Ep 170 - Working Comp

[00:00:00] **Shelby:** Welcome to Daily Grace. We believe the Bible is true, trustworthy and timeless, and we want to help women like, you know, and love God's word. The Bible shows us who God is and who he is, changes everything. My name is Shelby.

[00:00:18] **Krystal:** And I'm Krystal and we want to invite you to come join us as we chat about the truth of God's word in our everyday lives.

[00:00:26] **Shelby:** Today, I am joined by Elise Fitzpatrick and Eric Shoemaker to talk about Jesus and Gender, living as brothers and sisters in Christ. Elise Fitzpatrick is a nationally sought after speaker and author.

[00:00:38] She holds a certificate in biblical counseling and has an MA in biblical counseling from Trinity Theological Seminary. She has authored 23 books and lives in California with her husband, Phil.

[00:00:49] Eric Shoemaker is a pastor songwriter and author. He earned an MDF in biblical and theological studies from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Eric and his wife, Jenny, have five children and live in Iowa.

[00:01:02] My conversation today with Elise and Eric is based on their new book, Jesus and Gender. And the book, and our conversation, are challenging, yet edifying. Gender roles and relationships are a doctrinal issue in the church that many disagree on. No matter your views on how men and women should relate in the home church and society, conversations around gender can get heated.

[00:01:28] Elise and Eric are here today to challenge us to think about men and women in a new light. Instead of asking who gets to be the boss or who has the authority, they encourage us to ask how can we live together as humble servants of Christ who work towards the mutual flourishing of each other?

[00:01:47] My conversation with Elise and Eric is gospel-centered, convicting, freeing, and, most importantly, essential for the global church to grasp as we men and women, brothers and sisters in Christ, work together to preach the gospel, make disciples, and bring glory to God. Come join me. As I chat with Elise Fitzpatrick and Eric Shoemaker about living as sisters and brothers in Christ.

[00:02:11] Hey everybody. Thank you so much for joining us for another episode of the Daily Grace Podcast. This is Shelby and I am so excited to welcome Elise Fitzpatrick and Eric Shoemaker back to our podcast.

[00:02:25] You know, you both joined us last in July of 2020, where you shared about the first book that you co-authored together called Worthy, and you are back today to share about your new book, Jesus and Gender: Living as Brothers and Sisters in Christ, that released at the beginning of April. And we are so glad to have you here today, Eric and Elise.

[00:02:46] **Eric:** Thank you!

[00:02:48] **Shelby:** You know, I have to tell you both that I discovered your podcast called Worthy at a time in my life, when I was really left, wondering if as a woman, I had value in the body of Christ. And in that season, your words, and the words of your guests were just like a balm to my soul. And I remember devouring episode after episode, because I had rarely heard someone outside of my family who was in the church, just speak so highly of women.

[00:03:16] And so, you know, your work and your ministry has been an encouragement to me personally. And I just find it a privilege and a joy to be able to speak with you today.

[00:03:26] **Elyse:** Thank you, Shelby. That's encouraging.

[00:03:30] **Shelby:** I'm glad.

[00:03:32] You know, to get us started, can you each just take a moment to tell us about yourself and the work that you do?

[00:03:39] **Elyse:** This is Elyse and let's see the work that I do is I write books with Eric and correct him on social media. Actually I'm a mom and a grandmother of six, and I got saved in 1971. I was not raised in a Christian home. But, the Lord graciously brought me to Himself right before my 21st birthday.

[00:04:05] So what I try to do is produce material that helps people see how the gospel impacts their daily life.

[00:04:16] **Eric:** I'm a native Iowan and I have been married to Jenny for almost 24 years now. And we have five kids and our oldest is a freshman in college, which doesn't seem possible, but he'll be 20 this summer. And our youngest just turned 10. And so, most of my family's away today out to a robotics competition where my, our middle child is, the driver of the team's robots.

[00:04:46] And so, I'm kind of taking care of the dog today, but I'm an associate pastor also and podcaster. We're where, Elyse's my mother and corrects me on social media and, uh, tried my hand at writing non-fiction and fiction books and songs sometimes. And, and I'm pursuing a master's degree right now in a marriage, family, and individual counseling.

[00:05:10] **Shelby:** Thank you both for sharing that about yourself. You know, in a moment, we're going to talk about your new book, Jesus and Gender: Living as Sisters and Brothers in Christ. But I believe that first we need to talk about what led to the writing of this book, because this book was the result of your own experiences, conversations that you've had in the church, your work on your podcast.

[00:05:31] And I believe I've even heard you say that in some ways it is a follow-up to your first book, Worthy. So I'm wondering if you can just share with us what led to you, writing Jesus and Gender?

[00:05:42] **Eric:** Yeah, I, you know, Elyse and I connected, in the writing of Worthy where we just explored the value of women in the storyline of redemption, tracing that through from Genesis through Revelation. And a natural follow-up question is if women have such value, entirely equal with men and play just as an important role in God's saving purposes throughout the Bible, then how should men and women relate?

[00:06:11] And we're also both very weary of the conversations and debates that surround the topic of men and women in the church and in the world and in the home. We value men and women in all those spaces, but we found that most of the conversations have revolved around who gets to be the boss, who's in charge.

