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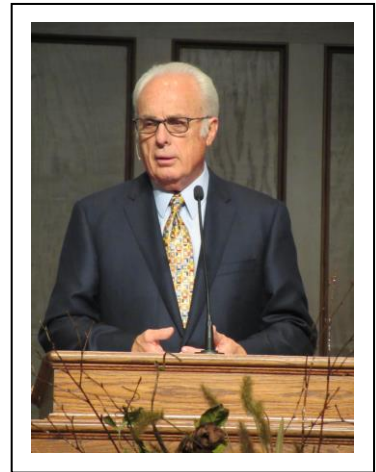
Does the Bible Permit a Woman to Preach?

1

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1 Corinthians 14:33-38

Today I want to address a very important issue that has been stirred up on the Internet with me kind of in the middle of it. I do not like to give short answers. I don't like to get put into position to do that, because I feel like that just escalates confusion. So I want to take the opportunity to address the issue of women preachers this morning and to give you a more thorough answer from the Word of God on this very, very important subject. And I think by the time we are finished, you will understand what the Word of God has to say and how consistently it says it.



So to begin with, let's open the Word of God to 1 Corinthians chapter 14, 1 Corinthians chapter 14, and I want you to look down at verse 33, verse 33. "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." And then this sentence really begins the text with regard to our subject: "As in all the churches of the saints, the women are to keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home. For it is improper for a woman to speak in church. Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?"

"If anyone thinks he is a prophet or a preacher or spiritual, let that person recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone doesn't recognize this, he is not recognized." Just from that passage alone there's no lack of clarity with regard to what the Bible says about women who preach. But in spite of the clarity of Scripture this has become a monstrous issue in our day.

One divine statement answers the question, "What does the Bible say about women preachers?" It's in verse 35, the last part of the verse: "It is improper for a woman to speak

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

in church.” That’s not ambiguous; that’s not at all unclear. “It is improper for a woman to speak in church.” That is an absolute prohibition.

And the word “improper” is chosen very, very carefully by the Holy Spirit to leave no lack of clarity as to the force of the statement. The word that is translated “improper” is *aischros* in the Greek. It really is a word that means “disgraceful” or “shameful.” It’s something more than just improper; it’s disgraceful.

In fact, that is the way it is translated in [1 Corinthians 11:6](#) by the word “disgraceful.” That is the way it is translated in Ephesians 5, verse 12, as “disgraceful” or “shameful.” That same word is used in [Titus 1:11](#), and there it is translated “sordid,” “sordid” - a word that basically means “base” or “shameful.” It has the common sense of something that is known to be a disgrace.

In the fifth chapter of Ephesians and the fourth verse, a word from the same root is used here. I’ll read the verse. “There must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting.” Again, it’s the same root: “disgraceful” or “shameful.” So “filthiness, silly or low talk, coarse jesting” - which is usually sexual innuendo - these are “disgraceful, sordid, disgraceful, shameful.” That’s what this word means.

What we read then in verse 35 is it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church. It is shameful. That is a recognized judgment on all such behavior, the same as teaching for “sordid gain” in [Titus 1:11](#) - “disgraceful, shameful gain.” It’s sort of like false prophets doing what they do for money. And this unmistakable, divine law and command is so absolute that we go back to verse 34, and the section actually begins, as you will note if you have an ESV, “As in all the churches of the saints, the women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak.” And then verse 35, “It is improper for women to speak in church,” as in *all* the churches of the saints, always and everywhere.

This whole section starts with that statement at the end of verse 33, “As in all the churches of the saints.” Paul is giving us a universal principle here. This is not some local thing; this is everywhere and at all times. When Paul says that, he is talking about something that is universal, and I’ll show you that from some other portions of 1 Corinthians.

If you go back to chapter 4 in 1 Corinthians, Paul is writing to the Corinthians and he says, “I’m going to send Timothy to you.” Verse 17, “I’m going to send Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church” - the same expression. What Timothy was going to bring to them concerning the believer’s relationship to Christ was what Paul taught everywhere in every church. This is divine doctrine. This is the true doctrine of the gospel, and he taught it in every church, and it didn’t vary from church to

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

church. This is Paul saying, "He's going to teach you about my ways in Christ, which I teach in every church, what it means to live in Christ." That's for all believers in all churches.

Over in chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians, there was some discussion among the Corinthians about when you become a believer. What if you're married to a nonbeliever, do you divorce or do you stay with a nonbeliever? Or what if you are circumcised or uncircumcised? Do you do something about that? Is it necessary to then be circumcised? Do you dump your unbelieving spouse? What do you do about your social situation?

And he says in verse 17, "Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk." If you're married, stay married. If you're single, stay single. Don't worry about circumcision; he says that in the next verse, verse 18. These things do not matter. Down in verse 20, "Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called." Listen, becoming a believer is no excuse for a divorce, even if you have an unbelieving spouse.

And what's important about this is, the end of verse 17. Paul says, "So I direct in all the churches." Again, he's teaching the same doctrine in all the churches, which Timothy will reiterate to them. He's setting up the same exact standards. When one becomes a believer, you don't alter your life circumstance. Now that you're a believer doesn't mean you have to get married; it doesn't mean you should get a divorce. You stay in the circumstance you're in. That's the same for all believers in all churches.

