

### CAN A WOMAN EVER TEACH A MAN?

December 30, 2012

Paul admonished Timothy, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:11-12). The Holy Spirit, through the pen of Paul, has commanded that women are to be in subjection to men. Exactly what does that mean? Paul is explaining that women are subordinate to men within the roles that God has ordained. He also wrote, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:22-23). Does this mean that men are to be dictators in the home and act as if the woman is inferior intellectually in some way? If a husband acts or feels this way, he will not inherit eternal life! Paul said, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” (Eph. 5:25, 28-29).

Though the woman is not inferior to the man intellectually, she is to be in submission to the man within her role. According to Paul, in his letter to Timothy, a woman is not to take the leadership role within the family or in the works and worship of the church. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul supported the God given edict that the woman is to be in subjection to the man, “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. 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” (1 Cor. 14:34-35). If a woman were to pray, preach, or teach in a public manner, she would, without doubt, violate the injunctions of God.

Does this mean that a woman can never teach another? God commands the older women to teach the younger (Titus 2:3-4), and we understand that they are to teach their children, or anyone else’s, when they have the opportunity. Timothy’s grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice taught him when he was a child, and Paul congratulated them for doing so (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). When a woman sings within the worship assembly, she is teaching (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19), and when she makes the good confession (Mt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Tim. 6:12), she is teaching by statement and example.

Though all may agree on the previously mentioned occasions pertaining to when a woman may teach, is it ever permissible for her to teach a man? What if a woman was seated next to a man as she traveled, could she teach him in matters of the Bible? Would she be able to answer his questions concerning the scriptures? Peter answered that question when he said, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). Did Peter only intend for men to be able to defend their faith? Did Jude only intend for men to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)? Did the Lord intend for men only to fulfill the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20)? Like Jesus, Peter and Jude instructed the saints which include our sisters!

May a woman teach a man in the privacy of the home? That has also been answered for us. Luke recorded, speaking of Apollos, “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, **they** took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26, emphasis mine). Strong and Thayer both indicate that the Greek word that has been translated “expound” means to declare. Merriam Webster’s online dictionary gives the definition

of expound as: 1 *a*: to set forth: STATE *b*: to defend with argument 2: to explain by setting forth in careful and often elaborate detail <*expound* a law>. Both Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos aside and declared to him the way of God more accurately.

It becomes clear with a sincere study of the Bible that a woman may teach a man as long as she does not exercise authority over his God-given position. She may not teach in any public way or in any way that would indicate that she has authority over the man. However, it is clear that a godly woman like Priscilla did teach a man in the privacy of her home in partnership with her husband and did not violate the commands of God when she did it.

Those that support the false doctrine that a woman can never teach a man under any circumstance do so at their own peril and anyone else's that heed their doctrines of men! Often, they will go to the Greek to support their beliefs. They might ask, "did Priscilla διδάσκω; didaskō (the Greek word for teach)?" What we do know is that she did not teach publicly or lead a class that included men, but she did declare unto Apollos the way of the Lord more accurately. One cannot ignore what this faithful Christian lady did in the presence of a non-Christian!