

A Biblical and Theological Response and Statement of Opposition
to Women Serving in the Military and Registering for the Draft

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There was a time in US history when our culture and government abhorred the thought of women serving in the military alongside men engaged in mortal combat. Today that view has been jettisoned as evidence of a backward and patriarchal culture. Now the normal, celebrated, and insisted on belief is that there are no fundamental differences between men or women.

Consequently, women not only can enlist in the military but can also serve alongside men in any military capacity and situation.

Each year Congress passes laws that make up the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which authorizes the annual budget for the Department of Defense. The last several years the NDAA included a recommendation that women be required to register for the draft. Though it has yet to be adopted there is bipartisan support for this.

How did the United States of America get to this point? Is this right, wrong, or merely one among many legitimate career choices for women? How should Christians think about this?

United States society and culture was largely informed by “Christianity;” thus Americans’ views of church, marriage, home, government, etc. were controlled by and directed along the lines of Christian truth.

First, we must understand that culture is the outworking of the beliefs and commitments of a group of people, evidenced in daily life.

Second, in the Bible God declares and assesses human belief and behavior as either right or wrong. He is the standard (Matt 5:48). Furthermore, the presence and effects of sin in everyone’s heart direct and control every aspect of human life (Jer 17:9; Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19). Thus, no aspect of human culture is neutral; in the eyes of the Triune Creator who has authoritatively revealed himself in the Christian Scriptures, every aspect of human culture is either right or wrong.

Third, as United States culture has become increasingly informed by unbelief, atheism, evolution, gender equality, gender fluidity, LGBTQIA+, etc., such beliefs are evidenced in daily life and human institutions, e.g. church, marriage, home, government, etc.

Consequently, Christians must step back and away from predominant American culture and mores and reassess from God’s point of view as revealed in the Christian Scriptures what role if any women should have in the military.

I will address this through sixteen statements.

1. The Bible is God’s Word stating His will for all human life, authoritatively teaching everything necessary for faith and practice (John 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4). No man or institution has authority superseding that of God’s Word.

2. Men and women owe their existence solely to God, not any naturalistic, evolutionary process. God created both man and woman in his image, man (Adam) from the dust and the woman (Eve) from man's rib (Gen 1–2).
3. Men were specially created and constituted by God to lead, provide, and self-sacrificially protect their wives, families, and societies (Gen 9:6; Rom 13:4; Eph 5:25; 1 Pet 3:7).
4. Women were specially created and constituted by God to help and support their husbands and give, nurture, preserve, and care for life within marriage and their various spheres in society (Gen 2:18, 20, 22; 3:20; 1 Cor 11:9; 1 Tim 2:11–15; 5:14; Titus 2:3–5). Women's natural vulnerability is not a fault or shortcoming but serves their God given roles and calls for loving care, consideration, and protection (1 Thess 2:7; 1 Pet 3:7).
5. By God's creation men and women are fundamentally distinct from one another in constitution, abilities, gifts, and purpose. Women should not minimize how God has created them different from men to attain equal status with men; instead, they should gratefully recognize, joyfully celebrate, and faithfully live out to their fullest ability their God-given roles and responsibilities (cf. 1 Tim 2:11–15).
6. Men and women are not *fungible*, that is, interchangeable, capable of switching roles and responsibilities without distinction (Gen 1-2; Deut 22:5).
7. Adam's failure to obey God's command and to protect his wife caused sin's destructive effects to spread throughout the created order, of which warfare is one such sad but necessary effect (Rom 5:12ff; 8:20–21).
8. The objective of warfare is for governments to inflict destruction and death on an enemy to protect the welfare, security, and good order of a nation and its citizens (Rom 13:4). This is in keeping with the role and responsibilities God gave men (cf. #3) but not women (cf. #4).
9. Throughout Scripture only men were the subjects of military service and involved in combat (Gen 14:14; Num 31:3–4, 21, 49; Deut 20:5–9; Josh 1:14–18; 6:3, 7, 9; 8:3; 10:7; Judg 7:1–8; 20:8–11; 1 Sam 8:11–12 [contrast v. 13]; 11:8; 13:2; 14:52; 16:18; 18:5; 24:2; 2 Sam 17:8; 23:8–39; 24:2, 9; 2 Kings 24:14–16; 1 Chr 21:5; 27:1–15, 23–24; 2 Chr 17:12–19; 25:5–6; 26:11–14; Neh 4:14).

