

## **Transcript for the podcast “Worthy: Celebrating the Value of Women.”**

**Hosts:** Elyse Fitzpatrick and Eric Schumacher

**Episode 13 — Guest:** Russell D. Moore

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Eric Schumacher 0:06

Welcome to worthy Christian podcast celebrates the value of women. Each week, we'll bring you conversations with women and men, on the value of women in the church, home, and society. We will not always agree on everything. But we do agree that God is glorious. The Bible's true. Women are valuable. And respectful conversation on this topic is essential in our day.

Thank you for joining us on the worthy podcast. I'm Eric Shoemaker here with my co host, Elyse Fitzpatrick. And our special guest today is Dr. Russell Moore. He's the president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, which is the moral and public policy agency of the nation's largest Protestant denomination. Dr. Moore is the author of several books, including *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel*, and *The Storm Tossed Family: How the Cross Reshapes the Home*. He's a native of Mississippi, and he and his wife, Maria, are the parents of five sons. He is also a Johnny Cash enthusiast, and was one of my favorite professors in seminary, and so you can blame it all on him. So, Dr. Morrow, welcome to the podcast.

Russell Moore 2:02

Oh, I'm so thrilled to be here. I loved your book of worthy. And so it's an honor for me to be here with both of you.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 2:08

Thank you.

Eric Schumacher 2:10

So Dr. Moore, why don't you tell us, our listeners, who may not be familiar with you just a little bit about yourself, sort of your journey and how you ended up at the ERLC?

Russell Moore 2:21

Well, I'm, as you mentioned, I grew up in coastal Mississippi. I grew up in a home that was half angelical, half Roman Catholic. Catholic on my mother's side. Baptist on my father's side. My grandfather had been the pastor of my home church, before I was born. And so I grew up in that church experience - called to the ministry but rebelled against it. I experienced it really early, but I really wrestled with it for a long time. And for a while, went into government, instead of ministry while I was working that through. And then ended up in ministry. And somehow all the little streams eventually came together in some way or other. So I've been in this role - I'm in my eighth year now.

Eric Schumacher 3:14

Okay. And give us a little bit of your journey just on how you've come to understand the value of women.

Russell Moore 3:22

Well, there was no way for me not to understand the value of women at one level, because in terms of my Christian life, and discipleship, women were formative. And one woman in particular, my grandmother, who had become a widow at a very young age. And she lived right next door. And she was the one who made sure that I was in church, Sunday morning and Sunday night, Sunday school and discipleship training and everything. So many things that we had during the week. And then she was one she just invested her life in me. And I saw her leading in all sorts of ways. So I never, I never could have had a category for a woman who did not see her place in God's kingdom as a place of value and worth. And so that was imprinted on me really, really early on. In recent years, a number of things have been a shock to the system for me. And one of those things is having to work so much in the area of church sexual abuse, and seeing some of the things that have taken place. And one of the moments that was kind of an epiphany for me is sitting around in a room with evangelical women of all ages, all theological tribes, all everything else. And one of them said, "You know, we sense that some of you men are shocked and rattled by some of the revelations that have come out. But none of us in this room are right?" And every head in the room nodded. And that was really revelatory, to me of some of the things that had been happening not just at the explicit level, but at the implicit level for sisters in Christ for a long time. That was a - the Lord, the Lord really wrecked me with that.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 5:37

You know, I've as I've listened now, and had the great opportunity to talk with men, pastors in particular, about how their view of the worth of women and what women experience has changed. I, I've heard almost that exact same sentence that you just said, Dr. Morrow, when you said, ".. it was like a wake up call, it was like I never knew. And now all of a sudden, I'm seeing things." And I've had the the really great opportunity to talk with guys who say, "You know, it's not just that I have to be convinced,

maybe theologically, or maybe even just from Scripture. But to actually have the experience of sitting down with women, and hearing them, actually hearing their stories." And I know that for me, personally, I over the last few years, really did kind of a deep dive into what it was like to be in the white majority. And I had never even thought about that, even though I live in Southern California, which is highly Hispanic - never even thought about it until I sat down and listened to stories of my neighbors. And that's, that's so important. You know, how how, in your position -which your position - I was thinking about all the things that you have to face right now - you're kind of in a hornet's nest. And, and I was wondering, how is it that you think that we can help pastors, men who look to you, to begin to say, okay, maybe there's something here I need to listen to?

