

# Daughters of Abraham



***A DEEPER LOOK AT THE ROLE OF  
WOMEN IN MINISTRY AND THE  
CHURCH***



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## **Daughters of Abraham!**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Lessons</b>	<b>My Name Is Woman</b>	05
	<b>Introduction</b>	07
01	<b>The First Couple</b>	09
02	<b>Ideal Help</b>	15
03	<b>Mutual Submission</b>	21
04	<b>Women Learn In Silence</b>	28
05	<b>The Lord's Anointed</b>	36
06	<b>Before or After?</b>	43
07	<b>Women In Authority</b>	49
08	<b>Women In The Primitive Church</b>	56
09	<b>Jesus, Women And The Culture</b>	64
10	<b>Husband of One Wife (Part 1)</b>	72
11	<b>Husband of One Wife (Part 2)</b>	78
12	<b>Women And the Spiritual Gifts</b>	84
	<b>Notes</b>	90

**MY NAME IS WOMAN**  
**Poem written by Jessica Willings**

Woman, a word I never knew the meaning of.  
They said it meant to cook, to clean, but never mentioned love.

Woman, a sound that filled my heart with dread,  
For it meant an empty face whose thoughts were always left unsaid.

Woman, a creature left to rust upon a shelf  
And taken down to dust, but only when they needed help.

Woman, the word sends fire through my veins,  
A burning heat which screams through stitched up lips til nothing  
else remains.

Woman, the sound of weeping in the night,  
A silent stream of brokenness and shattered, fractured light.

Woman, a creature they never could have known.  
Did they not see the spark inside, which threatened to explode?

I am not a made up doll for you to look upon.  
I'm not this skin, these curves, or a barren, vacant mind.

I am more than eyes and breasts, more than gentleness.  
I'm more than your wants, your needs, the feel of my caress.

I am light and dark and all that's in between,  
A goddess born of might, of strength, and victory.

Woman, my name, one you will not soon forget;  
Without me you'd be nothing, and no one would exist.

Woman, a name that's spoken many ways.  
It strives to break the chains of bigotry and oppression it creates.

Woman, the name of every face  
Together we are justice, truth, regardless of our race.

Woman, I stand and shout it to the sky,  
For now I know it's who I am,  
No more filters, no more lies.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Poem written by Jessica Willings, used with her permission; taken from  
<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/my-name-is-woman>

## INTRODUCTION

During this quarter we will be studying some of the most controversial texts in the Bible regarding the role of women in the church and ministry.

For centuries, for the most part, the major religions of the world have marginalized women and kept them completely silent when it comes to the issue of serving in leadership capacities within the religious world, especially in the church.

This booklet is not intended to be an exhaustive study, but a comprehensive one, where we will see how many scholars have misinterpreted the biblical texts to adjust their own ideas and keep women in a situation of servile submission that does not resemble the God to whom we serve

For example, the situation of women in the Roman world was deplorable.

- ✓ There was constant marketing of women; they were sold and bought as if they were slaves.
- ✓ The vast majority of marriages were financial arrangements between families.
- ✓ The general opinion was that men owned women.
- ✓ Women were not allowed to go to schools to learn to read and write. In other words, women were used to:
  - Being sexual objects.

- Being housewives
- or Slaves.

The apostle introduces a radical principle to the Christians of Ephesus and to us: "*Submit yourselves to one another in the fear of God*" (Ephesians 5:21). He knows very well that with that statement, he is breaking with the tacit culture of the moment. This statement in the context of marriage, for example, was very bold, but Paul does not care about anything, other than presenting the truth of the gospel: "*In Christ, there is no longer male or female*"; we are all the same.

It is my desire and prayer that we humble ourselves and accept what the Word of God is telling us and that we become more careful when looking at the biblical text.

## THE FIRST COUPLE

*"Male and female he created them, and he blessed them, and called their name Adam, on the day they were created"* (Gen. 5: 2)

### The Supremacy of Adam?

Although Adam was created first, this argument should not be used to tarnish the work of God in the role of women:

1. The fact of having been created first is not sufficient reason to think in a hierarchy.
2. Six times after creating something on earth, the Bible declares: *"God saw that it was good"* (Gen. 1: 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). The 7th occasion was after having created BOTH, which God said was *"very good"* (v.31). This statement made without distinction of gender implies several things:
  - a. God lets us know that humanity is incomplete without the presence of one or the other (male or female).
  - b. God does not make a gender distinction to make the statement: *"very good"*.
  - c. When the Bible tells us that God created man *"in his image and according to his likeness"* (v.27a), and that also *"male and female he created them"* (v.27b), implies that God was not thinking of any kind of human hierarchy.
3. When Gen. 1:27 says that God created *"man,"* the Hebrew word is *"Adam,"* which actually means *"human."* For this reason, Gen. 5:1-2 clarifies the following: *"This is the book of*



*the generations of Adam, on the day that God created man [humanity] in the likeness of God did. Male and female he created them; and he blessed them, and CALLED THEIR NAMES ADAM, on the day they were created."*

- a. According to this text, when God made mankind, he made them both and called them both, ADAM.
- b. This means that God was not discriminating in any way the role of one over the other.

### **The Name Change**

Others argue that Adam is superior because he was given the task of naming all the animals. The problem is that using this argument in relation to women, is effectively and subtly equating women with animals. But let's look at the text more carefully.

1. The name Adam gave to his female counterpart was "*woman*," because she was taken from the man (Gen. 2:23).
2. The name "*Eve*" (living) appears after sin, and it is Adam who changes the name of "*woman*" or "*female*" to "*Eve*" (Gen. 3:20).
3. The change of names in the Bible implies an acceptance of the change of character (Gen. 32:28) or the change of roles (Dan.1:6-7; Mark 3:16).
4. In this case, it is Adam who establishes the roles after the entrance of sin. This change of roles was probably due to the curse that God placed on the woman: "... *and your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you*" (Gen 3:16).

Notice here, that any type of hierarchy was probably established AFTER SIN, and not before.

5. Paul understood it when he said: "*And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, committed transgression. However, she will be saved by giving birth to children, if she perseveres in faith, charity and holiness in all sobriety*" (1Tim.2: 14-15).
6. Therefore, to allude that man was created first, and therefore, is above the woman, is unequivocally to deny the biblical account. The supposed hierarchy occurs as a result of sin.

### **Head of the Woman / Head of the Church**

Shortly before ascending to heaven, Jesus said: "*All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth*" (Matthew 28:18). Even more, in Dan. 7:13, the "*son of man*" received the "*kingdom, dominion and glory.*" This statement of Jesus implies that as a human being, Jesus received complete authority over the human race and this occurred by virtue of his absolute submission to the will of God. For this reason, Eph. 1:19-23 says the following:

*"And what is the great grandeur of his power for us who believe, for the operation of the power of his strength, which worked in Christ, raising him from the dead, and placing him at his right hand in heaven, above all principality, and power, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the age to come: and he subdued all things under his feet, and gave him as HEAD above all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of Him who inflates all things in all."*

The context in Ephesians, focuses on the power and greatness of God and Jesus Christ over everything created: HEAVEN and EARTH. In Col. 1:15-19 we find the following statement:

*"The [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation. By Him all things were created, those that are in heaven, and those that are on earth, visible and invisible, are thrones, dominions, powers: everything was created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and all things in Him subsist. And He is the HEAD of the body, the church: The chief, the Firstborn from the dead, so that in all He has the pre-eminence. "*

**So far, this is what we found:**

1. Jesus was given total dominion of the universe based on his sacrifice on the cross; that includes, being the Head of the church. Therefore, He has absolute preeminence.
2. The church is NOT limited to a small group of believers on earth, because the text tells us that it includes the heavens and the earth, the visible and the invisible, thrones, dominions and powers that we do not see nor do we have access to them.
3. When Christ is spoken of as "*Head*", it means that He has absolute and indisputable powers. The interesting thing about both texts is that the concept "*Head*" applied to Christ is intimately linked to his resurrection from the dead. In this sense, it means that his lordship (as a human) is based on his power over death and sin.
4. Then, the parable of the lost sheep makes more sense, where the Shepherd leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the fold and

goes out looking for the one that was lost. The planet earth is the lost sheep, and the ninety-nine are those worlds that Christ left to come here to fight against sin and overcome death.

## **Conclusion**

To invoke the supremacy of man over woman has no place in the Genesis account, and a careful mapping of the texts involved does not allow us to conclude that men had or have any supremacy over women.

## Relevant Questions

1. When did God say that what He created was "*very good*"?
2. When God created the couple, did He make them equal or placed the man above the woman?
3. Why is the argument that Adam named the woman invalid?
4. When was the human hierarchy possibly established?
5. Based on what was Jesus given the total dominion of the universe?
6. Read Ephesians 1:19-23 and check out who is receiving absolute power as the "*head*" of the church.
7. The concept "*head of the church*" is linked to what?

## IDEAL HELP?

*"And the Lord God said: It is not good for a man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him ... but for Adam there was found no helper suitable for him"* (Gen. 2:18, 20).

### Background

Some husbands take Genesis 2:18 out of context because they sincerely believe, that their wives are their slaves or helpers. Is it true that the woman is the subaltern<sup>2</sup> assistant of the husband?

The word "*help*", 'EZER is used 21 times in the Old Testament. Twice it is used in the context of the first woman. Three times it is used by people who help (or do not help) in situations where life is threatened (Isa 30:5; Dan. 11:34). On 16 occasions it is used in reference to God as an Assistant.

Without exception, these biblical texts are talking about a type of vital and powerful help. However, when 'EZER is applied to the first woman, its meaning is usually diminished by some interpreters to fit the traditional and cultural views of the roles of women as subservient to men.

