

## Pursuing Partnership: Moving Mountains of Strongholds

Stronghold #7 – NOT Knowing When to STOP

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*In this series of blogs, Leslie and Chad identify spiritual strongholds that need to be unearthed and removed so that godly men and women can partner well together for the completion of the Great Commission. Pray with us into these mountains, and by faith may these tectonic plates move in Jesus' name!*

### NOT Knowing When to STOP



**“Women are the BEST!”**, **“Men are HORRIBLE!”**, **“Men are BETTER because they were created first!”**,  
**“We are all the same!”**, **“Girl Power!”**

You’ve heard the screechy slogans and contradictory choruses ringing out across Western culture. They lead to separation, division, and at times hostility between men and women. We exaggerate, we overcompensate, we run right past God’s intent. We don’t know when or where to stop. The goal of this demonic stronghold is sinful polarization. Polarization between male and female began in Genesis 3, separating what God had joined together.

### The God-Centered Compass

Let us plant an image in your mind – a swinging compass (like a 2-D pendulum, but in 3-D). At the center of this compass stands GOD’S PERFECT PLAN for men and women. This place of unwavering harmony is where people thrive, and God’s laborers multiply lasting fruit. In this place, Truth aligns with reality. Here we find men and women relating within a system centered on the kingdom of God and the character of the King. This is the aim... **godly mutual submission leading to godly unity, and gifted men and women serving as God intended, to let the world know**. Because it’s God’s idea, this kingdom ethic works!

Satan, of course HATES this God-centered plan of male and female harmony. Satan works to swing that compass needle somewhere – anywhere other than perfectly aligned with God’s plan.

This demonic stronghold pushes the pendulum to an exaggerated extreme. On one side we have “male-only leadership.” On another side we have “radical feminism.” On yet another side we have “androgyny/gender confusion.” The enemy loves deceiving and pushing people to embrace any extreme that misses God’s standard. And because Satan deceives, many Christians believe and function outside God’s centered kingdom and teach others to join them! It takes humility to recognize our personal location on this compass.

### **Extreme #1 – Machismo/Male-only Leadership**

Here, women may be viewed as damsels in distress needing rescue or objects to be used. From this women-restricting view related to Christian ministry, you may have heard, *“Women teaching/preaching/leading is a ‘slippery slope’ to accepting homosexual behavior in the pulpit.”* Or *“Promoting women in leadership positions is like a camel getting its nose under the tent. Soon the whole camel is inside.”* Noooo... being a woman is not sinful, nor are women camels! God’s Word says that BOTH male and female are given the task of multiplying, filling, and ruling (Gen. 1:28). The Holy Spirit does NOT give gifts based on gender, and God *“looks at the HEART”* not outward appearance (1 Sam. 16:7).

### **Extreme #2 – Radical Feminism**

You may have heard, *“Who needs a man!”* or *“No uterus, no opinion!”* or *“Men can sit and learn, but we don’t need your voices or thoughts!”* or *“Abortion rights on demand!”* Overcompensation against men can lead to swinging toward another sinful option. This side promotes radical feminism which sees no need for men. Those *without Christ* often vent anger and lop-sided logic, while demanding their “rights.” Christians on this spectrum may want to “throw out Paul!” or they are easily offended by those who don’t hold their view, creating division and offering only judgment – rather than grace or forgiveness! (As a side note, read up on **“first-wave feminism.”** You are one almost certainly. Includes: women’s right to vote, anti-slavery, pro-life. But 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> waves of feminism have definite roots of evil, including abortion).

### **Extreme #3 – Androgyny/Gender Confusion**

Taking it to another level of distortion, the compass swings to actually denying gender differentiation. With phrases such as *“Love is love”* or *“Jesus would include everyone,”* this demonically confused side denies biological reality, endorses or condones sin, distorts the biblical meaning of love, and blurs the clear standards God gives for our protection and flourishing.

### **Do Justice Biblically!**

Injustice on one side can lead to foolish overcompensation on the other. Or it can lead to non-logic, confusion, bitterness, and pride. We must consistently walk in the humility of the Holy Spirit. Each of the exaggerated poles above rejects God’s standards for men and women in relationship. The enemy loves for people to declare themselves their own moral authority. God’s authoritative Word declares that both men and women are designed to serve together in God’s mission.

**God’s answer to machismo is not feminism. God’s answer to patriarchy is not matriarchy. God’s answer to confusion is not denial of biological reality. God’s answer for male and female is *mutual dominion which leads to powerful unity for witness.***

Jesus had a simple and powerful battleplan against this stronghold of **“NOT knowing when to STOP.”** When religious leaders asked Jesus about marriage, where did Jesus point? The current 1<sup>st</sup> century standards? Patriarchy? Jewish tradition? Radical feminism? None of those! He pointed to God’s intent *“in the beginning”* (Matt. 19:4, 8). Jesus battled this stronghold not by making a polarized claim. Rather he called out people to follow God’s original plan – man and woman side-by-side and shoulder-to-shoulder, commissioned for the world. *Selah...*

**Pray the compass needle of theology will swing rightly, straight down the middle of God’s truth, God’s character... and STOP there!**