

04 – CAN WOMEN TEACH and/or LEAD?

- ✓ Victory makes room for women, because the *Bible* makes room for women. (The first thing I'd say to those who oppose women being involved is this: If God *really* doesn't want women to preach or hold positions of authority, then the whole Bible should communicate that message. But it doesn't.)

What **Does** the Bible Say?

Psalm 68:11 (Amp.) – “The Lord gives the Word [of power]; the women who publish [the news] are a great host.”

- ✓ The King James doesn't use the word “women”. (It renders it as “company”. But the Hebrew word is feminine. So, a lot of versions do translate it as “women”.

(ASV, Amp, AmpC, BAS, BSB, CSB, CEV, Easy, EHV, ESV, ESVUK, EXB, Expanded Bible, GNV, GW, GNT, HCSB, ISV, JPS Tanakh, Leeser, LSB, LSV, LEB, MEV, NOG, NASB, NET, NIRV, NIV, NIVUK, NHEB, NLV, REV, VOICE, WYC, YLT.)

- ✓ The second word I want to draw your attention to is “publish”. The Amplified said, “The women who publish the Word are a great host.” I've heard people say, “Well, that means they worked for a publish--ing company.” (That's not possible. The printing press wouldn't be invented for another 1900 years. So, obviously, it can't mean that! So, what *does* it mean?)

- ✓ This same word is used of Jesus in Isa. 61:1 where it says, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach.” (“Publish” and “preach” are the same Hebrew word.) Wycliffe's translation (which predates the KJV by over 200 years) says, “The Lord gave the Word; and many women preached this good news.” Can God use women to preach? It would seem so.

- ⇒ You see several prophetesses. (OT – Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Noadiah, Isaiah's wife; NT – Anna.) Deborah was also a judge.
- ⇒ In Acts 18 you see the husband-wife teaching team of Aquila and Priscilla. Verse 26 says “they” expounded (taught) the Word to Apollos. In Romans 16:3, Paul calls them both “fellow-workers”.

- ⇒ In Romans 16:1 we meet Phoebe who's called a deaconess. In verse 2, Paul tells the church to “receive” her and “assist” her. (He doesn't say, “Push her out of the way, and have one of the *men* take over”.)

- ⇒ In Philippians, we're introduced to two women who labored with Paul. “Beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. I ask you also, true companion, help these women who have laboured side-by-side with me in the gospel” (Phil. 4:2-3 KJV, ESV). Another translation says: “I also request you, loyal Syzygus, to help these women; for they have worked hard proclaiming the Good News with me ...” (CJB)

- ⇒ In Romans 16:7, Paul says, “Greet Andronicus and Junia ...” (“Junia” is a woman's name.) “...my compatriots who were in prison with me. They are outstanding and well-known apostles”.

One commentator says this: “As apostles, they were called by God, sent to preach, and ministered together as husband and wife, much like Pricilla and Aquilla ...” – Eldon Jay Epp

- ⇒ So, we have *several* examples of women being involved in ministry. We saw two husband-wife ministry teams, and several women who occupied offices – (one apostle, six prophetesses, a judge, a deacon, and 2 women who “worked alongside” Paul, and a “great host” of women preachers.)

What About 1 Tim. 2:12?

1 Tim. 2:12 – “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence”.

- ✓ In a previous series I compared Bible Study to doing a jigsaw puzzle. (I Said: When you've got the truth, every piece fits.) We've just seen a dozen examples of women preaching and leading. Now, we've got one verse (from Paul) that seems to say that they can't. (Obviously, we're misunderstanding one or the other.)
- ✓ In my opinion, it's more likely that we're misinterpreting the single verse, and not the dozen examples. But let's take a closer look.