And then over in chapter 11 and verse 16 – and we'll get back to this chapter a little later. But Paul is talking here about a woman submitting, and he's talking about a woman submitting in a way that's manifest by how she dresses, by what she looks like, by wearing the cultural symbols of womanhood to show her submission. But he knows that there will be women who will fight against that, so in verse 16 he says - verse 16 - "If one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God." It's the same for all women in all churches in all times. You are to demonstrate manifestly your submission to your husband, and thus, to the Lord.

So when Paul says, "As in all the churches," he means the universal doctrine that's taught in the church. He means the universal behaviors that are taught to all believers, which means they stay in the social situations they're in. Christianity is no excuse to disrupt life in a social level. And it essentially means that women are to maintain submission to men in all churches in all times.

Now there's no lack of clarity. Again I say, if you go back to 1 Corinthians 14, that Paul's words could be mistaken is impossible. "As in all the churches of the saints, the women

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

are to keep silent in the churches. They're not permitted to speak. It's disgraceful for a woman to speak."

In the face of that - it might be shocking to you to know this - but in a survey conducted in 2017, about eighty percent of Americans are comfortable with a female pastor; sixty-two percent of practicing Christians are open to women pastors' forty percent of evangelicals are fine with women pastors. In pastoral training, there is a degree, a graduate degree called a Master of Divinity. It's, generally speaking, a three or four-year degree to prepare you for pastoral ministry. Fifty percent of women enrolled in seminaries, fifty percent of, I should say, M.Div. students in seminaries are women preparing for pastoral ministry. Twenty-five percent of seminary faculties are women; that means you have women faculty members teaching women students to be pastors. Eleven percent of seminary presidents are women; twenty-seven percent of pastors across this country are women. This is an explosion. In 1960, two percent of clergy were women. The women's movement has basically just erupted in the church. And the last frontier for the movement is the evangelical church, the last frontier to fall victim to the rebellion of feminism along with cultural Marxism.

Perhaps women pastors and women preachers are the most obvious evidence of churches rebelling against the Bible. I can't think of anything that's as far-reaching and transcends all denominations as the woman's rebellion against the Word of God with regard to women preachers. Women who pastor, women who preach in a church are a disgrace, and they openly reflect opposition to the clear command of the Word of God. This is flagrant disobedience. It has been acceptable in our culture, and now acceptable even in the evangelical world.

I read an article this week written by a woman. The title is "Have M.Div., Will Preach." And this woman writing this article said the article is designed to answer this question: "How does sexism play a role as your congregation works to embrace the pastoral leadership of women?" So if you're not willing to embrace the pastoral leadership of women, you're not biblical, you're sexist.

Why is this such a far-reaching, vast rebellion against the Word of God? Why? Well, the answer comes all the way back in Genesis chapter 3. So turn with me back to Genesis 3, and we'll see how it all begins.

We all know the story: Adam and Eve created in the garden, innocent. Eve comes out from under the protection of Adam, has an encounter with Satan. She is seduced, deceived; she sins. Adam follows up, sins; the whole human race catapulted into corruption. So the Lord curses the participants in that. The serpent is cursed in chapter 3, verse 13 and 14, and even 15. The man is cursed in verses 17, 18, 19. But the woman is

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

cursed in verse 16, and it's very important. "To the woman He said," – this is the curse of the Fall – "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Is pain in childbirth universal? Yeah. Yeah. Every woman who ever has a child has pain. That's universal. That's the curse. That's the first half of it. But the second half is equally universal. "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

What is that talking about? Is that talking about sexual desire, physical desire? No, because physical desire was there before the Fall, because when God created Adam and Eve, He said, "Be fruitful and" – What? – "and multiply, fill the earth, go have babies." What leads to babies is desire. There's nothing wrong with a woman desiring her husband in that way. That is not the point. The point is there's a curse on the woman, and the curse is that she has a desire toward her husband, and he has to rule over her. If you have a sexual desire for your husband, that doesn't lead to him ruling over you, that leads to a joining together in an act of love that produces a child. What is this desire of a woman that forces the husband to have to dominate her? This is a curse. This sexual attraction and marital love is not a curse. But whatever this is, it's a bad thing and it leads to conflict.

Well, the answer comes in chapter 4. This particular phrase is only used twice in the Pentateuch in the Old Testament, and here is a second one. The Lord said to Cain in chapter 4, "Why are you angry?" Cain, you remember, offered an unacceptable sacrifice to God. "Why are you so angry? Why is your face so fallen? If you do well, if you do the right thing, would not your countenance be lifted up? If you had obeyed and offered the right kind of sacrifice, not the fruit of your labors, but an animal sacrifice, you wouldn't have this issue. And if you do not do well," – here's why – "sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." It's the exact same expression as in chapter 3. Here it's "sin desiring to have you, and you must master it." That is exactly what is meant in chapter 3, verse 16, "Sinful desire to dominate your husband, and he is going to have to exercise rule over you."