[00:06:34] They center around authority and submission and who can do what. And we both are very convinced that the Gospel is the power of God for salvation, and that Jesus Christ stands at the center of history, and God's glory is most clearly manifest in the person and work of Jesus. And so, the charge of the new Testament and the aim of Christian discipleship is for us to be conformed into His image.

[00:07:02] And so we wanted to start with, who is Jesus and what did it look like for the eternal Son of God to take on flesh and the incarnation and live as the perfect human? And how should that shape how we understand what it means to be men and women, and to walk together in Christ? And maybe Elyse can fill that out a bit.

[00:07:26] **Elyse:** As I said, I got saved in 1971, but it wasn't really until the mid 1990s that I began to see that the gospel, even though I believe the gospel, and as a Christian, I didn't really see how it should impact every area of my life. And so once I began, to see that more clearly then off of that understanding, I wrote a number of books, you know, because he loves me.

[00:07:56] And then I started to ask questions. Well look, the gospel is supposed to be central in, my life then how is it central in my parenting?

[00:08:07] We wrote, Give them Grace, how is it central in counseling? We wrote Counsel From the Cross. So I've been doing that sort of thing.

[00:08:16] So then with Jesus and gender, we are really starting at the place, as Eric said, with Jesus Christ being center. If Jesus Christ is the center of our discussion about gender and gender roles, then, what does that mean?

[00:08:35] And We really focused in on Philippians 2. And in Philippians 2:5, it says,

[00:08:44] have this attitude, adopt the same attitude of Christ. And that was the thing that we thought was really missing from the discussion of gender.

[00:08:59] So gender discussions usually start out with who gets to be boss. But what we wanted to do was begin the discussion of what was Christ's attitude that we're supposed to adopt. And then how does that attitude play out in our lives, in the home, in the church and society

[00:09:21] **Shelby:** I feel like this conversation needed a refresh. It needed someone to come at it in a different way and say, Hey, I don't think the way that we're talking about this is working. And I don't think that it's centered on the Gospel. And so I thank you for your book and the conversations that you've had around that.

[00:09:36] You know, in your book, you introduce this idea of being Christic men and women. I'm wondering if you can unpack that idea a little bit for us?

[00:09:45] **Elyse:** So, the word Christic is actually just a word that means relating to or about Christ. All right. So if something is Christic, then it's really focused on Christ. And so then getting back again to that Philippians 2 passage where we're supposed to adopt the same attitude of Christ, that's what it means to be Christic.

[00:10:13] So then what does that attitude look like? It looks like an attitude of self emptying and humility. And the word Christic has been used in the past. And I'll let Eric speak to this, but it has been used in the past primarily to talk about men like men are supposed to be Christic, which then leaves us, Shelby, as women asking the question, well, if men are supposed to be Christic than, what am I supposed to be?

[00:10:42] And actually in the past, women were told to be like Mary, because we couldn't, be like Christ because Christ was a man. But instead what happens is that we want to say that both men and women are like Christ.

[00:10:57] **Eric:** Hmm. And often that, that term Christic manhood would be used to describe this sort of macho, sort of culturally defined concept of manhood where you're, you're out there doing tough things and you're a strong leader and maybe you like to eat meat and shoot guns, or, you know, those sorts of things.

[00:11:19] And like Elyse said, it was never heard of, Christic women. And we think that even a lot of the stereotypes about what it means to be a man that looks like Christ have gone astray, you know, he is gentle and he's lowly at heart. And so, so we wanted to bring this back away from some culturally mandated stereotypes of what it means to be a good Christian man or a good Christian woman.

[00:11:47] And ask the question if Jesus Christ was a, you know, if, if as the author of Hebrews said he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every respect. And we as men and women are predestined to be conformed into His image, then what does it mean for men and women to look like Jesus? What we're trying to say here is that if you want a picture of what it looks like to be a mature Christian woman, then you should look at Jesus.

[00:12:20] And if you want a picture of what it looks like to be a mature Christian man, then you should look at Jesus. Because we aren't given different gendered fruit of the spirit. We're given the fruit. And the command to put off the old self and put on the new isn't given to us as a female Christ and a male Christ were to put on Christ.

[00:12:40] And yes, He is a male in His human physical body, but He as a male, as a human being, is the perfect human being. And anything that biblical womanhood rightly entails or biblical manhood rightly entails, can be found equally in the person of Jesus.

[00:13:07] **Shelby:** Yeah, and I don't think that I knew that I had bought into the, this idea that Christian men and Christian women should embody different virtues until I read that in your book. And I thought it was so compelling when you went through the fruits of the spirit of some of these other passages and said, like this doesn't apply only to one gender.

[00:13:26] There's not different different passages here for each gender. It's all one. And so I love that you're bringing that to light. Can I ask what has been the response of the Christian community to you entering this conversation in this way?

[00:13:40] **Elyse:** I think generally positive. I guess I would say the book hasn't been out long enough for us to get a lot of pushback. I mean, we have gotten some pushback, but generally speaking, I think it's been positive. I think people are ready for a reset, generally speaking. I mean, there are some people who are going to dig in, I'm quite sure and just, you know, reinforce their positions.