Three Possible Interpretations of 1 Tim. 2:12

1. Sit Down and Shut Up – Paul really was saying that women can't teach or hold positions of authority. (This seems unlikely.)
2. Paul's Command Only Applied in the 1st Century – Paul wasn't intending to lay down a universal rule for all time. He was addressing a specific set of circumstances that existed in *his* day. In Ephesus, there were women who were teaching false doctrine, and Paul was saying "for that time", women weren't allowed to teach. I can't support that explanation. First, Paul gives no indication that there was a time limit on his command. And second, if we start going down that road, where does it end? (Morality?)
3. Paul Was Talking About a Family, Not a Church – When Paul said, "I suffer not a woman to teach", he wasn't talking about preaching from a pulpit. He was saying that a wife shouldn't try to teach her husband. Nor should she try to usurp her husband's authority in the home. (Is that interpretation possible? It *could* be, for a few reasons.)
 - a.) There's no specific word for "wife" in the Greek. They just use the word "woman" (gyne), and you have to determine from the context, whether he's talking about "wives", or just "women in general".

Several translations *do* translate this as "wife" and "husband". CEB – "I don't allow a wife to teach or control her husband." (OJB, LSV, EXP, Knox, Williams, JMNT, David Bentley Hart, Godbey, Richard Lattimore – Footnote in NIV, INT, TNIV, BSB)

- b.) The word Paul uses for "authority" is also important. If Paul just meant to say, "I don't want women holding leadership positions", he would have used the usual word for "lead"! But he *doesn't*.
- ✓ Instead, he chooses a word that's only used once in the entire Bible ("authentein"). It doesn't mean "to lead". It means "to be controlling and domineering" (Louw and Nida), "to lord it over someone" (Coptic Sahidic 3rd C.), "to put your foot down" (Friedrich Preisigke), "to lay down the law" (Jerusalem Bible).

A Closer Look

1 Tim. 2:8-15 – "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But with what is appropriate for women who are committed to godliness, namely with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (KJV)

- ✓ Take your pen and underline the word "church". It's not there? Neither is the word "sermon". Or "pulpit". Or "congregation". The only context Paul provides is Adam and Eve – (a husband & wife.)
- ✓ Now, hold on to that thought for a moment, and let's look at (what many consider to be) a parallel passage. (Sometimes in Scripture, you find two passages that are so similar, you'd think that one author copied the other's work.) Let's look at these parallel passages. (I just want to highlight certain things so you can see that they're parallel.) The two chapters are 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Peter 3.

1 Tim. 2:9-14 – ⁹ In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; ¹⁰ But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. ¹¹ Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. ¹² But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was first formed, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

1 Pet. 3:1-4 – ¹ Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; ² While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. ³ Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; ⁴ But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

- ✓ They *do* look parallel, don't they? Both passages have a section about how women should dress. Then both passages talk about the internal beauty of submission and quietness. So, they certainly do look like they're parallel. (If these *are* parallel passages, then we should compare them. Let's look first at what **Peter** says.)

1 Pet. 3:1 – “Wives are to willingly submit to the authority of their husbands. Your manner should be so loving that husbands who reject God's Word might be converted to the faith without your having to say anything to persuade them. They'll be attracted to the faith when they observe your behavior.” (INT)

- ✓ He's talking to a wife whose husband, for whatever reason, isn't obeying the Word. (He's either unsaved or backslidden.) God gives her a new strategy to reach him. “Stop talking to him about it! Stop preaching at him!”
- ✓ **Sometimes the most effective thing you can do to reach your man is to love him, pray for him, and let the Holy Ghost deal with him.**
- ✓ For a moment, let's assume these are parallel passages. Could it be that 1 Tim. 2 is sharing the same advice with wives? Paul says, “Let the women learn in silence with all submission”.
- ✓ The key words are “learn in silence”. If your husband isn't going to church ... YOU can go to church. YOU go ahead and learn. But do it quietly. Don't hear the Word at church, then come home and beat him up with it. Learn, but keep it to yourself.
- ✓ Then He says, “I suffer not a woman (wife?) to teach”. The Greek word for “teach” means “to teach by repetition, trying to shape the will” (Zodhiates). “I want to change his will, so I'm going to tell him, and tell him, and tell him.”
- ✓ “**But I suffer not a woman (wife) to teach** (preach at him, trying to change him), **nor to usurp (his) authority**. He's still the head whether he's acting like it or not. You won't win him by nagging or by “taking over”. Be sweet, pray, and let God change him. Good advice.