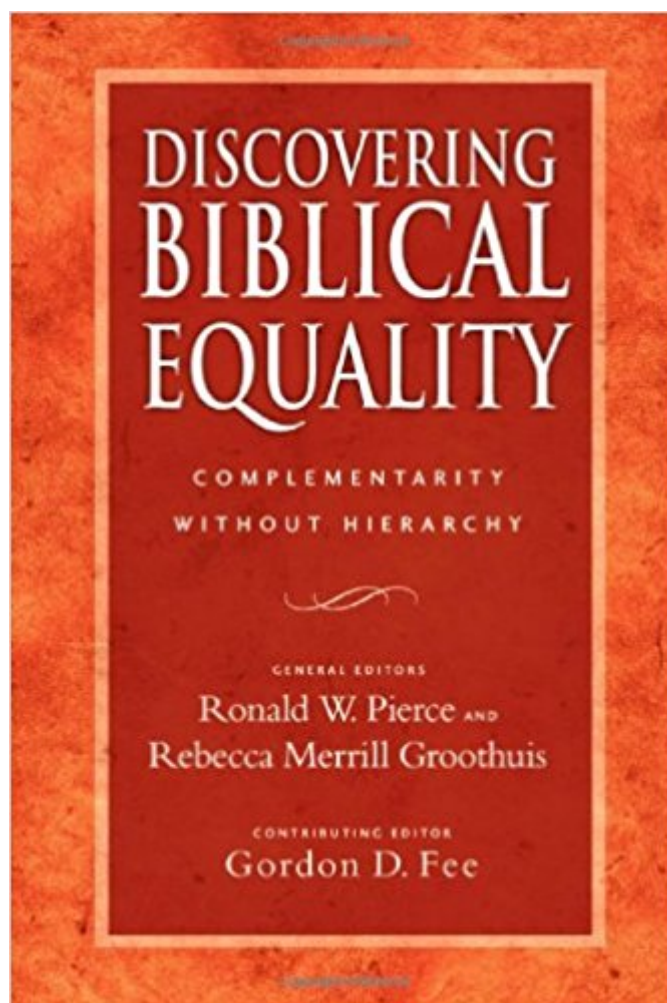


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# Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy



## Synopsis

Discussions surrounding the roles of men and women--whether in the church, the home or society at large--never seem to end, often generating more heat than light. Such debate is still important, though, because this issue directly affects every member of Christ's body. What we believe the Bible teaches on these matters shapes nearly all we do in the church. In addition, these questions deserve further thought and reflection because neither side has won the day. In an effort to further discussion, Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (general editors), with the aid of Gordon D. Fee (contributing editor), have assembled a distinguished array of twenty-six evangelical scholars firmly committed to the authority of Scripture to explore the whole range of issues--historical, biblical, theological, hermeneutical and practical. While dispelling many of the myths surrounding biblical equality, they offer a sound, reasoned case that affirms the complementarity of the sexes without requiring a hierarchy of roles. Contributors include Ruth A. Tucker, Janette Hassey, Richard S. Hess, Linda L. Belleville, AÃ- da BesanÃ§on Spencer, Craig S. Keener, I. Howard Marshall, Peter H. Davids, Walter L. Liefeld, Stanley J. Grenz, Kevin Giles, Roger Nicole, William J. Webb, Sulia Mason, Karen Mason, Joan Burgess Winfrey, Judith K. Balswick, Jack O. Balswick, Cynthia Neal Kimball, Mimi Haddad, Alvera Micklesen, R. K. McGregor Wright and Alice P. Mathews. Here is a fresh, positive defense of biblical equality that is at once scholarly and practical, irenic and yet spirited, up-to-date and cognizant of opposing positions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ronald W. Pierce (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary) is professor of biblical and theological studies in the Talbot School of Theology at Biola University. He is the author of *Partners in Marriage and Ministry*. Rebecca Merrill Groothuis is a freelance writer and editor. She is the author of *Women Caught in the Conflict: The Culture War Between Traditionalism and Feminism* and *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*. Gordon D. Fee (Ph.D., University of Southern California) is professor emeritus of New Testament studies at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He has written several books and commentaries, including *Listening to the Spirit in the Text*, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* and commentaries on 1 Corinthians and Philipians (NICNT) and the Pastoral Epistles (NIBC).