1 Samuel 8:11-13 *And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. [12] And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. [13] And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.*

- a. While Deborah did go with Barak, God commanded Barak to lead the army into battle, promising him victory (Judg 4:6–7). Barak's unwillingness to go without Deborah

demonstrated weakness on his part (4:8, 14) and a failure to exercise the leadership God called him to. Furthermore, Deborah did not take part in the battle (4:10, 12, 14b).

- b. Jael's action in killing Sisera (4:21) was not as a soldier in combat but occurred in her domestic jurisdiction against one who was not on the field of battle.
- 10. While women *could* use their God-given gifts in military service, and some *may* be able to effectively participate and contribute in warfare, this does not provide biblical grounds *for* doing so (just because they *can* doesn't mean they *should*, cf. #4). *Ability* does not mean *appropriate* or *acceptable*. God gives abilities to be used in ways God ordains.

This could be applied in other areas of life such as leading a marriage/home or preaching/church leadership.

- 11. Women can care for and treat those ill or injured in the course of military service, but such service does not require women enlisting in the armed forces. International and our nation's history reflects this practice.

- 12. Those enlisting in the United States military must affirm the oath of enlistment:

U.S. Code § 502

(a)ENLISTMENT OATH.—

Each person enlisting in an armed force shall take the following oath:

“I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and ¹defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that ²I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. ³So help me God.

Women enlistees thus take the role of military defender which is out of line with God's Word and her created constitution. While some have attempted to distinguish between combatant and non-combatant roles, the enlistment oath makes no such distinction.

¹ Women are thus forced into the role of warrior and protector, contrary to God's revealed will in Scripture.

² Women are thus forced to obey and submit to men other than their fathers and husbands, contrary to God's revealed will in Scripture.

³ To add insult to injury, the enlistee/draftee invokes God's help to act contrary to God's design, intention, and will.

- 13. Civil authorities that permit women to enlist in the armed forces or compel registration for military conscription remove fundamental distinctions between men and women, declaring them be interchangeable (“fungible”). Civil authorities thus act contrary to God, who created men and women with different constitutions and ordained different spheres of activity (#3–5).

14. Women in military wear the same uniform as men, obliterating the God-created distinction between them (Gen 1:27). God explicitly forbids this (Deut 22:5; 1 Cor 11:4-15).

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Deuteronomy 22:5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.

1 Corinthians 11:7,14 [7] For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. [14] Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15. Civil authorities that intentionally place women in harm's way or rely on them for military service violate God's Word, degrade rather than honor women, and disgracefully surrender the God-given roles and responsibilities of men (legislating a situation worse than Barak's, where women are compelled to act in a manner which Deborah refused to do). Furthermore, conscription of women into military service would force many to take an oath against their consciences to do what they believe is wrong.

16. No human institution—including government—supersedes God's truth revealed in the Christian Scriptures. Thus, women who are forced to register for the draft and/or are conscripted into military service have biblical grounds for “civil disobedience.” While Christians must submit to government authorities (Rom 13:1), when such authorities blatantly violate Scripture, Christians must respond with “we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

What Should Be Done?

Several suggestions have been recommended over the years:

- 1) Communicate with government officials (yes!)
- 2) Speak publicly about these issues from a biblical perspective (sure!)
- 3) Run for office and enter politics to make a difference

This is not an amoral issue, neither right nor wrong. This “is where our culture is”—IOW, what the majority of people in the United States of America view as good and proper, a radical shift from the majority of US History.

The only way that sinful human hearts can be changed...

We need strong local churches committed to fulfilling the commands Jesus gave after his resurrection: preaching the gospel to the lost, making disciples (followers of Christ), teaching the saints to know and obey his every command.

Churches must teach the above, teach biblical morality and the different roles and responsibilities of men and women, and adopt position statements/resolutions. All this is part of the church's necessary teaching and discipling role.