

Msg #175 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

“Should Women Be Ministers?”

With Randy Smith

(269) 763-2114

Preparation Ministries, Inc

PO BOX 475 OLIVET, MI 49076

(Please feel free to call, write, or send e-mails)

E-Mail

preparationministries@gmail.com

Web Site

<http://www.preparationministries.net>

Broadcast Schedule

WLQV AM 1500 - Detroit, MI, Sun. 10:00am

Also, Internet Stream - www.am1500wlqv.com

WFPM

99.5 FM in Battle Creek - Fri. 3:30pm

99.9 FM in Albion - Fri. 3:30pm

103.7 FM in Jackson - Fri. 3:30pm

Also, Internet Stream - www.wfpmradio.org

Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to deal with a very difficult subject, and that is whether or not women should be ministers. First of all, let me be right up front. Although I believe, personally, that it is not God's will for women to be ministers, my purpose in speaking of this subject is not to point the finger at women who are ministers, but rather just to explain my position on the subject. You may not agree with my perspective, and that's just fine. However, I am asked about this subject quite often, so I'm presenting this for those who would like to hear my perspective on the subject. And if you believe that women should be ministers of the Gospel, and you believe that women should take the leadership of Bible study for men, then by all means you should pursue your convictions, because that is between you and God. I'm not condemning women who believe they should be ministers, but from my own perspective, I believe scripture tells us that this is not God's plan for his children.

So, let's get started. In Genesis 3:16, it says, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in sorrow you will bring forth children; and your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you." This is plain and straight forward. God introduced his plan of authority. And what really took place is that Eve rejected God's authority. And God's response was to say, in essence, "because you rejected God's authority, I will give you over to a system of authority which is imperfect. In this way you will learn obedience." Of course, it would be much easier to let God lead than to try to follow another human being. But once disobedience had entered the world, then obedience had to be learned. Hebrews 5:7-9 refers to the same concept wherein Jesus learned obedience, and because he did learn obedience,

salvation came to men. And this is what God is trying to show us, the benefit of obeying God whether we understand or not.

So, the next set of verses I will give you is 1 Timothy 2, verses 11 through 15. It says, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression. 15 Yet women shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith, charity, and holiness with soberness.”

Now, verse 11 said that the woman should learn in silence. And this means that the woman should not put herself forward in public, asking questions, but should wait until she is home and ask her husband the questions. Because the man is ruler over the woman, she must allow him to be the public liaison. She must allow him to take the leadership.

If a woman puts herself forward in the church, asking questions and disputing doctrine, what happens is that she becomes the authority instead of the man. She becomes the leader. In verse 12, Paul says that he does not permit a woman to teach a man, nor to usurp authority over him. The word usurp, means to take authority to yourself that belongs to another. If God has given the man the role of leadership, and a woman takes that role of leadership for herself, then she has taken it without it being delegated to her. She has usurped the authority; taken it by her own choice, rather than it being given to her.

And here’s an interesting point to consider. Authority cannot be delegated to someone else unless you have been given the right to delegate it. You can delegate authority to someone else if you yourself have that authority in the first place, but if you have no authority, you can’t give it to someone else.

For example, if you’re not a supervisor at work, but you go to work and start giving orders to people, you’ll quickly find that you’ve overstepped your boundaries. In the same sense, when the authority belongs to God, you cannot take the authority to act or speak in any manner unless God has given you that right.

Now, sometimes people teach a concept that women can have the authority to teach men if her husband or the pastor delegates that authority to her, and in that way saying that she is not usurping the authority, but it has been given to her. However, there are some situations in which God has given us the right to delegate authority, and in some other situations he has not. When God says that the woman should be in subjection to the man, and when scripture plainly says that women should keep silent in the church, and if they have questions, ask their husbands at home, then how can husbands or pastors give women the right to go against God’s Word? It is not husbands or pastors who have established which sex should lead and which sex should follow, but it is God who has established the line of authority. Therefore, it is only God who can authorize a change to that doctrine. We cannot tell someone that they can do something that God has told them not to do.

And here's another thing to consider from these verses. Sometimes people attempt to say that Paul's perspective of a woman keeping quiet in the church was just a social perspective in that time period, and that because today is a different day and age, women are now equal with men in all things and can lead as well as anyone else. Certainly, there is no question as to the ability of women to lead. It has nothing to do with ability, for in many instances women can do a better job of leading than men can, just as in the workplace there are many situations where workers could make better decisions than the designated supervisors.