Russell Moore 7:31

I think honestly, all that it takes are a few models. I think that we underestimate just how much happens in church life by people overhearing what's happening in the lives of other people. And so they see somebody who is standing up and saying something, or, or giving an outlet to God's gifting of women leaders in their congregations. And they see what's possible for them in their own congregations. And they start asking questions. And I think I learned that more working in the adoption, orphan care sort of arena. Because I saw it happen so many times, if you just had one church that would kind of obediently follow where God was taking them, other churches would watch that. And it wasn't so much that they would mimic what they were doing...

Elyse Fitzpatrick 8:27

Right.

...as it would put the question on their minds. "Well, wait a minute." What so I think sometimes when you have people who see what's going on in other people's ministries, they then come back to their own churches and say, to the women who are there, let's evaluate us, and how are we doing as a family? And in many cases, I've had people say to me, guys who've said, "Nobody ever complained to me about anything in our church. Everybody was just serving the Lord." But when I asked, there were a lot of viewpoints that just hadn't been even looked at before. I think that can that really, that can seem like nothing's happening. And then it happens all at once. I really, I've seen that happen in so many different arenas over the years.

Eric Schumacher 9:18

What were some of the revelations at that conversation that really shocked or surprised you?

Russell Moore 9:24

It wasn't so much that one conversation, it was the ongoing conversation. And honestly, I think that for me, it was less about what I was hearing from women, although that was important, as much as it was seeing some things that I had never seen before. That previously I would have said, well that doesn't go on, or that's really limited to a fringe. So it kind of reminds me there was a fellow Mississippian who was a comedian storyteller named Jerry Clower, talking about how he changed his mind. He used to be a segregationist back in the 50s and early 60s, and he changed his mind. And he said, what changed my mind was the Ku Klux Klan. They said, because he went to a clan - he was walking through downtown Jackson, there was some sort of Klan rally or something. And he said, the sort of anger and hatred that he could see on display showed him "Wait, something is wrong with that!" And so some of the conversations that I've had to have, when it comes to and some of the things that I have seen, when it comes to not just what women have experienced in a predatory way in church life, but the way that men will sometimes cover those things up and empower those things, excuse those things, justify those things. You're really, I think what has happened for me is that I've seen in this conversation what I think God has been teaching me is what CS Lewis said, in talking about how the devil sends evil into the world. And he never does so one by one, but two by two on each side of the truth. And I think that that is

Elyse Fitzpatrick 11:25

Oh that's really good. Can you say that again? I'm sorry. I'm sorry for interrupting you. But can you say that again? I've not heard that.

Russell Moore 11:34

Yeah, he said, I can't remember if it's in Mere Christianity or Weight of Glory. But he says, the devil doesn't send evil one by one into the world, but two by two on either side of the truth. So he's sort of picking up on what Aristotle had talked about from pagan standpoint, long ago. But the idea that you can distort something good in either way. So your distortion of courage, for instance, could be cowardice, or it could be quarrelsomeness.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 12:07

Yes,

Russell Moore 12:07

Somebody who doesn't want to ever have conflict, or somebody who wants to fight all the time. And I think when it comes to this issue, in protecting what God has revealed about the creativeness of male and female, about the distinctiveness of male and female, I think I saw a distortion of that. And I agree with what I've always thought about the distortion of that in one way, without sometimes seeing the way that it can be distorted, just as wrongly in a different direction. So you can have this kind of hyper complementarianism that says, well, it's easy not to have to worry about what fits into First Timothy 2, or other relevant passages of Scripture, if you just make sure that the women essentially are not doing anything that could be in any way interpreted as leading.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 12:13

Right.

Russell Moore 13:09

Well, yeah, you can do that. But what do you end up doing, you end up silencing a gifting that Jesus commands, you end up harming your own body, body of Christ, you end up harming, not just women, but men, within the congregation. And you end up doing exactly what Jesus blasted with the religious leaders of his day who were building all of these hedges around the wall to make sure that they never come close to violating it. So it's easy to do that. Now, I'm not - I recognize there are going to be there are some things that are really clearly defined in Scripture. There are some things that are - people have Romans 14 sorts of differences on and a lot of those are going to differ, conscience by conscience and church by church. But I think we have to constantly be asking where are our points of vulnerability in multiple different directions, when it comes to honoring. And just like, a, an individual can have certain vulnerabilities that others don't - I mean, as a parent, I've got one child who sees things black and white, you're either totally with us, or you're, you know, an enemy to be opposed. And another child who sort of, everything's fine. So I have to work different ways with with each of them. With the one I have to really shore up what it means to stand for truth. And the other I have to come in and say, "Hey, lighten up!" I think all of us are that way. And so you have to say where is my particular area of vulnerability when it comes to these issues. And where is the vulnerability of my church. And then constantly sort of be evaluating that as you go.

