

Women Serving Jesus

As you read the Gospels you can see that women who knew Jesus trusted Him and loved Him and served Him.

Jesus honored some women highly. He said to a woman from Canaan in Matthew 15:28, “O woman, great is your faith: be it to you even as you will.” He publicly praised a woman who anointed His feet with ointment, “She loved much” (Luke 7:47). When He arose from the dead He appeared *first* to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9).

Jesus made many promises for *anyone* who will believe. He gave many commands irrespective of gender.

In some things God makes no distinctions. “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34). We must all come to Him the same way, by faith.

For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26, 28).

Does God make *any* distinctions in the roles of men and women?

God said He made the woman to be a *help* to the man. “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18).

The Holy Spirit enlarges on this truth in the New Testament: “Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (1 Corinthians 11:9).

Then when she was deceived by the serpent God said to her, “...your husband... shall rule over you” (Genesis 3:16). The New Testament does not annul this statement but reinforces it.

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I do not allow a woman to teach, nor to have authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Timothy 2:11-14).

...The head of the woman is the man (1 Corinthians 11:3).

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing”
(Ephesians 5:22-24).

So far, we have seen these facts:

- ❁ The woman was made for the man, to be a help.
- ❁ She was deceived; he was not.
- ❁ She should learn in silence with all subjection.

- ❁ She should not have authority over men.
- ❁ A wife should obey her husband in everything.

**Does God make a distinction in the
roles of men and women
*in the church?***

The Word of God is specific:

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 the law also says. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame [*also translated* “a disgrace”] for women to speak in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34, 35).

Is it demeaning for a woman to serve and obey?

Jesus, by His example, *exalted* obedience and lowly service. Though He is equal with the Father (John 5:18), He obeyed the Father. “For I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John 6:38). As a child He even obeyed Mary and Joseph (Luke 2:51). Obviously, He is greater than they were, but He obeyed them. And He showed that the way to be great is to serve.

Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister, and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not

to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:43-45).

So instead of feeling debased and frustrated, women who obey and serve are happy. “If you know these things, you are happy if you do them” (John 13:17).

Objections

But Jesus said, “Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your **daughters** shall prophesy, and your young

men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; And on My servants and on My **hand-maidens** I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy... (Acts 2:17,18).

So women can and should preach, that is proclaim the good news, and they can prophesy, provided they obey God's commands in doing so. He commanded women to keep silence in the church, they are not to teach men or have authority over men and they are to have an attitude of subjection.

Another objection to obeying these commands in 1 Corinthians is to say that these commands were only to the church in Corinth. It is said that there were special abuses in Corinth, so these

are special commands to them, not to all churches. But God specifically addressed this book, not just to Corinth, but to all Christians everywhere:

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, **with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord...** (1 Corinthians 1:2).

Actually, women are commanded to teach. The older women are to teach the younger women to “be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands” (Titus 2:4, 5).

A famous preacher justified his wife, who taught men, by saying that she was gifted to teach. It is true that she was gifted to teach, but she should keep the limits God set. To follow this man's reasoning would also allow a pretty woman to be a prostitute: she has been gifted by God with a beautiful body. She can bring comfort and pleasure to many men. But, of course, that's wicked! She is disobedient to God's commands. Yes, and so is the woman who will not keep silence in the church or who teaches men.

A gifted woman may still teach about three fourths of the Christian population, the women and the minors. And she may teach about three fourths of the unsaved population. She doesn't throw her gifts away. She obeys God in

how she uses them. No one will “win the prize unless he competes according to the rules” (2 Timothy 2:5 NAS). A talented soccer player may show amazing skills and get the ball past all the defenders into the goal, but if he breaks a rule, it's all for nothing. Obey the rules.

Often Deborah the judge of Israel is cited as justification for women taking leadership over men. But the fact that she was a godly woman does not justify every aspect of what she did. Samson was also a judge of Israel and was commended for his faith in Hebrews 11 (Deborah was not), but that fact does not justify his going in to a prostitute or his other escapades!

A big reason men and women feel comfortable in breaking God's commands in this area is church tradition. Women teaching men, and women in authority over men have become more and more accepted and defended, even promoted. But Jesus said, "You reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition... making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition..." (Mark 7:9, 13).

How serious is this issue of not keeping our God ordained roles?

Korah and his company were not satisfied with their roles. God made a public demonstration of how serious their rebellion was. The earth opened and swallowed them alive (Numbers 16)! When Miriam and Aaron criti-

cized Moses, God struck Miriam leprous (Numbers 12). King Uzziah, who was not satisfied with the role God had given him but also wanted to do the duty of a priest, was struck leprous (2 Chronicles 26:19). “And the angels who did not keep their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).