As a result of the Fall, woman bears a curse in two areas. One, and it's ubiquitous and universal: pain in childbearing. Secondly, a desire, because of her fallen heart, to upset the divine order of authority and submission, and to want to dominate her husband. This is the universal reality in marriage to one degree or another. The woman will desire to control, the man will have to rule over her. That's as universal as pain in childbearing. It refers to a desire, a sinful desire to control. This is why there is constantly the effort of women to overthrow the authority of their husbands, or the authority of men in the culture.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

And obviously, there is a multitude of women in the church trying to overthrow male leadership in the church. That in mind, go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 34. "The women are to keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says."

You have to get a grip on yourself because you're fighting against your own fallenness, and your own fallenness would cause you to want to overthrow the order of your own marriage – authority and submission. You are in the church as women, it says, to keep silent in the churches. "What do you mean, 'Keep silent'?" Not hard to understand, is it? You don't say anything.

He's used that already twice in this chapter, once back in verse 28 in the case of someone speaking in a tongue or language. Verse 28, "If there's no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church." That means exactly what it says; he is not to speak.

In verse 30, where you have several preachers and people rendering judgment on them, "If a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent." You can't have chaos with all kinds of people speaking at the same time; somebody has to be silent while someone else speaks. So this is talking about actual silence in the church. So women are to keep silent in the church; they are not permitted to speak. And then verse 35, the last half of the verse, it's actually disgraceful for a woman to speak in church.

Now this is from the apostle Paul. Inspired by the Holy Spirit with a command from God forbidding women everywhere in all ways to speak or preach in any church. So that's the answer to the question. We could close the Book and go home. That's it. It's an absolute prohibition. "They are not permitted to speak in the church."

Now does that mean that women can never teach? Let's look at Titus chapter 2, Titus chapter 2. As the apostle Paul gives instruction here to various groups in the church – older men, older women, younger men, younger women – we focus in on the mature women, verse 3, [Titus 2:3](#). "Mature women are to be reverent in their behavior." A reverent behavior would be obedience to the Word of God, right? Would you be a reverent woman if you were a woman preacher? That doesn't reverence God.

"They're to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good." Did you see that? Of course, women can teach. Women are called to teach. They are called to teach other women: "teaching what is good," verse 4, "so that they may encourage the young women." Older women teach the younger women. And obviously, they teach their children.

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Yes, women teach. Yes, they teach what is essentially good. And what is that that they teach? What is that good that they teach? They teach young women – here’s the lesson: “Love your husband, love your children, be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.” When women are not subject to their husbands individually in a marriage, or women are not subject to their leaders in the church collectively, the Word of God is dishonored. You can’t say you’re a woman preacher preaching the Bible and be by virtue of that very role dishonoring God and His Word.

Yes, women teach. They teach out of a life that is reverent in its behavior, and that means it reverences God to the point that it obeys the Word of God. They’re not malicious gossips. They’re not enslaved to much wine. They teach what is good. And what is the good they teach? “They encourage young women to love their husbands, love their children, be sensible, pure,” – that means “holy” – “workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

That’s the great teaching responsibility of older women, to teach younger women the necessity of the home being the priority, loving husbands, loving children, being subjected to your husband, so that the Word of God will not be dishonored. If women don’t behave in that way, then the Word of God is – What? - dishonored. So all these women running around as preachers, supposedly teaching the Bible, are defying what the Bible says, and they’re propagating some kind of Christianity that is whimsical about how it handles the Word of God. Paul is saying, “Look, you’ve got to get a grip on yourself.”

Now go back to 1 Corinthians 14. He says, verse 34 - really important - “They are to subject themselves.” You’ve got to get ahold of yourself. You need a little self-control and self-restraint here. You are to “subject yourself.” That’s an imperative middle voice from the verb *hupotassō*, which means “to line up.” “Put your life in order. Get your life in order. Get your life under control. Bring yourself into submission, submission to the Lord by submission to your husband, and submission to male leadership in the church.”

Now what about Paul? Was Paul just out on a limb? Was he just an alpha male with an issue? Or was Paul maybe somehow prejudiced? “This is just Paul.” As the most popular woman preacher today says, “Well, Paul’s not Jesus; and Jesus told me to preach.” Is that what we’re dealing with here? Paul is some kind of an independent guy who is giving us his own advice which isn’t consistent with what God wants? No, because it says, “Look, you’re going to have to subject yourself.”

Why are you going to have to subject yourself? Because the tendency in your fallen heart is to want to overpower men - your husband and leaders in a church. And if you make

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

that noble, if you redefine that, like you're hearing today, "We need to give women the due respect that they haven't had for the last decades and give them their place in the church," you're aiding and abetting the sin and the violation of God's standard.

The standard for all the churches is that women need to get themselves under control and realize they are not to speak in a church. To do so is shameful and disgraceful. And this is not whimsically Paul, because at the end of verse 34, he says, "just as the Law also says." The Law, with a capital L, refers to Scripture. We know that, because back in verse 21, we read, "In the Law it is written," and then [Isaiah 28:11](#) is quoted. Law is simply a term to define the Old Testament. This is nothing new. The authority and submission order that God has wonderfully designed for the happiness and blessing of all of us is all the way back from creation.

