



Discussion & Application

1. We customize our phones, our houses, our coffee, and our social media profiles. Do you find that your time reading Scripture throughout the week has become customized to your own taste, life circumstances, and needs? What types of resources do you use most to help you in studying Scripture?
2. What is the value of men and women learning together? What are we missing out on if we capitalize on the benefits from male only and women only studies at the exclusion of coed opportunities to learn together?
3. What do you think about John McKinley's translation for the word *ezer* as necessary ally? Does that affect the way you think about women's ministries? How does this translation extend beyond the relationship of husband and wife? How is it broader than the typical categories of authority and submission that associated with the translation of helper?
4. Sometimes we get so invested in our favorite authors and teachers that we have trouble separating their personality from the content of their teaching. How do you handle it when your favorite books or speakers are challenged by constructive critique? Do you take it personal? Do you think you have any blind spots when it comes to reading with discernment?
5. We are all called to communicate well, whether we are in the ordained ministry or not. We are to read God's Word for understanding, as that knowledge fills our hearts and directs our actions. Although the Triune God has no need whatsoever for further communication and communion, theologian Scott Swain points out that we learn from Scripture that "he desires to communicate his own glorious and blessed life to us---in a manner appropriate to our creaturely status---in order that we too might have communion and fellowship with him, that we might become friends with God."¹⁴ Swain describes communication as "making common" and communion as "sharing, holding in common." This is a movement towards another to truly be known and an invitation to participate in holy goodness. Does that help you to understand your privilege and responsibility as a sibling in God's household? As part of this life-giving covenant community, men and women are all active traditioners, retrievers and reformers, receiving God's Word as it has been historically confessed through his Spirit and making it common to others. How is Phoebe a great example of this in Scripture? What do you think Paul saw in her to give her the authority and responsibility to deliver his epistle? Do you think there were any qualified men for the task? Why do you think he chose her? How does that impact you as a woman in Christ's church today, with all the Bibles you have access to?