Bible Examples

Sarah is held up as a godly example for women: “Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters you are, as long as you do well...” (1 Peter 3:6). Jesus did not try to have an equal number of men and women as apostles; all were men.

(Don't blame first century culture; Jesus was not afraid to break the status quo or confront the culture.) All of the known authors God inspired to write Scripture were men.

Here are some examples of service expected of women. In fact, the church is not to accept a widow for support unless she has done these things:

Let not a widow be taken into the number under sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work (1 Timothy 5:9,10).

Other Distinctions

There are other examples of God making a distinction in the treatment of men and women. Only males were numbered to go out to war. Sometimes when God brought judgment on a group, all the *males* were killed. The *females* were spared (1 Kings 14:10; 21:21 and 2 Kings 9:8). Men who made regrettable vows were stuck. They had to perform their vows. Women had an escape; their husbands or fathers could rescue them and nullify the vows (Numbers 30).

Serving Jesus by Raising Godly Children

In recent generations the ministry of mothers raising children to love and serve God has been belittled. But the Holy Spirit says in 1 Timothy 5:14, “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house....” Children are a *blessing*.

Children are a **heritage** of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His **reward**. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. **Happy** is the man that has his quiver full of them: they will not be ashamed, but they will speak with the enemies in the gate (Psalm 127:3-5).

Obed-Edom had eight sons “for God blessed him” (1 Chronicles 26:4, 5). So children are a blessing. They are an inheritance from God, a reward, a source of happiness, and they are useful in furthering God’s kingdom (like arrows for a soldier).

Of course they will need to be trained. That takes *work!* It is an important ministry for Jesus. It takes dedication to Jesus. But it can be done. “Correct your son and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul” (Proverbs 29:17). “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). That is a certainty (Proverbs 22:21).

But we cannot expect the children to turn out to love and serve God if we just spend a few minutes with them each day, along with a couple of hours a week at church, but then send them off to live among worldly peers all week, besides absorbing many hours of ungodly screen time! “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals’” (1 Corinthians 15:33 NAS). “The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame” (Proverbs 29:15).

Training our own children to love and serve God is a huge ministry for Jesus that has been largely neglected!

How did Mary serve Jesus?

Both men and women can learn an important lesson in serving Jesus from Mary. When Martha was frustrated in her busy service, Jesus praised Mary. She sat at His feet and heard His Word. Let's not forget to quietly sit and hear His Word and worship Him each day!

Tribute to a Woman

My wife shares the responsibility in our evangelistic work. She will share in the reward. I go out and preach and see many public professions of faith. Sometimes I am publicly honored by kind, appreciative people. She is not in the lime light. She is often at home caring for little ones, serving, and making a happy, interesting home for the chil-

dren and for me. She is an inspiration to other women for her down-to-earth, fun attitude and for enjoying life.

Jesus said, “He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward” (Matthew 10:41). My wife, Vicki, has received this evangelist in quite a full sense! I think she’ll get an evangelist’s reward!

Conclusion

We have seen that God has commanded us to train our children, that women are to be keepers at home, keep silence in the churches, not teach men or have authority over them and that wives are to submit to their husbands in

everything. We have seen that it is a shame, a disgrace, for women to speak in the church. Of course, many devout Christian women who speak up at church and who teach men feel they are serving Jesus, sometimes at a sacrifice. But the Word of God says, “To obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Samuel 15:22).

Of course, it is not just some women who are at fault. Many *men* have failed to rule. “For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” (1 Timothy 3:5). God was pleased that Abraham ruled his house.

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice

and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him (Genesis 18:19).

And Joshua proclaimed, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

Many pastors, husbands and fathers have failed to teach God’s commands concerning women. Some do not even know about these commands. A man must make it his business to know God’s Word well enough to teach it to his wife and children! A woman should be able to ask her husband if she has questions about the Bible. “And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home” (1 Corinthians 14:35). Many pastors and husbands

have even encouraged disobedience to God's Word in this area!

Christians who try to obey God's commands are sometimes called legalists. But Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). "And why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, and do not do the things that I say?" (Luke 6:46). "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments..." (1 John 5:3).

Just after the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write, "Let your women keep silence in the churches... for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" he continued with "If any man thinks himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the com-

mandments of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, 37).

In the Great Commission Jesus commanded us to teach His followers to obey **all** the things He commanded (Matthew 28:20).

- ❁ Are you obeying these commands?
- ❁ Are you teaching others to obey these commands?
- ❁ Are you ashamed of these commands?

Whoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels (Mark 8:38).

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