What does the Old Testament say about this? What does the Law say about it? Well, first of all, it says God created man, and the man was alone; and so God reached in him, took out a rib and created woman, and He created woman to be his helper, to be his helper. We know that from Genesis.

We also know that just in the normal arc of going through the Old Testament, some things are very obvious. There was never a female priest, never. There was never an authorized female king-queen, either in the northern kingdom or the southern kingdom, they were always men. The only time a woman ascended to that was Athaliah the usurper. There was never a female prophet with an ongoing prophetic ministry like Elijah and Elisha. No book in the Old Testament was written by a woman, nor was any portion of an Old Testament book written by a woman.

Now there were some women throughout the Old Testament that on occasion spoke for God. Miriam is called a prophetess or one who speaks for God, but hers was a kind of musical event, wasn't it, back in Exodus chapter 15. Deborah was a judge in Judges 4. And in the absence of a man, the Lord used Deborah to bring about His will on one occasion. But when it came to going to war with the enemies, she was not about to lead the troops, and so she chose a man, Barak, to lead the troops.

Another woman is mentioned as one who spoke for God in 2 Kings 22 by the name of Huldah. And then in the New Testament you have Anna in the temple when Jesus was taken there to be dedicated in the temple, and she spoke a word from the Lord. But she was not a lifelong prophet. No woman ever had an ongoing prophetic role.

But occasionally, God used women to speak for Him. In the New Testament, it was the daughters of Philip, who on one occasion were used by the Lord to speak, not in a church service, but to speak for God. Those are all exceptions that prove the rule. You just cannot

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

find any woman as a priest, any woman as a spiritual leader, any woman as a prophet anywhere in the Old Testament. But the rebellion was on. Women were going to get their moment in the sun; and they did, tragically.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 3, Isaiah chapter 3. Judgment is coming, a day of reckoning is coming. That's Isaiah's message. This is a very powerful portion of Scripture. We'll start in verse 16. God denounces the women.

"Moreover, the Lord said, 'Because the daughters of Zion are proud and walk with heads held high' – 'outstretched necks,' literally – 'and seductive eyes.' So you have women who are stepping out of the God-ordained boundaries of their own husband's control, and putting themselves on display for others, with seduction in mind. 'They go along with mincing steps' – a certain kind of walk that is intended to be seductive – 'and tinkle the bangles on their feet, therefore the Lord will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs, and the Lord will make their foreheads bare.'"

I think the worst thing for a woman is to be bald. That's why those dear women who suffer through cancer and chemo and radiation and all that wear wigs, because everybody recognizes that that's a woman's glory. God's going to make them bald in judgment.

"In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, headbands, crescent ornaments, dangling earrings, bracelets, veils, headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets, finger rings, nose rings, festal robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses, hand mirrors," – this sounds like a list for the next shopping spree – "undergarments, turbans, veils." What you have here is these women have just gone crazy trying to call attention to themselves instead of humbling themselves in modesty and discretion under the headship of their husband and giving honor to him.

They brazenly flaunt themselves in a seductive way with all this ornamentation: anklets, headbands, crescent ornaments, dangling earrings. So interesting how the Lord is so specific about it, not that any one of these things is wrong in themselves. But this is so outrageous: bracelets, veils, head-dresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets, finger rings, nose rings, festal robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses, hand mirrors, undergarments, turbans, veils.

Unfortunately, verse 24, "It'll come about that instead of sweet perfume there will be putrefaction; instead of a belt, a rope; instead of well-set hair, a plucked-out scalp; instead of fine clothes, a donning of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty." And then here's the fallout: "Your men will fall by the sword." Guess what? When women take over a culture, men become weak. When men become weak, they can be conquered. They can

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

be conquered. You're watching that happen in this country. As more and more and more and more women ascend to power, more and more men become weaker and weaker and weaker, and the level of vulnerability just keeps escalating.

"Your men will fall by the sword because they become weak." You've literally lived out the curse of Genesis 3. You've desired to dominate them, and you've done it. "And your mighty ones are going to fall in battle. And her gates will lament and mourn," – meaning the city – "and deserted she will sit on the ground." Guess what? When all the men have been slaughtered, you can sit there with all your jewelry and junk; you've been conquered because you've overpowered your protectors. Don't misunderstand this. This is what we are living in today. The curse has been legitimized, even in the evangelical church now, the last frontier to fall. Empowering women makes weak men. Weak men make everybody, everybody vulnerable to danger.

Go back to chapter 3, verse 12: "O My people! Their oppressors are children, and women rule over them." Now that's not intended to be anti-woman any more than it's anti-children. Let me tell you something: if children are in charge, we're in trouble. If women are in charge, we're in trouble. And if you look carefully at our nation you would have to agree that it's childish, young, inexperienced, ignorant women who are ascending into power.

When you overthrow the divine order, the results are always disastrous. And again, it's not anti-women any more than it's anti-children. But it's a divine judgment on a nation that its young and its women are in power. Young people, it seems to me, and women are taking over churches. So there's plenty of Old Testament revelation to uphold the New Testament standard for women to keep silent in the churches.