Eric Schumacher 15:06

That's, that's really good. I really appreciate what you just said. And I, I found myself there, I think in the lead up to writing Worthy. As a conservative, that I'm happy to identify as a, as a Christian conservative, I think I only thought the slippery slopes could go in one direction. And I didn't worry about that other side. And, you know, I, I think, you know, even just, I've been a Southern Baptist now, I guess, for 20

years. And I was after the conservative resurgence. But there's still that idea that what we really need to guard against is the liberals. And obviously, there's things to guard against.

Russell Moore 15:45

Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 15:46

But I forget sometimes that in my own conservative nature, there are things to guard against. What you just said about, you know, there's these different tiers of areas on this issue in terms of having women serve in the church and that sort of thing. So you and I are both in the Southern Baptist Convention. Forty some thousand churches. There's going to be a lot of differences about how we interpret and apply some of those things in our local churches. How do churches partner together well, even when they disagree on those particulars?

Russell Moore 16:24

Well, I think churches can cooperate well, when they disagree on what are the distinctive callings, in terms of mothering and fathering in a spiritual sense within the church? What do those look like, in a way that recognizes the authority of the text and recognizes the full humanity and dignity of everybody, both male and female. When they when they do that, and they're arguing about the application of something. So for instance, you may - I served with someone who, who would have women much more visibly operative in his congregation, every week, as opposed to someone else who had great ministry from and to women, but it it wasn't as visible. That's not something where I think they ought to break fellowship. I think that, that the one can learn from the other. That's a very different thing than having a situation either where someone denies the authority of Scripture or undermines the authority of Scripture, or where someone hides behind the authority of scripture in order to prey upon vulnerable people. In those cases, you've been condemned to fellowship there. So I think there are going to be things where we have to say we're - and we do that all the time. But we do that all the time with all sorts of questions that Paul in Romans 14 never addresses. And honestly, I think one of the problems here is that there's a kind of evangelical culture...

Elyse Fitzpatrick 18:05

Yes.

Russell Moore 18:06

...and I recognized it in myself several years ago. There's a kind of evangelical culture that thinks only through the grid of controversy. And there's a piece of that that is always going to be the case. So we have the Nicene Creed because of controversy over areas, and those things you have to - explain things you didn't have to explain before. But there's a - I noticed this when I was teaching seminary, and I would notice a kind of student who couldn't tell you the difference between Judah and Jehoiakim. Who couldn't find Habakkuk without a thumb tab. But who knew all the talking points on Calvinism versus Arminianism, or complementarianism versus egalitarianism. And it seemed that sometimes the more attuned somebody was to what the scripture might refer to as the secret things of God - supralapsarianism versus sublapsarianism, the less attune sometimes that person would be to the clearly revealed things of God, like the Sermon on the Mount. And so I think there's a tendency, and it's not just in evangelical culture, it's in North American culture, generally, Western culture generally right now, but it's easily adapted to evangelical culture. And when that's the case, then all you do is to rehearse what are the talking points for your side, rather than coming in and saying, "I've got to be wise as to what's going on around me and I have to be wise as to what's going on inside of me." And I think that's - and then the other thing is just to have patience with one another. I mean, honestly, and that that applies across the board, where what I fear sometimes, and again, I learned this in the orphan care work. Because I would have people who would say, "My pastor just doesn't get it." And I would say, "Well, it might be that when you come up and say to your pastor, I need you to get it on adoption, foster care and orphan care - what he's hearing is, I need you to do something." And instead, if you will come and say, "Hey, would you bless and empower me to do this?" - you might see different results. And often, that's what happens. And so some of those pastors that previously I would hear "Ah, he just doesn't get it" - are now the people who are leading the way. And I think there are a lot of churches where the issue is not a heart distortion. But the issue is that there has never been a model to follow or possibilities that they have seen that when they do, those changes will happen. So there's kind of a first step would be to say in those congregations: "Hey, why are the people reading Scripture always men? Is that because our church thinks that First Timothy 2 prohibits that?" And if the church does think that okay, well, that's but But often, that's not the case. Often, it's instead, the church just says: "We've never thought about it before. That's just never, that's never happened before." And I remember, I had a great aunt, who, at the time, it must have been in 90s, who had visited a church and she came back absolutely aghast, saying they had women taking up the offering. Can you believe that this is happening? And I kind of chuckled about that. And I thought, you know what, I almost never see women taking up the offering wherever I go. And I, I also, don't think I've ever met anybody who would say the Bible forbids women from taking up the offering. It's just something they haven't seen when they start to see it, but it takes place. Yeah, that's just a small, tiny thing. But sometimes those small tiny things are kind of where you see where some hidden assumptions might be that might need to change.

