

The Role of Women in the Body of Christ and the Bible

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Introduction

I debated on the title for this article. Should it be, “*The Role of Women in the Church and the Bible*”? But, “*Church*” brings up the idea of a local church and its hierarchy structure, with various ordination rites, accompanying theological degrees and credentialing, staffing procedures, etc. I will address all that in due course, but that is not my initial interest. I want to focus on the role of a woman in *the body* of Christ - which is, of course, *the Church*.

The title could read, “*The Role of **Christian** Women in the Body of Christ ...*”, but there are no other women in the Body of Christ, so that adjective is not needed. Bottomline: the forthcoming material is directed at God's daughters - my sisters in the Lord. Non-Christian women can do ... whatever. While it is possible some of them might “*naturally*” comply with parts of this upcoming material, and will thus temporarily benefit, if they remain outside of Christ, things will not end well. “*He who is not with Me is against Me and he who does not gather with Me scatters*” (Lk 11:23).

One last note before beginning this journey. Keep in the forefront of your mind, that, if you are a Christian, you will not account to me for your life and work. Nor will I account to you. Each believer will stand alone before Christ Jesus at his/her own personal judgment (Ro 14:4, 10-13). While each Christian will exit that encounter eternally safe, that does not mean the encounter will be filled solely with accolades and rewards. Jesus, as Founder and Boss of the Church, warned Christians (through Paul), “*let each man be careful how he builds upon (the) ... foundation ... which is Jesus Christ*” (read 1Co 3:10-15). All representations of Him - His commands, promises, practices and priorities ... He will judge. And look at the warning to teachers: “*Let few among you all be made teachers, my brethren, knowing that, as such, a stricter judgment we will receive*” (Ja 3:1. This is a more accurate translation). I will answer to Him for every word of this article. So, as far as you and I are concerned - we are both freed from each other. All responsibility for our Christian life and witness, all our representation of His will, ways and priorities, rightly falls where it belongs - squarely on our own self.

It Will Probably Not Surprise You ...

... that I have been warned about writing this article. This has been in half jest - but only half. My culture has been infested by what is termed, “*political correctness*.” That is just a new twist to situation ethics. In this case, the assumed sensibilities of the hearer dictates what is right to say or do ... or even what is right, period. “*Offending*” someone becomes the yardstick that dictates rightness or wrongness - with no consideration given to the truthfulness of the “*offending*” material. Matters concerning women, and their roles, are hostage to this philosophy. Warnings about addressing this topic are their own evidence. My mother has called this time in our nation's history, “*The Year of the Woman*.” This was not in boast, but with mixed sentiment. She knows that while women have benefited in some ways - they have also lost much. The greatest loss has been in relationship with immediate family. Being older, she understands the negative consequences this exacts on child rearing and marital responsibilities. But, she also knows there are some women who never take on family responsibilities, and some who can truly balance these matters, and she is happy for the broader opportunities afforded them.

So, why have I been warned? Well, as a white male, an American white male, a Bible-thumping American white male ... I have no standing on this matter. My response? If this accurate description of your humble author causes you to dismiss me, it is my hope you will be able to lay aside your error and carefully consider the forthcoming material. You already know that truth and

error have nothing to do with anyone's race, gender, or nationality. God's word, handled accurately, is independent of any vessel through which it comes. So, go ahead and abandon your sin and then read without a darkened grid polluting your mind and heart. After all, you also know that God often tests us by bringing truth to us through people our flesh naturally rejects. He does this as part of His training in righteousness. If we can pass such tests, we gain spiritually, and even start looking for Him to operate like that.

But, ...

I am now going to contradict what I just said. I want you to be able to focus on the content of this article - not the vessel. So, if this will help you ... pretend I am a woman of color from a third world country. If that doesn't neutralize your polluted grid, then construct the grid that allows you to lay aside your bigotry and malephobia (By the way, my software program does not think, "malephobia" is a word. It means, "fear of males." The other words I use to describe this phenomenon is "malephobes" who are "malephobic." The "e" is silent.) Anyway, my point is that I want you to visualize the vessel your flesh accepts. Then read.

But, now that I think about that, I have just proposed an oxymoron. Let your flesh accept itself ... and then hope you are spiritual enough to consider the forthcoming *spiritual* information? I guess it would just be better that you confront your sin now (assuming you need to) and then read. If you just can not, or will not, abandon your grid of flesh ... well, there probably isn't much point of going forward here.

Our Role in Life – Why are We Here?

Well, it looks like you are still here. So, now I am going to ask a big favor. Please bear with me on these next five paragraphs. While personal, they do lead directly to our discussion of the role of a Christian woman in body of Christ - the Church.

Most people do not have to be alive too long before he/she begins wondering: "*Why am I here? What is my purpose, my role, and how do I get into that?*" One reason many people turn to the Lord is because ... they have no answers for these questions. That describes ... me. Once I became a Christian, those questions did not automatically end. However, the biggest one was answered. I had found my primary purpose. My work ... is [to proclaim Another's](#). But, then the question became, "*From what platform do I proclaim His work?*" or, more specifically, "*In what role?*" At times, [my place in His plan](#) has been extremely clear. At other times, unclear. The latest chapter of murkiness was a long one - at least by my measurement. I had to examine, and reexamine, several foundational issues. Here are three of my bottom-line conclusions from that life chapter.

First: "*One reason I came to You was because I was lost in this life. I did not know why I was here, my role in it, and what I should do. Nothing has changed. I am still totally dependent upon You for guidance to find my place.*"

Second: "*Am I supposed to 'create ministry'? Am I supposed to decide what You want done in Your Kingdom expansion ... and then go after that?*" That question was laced with personal sarcasm to myself as it told me (and Him) that such a determination would be absurd. He opens doors no one can shut and closes doors no one can open (Rev 3:7,8). He also "*calls into being that which does not exist*" (Ro 4:17) ... like the works He wants done. It is *His* role to lead us and guide us for His Name's sake (Ps 31:3). That is not my role.

Third: This determination helped me turn all these matters directly into His hands - and then wait and

trust. *“Lord, I would rather be used by You **one time** in what is left of my life in this age, than to spend the rest of my life in what I, or others, have determined is 'ministry' - just to see that burn up when I stand before You.”* That's it. I only want to know my place - my role - from His viewpoint ... and function in that. Any other stance is insanity of the flesh and will prove to be [toil for fire](#).

These three determinations are not unique with me. While my brothers and sisters may phrase each one a bit differently, the thrust of each point *does reside* in each sane saint. Maybe now, if you can also adopt such a posture, you will be open to examine with me ...

“The Role of Christian Women ... ”

The word, *“Role”* is the primary point of this article. **Primary**. And that was the primary point of my soul searching of the preceding paragraphs - to find my proper role, thus place, in life. The first error which must be avoided is an exceedingly common one - where *“role”* is equated with *“value.”* This is a cardinal error that must not be glossed over. If one does not understand, and then reject, this error, everything in the forthcoming material will be missed. To illustrate ...

In seminary, I was taking a class on pastoral ministry. The subject of women's roles in the church arose. Within seconds, so also the temperature. It was immediately clear that anyone who believed that women were prohibited from some role - was **the same** as saying they were not *as valuable* as men - thus, inferior. In an attempt to repudiate this cultural mistake, I asked the instructor, *“You are the teacher and I am a paying student. Does that mean God thinks you are more valuable?”* He, and the class collectively, responded, *“No.”* I continued, *“We are just in different roles ... with different responsibilities. This has nothing to do with our value to God. This discussion about women is the same thing ... about roles - not value.”* Of course, if you are functioning in a fleshly mindset, you probably **do** believe the instructor is more valuable ... so, the rest of this discussion is already on the rocks. But on that day, in that classroom, following this foundational point, we were able to discuss the role of our sisters from the Bible's declarations with no reference to **the value** of a woman. The temperature went down and points were presented ... many of which you will find in the coming pages.

Here is another way to explain this. When discussing the Body of Christ, we are told, *“... it is much truer that the members of the body which **seem to be** weaker are necessary ... ”* (1Co 12:22. Read all of chapter 12). They *“seem to be weaker”* from a worldly view, as these parts of the body are not the flashy, out-in-front parts. Yet their roles are critically necessary if the body is to function properly. So, we are instructed to honor, nourish, encourage and otherwise respect those parts of the body. So, is God just pandering to those who's role is *seemingly* weak in the Body, the Church? Is He wanting those Christians to feel better about themselves, and their lot in life, thus improving their self esteem? Or ... is He sharing spiritual truth? You can already guess my position on this. He never abandons truth for some ridiculous self esteem therapy. It repulses me to even cast Him in a light that such activity is even a remote possibility. He knows that if we are not operating in some role - either by circumstance, lack of gifts, or His outright prohibition from it - that does not mean we are of less value than those who do operate in those roles. Think of it this way. If we are not meant for some role (by His design), does He look down on us - with some degree of disdain – and, perhaps, even penalize us - for that? Answer: He likes what He makes.

Here is another scenario which may strike a cord with some of you. Currently, I am attending a church where I am not the pastor, assistant pastor, deacon, elder or anything else. Those roles are not open to me, and never will be, for a variety of reasons (i.e., church membership, errant money teachings, and other organizational matters). But, regardless of the reasons, as a Christian among Christians (and I know many of them are), does that mean I am inferior to the ones operating in those

roles? If those in leading positions in a local church unrighteously censure or otherwise dismiss fellow Christians for some plastic reason, who is going to suffer loss when standing before The Boss of the Church at Judgment? If denied the opportunity to operate in some role by man's errant design, will He penalize the censured one? It is obvious I don't think that is who will lose. In light of this, I have no desire to errantly censure my sisters. Therefore, I have worked carefully with forthcoming material.

“You Have Heard It Said ...”

... that Jesus came and *elevated women*. Those espousing this point excitedly to His mother, or the woman at the well, or Mary Magdalene, or the widow who gave her mite, or those who contributed to His ministry “*from their private means*” (Lk 8:3), etc., etc., etc. But that is not my view. He had elevated women, and their role in society, long before His entrance at Bethlehem. In the next paragraphs we will take a *cursory* look at The Virtuous Woman of Proverbs 31. Jesus, while here, simply scraped off the religious and cultural pollutions that were marring what He had *previously* established ... under Law. So, in the New Testament, I do not believe He introduced anything new. He simply did *what should have been happening* under Law the whole time. He came to fulfill the Law ... and how women were viewed and treated, and their role, was always part of that charge. He did that.

Proverbs 31:10-31

There is just no way to pick and choose parts of this tremendous passage. So, just read this. You have spent time in worse ways.

*“An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.
The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.
She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.
She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in delight.
She is like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar.
She rises also while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and prescribed tasks to her maidens.
She considers a field and buys it; and from her earnings she plants a vineyard.
She girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong.
She senses that her gain is good; her lamp does not go out at night.
She stretches out her hand to the distaff and her hands grasp the spindle.
She extends her hand to the poor and she stretches out her hands to the needy.
She is not afraid of the snow for her household for all her household are clothed with scarlet.
She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.
Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.
She makes linen garments and sells them and supplies belts to the tradesmen.
Strength and dignity are her clothing and she smiles at the future.
She opens her mouth in wisdom and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her saying.
'Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.'
Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.
Acknowledge the product of her hands and let her works bring her praise in the gates” (Pr 31:10-31).*

Wow! Before pulling out a few observations, here is one thing of which I am certain. Any sister who studies this passage and lives any part of it, will find herself on solid footing when it is time

to stand before the King. I also know that from this moment to that one she will walk through this age sensing “*her gain is good*” (v.18).

This woman is a shopper (v.14,15. Boy, will that make my sisters happy!). She is an entrepreneur in real estate and clothing (v.16,24), and she has employees (maidens, v.15). Their assigned tasks may include making the garments that she sells and also assigned work in the food production (vineyards). Where I work, the owner is credited with providing all kinds of services to the public, but it is actually the employees who do the labor. The employer manages the operation and *that* is his primary labor in the enterprise. I suspect our virtuous woman operated, to some degree, in this same vein. But, there is much more.

She is finely attired, as is her household (v.21,22). She is not running around town in a gunny-sack. And as one who “*opens her mouth in wisdom,*” you know her counsel would be regularly sought - not just by other women, but by an intelligent husband, and other males, too. Wisdom is not captive to gender any more than is truth. Anyone who gains, and traffics, in wisdom - is a person in demand.

Wisdom

Let's spend a moment here. So, ... how does one gain wisdom? How did *she* get that? Well, it comes through knowledge ... *lots* of knowledge ... *lots of accurate* knowledge. In fact, wisdom is built upon accurate knowledge from all the competing views on a particular subject - followed by an accurate dissection of each view, and then followed by adherence to the correct position. Wisdom has analyzed the logic and thinking leading to all the possible chosen options - and comes away having chosen the correct one. That is how persuasive arguments are then developed exposing the flaws of the foolish choice/choices. “*The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge*” (Pr 18:15). Our virtuous woman was intelligent, active in learning, and active in assessing and reassessing information on all subjects that came into her sphere. “*Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good*” (1Th 5:21). She was doing that long before Paul came on the scene to inform her ... of this good idea. But, there is more to her wisdom. In this age, there are *two* kinds of wisdom ... two separate fields.

Spiritual Wisdom

This resides in the Creator. The world is separated from it because of sin. God has created one path to it. In the Old Covenant, He put it this way: “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*” (Ps 111:10). Similarly, “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*” (Pr 1:7). Knowledge and wisdom are inextricably intertwined. But in The New Covenant, He defined this even more directly. He informs us of “*God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” (Col 2:2,3). When He says “*all*” ... He means all. Our virtuous woman had access to this as she was an Old Covenant woman who feared the Lord (Pr 31:30). This is the wisdom that eternally “*preserves the life of its possessors*” (Eccl 7:12).

Worldly Wisdom

Jesus said, “*Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be shrewd as serpents and harmless as doves*” (Mt10:16). The word, “*shrewd*” is “*phronimos*” and that whole family of words is centered on “*the mind, thinking, thoughtfulness, intelligence, prudence.*” So, what exactly is He saying?

