



Chalmette Church of Christ

February 15th, 2015

The Limitations of a Woman's Authority Part 1

[Editor's Note: As modern innovations rage in the church of our Lord, it is needful to teach the truth when error raises its ugly head. Women preachers or women teaching over men are not authorized by God. Jane McWhorter, outstanding wife of a gospel preacher was an accomplished ladies speaker and author of numerous books and articles. The following is very relevant today.] One of the leading questions of this decade revolves around the role of women in spiritual matters. Many honest Christians are frustrated. Women are talented, well-educated, and genuinely desirous of using their abilities in His service. The pleas for breaking the shackles of previous "traditions" are even made by many men, and some women are perplexed as to what is actually pleasing in the Lord's sight. As a woman, I also want to do all that I can; but I must be certain that my zeal is in accord with the word of God. I would like to appeal to my sisters to examine the Scriptures with an open mind.

Why Is It Limited? Before dealing with the scriptural reason for the limitation of woman's authority, let us first examine the two most commonly used arguments for lifting all restraints and allowing, or even encouraging, women to assume roles of spiritual leadership. First of all, the contention is made that the early restrictions were simply based on culture; and, since we are no longer living in that culture, those customs are not binding today. While it is true that the Jewish women did not have the same freedom as many others around them, remember that Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 were addressed to a Hellenistic culture of people who were accustomed to hearing and seeing priestesses in religious leadership and delivering divine oracles at the temples. It was against this background and contrary to this culture that the restrictions were given. Christian women were to be different.

Second, Galatians 3:28 is often cited as proof that there is no distinction between the roles of men and women, since the blood of Christ delivered us from the bondage of sin that originated in the garden: "There is neither male or female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." This passage deals with the worth of Christians in God's sight, not the abolition of roles. The death of Christ certainly did not do away with roles. There are still the roles of husbands and wives, parents and children, elders and congregations, in addition to others. While we have different roles to play, all Christians have the same worth in God's sight. Different roles have been given to men and women, not because of custom and not because of the curse of sin in the garden, as a misapplication of Galatians 3:28 would lead one to believe. Instead, the matter of roles goes back to the very beginning. At the time of creation—even before the fall—God delineated various roles in spiritual matters. God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head man; and man is the head of woman (1 Cor. 11:3). In the two passages which deal primarily with the roles of men and women in the church, reference is made to this original hierarchy. The reason for different roles is given in 1 Timothy 2:13: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." 1 Corinthians 14 makes reference to the same law of creation regarding roles in verse 34: "...for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." To what law was Paul referring? It could not have been the Law of Moses because that law had been abolished with the death of Christ (Col. 2:14). Neither could it have referred to the law of custom because the Christians at Corinth were accustomed to seeing women taking a leadership role in the pagan temples. The only logical law to which it could refer would be the law of creation, or the hierarchy of roles. Christ willingly submitted to the Father, not because the Son was inferior, but because it would be the best for the furtherance of the divine plan. In the same sense, woman is to submit to her husband in the home and to male leadership in spiritual matters, not because she is inferior but simply because it has been divinely decreed that men and women would have different roles from the very beginning.