Excellent scholarship. The serious student of the Bible should study this book to understand how the Bible supports equality of men and women without a hierarchical relationship. The chapters that explain the relevant Bible passages finally allowed me to make sense of some difficult Bible verses that had puzzled me for years.

This is a compilation of scholarly articles written by theologically sound teachers. I would recommend this to anybody who is searching for the truth concerning men's and women's roles. This is a great book to read no matter which stance you take on the matter. It's good to know where people from both sides are coming from.

This volume is an amazing collection of articles that develop a cohesive vision of how the Bible leads us away from a gender-based imposition of authority in marriage and the church but instead points us toward a life of mutual submission that embodies the heart of the gospel. Positives: Scholarly, Thorough, Insightful. Negatives: Multiple voices make it less cohesive, some articles are so scholarly that they limit how many people will be able to successfully comprehend the depth of their message. Strongly suggest the chapters by Gordon Fee who paints the clearest picture of how church and society has misused the Bible by emphasizing small snippets of scripture and ignored the bigger picture of what the Bible is saying from cover to cover.

This is an outstanding, eye-opening book. During my whole Christian life, I've been uneasy with the traditional evangelical view of male leadership. But I thought: "That's what the Bible teaches, so what do I do about it?" I've always been aware of the passages that teach gender equality, but was

never able to reconcile them with the ones that seemed to teach inequality. Now I see that there's solid, evangelical scholarship supporting gender equality in the church and home. Not only that, there's even a long history of such scholarship and beliefs starting long before the feminism of recent decades that has turned off many evangelicals. I love having chapters written by so many scholars and thinkers, male and female. The writing quality varies, of course. Scholars and thinkers aren't necessarily good writers. But they're all digestible, and some are quite tasty. Gordon Fee's chapters, for example, stand out as excellent scholarship combined with clear writing. I do think the last section of the book, "Living It Out (Practical Applications)," is mostly weak. Most of the chapters in this "practical" section are far from practical, with way too many abstract ideas and too much psychological and academic jargon. I ended up skimming most of these final chapters. But NOT the very last chapter! The final chapter, Alice Mathews' "Toward Reconciliation," positively glows. It's the most important chapter in the book, and one of the best written. It should be published separately as a must-read for Christians on all sides of this or any other potentially divisive issue. It absolutely nails the most important issue of all.

Amazing. I love this book. It really tackles all angles, from Greek and Hebrew language to Theology to excellent exegetical analysis to logical evaluations and sound Scriptural interpretation.

I don't typically do reviews but this book answered so many questions for me. I've always struggled with those well-known controversial passages in the Bible about women, but in reading this book everything finally makes sense for me. I've read arguments on both sides of the fence. The essays in his book, however, made everything just click. And it has some very good chapters on issues like abortion and homosexuality. A very good read!

No matter your previous position, if you are interested in the topic of women and their place and role in the kingdom of God, this is a collection of essays that must be dealt with. Many (all?) of these authors have longer works that already make these points but these succinct restatements make it easy to begin your research. Particularly look at the contributions of Webb and Fee. One need not agree but you can not credibly disagree until you have given them an honest read.

As one of the editors of *Discovering Biblical Equality*, I find the sample citation and key phrases chosen by to be misleading (unintentionally, I'm sure). I suggest the following: "This book is born of the conviction that both the world and the church urgently need to hear and take to heart the

message of biblical equality, because it is at once true, logical, biblical and beneficial..." (taken from the Introduction). Key Phrases: biblical egalitarians, mutuality, evangelical patriarchy, 1 Timothy 2, partnership, authority, submission (see "tags" below...)

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