By the way, in the New Testament there was no woman apostle. There was no woman prophet. There was no woman pastor, elder. No New Testament book is written by a woman. No sermon is ever recorded from a woman. And every time God appoints people, whether it's the apostles or Acts 13, it's all men. This is the divine order.

First Timothy 2, let's look at that; and this will tie in well with what I just read you from Isaiah 3. First Timothy 2. Now Paul is writing to Timothy to help him get the church in order. If you look over at chapter 3 for just a moment, verse 14 and 15. Chapter 3, 14 and 15, "I'm writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I'm delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Okay, "I'm writing this letter to you, so that you know how to conduct things in the church, to live consistent with the truth, revealed truth, divine truth, the Word of God." And all throughout this letter, on both sides of that verse, before it and after it, Paul gives instruction for the life of the church.

In particular, let's go back to chapter 2 and look at the instruction for women. Verse 9: "Likewise, women are to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with plaited hair and gold or pearls or costly garments." This is antithesis of Isaiah 3, right? Women are to be identified because they dress in an appropriate way, appropriate for worship, with modesty and discretion.

11

What is this plaited hair with gold pearls? What is that about? Since women basically wore a robe from their neck to the floor, the only way they could display their wealth would be in the quality of the garment they were wearing. But even more so, they would weave their pearls and their gold through their braided hair. And so they would put on display their wealth, calling attention to themselves.

"I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with plaited hair or gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness." You say you're a godly woman, then you should be manifesting good works. And what are those good works? Immediately verse 11, "A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." Whoa.

That's how you conduct yourself in the church. Women are called to modesty; they're called to discretion; they're called to good works; they're called to godliness. And what does that mean? That means they "receive instruction quietly with entire submissiveness." Very strong, very strong language – "entire submissiveness."

You want to know how entire it is? Go to 1 Peter 3, as Peter gives instruction for godly living. First Peter chapter 3, Peter is going to talk to the wives again, and he says, "In the same way, you wives," – chapter 3, verse 1 – "be submissive to your own husbands." You get the picture here? They just keep repeating this: "Be submissive. Be submissive. Be submissive." Why? Because of the reality of the Fall that built into the curse is a woman's innate, fallen desire to overpower her husband and take control. And collectively, that means do the same thing in society, and even do the same thing in the church.

So there's these repeated statements about, "Be submissive to your own husband, so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word" – that is, maybe they're nonbelievers – "they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

chaste and respectful behavior.” Again, “Your adornment must not be merely external—plaiting the hair, wearing gold jewelry, putting on fancy dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.” Wow. That gentle, quite spirit is precious in the sight of God.

And then he gives an Old Testament illustration. So here’s more from the Old Testament law. “For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.” I can hear some of you saying, “I’m not there. I’m not there. Maybe dear, maybe honey; I don’t know about lord.”

“Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.” You don’t have to fear submitting to your husband; that’s God’s divine order. “Even if he’s an unbeliever, you may win him over by your behavior.” And again, the assumption in all of these passages is that this is something women have to work on, because their fallen nature naturally seeks to control.

And by the way, we know that women have the powers of control. They can make life pretty miserable. Do I hear an “amen” out there rumbling? But you get the picture with all of this in the Word of God that there is a battle going on here. There’s a battle in every marriage, there’s a battle in every society, there’s a battle in every church to keep the divine order. So go back to 1 Timothy 2.

So women are called to modesty, discretion, good works, godliness. And what does that look like? It means that they “quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness,” “entire submissiveness.” “But I do not allow women to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.” That is so absolute, it’s unbending - no preaching, no teaching, no leading position in the church.

You say, “Well again, this is quirky Paul.” Is this just Paul? No. Look at verse 13. This was designed by God. “For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.” This is the divine order. “It was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.” God created Adam; he was alone. He took a rib out of Adam and He made a woman, and the woman was to be Adam’s helper.

But not only was this God’s creative design, it was basically affirmed in the fall, verse 14: “It was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.” This is a very severe warning, very severe warning. A woman out from under the protection of her head is vulnerable. Because of typical women’s sensibilities, passions and compassion, because of their tendencies toward kindness and mercy and

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

care, they become more vulnerable when unprotected. That is a reality today that is in no short supply, being exhibited by the vast number of women running around single, who have neither a father nor a husband to protect them from deception.

But the role of women in this authority-submission partnership was designed by God in creation and confirmed in the Fall. What happened was, Eve got out from under the protection of Adam. She was vulnerable; she was deceived. Adam was not deceived; he basically ate willingly. Why? She sinned because she was deceived by Satan; he sinned because he couldn't live without her. You understand that? She had become everything to him. And when the roles are reversed, the women are deceived, bad things happen. The men are made weak, worse things happen. The whole human race went down with Adam. You tamper with this order, chaos is unending.