However, there is a reason for women to remain silent in a public setting, and it's not because of the social situation in those biblical times. And actually, Paul specifically states the reason that women should keep silent in the church, and the reason is found in verses 13 and 14. And the reason is because of the original requirement by God established in the Garden of Eden at the time of the original sin.

Anyway, let's move along to the next set of verses. We're looking in 1 Corinthians 11:3-5. It says, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head (Christ). 5 But every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head (the husband): for that is the same as if she were shaved.

Now, stop and think for a moment, what do these verses mean when it says that the head of the woman is the man, or the head of Christ is God? It's an interesting concept, but it's just simply this. When the Bible says that the head of Christ is God, it just means that the head rules the body. Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. He was the body of God. Yet, it was the Father who was the head of Christ. He was the authority over Jesus Christ, the body.

The head is that portion of the body which rules the body. The hand does not tell the foot what to do, but it is the head that bears the responsibility for directing the different parts of the body. Jesus Christ is the head of the body. And just as Jesus Christ submitted himself to the father, who is the head of all things, man must submit himself to Christ and allow Christ to be his head, his authority. His ruler.

Now, verse three in this set of verses very specifically says that the head of the woman is the man. In the same sense that the Father is the head of Christ, and Christ is the head of the man, the authority over him, it is the man who is the head of the woman, her authority.

Now be careful not to get ahead of me. Don't jump to conclusions. This authority is not absolute, and it certainly does not give the man license to rule indiscriminately. So hold on a minute, and let me explain further.

Just as we expect our children to recognize our authority over them, we each have a responsibility to submit ourselves to authority. If Jesus had refused to allow the Father to be his head, we would never have received salvation from our sins. But fortunately, for us, Jesus says in scripture that he only spoke the words of the Father, and he only did the works of the Father.

And because he was faithful and allowed the Father to be the head over him, we have therefore received that saving grace.

In the same way that Jesus Christ gave himself over to the leadership of the Father, the man is also required to make Jesus Christ the head of him. And it is by submitting to the leadership of Christ that man comes into God's perfect plan. In the same way, women have been required by God to submit herself to the husband. This does not mean that she cannot pray to God, or that she cannot request anything in the name of Jesus, but just means that the man has been saddled with the responsibility of being the leader between the two sexes, whether he likes it or not.

As in all things, there can only be one leader. And in the body of Christ, that designation has been given to the man, but the woman has been designated as the authority over the children. In the family, you would never allow the children to go over the head of the woman to the father, because the authority of the woman must be respected by the children. And although children can go to the father with requests, they must never subvert the authority of the mother to do it. It is this same concept that the woman should observe when respecting the man's leadership. And it is the same concept for the man in respect of allowing Jesus Christ to be his head.

Now in referring to verse five concerning the covering or uncovering of the woman, we must realize that in scripture a man is the covering for the woman. Covering means authority. And this covering accomplishes the task of removing the woman's shame. This is why Paul refers to a woman speaking in the church as being shameful. When women step out from under the authority of the husband, or in other words, when they step out from under the covering which the husband is supposed to supply, they are exposing themselves as uncovered woman.

In scripture symbolism this implies the woman's nakedness. It is the same thing that took place in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve stepped out from under the covering of God by being disobedient to his authority concerning not eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As soon as Adam and Eve ignored God's authority, they knew they were naked. In scripture, nakedness is shameful because it reveals disobedience.

Now, when we step into the shower, we are naked, but yet we feel no shame even though God can see our nakedness in the shower. So we see that it's not the naked body that makes the difference, but the disobedience makes the difference. In God's eyes the body is nothing, but obedience is everything. Whenever a woman or a man refuses to follow the lines of authority which God has established, the result is, shame. Therefore, Paul says, "it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church."

Alright, let's go on to the next set of verses. 1 Corinthians 14:34-37 says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law. 35 And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. 36 What? Came the word of God out from you? Or came it unto you only? 37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

Here again, scripture explains that women should keep silence in the church. Sometimes people attempt to explain the phrase, “for it is not permitted unto them to speak,” as meaning that the rule was just a social custom at that time. However, once again, we need to look at 1 Timothy, Chapter 2, verses 13 and 14, to realize that the reason for woman’s silence in the church is not social custom at that time, but God’s determined line of authority established in Genesis.