[00:14:07] But I think that people are ready for something fresh and they're tired of the gender war.

[00:14:13] And if they can reframe the discussion around Jesus and his humility and, his laying down his life, if we can reframe the discussion around that, then I think that probably people are going to be happy to have that.

[00:14:32] I'll I will say, there will be people who will be frustrated on both sides of the debate. Because we don't come out and say, Hey, grab your power. I don't think it's where the discussions should go. If you believe that you have authority because you believe that that's what the Bible teaches then, great. Give up your authority for your neighbor.

[00:14:55] **Eric:** Yeah. And we've been really encouraged by the response that we've seen in the endorsements. We sent it out to just a very wide range of Christians who are in different circles. So, we have someone like Brian Croft of practical shepherding, who is a committed complimentarian, who comes out and says, I didn't think that such a gracious, you know, approach to this subject that would be uniting, could be written.

[00:15:23] And he said, I'm convinced by that now. And we have committed egalitarians. You know, women who preach in church and would be, and men who might be in churches where they have female pastors and they've come and said that this book has, just really shaped and, and helped them inform their views.

[00:15:43] Almost everybody has said it's been a refreshing and helpful look at the topic of men and women in Christianity and even someone like, you know, Paul Tripp, wrote the, foreword for it. And, you know, anytime I read Paul Tripp, I'm just amazed and humbled and feel like I would never have anything to say on anything because he's just so brilliant and eloquent.

[00:16:09] And he's saying in his endorsement, he said, you know, the Lord was doing a work in my heart of tearing down things that needed to be taken down and rebuilding something new. And so, that's probably all from Elyse's chapters, but it's been, it's been really encouraging.

[00:16:28] **Shelby:** I'm glad to hear that. I know we've already touched on it a little bit, but maybe let's unpack it just a little bit more. So how should the gospel reframe our vision of gender and relationships?

[00:16:40] **Elyse:** All right. So if Lee let's define the gospel first, so what is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that the second person of the Trinity was sent by His Father to love and bring life to his people. And in doing that, He became the Incarnate Son. So He gave up, I don't want to say He gave up His godhood because He did not, but He humbled Himself and became one of us.

[00:17:12] And then He lived a life for us, lived our lives for us, perfectly fulfilling the law. And then He died for us in our place, taking our sin upon Himself and transferring to us His perfect righteousness. And then He was raised from the dead for our justification, and then He ascended to heaven.

[00:17:39] That's the gospel. Now, how does that impact how Eric and I relate to it?

[00:17:46] Well, of course at the very bedrock has to be that I seek to serve and love my brother.

[00:17:57] And I do that because that's what Christ has done for me. In all the ways I failed to do that, I have Christ's righteousness and forgiveness, but from a position of strength, Shelby, where I don't have to get from Eric anything to make me know that I'm okay because I'm already okay in Christ,

[00:18:22] I can serve my brother. And that goes for my relationships in church. I don't have to look to be in charge or have respect or any of those things. Not that any of those things are necessarily bad. I just don't need them because I have everything in Christ. Therefore I am free. I am a free agent and I am free to lay down my life to serve my brother and not try to fight to be the person that, gets the glory.

[00:18:59] If in fact Christ is who He says He is and he was raised from the dead, then I'm completely justified just as if I had never sinned, just as if I had always obeyed.

[00:19:12] Therefore I can love my brother. That's how it impacts our relationships.

[00:19:19] **Eric:** Yeah. Then, you know, if we go back to the beginning of the Bible and we look at relationships post fall after sin has entered the world that, you know, the very first thing, that's happening. As men and women looking to see like, well, whose fault is this? You know, Adam's saying this woman who you gave to me, it's, it's, it's her fault and, and Cain and Abel, you know, their brothers, neither one of them is a woman, but, you know, there's, there's the first huge human conflict after that.

[00:19:51] And the competition is which one of us does God like more? then you get into, Cain's descendants, you look at Lamech and he's gathering his wives to him and saying, Hey, wives, plural, it's really important for you to hear this a young man wounded me, and so I killed him. And if I just need you to know as my wives, that if people don't treat me the way I want, I am lethally violent.

[00:20:18] And so you see this picture right away being presented of human relationships, where the thing is, is how can I escape blame? How can I be the one that God likes the most? How can I make sure other people are serving me and my interests? And then you have Jesus come on the scene. And here's this one in Philippians 2, who's equal with God.

[00:20:40] And he just says, I'm not going to exploit this. Instead, I'm going to think of the interest of others instead of My own. And I'm going to become a servant to both My Father and to My people so that God would be glorified and My bride would flourish. And My brothers and sisters would flourish, even if it costs Me My own life.

[00:21:06] And that is a radically new way of living and that's what the message of the gospel is, is that Christ lived that way because we didn't, and we get His righteousness and He takes the blame on the cross. And now we're being made new to look like him.

[00:21:27] And so, when we look at our brothers and sisters, uh, when we look at other, men or women, our attitude, isn't what can she do for me? How can I control her so that she can meet my interests and make me look good and make my vision flourish and make my calling successful? How can I make her the scapegoat when things go wrong? And how can I ensure that even though she's important, I'm more important to God.