Let's look at it this way. Do you want your children to be ... dopes? Do you want them to fall for the pitch of every snake oil salesman that crosses their path - gullible, easy targets for exploitation? Well, God doesn't want stupid children either. He wants His to be spiritually wise *and*

worldly wise - yet not practicing the abuses of that worldly wisdom. To be “*shrewd as serpents*” yet “*harmless as doves*” means several things. First, the dove must know the way of the serpent in order to avoid being struck. Second, the dove refuses to practice any of those ways. And third, the dove exposes the serpent's ways in an attempt to protect the naive from falling into its pits. In short, the dove understands the thinking, values, priorities, methods and agenda of surrounding snakes. “*Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature*” (1Co 14:20).

Jesus knew His enemies reasonings and He was always a step ahead. Actually He was always light years ahead. See Mark 2:1-12 and Luke 7:36-50 for a couple of examples. Our virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 engaged in real estate transactions and also sold linen garments and belts to tradesmen. She understood her markets - the needs, thinking and ways of those in those markets. She could not do this successfully if she was a silly woman. She had to possess wisdom in several areas of this world's system. She was shrewd ... yet harmless. She secured good deals, and those with whom she transacted also received a good value. She bought at fair prices and sold quality products at a fair price ... and she knew how to collect her agreed-to price. Lot's of worldly wisdom there, sisters.

Cash In Hand

Let's take a quick look at her handling of money. “*She considers a field and buys it; and from her earnings she plants a vineyard.*” Her husband is not in this picture. She is not going to him asking for money to operate her varied activities. This is not a “*one bank account household*” where every financial move is managed by the husband. She uses **her** earnings and senses “*her gain is good.*” Her husband's heart trusts in her fully and she does not violate that trust. He is not worried she is running up debt and squandering resources, putting the family at risk. She obviously handles money, manages money ... and relates to money ... in a very healthy way. Let's think about this a bit more.

We operate continuously in all kinds of relationships. We have relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and bosses (including government structures above us) – and we all have a relationship with money. So, how do you relate to it? How do you interact with it? Before getting too far into these questions, I want to back up and make a few observations about money.

First, I see money as an artificial, even arbitrary, ... “thing.” What actual value does printed paper with fancy designs truly have? You can't eat it, you can't build anything with it, you can't put it on, and it can't drive you anywhere. Its physical reality is not much of anything. It only has value because we decide it does. But, even at that, I have some money from other countries – that is worthless in my country as far as I can tell. Who knows, maybe I would be rich inside the country of that currency's origin (maybe I have a rare coin!), but here, no one will exchange all this foreign money for even one loaf of bread. So, money is really an artificial “thing” - not a more natural “thing” like ... family, friends, co-workers, and bosses (including government structures above us). As we continue moving toward a cashless money system, then money isn't even paper or coins – it's just numbers on a computer screen technically residing in some bank or investment firm. And one may never even see those places of business. That is already a part of my reality. So, in my estimation, the fact that money is an artificial “thing” - invented and/or imposed upon us, creates an added level of difficulty *in how to relate to it*. Many people have a terrible time relating properly to *natural* things around us, like family, friends, co-workers, and bosses (including government ... you get the drill by now). Is it reasonable to suspect that many people would really struggle in how to relate to this *artificial* “thing”?

After reading the previous paragraph, your mind has started racing - as different people you have known come to mind ... or your own self. It sure has my mind racing, and I could easily pour out fifty pages writing about this. But, in an extreme effort at self discipline – so as to keep moving

forward on “the role of women,” I will keep this to a paragraph ... or two :)

The Bible speaks a lot about how people relate to money. Solomon describes some who hoard riches to their own “*hurt*.” To be sure, there are some who have riches and wealth whom God has “*empowered*” to use and enjoy those riches: “*This is the gift from God.*” But others have gained “*riches and wealth and honor so that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires, but God has not empowered him to eat from them This is futility and a sore affliction*” (Read Eccl 5:18-20 and Eccl 6:1,2 – bad chapter break there).

Some are “*lovers of money*” which is indeed “*a root for all kinds of evil*” (1Ti 6:10). But, others of us are not motivated by money. In my pre-Christian days, I called it “a necessary evil.” I knew I needed it, but I hated wasting my time for it. I always worked, but I did not want to work just for money. I wanted to work at what would bring fulfillment - money being an ancillary by-product. Unfortunately, for many of us, the things we enjoy working at ... produces little or no money. In fact, some of these pursuits actually *demand* money. How many song writers actually make money at it? How many artistic painters? How many writers? My guess is the percentage is quite low. It is no wonder that many people have a messed up relationship with money. It may not intersect well with one's life interests. When you add various personalities in the mix (big, boisterous spenders who approach all of life in that way, or, conversely, fearful, miserly personalities) – these traits alone influence how one relates to this artificial thing called money. And if one indulges in mind altering drugs – how many times does a whole week's pay go to a Friday night bar tab?

I could go on and on. But, a couple of more things. Some people never change in how they relate to money, and others change dramatically. For years I operated on, “what comes in, goes out - and no debt taking.” Then when my oldest was an infant and toddler, two emergencies changed how I related to money. I knew I needed cash on hand. I became a budgeter and saver. I may have even become too tight – for varied reasons I won't go into here. But, recently, my relationship with money is changing yet again. If there are tests available that can assess how a person relates to money, that would be well worth taking. And if such a test had accompanying information explaining the test taker's strengths and weaknesses – well, that would be worth spending some money on.

It is a gift from God to be able to relate to money in a healthy way. While this may come easily to some, others of us ... well, I think we can learn, at least to some degree, how to relate to it positively. Our virtuous woman had a very healthy relationship with money. She handled it well and used it well. Who knows, her husband may have been like my Dad. For fifty plus years of marriage, my Dad knew that my Mom was good with money. So, he turned over the finances to her and she never betrayed that trust. I do not remember one argument between them about money. And even though they both exited this age through lengthy and expensive sicknesses, they left money to all nine grandchildren and all three sons. Not fortunes, but definitely meaningful. Back to our topic.

But Now You Ask, “What About ...

*... the single woman? This passage is about a **married** woman ... with children to boot!*” Well, rather than throw out this entire passage and then make up stuff, let's just excise the parts dealing with the husband and children and see what's left.

*“... She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in delight.
She is like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar.
She rises also while it is still night, and gives ... prescribed tasks to her maidens.
She considers a field and buys it; and from her earnings she plants a vineyard.
She girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong.
She senses that her gain is good; her lamp does not go out at night.*”

*She stretches out her hand to the distaff and her hands grasp the spindle.
 She extends her hand to the poor and she stretches out her hands to the needy.
 She is not afraid of the snow
 She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple....
 She makes linen garments and sells them and supplies belts to the tradesmen.
 Strength and dignity are her clothing and she smiles at the future.
 She opens her mouth in wisdom and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
 She looks well to the ways of her household (even a household of one) and does not eat the bread of idleness....
 Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.
 Acknowledge the product of her hands and let her works bring her praise in the gates” (Pr 31:10-31).*

It seems to me that any of my single sisters ... still have a full plate. In fact, without husband and child responsibilities, every area of activity referenced above would get more of her attention, energy and expertise. No telling what kind of impact she would achieve!

1Timothy 2:9-15

“*I wish it didn't say that.*” But, it does say that. What does it say? Who am I quoting? For starters, though not necessary, I will abandon all New Testament passages dealing with some kind of restraint or prohibition directed at my sisters. They will be relegated to some kind of limited, First Century, cultural situation now defunct (1Co 11:1-16, 1Co 14:34-35, Eph 5:22-24, 1Pe 3:1-7).

But, before abandoning them, I must note that Paul referenced the Creation Account in one of those (1Co 11:7-9 ... hard to write off as a Corinthian culture deal with that info) and in another, Paul invoked “*the Law*” to back his statement (1Co 14:34. That also makes it difficult to surrender this passage to some narrow cultural address since the Law came from God in order to reveal His moral code and expectation for humanity.) And what is especially interesting about Paul's appeal to the Law in 1Corinthians 14:34, is that he was the one who argued strenuously against the Law's “*relevance*” in the Christian's walk. That is the central message of the entire Galatians letter. Elsewhere, he states the Law was “*the ministry of death ... which fades away*” (2Co 3:7,11). For this posture towards the Law, Paul was persecuted and suffered greatly. But, he also told Timothy, “*we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully*” (1Tm 1:8). So, when Paul uses the Law for this prohibition toward his sisters in 1Corinthians 14:34, we have an example of **a lawful use** of the Law... assuming Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit in his writing. If you agree that Paul's writings are God-breathed, where does this leave you? Here's the answer. *The Holy Spirit* brought this up and *He* used the Law for *His* point. That makes it difficult to write off as a cultural situation applying only to the Corinthian brethren. But, as stated earlier, for discussion here, I will abandon all that material and focus on ... 1Timothy 2:9-15.

Thus Saith The Lord

“*Likewise, women are to adorn themselves with proper clothing, with modesty (reverence) and sense, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works as befits women making a claim to godliness. Let a woman quietly receive instruction with all submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman, being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children, if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restraint (a sound mind, sense).*”

Sisters, ... there is a lot here. For starters ...

- * This material is aimed at Christian women.
- * This material is directed at Christian women - some who have the spiritual gift of teaching.
- * This material contains two prohibitions for Christian women concerning men.
- * This material is in a pastoral epistle written to all the existing churches.
- * The argument is based upon the creation order, and roles of the first two humans pre-fall.
- * This argument is based upon the post-fall condition.
- * There is no similar material directed toward men in the Bible: pre-Law, the Law, or post-Law.

If this material is not God-breathed, then do whatever you want. Paul was just a Law-polluted, male chauvinistic bigot. But if it is God-breathed, then it must mean ... something. Is God an oppressor to His daughters? Is He indeed the bigoted, male chauvinist? Is He a femalephobe/womanphobe (more new words) and, as such, wants to hold them back? And why aren't there similar "*disparaging remarks*" made about males anywhere? Jerusalem and Judah were chided for having "*women rule over them*" (Isa 3:12). And other cultures were described as "*becoming like women*" (Isa 19:16, Jer 50:37 and 51:30, Na 3:13). These ... were not compliments. To me, the answer is really very simple. Roles. He creates ... and all His creatures have limits and roles. But roles do not determine value. It is so hard to avoid confusing roles with value. But in God's economy, roles and value are not the same.

Here is one way to illustrate this. God decides how many "*talents*" to grant each person (Mt 25:14-30). Some have five, some two, and some one. If the person with **one** talent functions in a proper role using 100% of that gift, I believe that person will fare better at The Judgment than one who had five talents, but only operated in a partial manner. But, of even greater alarm, if one is in a completely errant role, that part of his/her work will result in 0% return. John warned, "*Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward*" (2Jn 8). This means there is possibility of partial reward ... or no reward ... especially when coupled with "*if any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire*" (1Co 3:15). Even though this last verse is directed at men, in an effort to avoid being viewed as chauvinistic, I will happily include His daughters as subject to these admonitions. Bottom line: anyone operating out of one's role, whether male, female or angel - will find all that activity as part of a negative calculation.

Normally ...

... when 1 Timothy 2:9-15 is read, **none** of the bullet points above are brought forward. The first response? "*But look what it says right before that - about men - in verse 8! 'In every place' they are 'to pray ... lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension'! How many of them are doing that? They are constantly fighting in the church over all kinds of doctrines and practices. Who has split the church into all the denominations and factions? And they always want to control the money!*" Now, once heads start nodding in agreement, Ephesians 5:25 and 5:28-29 are then pounced upon. "*Men are supposed to love their own wives 'just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.' They are 'to love their own wives as their own bodies ... for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as Christ also does the church!'*" At this point, applause begins and all the brutes hang their head in shame, whipped pups ... convicted to the core. And, of course, the one who is usually proclaiming this is ... some professing brother. And how the women love him.

Next comes, "*there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, **there is neither male nor female**; for you are all one in Christ*" (Ga 3:28). "*And if the men won't step up, the*

women must. And besides, men and women are all equal anyway!” Deborah, the prophetess and judge, with Barak in tow, is then studied and becomes a model (Judges chapters 4 and 5). Then the New Testament couple, Prisca (or Priscilla) and Aquila are cited. Of the six times they are mentioned, she got first billing **four** times (Ac 18:18, 26, Ro 16:3 and 2Tm 4:9 versus Ac 18:2 and 1Co 16:19). Furthermore, one of her first billings is the critical encounter with Apollos. He was “*an eloquent man, a learned man ... mighty in the Scriptures ... fervent in spirit ... speaking out boldly in the synagogue. But when Prisca and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately*” (Ac 18:24-26). She is clearly in the fore - teaching this man! So, Paul's instruction to Timothy in this pastoral epistle means ... nothing. It is the statement of an ex-Pharisee still steeped in Jewish tradition.

So, women now stand shoulder to shoulder with men (as our brother above has so clearly demonstrated) and are free to teach and dominate ... the whipped pups. And many of those pups don't mind. They too are free - free to hang back in the shadows and talk about football or whatever, and let the women ... “*lead.*” You know, a careful reading of the fall of Adam and Eve shows Adam doing this very same thing - hanging back. And that was even before he sinned. We will visit this shortly.

I know many of you vehemently object to this characterization. But, this is exactly the teaching in which I found myself when I first became a Christian. So, I can't take credit for writing the last couple of paragraphs. It was just dictation. A Bible study outreach ministry I was attending, called The Greenhouse, was dominated by women teachers with only a few men. And they all taught all that - aggressively. Initially, I didn't really care about a woman's role in Christianity one way or the other. My hands were full trying to get my own house in order. But I did notice, from time to time, some real defensiveness from them on this matter. Then, in my own studies, I stumbled upon 1 Timothy 2:9-15. It was a stunner. When word circulated that I was asking questions about this passage, it is amazing how all the “*love*” that had been directed toward me when I first showed up as a lost sinner – evaporated - to then be replaced by a genuine, and continued, hostility ... even though now I was a saved saint. I will return to this particular scene later. Stick around.

However ...

... I also know there are some very learned Christians who maintain men and women are equal in all ways in the body of Christ - with no roles closed by the Author of the Bible toward His daughters. One was my second year Greek instructor, Dr. Lee Magness. In my entire Christian experience, there is no man for which I have had more respect. And he is the one who said, ...