Eric Schumacher 22:31

Yeah, that's good. Our experiences is so often normative, it sort of defines what we think ought to be. And, boy, as you described those seminary students that you had, I couldn't help but think that perhaps was...

Russell Moore 22:46

That was not most of them. Yeah, that that were but there, but there was, there was a there is a type of that.

Eric Schumacher 22:50

Yeah, yeah.

Russell Moore 22:58

In the world, and that that sort of, I think there could be a tendency to go use the Scripture as raw material for whatever the controversy is, you know, rather than a controversy is going to be there. There are going to be controversies, but the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 23:18

Right.

Russell Moore 23:18

No, and why not? Yeah, yeah, I think it's not just because of, not just because of how Jesus has us carry up admission and what quarrelsome does to us, but also because Jesus is in all sorts of controversies. But Jesus's emotional reaction to those things is very different than mine often is and always working toward something else. So He sometimes is answering questions, sometimes refusing to answer questions, sometimes asking more questions, and, and why? Because His point is not whatever the argument is, at the moment, His point is, let me get through this argument toward something else. And I think I missed that often, you know,

Eric Schumacher 24:08

And that was, that was definitely me in seminary. And I know that you were a positive example to me of compassion in the midst of conviction. And I've, I've watched you demonstrate that over the years, and it's, it's had a sanctifying affect on me. And I know I've found myself many times in places of repentance, where I think I saw my significance in the kingdom by whether or not I had blood on my sword and if I was fighting a battle, and that's not what the kingdom of Christ looks like. And you know, I think of I - we both love Johnny Cash, and I think of his song, "Don't Take Your Guns to Town."

Russell Moore 24:49

Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 24:49

And, and whenever I, you know, you've got that young man's ambition to go carry his guns and prove that he's a man. And...

Russell Moore 24:59

Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 25:00

I think that song comes to mind often, over the years as I find myself on the edge of a controversy someplace or somebody is upset, and I'm going to go meet with them or respond to them on the internet, thinking: "Okay, Eric, don't take your guns to town! Like you don't have to come in blazing. This, this could be a conversation amongst friends." I'm curious, is there one particular song by Johnny Cash that you think would be good for us to think about in light of the value of women?

Russell Moore 25:28

Well, I think that one of his most famous songs, Walk the Line, when the - because of, if you see the subtext of what's happening there of somebody who did not act well toward wome early in his life, and it had some wreckage there. And who seems to be saying: "I'm going to sacrifice myself, for the sake of the other." That sort of self pouring out where the walking the line, the ethical formation is not just about obeying abstract rules. It's for the sake of the other, as well. And so I think that would be probably what I would choose.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 26:18

Eric, you just you had to do that, didn't you? You had to...

Eric Schumacher 26:20

Absolutely.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 26:21

You never miss an opportunity to talk about Johnny Cash, do you?

Eric Schumacher 26:29

I don't know if I can help it!

Elyse Fitzpatrick 26:29

Hahaha! Okay, I want to say Dr. Moore, how thankful I have been - I'm not part of the SBC - I am in an independent Reformed Baptist Church in Southern California. But how thankful I have been over the last 18 months or so watching the way you have been trying to help women who have suffered abuse in the SBC. So first of all, thank you for the way that you have stood up. And I know you've taken heat for that. Your sisters are grateful for you - for you doing that. I would also imagine that someplace along in there, you've taken heat for - from people who say you're on a slippery slope. If you allow women like Beth Moore - who is our friend, we've just we've had her on recently - by having women actually talk in front of a group of 3000 people and talk about their experience. How to summon they would say to you: "Yeah, see here's the deal, Dr. Moore, he is on a slippery slope, and he's sliding down into liberalism. And you know, the next thing is the SBC is going to have a female president!" I mean, I'm hearing that all over the place. I'm not even part of the SBC.