So where does that leave women? If men are in charge of everything, where does that leave us? Verse 15, [1 Timothy 2:15](#), "But women will be" – and the Greek verb here is *sōzō*, which means "saved." It's the very word for "saved," like spiritually saved. "Women will be saved through the bearing of children." There's the balance, right? You get to have the babies. You get to nurse the babies. You get to hold them in your arms. You get to spend every day with them. You get to nurture them. You get to develop them. That's your marvelous privilege. In reality, there is a depth of influence at that level that no man will ever have with his children.

Now what does it mean, "She'll be saved through the bearing of children?" I remember when I was in Bucharest, Romania some years ago. There was a pastors' conference. Had about twelve or fifteen hundred pastors and their wives in this church, and they wanted - after I spoke a lot - they wanted to have a Q&A. So one of the guys asked the question, "What does this mean, 'Women will be saved through childbearing'?" And I said, "Well" – I just blurted out – "well, of course it doesn't mean spiritual salvation. Doesn't mean you're going to go to heaven if you have babies, you know. You don't get eternal life by having babies. So it can't possibly mean that kind of salvation. It has nothing to do with your soul salvation."

All of a sudden the room got just dead flat. It was like somebody sucked out all the oxygen, and I could see confusion on the faces of men and women. And the moderator sitting next to me said, "You just dropped a bomb, because in our theology, you can lose your salvation. And one way a woman loses her salvation" – they had been taught – "was by doing anything to prevent a pregnancy." So that's how they misinterpreted that. That's why they all had 15 kids, these poor, beleaguered women; and they're looking at their husband saying, "You had to be wrong about that verse? Of all the options possible, couldn't you have been wrong about like sprinkling or something?" So I spent the next 20 minutes sorting that out. And then those dear people, of course, they wouldn't want

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

to reverse anything because they loved their children. And even with a faulty theology, they had done what godly women do; they had brought children into the world.

When Eve stepped out from under the authority and protection of Adam, she was vulnerable, and she fell. And Adam, bound by his heart to her, abandons his own authority and becomes weaker, and plunges the whole human race into corruption. Adam was not deceived; Eve was deceived. If we stay in the order that God has designed us, everybody flourishes.

Men and women, by the way, as a result of the Fall are equally sinful. Adam needed Eve so much he sinned willfully. We get that; we need you. The leadership of men, though, it was established in the creation and reaffirmed in the Fall. No daughter of Eve should follow her path into forbidden territory of going out from under her authority, her God-given authority, and trying to live independently - too much danger abounds. Actually, all human relationships are built on authority and submission. You would know that, right? You have a job. You get it, right? Authority and submission; somebody's in charge.

"Women are saved" – go back again – "by bearing of children," – literally in the Greek – "begetting children." This is the woman's high calling – "if" – this is important – "if those women continue in faith and love and sanctity or sanctification with self-restraint." Here we go again. Women are constantly being told, "Get a grip on yourself, be submissive, subject yourself, have some self-restraint," because the impulse of your fallenness is to overpower your husband.

And there's reason for that: because your husband's not perfect, and you can find a lot of reasons that you'd like to get power, right? A woman's high calling is to save herself from the stigma of the Fall. She led the race into sin by being deceived. How does she reverse that? How does her life count for something good when it was a woman who led the whole race into sin? A woman reverses that by raising godly children. This is the highest and most influential life possible.

Now I understand, God doesn't want every woman to be married. There's a gift of singleness Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 7. And sometimes there are married couples that the Lord doesn't give children. But as a general principle, this is the high calling of women: have children, pour your soul and your life into those children. That is the greatest of all influences.

Meanwhile, back at the church, chapter 3, verse 1, "It's a trustworthy statement," – and everybody knows this – "if a man aspires to the office of overseer or pastor, elder, it's a fine work he desires to do." Meanwhile, men are in charge of the church. "And an overseer" - pastor, elder – "must be above reproach, must be a one-woman man,

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money." And here it comes, verse 4, "He must be one who manages his own household well." Just as he manages the household, that's the proving ground for him to be able to be given responsibility in the church, because the next verse says, verse 5, "If a man doesn't know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?" Since men are called by God to manage the house, they are, in being qualified to do that, qualified to be managing the church. No woman is the head of a house; no woman can be the head of a church.

Now somebody's going to say, "Well, what about 1 Corinthians 11?" So let's look at that. Now so far, it's abundantly clear what Scripture says about life in the church as regards women preachers. But here in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, in the very same book, without any confusion, Paul says in verse 3, [1 Corinthians 11:3](#), "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, man is the head of a woman, God is the head of Christ." God's the head of Christ; Christ is the head of the man; man, the head of the woman. That's the order; that's the divine order; that's how it has to be.

And then he says this: "Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. Every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved." Well, that's a strange kind of thing. What's going on here?

In the course of life as believers, there will be times when women pray. Obviously, they're not doing it in the church, in the order of the church, in the service of the church. That's crystal clear; I've showed you everywhere it says that. But in the fellowship of the saints and in the opportunity to preach the gospel, proclaim the gospel, give testimony, there are going to be times in homes, in social gatherings or whatever, that women are going to be praying; and there are times when women are going to be speaking. Praying means you're speaking to God about people. Prophesying means you're speaking to people about God. You're going to be speaking the truth of the gospel to someone. You're going to be praying to God on behalf of someone. So you're praying to God, talking to God about people, or talking to people about God; that's going to happen. And a great host – the Old Testament says – a great host are the women who publish the good news.