“I wish it didn't say that.”

This story comes from 23 years ago (or, 1990). I hesitate using Dr. Magness' name, as I have no idea if he still holds the same persuasion and I do not want to misrepresent him. But, at the time of this forthcoming narrative, I took very careful classroom notes. Here is why.

The time between my Beginners Koine Greek instruction and my second year of formal Greek instruction (under Lee Magness) was seven years. The reason for the gap was because the Bible college where I took first year Greek closed on me. That first year Greek was primarily rote memorization of the language basics. But I had already found that it was opening up an entire new treasure chest for my Bible studies. As I began my own study of John (the easiest of the Greek in vocabulary and syntax), by the time I encountered [John 3:16](#) and then [John 3:19](#), I was forever hooked. Even now, every time I open my Koine Greek New Testament, I make new discoveries in the vocabulary and/or syntax. I mean it when I say, “*every time.*” No exaggeration.

Over those seven years between Greek 1 and 2, I undertook several projects. For example, I assembled “*The Running Oratio*” - in English and Koine Greek. I made physical copies of the Greek

passages, and cut and pasted them into a single document - mirroring my English compilation. I wasn't worried about the syntax being messed up in places, I just wanted the words all in the same order as the Running Oration. Anyway, while working with the Greek in my varied projects, I began compiling questions that "*violated the rules*" of my Beginners Greek instruction. I was not *worried* about this because all languages have exceptions to their general rules. But these exceptions did bring questions. So, by the time I entered Dr. Magness' class, I was loaded with them.

His actual classroom material addressed many of my questions. For example, to learn there are four uses of the imperative mood (not just "*command*" as Greek 1 presented) helped explain its presence when it was not a command. It also helped to learn there are five possible uses of the subjective mood (not just hortatory like Greek 1 presented), etc., etc., etc. Not only was Dr Magness' assigned material of high quality, but when I asked him any question on the mechanics of the language, answers just rolled out. To give you an idea of his mastery of the language, he would write on the blackboard some lengthy passage (just like one of us writing in our own language), and then stand back, look at it ... and then start filling in all the accent inflection marks and breathings. It was obvious this was not done for show, but as a matter of precision in his working with this language. Meticulous and precise are the words that come to mind when I think of him. That's all to say ...

Sisters ...

When Dr. Magness passed out the syllabus for our second semester, it included the passages we were going to dissect and analyze - in depth. The selected passages were ... you guessed it ... all the New Testament prohibitions directed at ... you. I do not know if he did this every year, or if he decided to do this because of a guy like me in the class. You see, his wife was a fellow professor at that college, and Dr. Magness held her as an equal in all ways in Christ - at least in any public role. Maybe in everything. A Christian woman could operate in any role she might desire.

As I was looking over the syllabus and saw the passages that were going to be dissected, I blurted out, "*Boy, the sparks are going to start flying!*" He was writing on the board and without looking away, under his breath, remarked, "*They already are.*" With this terse comment, I responded, "*Dr. Magness, I want you to know I am excited about this semester because I want to know how a man of your persuasion, with your conviction, handles these passages. I am really looking forward to this.*" Because he knew I meant what I said, the tension completely evaporated. He knew I wanted his information ... every bit of it. So, he was free to just teach it. One reason I was excited about this is because *I was certain* he would present what the passages *actually did say* in accurate Koine Greek before anything else was said. That is not true of many who profess knowledge of that language. I knew he would be honest with these verses in vocabulary, syntax and context. This would be a new, and welcome, experience when dealing with this subject. I was especially interested in his handling of the Timothy passage as the "*pro-sisters in any and every role,*" advocates of my past had never addressed this passage in any kind of convincing way. I was all ears ... and he did not disappoint.

For the record, here are the passages - in order - which we examined: 1Corinthians 11:1-16, Ephesians 5:21-33, 1Timothy 2:8-15, 1Corinthians 14:34,35 and 1Peter 3:1-7. I am grateful the Lord granted me this experience. If you seek Him, and then adhere to whatever He teaches you, He will take you into good places. After all He did give His life for us via unspeakable agony. And you think He doesn't want to share His things with us? Now, let's begin to zero in on the passage in Timothy - with a few side-steps.

The Dissection

Dr. Magness first pointed out that he believed the 1Timothy passage was speaking about men and women - not husbands and wives. The passage starts by speaking about men's behavior and Paul

then went right into women. The word “*aner*” can mean, “*husband*” but often simply means, “*adult male*.” The same is true for “*guna*.” It can mean, “*wife*” but it just as often simply means, “*woman*.” So, he concluded this is about men and women in general.

“*Let a woman quietly receive instruction with all submissiveness ... to remain quiet.*”

Next, the word, “*hesuchios*” is often translated, “*quiet*.” But he stated the meaning is more about a disposition of tranquility, or orderliness - not a total verbal silence. As I researched this and found Dr. Magness' assertion sound, I looked at 1Corinthians 14:34. The imperative “*to be silent*” may have more to do with orderliness and “*holding one's peace*,” than a prohibition that one cannot utter a word. And even when that passage says women “*are not permitted to speak*” that is probably referring to addressing the assembly in a more formal post. We often say something like, “*I have been asked to speak at such and such an event*.” But if I go to some gathering and do not “*speak*” (in that sense), that does not mean I go there and utter zero words. With such an understanding, the passage in 1Corinthians 14 aligns with the 1Timothy 2 passage in that the prohibition has to do with speaking or teaching in a more formal way in the general church gathering. There are several reasons - say, the four below - why this makes sense.

First, older women are to “*train the young women to cherish their husbands and to cherish their children*” (Ti 2:4). This involves teaching. So, if they cannot utter a word “*in church*” (1Co 14:35), where does this training occur? But, more basic, what is “*in church*” anyway? Jesus said, “*where two or three have gathered together in My Name, there I am in their midst*” (Mt 18:20). If He is there, wouldn't one find himself/herself “*in church*”? Or would this gathering get the little Jesus while a gathering of 1000 gets ... the big One? If you decide two or three gathered in His name, with Him in the midst, is not really a church gathering, then what is the number for one to be found “*in church*”? Is it four, six, a dozen, twenty, forty ...? Please enlighten us.

Second, when one learns the things of God, say, in church, reactions occur inside the recipient. It makes one ... “*greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory*” (1Pe 1:8). The enlightened one will “*eagerly utter, or bubble over with, the memory of (His) abundant goodness and shout joyfully of (His) righteousness*” (Ps 145:7). It is impossible to contain what is a spontaneous reaction to imparted knowledge, understanding, or wisdom from our Creator - whether one is a man, woman, child or angel. Silence, in terms of no uttered word, is just not possible ... and God does not expect that.

Third, and fourth ... Prophetesses (Ac 21:10) and Phoebe a deaconess (Ro 16:1). So they only uttered words when *outside* a church gathering? And again, what was that magic number for a church? Women are to be active in the fellowship. This is not done in sign language ... which actually is, in itself, speech. We will come back to some of this.

“*But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man ...*”

Dr. Magness first pointed out that, “*didaskhein de gunaiki*” - “*to teach by means of a woman*” is an instrumental dative construct. A woman is not to be an “*instrument*” for teaching a man. This was not to be “*epitrepo*” - “*allowed, permitted, commissioned*.” I have no further notes from Dr. Magness about this as he went directly to the next phrase. But here's the question: What man can allow or permit or commission this? One who is more insightful than the Apostle Paul? One more spiritual? I will return to this. When Paul states his reasoning a few verses later, this construct is a stumbling block for those who “*epitrepo*” - allow - otherwise. (See, you are learning Koine Greek).

What Dr. Magness did focus on was the phrase, “*authentain andros*” - “*exercise authority over, rule over, or domineer a man*.” He said this involves the woman acting by her own **authority**. I had heard this before and had found that “*authentain*” is a compound word from “*autos*” - “*of one's*”

self, of one's own motion,” and “*hentes*” - “*a lost noun probably signifying working*” (An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, by W. E. Vine). Dr. Magness pressed the point that “*authetein*” is a woman who self-**appoints** herself, or self-dominates, a man. Based upon this definition of the word, many assert (I am not sure if Dr. Magness also asserted this) that if **others** appoint a woman over a man, or men ... that is fine. The woman has not appointed *herself* so as to domineer.

So, ... what if a tribunal *of other women* appoint a woman to domineer a man - or men? She would not have appointed herself. So, that is fine ... correct? Incidentally, that is exactly what happens all over the place in “*Christian*” hierarchy circles. On the other hand, if you maintain that it must be *men* who would appoint women over other men so that Paul's prohibition is not violated - then these men **allow** what Paul just said was **not allowed** ... and that is not violating Paul's prohibition?

In order to use the word, “*authetein,*” so as to justify women being able “*to teach or exercise authority over men,*” one must impose all kinds of meanings upon that word that the word itself does not support. To be specific, this word is not about **appointing** anyone to anything. It does not introduce the idea that there might be some outside entity **with authority to appoint**. It is only concerned with what a person is actually doing (in this case, a woman). It has nothing to do with **how** a person has gotten to that place. Regardless of any mechanism in which a woman gets to the place of domineering a man/men ... **she** is domineering him/them. This is *her own* activity, as she is acting *in reference to herself*. No one is forcing her to do this - **she** is operating in this role. The word describes her activity. What group has the authority to allow this domineering/teaching activity? Paul doesn't say - because it doesn't exist. And the word, “*authetein*” does not create that group.

Dr. Magness' Primary Take on These Two Prohibitions

He stated that the prohibitions upon God's daughters in this passage centered on cultural problems of *that* day. These he viewed as temporal and no longer applicable in *our* day. At that time, Christian women were not to be flaunting their new found freedoms in Christ by a “*rush into excess*” - whether in attire (thus looking more like the prostitutes of the day) or in public behaviors ... including public discourse/teaching. And concerning public discourse (teaching), he stated women were “*less educated then*” institutionally, so they were “*not able*” to occupy these formal public positions. So, women teaching men or exercising authority over them in the local church would have been culturally inappropriate. While Dr. Magness did not state this next part, I am sure there are some who believe that because women were limited (or denied) educational opportunities at that time, they would not have been able to scholastically engage, and counter, the many errant theologies and philosophies of the day. But now, where such educational backwardness has been rectified, women can competently occupy any post in the church that men can.

Anyone advocating this cultural argument is going to have a very hard time with the very next verse - Paul's reasons (plural) for the prohibitions (plural again). But before the hammer falls, I want to take a moment on this education issue. First, there are many cultures - indeed most - that still hold women in education deficit. So, to become a Christian in those societies would mean the prohibitions are still alive and active today, right? But, even more basic, what does it mean to be more “*or less educated*” from God's perspective - thus meeting, or not meeting, His requirements to hold a post of teaching men and exercising authority over them? Let's talk about ... Priscilla and Apollos.

Actually, I want to address some things about Apollos in a bit. But for now, just know that he was a bold teacher who “*powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ*” (Ac 18:28). Apollos “*was mighty in the Scriptures*” (Ac 18:24). But guess who, after listening to him, “*took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately*” (Ac 18:26)? Priscilla ... and Aquila her husband (but, she had ... first billing, remember? But, regardless of that ...) “*they took him aside and explained*”. The word, “*explained*” is “*ektithemi.*” It is

literally the setting out of something, and in this context it is a clear setting out of information - scriptural information - that this man, though “*mighty in the scriptures*” lacked. Priscilla was definitely involved in correcting Apollos' knowledge and understanding ... yet, she was not teaching this man?

This entire scene was scriptural *instruction* - not just information - maybe much like what Jesus did on the road to Emmaus after rising from the dead (Lk 24:13-35, especially v.27 and 32). So, would Paul have stopped her, commanding her to stand down in Apollos' presence? Was Aquila the real culprit here - by letting her speak? Or did his presence alone make everything okay? (That is another one I have been told). But, if Paul would not stop her, or rebuke Aquila, (and there is no indication he ever did either ... and Paul knew Priscilla - Acts 18:18), then what is prohibited in 1Timothy 2:9-15? Was the lack of a woman's *formal* education the problem (as asserted in the previous paragraphs) - thus, now solved in some of our cultures? Accurate knowledge, and application, of the Word of God is the most valuable *education* in existence - regardless of accompanying “*letters.*” Priscilla possessed *that* education. So, what is the material in Timothy about? What is Paul's reasoning and what is he actually prohibiting? Here we go.

“For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman, being quite deceived, fell into transgression.”

This is loaded. First, Paul bases his entire argument for these prohibitions to his sisters ... on the creation order, *and* the fall. It is here I believe Dr. Magness, while looking at the Greek text on the chalkboard said, “*I wish it didn't say that.*” That is because these prohibitions in this Timothy passage then have *nothing to do* with some particular cultural situation. It is at this critical juncture one must decide if this passage is God-breathed ... or not. Are these just the opinions of an errant, early Jewish convert, or is this material from God ... directed at His daughters? It was here that Dr. Magness did say he did not believe women are “*inherently more gullible than men.*” They may be “*more emotional*” but that “*does not necessarily equate to irrationality.*” Concerning irrationality, I am not sure this passage has anything to do with that. In my mind, irrationality is an act of one who possesses accurate facts, but then chooses another course. That is irrational. On the other hand, one can be extremely rational *and yet be deceived by another who has either withheld pertinent information - or straight out lied to the victim.* Satan does both ... as do his children (Jn 8:44). Gullibility, on the other hand, addresses if one is more easily duped through these devices. It is on this point, the Apostle Paul and Dr. Magness do not agree. Of course, I do not think the disagreement is ... with Paul. Let's look at this more closely.

The creation order is a big deal. The account in Genesis is about a woman's role and why God created a woman in the first place. Originally, there was no woman. I am not at all sure she was created the sixth day because it appears she was created after Adam named all the animals (Gen 1:27-31 with Gen 2:15-25). But regardless of the time-line, she was created after Adam, and not from the ground, but out of him. She was to be a “*help*” to Adam, “*corresponding*” to him - not his head/leader (Gn 2:18). By Paul using this passage in his argument, it is clear this creation order position was not meant to be isolated to her. It extends to ... women. All women. Even those who never marry, the boundaries toward men remain intact. This has nothing to do with value. No other created being can operate in a woman's role. No man can, no child can, no angel can, and no animal could. It is a role that stands alone and is irreplaceable by anyone else ... and it has its own goals, standards and benchmarks. It is not measured by any other role's goals, standards or benchmarks. Let's revisit the instructor/student discussion that I had in my seminary class.