Exodus 18:4 say's that Moses named one of his sons Eliezer, which in Hebrew means "*My God is my helper*" (Eli = "*my God*"; "*ezer = "helper* "). This verse continues to explain why Moses named his son Eliezer: "*Because God had POWERFULLY delivered Moses from Pharaoh's sword!*"

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<sup>2</sup> Someone under the authority of another

'EZER describes aspects of God's character: He is our Strength, our Savior, our Protector and our Help! And 'EZER was the word choice of the Holy Spirit to describe the first woman. Eve was someone who would provide a valuable and vital force to Adam.

The expression ('EZER KENEGDO') that appears in Genesis 2:18 and that translates as "*suitable helper*", has been the reason for different interpretations.

1. St. Augustine suggested that Eve would be a suitable helper in giving birth to children.
2. Delitzsch suggests that this help would consist in cultivating and maintaining the garden.
3. The Hebrew word ('EZER) means "*helper*". It is the word that is translated as "*help*" in Genesis 2:18. The Hebrew word ('EZER) is translated as "*succor*" in Psalm 121:1 and designates the help or assistance that comes from Jehovah. This word, like its verbal root ('AZAR) implies divine assistance.
4. 'EZER KENEGDO,' a suitable helper for him', is used in reference to the first woman without any restrictive qualifications or without prescribed limitations or carefully designed cultural restrictions.
5. In other words, it is not specified anywhere in Genesis 2 how the first woman should express and apply her help to her husband (Gen. 1:28).

- a. According to Strong, the word (NEGED), which translates as "*suitable*" in our bibles, means "*specifically a counterpart or fellow militia person of the same rank.*"
  - b. The Hebrew rabbis Abraham Ben Isaiah and Benjamin Sharfman affirm the following about the expression ('EZER KENEGDO): "*If he is worthy, she will be a help, if he is not worthy, she will be against him, to contend*".
6. The expression ('EZER KENEGDO') that appears in Genesis 2:18, which translates as "*help*," really implies indispensable, corresponding or mutual help.
7. Nowhere does it mean that Eve would be a mere helper that Adam would use whenever he wanted, but an essential help at all times. Someone of the same rank and of the same level. Together they would form a team.
8. Because no one ever hated his own flesh: "*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh*" (Gen. 2:24).<sup>3</sup>

### **Where is the problem?**

1. The expression "*suitable help*" does not imply inferiority nor that Eve was created as a simple helper to assist her husband cultivate the garden and give birth to children. Eve

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<sup>3</sup> Article originally written by Rafael Montesinos. Used with the permission of the author. Adapted and edited especially for this book.



was his other self, his equal, and his companion. Together they would be the “lords” of the earth. They would be one flesh (Gen. 2:24); that is, they would work in perfect unity (John 17: 21-23).

2. The whole purpose of the account of Eve's creation in Genesis 2:21-24 is to emphasize the unity and reciprocity of man and woman; to interpret it in a different way is to lose the point and distort its meaning and purpose.

3. The first woman was "*taken out*" of the first human being (Genesis 2:23b). When Adam looked at his new partner, he exclaimed that she was "*flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones.*" This is a profound expression of similarity and equality. Here there is no hierarchy.

4. But to emphasize the point further, Genesis 2:24 says that when a husband and wife unite in marriage, they become "*one flesh,*" a point Jesus also highlighted (Matthew 19:4-5; 10:6-7).

5. God's ideal in creation was that Adam and Eve would be completely equal and ruled the earth together (and not one another -Gen 1: 26-28).

6. Satan's distortion has been for human beings to govern one another, especially man to woman.

7. Equality is also the ideal of God in the New Creation.

8. Suitable help implies being the same as the other; someone who surrounds, helps, protects, assists and supports. This

expression does not imply inferiority or a secondary position within the sphere of man and woman.

9. Much less implies that the man should treat the woman as if she were his slave.

10. Ideal help means teamwork, that is, perfect unity.

### **Three tips for couples**

- ✓ Treat both with respect and love.
- ✓ They work in perfect harmony.
- ✓ Make household decisions together.

### **What should we remember?**

1. When you go to church, remember that the sisters are not second-class Christians.
2. Remember gentlemen that they can do much with the brothers for the advancement of the cause of God.
3. Remember that: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither man nor woman, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal 3:28).

## Relevant Questions

1. What does “*suitable help*” means biblically?
2. Where did some get the concept of hierarchy that man is above the woman?
3. What is the distortion of marriage that the devil has even managed to convince many Christians?
4. What does the word 'EZER mean?
5. Why do you think the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to use the word 'EZER (helper)?
6. When talking about the meaning of the name "*Eliezer*", what explanation does the Bible give?
7. When gentlemen go to church or are doing something else, what should they always remember?

## MUTUAL SUBMISSION

***"Submit yourselves to one another in the fear of God"*** (Eph 5:21).

### **Submit to each other**

In Ephesians 5:21, we find the following statement: *"Submit yourselves to one another in the fear of God."* This expression opens the floodgates for a series of statements by the apostle that we should look at more carefully.

1. *"Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord"* (v.22). The statement is unequivocal. However, this emphatic declaration must be seen through the two pillars that Paul established:
  - a. Submission is mutual (v.21).
  - b. The woman must be subjected to the husband in the same proportion as she is subjected to God, that is why the expression *"as to the Lord"* (v.22).
1. *"For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church: and He is their Savior"* (v.23). Based on this verse many assume that:
  - a. The woman has to obey the man as a daughter obeys her father.
  - b. Man was made superior to the woman.
  - c. The woman should not make decisions on her own.
  - d. God established a hierarchy where the male is above the woman.

- e. Women should not and cannot be in positions of leadership above men, especially in the church.
2. However, in this text we see several details that we must ponder.
  - a. The husband is the head of the home, the woman is not.
  - b. The comparison of the husband is with Christ.
  - c. This comparison has a qualifier: SAVIOUR.
3. The concept of a husband-Savior, is the same used for those masters who bought certain slaves to give them freedom. For this reason, the submission of the church to Christ is voluntary. Christ does not force anyone to submit to Him.
  - a. The implication of this voluntary submission of the church to Christ is that the woman should submit voluntarily to her husband, as long as he fulfills the qualifier that corresponds to Christ (Savior).
  - b. That is, not because a paper says they are married the woman must submit. The submission of the woman to the husband is in direct comparison to whom the husband is representing with his qualifier of "*Savior*".
4. In other words, if a husband is abusive, as such, he stopped representing Christ; then the woman DOES NOT HAVE TO SUBMIT, even if they are still married.
5. Therefore, the correspondence of the husband's behavior is with Christ, and not with a marriage certificate.

To have a clear understanding of the text, we must first see what the words meant to them in their time.

1. The first word to verify is "*submit*". I do not know why those who rank the man over the woman conclude that the woman is the one who must submit to the husband. But that contradicts the previous text that speaks of mutual subjection (Eph 5:21).
2. The word "*submit*" (in context) does not have to do with submission, but with UNITY. Something that now seems obvious, but at that time it was not.
3. Then comes the expression "*head*", from the Greek KEPHALE.
  - a. The first thing the anti-women movement supposes is that there is a hierarchy. If Paul had wanted to express hierarchy he would have used other words that imply command (MELOUZA, for example), but not KEPHALE.
  - b. According to the context KEPHALE is linked to the work of Christ. Christ sacrificed himself for the church, and He sanctifies it with his action.
  - c. Christ does not impose nor commands arbitrarily, Christ loves unconditionally.
  - d. Head in this verse has nothing to do with hierarchy or command, but with sacrifice and surrender; something

absolutely revolutionary for such culturally perverse men.

4. "*Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ, likewise, wives should be subject to their husbands in everything*" (v.24). We already explained that such submission is voluntary, has a qualifier, the act of saving.
5. "*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*" (v.25). Here we see two very important qualifiers:
  - a. "*Loved [agapao] the church*". This love is a divine love, and cannot be produced by humans, unless God implants it in the heart through his Spirit.
  - b. "*He gave himself [PARADIDOMI] for her.*" This verb also means to "*deliver,*" and it is used consistently in the Bible and in extra-biblical literature to speak of people who put aside their authority, their hierarchy and their rights to defend themselves in order to win friends, disciples and followers. That's exactly what Jesus did: he emptied himself of his power and his majesty to win the world for God.
6. For this reason, if the husband does not love his wife with divine love (agapao), he is NOT representing Christ. The wife has no obligation to submit to Him.

7. If the husband is not willing to set aside his macho pride and his vehement desire to feel and act superior to the woman, he is not representing Christ, and as such, is a total fiasco.
8. Verses 26-27 are self-explanatory: "*To sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word. To present to himself a glorious church, without spots or wrinkles or anything else, immaculate and without spots*" (v.27).
  - a. In this verse, the apostle lets us know the clear intentions of Christ with his church: that the church corresponds back in a worthy manner to Jesus. This means that the husband who does not work for the sanctification of his wife does not deserve her submission.
  - b. It also implies that Christ concentrates himself on the act of "*washing*" and "*cleansing*" his church, never in the act of condemning, denigrating or eroding the value of the church as many husbands do with their wives.
9. "*Therefore, husbands love your wives as your own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself*" (v.28).
  - a. Here we are given a very interesting order: to love our wives in the same proportion as we love ourselves.
  - b. This means that the abusive husband would not be able to abuse himself, right? The following verse explains:



*"For no one ever hated his own flesh, but he sustains it and gives it away, as does Christ to the church."*

### **Implications**

It is interesting to note that Christ was willing to give his life for the church and He did so. The direct connection is that if the husband is not willing to give his life for his wife, mistreats her and beats her up or if he abuses her, she has no ecclesiastical or biblical responsibility to submit to him.

