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Women

*1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:
3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as
becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine,
teachers of good things; 4. That they may teach the young
women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their chil-
dren, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedi-
ent to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blas-
phemed.*

*15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all au-
thority. Let no man despise thee.*

Titus 2:1,3-5,15

Words of Authority

Paul's words to his helper, Titus, are to guide Christians in various positions we fall into in life. I've quoted those that refer to women. These are profound instructions whose import is often read casually. It's time we take a careful look!

In consideration of these verses, they need to be viewed in the full context of all of Titus chapter 2. Paul started his words with the weight of "sound doctrine." Indicating other teachings, in regards to what was to follow, weren't "sound doctrine." This is serious! All the "lifestyle" choices, of this era, aren't just a

valid list of options for believers. They're choices based on "unsound doctrine" or "false doctrine". Such as this are sealed up with a powerful command at the end of the section in verse 15. We find the command to "*speaking, exhorting and rebuking with all authority.*" Think about this. For those who face a congregation of women who violate the commands Paul gave to Titus to teach, they would find it easier to hold their tongues until a better day. The violent rejection could spell war! Paul however told Titus to prepare for battle. He knew the things contained in chapter 2 could spell war. Paul spoke the marching orders as powerfully as they could be worded, "*speaking . . . rebuking . . . authority.*"

Paul knew some would hold such commands in contempt, heaping scorn of such teaching upon Titus. We see that today. For men who preach the instructions for the women, there comes scorn for trying to run their lives. Paul said the scorn wasn't to be received. Instead, Titus was to put their scorn to shame by rebuking them for rejecting the strong words of direction he had given, thus we find, "*Let no man despise thee.*"

Since Paul prepared Titus for war, what instructions was he to give that could be so explosive?

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

Buckle up for the journey! I want you to picture what Paul was doing in a contemporary scenario. Paul commanded an assistant church planter to tell the older women, who were godly examples, to go to the younger women and teach them. Imagine, the venerable Mrs. Godly paying a visit to the younger Mrs. Youngwife and some of the other younger wives and telling them how to set up their home in a godly manner. If such was carried out in most of today's churches, the charge would be cried, "Who do you think you are, trying to tell me how to live!" She would be marked as a judgmental woman for correcting the erring younger women. Such could possibly be scandalous, and the godly older woman would be branded as "*unchristian.*" This result in itself is scandalous. Through silence and compromise, we have drifted far.

OLDER WOMEN OF EXAMPLE

“The aged women,” who are they? Must they be over 70? The verses draw the description so we can know. They’re women who’ve had husbands, raised children and lived the example. A woman who has lived the successful example is the woman called upon to help others who are just beginning the journey. This is a serious ministry I’m not seeing done *OR PERMITTED!* Not generally permitted by either the younger women or the other older women who haven’t lived the godly example. To such a situation, Titus was to stand up and *“rebuke”* these women who were actually forcing “false doctrines”.

Only one of the verses describes these older women. The following two are instructions as to what it is she’s to teach the younger.

These “older women” are “elders” of a sort to the younger women. They again, are to be women of good reputation amongst those who are honest about her. Remember, the ungodly older women won’t speak well of such women. Especially in today’s society! Not to mention there are usually more of these ungodly women, and they tend to be loud in their attacks. To this, the “godly men” need to stand up and bring the situation under control. A good starting point would be the pulpit, preaching all the counsel of God to this issue!

The description goes, *“in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;”*. We find four qualifications here:

1. *Holy in behavior* is the mark of a God seeking woman. She is one who diligently seeks to know God’s word and follow it. For her, Christianity isn’t hobby, it’s life itself. She endures the slander of the other ungodly woman, yet seeks no revenge.

2. *“Not false accusers”* means she isn’t a liar. She doesn’t seek to stir mischief. She seeks to find the biblical solution to problems amongst people she’s involved with. A false accuser is one who lies to cause others to turn against the person lied about. A wall of hate is created by such a woman, and since she is the liar, the hate is of the innocent, while the liar is usually

held in honor!

3. “*Not given to much wine*” marks the woman who isn’t living for the pleasures of this world. The thoughts of God, and pleasing Him, are always at the forefront of her heart. Over-indulging in the things of this world just don’t mark her.