The student has an entirely different role than does the instructor. Students are to listen, get assignments in on time, and are graded accordingly. The instructor prepares a course of study, makes

coherent presentations, and assigns and grades all quizzes, tests and papers. Comparing the two positions is comparing apples and oranges. They are different and are on different tracks - each with their own goals, standards and benchmarks. They are not pitted against one another for “*value*.” Now, within each track, values *can be* assigned for performance. For example, *students* finally receive an A, B, C, D, or F, etc. So, too, *instructors* are assessed in their track ... good or lousy. It is not even possible to rationally measure a student against an instructor's role performance or vice versa. Women will be graded as women and how they performed in their God-assigned track ... as was the virtuous woman. “*Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all*” (Pr 31:29). That's a grade. So also, men will be “*graded*” as men. This entire article is an effort to determine what activities are inside the track for my sisters and what are not - and why ... with the Bible as the guide.

Now to the Fall

In this event, there were actually two primary culprits - Satan and Adam. Eve was the pawn for them both. I did say ... both. Stay with me. But first, why did Satan target Eve in this attack? Adam was right there, as at the end of it we are told, “*she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate*”(Gn 3:6). The reason is probably very simple. Satan goes where he thinks he has the best chance for “*victory*.” He is evil, but that does not mean stupid. Foolish, but that does not mean inept. Here is what I believe happened on that dark day - the day that ushered in all the heartache that has plagued, and continues to plague, our fallen world. All the pain and suffering, all the injustice and violence, all the abuse and tragedy, is traced back to this “*event*” with Adam, Eve and Satan in that garden.

So, ... Why is Eve the Target?

When we are told the woman was “*quite deceived*,” or “*thoroughly deceived*,” the word is an intensive, passive verb, “*ekapatatheisa*.” It is a compound word, “*ek*” plus “*apatao*.” The preposition “*ek*” means motion from within that then proceeds out. Eve was internally confused over God's command before this conversation with Satan even began - and it was drawn out by Satan. In the midst of the Garden of Eden, there were actually *two* trees: “*the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” (Gn 2:9). Here is God's actual command: “*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat from it, you shall surely die'*” (Gn 2:16-17). Eve had not yet been created when this command was given.

While it is possible Adam had misinformed Eve of God's command (thus he also was confused), I do not believe that was the case. Adam knew *exactly* what God had commanded. Satan also knew *exactly* what God had commanded. Satan began his inquiry of Eve saying, “*Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'*” Notice the singular, “*tree*.” He put the focus immediately on one tree in that entire domain. Eve's response? “*From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat from it, or touch it, or you will die*” (Gn 3:1-3). That tree was indeed in the midst of the garden, *but so was the tree of life!* But the tree of life was now blended in with all the other trees. Satan is skillful. Also, concerning God's command about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He never said they could not “*touch it*.” Nothing was said about that one way or the other. I do not think Satan was surprised by Eve's faulty understanding of God's directive. He probably heard her say something that made him at least suspect her understanding was flawed. And *that* is why Eve was the target. The only one in this scene that held an error in knowledge ... was Eve. That made her vulnerable. Error always does that ... including today.

When Satan heard her response to his question, he knew he had her. “*You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,*

knowing good and evil” (Gn 3:4,5). Once she touched the fruit and did not die, I would not be surprised if Satan continued his assault ... and it just wasn't recorded for us. You see, *“touching sin”* - say, when we approach it and are tempted by it, does not carry death. We must *partake* of it - and then we reap death. Satan had *“won”* nothing to this point. She must **eat** of that fruit. *“See, everything is still just fine! God lied to you about dying if you touched it. And He knows you won't die if you eat it. He just wants to keep you down, in an insignificant role ... He is truly an oppressor.”* Satan does this same thing today. He is the accuser - of God, His people and His truth (Rev 12:10).

The First Husband

Adam knew Eve was in error on God's actual prohibition, yet, *in Satan's presence*, he made no attempt to set the record straight - to *help* her. I guess he saw this *“help”* thing as a one-way road. In fact, Adam made no effort to protect Eve from any of Satan's assertions and challenges during this entire episode. Why? Here again, the answer is probably quite simple. **He** wanted to eat of that fruit ... but he did not want to die - assuming he even understood what death was. Whatever it was, he knew it was not something to be desired ... but, that tree sure was. It was *“a delight to the eyes ... and desirable to make one wise”* (Gn 3:6).

By the time of this incident, who knows how long he had been living in this garden paradise. Maybe years (if there was such a thing pre-fall). My guess is that ... that tree, and its fruit, in the very midst of Eden, had become the center of *Adam's* focus. The Tree of Life (also in the midst of the garden) had long sense faded into the rest of the trees. Only the tree of prohibition now occupied center stage. When Satan said, *“in the day you eat from it ... you will be like God”* (Gn 3:5), this may have sealed the deal. Adam let Eve, his help ... become a guinea pig. I guess he decided that is how she could *“help”* him achieve his goals. *“If she dies, I won't eat it. But, if she lives, maybe Satan is on to something. And even if she does die, God will probably make me another woman anyway, because she will have been the one who disobeyed.”* Well, from all *outward* appearances, after eating it, she did not die, and then *“she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate”* (Gn 3:6). This is a disgusting scene on several levels. Adam's sin was manifold and astoundingly evil. I have no idea if he found redemption from God.

Eve - Post Fall ... Some Speculation

After the episode in Eden, there are no recorded conversations between Adam and Eve. So, did they live out the rest of their lives and never talk about this disaster? Let's think about this. For starters, these two had tremendous mental capacity and acuity. One thing that confuses atheistic evolutionists is the massive storage capacities of our brains. Debate rages on why it is so massive as a normal lifespan uses but a fraction of it. *“So why,”* wonders the futile atheist, *“would an organ of such massive overkill ... evolve?”* The answer is really quite simple. God did not originally create man for a measly eighty-year lifespan. Again, not knowing how long Adam and Eve were in the Garden before being cast out, there is no telling how brilliant they had become. And in a pre-fall state, they surely forgot nothing and had instant recall of all the information they had accumulated. And since Eve was made in accordance to Adam, she too was undoubtedly a tremendous intellect.

When a woman is kicked out of the Ritz and assigned to the slums with no prospect of ever getting anywhere near the Ritz again, well, ... I think the curses Adam received from God were not the end of the curses. Yes, Eve had plenty of time to replay the episode in the Garden and plenty of time to figure out everyone's role and motives in this unparalleled disaster. *“Adam, you spineless, @*!#! What did you know about that serpent and when did you know it? And what did you know*

about the consequences of eating from that tree and when did you know it? You #%!*#! What a sorry excuse for a man! You used me as your guinea pig to see what would happen!"* And being found in her new digs of thorns, thistles, pains and want, with no way back to Eden, it would be hard to fault her for being less than a compliant mate once she figured out Adam's role in this unspeakable debacle. Also, as she toiled in her new environment, I would not be surprised if she always had a club close at hand ... if not to use on Adam, or some base son like Cain – at least so as to pound the life out of any snake she ever came across. And after it was dead, she probably kept beating it.

Literal Handling of the Genesis Account of the Fall of Man

When pursuing my Master of Divinity, I had a seminary instructor challenge my literal handling of the Creation Account [and the Fall](#). Of his many remarks on my term paper (in the margins with a red pen, of course), when it came to this point about the Fall, he wrote:

“But, have you noted:

- 1) God had originally said, 'In the day you eat of it you shall surely die.'?*
- 2) They did not die in the day they ate of it.*
- 3) Death is not stipulated in 3:14-19 as a part of the punishment; rather it is assumed that whatever comes from the 'dust' will one day return to 'dust.'”*

Concerning points one and two, dear sir, Adam did die that day ... and so did Eve. The Apostle Paul said of himself, *“when the commandment came (the Law's prohibition about coveting) sin became alive **and I died** ... for **sin**, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me ... **and killed me**”* (Ro 7:9, 11). But, ... Paul was still walking around, right? Additionally, when addressing the Ephesians about their pre-Christian life, he said, *“When you were **dead** in your trespasses and **sins** ...”* (Eph 2:1). This planet is filled with dead people walking around all over the globe. Sin immediately puts the sinner into the place of being **spiritually dead** to God. Not real sick - but dead. Adam and Eve *spiritually* died that day ... and it is this *“gift”* they have passed on to all of us. When they sinned, they placed themselves in a position of needing to be *“born again”* (Jn 3:3). New life. So too, our need.

As to this instructor's third point, no one, and nothing, was consigned to a return to dust until this event in the Garden of Eden. Who *“assumes”* a return to dust is expected when God first made Adam? Only those who *“assume”* long ages and evolutionary theory are true – with death being present when the first living matter spontaneously arose from inorganic elements. If a return to dust was already a common, present reality, it would have been ridiculous for God to include this assertion when telling Adam of the penalties for his rebellion. Physical death is indeed a judgment from God - one of sin's many fruits. *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, **and death through sin**, so death spread to all men because all sinned”* (Ro 5:12).

Incidentally, if you notice in the verse just quoted, even though Eve sinned *first*, God gives the credit ... to Adam. Satan and Adam were the primary culprits who forged our current reality - not Eve.

But let's return to Eve. First, she **did** take the lead here. And Adam **did** permit it. So, how did that work out? But, there is more to consider at this point. She took the lead ... as a sinless woman. Sinless. We must spend a moment here. This observation must not be glossed over.

Eve was *“thoroughly deceived”* by Satan ... *before she ever had a sin nature*. Though confused over God's command, she was still in a state of innocence. No woman since has ever had such an advantage when approached by Satan. This is an extremely important point to consider when seeking to analyze all the dynamics here and then move it forward to the present situation.

Some may balk at my assertion that, *“No woman since has ever had such an advantage when*

approached by Satan” - because Christians are now indwelt by the Holy Spirit. That is indeed true, but it is also true that *“the old man (can I add woman?)”* continues residence in us. (For the record, the word translated, *“man”* - *“anthropos”* - can also be translated, *“person.”* See 1Pet 3:4. An assignment of gender to a Koine Greek noun does not necessarily mean the word is a literal male or female. Examples abound. The nouns for - hour, *“hora,”* - day, *“hemera,”* - truth, *“alatheia,”* - are all feminine - but do not mean, *“female.”*). Our sin nature remains a very active resource for all kinds of trouble. As a Christian, most of the grief I have experienced - or caused - has **not** been due to God's hand of discipline on me, or natural events pulling me back to dust, or some form of Christian persecution. No, ... the bulk of my troubles can be traced directly to my old man dominating the moment. That's why I am of the conviction the major part of the Holy Spirit's interaction with us is a *“seek and destroy”* mission. *“If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God”* (Ro 8:13,14). Led to do what? Put to death the deeds of the flesh. But, more to the point, our old man gives Satan *resources* through which he can design and launch attacks against us. Before the Fall, Eve had no such reservoir Satan could tap. She had no sin nature ... yet.

But her advantage in this confrontation did not end there. Satan is a creature who learns. For example, when God was devising His salvation plan, a plan by which He could pardon sinful beings and yet not compromise His righteousness and justice, we are told these were *“things into which angels long to look”* (1Pe 1:12). This could be translated, *“into things (plural) angels (plural) lusted (epithumeo) to stoop down and look intently into in order to penetrate (parakupto).”* *“Parakupto”* is a verbal noun that expresses the aim of the action of the verb, *“lusted.”* It is a compound word: *“para,”* meaning, *“beside,”* plus *“kupto”* - *“to bend forward, stoop down, penetrate.”* In this case, the reason they were bending forward, stooping down, and seeking to penetrate with lust - is because they longed/lusted to peer into this salvation matter - to penetrate its mysteries *and figure it out*. In this, they **learned** ... more about their Creator. This is a magnificent picture of these angelic beings. The verb I translated, *“lusted”* is *“epithumeo,”* meaning *“to long for, have an earnest desire for; set the heart upon, lust for.”* We usually think of *“lust”* in a negative way, but this instance, all this word's intensity - is directed in a positive manner. But, there is an asterisk to that observation. Satan was (and is) part of that throng ... *lusting to learn*. But his *“lust,”* in desiring to penetrate this matter, was always with the intent of finding some way to thwart his Creator's plan. So he, and his, also lusted here - but in the negative sense.

Part of Satan's learning and growth, of which I am absolutely convinced, has been to become more skilled in how to get sinners to sin - and also how to get Christians to stumble so as to thwart God's agenda for their lives. But, I suspect we are not really all that complex, so ... maybe there is little to learn. We probably provide exercises that are no more than child's play. But, if he can devise some new strategy, some more efficient path toward destruction, I am certain he feels it is worth the trouble as he knows he has but *“a short time”* and is *“full of fury”* (Rv 12:12). He wants to be as *“successful”* in evil as possible. That is the nature of the one who has been *“a liar”* and *“murderer from the beginning”* (Jn 8:44). Eve had many advantages in her interaction with Satan that no woman alive today shares ... **and he thoroughly deceived her**. Today, Satan is a more learned adversary. Accept this warning, my sister. In a moment I want to talk more about Eve ... post-fall. But let's first *“finish”* this passage in Timothy.

“But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children, if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restraint”

... *“will be preserved”* is the future passive of the verb, *“sozo”* which means, *“save, rescue, preserve safe and unharmed.”* As a future **passive**, women *will be acted upon* ... by something. But

before getting to that “*something*,” what will she be saved from? Answer: “*being deceived*.” And who is the one wanting to deceive her - wanting her *unpreserved, unsafe, and harmed*? You already know the answer. Adam **was not** the deceiver from whom Eve needed protection - at least not the primary one. He was a passive oaf lusting for forbidden fruit ... willing to sacrifice her for it. So, women are protected from Satan's deceptions ... how?