1. Paul admits that this is a great "*mystery*", but he is talking figuratively about "*Christ and the church*" (v.32).
2. What does this mean? That the hierarchy of Christ over the church is not based on his authority as Creator, but on his capacity as our SAVIOR.
3. The hierarchy of Christ is a reward that the Father gave to Jesus, not only for his complete submission to Him, but for his initiative and tangible reality of giving his body, his life, his blood for us.

### **Conclusion**

The concept of HEAD of the church is not really a position, but a PRIZE granted by a SACRIFICE made. Our relationship is NOT with a marriage certificate, but with the tangible reality of God's love shown on the cross through the example of Christ.

## Relevant Questions

1. How should the husband love his wife?
2. What significance does Ephesians 5:21 have for you?
3. To whom is the husband compared?
4. To whom is the wife compared?
5. What does "*submit*" mean?
6. Does Christ, as Head of the church, demand obedience?
7. If the husband demands obedience, why is he misrepresenting Christ?

## **WOMEN LEARN IN SILENCE**

*"For I do not allow a woman to teach, nor to take authority over a man, but to be silent" (1 Timothy 2:12).*

### **Background**

We all know that the Bible was written (as far as we know) mostly by men. Women were not allowed to go to school to learn to read and write. Therefore, it was practically impossible to ask them to write something, when in fact they did not know how to do it.

The great majority of the ancient civilizations, looked at the woman with scorn or with a sense of being an object. The woman was simply the property of man.

The Torah is the only document of that time that seems to give women a little more openness and function within society (Matt. 19:3-10). But the process has not been easy.

Unfortunately, many believe that biblical texts that seem to speak against women should be taken literally (our memory verse, for example). But is this a healthy way to interpret the Scriptures? Let's see some examples and then we will analyze if we have been consistent with the biblical text.

### **The argument that women should learn in silence**

The detractors of women in ministerial or ecclesiastical functions love to use texts such as the passage quoted above, alluding that only men have such a right.

1. In Acts 21:8-9, the biblical writer lets us know something fascinating: That Philip was an evangelist and that his four (4) daughters "*prophesied*". The questions that arise are the following:
  - a. If a woman could not teach, especially in the church, how could the daughters of Philip prophesy without opening their mouths?
  - b. Why is the Holy Spirit interested in letting us know that the prophetic gift was not relegated to men?
  - c. What does this teach us about spiritual gifts? (We will study this topic later in details).
  - d. Obviously in the early church, God spoke and taught his people through the four daughters of Philip.
2. The Greek word used for "*silence*" (HESYCHIA), in 1 Timothy 2, does not refer only to verbal silence. In reality it is a verb used to refer to someone who is "*calm*," "*slow*," "*measured*" and "*without causing disturbances*."
3. It is clear from the text that the church was going through a serious problem, where some women were dominating and interrupting the teaching process (possibly influenced by the false teachers).
4. Paul essentially rebuked them by telling them that they should be calm, stop interrupting and reverently get involved in the teaching process.

5. We find a very similar situation in the local church of Corinth (1 Cor. 14). On three occasions Paul tells the people to be "*silent*" (verses 28, 30 and 34).
6. However, note that the first two times (verses 28, 30), Paul admonishes that the "*men*" (males) are those who needed to be in silence.
7. And it's not until v.34 where he admonishes women to do the same.
8. What was the problem of the Corinthian church? It was the disorder they had during the time of teaching, which resulted in confusion in the process of learning the doctrine/s.
9. It is as if one of us here wants to monopolize the conversation, promoting a confrontational and aggressive argumentative environment and not one of dialogue, where others cannot learn because a "brother" or "sister" spends it the time ARGUING with the person who is facilitating the class.
  - a. For these people who cannot remain calm and measured, the apostle admonishes them and commands them to be "silent" (be they men or women).
  - b. The process of discipleship in the church should *not be disturbed by a few who do not understand.*

- c. If you have difficulties understanding, or rather, accepting what is taught, talk with the Pastor. But do not create a unnecessary cumbersome situation in the church that can disturb the learning process of others. That's what this is about.

### **A microscopic look at the text**

It is often said that a woman must "*learn in silence*" (1 Tim. 2:11), since she was "*deceived*" and "*seduced*" (v.14). Let's see the text with more details:

1. "*The woman learns in silence, with all subjection*" (v.11). This imperative mandate to "*learn*" (MANTHANO) was often used pejoratively. But the reality of the matter is that it was very common in schools or "*lyceums*" for men to "*learn in silence.*" The students did not speak, unless the Teacher indicated it. The disciple's job was to digest all the instructions that his Prefect (Teacher) gave him.
2. One of the reasons why Socrates caused a great revolution in Greece was precisely because of his use of Mayeutica (dialectical exercise that reaches an alleged truth through the use of closed questions –yes or no questions). Socrates distanced himself from the traditional teaching form "*learning in silence*" by asking his disciples to reply back to him. His Mayeutica method became very popular, and soon enough, the students of Socrates were more advantaged than the philosophy students of other schools.

- a. Ignoring this aspect of ancient education has caused many, including commentators and scholars, to use this text to denigrate women.
3. "*For I do not allow a woman to teach, nor to take authority over a man, but to be silent*" (v.12). Here Paul is more explicit:
- a. In a culture, where women were not allowed to attend the Lyceums (teaching centers), it is obvious that the woman was disqualified to "*teach*", because she lacked knowledge.
4. Now, we know that the verb used here means "*to calm down.*" This verb is used in different ways in the Bible, for example:
- a. It is used in Luc. 14:4 to avoid responding or making admissions of facts.
  - b. It appears also in Luc. 23:56 in relation to the women who observed the Sabbath "*rest*", obviously in silence.
  - c. It also appears in Acts 11:18 and 21:14, where it is clearly used with the intention of listening to the speaker.
5. The use of this verb in context indicates that some women in Ephesus were causing turmoil and disorder in the midst of the congregation. This means that this silence is of a conciliatory nature as expressed in Acts 11:18, where the people "*kept silence and glorified God*", because they were eagerly LISTENING.

- a. In other words, the silence of which Paul speaks here, has to do with keeping calmness so as not to generate strife and controversy; since he also exemplifies it in 1 Tim. 2:8 when he says: "*I want, then, that men pray everywhere, raising holy hands, without anger or strife.*"
6. Obviously the apostle establishes guidelines for orderly learning. The phrase "*to be silent*" (v.12), in no way means that the mouth was not opened to teach or participate, but rather, to avoid contention and foolish discussions and arguments.
7. Apparently, these women had fallen under the mesmerizing power of the false teachers and were, obviously, creating strife and disturbances during the church service (2 Tim 3:6).
  - a. Paul wanted to avoid these long, empty arguments, where obviously these women repeated like parrots what they heard from the false teachers without having studied the matter. That is why the mandate to "*learn in silence*", which means, to listen attentively.
8. "*Because Adam was formed first, then Eve*" (v.13). Paul recognizes that Adam had certain rights because he was formed "*first*." But he realizes that this argument alone is NOT enough, and for that reason he adds the phrase in the following verse:



- a. *"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being seduced, became involved in transgression"* (v.14). We know that this is the continuation of the argument by the conjunction *"and"* (KAI), which is of a summative nature.
9. What Paul says here is that the woman, having been *"deceived"* (APATAO), fell into *"transgression"* (PARABASIS) or rather *"violation of the law"* given to both. As such, the woman who has not been *"taught"* in the school or at home had no parameters to teach others. But this principle applies not only to women, but also to everyone.
10. But, if we take this argument to its ultimate consequences, as those who advocate for not allowing women to exercise their spiritual gifts in the church do, they should conclude that:
11. Women SHOULD NOT teach men, period.
12. Because the woman was *"deceived"*, the woman is disqualified to be a teacher of men or of anybody.
13. This text does not discriminate on whether to teach the gospel, teach a biology class or just teach, even at home.

## Relevant Questions

1. Who were the only ones allowed to go to schools in ancient times?
2. Who revolutionized the educational system in ancient Greece?
3. 1 Tim. 2:14 placed the blame on Adam, because he himself was NOT deceived. That means that he sinned voluntarily. What does this mean for the woman who was actually "*tricked*"?
4. What does it mean to "*keep silent*" in the context of biblical teaching?
5. The lesson presents several examples of how silence is described in the Bible. Mention at least one example of the several mentioned here and explain what it means for you to "*keep quiet*" in the church.
6. Why is it important not to get upset or unsettled during the time of teaching or preaching in the church?
7. What should the brother or sister do who cannot understand or accept what has been taught, based on Paul's advice?

## THE LORD'S ANOINTED

*"Do not touch my anointed ones or harm my prophets"*  
(Psa. 105:15).

### The Lord's anointed

The expression "*The Lord's anointed*" has been misused over the years to make it say that the "*pastors*" and "*ministers*" are the only "*anointed ones of the Lord.*" But, let's look at the text more carefully.

1. There are countless words in the Hebrew to refer to "*anointed.*" For example:
  - a. "Mashach", (Ex. 29:2); "Cuwk" (Ezekiel 16:9); "Yitshar" (Zech 4:14), these three words have similar meaning: "*to pour liquid on something or someone to consecrate it for a holy use.*"
  - b. However, "Mashiyach" (Ps 2:2); "Mimshach" (Ezek 28:14); "Mashach" (Isaiah 61:1), are words used to refer to when someone has been anointed with "*power*" and "*authority*".
2. In the New Testament (NT), the term "*anointed*" appears 12 times and five different words are used to refer to "*anointed*".
  - a. ALEIPHO = the act of anointing with oil (Mark 6:13) or perfume (John 12: 3).
  - b. EPICHRIO = the act of anointing someone with a substance (John 9: 6, 11).