So all of us, men and women, are called to pray. We're to be praying for people; we're to be praying together with people. We're to be communicating the truth of the gospel. We're to be nurturing one another, speaking to one another in edifying ways. Paul says, "When you're doing that, in just the normal life of the church, men don't want to have something on their head; women do." He's talking about a head covering. This is apparently a local custom; I don't know how far it extended. But I'll show you how important it is.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

If a man has something on his head when that is traditionally what women do, then a man is acting in an effeminate way, and he is doing some kind of spiritual praying or proclaiming the truth, but he's got a covering on his head. He's dishonoring his Lord and himself, because in that culture, women wore head coverings and men did not. So, "If a woman uncovers her head while praying or prophesying she disgraces her head, for she is one and the same whose head is shaved." What women shave their head? Lesbians, prostitutes. Sometimes they shave the head of adulteresses. In other words, what Paul is saying, "When you act as a believer in any setting publicly, maintain the visible symbols of your manhood and womanhood." We live in a culture where they're trying to rub that out – Right? - where androgynous hairdos and androgynous clothes and who knows what that person is - transgender, rejecting the reality of gender – all of this is a complete assault on God's divine order.

So the local custom was that women in public wore a covering, a symbol of their femininity. It's the same today. I mean, I can look out and I can tell exactly who the women are and who the men are because of your hair. That's a cultural cue. Men are looking like men and women are looking like women. But apparently in the Corinthian society, because there was so much confusion about that, as you would expect in a pagan idolatrous culture, some women had come to Christ but hadn't shed some of those rebellious characteristics. And perhaps, some of the men as well. There may have been some effeminate men, sure, because what does Paul say to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 6? "Effeminate, homosexuals – such were some of you. You may have dressed like a woman; you may have manifest effeminate symbols; or you may have been part of a woman's liberation movement." There were many of them in Rome. We read about women running around with spears sticking pigs; women wearing armor, carrying swords; women shaving their head. All these kinds of rebellions were part of the ancient world. Paul is just saying, "Look, as a believer, you need to make sure people know you're a man or you're a woman."

If you didn't know that was under attack in the past, you would know it today, would you not? A man with a head covering was effeminate. A woman without a head covering was masculine. Symbols are important. Our culture has popularized fashions that blur those lines. When you go shopping, guys, go to the men's department. And if you can't tell whether you're in the men's department or not, go somewhere else. Ladies, go to the ladies department. No place for transvestism, cross-dressing, gender confusion.

When a woman dressed in socially female style she was declaring her understanding of God's order. She was declaring her understanding of the divine uniqueness of being a woman, and she was testifying to her submission to that divine design, and her submission and devotion to her husband; and for a Christian, further, she was declaring

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

her devotion to Jesus Christ. But as is clear in this letter, the Corinthians had a hard time separating from their former lifestyle, and they needed to be instructed to do this. Head coverings aren't the issue. Wearing those symbols that clearly designate you as a woman, that's an issue. Wearing those kinds of symbols that clearly declare you as a man, that's an issue. And this is God's design.

Verse 7. Anything other than that is disgraceful, verse 6 says. Verse 7 says, "A man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; and the woman is the glory of man." God is the creator of man out of nothing; God is the creator of woman out of man. The man's glory is in the image of God; the woman is that she is created by God from man.

"A man doesn't originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed, man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake." In other words, keep these distinctions clear: authority, submission. And culture so clearly recognizes this, that all cultures have those kinds of distinctive marks.

And then this, verse 10: "Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels." What? What does that mean? The most submissive, the most holy, submissive creatures in the universe are the angels, right? What are the angels? They're ministering spirits, right, who serve the Lord constantly. So they are the purest and highest of all submissive creatures. And when women demonstrate their submission, they put their obedience on display to that most submissive of all creatures, the holy angels.

And you know, in Ephesians 3 it says that. I'll just read you this verse, what the Lord is doing in the church, chapter 3, verse 11. What He's doing in the church is "bringing to light the administration of the mystery, the gospel, which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies." Who are they? Angels. The Lord is working His work in the church to put the church on display for the angels, and the angels expect to see the church and see in the church the Lord glorified.

How disappointing it must be for angels to look down and see rebellious women trying to usurp leadership: preaching roles, overpower their husbands. Wherever you have that kind of woman, you have weak husbands. Wherever you have a collection of those kinds of people in leadership, you have weak men. Wherever you have weak men, you have the inevitable destruction of whatever that entity is.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

Back to 1 Corinthians 11. Let's talk spiritually though, verse 11: "However, in the Lord," – now we're not talking anymore about just sexual distinctions here – "but in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God." So what he's saying there is spiritually we're mutually dependent. I mean, at the base of life we're mutually dependent. So this isn't making one less than the other; these are just God-ordained roles. And, "in the Lord," that's why [Galatians 3:28](#) says, "There is neither male nor female in Christ; you're all one in Him." Spiritually speaking, we're all one; there's no hierarchy.