Russell Moore 28:15

Yeah.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 28:15

And, and just because you're saying, women can have a voice, and it's important to listen to them, particularly about this, people say you're on a slippery slope. So I know you've talked about that a little bit. But talk a little bit more about it, if you would just, just how would you answer them?

Russell Moore 28:35

Well, I mean, the first thing would be to say, I don't find the category of SBC president in First Timothy 2 or 3 or anywhere else in Scripture so that's an entirely different sort of conversation that people can have where they would have to argue about what does that office even do in terms of those categories, or not do, or what, what, what is just tradition and what is not? That's an entirely separate conversation. I think, though, that as we've mentioned before, the slope is always slippery and the slope is slippery in multiple directions. And so there is a, a sense in which what the Scripture is calling us to is a constant vigilance and guardedness - guard the trust. And the guarding of the trust is not - it would be easy for Jesus to have said: "The Pharisees are bad, therefore the Sadducees." Or to say: "Rome is bad, therefore the zealots." And instead what He is doing is coming in and speaking to all of those sectors to say: "Come follow the way of the cross" - which is different from all of them. And I think the same thing is true. There are there are multiple different ways, as G. K. Chesterton said, there are multiple ways to fall in only one way to stand. And so you have to be walking that line to come back to the previous question constantly of saying: "Where am I, in terms of the revealed text of Scripture and the will of God? And, and what are the ways that I'm being led astray from that, however I'm being led astray from that." So if you, if you talk about the slide into liberalism, I think that's a very real and constant threat to the, to the church. I think the liberalism, as defined by J. Gresham Machen, is turning Christianity into a means to an end, whatever that end is. And so in that sense, I think you can find liberalism on the left, on the right, in the center, you can find liberalism everywhere, anywhere that that Scripture is instrumentalized. And there's that there's some other agenda other than, than following Christ. And so I think that's, that's the case. And when it comes to - you know, I think about Beth Moore. I've been reflecting on this a lot, because I've been working through - I'm writing a book on the life of Elijah and working through Elijah with the widow of Zarephath. And those relationships that would never have happened if there hadn't been some, some pressure for that to happen.

Eric Schumacher 31:33

You know, thinking about your work on abuse. And thank you also, for that. I've just really appreciated the initiative you've taken in bringing some important female voices to be heard in the SBC. It has blessed, and helped me. I know with, you know, one of the things I hear sometimes is, is women saying that they haven't been listened to for so long, these concerns that they have. What kind of - what can we do you think as churches to help heal some of those wounds?

Russell Moore 32:14

Well, it depends on where somebody is in a church as to how they would respond. So I would say something different to somebody who's a lay person, and she's concerned about her church. And what I would say, in that case, is if it's a, if it's a safe sort of environment, not if it's a toxic environment that you should leave. If it's a safe sort of environment to say to your church leadership: "Have you considered these things?" And often they haven't. And often they not only haven't, but they're often grateful that you raised it, and glad for that. If you're a church leader in some way, I think it goes a long way simply to raise issues and to say: "Hey, can you help me?" I remember being on a panel one time. And the question was, what are your blind spots? And Tim Keller and I were on that panel together. And he said, before I did: "If we knew what they were, they wouldn't be blind spots. We wouldn't know what they were!"

Elyse Fitzpatrick 33:23

Right.

Russell Moore 33:23

I think just simply standing up and saying, look, we're seeing a lot of things being revealed right now. And there may be a lot of things that I don't see and I don't know. And not only do I not see, and I don't know, but I don't even know what kinds of questions to ask.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 33:40

Right.

Russell Moore 33:41

Would you help me? And giving people the freedom to be able to do that? Now there was one pastor who said that what he did was to create a way for people to anonymously. I wouldn't really advise that for most pastors, because most of the time, you're going to end up with just your your cranky guy who's finding another way to send you anonymous letters. But it is in this context, it was fine to send in and say: "Here are some things for you to look at." Because he knew there was there was going to be some people who would think: "I don't want to raise this issue without offending somebody." And they wouldn't do it. Well, there are all sorts of ways that you can creatively raise that and just give people venues to be able to raise issues. And sometimes that means just getting up and saying: "I'll tell you, I

don't know what to do. But the Lord is starting to show me that, that maybe something needs to be done." I think sometimes just saying that gives the impetus to people to start helping to find those solutions and those questions.