- c. EGCHRIO = The act of smearing something (Revelation 3:18).
  - d. CHRIO = the act of anointing with power (Luke 4:18). The latter is only used to refer to Christ, and only once in the whole Bible it is used to refer to us (men and women believers in Christ - 2 Cor 1:21).
  - e. CHRISMA = The act of anointing someone with knowledge (1 John: 2:27).
3. In addition, in ancient times, utensils, houses, stones, etc., were anointed. But we will concentrate on the anointing of the people. Only three types of people were anointed in the Old Testament (OT):
- a. The king.
  - b. The priest.
  - c. The prophet.
4. In none of the three cases does it refer to pastors in the OT. Now let us take a look at the New Testament (NT) data.
- a. There is no text, NOT ONE, that indicates men or women being ordained to the ministry.
  - b. The verb "*anoint*" appears 35 times in the Bible, five of them in the NT.
  - c. The term "*anointed*" (as a subject) appears 98 times in the Bible, 12 times in the NT.

- d. The word "*anointed*" (as a verb) appears 1 time in the Bible (Gen. 31:13).
  - e. The term "*anoints*" appears 1 time in the Bible (Ps 23:5).
  - f. The term "*anointing*" appears 28 times in the Bible, and only 1 time in the NT (1 John 2:27).
5. In none of the cases of the 163 occasions in which the word appears in its different forms ever speaks of having anointed a pastor.
6. Why then is "*anointed*" equated with Pastor or ministry? The answer to this question is based on the analogy made with the Levitical priesthood, where the Levite males were chosen by God to minister to the people. However, equating the priesthood with the pastorate is **IRRESPONSIBLE** for the following reasons:
- a. The Bible does not make such a comparison anywhere in relation to pastoral ministry. The comparison is made with all the people of God, which was something that already existed in the OT (Ex 19:6) as a "*kingdom of priests*" (including men, women and children).
7. We have all been called to exercise the ministry of "*reconciliation*" (2 Cor 5:19); and we have all been entrusted with "*the word of reconciliation*" (v. 19b).

8. The priest was the mediator between God and men. I find it hard to believe that some people make this analogy by ignoring the priest's main role: to mediate for men before God. The Bible specifically tells us that we have only one Mediator, Christ (1 Tim 2:5).
  - a. Jesus is Mediator of a "*better covenant*" (Heb.8: 6b), and with "*better promises*" (v.6c); with a "*better testament*" (Heb 7:22); with a "*better sacrifice*" (Heb 9:23); "*better substance*" (Heb 10:34); a "*better country*" (Heb 11:16); with a "*better resurrection*" (Heb 11:35); with "*better things for us*" (Heb 11:40), and with a "*better blood*" (Hebrews 12:40).
9. If there is a pastor who meets these characteristics, then he is at the level of Christ. If so, we can no longer call ourselves Christians, but vicars of God on earth.
10. In addition, in ancient times, a male became a priest through inheritance from father to son (Ex. 40:13-15). Pastors who can say that their parents are pastors or anyone who came to the ministry because their parents were pastors, are an extremely small number.
11. Priests could not buy land or have earthly possessions (Num. 18:20-21). Today's pastors buy and sell houses, land and have countless possessions.

12. The priests offered sacrifices (Ex. 29:28). Pastors today only offer a "*rational*" sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2), but it is NOT limited to the ministry.
13. The priests were assigned in offices for specific functions within the sanctuary (Luke 1:5). The pastors all exercise the same function: minister the flock.
14. Therefore, the comparison does not fit in any way in which it is presented. For we have all been called to the holy priesthood from the OT.
  - a. For the argument of the "priesthood" = "pastorate" to be valid, all pastors must be Jews by blood and from the tribe of Levi.
15. The Bible is a very consistent book. Nowhere is there talk of non-Jewish priests officiating to the Hebrew people; although they do appear officiating to certain individuals such as Melchizedek to Abraham (Gen. 14), Reuel to Moses (Ex. 2:16-18), etc, but they never officiated to the people.
16. The priesthood was transferred to Christ (Hebrews 5:5-6) and to all the believers (Rev. 1:6). In the OT it was for everyone, under the command of Levi (Ex 19:6), but only the Levites could complete the divine requirements.
17. In the NT, the priesthood has been changed to the "*Order of Melchizedek*" (Hebrews 6:20), where nothing of the ancient Levitical system remains standing, except the act

of mediating before God on behalf of men, the latter falling exclusively on Jesus (Heb 12:24).

18. Timothy is exhorted to keep the "*gift*" given to him by "*prophecy*" by the "*laying on of hands for the ministry*" (1 Tim 4:14), which may be a reference to his leadership as "*Elder*" leader.
19. The same idea is repeated by saying "*to revive the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of hands*" (2 Tim. 1:6).
  - a. However, I cannot find anywhere in the Bible that "*laying on hands*" means, "*anointing*".
20. For this reason, I must conclude that when people make tremendous noise on the matter of ordination to the ministry (whether male or female), it seems to me that magical powers are attributed to the act.
21. I do not find pastors in the Bible being "*ordained*" to the ministry. For this reason, I find the discussions about ORDINATION meaningless.



### **Relevant Questions**

1. How many times do we see pastors being anointed in the Bible?
2. How many times does the verb "*anoint*" appear in its different forms in the Bible?
3. Who is the only Mediator between God and men?
4. Mention at least three (3) reasons why the priesthood cannot be compared to ministry.
5. Explain in your own words why "*laying on hands*" does not mean, "*anointing*."
6. According to this lesson, to who was the priesthood transferred?
7. Is there a case in the Bible where a pastor was ordained to the ministry?

## "BEFORE OR AFTER?"

*"But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ"*  
(1 Cor 11: 3).

### **Introduction**

The proponents that man is superior in authority to women, derive their arguments from the idea that at the beginning, (a) Adam was designated as the co-regent with God on earth and, (b) when God created Adam He made them male and female, defining roles or functions. This argument is partially based on the idea that, (c) in the Trinity (Deity), God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are ontologically equal, but unequal in function.

### **The Argument of the Co-regency**

This idea, although it is true, does not cover the totality of the truth for several reasons, let's see:

1. When God created mankind he made them "*male and female*" (Gen. 1:27).
2. When God gave his blessing, he "*blessed*" them both (v.28a).
3. When God commands them to "*bear fruit, multiply and fill the earth,*" He gave the order to both (v.28b).
4. When God commanded them to "*subdue and rule over*" the earth, that is to say, to DOMINATE it, He gave authority to both of them (v.28c).

## The Gender Argument

The second argument used by the anti-women movement to affirm that the man is superior to the woman, is their understanding that God made Adam a male. However, let's see the implications of this statement.

1. Accepting the pre-fall primacy under the pretext that men and women are equal before God, but have different functions has several problems, let's see:

- a. Gender (male or female) has nothing to do with functions, but with the essence of what one is.
- b. Being feminine or masculine are not human functions, but a matter of identity.
- c. Trying to make this differentiation at the gender level to affirm that the functions are different, therefore man has primacy over the woman does not fit the biblical reality nor the biological or ontological reality of being a human.
- d. To say that men are ontologically equal to women, but functionally unequal, is a clearly biblical contradiction. Why? Because the Bible does not make such a distinction of gender and functions when it comes to men and women. Both are ontologically and functionally equal, for the biblical text teaches the following: "*There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no slave or free; there is neither male nor female; for*

*you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). The biblical text also states as follows: "Then Peter, opening his mouth, said: I truly understand that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34).*

### **The Argument of Inequality of Functions in the Trinity**

The third argument is more complicated and more complex than the first two, because it introduces an element (the Trinity) that can be volatile, if it is not carefully analyzed. The defenders of this idea invoke 1 Cor. 11:3, where it says that "*God is the head of Christ.*" But let's analyze in detail the implications:

1. In affirming that these functions exist within the Trinity, we immediately ask ourselves, are these functions eternal roles? Has Christ always been the "*Son of God*"?
  - a. I am not against the idea of functions within the Trinity, but I am very clear about this, that these functions are not eternal, never have been nor will they be. Rom. 1:1-4 states explicitly, that God issued a decree making Jesus the "*Son of God.*"
  - b. This in itself indicates that if the function of Christ as "*Son of God*" was eternal (as the anti-women movement claims), then there was no need for a decree on God's part.
2. Yes, in 1 Cor. 11:3 "*God is the head of Christ*", we ask: Is this situation temporary or eternal? In other words, has God

always been the head of Christ? If it is, how can Christ then be equal to God?

- a. Now, if this condition that establishes 1 Cor. 11:3 is temporary, that is, the product of the incarnation of Christ, then this argument cannot be used and applied to the primacy of men over women based on different roles or functions.
  - b. We clearly studied in a previous lesson, that the hierarchy of man over woman was a result of sin and is obviously a temporary matter.
3. In other words, there is no such thing as "*eternal subordination*".
4. If the Son has been eternally subordinated to the Father, then Christ is not God, because it is something that He has always been. But what we see in the Bible is the following:
- a. Christ IS God (John 1:1).
  - b. God became flesh in Christ (v.18).
  - c. Christ, BEING the same as God, decided to become a man (Phil 2:4-6).
5. Finally, is this temporal subordination 1 Cor. 11:3 something arbitrary imposed by the Father or is it a voluntary subordination that Christ took upon himself?
- a. Obviously it is not arbitrary, because Jesus himself says: "*For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life to take it again*" (John 10:17).

## **Conclusion**

We see then that using the argument of the exclusive co-regency of Adam with God as having primacy over the woman is invalid, because God gave them both the orders to govern and subdue the earth.

