

12. Women as Teachers



**** According to Titus 2:1-5, what should be true of older women?

Who was Titus supposed to teach, based on 2:3? The older women, rather than the younger ones, are to teach.

Based on Titus 2:3, did God design for women to be teachers?

Who is to be doing this teaching (Titus 2:3)?

- 1. In Titus 2:1-5, who and what are older women to be teaching?** See *1Ti 5:9-10*, *Proverbs 31:10ff*.
- 2. In context, what does it mean to “teach what is good” (2:3)?** This phrase translates a single word in the Greek, found only here in the NT. It is the word “teaching” and the word “good” together in compound. From the context, it is obvious that the “good” being taught relates to the topics listed in 2:4.
- 3. What does “train” (NASV: “encourage,” Titus 2:4) mean?** It is from *sophronizo* (4994), “to recall one to his senses, to admonish.” *Sozo* means “safe, well, preserved, restored” and *phren* means “thinking, mind.” Thus it means “to restore a person to his senses, to control, to discipline, to admonish.”

Comparing Titus 2:3 to 2:4-5, what topics did Paul have in mind when he wrote that older women were to be teaching what is “good” (2:3)?

4. How would you categorize the topics listed in Titus 2:4-5?

Does Titus 2:3-5 mention anything about older women teaching men?

Does Titus 2:3-5 mention anything about older women teaching the Bible as their curriculum? Not explicitly; older women are to primarily teach/train on the topics listed in 2:3-5. However, in so doing they will naturally refer to Scripture in order to support their applications.

5. What ministry were women exercising in 1 Corinthians 11:3-10? See *Luke 2:36*, *Acts 21:9*.

Note: The difference between prophecy and teaching will be dealt with in a later question.

6. Based on 1 Corinthians 14:3 and 14:31, what are some of the results of a prophetic ministry?

Observation: Based on the fact that some women undoubtedly have the gift of prophecy (Lk 2:36, Ac 21:9, 1Co 11:3-10), and that the hearers of prophecy can be strengthened, encouraged, comforted, or even instructed (1Co 14:3, 31), there is evidently nothing inappropriate for men to learn from women prophetesses.

****** According to 1 Timothy 2:11-12, in what two spheres of ministry is a woman not permitted?**

7. What parallels are there between 1 Timothy 2:11 and 2:12?

8. What do “quietness” (2:11) and “silent” (2:12) mean? See 1 Timothy 2:2, 2 Thessalonians 3:12. Both are from *hesuchia* (2271), “stillness.” The root actually means “tranquil.” Also used in **1 Timothy 2:2** (“quiet”) and **2 Thessalonians 3:12** (“settle down”). “Quiet” does not necessarily mean “silent” or “mute” (although it can mean mute in certain contexts); its primary meaning is “still, tranquil” (as is evident from its usage in 2:2 and 2Th 3:12). Thus, instead of teaching, women are to be learning in *hesuchia*. Instead of exercising authority over men, they are to be in a settled down state of tranquil submission (*hesuchia*).

In 1 Timothy 2:12, what does “or” mean? The Greek word is *oude* (#3761) and actually means “neither” (BAGD, p. 591).

What practical difference does it make between a check made payable to “Dick and Sally Smith” vs. “Dick or Sally Smith”?

9. Study 1 Timothy 2:12 carefully. Is Paul prohibiting one activity, or two? Is he simply prohibiting authoritative teaching, or is he prohibiting both teaching and also having authority? How so? Two separate and distinct ministries are denied to women. One is teaching (Scripture). The other is having authority. In the Greek, the two action verbs (teach, have authority) are at opposite ends of the sentence. Literally, it reads something like: “To teach, a woman, I am not permitting, *neither* to exercise authority over a man (or, the authority of a man).”

10. Should the phrase “over a man” be applied to both infinitives (to teach, to have authority) or only to the closest infinitive (to have authority)? Stated another way, did Paul intend for the two verbs share the same prepositional phrase? If both, then women could presumably teach doctrine to other women, but not to men. If only the latter, then women are prohibited from teaching doctrine to either men and other women. Technically, the Greek could be applied either way. Thus there is some question as to whether the prepositional phrase “over a man” (2:12) should be applied to both teaching and authority, or only to authority. More insight into which Paul might have meant will be found in 2:14.