Eric Schumacher 34:51

That's good. And I would I would just echo that, for me, it's been a very helpful thing to just initiate those conversations with with sisters in the church. Say: "I don't even know what I'm not seeing because we can't see our own blind spots. And I just want to hear from you. I don't want to argue. I don't want to debate. I don't want to push back. I just want to listen, and I want to understand." And I think I would say to the listener, who's pastor maybe isn't asking those questions or doesn't know that he needs to be - just the whole idea of a gentle answer turns away wrath. Like think about how you're going to go approach him. If you keep a list, and you come to him, and you say: "Here's 25 ways that you've offended me. And I'm really bitter about this." I would hope that as a pastor, I would patiently listen to you, but it's gonna be a lot harder in my flesh, than if you come and you say: "You know, I really appreciate you and your leadership, and they're just a few things, I was wondering if I could talk with you about, you know, to help improve on this." That's, that's usually well received.

Russell Moore 35:56

And especially if you frame it into - and again, not, if you're in some awful situation. I'm talking about, you're gonna...

Elyse Fitzpatrick 36:03

Right.

Russell Moore 36:03

A good church that you're happy to be in, to come up and say: "Here are some ideas that the Lord's putting on my mind, what do you think about them?"

Eric Schumacher 36:14

Yeah.

Russell Moore 36:14

As we move together that can - because there's just a natural human tendency, especially when you're in ministry, everybody in ministry is being attacked constantly. And there's always a little group of trolls in any congregation, who's just looking for something that the pastor or the or any other staff member is doing. So you just become accustomed to kind of protecting yourself against that. So find a way to go around that. And I don't mean the sort of corporate sandwiching of: "Here's some positive things, here's the negative things, here are the positive things." That I mean, instead of just coming in and genuinely communicating - "I'm seeing a problem here that I know, based upon your heart, and what you have said, that you would want to address. How can I help to address it?" - can often yield a lot of fruit as long as you don't expect: "Okay, right now is when he's going to have a list of initiatives." Instead, leave it there.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 37:26

Yeah.

Russell Moore 37:26

And let these people, whoever they are, that you're talking to go mull on it and think about it, and watch it - bring it back up later. But I think that can that usually can yield a lot of fruit. Or can at least tell you where things stand. So I mean, if you go up and say - and I deal with this all the time with churchsexual abuse issue - if you go to your church leadership and say: "Hey, I'm noticing some things that other churches have have done in terms of protecting vulnerable people, maybe we can do those things." And the response is: "Let me think about how we can do those things here or if there are better ways." Okay. If the response is: "Who cares about that , that's irrelevant, and we don't have those problems here." Now, that's an entirely different conversation. You know, I don't think the same thing would be true here.

Eric Schumacher 38:20

Good. Well, you've been listening to the Worthy Podcast with Eric Schumacher and Elyse Fitzpatrick. Our special guest today has been Russell Moore. We're coming back with one more question for him - Elyse is going to close out with one question for Dr. Moore. He's the president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the author of *The Storm Tossed Family: How the Cross Reshapes the Home*. We think that respectful conversations about the value of women are important today in the church, in the home and in the world. And if you agree, and you've been enjoying the Worthy Podcast, we hope you'll share it, and rate it, and review it. And if you'd like, you can join our Patreon supporters in helping us cover the expenses of publishing this podcast. Elyse...

Elyse Fitzpatrick 39:06

Thanks so much for being with us, Dr. Moore. One of the things that has really troubled me is that a lot of times men who would maybe be more theologically trained, will look at some women who perhaps are not, and say well, and discount whatever it is that they have to say. But then on the flip side of that, which is really very troubling to me, which is that women are being allowed to go to seminary now which is a newish sort of a thing. But women are not at all represented in faculties at seminaries. And if a woman were to go and spend \$25,000 or \$30,000 getting a degree from a seminary or getting trained in theology. First of all, do you think that's a good idea? And then secondly, how do you think the SBC can help women or help facilitate women who have degrees from seminaries to use their gifting and their education?

Russell Moore 40:23

Well, I think the question of whether somebody ought to go to seminary or not, is one that would be different, almost person to person in terms of what she wanted to do. And so what I would say is, I would not counsel you to go to seminary if what you're looking for is a credentialing.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 40:48

Okay.

Russell Moore 40:48

Because I don't think you need it. In this day and time.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 40:53

Okay.