Also, to use the argument of gender to say that men have primacy over women is not valid, because it does not have to do with functions, but with identity.

To affirm that the functions of the members of the Trinity are eternal in nature is to contradict the biblical text, since it teaches that these functions are temporary and have nothing to do with the subordination of women under the supremacy of men.

## Relevant Questions

1. Mention two biblical reasons why Adam was not the only co-ruler with God.
2. To whom did God give the command to "*subdue the earth*?" (Gen. 1:28) What does that mean to you?
3. Are there functions within the Trinity?
4. Are these temporary or eternal functions?
5. When did the headship of man over the woman begin? Before or after sin? (Gen. 3:16)
6. Did God force Jesus to die for human beings? Use the Bible to answer.
7. Explain in your words why it is a contradiction to say that man is "*ontologically*" equal to woman, but "*functionally*" unequal.

## WOMEN IN AUTHORITY

*“...I do not allow women to teach nor to exercise dominion over men...”* (1 Tim. 2:11-14)

### Background

The anti-women movement in the church argues that the role of women must be subordinate to men, and of course, they often have difficulty explaining some texts when we take their arguments to the ultimate consequences.

We also learned that in the Bible there is not even one case of someone who has been ordained to the ministry (male or female).

We also learned that "*keeping silent*" in the Bible, means to be non-disruptive, especially when the church is in the process of discipleship.

In the same way, we also saw that God gave to both (Adam and Eve), the authority to govern the earth. We learned that being the "*head*" is not a position given to man simply because he is the husband, rather this is a position acquired through sacrifice.

Therefore, in this lesson we will see the implications of interpreting texts in the way that the anti-women movement writers do, and the serious problems that exist if we follow their interpretative methodology in relation to the role of women in the church.

### How is a Believer Woman Saved?



*"However, she will be saved in giving birth to children, if she continues in faith, charity and holiness in all sobriety" (v.15).*

1. Many commentators literalize the previous verses (vv.11-14), but when they arrive at this one, they adopt a different position; they take an allegorical point of view. Consider the following questions:
  - a. Did Paul want to say that only women who can have children could be saved?
  - b. What about those that are barren?
  - c. Did not Christ die for them, too?
  - d. And what about those who give their lives for the cause of God in the mission field, but could never have children?
  - e. In the end, will they be lost because they could not have children?
2. Taking this argument to its ultimate consequences can be dangerous. Therefore, what we must remember here is the following:
  - a. Salvation was given freely to all who believe in Jesus. There is no other qualifier that can improve or displace this one.
  - b. If a woman can be saved only by giving birth to children, then we really have a sexist God, which the Bible denies outright.

- c. If we take this text literally, even giving birth to children would not be enough to save women, because she must also "*continue*" (MENO) in "*faith, charity, holiness and sobriety*" (self-control).
  - d. Therefore, salvation for women is no longer by "*grace through faith,*" but by "*having children,*" having "*faith, charity, holiness, and sobriety.*"
  - e. According to the interpretation of the anti-women movement, the woman is the only being that can be saved without the need of Jesus Christ.
3. Therefore, 1st Timothy is a letter that can divide the churches very easily, because there we find a series of stipulations, that if they are not seen in the larger context of the whole Word of God, the neophytes distort to keep the masses in the dark.

### **The Gender Argument Applied Only to Women**

1. In the Decalogue we find the following statement: "*You shall not covet your neighbor's wife*" (Exodus 20:17).
  1. Nowhere have I read of any scholar concluding that this command applies only to men.
  2. This commandment is for everyone, even if the language has a generic masculine tone.
  3. Obviously, the commandment also applies to women so they should not covet other women's husbands.
2. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus established several parameters. One of them was adultery, when he said: "*But I tell*

*you that anyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).*

3. No one has dared to say that these words apply exclusively to men. Why? Because the main point of the teaching is not gender, but lust.
4. We find a very curious statement in the Bible, although it is true: "*The holy men of God spoke by being inspired by the Holy Spirit*" (2 Peter 1:21).
  1. We know that there were prophetesses like Deborah, Hulda, etc. Did they speak through the Holy Spirit? Of course. There are no doubts about this.
  2. Did Peter mean to say that God only speaks to men? Of course not. And it is here at this point that we, as students of the Bible, must make an effort to be fair and balanced in the treatment of biblical texts.
4. In other words, if we applied the same methodology of interpretation to the examples mentioned above that the proponents of the anti-women movement propose, texts such as 1 Timothy 3, we would be in serious theological problems. Let's see:
  - a. While the man is forbidden to "*covet his neighbor's wife,*" the woman would have an open license to do so.
  - c. While Jesus invites men not to commit adultery in the heart, women would have complete freedom to do it in their hearts.

- d. While men may be the only ones to exercise the prophetic ministry, women would be exempted from this function.
6. This type of interpretation and approach to the Bible is not only deficient, but also deplorable, because it brings division to God's word making him look very capricious.
  7. An inevitable conclusion that emerges from a better understanding of 1 Timothy 3, is that the topic that is being addressed in the chapter is NOT gender, but character.
    - a. The text is not saying: "Timothy make sure that only men occupy the ministerial role".
    - b. In fact, what he is emphasizing is: "Those [male or female] who occupy this role must be morally blameless."
    - c. To ignore the obvious is the sin of naivety. It is to make the text say what it does not say or teach.

## **Conclusion**

For this reason, when someone uses this text "*For I do not allow a woman to teach, nor to take authority over a man, but to be silent*" (1 Timothy 2:12) to apply it to the condemnation of women in the exercise of ministry or any other role in the church, is an exaggeration of huge proportions, because the text does not even mention the pastoral ministry. But focuses on the concept of teaching without having been educated for it, aspect that is applicable for both sexes: male or female.

Furthermore, if we were to interpret the whole context in the way that the anti-women ordination people do, we would have to begin to teach that women are saved by having children, that barren women cannot be saved, that salvation is no longer by grace, and that Christ's death on the cross is not enough for the salvation of women.

## Relevant Questions

1. Why would the anti-women movement have problems interpreting some texts that seem to be sexist, especially when using a language that seems to be directed only at men?
2. Why the gender argument is not valid in the light of Exodus. 20:17?
3. Matthew 5:28 speaks of "*coveting*", did Jesus refer only to men? Are women exempted from greed?
4. Explain, were only men "*inspired by God*"?
5. Why is it dangerous to interpret texts literally without taking into account the whole context? That is, in a particular context to interpret a verse literally and symbolically the next.

## WOMEN IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

*“So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately”* (Acts 18:26).

### Background

A sharp critic of Christianity claimed that the church only baptized men that were “*silly and stupid*” with their “*women and children.*”

Tertullian, a church father spoke very badly about women. He said: “*You are the devil's gateway: you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man.*”<sup>4</sup> He was so convinced that women were subservient to men that he said the following: “*You are bound to please your husbands only.*”<sup>5</sup> He went on to say as well: “*It is not permitted to a woman to speak in church. Neither may she teach, baptize, offer, nor claim for herself any function proper to a man, least of all the sacerdotal office.*”<sup>6</sup>

Women were considered to be a living curse: “*in the Gospel according to the Egyptians. They say that 'the Savior himself said: I*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/terullian27.html>; Book 1, chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 1, chapter iv.

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women\\_in\\_Church\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Church_history): “On the Veiling of Virgins.”

*came to destroy the works of the female'. By female he means lust: by works, birth and decay."*<sup>7</sup>

Origen (AD 185-254) stated that, *"even if it is granted to a woman to show the sign of prophecy, she is nevertheless not permitted to speak in an assembly. When Miriam the prophetess spoke, she was leading a choir of women ... For [as Paul declares] "I do not permit a woman to teach," and even less "to tell a man what to do."*<sup>8</sup>

Comments like these were the ones used by some people in the past to create this atmosphere of rejection to women in the ministry and to foster an era and a whole culture of abuse and mistreatment. But not everything is negative. Even though much of that history could have been probably suppressed for centuries, God has unique ways to bring the truth to light.

## **Women that transcended**

1. One of the most famous woman apostles was Thecla, a virgin-martyr converted by Paul. She cut her hair, donned men's clothing, and took up the duties of a missionary apostle. Threatened with rape, prostitution, and twice put in the ring as a martyr, she persevered in her faith and her chastity. Her

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<sup>7</sup> The Gospel to the Egyptians is an apocryphal book.