4. *Teaching good things* marks what she’s to do for the younger women. It also denotes the woman who always wants and seeks opportunity to commune about the things of God and how they impact our living. The woman whose conversation carries little meat for godly living, isn’t the woman for this position.

THE SOUND DOCTRINE TO BE TAUGHT

I want to start at the end of these two verses. We find, “*that the word of God be not blasphemed*”. What is that blaspheme? How does such come about from the younger Christian women not living the way the godly older women direct?

First, consider this illustration of blaspheme: We see a man who tells everyone he’s a Christian. He swears regularly and cheats his neighbor. That man is blaspheming God’s name through his conduct. He claims to be a representative of Christ, which is a position all Christians are given by new birth. The world sees his ungodly behavior and says, “if that’s what a Christian is like and that represents the kind of God he serves, I want nothing to do with that kind of God!” His conduct has “blasphemed” the good name of God.

Taking that understanding here, we see the world looks at the young Christian woman who isn’t a “*keeper at home*”, as verse 5 itemizes, but sees her keeping some office instead. She has a “fair” husband who shares the “keeping of the home” duties with her, because the task would be too great for her alone since she’s also supporting the home. They see the modern, “equal partnership” marriages. They look and consider that the Christians are no different to them in the family unit. To become a Christian doesn’t impact that area of their lives. Since this isn’t the case, according to God’s word, the world gets that

same misunderstanding of what God calls for in the family. They accrue that lack of lifestyle difference to be according to the way God's word reflects on the family life. Hence, since that isn't true, it gives occasion in that manner for the "word of God to be blasphemed". This is identical to that swearing and cheating "Christian" who blasphemes God's name through ungodly conduct.

Unfortunately, I'm able to give a living illustration I witnessed. A pastor had recently had his first child. The couple's infant was still nursing and his wife was still holding employment outside the home. Members of another religion innocently enough inquired about the pastor. They had seen his wife in the store with their infant. I told them simple things like how long he had been a pastor in that town. How long he had been married, and how they had met. For them that necessarily included the fact of her job. They asked if she was still working. The fact couldn't be denied. They momentarily gasped, then quickly covered up their shock. It was too late. The ungodly example was noted and it layed a basis for these non-Christians to hold a Christian church in a just contempt.

Coming to the details to be taught, carries a lot more weight when we realize the failure here is serious indeed. A cause for blaspheme!

1. The first detail is the call for the young women to not over-indulge in the things of this world. Life for the Christian must have sobriety. We picture the men at war needing to be on constant guard and vigilance against the enemy, but the same holds true for women. Satan is winning the battle in most Christian households today! That soberness is lacking and a tighter budget is enough to send most women scurrying off to some office. **Living faithfully, in being the keeper at home at the risk of poverty, while truly trusting God to take care of His own obedient and faithful children, is the mark of soberness.**

2. To love both their husbands and children needs to be taught. The cause of failure would tend to be the woman's look-

ing at self. Living for self. She's to be trained to keep her heart focused on raising godly children and being a true helpmeet for her husband. What if her husband isn't a Christian and wants an "equal partnership" marriage, sending her outside the home to work? How does "love your husband" impact here? Obedience to God is to be understood first. The following verse is specific in being the keeper at home. It implicates failure here to be a potential cause of blaspheme. Abandoning that course, due to the husband's request, isn't an option. Does that mean she doesn't love her husband? Of course not. She has no choice in obedience to God, but to love her husband is not negated in choosing to obey God first and always. It's just like honoring the authorities, but we can't obey commands contrary to God's higher laws.

3. "*Discreet*" and "*chaste*" go hand in hand. Her conduct and dress should reflect the impression of a woman who pays attention to how her body affects men. She's to be taught to take great care to not get caught up in the fashions "everyone" is wearing. Pay attention to the ads, when a new questionable style of clothing comes out. In the secular media, they will push it by appealing its seductiveness. We Christians shouldn't be so naive as to not catch the intent in the new designs.