Russell Moore 40:53

But if what you're looking for is the sort of education in terms of, especially in terms of Biblical languages, and church history and theology and those sorts of things. And God has opened the door and you have the ability to do it, then I think it's really really valuable to do it. And especially because one of the problems that we've had in North American evangelicalism, at least in a lot of tribes, is where there

has been women's ministry, it is not the sort of women's ministry that we see in the New Testament. It is focused really narrowly only on, in the best case scenario, distinctive aspects of womanhood. In the worst case scenario, to work distinctive aspects of a cultural brainwork of womanhood in a way that that isn't helpful at all. If, even if, even though, we hold to complementarian distinctions between the things that men do and things women do within the church. Just as we do within the home. But do we believe that there is leadership aspects to motherhood within the home? Well, you had better or you're going to have total chaos when it comes to parenting your children. Do you think that there are nurturing aspects to fatherhood? Yeah, you better or you're not going to be reflecting the fatherhood of God at all that fatherhood is his raw authority, then that's not a fatherly view that we see from the New Testament. And the same thing is true within the church, we need to equip the body to minister to one another. And that doesn't just mean the ordained ministry. It also means those who are as equipped and trained as can possibly be. And frankly, the truth of it is, in most congregations, forget, again, forget all the talking points for controversies. In most congregations, and there are some exceptions. The people who know the Bible best are more often women within a congregation than men. And I have all sorts of reasons why I think that is, but that is the case. So we need to, we need to take the raw material of what's already there, and allow it to be expressed in every Biblically permissible way. And so for some people, seminary is going to be a really good way to sharpen and to hone those gifts, and to be able. And one of the things that seminary can do that I think actually is the best value that seminary brings, that previously would not have been of much value for women. Because you've had so few in some contexts who were there, but that's changing in a lot of places. Seminary is often a place where you form relationships, and study with people who have been called to the same work that you have, that are going to be maintained for the rest of your life. And I think that that just has enormous, immense value for anybody. And so if God's called you to that, I would encourage you to check it out.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 44:17

Sweet.

Eric Schumacher 44:17

So I had said one more question, but this is just an extension of the one more question.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 44:22

This is what we do. We say 45 minutes. We mean an hour and a half.

Eric Schumacher 44:28

So on that note, what would you say to seminarians and pastors about the importance of learning from and with women? And then who are some of the women in the church today that we should be listening to?

Russell Moore 44:44

Well, I think there are - I think that the main thing that I would say - I don't know many actually successful in a Biblical sense and faithful pastors who have not actually learned to learn from women even if they don't know how to vocalize it. That's the case and to learn with women. I think that's that's the case for - eventually you're in the situation where in order to faithfully lead that's, that's going to be part of it. I know a lot of defective ministries where that's not the case but not in terms of faithful ministries. I think we just need to take those examples and show them to other people. When it comes to women that I think everybody ought to benefit from - there are tons of them. And one of them is actually one of my trustees, Christine Hoover, who has written many books and has a podcast and is just an incredibly, incredibly gifted woman who is a teacher in multiple areas. And then names that you all would would know about: Beth Moore, and my colleague Trillia Newbell and Jen Wilkin. And Nancy Guthrie, who is phenomenal. just phenomenal. Every, every time that I'm with Nancy Guthrie, I tell my wife, Maria when we are in the car, I would just love to just put a microphone on her for the entire evening and just listen to a monologue on any book or Scripture.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 46:31

Yes, yes.

Russell Moore 46:33

So there are multiple - and one of the things I think we're starting to see now, that's always been the case, but because of the way media has changed, we're able to see it more - is the unique and multiple and complimentary giftings of women within the church, who are able to speak in multiple different areas. In my work, we've been accustomed to that in terms of men, for a long time that there's unique ways that people bring different things to the table. But I think that's, that's more and more obvious in terms of how God's raising these women like Trillia Newbell. And you have people working toward the same edification of the body with magnificent giftings, but giftings that complement one another in ways that are obvious. I think that's a unique sort of blessing that we can see right now.

Eric Schumacher 47:40

That's good. Thank you, Dr. Moore, for being a guest on Worthy. We've enjoyed our time with you.

Russell Moore 47:44

Oh, thanks for, thanks for having me. Great to be with you.

Eric Schumacher 47:47

We pray God blesses you and Maria and your your five sons. And

Russell Moore 47:53

Thank you.

Eric Schumacher 47:53

Yeah, so and thank you to our listeners for tuning in to Worthy.