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/gospelegyptians.html> Strom. iii. 9. 63

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women\\_in\\_Church\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Church_history); Origen, *Fragmenta ex commentariis in epistulam i ad Corinthios*



lively and somewhat fabulous story is recorded in the second century Acts of Thecla.<sup>9</sup>

2. The African church father Tertullian, for example, describes an unnamed woman prophet in his congregation who not only had ecstatic visions during church services, but who also served as a counselor and healer.<sup>10</sup>
3. The third century African bishop Cyprian also tells of an ecstatic woman prophet from Asia Minor who “*celebrated the Eucharist and performed baptisms.*”<sup>11</sup>
4. In the early second century, the Roman governor Pliny tells of two slave women he tortured who were “*deacons.*”<sup>12</sup>
5. In fact, women were even ordained as priests and bishops in Italy as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup>

### **Women as Martyrs**

1. Many women suffered tremendously, among them the prominent Perpetua (a wealthy matron). A woman that the Roman Empire tried to portray her as an enemy of the state. However, Perpetua in her diary avoids making the Roman violence towards her an issue of male vs. female. She rather concentrates in making it an issue of faith that any believer could suffer.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., (On the Soul 9.4).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., (Epistle 74.10).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., (Letter to Trajan 10.96)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., (Gelasius, Epistle 14.26).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

2. There is another book that was discovered recently called *“The Collection Thunder Perfect Mind”* (written possibly by a woman). This book addresses women in a powerful way, *“emphasizing the presence of women”* in the church’s setting and *“insisting upon their identity with the feminine voice of the Divine.”*<sup>15</sup>

### **Women in leadership positions**

1. After the death of Jesus, women continued to play prominent roles in the early movement. Some scholars have even suggested that the majority of Christians in the first century may have been women.
2. The letters of Paul - dated to the middle of the first century A.D., and his casual greetings to acquaintances offer fascinating and solid information about many Jewish and Gentile women who were prominent in the movement. His letters provide vivid clues about the kind of activities in which women engaged more generally.
  - a. He greets Prisca, Junia, Julia, and Nereus' sister, who worked and traveled as missionaries in pairs with their husbands or brothers (Romans 16:3, 7, 15).
  - b. He tells us that Prisca and her husband risked their lives to save his.
  - c. He praises Junia as a prominent apostle, who had been imprisoned for her labor.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/roles.html>

- d. Mary and Persis are commended for their hard work (Romans 16:6, 12).
3. Euodia and Syntyche are called his fellow-workers in the epistle (Philippians 4:2-3).
  4. In the apocryphal Gospel of Mary Magdalene, the author portrays Mary Magdalene as the leading person who brings “*courage and comforts the others [disciples] in despair.*”<sup>16</sup>
  5. Here is enough evidence of women apostles active in the earliest work of spreading the Christian message.
  6. Paul's letters also offer some important glimpses into the inner workings of ancient Christian churches. These groups did not own church buildings but met in homes, no doubt due in part to the fact that Christianity was not legal in the Roman world of its day and in part because of the enormous expense to such fledgling societies.
  7. Such homes were a domain in which women played a key roles. It is not surprising then to see women taking leadership roles in house churches.
  8. Paul tells of women who were the leaders of such house churches (Apphia in Philemon 2; Prisca in I Corinthians 16:19). This practice is confirmed by other texts that also mention women who headed churches in their homes, such as Lydia of Thyatira (Acts 16:15) and Nympha of Laodicea (Colossians 4:15).

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<sup>16</sup> Idem.

9. Women held offices and played significant roles in group worship. Paul, for example, greets a deacon named Phoebe (Romans 16:1) and assumes that women are praying and prophesying during worship (I Corinthians 11).
10. As prophets, women's roles would have included not only ecstatic public speech, but preaching, teaching, leading prayer, and perhaps even performing the Eucharist meal. (A later first century work, called the Didache, assumes that this duty fell regularly to Christian prophets.)<sup>17</sup>

### **Junia the Apostle**

1. Paul in Romans 16 mentioned Junia as "*notable among the apostles.*" Some have debated the meaning of this verse, but I personally believe that Junia was a woman and was considered an apostle.
  - a. John Chrysostom wrote: "*In fact, being an apostle in everything is a great thing... Just consider it as the great commendation that is... Oh, how great is the devotion of this woman, that she was even considered worthy of the eulogy of the apostle.*"
  - b. In fact, the name Junias never applies to men anywhere. There's is no literary, epigraphic or archeological evidence that would demonstrate the opposite of what the apostle Paul is saying here.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>

2. Romans 16:7 also says that Junia was imprisoned for her faith at some point before the book of Romans was written (approximately A.D. 55). This fact would make her one of the first believers arrested for her faith (she was maybe even in prison alongside Paul). Furthermore, she was involved in the formation of the early church in Rome.<sup>18</sup>

## Relevant Questions

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Junia-Junias-apostle.html>

1. Explain who was Junia.
2. ¿What was Tertullian view on women? How would you respond to someone who upholds the same view as Tertullian?
3. Mention at least three examples of the role of women in the early church as described by the apostle Paul in the Bible.
4. Explain in your own words who was Thecla.
5. What did Origen say about women?
6. In which country of Europe were women ordained as priests and bishops as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century?
7. What is the “Collection Thunder Perfect Mind”?

## **JESUS, WOMEN AND THE CULTURE**

***“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”*** (Esther 4:14).

## **Background**

The Archeology students from Andrews University went to San Miceli, Sicily, to dig in a couple of sites centered on a Christian basilica dating back to the 4th century.

Approximately one hundred years ago, an archaeologist began to explore this site; however, it had not been touched since then. The team discovered that a woman was buried in a prominent area inside the church. *"She was very rich, she had a gold necklace, she had a gold headband on her head and had gold earrings,"* said team leader Randall Younker. The woman must have been an important member of the congregation, Younker explained, because *"they buried her next to the priest in the front of the church in a very prominent place... They buried her under the altar."* Other women were also buried in the church, where priests and bishops were usually buried.

Because of Christian values and because women could hold leadership positions in the church that they could not have in Roman society in general, the number of women in the church grew significantly. Using statistical growth rates and other data, Younker said that the Christian community probably would have been at least 60 percent women.

Given the shortage of women in society, but the high number of women in the church, these young Christians were quite desirable to pagan men. When these Christian women married pagan men, they raised their children as Christians and worked to convert their husbands, which contributed to the growth of the church.

Younker's team found more women than men in Sicily. This could be due to a number of reasons, including that there were more women in leadership than men. These trends have been reported in other areas outside Italy as well.

In addition, rich women played an important role in financing the church. Of the 25 oldest churches in Rome, nine properties were donated by women.

### **How Jesus treated women**

The New Testament stories of Jesus' interactions with women show him behaving in ways that are very contrary to cultural norms. In the gospels we see Jesus:

1. Having public conversations with women.
  - a. The Samaritan woman (John 4).
  - b. The Canaanite woman (Mat.15: 21-28).
  - c. Martha (John 11: 21-27),
2. Touching or being touched by women while healing them.
  - a. The maid of the daughter of a ruler.
  - b. The healing of the woman with the blood problem in (Mat 9:18-26).



- c. The invalid woman who was healed on the Sabbath (Lk.13:13).
3. Defending women from criticism and accusations and offering them salvation.
  - a. The woman trapped in adultery (John 8:1-11).
  - b. The sinful woman who anointed Jesus (Luke 7: 36-48).
4. Receiving the adoration of women (John 12:1-7).
  - a. Women who mourned for Jesus while he walked to Calvary (Luke 23:27-28).
5. Accepting women as disciples.
  - a. Mary of Bethany (Luke 10: 38-42).
  - b. The women who followed him from Galilee (Luke 8: 2-3).
  - c. The women near the cross (Mat 27:55).
6. Commissioning women to be witnesses of the resurrection (Matthew 28:8-10).

All of these are prime examples of Jesus' view on women. Jesus broke the cultural norm of how women were treated by some leaders in Judaism.

### **How Jesus spoke with women in public**

Jesus refused to treat women as inferior. Women in Jesus' time had a bad reputation culturally; the writers of the Gospels testify that Jesus treated women with respect, responding frequently

in ways that rejected the cultural norms of the moment. He recognized their dignity, their desires and their gifts.

Jesus, for example, spoke to women in public. He went ahead in the midst of a crowd of mourners to talk to the widow of Nain, and to bring her son back to life (Luke 7:11-17).

He cured a woman who had been crippled for 18 years, putting his hands on her in the Temple and saying, "*Woman, you are free from your illness*" (Luke 13:12). When the leader of the synagogue became angry because Jesus had healed a woman on the Sabbath, Jesus uses a title of particular dignity for her, "*daughter of Abraham*" (Luke 13:16), which the reason why I also used it as the title for this book.

Although the expression "*son of Abraham*" was used to indicate that a male Jew was recognized as being bound by the covenant with God, women never, in the history of Judaism, had been called "*daughters of Abraham.*" With this title, Jesus recognizes that this woman had equal value to any man.

In John 4:4-42, Jesus ignores two codes of conduct: a) He starts a conversation with a foreigner, a Samaritan woman. b) In addition, her surprise is included in the narrative: "*How can you, a Jew, ask me to drink? Do not you see that I am from Samaria?*" (John 4: 9)

Jesus not only talked with her but also participated in a prolonged dialogue, a dialogue that recognized and honored her thirst for religious truth. Ultimately, it leads her to the revelation of

his identity as the Messiah. When his disciples return, they are clearly uncomfortable with Jesus' behavior. John includes the question they are afraid to verbalize: "*Why are you talking to a woman?*" (John 4:27).

The writer of the Gospel does not hesitate to conclude the story with the comment that, although in Jewish thought the testimony of a "perverted" woman was unreliable, here the excited words of the Samaritan woman are heard and acted upon. "*Many of the Samaritans of that city began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified*" in his name (John 4:39).

### **Affection and compassion**

Jesus refuses to see women as impure or especially deserving of punishment. Women who were menstruating or people who had any blood flow were considered ritually unclean.

In this condition, women were not allowed to participate in most religious rituals. Anything or person that the woman touched was considered unclean. The most dramatic story about a woman in this state is the story of the woman who had a blood flow for 12 years (Luke 8:43-48). Luke emphasizes Jesus' compassion for women by the way he places them in history.

Chapter 8 of Luke introduces Jairus, an official of the synagogue, coming to Jesus to beg him to heal his daughter. While they are on the way, this frightened and suffering woman, who has been sick and, consequently, isolated for years, touches his cloak. Jesus directs his attention from the synagogue official to the woman.

He wants to know who touched his garment. According to religious norms, the touch of the woman, made Jesus automatically “*unclean and defiled*” (Lev. 15:19).

This woman most likely expected Jesus to be angry with her. But she was quite surprised. He does not say anything about his ritual impurity, but he addresses her as “*Daughter.*” In fact, his reaction is quite the opposite, he tells her that her faith has saved her and he told her to leave in peace (Luke 8:48).