[00:21:56] That mind just has to go into the dumpster and be set on fire. The mind of Christ is how can I become a servant to see my sister flourish in the things of Christ.

[00:22:13] **Shelby:** Exactly. I love that definition.

[00:22:16] So, you know, in your book you have different chapters that cover, um, specifically what this might look like in marriage, in the church and in parenting. So I'm wondering if we can unpack each of those a little bit, starting with, what does it look like to live this way as brothers and sisters in Christ in marriage?

[00:22:32] **Eric:** Yeah. So, you know, as we think about those passages, Ephesians 5:22 and following, and 1 Peter 3:7, where we have these concepts of, you know, the husband is the head of the wife as Christ as the head of the church. And, you know, she's told to submit to him in such a manner. And there are, is, there's obviously been a lot of paper and ink used to try to explain and understand those things and they're debated.

[00:22:59] And one of the things we pointed out there, you know, we don't try to solve that matter for our readers and come down on what exactly, you know, is headship. Was that a cultural concept or is that something that's continuing today? What we did say is look, how does Paul speak about these things?

[00:23:18] You know, he doesn't give us a definition of headship. He gives us a description and that description is husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. And so if someone's concept of headship is the husband's the head of the family. And so that means his vision and his calling and his giftings are primary.

[00:23:41] And the wife functions to make sure behind the scenes that he gets to flourish in his endeavors and be successful on those things, then we that's really an opposite picture of the gospel because Christ is going to die for His bride, He's going to lay aside His rights. He's going to lay aside His own interests so that she can be washed and cleansed and, and have a life of flourishing because she is one flesh with Him.

[00:24:13] And so His flourishing is bound up in her flourishing and they can't, be divided. And then with the wives, you know, this idea of submitting, which, which is really a principle of being willing to be convinced, being willing to be persuaded. So your, your stance is not one of instant resistance and independence.

[00:24:36] It's this desire to want to cooperate, which is entirely right, because that's what the humans were created to do in Genesis 2. It wasn't good for man to be alone. God says, I'll make a helper, a strong ally for him. I'm not a strong. person to not ally with him and to be involved in some other vision.

[00:24:57] No, I'm making her as a helper to join him in the task I've given to humanity. And so cooperation's there at the beginning. And so really it's in a lot of ways, the same calling the husband has in the sense of your stance should be, I want, and I'm willing to lay aside my rights and my interests and my, what I want for the sake of cooperating with you for the mission that God has given us to make disciples in the world.

[00:25:31] And so the call to a husband and to the wife is to die to self, for the sake of being united to each other, to cooperate in God's calling.

[00:25:42] **Elyse:** Again, I just to sort of maybe add to that a tiny bit, a lot of the literature that we hear about relationships in marriage, say that the man should be the servant leader and we wanted to change that because then when you say servant leader, then servant modifies leader as the leaders, the most important thing.

[00:26:08] And what we wanted to say was no, actually that's backwards. the husband should be the leading servant, not the servant leader. So the leading servant, the person who lays down his life and, you know, getting back again to Genesis 2,

[00:26:26] you know, it's an interesting thing in Genesis 2, the husband is told basically he's the first one that has to lay down his life because he's told to leave his father and mother. Which basically means he leaves his position of security and, what he has, which we really don't see happening, but it should have been, that the husband would leave everything that he had known and loved in order to be unified with his wife.

[00:26:57] And so what's the point of that unity of that marriage. It's it's unity. And you don't have unity in a relationship where you have one person, either one, demanding that they're going to be in charge and having the other person obey. You just, you don't, you won't have unity there. And we believe that unity in the home, in the church, is really, the goal.

[00:27:27] Working together as husband and wife to fulfill God's command on our lives, which is of course now the great commission. So, you know, my husband, Phil and I have been married for almost 48 years. And as I've looked back over our marriage, Phil is, uh, such a wonderful godly guy. But I would say, you know, there has really been mutuality all along in our marriage, both of us laying down our lives for each other, asking one another, what do you think we should do?

[00:28:04] And then nobody demanding, nobody having to demand their own way. And that has made for a really wonderful marriage. I mean, not perfect, but wonderful, wonderful marriage.

[00:28:20] **Shelby:** Yeah. You know, when I got to your chapter on marriage, I was reading before bed and my husband was sitting right there and I was like, let me read this out loud to you. And so I read him, you know, a big chunk of the chapter and we just looked at each other and we thought, you know, much like your marriage allegiance, ours has been one of humility and mutuality, not perfectly by any means.

[00:28:40] But my husband is probably one of the most humble people I know. And so he's led the way in that. and we just thought, you know, I don't think we've ever heard it taught this way, but just by following Christ, by reading the Bible, by submitting to the leading of the Holy Spirit, I feel like this is where our marriage has gone.

[00:28:54] And so to see it affirmed in your writing and in that chapter made so much sense to the both of us. I really appreciate the words that you guys have brought on that topic. Can we talk about what this looks like as parents who are raising young men and women?

[00:29:10] **Elyse:** Again, if the point is that I want to model Christ to my children, it means a couple of things. It means, first of all, that I don't try to get my identity from how my children do. Okay. Which I think is a very big key to a lot of the problems that parents have with their children. They try to prove that they're actually good parents.