So verse 13, he asks the question, "Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?" No. "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it's a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it's a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering." I read some time ago that women's hair actually grows faster than men's because God has built in that hair as a covering. "If a man has long hair," – trying to look like a woman – "it's a dishonor to him." He's a weak man. "But if a woman has long hair, it's a glory to her. For her hair is a testimony to the covering that symbolizes her submission."

You don't like this? Verse 16: "If one is inclined to be contentious," – Is that you? – "we have no other practice," – sorry – "nor have the churches of God." There's that phrase again. This is it for every church, in every place, all the time. "We have no other practice."

This takes us back to [1 Corinthians 14:33](#), the universal standard for all the churches of all the saints. Now let me give you a perspective, okay. Humanity is made up of families by God's design. And where God-ordained families are strong, you have a strong culture, you have a strong church. The relations in those families follow into society and you have an ordered society. Those relations follow into the church and you have an ordered church. Men lead, feed, protect, provide. Women support and nurture. Children obey. So the church should be the highest manifestation of that divine order; and that's what Paul says in Ephesians 5: "As husbands love their wives and wives submit to their husbands," the church is seen in that marriage, because that's the relationship that it has to its Lord. That's God's design.

However, the world – particularly the world we live in – is very different. It is not made up of families anymore; it's made up of individuals, individuals. Marriage means very little to anybody, whether you get married or not. And if you do get married, you get divorced as fast as you can get married. Family doesn't mean anything. Male authority doesn't mean anything. Female submission doesn't mean anything. So you have all these individuals running around defying God's design, and the world rebels strongly against these God-created roles so that it reaches the point where it actually denies they exist.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

It started some years ago maybe with women making sure they maintained their maiden name in a marriage, so there was a sort of a symbol of power. And now it's reached the point where we deny gender exists. Individualism has so perverted the culture and the culture has so perverted the church that the churches are increasingly rejecting the will and command of the Lord. This is not unclear. They have no interest in the honor of the Lord. Rebellious women pastors and preachers flood the church in the roles that were for men. Same thing they're doing in the secular world is being done in the church. How can you do that when the Word of God is so crystal clear? Oh, Paul anticipates how they could do that.

Go back to 1 Corinthians 14, verse 35: "If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home. For it is improper for a woman to speak in church." That puts a burden on the husband to be the teacher.

But then, verse 36. "Why would you defy this? Was it from you that the word of God first went forth?" Well, that is just sarcasm. "Did you write the Bible? Was it from you that the Word of God went? Are you the source of divine truth? Because if you defy this, you're acting as if you are God, and you have overruled the revelation of God because you're a higher authority. Or maybe," – more sarcasm – "or has it come to you only? You had a private revelation, I see. Jesus came to you. Jesus told you to do this." Look, Paul anticipates the only possible defense of women preachers. One, "You have ideas that literally trump God. You're getting private revelation."

As that most famous woman preacher says, "I didn't surrender to a calling of man when I was 18 years old, I surrendered to a calling of God. It never occurs to me for a second not to fulfill it. I will follow Jesus. Jesus tells me what to do." Really? The only defense is either you're the author of Scripture, or you're the author of a higher scripture than God, or you get personal revelation.

One of the conversations that that woman had with Jesus went like this: "How ya doing this morning?" Jesus said. I said, "I'll get to You in a minute." He said, "Oh, don't mind Me. I'm doing fine. How are you?" This is the daily routine of somebody who's trying to justify their disobedience by special, intimate, personal revelation where Jesus talks only to them.

So here's a last word, verse 37 and 38: "If anyone thinks he's a preacher, or spiritual," – led by the Spirit, *pneumatikos* – "if anybody thinks he's a preacher, or spiritual, let him recognize the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. If you don't recognize what I've just written as the Lord's commandment, you are neither a preacher nor spiritual."

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Verse 38: "If anyone does not recognize what I have written as the Lord's command, he is not recognized." If you don't recognize the command of God, we don't recognize you as a preacher or a spiritual person. What Paul wrote is the Lord's command. Violate that command and you're not a preacher and you're not spiritual; you're a fraud. The Word of God is clear.

Now let me say this: I love a lot of things about Grace Church, but one of the things I love the most at the top of my list is the women of Grace Church. We have a lot of strong men because you honor their strength, you honor their responsibility. But what defines this church is the women: your sweetness, your grace, your kindness, your tenderheartedness, your goodness, your mercy, your love. It literally permeates this entire church. We enjoy it; we bask in it; we live in it. And strangers who come here from time to time all talk about it. There's so much love in this church.

Look, men, we have our worlds to conquer. But the heart and soul of this church is the precious women who walk in the Spirit and who live their lives in faith and love and sanctity and self-restraint, and raise godly children, and you are the benediction to all the rest of us. You are the heart of this church. We are the strength; you are the heart. So thank you for your faithfulness. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You again for Your Word. It's so clear, unmistakably so. May we rejoice in what You've called us to. Help us all to fulfill these roles so that we can raise up a generation of godly young people to Your glory, so that Your Word would never be dishonored, Your name never dishonored, so that the angels when they look at us will rejoice in our obedience. Thank You for the joy that comes in that obedience. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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