Jesus recognized the dignity of women in situations that by certain rituals seemed to demand judgment; for example, the sinful woman who anointed Jesus (Luke 7:36-50), and that of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11).

In both cases, he sees the person as someone who deserves compassion. In Luke's narrative, the woman who anoints his feet, after Jesus is touched and anointed by her, we hear the expected reaction of Simon, his host, who is a recognized sinner. This prominent religious leader, a Pharisee, is dismayed and says: “*If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what kind of woman is she who is touching him, who is a sinner*” (Luke 8:39). Jesus then tells the woman that her sins are forgiven, but also uses her actions of devotion as an objective lesson for Simon. Jesus' question is clear: “*Do you see this woman?*” (Luke 8:44)

The question urges Simon to look beyond the categories for which he has always lived and to see her as a sincere woman, as a woman full of love for Jesus.

Jesus clearly teaches us through her experience, that he who fulfills all the rules is not necessarily the best person. "*Her many sins have been forgiven, therefore she has shown great love*" (Luke 8:47).

In John's account of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11), a trap is placed for Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees who bring the woman to Jesus presented the case, the trial and the applicable punishment, and waited to see if he would reject the Mosaic Law in favor of the woman.

Jesus wisely evades the entire legal debate and confronts them with a more fundamental truth: none of them was exempted from sin...

When all the accusers left, Jesus spoke compassionately to the woman. He did not overlook her sin, but in his refusal to condemn it, he invited her to a new place of freedom and to re-take a new image of herself.<sup>19</sup>

## **Relevant Questions**

1. What does Lev. 15:19 say happens if a woman touches someone while she is having her period?

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<sup>19</sup> Taken from <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/jesus-extraordinary-treatment-of-women/>

2. What did archeologists find in Italy?
3. According to history, who were the main financers of church affairs in the early primitive church?
4. Of the first 25 churches donated in Italy, how many of them were donated by women?
5. Mention the two codes of cultural norm that Jesus broke when He spoke to the Samaritan woman.
6. According to this lesson, Jesus' question to Simon: "*Do you see this woman*" had only one goal: Which one?
7. What was the fundamental truth with which Jesus confronted the Pharisees in the case of the woman caught in adultery?

## **HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE**

### **Part One**

***“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach”*** (1 Tim. 3:1).

## **Background**

In the book of Acts, Dr. Luke established a connection between the local elders and the false teachings creeping in the church (Acts 20:29-30):

1. Those who were spreading errors are named "*teachers*" (1: 3, 7; 6: 3); "*teaching*" is also mentioned as one of the main tasks of the elders (3:2; 5:17). Therefore, the conclusion is that most likely, these teachers could have also been Elders in the church.
2. In addition, it appears that the shady character of some church elders led the Bible writer to discuss the kind of qualities that any church leader should have and not necessarily the usurpation of man's role by women (1 Tim 3:2-7; 1:7; 5:6; 6:4-5, 9-10).

## **Problems with the anti-women movement position**

The anti-women movement critics opposed to the ordination of women insist that gender does matter: an "*elder*" or "*shepherd*" (bishop), they say, must be a male. According to them, only a man can or should:

- ✓ Be a pastor or elder in the congregation.
- ✓ The expression "*husband of a woman*" refers exclusively to men.

- ✓ Paul limited the ministry men.

### **The expression "*if any*" (TIS)**

But is the claim made by the anti-women movement critics true? For example, they say that the expression "*If anyone desires the position of a bishop, good deed desires*" (1 Tim 3:1), it refers exclusively to men. Therefore, women are absolutely excluded.

Well, let's take a closer look:

1. The Greek text that is translated as "*if any*" or "*if any man*" (TIS), is used in greek to refer to one or more persons, objects or unspecified places.
2. When this phrase is used in the context of talking about human beings in the New Testament, it refers exclusively to both genders without any particular distinction.
3. Some may say, "but the pronoun is masculine in gender in 1 Tim 3:1." The simple answer would be, it is speaking in a generic sense, that is, men and/or women.

### **Husband of one wife**

The main argument of those who oppose women having leadership positions in the church is the belief that the statement below applies only to men:

1. "A ministerial leader must be the husband of one wife" [literally, "*a man of one woman*"].
2. Regardless of what Paul means by "*one woman*," what anti-women critics are saying is, that the use of the word



"*man*" (ANER) undoubtedly forbids women from serving as leaders in the church. The ambiguity of the phrase has led to five main interpretations on this issue:

1. A pastor/bishop must be married.
2. A pastor/bishop should not practice polygamy.
3. A pastor/bishop should never divorce, or remarry after the death of a spouse.
4. A pastor/bishop must practice marital fidelity.
5. A pastor/bishop must be male.<sup>20</sup>

Let us take a closer look to determine if any of these positions should be interpreted in the way that the anti-women movement critics interpret it.

### **A pastor/bishop must be married**

According to this view, Paul is interested in letting us know that church leaders must be married in order to serve in the church.

1. Actually, this interpretation makes sense, especially in the light that Paul's opponents seem to have adopted a low view about marriage (see 1 Tim. 4:3; 5:14).
2. However, even though Paul clearly speaks on behalf of marriage as a divine institution (1 Cor 7:1-16; Ephe. 5:22-33; Col. 3: 18-19), it is very unlikely to conclude exegetically that

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<sup>20</sup> Leadership and Gender in the Ephesian Church: An Examination of 1 Timothy  
Carl P. Cosaert, Ph.D. Walla Walla University. Theology of Ordination Study Committee  
Columbia, MD, January 23, 2014; p.20.

Paul's intention was to make marriage a mandatory demand for church leaders.

3. History tells us that most marriages were consumed at a very early age. Therefore, it makes no sense to demand such a things from those in the ministry or positions of leadership.
4. On the other hand, if being single really disqualifies an individual from serving as a church leader, Paul (and probably Timothy as well) would have been disqualified, since Paul certainly seems to have been single at least during the last two decades of his life (1 Cor. 7:7-8; 9:5).<sup>21</sup>

### **A pastor/bishop should not practice polygamy**

Was the apostle Paul trying to prohibit the practice of poligamy? It is very unlikely for two main reasons:

1. Monogamy was the norm in those days. Even though sexuality was a big issue, when it came to marriage, people only had one spouse.
  - ✓ Poligamy was practiced by the very few aristocrats, for example, Herod the Great. The practice of poligamy would have been looked upon with highly suspicious eyes by the majority of people. Therefore, I believe it was very unlikely this was the reason.
2. Incidentally, Paul used the same phrase in reference to widows: "*Only the widow who is not under sixty years of age,*

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.22.

*who has been the wife of one husband, shall be listed"* (1 Timothy 5:9).

3. If we believe the arguments of the anti-women movement scholars, we would have to conclude that Paul was prohibiting Polyandry (women who marry each other). Polyandry was a custom totally unknown in the Roman empire.

## **Conclusion**

So far, it does not seem so easy to deal with a phrase that seems so simple. The anti-women critics think that the biblical terms are as simplistic as their interpretations. But as we have seen, there are many more details to ponder before arriving to a conclusion. In the next lesson we will see other aspects of the different variants of this text.

## **Relevant Questions**

1. How many interpretations are there of the phrase “*husband of one wife*”? Please write them down.
2. When the expression “*if any*” (TIS) is used in the Bible to speak about human beings, is it in reference to males only?
3. If the pastor/bishop must be married (following the interpretation #1), why Paul himself (and possibly Timothy) did not fulfill this requirement? How the concept of being single as an apostle affects the interpretation of the anti-women critics?
4. In 1 Tim. 5:9, Paul uses the same expression, but it is applied to the “*widows*.” What problems will we face if we interpret this text in the same way that the anti-women movement critics interpret 1 Tim. 3:2?
5. In the ancient world polygamy was not commonly practiced, why?

## **HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE**

## Part Two

***“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife”*** (1 Tim. 3:2).

### **Background**

In the last lesson we learned that the anti-women movement critics believe and teach with vehemence that Paul limited the role of women in the church to remain silent and that the ministerial leader must be necessarily a man. But as we have seen, this cannot be possible, since the expression "*husband of one woman*" has five (5) different interpretations. In this lesson we will analyze the other three interpretations.

### **A pastor/bishop should never divorce/marry again**

1. The defenders of this position claim that the apostle is mandating that church leaders never divorce or never remarry after the death of a spouse.
2. Marriage and divorce continue to be one the most common problems since the entrance of sin for everyone (Matt 5:31-32; 19:8-9).
3. It is quite evident that Jesus clearly spoke against the practice of divorce for "*any reason.*" Paul echoed those same sentiments in his counsel to the Corinthians (1 Cor 7:10, 39).
4. However, in the same context of 1 Corinthians 7, Paul encourages celibacy after the death of a spouse for the sake of the Lord (1 Cor. 7:7-9).

- a. The only problem if this view is taken, is that both, Jesus and Paul allowed remarriage under certain circumstances (Matt. 5: 31-32, 1 Cor 7:15).
- b. Also, in the context of 1 Cor. 7, Paul speaks favorably of remarriage after the death of a spouse (see 1 Cor 7: 8-9; 1 Tim. 5:14).
- c. That been said, it seems very unlikely that these concessions would have been denied to church leaders.
- d. Therefore, this interpretation also seems not to identify Paul's primary intention.

### **A pastor/bishop must practice conjugal fidelity**

1. A very interesting interpretation says that a bishop should live a life marked by unquestionable sexual purity (which is really the ideal).
2. However, since most people were in married relationships those days, sexual purity would be expressed in terms of a monogamous relationship.
  - a. This view would not prohibit a church leader from remarrying after the death of a spouse, or even after the divorce (depending on the circumstances, of course).<sup>22</sup>
3. However, what this view would encourage to do is to probably prohibit all forms of sexual life outside of

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.24

monogamy, such as relationships between people of the same sex (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10).