“... *through the bearing of children, if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restraint*.” In other words, by operating in *her proper role* and continuing in the ways of God - *that* is how a woman escapes Satan's deceptions, schemes, plots, half-truths and lies.

As stated a moment ago, “*will be preserved*” is a **passive** verb which means the woman **is acted upon** - she is not the one in charge of this preservation from Satan's deceptions. So, what/who is the “*something*” acting upon an obedient woman and preserving her? The “*Who*” would be God, but it may be that God simply empowers obedience and righteousness with an innate power to automatically protect the one who chooses it. So, in this instance, as a woman operates in her God given role in a godly manner, preservation from deception just comes on its own ... in response to her right actions. Wow, now that **really is** “*something*.” But regardless of the mechanics of this protection - whether God's direct action, or His protective hedges, or just an innate power of righteousness that brings discernment - the promise of preservation for women from Satan's deceptive powers is very attainable and lifelong. “*But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ*” (2Co 11:3). Unfortunately, errant basics in theology and church polity (church government), rationalizations, cultural pollutions, and/or personal lusts, are what threaten the Christian woman's eternal fruitfulness.

“But, What About Women Who Never Bear Children?”

Well, is the option to throw all this out ... and then proceed with whatever rules one wishes to adopt? Refer back to the earlier excised version of the Proverbs 31 woman and see if protection from the deceptions of Satan, and ensuing protections from the Creator ... might be found there. Where do you think God might direct one who asks Him this paragraph header?

You know, there have always been those who make up their own rules on how to approach God and how to serve Him. And they honestly believe their good intentions will make God pleased with them. Read about Uzza ... and see how that worked out (1Ch 13:1-14 and 1Ch 15:13-15). Do you think God is different now? If Jesus is Boss of the Church - and He is - what exactly does that mean? Well, let's try this example. If a vote on some issue is 100 million, quadzillion to One ... the One wins. But even this is a flawed example. To insinuate that there might be “*a vote*” on anything in His Kingdom ... is error in itself. Here is a better way to answer the question. If you hold some belief or opinion contrary to His - what is the chance of **your** position becoming law in the Church and prevailing over His? “*If any man thinks himself to be something, being nothing, he deceives himself*” (Ga 6:3). I have somehow always known that when He and I disagree about something, if agreement is to be achieved, someone will have to change. Notice ... the small “*s*.” “*There is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel against the Lord*” (Pr 21:30). None that will prevail, that is.

The Real Adversary

My sisters, you already know who longs to sideline you so as to be out of alignment with God. He targets each of us - constantly working to thwart anything that advances true Kingdom expansion. All Christians are admonished “*to put on the full armor of God*” so we might “*be able to stand against the schemes (methodeias – methods) of the devil*” (Eph 6:11). We are then told “*our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*” (Eph 5:11-12). When

Satan is successful in deceiving a saint - in deceiving you - two major goals are achieved. They are ...

First, you will have incorrectly built on the sole foundation of the church - Jesus Himself - ending with Jesus burning up your "*ministry/service*" as He shows it for what it is: "*wood, hay and stubble*" (1Co 3:10-15). After all, He is the One who created the Church and is its sole Lawgiver. He alone decides what is valid and what is not.

Second, as great a victory as that may be, Satan will have secured an even greater one. He will have *kept you from operating in the role God would have honored* ... with its resultant Kingdom expansion. What a win! Of course, I do not really believe the size of Jesus' Kingdom will be thwarted by anyone's errant ways. If need be, He will raise up rocks that "*will cry out*" (Lk 19:40). He will expand the tents of others (Isa 54:2) and call them to accomplish what might have been your fruit. **You** will be the one who "*shall suffer loss*" (1Co 3:15). Ultimately, Satan will know nothing but frustration, but he wants you sharing in death as much as he can orchestrate.

So, what is actually being prohibited for women in practical terms?

Paul's letter to Timothy was instruction on "*how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God*" (1Tm 3:15). A fair reading of the entire letter makes it clear, "*the household of God*" is more than just one's individual daily lifestyle and witness to the world, but also one's conduct when Christians gather as a group ... a church. In Paul's letter, there are two over-arching topics he addressed concerning the corporate gathering of believers - ***some of the structure*** of the local church and ***some of the teaching*** of the local church. Concerning its structure (polity), he forwarded the qualifications for elders and deacons/deaconesses (notice, "*deaconesses*" ... to be explored a few paragraphs from now), with some of their duties woven into that material. Concerning the teaching of the church, he addressed several subjects throughout this pastoral letter (instructions about widows, attitudes toward riches, etc.). So, this letter was about formal positions ***in*** the church (offices) and formal positions ***of*** the church (some teachings). Paul did not write an exhaustive treatise on either area, but to expand the scope in either topic does not mean there is liberty to violate any of the material in this letter. Stated another way, any additional structure ***in*** the church or teachings ***of*** the church are not to negate any of Paul's material here. There is liberty for careful additions to both, either by a fuller incorporation of other Bible materials or possibly the addition of some practices that do not violate Bible materials, but there is no liberty to annul this material in Timothy.

Without Question ...

... this passage in Timothy is a role prohibition stance issued by the Boss of the Church. And, without question, it is directed toward Christian women. Without question, it must mean ... something. And because the creation order, and subsequent fall of Eve, is presented as the foundation for this role prohibition, this passage cannot be relegated to some cultural situation. So, the real question is what, in practical terms, constitutes role violation(s) in this matter? The prohibitions are: 1) Exercising authority over a man, and 2) teaching a man. I think the first one is clear-cut. The second needs careful analysis. But, let's look at the first one first.

Prohibition 1: Exercising Authority Over a Man – The Elder's Role

For starters, the only authority any Christian has over any other Christian is in respect to confronting sin in his/her life - scripturally errant behaviors - ***or*** scripturally errant, *substantive* teaching. Elders are charged with these duties when formal and definitive determinations (and ensuing actions) are to be made. Anyone can start the process of confrontation of a professing Christian who is perceived to be straying, but the formal disciplinary actions where *authority is exercised* falls to elders. There are no women elders anywhere in the New Testament. Peter admonished fellow elders

not to be “*lording it over the allotments*” (that is a literal rendering). As stated earlier, The primary pattern for confronting such errors is outlined in [Matthew 18:15-17](#). In reference to the morality expectations for a Christian (his/her behavior), a proper definition of the sins listed in 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 is the bedrock. I am not even sure elders should expand the net beyond this behavioral list - for which an unrepentant offender might be expelled from the local church.

I just had a discussion with a man who was on a church staff under a woman pastor. He had been on staff for several years. He was fired under what *later* proved to be false sexual harassment charges by a new staff member. He had not been given due process as required in Matthew 18:15-17 or 1 Timothy 5:19. After discussing several procedural violations in the events, I then brought up the more basic error of having a woman as pastor with authority over him in the church. His response was immediate. “*I have no problem with women being pastors and leaders in the church. She was just over-sensitive to a sex harassment charge because her daughter had just been involved in a different sexual harassment situation.*” Now, let's think about that for a moment. Because he has “*no problem*” ... then there is no problem, right? His sensibilities on this issue are the beginning and end of the matter. Will the Boss of the Church now subjugate Himself to what this man “*has no problem with*”? Do you think his opinion ... or mine or yours ... will prevail with Him? Through the incomprehensible agony of a Roman cross, Jesus birthed the Church. Each one who is “*born again*” (Jn 3:3) is granted entrance and becomes *a subject* ... in His **Kingdom** (Jn 18:33-38). It is not a democracy, republic, or any other competing governing construct. “*There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy*” (Jas 4:12). Jesus is its sole Boss. But, He is the sole Boss of everything in which He is involved - including this entire creation ... and every contrary system and creature in it. This reality will soon be displayed. “*‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow to Me and every tongue will confess ... even he who did not keep his soul alive’*” (Ro 14:11 and Ps 22:29). The truth is this: Jesus' sensibilities alone on every issue are the beginning and end of any matter. What do you think Judgment Day is about? Is that *our* day with *our* opinions prevailing? I wonder if this fellow has ever even thought about asking the Lord, “*Do You have a problem with this?*”

Prohibition 2: Teaching a Man – The Elders Role ... Plus?

Now as to teaching a man, this is another matter entirely and may be a root of much of the confusion on a woman's role in the church. We must work through this carefully. I am not saying that what I will forward here is the end of the matter, but I will say, the forthcoming material cannot be simply dismissed if you are looking to the Bible for guidance on this topic. I do think you are going to find a few surprises here - or at least some matters to investigate further.

Concerning Bible teaching (which is our exclusive interest here), without question elders are to be teachers. One vital qualification for every elder is that they must be “*able to teach*” and “*exhort in sound doctrine,*” as well as be able to “*refute those who contradict*” (1Tm 3:2 and Ti 1:9). As an aside, some churches have “*ruling elders*” who don't, can't, or won't teach. They simply rule. This is error. Such a practice creates a position with decision making power in the heart of the fellowship - with no real way to know what the “*elder*” actually believes. Also, there is no way to know if (or how) such a one is growing - or if errant convictions are taking root in this non-teaching “*ruling elder*” as time is going forward. Such a church polity practice is probably one of the fastest ways to set unspiritual individuals right in the heart of the local church.

Teaching - Generally

If not in trouble with you yet, now may be the time. While you may deem the upcoming material an unnecessary diversion, it actually goes to the heart of our attempt to understand this prohibition for the role of women in the church. We must talk about teaching - Bible teaching.

To begin, there is no greater opportunity afforded any person than to be able to teach others about our Creator. People desperately need accurate information about Him - His nature, His views, His demeanor, His values, His promises, His warnings - His agenda. The Bible is clear that if one is to know God deeper than what can be discerned from creation itself (general revelation), all further detailed information is hidden in God's mystery - Jesus Christ Himself (Col 2:2,3). While His willingness to impart this information (special revelation) is as deep as is He - it can only be accessed on His terms - and those terms are not open for discussion, debate or vote.

So, where is the starting place? Jesus told Nicodemus that no one could enter His Kingdom without first being "*born again*" (Jn 3:3). Those are then "*newborn babes*" (1Pet 2:2). For all practical purposes, a newborn knows nothing. All of us start out - right there. But once *in* Him, we are able to be taught *by* Him - the Teacher (Mt 23:8) and grow. Vast, new fields of information open to His "*sons and daughters*" (2Cor 6:18). So, let's talk about children - for that is what a Christian is - a child of God.

While a responsible parent sets the agenda and parameters of the relationship, *the child's behavior* often determines much of content of that relationship. An unruly child forces the content to be heavily weighted with discipline while the compliant child experiences a wholly different relationship with the parent. But, a rebellious child does more than just reject sound instruction. The rebellious one constructs a life platform laced with his/her own rules - and proceeds in a path of what *seems right*. "*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*" (Pr 16:25). This exact dynamic exists for the Christian and his/her Father. The one who seeks Him and sits at His feet is going to grow differently from one who regularly runs down rabbit trails while plugging his/her ears. Teachability lies at the heart of a Christian's growth.

In order to grow, one must respond positively to what *He* is teaching - and then more will be imparted. But, as to the point for this discussion, here is an amazing truth. The Teacher has decided to delegate this teaching function ... to some of His children! He imparts the spiritual gift of teaching to some (1Cor 12:28, 29) and along with the privilege is warning. In James 3:1, we read, "*Let few among you all be made teachers, my brethren, knowing that, as such, a stricter judgment we will receive.*" What a superlative gift - even though two-edged!

All subsequent teaching then falls into one of two broad categories. It is either: correct or incorrect, right or wrong, accurate or inaccurate, true or false. Even tolerated, weaker teaching by weaker teachers (i.e., 1Cor 8) still ultimately falls into one category or the other.

But, here is a nuanced point about the teaching going forth from His children. While truth is non-variable, what *is* variable is the way Christians are to respond to errant teaching by fellow Christians. For example, in 1Corinthians 8, Paul not only tolerates the weaker brother's errant knowledge (that meat sacrificed to an idol was "*unclean*,"), he decided, if necessary, he would never eat meat again in order to prevent that brother from stumbling. Yet in Galatians 2 (whole chapter), he aggressively rebuked Peter (and others) for errant, hypocritical teaching about the Law - in front of everyone! Had Peter and the others persisted in their false Law keeping/teaching, it would have been interesting to know if Paul would have labeled them "*factionous men*." In Titus, the factionous man, after two warnings was to be rejected from the fellowship - and disputes about the Law are in the factionous man's list of teachings in that passage (Ti 3:9,10). But, for this article, rather than a discussion on various false teachings, I want us to think about the source, or sources, for errant Bible teaching.

So, What is the Genesis of False Teaching?

If one is proclaiming false material, there are three main springs from which it flows - ignorance, corrupt motives or having been deceived. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive. False teaching often feeds from all three streams in varying amounts. But, let's separate them for a

moment. As you already suspect, this will swerve into the heart of prohibition 2 in the Timothy passage.

Ignorance

Ignorance is a multi faceted phenomenon. Sometimes it is innocent - as the one in ignorance having never been exposed to the correct (or updated) information. For example, Apollos, described by the Holy Spirit as a man "*mighty in the scriptures,*" was ignorant of Jesus' work - even after the resurrection had occurred. He was only "*acquainted with the baptism of John*" (Ac 18:25). Such ignorance has nothing to do with one's mental sharpness or even one's willingness to know and traffic in truth. The same can be said of Cornelius (Ac 10 - whole chapter), the Ethiopian eunuch (Ac 8: 26-39), the men on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-53) - and even Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-15, Jn 7:45-53, and Jn 19:38-42). What all these people had in common was ignorance - not stupidity. They lacked accurate information. You can't teach what you don't know. But, one of the greatest things about a "*pure*" ignorance is that when truth is presented, the ignorant one is no longer so. Ignorance immediately evaporates and sound knowledge now resides in that place. And if understanding and deep wisdom does not come immediately with that knowledge, it will - as other information on the topic is aggressively accumulated.

Of course, one who stays in ignorance after being presented true material descends into the realm of *willful* ignorance. This is bad place. At minimum, this adherent has become a conduit of a false teaching in that area. Then, depending on the substance of that false teaching (and maybe also the amount of other false teaching the person disperses), such a one is in danger of being assessed by God as a *false teacher*. Sometimes, we can identify one God has so assessed, versus one who may be guilty of some degree of teaching false things, yet not be categorized by God as a false teacher.