The Bounds of the Limitation While space will not permit a detailed discussion, it is important to summarize the two primary passages which deal with the limitations of a woman's spiritual role as commanded in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2. The second chapter of 1 Timothy is a discussion of the broad principle of the role of women in the work of the church, whereas 1 Corinthians 14 is an application of that principle, in the setting of public speaking in an assembled mixed gender group. This distinction is important. The theme of the entire book of 1 Timothy is given in the fifteenth verse of the third chapter: how to behave in the church (not a building but wherever the members have gathered in a religious setting). Only the male (aner) can lead the prayers (verse 8). The women must learn in SILENCE or "quietness," as the same word is translated in 2 Thessalonians 3:12. (The original word for "silence" used in 1 Timothy 2 differs from the one used in 1 Corinthians 14, which means "not a sound." The "silence" of 1 Timothy means a respectful quiet manner.) She must not teach (didasko) OVER a man nor have AUTHORITY over him (verse 12). "Usurp" is not in the original. A woman can TEACH a man in a number of ways. Priscilla helped her husband teach Apollos the truth (Acts 18:26), but she was not the authority figure standing before a group. A woman often quietly teaches men by appropriate comments that she may make in Bible class. However, she has never been given the right to teach over him in an authoritarian way. The broad principle applies to the situation anywhere that Christians have assembled for spiritual matters, whether it be at a church building, a home, a convention hall, or a lectureship at a Christian college. No man, not even an elder, can give the woman permission to violate God's law. 1 Corinthians 14 is an application of the broad principle taught in 1 Timothy 2. In this passage, rules for public speaking were given for the whole church assembled together in one place for worship. They involved an application of the broad admonition of 1 Timothy 2 to a specific situation; that underlying principle is still valid today. Two sets of rules were given to the men who were prophesying or speaking in an unknown tongue. Both of these involved public speaking before the group. Because "God is not the author of confusion" and "all things must be done decently and in order," the men had to take turns speaking; and sometimes some of the men had to remain absolutely silent ("not a word"). In the same context of rules for public speaking, women were told to be silent ("not a word"), not for the sake of orderliness—as in the case of the men—but for an additional reason: the original law of creation or the hierarchy of roles decreed from the beginning: God, Christ, man and woman. By way of summary, we learn that 1 Timothy 2 involves a broad principle concerning the roles of men and women in spiritual matters. The woman must learn in a respectful quietness and in no way teach over the man or have authority over him (because of the original hierarchy of roles, verse 13), although she certainly is free to teach a man by her example (1 Peter 3:1), by quietly teaching as Priscilla did (Acts 18:26), or by making comments in a class. The broad principle of 1 Timothy 2 was applied to a specific situation in 1 Corinthians 14, when the whole group had assembled and public speaking was being done. Although the men had to take turns and remain silent at times for the sake of things being done decently and in order, whenever any authoritarian roles of speaking were being exercised the women had to remain silent ("not a word") for an additional reason: as also saith the law, the original law of roles given at the time of creation.

By: Jane McWhorter

News & Notes

- Mark will be making his annual trip to Budapest this year and will be leaving on May 21st and returning on June 8th. Keep him in your prayers during his time of travel for a safe trip there and back.
- Vacation Bible School will be on June 15-18. Brandon Britton and his crew will be coming down to help us conduct our VBS this year. This is his 3rd time helping us!
- We would like to welcome David & Reberta Callahan to the Chalmette Congregation. They placed membership this past week. Also keep their son Noah and Daughter-in-Law Meleah in your prayers at this time as they had a miscarriage.

David & Reberta's address is:

3004 Blanchard Drive

Chalmette, LA 70043

985-718-7209

- Our Third Sunday Singing and Fellowship Meal will be this evening. Bring a dish and a friend!
- Please keep Alice Riley, Margo Rodney, and Malcolm Vazquez in your prayers at this time as they are each battling different illnesses.

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

17-Bruce Scariano

18-Claudia Smith

20-Bree Brock

26-Crystal Russell

26-Johnnie Wagner



Prayer List



**Alice Riley
Clifford Markum
Sherry Towle
Margo Rodney
Ella Gillard
Krisztian Montague
Addrean Jenkins
Gloria Smiles
Joel James
Ryker Amaya
Gary Huettmann
Carol Calix
Marie Pennington**

***All of our brethren scattered across
the United States & our troops in
Iraq**



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Chalmette, LA 70043
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Services of The Church
Sunday

Bible Classes 9:00 am

AM Worship 10:00 am

PM Worship 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 pm

Elders

Mark Lance 504-250-8492

J. V. Russell 504-277-0251

Charles Whitley 504-277-4717

Butch Snyder 504-682-0051

Evangelist

Mark Lance 504-250-8492

gospelpr@cox.net

Deacons

Scott Russell 504-232-4120

Wayne Schulz 504-392-3999

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