[00:29:40] And so they're on their kids. in not good ways.

[00:29:45] So as a parent, what, what do I want to do? Well, I, you know, I'm coming into parenting in the strength of knowing that I'm forgiven for all the ways I've sinned against my kids, that I have the record of Christ's perfect righteousness, and that I need to be honest and open with them about the way that I sin so that we can partner together to seek, to love, and serve Christ.

[00:30:14] One of the things that I really wanted to do was talk about what happens in a lot of the parenting literature, particularly these days in talking about what does it mean to raise girls and what does it mean to raise boys?

[00:30:32] You know, if we're going to actually read the Bible, there's no place in the Bible where it talks about how to raise girls or how to raise boys. It's just not there. And so then what does that tell us? Should I raise my daughter in a way that's distinctly different from the way I raised my sons?

[00:30:52] No, but maybe a little, yes. I mean, my daughter, had three children and so, you know, of course we talked about her biology and we're not trying to change biology or anything like that, but you know, the focus in raising my daughter was not to make her feminine.

[00:31:11] I am convinced that a lot of what we're seeing, not certainly not all, but a lot of what we're seeing these days, that is, resulting in gender dysphoria is a lot of kids are raised to think, if I, if I'm actually, uh, a boy or a man, then I have to like these things. And if I'm a girl, then I have to like these things.

[00:31:37] And in, in, you know, what, if I was told that when I was young, I would never have come to faith I wasn't a girly girl. I'm still not a girly girl. And it's okay. So to, to say that, you know what we've done as far as trying to raise kids, boys being masculine, girls being feminine, I, you know, it's way more than the Bible says. So we just want to say, okay, what does the Bible say? We need to raise children in the Lord. And what that means is we both go to Christ together.

[00:32:11] One of the things that I, and I'll just, and I'll just touch on this, but one of the things that I think is really important is the way that girls' lives have changed from the Old Testament, the Old Covenant to the new. In the old covenant, the sign that you belonged to God's family, the sign of the covenant was circumcision.

[00:32:35] That sign was given only to men, only to boys, so that any girl in the old covenant who wanted to be assured that she was part of God's family, she had to be related to a, sign bearing male. A father, a husband, a brother, a son. That was how she knew she was part of God's family.

[00:33:02] But now, Shelby, there's this marvelous difference. And the marvelous difference is you and I get to bear the sign of the covenant, which of course is baptism. And that's huge. So that I no longer have to be related to an earthly male to know that I am part of the covenant, and that has implications upon implications. So much of what is taught to, girls in the church, in Christian families, is what your goal should be in life is to get married and have kids

[00:33:45] Okay, getting married and having kids is a good thing. But it's changed. And now what I want to do is we'll maybe I'll be married. Maybe I won't. But what I want to say is I want to partner together with others, male, and female, to fulfill the great commission. And to me, that is a massive shift between where old covenant girls were in, grew up to be to the new covenant.

[00:34:14] So much of the teaching about what it means to be masculine boys and feminine girls, find it in the Bible for me. It's just not there.

[00:34:23] **Shelby:** Yeah.

[00:34:23] **Eric:** Yeah. Yeah. And I think just to follow up on that, you know, as parents, when things that we should be careful of is what we offer and don't offer or what we encourage and discourage with our own kids. And so, if our daughter shows interest in something, and we say, no, that's just for boys, we at least need to have a really good answer of why that's just for boys or why this is just for girls.

[00:34:53] And naturally I think some of our kids are just gonna pick wherever, you know, our boys will pick wherever all the boys are at and a girls pick where all the girls are at and, and that's fine. That's totally fine. And there's nothing wrong. I don't think with, gender distinct activities, a boys soccer team and a girl's soccer team.

[00:35:10] And as, as they develop, you know, there's differences in strength and development and those sorts of things, which can make competing, uh, more enjoyable when you're, when you're in a group. Uh, that's, that's similar.

[00:35:23] For example, our church, uh, recently our children's ministry, every spring, I think it's spring. Anyway, every year they offer a, a carpentry class and a sewing class and, uh, Terry who, uh, helps lead our children's ministry. He has some carpentry projects that he's developed over the years and Debbie has the sewing ones. And we offer those classes to the kids in the kids' ministry.

[00:35:47] And we don't say anything about, you know, this is for the boys and this is for the girls. And you know, this year I took my son and his class had no girls in it. He wanted to go to the carpentry class, but then, you know, at the same time I'm seeing the pictures posted from the sewing class. And there's one of our little boys, his brother went to carpentry and he wanted to go learn how to sew.

[00:36:10] I think that's great, you know, that we didn't say, no, if you're going to be a girl in this church, you have to sew. And you don't get to learn how to build with your hands. Or if you're going to be a boy, you know, fabric is off limits. but you can work with wood. There there's nothing there biblically that would, that would drive us in either direction.

[00:36:31] And so just allowing it to be open, to their interests without teasing, without discouragement, without making them feel like they're different or a freak or weird because they don't want to play sports, but they want to read novels or they're really, you know, your son's really interested in clothing design.