4. Being the *keepers at home* denotes the place of priority. A woman who has some job outside of the home, finds herself unable to be at home to carefully supervise and care for her children. Her home can easily suffer, but given that she has some system to keep the house in order, the children are inevitable casualties. When they're sick, the mom is compelled to go to the office. When they get home from school, or are off during summer, mom isn't there to carefully watch over them as a shepherd does his sheep. What would you think of a shepherd who just left his sheep alone, not protecting them from the wolves? Oh yes, I know, in our society we just find a substitute mom to raise the children, the day-care provider! All these sickly results, the cost of abandoning the principal of the women being the, "*keepers at home*".

5. “Good” is an aroma that naturally wafts the air. Such a woman is as a pleasing aroma that can’t be denied. You enter the home and the aroma is noticed immediately.

6. “Obedient to their own husbands” is the last. A woman who views her husband as a burden she has to honor, is a grief to all. She doesn’t honor him in her conversation with others and that heart of rebellion permeates all her life. Even if the husband has some rough spots, as long as he doesn’t require his wife to disobey her Christian calling, he should be honored.

Before we leave the issue of women, there’s one other concern I wanted to take a brief look at.

CORRUPTED UNDERSTANDING OF SINCERE WOMEN

Though it may seem strange to insert a message about Bible versions here, it’s necessary.

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.
1 Timothy 2:11,12

This is a famous challenged passage. Unfortunately, the battle is only heightened in women’s understanding when corruptions, such as *The Living Bible* are thrown into the fray. *The Living Bible*, as it’s called, isn’t a Bible at all! It’s a paraphrase. That means that some man read a Bible and put the verses into his own words. That was then passed off as a Bible. It’s more akin to a commentary. *The Living Bible* added words to this passage, which God saw better than to add, for it was inaccurate. It helps to promote women authority elsewhere in world affairs. One study version of *The Living Bible* also had study notes with the verse indicating the passage was for easily misled women a long time ago, but now that women know better today, it’s obsolete.

As we find in 1 Peter:

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:
1 Peter 2:2

Don’t fill yourselves with substitute formula instead of God’s true word. I’ve seen many people carrying their *Living Bibles*

around, using them as if they were Bibles. Considering that is probably all they read, they probably seldom ever really get fed with God's word. This is devastating! No wonder the church life is so shriveled.

Ignorance in Areas of Women Leadership

CAN WOMEN LEAD MEN IN PRAYER?

A very misunderstood subject is that pertaining to what is "leading" of women over men. Is it restricted to teaching or governmental actions only? Is the leading of joint men and women groups in prayers an example of women "leading" men? For a biblical answer, we need to cover two pertinent passages in 1 Corinthians:

3 But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. 5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. 6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. 8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. 9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. 10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. 13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14 Doeth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. 16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no

such custom, neither the churches of God. 1 Corinthians 11:3-16

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

1 Corinthians 14:34,35

From chapter 14, we find the passage quoted after talking over the exercise of spiritual gifts (14:1-33). We find that all the instructions of operation were for the men, in the general mixed assemblies of men and women. These verses of 34 and 35 make that suitably clear to the honest heart. The chapter has been talking about prophesying, in particular, and attaches the restrictions on women. When we connect this, in looking back at chapter 11, we can gain some insight into what's going on.

In chapter 11:4,5 we see two areas of leadership and speaking out loud in the assembly itemized. They are both enjoined to the issue of authority and head covering, which that symbolizes. The “*prophesying*” is in particular a spiritual gift, while “*praying*” is not. Chapter 14 mentions the women's silence in the discussion after the uses of the spiritual gifts, so enjoining the item of prophesying. Those who can readily see this would enjoin that prophesying might drop out the prayer aspect because chapter 14 doesn't specifically mention normal prayers. However, the reason normal prayers weren't mentioned was because they aren't “spiritual gifts”, which is all chapter 14 had been talking about.

An honest look at 11:4-16 makes it very clear that leading in prayer is an act of authority and leadership, to which the whole issue of head covering is tied. The head covering is the visible demonstration of submission to authority. The leading in prayers and prophesying are the specific actions of leadership that are brought forth in this section. The one, a spiritual gift, the other, a spiritual right. The one leading as from man to God, the other leading as from God to man. Both are leading and both are enjoined under the subjection of authority as drawn

out through the head covering issue.

