal traditions

while appreciating the unique calling of God in differing individuals.

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