[00:36:50] But he doesn't care anything about hunting. That's great. If every man and every woman in the world liked the same stuff and acted the same ways the world would be boring and it'd probably be a pretty bad place.

[00:37:02] **Shelby:** Yeah. As a mom of four young kids, I've definitely seen, with three boys and one girl, and so I've definitely seen just the difference and even my three boys and their, their interests. And, you know, some of them have no interest in quote, unquote, typical boy activities and some of them do. And so I appreciate everything you're saying.

[00:37:22] Um, and you know, I think sometimes in the Christian community and in the church, we began to believe that gender norms equal godliness, somehow in some way, um, that that's what God intended, but I love that you're saying that no godliness equals godliness when we're raising our children.

[00:37:39] So what about in the church? What might it look like to live as sisters and brothers who serve each other in the church?

[00:37:45] **Eric:** Yeah. And that's, that's a great question. And that's where, you know, often when these conversations happen, this is where the big debates occur is, you know, who can serve as an elder who can, be on the platform on Sunday morning, who can preach, who can pray, who can lead the liturgy, who can read this scripture.

[00:38:07] And we don't necessarily get into that conversation in our book. But what we do look at is the fact that men and women in Christ are described throughout the new Testament as brothers and sisters. That is the language that's given there. And so, part of what that calls too is, you know, that the command to, you know, you treat younger women as sisters and all purity, like, the, you know, what the, the incest laws in Leviticus pointed to.

[00:38:37] You know, like these people are the same flesh, so you may not have relations with them. And in the church we are brothers and sisters. And so we don't see each other as sexual opportunities and lusting after each other. We're, we're seeing each other as brothers and sisters who were in the same family.

[00:38:57] We have interest in each other flourishing and we protect each other from those who would do harm. Paul, the apostle Paul, who gets such a bad rap on the male and female issue. He just presents this picture of men and women laboring side by side in the gospel. And, you know, he speaks of Euodia and Syntyche and he wants them to get along.

[00:39:23] But what he says about them there is that, you know, they were, co-laborers, They strove side-by-side with me, for the gospel. They were contending with me for the gospel. And they're basically going into a fight and into a war with him, not behind him, but beside him, side-by-side for the gospel.

[00:39:44] And you go through Paul's letters and you look at the people he greets and how he speaks of them. And there's just woman after woman, after woman, that either has influenced him and blessed him or that he has served with, or that he's sending into service.

[00:40:02] And then you look at the book of Acts and you see the role that women play there. And, and you just begin to understand that the local church is this place where, uh, regardless, you know, your local church needs to figure out where it stands on issues like ordination and so forth, but regardless of where you land there, uh, you know, sin doesn't know, uh, any theological camp it's happy to enter into every opinion.

[00:40:32] Regardless of where you land, stance should be that of Christ. We are picturing the gospel. The church is an embassy for ambassadors of Jesus. And we're not on mission for ourselves in competition with each other. We're on mission for one King that we represent, and it's not good for us to be alone. We're linking arms and going into the battle, for the sake of Christ together.

[00:40:58] **Elyse:** I really appreciate what Eric did. And Eric wrote that chapter. And I I'm so thankful for the work that he did, but I, you know, I know that what people want is for us to say, this person should be able to be ordained and this person should not. And we're just not going to do that. Whatever you think, and Eric has opinions and I have opinions, but that's not the primary discussion.

[00:41:23] The primary discussion has to be wherever you land. And honestly, on either side, wherever you land, if you think you have authority then what the gospel tells you to do is give it up and serve.

[00:41:39] You know, if, if you believe in mail only ordination and I happen to belong to a church that believes in male only ordination, then what that means is that I want to willfully, joyfully as a person, a free agent to submit to the truths that, our pastors would preach and the ways that they would guide us.

[00:42:05] I want to submit to that, but then they're doing the same thing. They're giving up authority and laying down their lives for the people in the church. But if you happen to not believe that fine. What we're called to do is have the same attitude as Christ. Which he actually did have authority, but he didn't use it to exploit other people or to get other people to do what he wanted them to do by demanding. Instead he laid down his life.

[00:42:43] **Shelby:** You know, I think that's particularly convicting for me because as a woman in the church, who's typically, been in churches like yours, Elyse, that don't, believe that women can be ordained. I probably fall in that camp as well. You know, having any sort of like voice to speak to is not as heard of.

[00:43:02] And so the thought that if I do get that voice, then I should give it up, you know, that I should sacrifice it, that I should use it to serve. That was just really personally convicting for me as we had this conversation and really challenged me to think about my brothers in Christ in a different way, and not necessarily as power hungry people, but as people I can serve and love.

[00:43:23] And so I, I definitely appreciate, that chapter and, and the words that you guys are sharing on that.

[00:43:29] So we're going to wrap up here in just a minute, but let me just ask this, let's say there's a woman out there who's struggling to find her place in the church. Our podcast listeners are majority women.

[00:43:41] What encouragement would you give to her?

[00:43:43] **Eric:** Yeah. Well, first of all, I would say to her that you're not the problem. The fact that you are a female is not a burden to the church. You're not, what's wrong with the church. You are. a daughter of God, the Father, you are the sister of King Jesus, and He loves you, with an infinite love that you can do nothing to end.

