

# Special Theological Viewpoints

## **Women in Ministry**

We believe that God's calling and gifting to pastoral ministry is not limited by gender. We observe in scripture that God has seen fit to use women in key leadership roles in the history of His people in the Old Testament, in the community of followers of Jesus during His earthly ministry, and in the creation of the New Testament church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We are aware of the biblical passages (1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2 most notably) which would seem to prohibit women from teaching men or functioning as pastors. However, we understand those instructions to be linked to identifiable cultural realities in the churches or a possible specific individual, that allows us to view these scriptures and others (Acts 2, Philemon, Gal. 3, 1 Cor. 11, Romans 16, Judges 4, 2 Kings 22:14-20, Matt. 28,) in a deeper and a more holistic biblical view to which Paul wrote.

## **Human Gender and Sexuality**

We understand the issues of human gender and sexuality are very challenging. We believe every person is created in the image of God and is worthy of the love and salvation that Jesus offers to all. We also believe Scripture speaks directly to the appropriate expression of human sexuality. Throughout the Bible it is clearly communicated that God created two genders, male and female. God designed sex to be shared exclusively between one man and one woman who are united in the covenant of marriage (Gen. 2, Mark 10, 1 Cor. 7). All other expressions of sexuality stand outside of God's declared will, including premarital sex, extramarital sex, homosexual sex, and engagement of pornographic materials (Rom. 1, Matt. 5, 1 Cor. 6). All human persons are created in the image of God and derive their primary value from that truth as listed in Gen. 2. Regardless of marital status, gender preference, sexual preference, or sexual orientation, we choose to submit our life under God's design and created intention. As such, all persons should be loved unconditionally, welcomed enthusiastically, and served without hesitation. We call all persons to align all areas of their life to God's will as expressed in the Bible.

## **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit (as listed in 1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12) are meant to be used in our daily lives and in the church today. These gifts began on the day of Pentecost and are still in operation today and will be into the future. We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2, others) is a work of grace that is distinct from conversion, though it may happen simultaneously with conversion. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a singular, empowering event in which believers experience the person of the Holy Spirit, who already indwells in them (Gal. 4:6), and are released in greater power and influence to impact the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The experience is often accompanied by speaking in tongues, prophecy, or a greater and more regular use of supernatural spiritual gifts such as those listed in 1 Cor. 12 & Rom 12. Those gifts may be manifested immediately or later, and no one individual gift is the singular evidence of Spirit baptism. While baptism in the Holy Spirit is a one-time experience, scripture also directs believers to continue being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), suggesting that Christians should consistently and intentionally ask God to release the full impact of the Holy Spirit's presence and work in their life.