For example, we know that anyone who teaches Jesus is *not* the Master is a false teacher (2Pe 2:1). Similarly, one who declares there are many paths that lead to a right relationship with God is a false teacher (Jn 14:6). On the other hand, one who falsely teaches that God has changed the agricultural tithe of the Bible ([for Jews under the Mosaic Covenant](#)) [into a new cash tithe for Gentiles](#) (to be given to the local church from gross earnings each week for life) - is promoting an extortionist fabrication. Such teachers believe that God has revealed this to them *after* the New Testament's completion. This is some kind of new revelation that sets 1Timothy 5:8 aside (as well as many other passages). The heralds of this new "tithe" teaching proclaim God Himself stands behind it. But, I am not sure this one error, though grave, means God deems the proclaimer of this false teaching - a *false teacher*. It might - as this *is* extortion in the Name of Jesus Christ. My point is that sometimes we do not know if **God has decided** the line has been crossed - and one is deemed by Him as a false teacher.

The most instructive verse about this false teaching/false teacher dynamic is found in 1Corinthians 3:10-15. "*According to the grace of God which was given to me as a wise master builder, I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful **how** he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, each man's work will become evident because it is to be revealed with fire; for The Day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test **the quality** of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon (the foundation) remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved - yet so as through fire.*" Paul identified the sole foundation as "*Jesus Christ*" (verse 11), and he is clearly speaking to fellow Christians. Even those with burned up works are declared as ultimately "*saved*." So, what gets "*burned up*" with the ensuing "*loss*" for the saint? That's easy. All incorrect representations of Him is what burns. That includes actions, reactions, practices ... and teaching/teachings.

You know, there are some things the Bible is extremely clear about. One is that on Judgment Day all error will be exposed and eternally crushed - whether held by saint or sinner. For me, that means - whatever error I am clinging to ... will be stripped from me at that time. It has no future. In light of this, I have decided ... I might as well abandon error now before it abandons me. Why tenaciously cling to some foul bone ... when God is willing to replace it with steak?

But when an innocently ignorant person is exposed to what *is* true - yet decides to join the camp of the willfully ignorant, they also, at that moment of decision, birth ...

Corrupt Motives

Sin really knows how to feed, and replicate itself. It grows like the weed it is. The willfully ignorant have different motives for their tenacious adherence to error. Sometimes, it is a simple desire to keep some church tradition intact. But other times, the motivation is money, or power, or pride - the list goes on. But, whatever spring is feeding one's corrupt motive, all corrupt motives do have a common denominator: there is no desire for learning the truth - or practicing it.

But here is another side point about truth. Anyone who actually acquires truth in any area will automatically yield to, and seek to honor, the Author of that truth. Short of that, the *fullness* of truth is never gained. So a person may learn something that is true, but if he/she misses Who has created it, that person holds a shortness of truth. This applies to anything that is true in any field of knowledge. When Jesus said, "*I am the way, and the truth and the life*" (Jn 14:6) that declaration extends to anything that is true - whether in the physical or metaphysical universe. "*For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things and in Him all things hold together*" (Col 1:16,17). All laws of science, whether in the pre-fall creation, or in our current valley, or in the coming order (or any other order) - have been, are, and will be authored solely by the Creator. Similarly, any metaphysical truth of any age also finds the Creator standing behind that truth. Failure to grasp this will always find any truth-holder coming up short. Of course, the non-truth holder is not even on the field.

The bottom line on this corrupt motives section is that the adherent has been exposed to the truth on an issue, but has chosen, for some base reason, to reject it - and opt for other material. That brings us to the third spring from which one might spout error.

Having Been Deceived

This is where we find Eve. Broadly speaking, the one who has been deceived has been over-powered. Truth was replaced with something false, and it was presented in such a way that the deceived one embraces the error - thus becoming *a victim*. It's really that simple. Concerning *the agent* who brings the deception, well, that is an entirely different matter. This can be very complex - especially if you are seeking to uncover the motives of the deceiver. Concerning this episode with Eve, Satan's motives (the deceiver) were probably numerous. You would need to know all his goals before being able to expose all the motives. Jealousy towards those living in God's favor? Probably. Hatred for God Himself and seeking some way to injure Him? Probably. Attempting to establish himself as a force to be reckoned with - maybe among fellow angels? Could be.

But here is something of even greater interest. *The victim* of deception is not automatically guiltless. Eve secured for herself, and her daughters through the ages, several major penalties. "*I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you*" (Gen 3:16). Discussion of just these penalties provide the material for a huge book. But, I must back off and just make a few observations. First, probably the reason she, as the victim of both Satan *and* Adam, was *not* held guiltless is because she had

injected herself into arenas she had no business being in in the first place. Do you ... hear a warning?

But she incurred more than the three consequences above. When she plants a garden, do “*thorns and thistles*” freely grow? Is there “*sweat*” on **her** brow as she labors? Does she “*return to dust*” (Gen 3:8,9)? Is she exempt from “*the sufferings of this age*” as the creation has been “*subjected to futility*” with its “*slavery to corruption*” (Ro 8:18-22)? And what about the presence of a sin nature? Since that comes through Adam ... maybe she lived out her days without one? Somehow, I don't think she lived sin-free after this event with Satan. But, regardless of Eve's status on this, we do know that every female after her inherited a sin nature that is infested with all kinds of aberrant tendencies and lurking perversities waiting to be fueled. Eve's action, even though the result of a thorough deception by Satan, opened the floodgates to this current reality. She knew, and knows, this far more than I can expose. She eventually had daughters (Gen 5:4) and while they may not have been like Cain, she would have seen a flourishing sin nature in each one. This has been, and continues to be, an unparalleled disaster.

The Difficulty With This Deception Discussion

This is a difficult discussion to win. The problem is that those who are deceived - *do not think they are*. That's the whole point of deception! In the deceived one's mind, if anyone is deceived, it is somebody else – in this instance, you may think ... me! They view themselves as operating in accuracy. The greatest example of this dynamic (and most alarming) is Matthew 7:21-23. “*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven ... Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in **Your** Name, and in **Your** Name cast out demons, and in **Your** Name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me you who practice lawlessness.'*” There are several things each person of the “*many*” have in common. For starters, none of them ever even entertained the thought ... they would be a part of this group. Second, if they were familiar with this passage while in this age, they thought it was talking about *someone else!* Third, each one of them had been deceived into thinking he/she was in good standing with the Lord - with no clue they had been deceived! The profundity of these realities cannot be overstated. Each of the “*many*” will know exactly to Whom they are speaking - convinced they had been in right standing with Him. But, that's not all. Each of the “*many*” will also be presenting his/her “*ministry,*” as credentials of their faithful service to Him, *done in His name*, while in this age! This is a conversation of desperate shock. And what lawlessness they had practiced? Answer: a ministry and life of misrepresenting Him. They had promoted incorrect, errant, false, untrue teaching about Him - His nature, commands, promises, values, priorities, agenda, promises, warnings - false teaching from false teachers. Yet, they believed they had been teachers of truth. How could they have been so deceived?

Whether the deceiving agent was Satan, some other false teacher, or their own self - what does it even matter? But, here is one other important point. If anyone tried to convince them they were deceived while in this life - it fell on deaf ears. And that is the nature of deception. That is the problem. The victim only finds out *after the fact*. In the case of Matthew 7's “*many,*” the realization will come too late to be of benefit. Do whatever you must ... to make sure you are not one of the “*many.*”

As we have seen, this deception trap is one reason behind God's role prohibitions in Timothy for His daughters. “*it was **not** Adam who was deceived, but the woman (even while sinless and with no sin nature) being **thoroughly deceived** fell into transgression.*” This is a warning from the King of kings about Satan's ability in this age *toward His very own daughters!* To view this any other way - is exactly what Satan wants. This is an astoundingly sober matter which I am striving to bring to the attention of my sisters in the Lord. If just *one* sister is preserved from Satan's triumph just *one* time

because of my efforts here, then all this work will be proven worthwhile. *“But women shall be preserved (from being thoroughly deceived)”* ... how? By functioning in her God ordained role(s).

Now I am going to make some general statements about males and females. This has nothing to do with intelligence. Broadly speaking, men are more power hungry and basely corrupt than women. A Hitler is more common than a Jezebel. Men are more territorial - driven by position and station in life. They are often distrustful of another's motives and agenda - **until** one has been proven trustworthy. On the other hand, women are more relational - nurturers - rather than dominators. They are more likely to assume one is trustworthy **until** proven otherwise. This is a compliment to women, as such a posture adds a welcome pleasantness to life in this fallen age. But, as a result, they are more likely to take what is presented to them at face value - thus, easier to deceive. Anyone taking advantage of this natural benevolence - by deceiving such a one - is a foul creature, indeed ... and in deed.

Obviously, this is a very broad stroke. But, look again at the Timothy passage. Adam was not deceived by Satan. Eve was. In Timothy, all women are lumped with Eve as a foundational reason behind the role prohibitions. If I was a Christian sister, I would dissect the activities of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 and seek to enact every part I possibly could - and then see where that would take me. Any competing philosophy ... I would pound back down into the pit from which it arose.

Back to the Role of an Elder: “Refute those who contradict”

We must address a few things here. An elder must be *“able to teach”* (1Ti 3:2), *“exhort in sound doctrine”* and be able *“to refute those who contradict”* (Tit 1:9). An elder is **not** charged to refute someone who contradicts *him* (which many in that position do all the time), but to refute those *who contradict the Bible* - which the elder himself is to know and promote. What a massive difference in these two positions! One reason this teaching and refuting duty falls to elders (and not to the office of deacons/deaconesses - there's a clue of what's ahead), is because in some instances **an errant teacher** is to be marked - and then rejected. *“Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned”* (Ti 3:10,11). The word, *“reject”* is the compound word, *“paraiteomia”* - *“para”* + *“aiteo.”* The preposition, *“para,”* usually means, *“beside,”* and *“aiteo”* means, *“to ask, request, or demand.”* While this word has a circle of potential meanings, context dictates the probable rendering. Paul had just cited a few examples of *“unprofitable and worthless”* teaching in Titus 3:9 (making such a proponent a factious man) and after two unheeded warnings, the one persisting in such teaching error was to be rejected. Such a duty surely falls to elders as guardians of the church. Teachings and behaviors which cross certain lines are to be expelled from the church fellowship as that local group is representing the God of the Bible and they must protect that witness from gross perversions. This is for the internal health of the fellowship as well as its proper external witness. In this instance, a **substantively** erring teacher is to receive an authoritative demand to move on down the road. If the offender is a man, this requires exercising authority over a man - thus falling to elders ... who must themselves be men.

Substantive Error

Quite honestly, errant teaching abounds. It always has and always will. Even the most diligent heralds of the Bible have, at some point, taught some error. Peter and Barnabas did (Gal 2:11-21 esp verse 14). Yet, Peter went on to write two letters of the Bible! The *“unclean meat”* preachers/teachers of 1 Corinthians 8, whom Paul called brothers, were teaching error, yet Paul was ready to give up meat for these weaker brothers. And, unfortunately ... I have taught some error as well. Recently, I re-read some of my early notes about different things - and cringed. I don't even want to tell you ... about *“tithing one's time.”* Good grief. And who knows - maybe the actual first letter to the

Corinthians was not preserved because Paul had some misfires (see 1Cor 5:9). Probably the reason for *two* warnings is so one can have an opportunity to drop some hair-brained teaching. After all, all of us, including elders, are still growing in our knowledge. Sometimes we have parroted the error of others (having trusted an untrustworthy source) or we have brought our own biases to God's word and have come to some errant conclusion on a topic. Therefore, a full vetting of "*the error*" must be allowed with "*the errant one*" free to fully express his/her conviction and why. This must then be carefully, honestly, and properly evaluated **biblically** before being judged as wrong.

But, even if some position is clearly wrong it must also be **substantive error** in order to trigger substantive action. The Bible does call for tolerance on some matters – granting varied views. For example, the "*unclean meat*" proclaimers cited above, were allowed to continue ranting - and may have exited this age *as weaker brothers* - still pounding their pulpits on their way out about that unclean meat. But some errant teaching must be challenged, exposed and nixed. Had Peter and Barnabas persisted in their hypocrisy of Law (which the Titus passage cites as an example of substantive error) ... well, Paul would have found himself in an interesting position. Fortunately, Peter and Barnabas changed their mind about the place of the Law in Christendom (i.e., repented - literally "*after minded*," which means revisited their earlier conclusion and then abandoned it). Great care and wisdom from God are essential in these matters. And at the forefront of each elder's mind must reside the fact he will soon be in the presence of the Chief Shepherd (1Pe 5:4) - to account.

The point of the last few paragraphs is that any disciplinary action because of substantive, errant teaching *or* behavior falls to elders. To "*reject*" one (errant teaching), or to "*remove the wicked man from among yourselves*" (errant behavior - 1 Cor 5:13) requires authority. The Timothy passage is clear that women are not to be in a role of exercising authority over a man. Only an elder can do this. There are no New Testament examples of women operating in, or being appointed to, this role.

So, Does That Mean Elders are the Only Teachers in the Body?

No. I have taught in many settings without being recognized as an elder - and I know the Holy Spirit has given me the gift of teaching. In fact, I was never officially an elder in either church I pastored (for their own church government reasons - not important here). But, I also know that the Holy Spirit also imparts the gift of teaching ... to some of my sisters.

How do I know that?

Well, this same Paul, who was used by God in writing the prohibitions for his sisters in our 1Timothy, passage also stated, "*Older women are to be ... teaching what is good that they may train young women to cherish their husbands to cherish their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, arranged under their own husbands, in order that the word of God may not be dishonored*" (Ti 2:3-5). There is a mountain of material in this list which requires a lot of study and communication. There is no way older women can teach all this effectively, and train young women, without the spiritual gift of teaching being imparted by the Holy Spirit.