[00:44:08] He laid down his life for you so that you could be clothed with His righteousness and have all your sins washed away. And as part of the corporate bride of Christ, one day, you will reign with Him in a new heavens and new earth forever. And so your status and your eternity are entirely secure regardless of how you're being treated in a local congregation.

[00:44:39] Now, I want you to flourish in that local church. And so if you're struggling to find your place and granted, part of what's hard about answering this question is there's so many different ways that you can be struggling here. So you could be in a congregation that's spiritually abusive and you're being treated as less valuable and as unintelligent and as a hindrance to men, you're a temptation, you're a, seductress, you're always to be suspect.

[00:45:10] That is not a gospel environment. That's not a healthy environment. That is a harmful environment that I think is going to do harm to all the women in that congregation. And it's going to do harm to all the men because of what is going to happen to their lives. Because the people that God gave them, how they're, how they're going to be treated.

[00:45:27] In a situation like that, it may well be that you need to find another church that loves Jesus and His gospel, and wants men and women to look like Him. Maybe you're in a congregation where you do feel like you're valued And you're not mistreated, but you just don't feel like you're included and you don't know how to do that.

[00:45:52] Part of that might mean just having honest conversations with your leaders. And I want to emphasize, if you feel safe with those leaders, you know, you, you feel relatively safe with how they're going to respond and that you're going to be listened to. And those sorts of things. But I think even a book like Jesus and Gender or Worthy, and just saying, Hey, I bought you this it's been really helpful to me.

[00:46:12] And I just wanted to give this to you. And I wondered, could we get coffee maybe in a month? And I would love to hear what you think about it. And if you're willing, I'd love to share with you some of my thoughts on how we could strengthen our church by incorporating some of these ideas.

[00:46:29] So even just going in with I'm on board with you, like, I want to be in partnership. And hopefully a pastor has the same attitude of I'm not here to protect myself and my authority. I want to partner with you. And so I want to hear, and, and I want to learn.

[00:46:47] And I think what I would say to both men and women, when it comes to flourishing in the local church, you know, Jesus, the Messiah was not concerned about having a seat at the table. He was concerned about having a place on the floor next to the wash basin as He washed His disciples feet. Uh, he wasn't clamoring for a position of leadership among the Pharisees and in the temple. He was marching straight-forward to the cross.

[00:47:15] And I'm not saying that it's not important to have a seat at the table, and I'm not saying it's not important to have places in leadership because all of those things need to happen in a healthy local church. Women need to be heard. There are places for them in leadership So don't hear me saying any of that, but I think if we have that mindset of Christ, the first thing we're asking about how to get involved in our churches, where can I lay down my life for my brothers and sisters and serve them and put their interests ahead of my own.

[00:47:49] **Elyse:** I too would, encourage women to know that you are necessary to the mission. You're necessary to the mission. And, you know, getting back again to Genesis, it's not good for the man to be alone. And I think that in so many churches, people think it is good for guys to be alone and that they don't really need, the help of the woman.

[00:48:18] And so, you know, our, our friend, Rachel Miller wrote a book, Beyond Authority and Submission. And in there, she talks about how women are really necessary to the mission. But so often they're treated like throw pillows. So, Shelby, I don't know if you have throw pillows on your couch or your sofas at home, but yeah, so, you know, they're pretty, but they're not necessary.

[00:48:46] And so often that's how women are treated. So what we want to do is come back and say, Hey, you are necessary. God said, that's not good for the men to be alone in mission. That's what He was talking about there, the mission at that point, to have a mandate, the cultural mandate to subdue the earth.

[00:49:09] But now the mission of the great commission is for men and women to partner together and pursue whatever call happens to be on your life. And, you know, I know the Lord has gifted women. Again, I don't believe that the gifts of the Spirit are gendered. So if the gifts of the Spirit are not gendered, then what that means is that you have gifts to offer.

[00:49:37] And so, as Eric said, see if you can offer them at your church and do your best to, respectfully seek to open conversations about that.

[00:49:50] But, women, you are necessary. And as long as women's voices are squelched or women are silenced, then half of the army that God has given to the church to fulfill the great commission is just being silenced.

[00:50:08] And it's just not going to happen

[00:50:10] **Shelby:** That's great advice. Thank you. You know, let me ask you one more question on this topic. and then we'll have one more question in closing, but if Christians can get this right, if we can become brothers and sisters in Christ who work towards each other's mutual flourishing, what do you think the impact of that will be?

[00:50:30] **Elyse:** The evangelization of the world.

[00:50:32] **Shelby:** Yeah.

[00:50:34] **Elyse:** Right. I mean, I, you know, fulfilling the great commission. To go into all the world to partner together, to do that and to stop spending our energy fighting with each other and instead value each other and in humility seek to cause the flourishing of one another for the good of the earth. And as long as we're spending our time and our energy fighting with each other about who gets to be boss, Satan loves that, the world is laughing at us, and we're not fulfilling God's call on our life.

[00:51:17] **Eric:** Hmm. Yeah, I just give a big amen to that. I think. We so often, you know, one of the things that Lisa and I are convinced of is that one of the biggest mistakes made in the church and Christianity is that the gospel is a message for unbelievers to get them saved. And then Christians really don't have much use for it after that.

