

After the general instruction for brothers and sisters to pray for all men and especially those in authority, men and women are now distinguished by God's established gender roles. **Men** are to pray **publically**. All men. Women aren't. **Public prayer** is a priestly function to be exercised by every man. It is not to be left to the "gifted," to the older men, to the naturally eloquent or to some other humanly contrived distinction. If a brother has holy hands (is blameless and has a clear conscience), he ought not to be silent in the assembly or elsewhere when prayer is in order. On the other hand sisters are to be publically retiring and modest. Not merely avoiding immodest dress, but avoiding calling attention to themselves in behavior, conduct and demeanor. A manner described by a Greek word referring to downcast eyes. Downcast eyes displaying an intrinsic modesty, (not shame, as the KJV "shamfacedness" implies). A humble, almost instinctive, modesty against public exposure of any kind, but not from a sense of a shamefulness for being a woman, or of supposed inferiority to men. Not imposed by belittling or overbearing attitudes and conduct by males as is common in many societies. Not an awkward diffidence, such as we sometimes call sheepishness, or a natural shyness which may be based more upon inward pride not humility. Nevertheless a manner that is publically becoming to her Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ. She is here a type of His Bride, in awe, preparing Herself for marriage to the Lamb. She has a demeanor that does not divert attention from His glory, but glorifies Him before all. As Rebekah covered her face when first meeting Isaac. Woman is the glory of Man, 1 Corinthians 11:7, therefore properly not to be a public figure when approaching God in assembly.

Some of these passages might move some to characterize God's order as making sister's place inferior to that of brother's. Or perhaps demeaning. God doesn't say that. Neither does Paul, Peter or any other man of God in the scriptures. As men are to pray publically lifting up holy hands the women are to present themselves publically in the same way, the same manner. What does that mean? Doing all the things a man does? No. If that were so, gender would not be need to be mentioned here. (If there were to be no differences God would probably have specified there is no difference in order to counter worldly ideas of male supremacy.) But God has established different gender roles, just as He has created wonderful natural differences between women and men. If we are godly we will note and value both natural and scriptural gender based differences and joyfully take heed to live them in our daily lives.

These differences are underscored when one remembers the wonderful lack of such differences between those said to be in Christ.

*Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither*

*Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Colossians 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

The basic relationship of every believer to God the Father and to Christ is the same, male or female. All believers are saved by grace through faith. Saved by the blood of the Lamb. All are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. All have access to God, through prayer and study and meditation over the scriptures. All are members of the Assembly, the Church, the Body of Christ. But God in His wisdom desires to maintain some clear gender differences among believers while we are still here on earth. In fact He takes special care to restore the gender relationships He originally established by Creation, and also some subsequently necessitated (sorrowfully) by Man's sin. We glorify Christ before His whole Creation when we observe these.

Think of all of the examples of interactions with women Jesus had, all positive affirmations of women's equal status with men whether as a sinner or saint, the various Mary's, the woman at the well, Martha. Yet never compromising the appropriate place she has in God's order of headship and subjection.

God > Christ > man > woman > household.

Subjection and service to another is not demeaning but highly honorable before God. Christ is our example.

*Philippians 2:6 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,...*

What is said here to be most becoming to women professing godliness? Good works! She is to be industriously active in good deeds. These outshine all put-on beauty and they long outlast any natural beauty a woman may have. Not elaborate hairdos, expensive jewelry or clothes. Not accessories or make-overs. But to adorn herself so as to not call attention to herself. Neither elegantly arrayed or unkempt, but alert, attentive, well groomed, neat and clean.

What are the good works meant here? Scripture is full of examples of faithful, godly women such as Miriam, Rahab, Deborah, Ruth, Abigail, the Mary's that followed Jesus, Martha, Dorcas, Phoebe, Priscilla, Phillip's four daughters, accomplishing what no man could do alone. Not to mention mothers [see the last paragraph below]. See also Proverbs 31:10-31 describing the woman of excellence.