In addition, verses 36 and 37 here in the book of Corinthians, chapter 14, clarifies that this concept that Paul teaches is not his own perspective, but the Lord’s perspective, saying, “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” You see, Paul was not just expressing his own opinion when he said that women should be silent in the church, and that if they had questions they should ask their husband at home. He stated very plainly that this was not his commandment, but the Lord’s commandment.

Now the next verse is Ephesians 5:22-23, and it says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Savior of the body.

These verses are very plain, in that they emphasize the husband’s rulership. The woman should look to her husband as the authority just as if it is the Lord himself who is directing her. Now, here again, don’t jump to conclusions. This is not saying that the husband has authority to direct the wife in any way other than perfectly according to the will of the Lord. However, unless the wife finds the husband’s directives to be contrary to righteousness, then she is required to obey her husband the same as if the Lord were speaking directly to her.

Now, some would say that this is unfair to the woman. However, what it really is, is a huge responsibility of the husband that is very difficult to accomplish without error. Yet, the husband will stand in judgment for the rulership he applied toward his wife and children. And because he is imperfect, unlike Christ, he will never be able to measure up to perfection, and will always make mistakes concerning his authority. But each one of us will also stand in judgment one day, and will be judged according to our obedience to the authority God has placed over us. Whether we are children that have rejected the authority of the parent, or women who have rejected the authority of the man, or men who have rejected the authority of Christ, we will all pay the price or be rewarded in kind in the day that Christ judges.

Okay, the next verse is Colossians 3:18, which says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fitting in the Lord.” Now, that last phrase, “As it is fitting in the Lord,” means that women should submit themselves to their husbands, but only as long as the rulership of the husband does not step outside of the boundaries of God’s Word. The husband has no authority to require evil of the woman, but his direction must be fitting in the Lord. However, this does not mean that women can second-guess their husbands decision making process if she thinks she knows better. However, she can refuse to be obedient to her husband’s leadership in any case where his leadership is contrary to the word of God.

When a man makes a poor decision, it is no different than when a man submits himself to his supervisor's decisions at work, even when the supervisor's decisions are poorly made. When a man submits himself to authority at work, he also does it as it is fitting in the Lord. And if the supervisor asked him to do something which is contrary to God's word, he has no obligation from God to submit to the supervisor. However, if the decision of the supervisor is not contrary to God's word, but just a poor decision in the eyes of the man, then the man, as an employee who is trying to please God, must submit himself to the supervisor and not try to second-guess him. It is a great temptation for a man to be disobedient to a supervisor's authority because of the perception that the supervisor is unintelligent. However, God does not allow man to second-guess his employer, anymore than God would allow Jesus to second-guess the Father. Just as it is a great temptation for a man to second-guess his supervisor, it is a great temptation for a woman to second-guess her husband. And of course, the same goes for children, who always attempt to second-guess their parents.

Being subject to authority is never easy, except that sometimes when the decisions are good it makes life easier so that you don't have to make decisions yourself. But in this world, great decisions are seldom made by human beings. Just as parents are frustrated by having to be parents at the beginning of their lives, prior to the days of wisdom, so are husband's frustrated at having to be leaders when at the same time they are saddled with the imperfect elements of being human. Although they might desire to make perfect decisions at all times, it is evident that as long as we are humans in this world, perfection will never happen.

In addition, children are often frustrated by the poor decisions of their parents, but must continue to learn obedience by following their leadership. Men are often frustrated by the poor decisions of their supervisors, but also must conform to the authority set over them. Of course, there is no escape for the women from the poor decisions of their husbands.

Now, there is great temptation for women to reject the authority of the man and to make their own decisions. However, if they do this, they will find they are also prisoners of these bodies of flesh and blood, and will also make poor decisions of their own. Sometimes women think they can be independent and make their own decisions, and will be better off. But that's no different than children and men, who if they try to be their own authority will end up making a bigger mess of it than just abiding in the line of authority that God has established in the first place.

There is no escaping from God's word. That is a trick of the devil. Just as Satan lied to Eve in the Garden of Eden, he still lies to us today, telling us that we can reject the authority of God, and keep our own head and make our own decisions. But just as it was a lie in the Garden of Eden, it is still a lie today. Obedience to proper authority will always be better than rejecting that authority. Yes, we may find that we can eat the fruit of disobedience temporarily, without dying, so to speak, but in the end death will still win. Obedience can never be replaced with disobedience without inviting eternal damnation. God's delight is not in our obeying that which is easy, but in our obeying that which is difficult.