

What We Teach

THE CHURCH

1 Timothy 2:12-14 (NASB)

¹² “But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

¹³ For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve.

¹⁴ And *it was not* Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”

Women— Church: the Christian woman is not to teach in church nor to have authority over a man. Ears perk up and eyes focus when this statement is read, and in some cases emotions are aroused, especially in societies where the struggle for women’s rights are being fought. What does Scripture mean? Scripture is brief and factual. A simple statement is made: “A woman [is not] to teach, nor to hold authority over a man.”

But note: a woman is not forbidden to teach nor forbidden to hold authority. She is only forbidden to teach and to hold authority over a man. Why? Why is she allowed to teach and manage other women and children but not men?

1. Because God created in an organized and orderly fashion; He created everything to have its own order and function. In relation to human beings, God created man first, then woman. God created man...

- to be the driving force of creation.
- to plow the way.
- to take the lead.
- to be the initiator.
- to oversee the family and its welfare.

The woman was created not as a competitor but as a counterpart. She is just as unique a creation as the man and her function is just as important as the man’s, but her function upon earth is not the same as man’s. In the plan of God’s creation, each supports, complements, and works *along the side* of the other. Therefore, within the church the teaching and administrative leadership of the church is to be headed up by the man.

2. God created man and woman with different natures. Women were created with more of an open and receptive, trusting and intuitive, tender and bearing nature. Because of her receptive and trusting nature, she tends to believe things and to follow along more easily than man. Therefore, she is more easily deceived than man. This is what happened with Adam and Eve when they fell into sin. Eve was deceived and followed along with the temptation, but not Adam.

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He knew exactly what he was doing. He sinned because he loved the woman and wanted to know the pleasure of sin with her. He knew exactly what he was doing; therefore, he was in the greater wrong.

The point is this: by nature, men are built more to take the lead in teaching and administration; whereas women are built more to receive and follow.

1 Corinthians 11:3 (NASB)

³ “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.”

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 (NASB)

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.

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.”

Ephesians 5:22-25 (NASB)

²² “Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

1 Timothy 2:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ “A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.

¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”

1 Peter 3:1 (NASB)

¹ “In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives.”

1 Peter 3:5 (NASB)

⁵ “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.”

Thought 1. Note an important question: Does this mean that a woman is never to teach or hold authority over a man?

The New Testament gives example after example of women who held a phenomenal position and ministry in the early days of Christianity.

⇒ Mary of Nazareth was chosen by God to bear and rear and teach God’s very own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, while He was on earth (**[Luke 1:26-38](#)**).

⇒ Anna, a prophetess, was chosen by God to predict the future of the baby Jesus (**[Luke 2:36-38](#)**).

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- ⇒ It was four women who demonstrated raw courage by standing at the foot of Jesus' cross when all the disciples had fled for their lives ([Mark 15:40](#)).
- ⇒ Joanna and Susanna supported the work of Christ ([Luke 8:3](#)).
- ⇒ Martha and Mary opened their home to Jesus time and again ([Luke 10:38-39](#); [John 11:5](#)).
- ⇒ Mary Magdalene, because of her great love and devotion for Christ, was chosen by God to be the first to witness the Lord's resurrection ([Matthew 16:9](#); [John 20:11-18](#)).
- ⇒ Tabitha or Dorcas helped the poor of her city by clothing them ([Acts 9:36-43](#)).
- ⇒ Mary, the mother of John Mark, allowed the early believers to meet in her home ([Acts 12:12](#)).
- ⇒ Lydia courageously stepped forth and became the very first convert to Christ in Europe ([Acts 16:13](#)).
- ⇒ Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, taught the truth of Christ to the young preacher, Apollos ([Acts 18:26](#)).
- ⇒ Philip the evangelist had four daughters who were prophetesses ([Acts 21:9](#)).
- ⇒ Phebe served the church at Cenchrea, probably as a deaconess (see note, [Phebe—Romans 16:1-2](#)).
- ⇒ Mary of Rome ministered to Paul and his companions ([Romans 16:6](#)).
- ⇒ Tryphena and Tryphosa were two ladies who labored in the Lord ([Romans 16:12](#)).
- ⇒ The mother of Rufus became a mother to Paul ([Romans 16:13](#)).
- ⇒ Euodia and Syntyche were two women who labored in the gospel ([Phil. 4:2-3](#)).
- ⇒ The mother and grandmother of Timothy, Lois and Eunice, taught the Scriptures to Timothy from his earliest childhood ([2 Tim. 1:5](#)).
- ⇒ The aged women were to teach the young women ([Titus 2:3](#)).

These Scriptures clearly show that women were chosen and gifted by God to hold a significant position and ministry in the early days of Christianity. But it also has to be noted that there is no clear record of a woman serving in the capacity of the head teacher or head authority in the New Testament church (pastor, bishop, or elder).

Does this mean that God never raises up a woman to teach all Christians, men and women, or to hold authority on a church wide or worldwide ministry? In answer to this question, we have to go before the Lord humbly and openly and seek the answer for ourselves. But we must always confess that God is God; therefore, He can do what He wills in order to meet a special need. If He needs to raise up a woman to meet some special teaching or administrative need in the church, He can do it.

Thought 2. Some commentators say that this passage is to be interpreted only in the context of its day. William Barclay's comment gives an example of this position.

“The Christian Church did not lay down these regulations as in any sense permanent regulations, but as things which were necessary in the situation in which the early Church found itself....All the things in this chapter are mere temporary regulations laid down to meet a given situation. If we want Paul's real and permanent view on this matter, we get it in [Galatians 3:28](#). 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' In Christ the differences of place and honour and prestige and function within the Church were all wiped out....We must not read this passage as a barrier to all women's work and service within the Church; we must read it in the light of its Jewish background and in the light of the situation in a Greek city. And we must look for Paul's permanent views in the passage which tells us that the differences are wiped out, and that men and women, slaves and freemen, Jews and Gentiles, are all eligible to serve Christ” ([The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon](#), p.78).

But note: this position is most unlikely because of the universal reference to Adam and Eve. Scripture is drawing a universal application from the creation of Adam and Eve. It is because God created in an organized and orderly way and gave specific functions to both man and woman that man is to take the lead in blazing the path through life for his family and the church.

Thought 3. There is another possible reason why God has forbidden women to stand before men in a position of teaching and authority, a reason that has perhaps been neglected in discussion. By nature men and women are attracted to each other by looking, but man by nature is the more dominant pursuer. Therefore, by nature he is probably more attracted by looking than the woman is. If a man looks at a woman long enough, he will begin to notice any feature of attractiveness about her. ***This is natural and normal***, the way God made man and woman.

However, when a woman ***stands before*** a man for a long time and the man is forced to continue looking at her, the situation becomes ready-made for temptation to attack his mind with suggestive thoughts. This is not to say that every man who sits under the teaching of a woman and who is forced to look at her is thinking immoral thoughts. It only means that when a man is forced to look and look at a woman, the temptation is more likely to happen.