4. Nonetheless, since Paul used the same phrase to apply it to women who were widows in 1 Tim 5:9 ("*the wife of one man*"), it seems to indicate that loyalty in the marriage is what Paul had in mind and not the gender issue.
5. Therefore, to demand from church leaders sexual purity in the marriage appears to be what was important to Paul.
  - a. Promiscuity was the norm in the ancient world, and as indicated by Paul's letters, it was a problem too common among Gentile converts (1 Cor 5:1-2; 6:15-18; 1 Thes 4:3-5).
  - b. In light of the serious problems with lust and promiscuity among the believers, it would certainly be strange for Paul to have excluded any reference to sexual purity among the criteria for selecting bishops.
  - c. Of all the interpretations we have analyzed so far, this is the interpretation with more weight.

### **A pastor/bishop must be male**

1. Those who oppose the ordination of women to ministry and the use of women in positions of leadership in the church are willing to admit that the phrase "*husband of one wife*" probably requires that the bishops be monogamous. They

still maintain that the "*Text clearly states that they [bishops] must be monogamous men.*"<sup>23</sup>

- a. However, this exclusive gender reading of the passage is highly problematic. As has already been shown, the exact meaning of the phrase "*man of one woman*" is not as clear as it seems. For it is difficult to corroborate that Paul's main intention was to demand that the leaders of the church marry.
  - b. We must be cautious in assuming on the basis of an excessive literal reading that his intention was to require bishops to be exclusively men.
2. After all, if Paul had wanted to limit the work of the ministry to men, he could have said it directly:
- a. "*A bishop must be irreproachable, MUST BE MALE, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.*" However, Paul did not do it. Instead, he chose a much more ambiguous expression, "*husband of one woman.*"

### **So What?**

If Paul, with the expression "*husband of one woman,*" does not really refer to gender, what is he referring to?

The answer to this question can be found in the word game used by Paul. Often, when we translate from one language to

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.25



another, we find a set of words or idioms that cannot be translated literally.

For example, "*A thorn in the flesh to buffet me*" (2 Cor 12:7). There is no way to take this expression literally, because a thorn "pricks" and it does not "buffet" or "slap" people.

In the same way, there is another set of words in the Greek language, which is known as "*Front*." In this type of grammatical construction, the emphasis is on the first word that affects both nouns. Let's see:

1. The expression "*Husband of one woman*", literally reads in the greek: "*one woman husband*". As you see, a literal reading does not make sense, but this is how it is written in the original language.
  - a. This "Front" (play on words), indicates that the emphasis is on the word ONE, and not on the nouns "*woman*" or "*husband*".
  - b. In other words, ONE is a definite article and it affects both nouns ("*woman*" and "*husband*").
2. If this interpretation is correct, then Paul never refers to gender, but to a monogamous relationship of fidelity and loyalty to a single woman.<sup>24</sup>
3. Therefore, anti-women critics are very wrong in prohibiting women from exercising leadership positions in the church or elsewhere.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.26

## Relevant Questions

1. How many interpretations are there about the phrase "*husband of one woman*?"
2. In conclusion, for you, what does the expression "*husband of one woman*" mean?
3. Do you believe that only men can exercise the ministry and leadership positions in the church? Explain your reasons with the Bible.
4. According to the lesson, what is Paul's emphasis on the expression "ONE woman husband"?
5. What was the norm of the ancient world in relation to sex?
6. Paul could have said directly: "*The bishop must be male*", why do you think he used a more ambiguous phrase?
7. What do we learn from this lesson on how to interpret the Bible?

## WOMEN AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

*“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:”* (1 Cor. 12:4-7).

### Background

It is said that a certain Chinese emperor, when he was told that there was an insurrection in one of the provinces of his empire, he told the ministers of his government and the military leaders who surrounded him: *“Come, follow me, I will soon destroy my enemies.”*

When the emperor and his troops arrived where the rebels were, he treated them affably, who, out of gratitude, submitted to him again.

All those who formed the entourage of the emperor thought that he would order the immediate execution of all those who had revolted against him; but they were greatly surprised to see that the emperor treated those who had been rebellious, humanely and even with affection. Then the prime minister asked the emperor angrily: *“In this way does your Excellency fulfill your promise? You said that we were coming to destroy our enemies, you have forgiven them all and many, even with affection, you have treated them.”*

Then the emperor, with generous attitude, said: *“I promised to destroy my enemies; and all of you see that no one is my enemy anymore: I have made all my friends.”*

## The Spiritual Gifts

1. According to the biblical text for this week's lesson, the sharing of gifts is a work of the Holy Spirit.
2. The diversification of gifts in human beings or in the church is also a work of the Holy Spirit.
3. The multitude of operations, forms or methods of how these spiritual gifts manifest themselves is also a work of the Holy Spirit.
4. Who determines the spiritual gift in the individual is also the Holy Spirit.
5. Since everything comes from the Holy Spirit, we find the following:
  - a. No gift is given based on the **virtue** of the recipient.
  - b. No gift is granted based on **obedience** of the recipient.
  - c. No gift is given based on the **gender** of the recipient.

### The gifts of manifestation (1 Cor 12: 7-10)

1. **Wisdom**, a revelation of wisdom that goes beyond the natural human wisdom, which allows the person to know what to do or say.
2. **Knowledge**, ("science"), a disclosure of information for a person, group or situation that cannot be known by any natural means.
3. **Faith**, absolute trust in God that expects results.
4. **Healing**, the many ways and the variety of degrees in which God heals people.

5. **Miracles**, the demonstration of the power of God in action that goes beyond natural laws.
6. **Prophecy**, an anointed proclamation of God through an individual to encourage, exhort and confront.
7. **Discernment of spirit**, the ability of a person to perceive what kind of spirit is operating in a certain situation.
8. **Tongues**, the languages given to Christians by the Holy Spirit that are not necessarily languages learned by the speakers.
9. **Interpretation of tongues**, the supernatural ability to express the content of what has been spoken in tongues

#### **The ministerial gifts (Ephesians 4: 11-13)**

1. **The apostle**, the one who establishes and strengthens the churches.
2. **The prophet**, the one who pronounces the message of God.
3. **The evangelist**, the one who is called to preach the gospel.
4. **The pastor**, the one who feeds and shepherds the disciples.
5. **The teacher**, the one who instructs others in the Word of God.

#### **The motivational gifts (Romans 12: 6-8).**

1. **Gift of perception** ("prophecy"). The one who clearly perceives the will of God has it. We have used the word "*perception*" instead of the word "*prophecy*" to avoid confusion, because the root of this last word is also used in the other two categories of gifts.

2. **Gift of service.** Those who like to serve others have it, the one who enjoys serving others. This person likes to do practical things for others.
3. **Gift of teaching.** The teacher has it, the one who enjoys investigating and communicating the truth.
4. **Gift of exhortation.** It is a reference to the person who like to inspire others ("encourage"). The exhorter has it, the one who enjoys encouraging and motivating people to live a victorious Christian life. These are extremely positive people who can equally be called "motivators".
5. **Gift of blessing.** The gift of blessing ("distribute"). The giver has it, the one who enjoys giving time, talent, energy and resources to benefit other people and to advance the gospel. Another word to identify these people could be "contributor".
6. **Gift of administration.** Administration gift ("preside"; "direct"). The administrator, who enjoys organizing, directing or leading. The person with this gift can also be called a "facilitator" or a "leader".
7. **Gift of compassion.** Gift of compassion ("mercy"). The one who has compassion has it, the person who cares for the needy and shows them compassion and love. We have used the word "compassion" instead of "mercy" since this word is more understandable in the vocabulary used today.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Taken from <http://dones.indubiblia.org/las-tres-categorias-de-dones>

## **Use of gifts**

You will notice how your particular gifts have been evident in your actions, including from childhood. You will understand that your gifts are what motivate (motivational) all your actions, and that they also affect the way you carry them out.

You will also discover that when you use your special gifts only for your own selfish purposes, they will tend to become contaminated. But when you use your gifts to benefit other people, cooperating with God's plan for your life, they will produce the greatest joy of your life.

## **Conclusion**

Nowhere in the three lists mentioned do we see that there are gender requirements to receive a spiritual gift. It is the Holy Spirit who distributes the gifts as he wants, to whom he wants and when he wants in the church.

The anti-women critics are very wrong when they want to make it appear that the gift of a pastor, for example, is exclusive of men. But there is not a single text to support that assertion. If the Holy Spirit pleases to give any gift to a woman, that is his prerogative. We would do well to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, so that we will not be found fighting against the Spirit of God.

## **Relevant Questions**

- 1- Name the three categories of gifts that exist.
  
- 2- Who is the Giver of the spiritual gifts?
  
- 3- On what basis does the Holy Spirit offer us these gifts?
  
- 4- Is there a spiritual gift that is relegated to the male or female gender?
  
- 5- Why do you think that the anti-women movement critics have problems with these elementary concepts of biblical teaching?
  
- 6- What happens if we use our gifts for selfish purposes?
  
- 7- What will be the result of using the gifts given by God?



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*Disciples of The Word Ministries is located at 63 Arlington St., Nashua, NH.*

*Services are held on Saturdays at 10:30 AM;  
Bible Studies on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM (English); and Thursdays at 7 PM (Spanish).*

*How to contact us:*

*[www.disciplesoftheword.org](http://www.disciplesoftheword.org)*

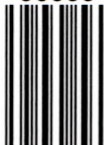
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