If one insists that Paul would not allow this activity to take place in the local church - as women were not to speak - then where were they to do this? Could they only do this outside of "*church*"? But, when **two** or three "*have gathered together*" in His name - Jesus is "*in their midst*." And this is not "*church*"? (Mt 18:20). So, here we are again ... back to the same question of the magic number necessary before a woman is "*in church*" - with accompanying, required, zipped lips.

For me, this poses no dilemma. Whether a gathering of two - or two million - a woman's role never really changes. She is not to be formally teaching or exercising authority over a man in the church - and older women are to be teaching younger women on the matters listed in Titus. This teaching is not to be clandestine, hushed, discouraged or prohibited by any man in any sized gathering

of the saints. But there is more. Keep reading. Discoveries lie ahead.

As far as when a gathering needs assigned roles of elders, deacons, or deaconesses (there it is again), that probably becomes self evident once the nature of the gathering takes on the feel of becoming a regular local gathering of believers. The formality brings order on several fronts - not the least important being a “*prosecution*” platform for the address of sin problems. Everyone/anyone can bring up some perceived sin problem, and elders supply a service so a complaint can be processed with appropriate resolution. And for the record, there is no such thing as a “*parachurch*” entity where all these “*rules of order*” can be set aside – to then be replaced by the whim of man ... or woman. Even the concept of “*parachurch*” does not exist anywhere in the Bible. It is a fabrication of man under the umbrella of the “*Christian*” religion. But it is not Christian or Christianity. But back to my sisters. You see, the honor of teaching God's word extends well beyond older women teaching the younger ones. Women are also to teach ...

Children

Do not err in downplaying this critical matter. Success in this task will be the difference between a continued impactful presence by Christians in a society - or not. Please consider the following material soberly. Success in this task requires great skill, great discernment, and great patience. It will not “*just happen.*” And if it does **not** happen, the loss will be incalculable. Let's start by looking at a person who may have been Paul's most trusted aide.

From infancy, Timothy had “**known** the sacred writings, which are able to give ... the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2Tm 3:15). To know something means you have been **taught**. Paul earlier spoke of the faith of Timothy in this way. “*For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you that first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure ... is in you as well*” (2Tm 1:5). No man is mentioned. So what Christian mother, or grandmother, with or without a believing husband, would **not teach** her child/grandchild the Bible? Boy or girl, it matters not. Women are critically important in the teaching of their own children and if they can teach their own male child, it is no stretch for me to see them teaching other male children. A male infant, or boy, is not a man - and that is where the prohibition lies. So, when does a boy become a man? Heck if I know. Puberty, age 18, some religious rite declaring him so? Your guess is as good as mine. All I can say is this is probably something to be worked out on a case-by-case basis. I never said I have all the answers. Sorry. But now let's turn our attention to ...

Phoebe, the Deaconess

Here is where things get interesting. At first blush, the qualifications for being a deacon in 1Timothy 3:8-13 seem directed solely at men. But, the same Paul stated elsewhere, “*I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant (“diakonon”) of the church which is at Cenchrea*” (Ro 16:1). The word, “*servant*” is the **exact same word** translated, “*deacon*” in 1Timothy 3:8-13 (The feminine gender in Romans 16:1 has no impact on the actual meaning of the word). But, a closer look at the **Timothy** passage finds **women** are addressed right in the middle of discussing a deacon's qualifications. “*Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things*” (1Tm 3:11). The three previous verses are about male deacons and the two verses after this one go back to addressing males. But, when he says “*women likewise ...*” that second word is “*osautos.*” It is a compound word, “*os*” plus “*autos*” - “*as the same*” - and is a connective particle. It is a word used to introduce **comparative** clauses - statements **equal** to each other. In other words, connecting phrases that are talking about **the same thing**. Paul was discussing the qualifications for the office of deacon before and after this statement about women. He did not shift gears midstream to address **wives** of deacons. This connective particle does not even support such an understanding. Paul

was addressing deacons **and deaconesses** in the body - "*Phoebes*" - plural. Phoebe was **a deaconess** in her church. I know I am on rock-solid ground here ... Rock-solid (capital "R").

It is now critical to notice that the role of deacons and deaconesses does not include the formal teaching, refuting, or disciplining posts assigned to an elder. So, there is no infringement when women operate in this role. The word "*diakonos*" has the primary meaning of "*servant*." Deacons and deaconesses are involved in all kinds of need meeting - serving and ministering - primarily toward believers. Acts 6:1-6 is probably a good example of such service (even though that scene happened to all be men). My point? Sisters can be like Phoebe - a deaconess in the fellowship. Of course, if a local fellowship only has deacons, who are actually operating in the role of elders, confusion on this matter will abound. And, as an aside, Phoebe did not go to her church in Cenchrea and operate in this role ... muzzled. That is not even possible. But, there is another New Testament woman we must discuss.

Priscilla

As Christians, we grow "*in knowledge*" (2Pe 3:18. Also, see Eph 4:15 and 1Pe 2:2). This is lifelong - as we continue learning of God's positions on a host of matters. For example, as pointed out earlier, Apollos was a man "*mighty in the Scriptures*" and "*logios*" - learned and eloquent. We are told he had been instructed ("*katacheo*" - "*ringing in the ears*") in the way of the Lord - with the result he was "*fervent in spirit*" (consumed by this material) and spoke "*out boldly in the synagogue*." And he was speaking and teaching "*akribos*" (accurately, precisely, exactly, strictly, circumspectly) "*the things concerning Jesus*" (Ac 18:24-28). These "*things*" ... are multitudinous. While Jesus' work in securing grounds for divine pardon has been, and is, the matter of first importance, there are a lot of other "*things concerning Jesus*" of which we are to be concerned. I am ... and rest assured, Apollos, a man "*mighty in the scriptures*" relished growing in His things - all kinds of things - and then boldly declared them. Jesus has declared positions on money, sex, work, politics, creation, angels, the matters of eternity - the list goes on and on. If you glance at my written works, videos, and songs and then multiply those by a trillion trillions ... then, at best, you will have scratched the surface of "*the things concerning Jesus*." Physically, His concerns span from the "*void*" between subatomic particles through the current universe. But it also spans from eternity past (before our voids) to and through "*the ages to come*" (Eph 2:7) - eternity. Metaphysically, His things stretch from righteousness, justice and wrath through mercy, love and eternal peace - and multitudes of subjects between and beyond. I have't even got a decent start on His "*things*." My point? Apollos, even though the recipient of these Holy Spirit inspired accolades, was **incomplete** in his knowledge "*being acquainted only with the baptism of John*" (Ac 18:25). He had an area ... of ignorance. It was here that Priscilla and Aquila entered the picture. **They** explained "*to him the way of God more accurately*" (Ac 18:26). Enlightening someone by explaining or counseling involves teaching. But, that is not the same as the teaching of a man in a more formal setting or session (which is what I think the Timothy passage is prohibiting). Additionally, if Apollos had rejected her teaching, what would - indeed what could - Priscilla do? She was not an elder - so she did not have the authority to censure, mark, discipline, or expel Apollos from anything. At best, she might report him to some elder (like Paul), and then **he** would be responsible to investigate the matter - followed by appropriate action. Bottom line: God honored Priscilla's teaching/explaining/counseling of Apollos and there was no violation of the prohibitions in Timothy in her session with Apollos. And the Holy Spirit did give her first billing in relation to her husband. It is hard to see that as having no meaning.

So, Sisters, Let's Step Back ...

... and consider the prohibition passage of 1 Timothy 2:12-15 from another perspective. Do you think Phoebe, and Priscilla, and Agabas' four daughters, prophetesses all, thought Paul was just

full of it, and proceeded to ignore him, publicly refute him by their activities, and otherwise dismiss what he prohibited in the letter to Timothy? Furthermore, do you think other women who may not have been gifted like these six (say, Mary or Joanna or Susanna or Dorcas) cheered these six women on as they opposed Paul? Or did all these women understand and agree *with* Paul - knowing that none among their ranks were operating in roles prohibited by God? Since these six women are cast in a positive light in the Bible, I am certain *Paul* cheered *all of them* on. In other words, these women, and any others similarly gifted, were operating directly in God's will and design - and were not involved in refuting Paul, resisting his arguments, or setting aside his commands to the Church. These women agreed with him - and taught the same. And they did so in a manner that did not violate any of God's prohibitions in these matters. Having said this,

The Greenhouse

Earlier I wrote, "... when I first became a Christian ... a Bible study fellowship I attended was dominated by women teachers with only a few men. ... then I read 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in my own studies. When word got around that I was asking questions about it, it is amazing how all the 'love' that had been directed toward me when I first showed up as a lost sinner - evaporated - to then be replaced by a genuine, and continued, hostility ... even though now I was a saved saint." I promised to return to this ... and here we are.

The place where I heard the Gospel was called, "*The Greenhouse*." That place was truly a mixed bag. The undisputed head of that ministry was a woman ... and several other women taught there, too. Every once in a while, the lead lady attempted to forward her husband as the actual head of the work. At the risk of being exceedingly ungracious, when she tried to put him forward ... it was a sad scene. While the Greenhouse did present a lot of actual Bible teaching, there was also a steady dose of the justifications for women teaching men and dominating the same - a few examples which I presented earlier. Since Jesus alone will judge their representation of Him, there is no point of getting too detailed. But if being out of one's role makes one susceptible to Satan's deceptions, to me it is worth the time to reflect on such a work to see where he might have succeeded. So, I have. In this instance, I have suspicions on three areas right off the top. There are probably more.

"We are a teaching ministry - not a pastoral ministry."

This was their bedrock claim ... with this meaning: they dispensed truth through their classes, but if you needed any *personal counseling* from the impact of that teaching, you were to go to the pastor of your local church. This is a total misunderstanding of being one who teaches God's word. It is "*sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit ...*" (Heb 4:12). They taught that a teacher could wield God's sword, slice and dice the hearers, and then, as the hearers lay bleeding on the ground, the teacher could look at him/her, and say, "*Go find your local pastor now. I am free to walk away. I've done my job. Let him do his.*" The Bible knows of no such office, no such position, no such posture, no such role in the body of Christ. Formal teaching and pastoring/shepherding are inextricably intertwined. But, one reason the teachers at The Greenhouse decided they could adopt such a position is because of an even deeper error. They declared themselves a "*parachurch*" ministry. This creates a "*freezone*" that can quickly become a bastion for all kinds of spiritual perversions. I will address this more thoroughly in a moment under the paragraph header, "**So, Why Has This Become So Complicated and Muddled?**"

The Boogie Man on the Move

Another area where I believe Satan was quite successful with his deceptions at the Greenhouse involved these women's belief about Satan's himself - his activities and schemes. They had set up their

Bible studies in “*wheels*” and once, every thirteen weeks, there was a class exclusively on Satan. Everyone always knew a couple of weeks in advance when that class was coming. These warring women would start telling stories about all kinds of spooky things that were happening around them - as they were busily fending off Satan's arrows ... preparing to teach us about him and expose him to us all. This happened like clockwork. If I was Satan, I would have had a heyday with them. I would have had a blast spooking them - sending all kinds of little events their way, letting them think they “*see*” me. Have you ever heard of diversionary bombs? You set off an explosion somewhere and get everyone running there ... and then rob the bank behind the dupes. Or the magician who rivets your attention on his right hand ... while the left accomplishes his undetected art? And that kind of thing is done by mere men. Who do you think might be the master behind such skills? Satan was presented by these women like a spiritual boogie man ... waiting behind a bush to get them. Looking back, this was almost comical. They probably never saw him coming when he actually moved at “*an opportune time*” (Lk 4:13). We'll see. Here's another claim

“But look at all the fruit we are bearing - and how God is using us.”

One fellow, who attended The Greenhouse for years, told me about a private conversation he had with some of the women on this issue. The statement in the header of this paragraph was intended to end the discussion about there being any problem with what they were doing. He responded by saying that anytime the word of God goes forth, *it will bear fruit*. God's word has power regardless of the vessel it goes through. This was wisdom from God through him - to them. I have no idea if they “*heard*” him or not as I had long since moved away. But this reminds me of the passage when Paul said, “*Some ... are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will ... the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice*” (Php 1:15, 17-18). God's word is not affected, or infected, by a dirty vessel when accurately proclaimed. Nor is it ultimately sullied if one is operating out of his/her proper role. I even go further than this. Even if one is *twisting* the scriptures to his/her own destruction (2Pe 3:16), I know God sometimes has the hearer *miss* the twisting and/or misapplication ... and “*hear*” the passage as He intended. The result is a breaking through of the hearer's sin barrier and changing that life. So, the fact that God uses and honors His word *is not proof* that the vessel it has come through will be honored by Him. Do you think those who proclaimed the gospel (which He created by passing through a Roman cross) out of “*envy and strife*” heard, “*Well done, good and faithful slave*” when ushered before Him (Mt 25:21)? Has the King of kings showered them with eternal rewards? And, by the way, do you think these gospel proclaimers believed they were operating with impure motives? The answer to each question is, “*No.*”

Christian Causes

In a class at a Southern Baptist seminary I attended, one instructor consistently invited guest speakers who espoused all manners of non-traditional Baptist teachings. He did this because he himself had been required to sign a statement saying he agreed with the Baptist's Faith and Message document before being awarded his professorship - and later became angry about that. Conservatives in the denomination had been using these signatures as a weapon to root out moderates and liberals who were deemed in violation of their compliance signature. This galled him because no church member anywhere in the entire denomination was required to sign this document - thus no “*witch hunts*” could be launched in the churches with this tool. But, for Bible College or Seminary professors, such a signature (required for employment) was the tool used to hunt down, expose, and then hopefully remove violators of that confessional document. So, he decided to purposely promote

controversy in his classes as a form of rebellion to this required signature practice. One day he brought in two women pastors. They discussed how they had thought about leaving the Southern Baptist Convention knowing they would be welcome in Methodist circles, Episcopalian churches, etc. But then they realized that as long as their local church was happy with them, and that church continued its contributions to the Cooperative, no one outside that local church had any authority over them. No one could touch them. So, they decided to remain Southern Baptists - and fight. And that is why they were in the seminary classroom that day - to fight for women pastors. Pure motives? All this became so ridiculous that at one point the instructor said, *“What if we find out that the author of Hebrews was indeed a woman?”* That was an, *“Aha!”* moment as though he had scored some big point. I feel certain this insight was then used by these ladies, or others like them, to move the cause forward - The Christian Cause. This ... brings me back one last conversation with Dr. Magness, my second year Greek instructor.