Next Paul marks out the boundaries God placed upon women at creation and later at the Fall of Man. In brief,

learn in silence. Can she ask questions in private settings? Mary of Bethany did. In general, a sister is instructed to ask her husband or her father, the man who is her male head, at home. Men, please avoid interposing yourself between a sister and her husband. Don't answer the questions "her man" is to be answering. If he needs your help, by all means help.

*1Corinthians 14:34 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 saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, 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.*

The call for silence applies in public, especially in an assembly meeting. But she does best to avoid anything that might seem like lack of subjection, in public and in private settings or at home. Her call to subjection is a blessing that places her under the tender, loving care of a brother in Christ, for her spiritual, emotional and physical well being. Her's is a voluntary and knowledgeable subjection and silence. It acts as a reminder to him to treat her as the "weaker (not inferior) vessel" although she is to be at least as strong as a man spiritually, and stronger in the many special ways for which her feminine nature equips her.

Paul then masterfully sets forth becoming conduct, the reasons and the benefits.

- \* Learn, not teach. Adam was not deceived. Eve was.
- \* Silent subjection, not competing for headship Adam was first formed then Eve.
- \* Adorned with good works becoming to godly women, who seriously continue in faith, love and holiness. Such receive promised "salvation" in childbearing.

While this last promise is puzzling, it cannot mean salvation from the Second Death. That would be salvation by works. So it must indicate an earthly deliverance or preservation. It could be taken to mean:

- \* Relief from the dangers associated with birthing and from the curse of painful childbirth which Eve heaped upon all women for her lack of subjection to Adam, her man and her head by creation.
- \* "Child bearing" may have a broader sense than pregnancy and labor. It may include the whole of child rearing as well. Many great and godly men are the product of their mother's faith. (Many wicked men have been raised or urged onward by ambitious, wicked women, mothers or wives.) Timothy had greatly benefitted from the faithful motherhood of his mother and grandmother. Later in this epistle the younger widows are exhorted remarry and raise families and manage a household. See Titus 2 also. The sobriety, faith, love and holiness needed to do this become her salvation in child bearing. That is, she has a meaningful, fruitful life for God despite the limitations placed upon here by her created gender role, and her recognition of the first woman's insubjection to her husband.

Mothers, women of God, such as Sarah (Isaac), Rachel (Joseph), Jochebed (Moses), Hannah (Samuel), and Lois, Eunice (Timothy) accomplished what no man could do alone. They bore and raised men of God used by God to bring about momentous changes and blessings here on earth. Mary, mother of Jesus, raised Him as well. There is a mystery that is beyond us here but it illustrates the good works of a woman of God Paul commends here.

By Ron Canner, March 8, 2006

NOTE. Some apply Titus 2:3-5 to the woman's role in teaching, limiting it to teaching women and not men. However, when looked at closer that passage seems to be even more limiting than that.

*Titus 2:3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things [of what is right,]; That they may teach [teach, admonish, encourage, train, school] the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, {sober: or, wise} 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.]*

The original Greek word translated "teach" in this verse is **sophronizo** (Strong's number 4994) It means to make of sound mind, i.e. (figuratively) to discipline or correct:—teach, train, to be sober. This is the only place in the Bible where this word is used. It is derived from 4998 **sophron**, which means: safe (sound) in mind, i.e. self-controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion):—discreet, sober, temperate. In short, Titus 2:3- 5 could be read: older women **be teachers of right and good, that they may put in a sound [sober] mind, [informally train] the younger women to be of a sound [sober] mind**, to love their husbands, etc. This is an entirely different word than that used in 1Timothy 2 for "teach." That word is **didasko**, found 91 times in the NT, and used generally for formal teaching, particularly of moral or doctrinal teaching. **The whole context of Titus 2 3-5 is of home life, not moral or doctrinal teaching.**

On the other hand, the Apostle encourages women to both **pray and prophesy**, covering her head, 1Corinthians 11. Therefore the restriction in 1Timothy 2 is focused on **teaching** and does not exclude a woman from prayer with others or prophesying to others, although she is to remain silent in the assembly, 1Corinthians 14:34. R.