[00:51:41] And what we're saying in this book, as I think Elyse said in so many books, is that like Paul says, the gospel is the power of God for salvation. It's from first to last, from faith to faith, how we are saved, sanctified, glorified, everything. And I think in a very similar way, we have forgotten what we're supposed to be about as a church.

[00:52:05] And we're caught up in the question of like, what's my purpose. And we forget it's exactly what Elyse just said, the fulfillment of the great commission, the evangelization of the whole world. You know, in the beginning when God made the first man and the first woman in his image, The task was be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and exercise dominion, fill the earth and rule it.

[00:52:31] Well, now Christ has come as the perfect image of God and the cultural mandate from, back in Genesis, uh, 1 has been transformed and fulfilled in how do we fill the earth now? Go and make disciples of all nations. How do we exercise dominion? Teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded. That is the task of every man and woman in the church.

[00:52:59] And if we're sitting around looking at whether or not, you know, I'm getting promoted in the right way in this army, we're not going about the mission. And the world suffers from that. I believe strongly in the sovereignty of God and salvation, but the means that God uses to save people is the preaching of the gospel.

[00:53:23] And if we're fighting over these things in the local church, then people are going to hell because we're sitting around fighting about who gets power rather than who's going to get the gospel.

[00:53:35] And also I think there's a generation that's coming up that is here and is absolutely confused about what it means to be a man or a woman.

[00:53:47] All sorts of terrible things are happening, you know, suicide among people who are confused about gender and we have a church that's trying to foist on them extra biblical, culturally constructed understandings of masculinity and femininity that Jesus had nothing to do with. And we think we're doing it in His name.

[00:54:10] And so they're being harmed and they want nothing to do with the Christ that we have to offer. And so, yeah, I'll end my sermon there, but, uh, it would be like, Elyse said it would be good for the whole world.

[00:54:27] **Shelby:** Yes. Amen. You know, to wrap up our conversation, there's one question that we ask every guest who comes on our podcast. I'd love for each of you to take a moment to answer this.

[00:54:36] At the Daily Grace as you guys have mentioned today, we are all about the gospel and we always say the gospel changes everything.

[00:54:43] So I'm wondering Elyse and Eric, what has the gospel changed for you?

[00:54:49] **Elyse:** Thank you. And that's a great question. I guess that I would say understanding my justification, that I am completely forgiven, and counted completely obedient, and that Christ has had it all. It has drained out of my relationships with people, fear that I'm not being respected, fear that I'm not going to be taken care of and anger.

[00:55:16] And it's made me free to lay down my life because I don't have anything to prove anymore. Everything that needed to be said about me has already been said. And so I can freely love my brother. I wish that were the case in my mind all the time, but it, it actually is where I, where I believe,

[00:55:38] **Eric:** Well, hopefully it's not this brother that she has trouble loving in her mind. Oh, wow. Yeah. You're you are so right. And I love that emphasis that the gospel changes everything. I mean, I could probably talk about every area of my life, but one in particular, I think that's important for this discussion is that the gospel has changed how I view and think about and relate to women.

[00:55:58] Because in the circles that I cut my teeth on theologically, you know, a very conservative form of complementarianism was all the rage and I'm a natural, performer and I want to be respected and I want to be applauded and I want to be included and received and valued in circles.

[00:56:18] And so part of that meant like, Man you're competing for that. But also you have to maintain that. And so when I started just questioning in my mind, like a lot of this stuff that I'm hearing about manhood and womanhood, just, I'm not seeing it in the biblical text, you know, I there's things I hold to very firmly, but it seems like so much of this is going beyond that.

[00:56:42] It, it really felt like just to step out and say, I think we're thinking about women wrong. And I think we're thinking about manhood and womanhood wrong. Like I have friends that I don't have anymore because emphasizing the value of women meant I was suspect and probably going liberal and maybe going through, you know, like a, a gender transformation or something like I've heard that said.

[00:57:10] And it's just to come to the point where. You can say, Jesus loves me. And He gave His life for me. And He was raised from the dead for me. And He never leaves me or forsakes me. And He stands beside me. And if everybody else wants to write me off, because I'm saying what I believe is true, Jesus will stand beside me and, and He's proved Himself faithful.

[00:57:36] There are communities and circles. I don't feel like I have a place in anymore. I don't hear from those people anymore. They don't talk about my books, definitely, but I, what you've given up to follow Jesus, He says, you'll have a hundred times more in this life and in the next. And He's brought me so many friends who love Jesus, love the gospel, love the scripture and take it very seriously, even where we disagree.

[00:58:03] And I can't be more thankful that the gospel has done that for me.

[00:58:08] **Shelby:** That's great. Well, Elyse and Eric, I appreciate you both so much for taking the time to talk to us today on this important topic.

[00:58:16] **Eric:** thanks for having us

[00:58:18] **Shelby:** Yeah, I know that I personally have been challenged to think about the ways that I interact with men and women in the body of Christ and to fight for the mutual flourishing and the building up of all. As we work together on mission for Christ to each of our listeners. We're so thankful you joined us today on the Daily Grace Podcast.

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