I love the biblical story of Shiphrah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives we encounter in the beginning of the book of Exodus (Exod. 1:15-20). Despite the fierce oppression the Israelites were facing under the Egyptians, their numbers were increasing and the king of Egypt was getting nervous. He summoned Shiphrah and Puah and ordered them to murder all Hebrew boys they helped deliver.

Verse 17, however, tells us that Shiphrah and Puah “feared God” and did not do as they were told. And when confronted, they lied to the king, risking their lives to protect their people. Note their powerful role as protectors here. These women, and several others throughout Scripture, demonstrate that God calls women to fulfill this role too, despite our modern belief that protection is the work of men only. Because of the midwives’ brave actions, lives were spared and Shiphrah and Puah were blessed by God. Their story is a small, often ignored one, and yet it is a beautiful example to us of bold faith in action.

Why do I highlight this story at the beginning of our issue on “Emotion and Reason”? First, and perhaps obviously, Shiphrah and Puah are two of the many, many biblical examples of women who acted bravely and rationally, contrary to the popular stereotype that women are emotional beings (and men are not). Consider the fear they must have experienced at the idea of defying their oppressor, the king of Egypt. It would have been easy to succumb to the emotional desire to save themselves—to simply do as they were told. Yet, Shiphrah and Puah “feared God.” They recognized the power of God and trusted him to protect them and their people as they chose the righteous path.

We often think of our emotional and rational capabilities as opposites, or at odds with one another. We think that we either act entirely out of emotion or entirely out of reason—not both at the same time. And, at least in the Western culture that I have grown up in, we would much prefer to act out of reason than emotion. Yet, these Hebrew women acted on a fear for God that was both emotional and rational.

As their story shows us, our faith needs both reason and emotion. And we need leaders in the church who know and live this. We need pastors who are nurturing, empathetic, and sensitive to the needs of others. We also need pastors who are critical thinkers, who can make brave decisions based not on their emotions but on what is holy. Both men and women in the Bible demonstrated all of these qualities, as do both men and women today. This is why I find myself frustrated when I hear arguments like women are more gullible, more easily deceived, and too emotional to be effective leaders. It simply is untrue. God equips and calls us as God chooses, and we can be sure that as we grow in our faith in Christ, we will be called to act in ways that demonstrate both emotion and reason.

We hope this issue of *Mutuality* will be a blessing and encouragement to you. Be sure to read Mimi Haddad’s exploration of ancient Greek philosophy and how Greek dualism has influenced the church in its view of men and women. Next, Alvera Mickelsen demonstrates how the Bible celebrates both emotional and rational leaders, and how it does not discriminate because of gender. Cristina Richie then highlights the story of Judith, who acted out of bravery and faith to deliver the Israelites from certain death. William Spencer takes a look at masculinity, comparing and contrasting cultural and philosophical theories with the Bible. And finally, Hollie Baker-Lutz shares a thoughtful egalitarian review of John and Stasi Eldredge’s new book, *Love & War*.

As always, we would love to receive your comments and critiques on this issue of *Mutuality*. Blessings to you as you read and reflect!

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