I think this occurred after we had finished all the Greek passages about women. We were walking between classes, and I said, *“There are several reasons why I wanted to know how you handled the prohibition passages concerning women. One is that all through history, Christians have rightly confronted some societal norm, fought and sacrificed for change, and were eventually vindicated as being on the right side. For example, the Christians who fought to end slavery were clearly on the right side. The same will be true in the fight for the pre-born. But, on this issue, my concern is that my sisters may spend their life fighting for something that God Himself will not honor. They may even prevail in our culture and secure ‘victory’ at every level ... only to see that all burn up before Him.”* My concern is fighting for a *“Christian Cause”* ... that will be proven as not Christian. Doesn't that mean it will be declared by the Christ as ... anti-Christian? I do not remember any rebuttal response. Maybe, by this time ... he had given up on me.

For the record, there was one woman teacher at The Greenhouse who became convinced by 1Timothy 2:9-15 that she was out of her proper role. This was like a bomb exploding. She made it clear to everyone *why* she was stepping down. I am sure the discussions with her in private ... were interesting. It would be of great interest to know how the rest of her Christian experience proceeded. That was 30 plus years ago - and, who knows, maybe she will read this and contact me. Hi, Joy.

A Spiritual Law

The point of these last paragraphs is not to gain your agreement on every suspicion I have forwarded. The point is to warn you of what I call *“a spiritual law.”* Here it is: God warns. He does not threaten. If one violates His warning, negative consequences will inevitably come. In this instance, if a Christian woman decides to operate in a role of which the Lord Himself does not approve, that one has opened the door, and will be, deceived by Satan in some area - or areas. *“But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children, if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restraint”* (1Tm 2:15). So, do you think a woman can violate the role prohibitions in Timothy ... and still be preserved from Satan's deceptions? Stated another way, if a woman chooses to operate in a role prohibited by the King, it would *be wrong* to then preserve the disobedient one from Satan's deceptions. When Satan demanded to sift Peter *“like wheat”* it was *with cause* he could make such a demand of God. He knew Peter was about to deny Jesus ... and he knew Jesus' warning to those who would deny Him (Lk 22:31-34 and Mt 10:33. Maybe the fact that the Holy Spirit was not yet *indwelling* anyone helped Peter avoid certain doom with this violation. But now, Christian women have no such *“out”* as God's Spirit does now indwell the believer). Satan knows that God's warning to his daughters about improper role functioning, is not some idle threat. Any role violation gives him *“legal”* grounds for access to the King's daughters. Rest assured, Satan holds God to His word - and he will take advantage of this leverage. I bet you have never heard that before (See Mt 4:6, but in this

instance, he would be handling God's word accurately). If you decide to proceed on your journey into prohibited fields expecting God to make an exception for you, this is a sin of presumption. Abandon that. *“If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each **man's** work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth”* (1Pe 1:17). I suspect this applies ... to each **woman's** work too, don't you?

So what all does Satan deceive in the woman? Her teachings, her understandings, her values, her works ... her lifestyle? I don't know. Maybe all these things - maybe some. His assault will surely be as individualized as is the sister - taking into account both her abilities and surroundings. And he will undoubtedly target the areas that will cause the most damage so as to neutralize that sisters affect for true Kingdom expansion. All I know for sure, is that being deceived by Satan is never good. He only promotes, and leads, toward death. Of that, I am certain.

So, Are Christian Men Prohibited From Anything?

All of us live with role restrictions and prohibitions. I already mentioned that no man can possibly fill the role of a woman. That is **her** domain. Some are trying, but all such efforts have no hope of success. But, there are two other restrictions/prohibitions that immediately come to mind.

First, no man is to accept worship. At Lystra, Paul healed a man who had been lame from birth, and when word got around, the people and a local priest of Zeus, were preparing to offer sacrifices to Barnabas and Paul - as gods. When Barnabas and Paul got wind of this, they *“tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out”* to stop this. It was with difficulty they *“restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them”* (Ac 14:8-18). Paul and Barnabas knew **their role** did not include being worshipped. On the other hand, Herod Agrippa I ... missed that memo. One day, when dressed in royal apparel, he was delivering a speech and people kept crying out, *“The voice of a god and not a man!” And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died”* (Ac 12:20-23). What an exit. I don't want to be eaten by worms before I die.

Second, no man is to *“revile angelic majesties. For even Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'”* Any man who thinks he is in a role where he has authority to curse or rebuke Satan, or any of the demons, is deceived. Get away from such, for *“these men revile the things which they do not understand”* (Jude 8-10). Of course, they think they **do** understand but I suspect the day is coming when Satan and company will be granted opportunity *“to sift them like wheat”* (Lk 22:31). And I doubt they will fare as well as the two sons of Sceva. They were Jewish exorcists. *“I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches ...”* (Ac 19:13). Sounds rather mild compared to what I have heard. But one day, they came across an evil spirit who said, *“I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”* Well, *they* thought they were somebody. But, *“the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leapt on them and subdued both of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded”* (Ac 19:15,16). I am not convinced these men were actually reviling those angelic majesties - or that they were even operating in an improper role. But something was amiss. But, I am sure of this: any man who actually is reviling these angelic beings - that man is way out of his role ... and is in dangerous territory. God alone is the One who can circumvent these being's activities. No man fills that role.

Additionally, each individual Christian man is prohibited from all kinds of roles. Either the gifts and abilities are not right for some role, or one's timing may be off. But none of these restrictions equate to one's value. This applies to men, women, children and angels and any other order(s) of morally accountable beings God has ever created or will ever create.

So, Why Has This Become So Complicated and Muddled?

Self-will and cultural pollutions are some of the biggest culprits. But another big reason has to do with local church structure itself. For example, as mentioned earlier, if the local body only has deacons (no elders - so the deacons are actually the elders of the church), how do you rightly prohibit another “*Phoebe*” from being a deaconess in that local church - thus operating as an elder? I do not want to get into a big deal here as I have written on many of these topics elsewhere. But with the adoption of an errant clergy/lay system (accompanied with ordinations, paid careers, etc.), or an errant authority power by those officials in the local body, or a fabricated “*ministry versus secular work*” theology for Christians, then it easily follows that the role of women becomes confused.

But there is one other major false teaching that has added to this confusion. It is the heretical “*parachurch*” teaching. I alluded to this “*free zone*” earlier. Because it is deemed, “*beside the church*” - then the material *of* local church governance does not apply - including the material in Timothy about the role of women. All church governance material can be abandoned and replaced ... by whatever one wants to do. So, instead of elders, one can go with a Board of Directors - with none of the elder's qualifications being imposed on them. Women can also operate in any role as well - as this work *is* ministry, but, ... *not* the church. Surely, you see the ridiculousness of this last assertion. Christians *are* the Church and when they gather, for whatever purpose, all the “*order*” of church governance applies. There are “*varieties of gifts ... variety of ministries ... and a variety of effects*” (1Cor 12:4,5) but none of those are free from the Boss' rules of engagement.

In simple terms, here is how this works out. If the ministry is some targeted effort, say a drug rehab, or children's home, or political pac, etc., there is freedom to set policy, goals, and parameters of the work, but there is no freedom to violate any New Testament church governance procedures. A Board of Directors can be established that is comprised of elders and deacons and deaconesses, but their functions in that outreach ministry cannot violate the roles of an elder, deacon or deaconess – whatever he/she happens to be. Other issues cannot be ignored either. For example, the process for labeling and dealing with “*sin in the camp*” must be fully honored as well. Each person in the ministry must be given all the protections each saint has been granted by The Boss when accused of wrongdoing. A full vetting, with protections and opportunities for any needed repentance, is commanded by The King. No man-made label of “*parachurch ministry*” will make this Boss stand down. I started to say; “*Violate these things at your own risk.*” But “*risk*” carries the concept that the risk-taker one has at least some chance at avoiding negative repercussions for the chosen act. But, in this instance, there is zero percentage chance in winning, so these actions have moved from a category of, “*risk*” to a category of, “*certain failure.*”

I could go on and on, but my point is that anything of which the Boss of the Church disapproves ... has no hope or surviving His Day. The fool erects plastic in His Church. That is indeed “*toil for fire*” (Hab 2:13).

So, Men ...

If Paul would not allow, permit or commission (“*epitrepo*”) a woman to teach a man - what man can? What man should? Should any man? In what culture could Paul find himself, and reverse his position? Will there ever be a country, or a culture, or a century where Adam and Eve, and the creation order and fall ... does not apply? You already know the answers. Based upon the reasons for the prohibitions, Paul would never permit a woman in these roles anywhere on the globe - yesterday, today or tomorrow. The question then becomes, “*Was Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit?*”

Well, let's think this through. If you know what this passage says (and that it cannot be dismissed as prohibitions addressing some local cultural problem), then you can only abandon the injunctions on a couple of grounds. Either you assert Paul *was not* inspired by God (at least in this

passage), or that *he was* inspired by God, but there has now been further revelation from God that negates this passage. So, you, or somebody, has been the recipient of some progressive revelation resulting in “*new Bible material*” - and you are opting for that. It's similar to the New Covenant replacing the Old – same principle, right? Some consider this bold. Others, foolish. What do you say? Don't bother telling me. No one answers to me

So, What is the Bottom Line?

In the final analysis, I believe this issue is pretty simple. Paul did not permit a sister to teach or exercise authority over a man. He based this on the creation order, the fall scenario, and the continued power of Satan in this age. Three things that cannot be dismissed as some cultural oddity. The only role in the local church that has both of these powers innately present - is the role of elder. Since Timothy is a pastoral letter (filled with instructions about the structure and teachings of the local church), these prohibitions should be viewed in that light - a prohibition of operating in the position of an elder. And as stated over and over, such a role prohibition has nothing to do with one's value from God's viewpoint. So, to my sisters, I say, there are massive safe and fertile fields awaiting a lifetime of your most aggressive fervency. And Paul is writing in reference to the church - not some business or secular government position, etc. Get involved in anything (or everything) in which the virtuous woman was engaged - and you will *always* do well. Please read that sentence again, and go back and look at her list of activities. Then tell me ... your life will feel short-changed.

Why This Article and Why Now?

I can't really say why I have waited so long before writing this article. It really is important enough that it should have been somewhere near the top of the list. I guess I have been preoccupied attacking [the evolution hoax](#), [the abortion massacre](#), and [the “tithe” extortion](#) ... things like that. But I knew I did want to address this issue at some point, so in preparation, I started a casual review of the Bible materials on women. As I was doing this, I thought of Thomas Paine and his prologues to, “*Age of Reason, Part I and II.*”

Thomas Paine was very instrumental in the Revolutionary War that birthed the USA. He was a controversial firebrand – but also brave, aggressive, and could write very motivational patriotic pieces. But he was no fan of the Bible. He wrote, “*Age of Reason, Part I*” just before being arrested in France (he had gone to participate in a revolution there). He wanted to pen his thoughts about the Bible (and religion) - certain he was going to die in prison, which he almost did. When he wrote, “*Part I*” he had no Bible at his disposal, so he was relying on his memory. It was a scathing rejection of what he considered the Bible a despicable piece of prose. To his surprise, he did not die in that dungeon. So, shortly after his release, he wrote, “*Age of Reason, Part II.*” In its preface he said he wanted to re-read the Bible as he felt he may have been a bit harsh and rash with his criticisms in “*Part I.*” Now, with Bible in hand, he found it to be “*much worse*” than what he had remembered. So, now he was convinced he had previously been ... *far too gracious* as the Bible was much more repulsive than he had remembered. So, “*Part II*” tells you what he really thought.

My point? When I re-read these New Testament prohibitions directed at my sisters, the material was much more aggressive than I had remembered. Quite honestly, I was taken aback at God's material toward His own daughters. And when reviewing all the varied arguments attempting to tone down or negate this material for today's setting, those arguments rang even more hollow than my original memories of them.

So, if the Lord approves of my efforts here, and if He uses it *once* in **one** sister's life to keep her from wandering down a path of “*wood, hay and stubble*” (1Co 3:12), then I will be happy. You see, He will allow me to be part of the eternal fruit she will then produce. And the truth is - one bite of

her eternal, Kingdom-expanding fruit will secure greater wealth for me than all the combined treasure this age can muster. Adam had his eye on the wrong fruit. It didn't look rotten, but it was. You really should think on this. As Christians, we have been given unequalled opportunities at genuine wealth. While that is not what motivates us (the desire to honor Jesus Christ in all we say and do is what animates us), yet He wants us to know that accurate representation of His person, values and agenda ... He will reward from His treasures. And He has real treasures, where "*moth and rust*" cannot destroy and "*thieves cannot break in and steal*" (Mt 6:20).

Conclusion

If a woman is out of her role as determined by Jesus Christ Himself, how is that going to work out? It doesn't matter what I think - or what you think. All that matters is what He thinks. And isn't that the major reason for the Bible - so we can learn what He thinks? If you choose to handle these prohibition passages toward Christian women differently than what I have presented in this work, that is your choice to make. None of this is between you and I. In fact, if you choose to target me - that is the wrong target. Focus on His word and come to right decisions. I do not expect, or even want, you to blindly accept what I have presented. All of us are to "*examine everything carefully and adhere to that which is good*" (1Th 5:21). I have no desire to unrighteously censure any of my sisters. Instead of commendation from the King, that would end in rebuke and loss. So, study and correct this record if you can. Refute it biblically ... or yield. Not to me - but, to Him. That is Christianity.

Also, sisters, know that if what I have presented here is, in the main, correct, and yet you choose another path, do you think you have a better chance at out-whiting Satan ... than did Eve, who had no sin nature? Your old sin nature still is a treasure chest full of tools that Satan can use toward you. When he attacked Eve, she had no such treasure chest that Satan could tap. Yet, he devastated her.

You know, as a Christian, I have made a lot of errors along the way. There are many things for which, when I stand before my Savior, my head will hang. But, this article, being part of my life's work ... I do not believe ... will be one of those things.

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