

If Eve Only Knew: Freeing Yourself from Biblical Womanhood & Becoming All God Means for You to Be by Kendra Weddle Irons and Melanie Springer Mock

Reviewed by Shirley Taylor

Age appropriate level – Age 14 forward

If Eve only knew how her desire for wisdom would be distorted and misused down through the centuries! We know, of course, how women have had to fight for any measure of equality in both the church and the home. But what many do not know about is the powerful religious machine that is keeping women in what is termed “biblical womanhood” and the extremes women have accepted as being “God’s design.”

This book explains those extremes such as: the Christian Patriarchal Movement; Purity Rings for girls and boys; Proverbs 31 woman and the Proverbs 31 Ministry cottage industry; the Titus Two Woman; Waiting for your Boaz for young single Christian women; “His (Jesus) Princess” for adult women; Princess bibles for little girls complete with beauty tips; Warrior and Princess Sunday school literature; Stay-at-home daughters; sexual and emotional abuse by religious leaders and parents; Biblical Womanhood; Biblical Manhood. The authors’ show throughout the entire book that whenever males seek to hold superiority over females, there is no limit as to what will happen. As you read the book you may wonder why Christian women have embraced patriarchy so fully for themselves and their children.

The writers’ stated goal was to offer ‘a different, richer, and more complex reading of the bible: one that allows women and men the freedom to be all God intended for them. Each chapter begins with the messages popular evangelical culture sends us about who it believes the Bible demands we be, given its interpretation of Scripture and church tradition.’ The authors show a different way to understand the biblical texts. They critiqued the evangelical culture with a ‘reading of Scripture that provides a fresh perspective on the Bible, Jesus, faith, vocation, and the self.’ They help readers find new strength in pursuing what God meant them to be, and as I read the book, I found it hard to understand why more pastors and Christian leaders are not concerned with the direction ‘biblical manhood and womanhood’ has taken this generation.

The book is written in an easy to read format. It is interesting, well-researched, and told in such a way that leaves no doubt that evangelicals have taken patriarchy in the 21st century to a new level of gender inequality.

It is not often that a Christian publishing house takes on the subject of biblical womanhood as espoused by evangelical denominations, and the Chalice Press is to be commended for doing so. This book should be read by leaders – pastors and laypersons – of those churches that already accept female equality. It is imperative that they know how mainstream evangelicals are changing the religious landscape through their promotion and teaching of male supremacy (patriarchy), because it affects their congregation’s families, neighbors and communities, allowing this patriarchal attitude to seep into egalitarian churches.