So what kind of praying and prophesying can women do that's being talked about in chapter 11? Praying and prophesying of the women in special women's groups. This passage actually shows us that the women did have a special gathering time of their own where they gathered as a body of women. We can see this practice was going on in the synagogues at the time of the early church in Acts:

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. 13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

Acts 16:12,13

This practice, (of the women gathering for a special time on their own) was clearly drawn out both in this passage and in conjunction with 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and 14.

I wanted to make a special note here that the Greek word translated as "*permitted*" in 14:34 is the same word translated as "*suffer*" in 1 Timothy 2:12. The weight of intoleration is spoken with the same weight in both passages.

[For a more in depth discussion of this complex issue of women's authority, see the four tracts on women by Based In The Word Ministries.]

CAN WOMEN LEAD MEN IN SONG?

Another area that needs addressing is in the area of music. A quick look at most modern hymnals will show many hymns written by women. The question that should arise is, "Is it right for the assembly of mixed men and women to choose to sing songs where the words are written by women?" Most would wonder why such a question has any validity. What could possibly be wrong with that? To start with, we should ponder the following:

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns

and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. *Colossians 3:16*

From this we see songs are considered vessels for teaching. Can we ignore this and continue to choose songs written by women to help lead and teach men? It's easy enough to just ignore, but it's not honest before God or faithful in obedience to Him.

Take note of a very important fact. The book of Psalms was the nation of Israel's public hymn book. Actually it is the compilation of five different hymn books. Out of all those songs, with credit of the authors on most, not one was written by a woman. Such a difference in our hymnals would be commented on as being chauvinistic today! What's more, we do find two songs of women recorded in the Old Testament. That of the prophetess Deborah, which wasn't placed as part of a public hymnal (Judges 5:1-31). The other is that of Miriam (Exodus 15:20,21) where she led the women in song. They also were picking up a refrain of what Moses had just sung (Exodus 15:1). Miriam's song also didn't become a part of the public hymnals. There were also men and women singers in the temple days but with all this, the songs written by women never became part of the public hymnals. Why? To do such would have been in violation of the principal of women teaching or leading men.

I was posed with the concept that it wouldn't be wrong to use Deborah's song as part of scripture to teach a lesson from. In using such reasoning, it must be remembered the song was not originally given with the object of teaching or leading men (the Deborah account is much vaster and is looked at in more depth in the fourth tract of the women series), and neither was Miriam's. Her song is the only legitimate one to consider here and it wasn't given with the object of operating in violation of proper places of authority, leading or teaching. To use it to preach a message from would not be violating any such barriers either. If I obtained a sermon by a woman and read it to the congregation, that would be in violation of a woman teaching men. We can take anything in the Word of God and preach from

it, but we always need to preach it in context. If we preach using Miriam's song as a text, it must be presented in that context. To do otherwise would be like taking one of the statements of Job's three friends and building a lesson from that viewpoint. We could even quote Satan for that matter and use it out of context. The principal to be remembered is that of authority and if there are ways in which it's being violated.

Going back to Colossians, we see that songs are ways of teaching. Not only that, to lead in the singing of songs is leading. Having women music leaders are still just that, "leaders". For a woman to stand up front with her guitar and say, "Turn to song number 25" is leading. For the leader to ask for song numbers the people want to sing and the woman standing next to him with her guitar request song number 25 is not leading. Such is the difference of positions of authority. Anyone, who truly cares about such issues, will notice the difference when they encounter the extension of authority.

It must be noted that even using the hymns of praise written by women, we're confirming those women's leadership in the words we choose to sing to God. Beside the point I've heard ministers use verses from the hymns to teach. They pull out one of the verses and start expounding on it. Such shows the obvious use of the hymns for the purpose of teaching.

This area is one of great ignorance with Christians. I know it will not be easily understood at first, but we must make a stand for what's right, making the call for correction. Hopefully eyes will begin to open and real care about pleasing God in all things will rise to the fore even at the risk of being misunderstood.

We've taken a brief look at the subject of women and their ministry in the body of Christ. This short look should help to give some important needed direction to put us back on track. The getting back on track can't be accomplished though, unless we decide to obey and gaze upon God, no matter what hardships it might mean. A single income family for one. To obey spells blessings of another sort which will not be imagined until the obedience is accomplished. Trust Him and see!