

The "One Another" Scriptures and Gender

Author: Leslie & Chad Seagraves

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Leslie and Chad Seagraves are members of Alliance 2.29, the Lausanne Special Interest Committee that works on issues of empowering women and men to work together for the Gospel. They work as a team to run an international ministry, will be plenary speakers at the Cape Town Congress, and both hold doctorates in Missiology from Fuller Seminary. Chad wrote on the "one another" scriptures in his doctoral dissertation.

It is interesting to overlay these scriptures on the idea of men and women working together, for surely such important scriptural principles would also apply here. As you read the following that Leslie and Chad have written, think of these scriptures in light of interactions between men and women. I have enjoyed reading past comments in this blog and look forward to hearing your thoughts.

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"Do unto others?" This simple phrase of Jesus serves as a clear reminder to treat others well, just as we want to be treated. A worldly perspective may tell us to "treat others the way we have been treated" or "treat others in a way that protects/benefits ourselves." Not so in God's kingdom. Jesus' proactive standard of other-centeredness exemplifies the best way humans can relate. At the same time, Jesus' example reveals the very character of the Triune God.

The logical flow begins with Godself and calls for humans to emulate. 1. The Trinity relates in an "other-preferring" or "one another" manner among the Godhead. 2. Humans are made in the image of God. 3. Humans relate best to other humans when we practice a "one another" type of relationship, as does the Trinity. That is the logic; the practical application, however, can be quite tricky! What does it mean to relate in a "one another" fashion? What about in a cross-cultural situation? What about between genders or across generations? What about relationships with great power distance (CEO and daily wage earner in the same company)?

The Greek "allois" is translated "one another" or "each other" and carries the meaning of reciprocity for a particular action, attitude, or situation. While each finds perfection in the Trinity, humans can aim for an accurate reflection as well.

Following are a few New Testament uses of allelois. As you read them, which ones do you find easy to do? Which ones are more difficult? Why? Love one another John 13:34 Forgive one another Ephesians 4:32 Accept one another Romans 15:7 Honor one another above ourselves Romans 12:10 Be kind and compassionate to one another Ephesians 4:32 Do not lie to one another Colossians 3:9 Teach and admonish one another Colossians 3:16 Confess your sins to one another James 5:16 Build up one another 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Serve one another Galatians 6:2 Help one another Ephesians 5:21

You can probably think of many more! Wayne and Clay Jacobsen in their book *Authentic Relationships: Discover the Lost Art of "One Anothering"* offer a solid biblical foundation for practical theologizing through the "one another" principles.

So in Eastern cultures what does it look like for the older Christian generation to "honor" the younger believers "above themselves"? In a work environment what does it look like for the boss and for co-workers to "serve and build up" the other employees in the company? What does it look like for men and women to "teach and admonish one another" and to "submit to one another"? Each of these scenarios conflicts with aspects of most cultures. Praise God the Holy Spirit who empowers us to accomplish the super-natural!

Living out the one another principles: helps focus our spiritual eyes on the Trinity as our model, moves us beyond stereotypical ?authority? and ?roles? vocabulary, and requires the Holy Spirit to help us overcome our naturally selfish tendencies.