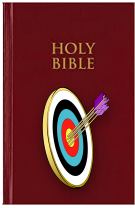


Spot On

*Restoring the Hebraic foundational emphasis on the processes of how you live your life:
•the responsive actions our Lord commands all of His followers,
•and their responsibility to deferentially obey by grace the One they love.*



Spot 2. Godly Women With A Peaceable Spirit Can Speak!

Too often God's righteous instructions have been relegated to a "cultural box" — that His commands haven't "evolved" from their historical settings and therefore don't apply today. And no wonder! If women today are told they must keep their mouths shut ("*remain silent*") in gatherings of faith communities as it's translated in 1Corinthians 14:34 in the NIV and NKJV, how can they publicly pray and prophesy, which Paul discusses them doing in 1Corinthians 11:5?

• "*Let a woman learn in silence with all submission*" (1Timothy 2:11, NKJV).

A number of denominations use verses such as this and insist that women not speak at all in congregational gatherings. That sounds pretty straightforward, but let's look a little deeper.

The Greek word for "woman" can also mean "wife" depending on the context, and Paul is clear that a woman whether married or not should be allowed to learn in gatherings alongside men. The word often rendered "silent" as in *mute* has a more accurate meaning of "peaceful, quiet, tranquil" — in other words, the women aren't creating a disturbance by calling out questions or comments when they don't understand something. As it's put in the Complete Jewish Bible (CJB), "*Let a woman learn in peace, fully submitted*" (1Timothy 2:11). Those who are married are expected to remember their position in relation to their husbands by submitting themselves, and to never say or do anything that would bring embarrassment on him.

Whether it's a man or a woman who's learning, to "learn" in a Hebraic context doesn't mean just accumulating knowledge from a speaker. That's a Hellenist format that's still used in pulpits today! Rather, in the pattern of Jesus with His disciples, learning takes place through *discipling and being disciplined*: putting into practice what you've heard/learned so that you might grow in holiness. So as a woman is being *disciplined*, she is to *be at rest* even when she doesn't understand. Later she can ask the appropriate person about her concerns: her husband (if she's married), her father, or an older woman of wisdom.

• "*And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence*" (1Timothy 2:12, NKJV and NIV). This is a point of discord in a number of congregations or faith communities in which women are told to not speak at all. On the opposite end of the spectrum, women whether married or not have "taken rule" over men by assuming positions of authority within congregations or faith communities in violation of God's instructions through His servant Paul.

A better translation is from the Complete Jewish Bible (CJB): "*but I do not permit a woman to teach a man or exercise authority over him; rather, she is to remain at peace*" (1Timothy 2:12). Paul has taken pains to reiterate that from Creation, God's order is for the man to lead (2:13). As the "head" of his wife, he's also responsible for their spiritual life as a couple (see Ephesians 5:23-27). Therefore, according to God's order in a faith community gathering, women aren't to take responsibility to teach/disciple men or

to usurp authority over a man, particularly her husband. Since she is a fully functioning member of the collective body of Christ, if she is older she is directed to teach other women through her own example of reverent and godly living (see Titus 2:3-5).

For wives both then and now, learning to freely and willingly submit yourself to your husband upholds the wisdom and truth of God's Word. Compromising with the world's ways in regard to marital roles and the sanctity of marriage or even discarding completely our Lord's standards brings down the reputation of His holy Word to just another religious system of beliefs and rules.

- *“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church”* (1Corinthians 14:33-35, NIV; NKJV is similar). Again, many could read this passage and interpret complete silence on the part of women in collective gatherings of Christ's people to be the norm.

We mentioned earlier about women *praying and prophesying* in gatherings of faith families (1Corinthians 11:5), so this “silence” has something to do with *speaking out inappropriately* rather than actively participating in gatherings. As Paul has emphasized, God is characterized by peace, not by confusion. Therefore those who gather to worship as a faith family must also stay at peace. Women, especially wives, are addressed specifically to avoid *speaking out disrespectfully or disruptively*. Paul uses a particular word for “speak” whose meaning can include even chatting at random. Again, the focus is on having a peaceful atmosphere that's free of any disorder.

SOMETHING TO CARRY AWAY FROM THIS DISCUSSION

Whether you gather as a small group of individuals and families or in a larger gathering, keep in mind that God made sure His people realized that *in Christ there's no difference in their acceptance by Him* whether they are male or female (see Galatians 3:28). Yet He never sets aside gender distinctions or roles! Each person in Christ is precious to Him and each fleshes out the multi-faceted character of our Lord Jesus. We live in a culture in which men are constantly being mocked or vilified, and women are filled with anger and spite from feeling victimized and preyed on. Animosity and hostility between the sexes evidences this discord. And all too often contemporary congregations respond to the cultural standards around them by discarding any instructions and commands from Scripture which don't agree with popular opinion or practice.

This results in a homogenized, so-called “Christianity” which is really no different than the unbelieving world except for some “religious beliefs.” But men and women who have been “called out” as the collective Body of Jesus Christ need to reconsider if they've compromised with the world's standards, thereby repudiating through their own lives the holiness and “set-apartness” of following Jesus. Our Father never called His own to be “popular” with the world nor to adopt the world's values and ways in order to be more readily accepted. Discuss this Spot On segment with your family and those close to you in Jesus, and discern if any of today's verbal belligerence or worldly cultural attitudes have infected your own hearts and minds.