



# Women in the Liberal Arts Tradition with Joelle Hodge

## Lecture 1: Introduction

### Outline:

#### Introduction to Women in the Tradition

- “This small book, adorned with little grace of beauty but elaborated with no little loving care, I offer to the benevolent gaze of all who are wise for correction, or at least to those who take no delight in belittling one who errs, but rather in the correcting of errors.” Hrotsvitha of Gandershem
- Dorothy Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*
  - Grammar
  - Logic
  - Rhetoric
- Doug Wilson, Logos School of Moscow Idaho, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*
- The classical tradition of the liberal arts and the great books has always belonged to both men and women even if for various circumstances male authors exist in greater number.
- Where are the women?
  - It is important that we recover our memory of these forgotten women and their work in the renewal of classical Christian education.
- Challenges
  - The authority of those in the in this part of the recovery may be called into question.
  - We live in a divisive times where words like diversity, inclusivity, and equality are charged with political meaning.
    - We have set out to recover the lost voices of women not to supplant significant and essential contributions made by men over the last many centuries, but to live out the good news of God’s radically inclusive kingdom.
- Recovering and remembering is kingdom work.
  - “Thus they [the forgotten thoughts and information] must have been in my mind even before I learned them, though they were not in my memory. Then where were they, or how did it come that when I heard them spoken I recognized them and said, “It is so, it is true,” unless they were in my memory already, but so far back, thrust away as it were in such remote recesses, that unless they had been drawn forth by some other man’s teaching, I might perhaps never have managed to think of them at all?” St. Augustine of Hippo



- We must guard against allowing the dark amnesia of obscurity to rob us of the collective memory which is ours and from which our schools and students would benefit.
- Remembering becomes our means of radiating the praises of creation, of worshiping the creator. Worship in the form of remembrance becomes part of the habit of virtue. Properly situating memory is an essential component of living out the gospel through the acts of the virtuous life.
- Viewing ourselves as weavers, our role is to work together in the process of gathering missing threads and interweaving weft and warp as we watch the recovered patterns emerge (thankfully we do not start with an empty loom).
- What weaving may look like in your classrooms and curriculum for these seven sample cases:
  - Sappho
  - Perpetua
  - Hildegard
  - Dhuoda
  - Christine de Pizan
  - Hrotsvitha
  - Cooper
- Are women capable of participating in the habits of moral and intellectual virtue?
  - Were ancient women literate? Did they read and write? Historians are confident that they did.
  - In the case of women throughout history, we must allow other forms of evidence to help us piece together and recover the tapestry of their influence.
  - “The absence of women from ancient philosophy has meant that answers to the questions of sexual difference whether and how women are different from men were established and positions marked off before women had an opportunity to enter the debate.” James and Dylan
  - Macrina the Younger discusses the nature of the human soul. She suggests that that soul is sexless. This would have been a transformative concept.
  - Hildegard describes a relationship of mutual dependency.
  - Cooper: There is feminine as well as a masculine side of truth.
  - The opposite of remembering is not forgetting rather it is dismembering.
  - As we sit with these women learning their stories...with each new telling, with each new stride and scholarship we undo the fugue of the dismembering of our story. We take a step closer to God’s future kingdom, a fully redeemed creation.