

WOMEN KEEPING SILENT IN CHURCH – PART 2

1 Timothy 2:11-12 ... “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man...”

Did your heart stop when reading part 1 of this devotional? People get irritated at the bluntness of the Bible when scripture affects them. That is why many pastors avoid difficult teachings because they do not want their tithing members to shop elsewhere for “truth.” The Bible saves lives by being blunt about the consequences of sin. So, we should not avoid difficult passages or teachings. I have found no expiration dates in my Bible. However, you will find amendments, such as Christ fulfilling the law (Matt. 5:17). The discussion of roles that God defines by gender is not a comfortable fit in today’s progressive society.

Our natural rejection of authority is due to the fallen nature of man. Babies reject the authority of their mothers, toddlers reject instruction to go to bed, teenagers reject guidance by parents and teachers, employees resist their bosses, and on and on it goes. The subject of this devotional (parts 1 and 2), centers around the different roles God gave to men and women. Men do not have authority to mistreat, oppress, disrespect, or demean women, but to lead and honor them. Genesis explains that Eve was created as Adam’s helper, but until they sinned there is no evidence of inequality in the Garden. Part of their punishment (which we inherit) was that they both would struggle through life under hardship, Adam as the provider, Eve in submission to her husband.

As we cruise through scripture, we collide dramatically with 1 Corinthians 11:3, which reads: “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” A woman who objects to submission might consider the burden this places on men; neither is without his or her complaints about it. Many men do not want the responsibility of being in authority. Does anyone believe that Ephesians 5:25 (“Husbands, love your wife, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her”) is easy? I do not recall hearing wedding vows in which the man agrees to be tortured and die on a cross for his wife. But that is the context of the command.

We also must consider this instruction with regard to homes without Godly men, either because the man abandoned his family, is not a Christ-follower, or has died. If only one spouse was a Christ-follower when they married their trials will be greater due to disobedience to God’s instruction about being equally yoked (2 Cor. 6:14). In other situations, such as death of a husband or abandonment, the wife has no choice but to inherit the husband’s responsibilities.

Today’s verse is Paul’s instruction about women teaching spiritual subjects to men. First, all persons were admonished to observe the authority of pastors and listen submissively to their teachings, not just women. Second, in the Mediterranean region at that time, education was mostly a pursuit of boys and men, not women. It would have been hard for an uneducated woman to teach from scriptures she could not read. So, men were appointed to serve as pastors and teachers. Since we are better educated today, I believe a pastor can assign a woman to teach if she is sufficiently educated, a student of the Bible, and submissive to God, which are the same qualifications for men. However, Paul says he does not “permit a woman to...have authority over a man” in the context of church.

Objecting to this or other uncomfortable instructions in the Bible, does not permit us to ignore them. If you have questions or challenges, use Face Book’s comment feature to present them. We will answer each one, but please frame your arguments or challenges with respect to Biblical instruction, not just emotion or personal opinion.

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