11. What is “authority” (2:12)? It is from *authenteo* (831), a word only used once in the New Testament. Originally it referred to “one who with his own hand kills either others or himself.” In later Greek, it meant “one who does a thing himself, the author” and also “one who acts on his own authority, autocratic.” Finally, and this is how it is used in 1 Timothy 2:12, it came to mean “to govern, to exercise authority over” (Thayer). BAGD’s lexicon defines it as “have authority, domineer over someone.”

Note: It has been suggested that since some Gnostics falsely taught that a female deity created mankind, surely the women believers at Ephesus must have been confused about creation and were teaching the same thing. Since *authenteo* can mean “to be the author of,” they understand Paul to be prohibiting the Christian women of Ephesus from claiming to be the authors of men! However, this whole notion is somewhat fanciful and rests upon complex presuppositions that are foreign to the text. Even accepting their definition of *authenteo*, the word “claim” would still be missing. It is not that Paul would be prohibiting women from “claiming” to be the authors of man, but he would be prohibiting women from actually being the authors of man. This would be complete nonsense!

12. What “authority” (2:12) do men have in a church? See previous lesson on church authority. No man (even an elder) has authority “over” any other man in a church. However, the men of a church do have the “authority” to teach and to make decisions as an *ekklesia*. However, in the family, the man is given the responsibility for being the loving head of his home. The wife is explicitly called upon by Scripture to “submit” (Ep 5:22) to her husband’s leadership.

13. In 1 Timothy 2:12, the Greek underlying “over a man” can also be translated “of a man.” What are the differences in implication between these two options? There is no actual preposition here in the Greek, but it is implied in the ending of “authority” (in the Greek), and either “of” or “over” is a correct grammatical option. The phrase “over a man” implies that some men have authority over other men in the church. The phrase “of a man” implies that there is some type of authority that goes along with being a man. Since no man has authority “over” any other man in the church, and since the men do have the authority to teach and make corporate decisions, the Greek behind the phrase “over a man” in 1Ti 2:12 probably should be translated “of a man”.

In Ephesians 6:1-3, what authority do mothers evidently have over their children?

Based on 1 Timothy 2:11-12, would it be okay for a woman to teach as long as she is under the authority of her pastor? Some have held 1 Timothy 2:12 simply to mean that women are not to teach under their own authority. However, as long as they place themselves under the authority of a male leader they are allowed to teach Scripture, even to men. One problem with this notion is that Paul is prohibiting two activities (not just one). Also, it is difficult to imagine how anyone can teach a group of people without that group perceiving the teacher to be an authority. Teaching, by nature, assumes the position of authority. Further, it is extremely difficult to teach while “quietly learning in all submission” (1Ti 2:11).

******In 1 Timothy 2:13-14, what two reasons are given as to why a woman is not allowed to do the things prohibited in 2:11-12? See Genesis 2:7, 18, 20-24, 3:1-17.**

14. Why is it significant that Adam was created first (1Ti 2:13)? See Romans 5, 1Co 11:3-4, 7-9, Colossians 1:15. It implies headship, priority, and order in the relationship between men and women. In the Old Testament, the firstborn son had all the birthrights and received the bulk of the father's estate. In the New Testament, much is made of Jesus being the firstborn over all creation.

15. Why is it significant that Eve was deceived while Adam was not (1Ti 2:14)? The facts are simply recited here as they occurred. Woman took the leadership; man submitted; disaster resulted. God created each gender with differing spheres of ministry, and confusing the two invites trouble. Perhaps due to her mothering instinct, Eve was more trusting, more giving, less suspicious. In contrast, Adam sinned knowing full well that what he was about to do was wrong. So whereas both sinned in eating, each had a different perspective to the same temptation. Thus, men and women were created to be different not only physically but also in the roles they assume in society, family, and the church.

Does 1 Timothy 2:14 explicitly teach that all women are deceived? Absolutely not!

Does 1 Timothy 2:14 explicitly teach that women are more liable to deception than men?

No, but it certainly is implied. Otherwise, why does Paul give us the information of 2:14? Thus, if it is wrong for a woman to teach doctrine to men (because women are more liable to deception than are men), then it is doubly wrong for a woman to teach doctrine to other women (and have the whole lot of them potentially be led off into error). Thus, Paul's reasoning in 2:14 about Eve's deception would indicate that we take 2:12 to mean that women are not to teach doctrine to men nor to other women. If however, the prohibition is purely judicial, then presumably it would be permissible for one woman to teach doctrine to other women (but still not to men).

Based on 2 Timothy 1:5, how did Timothy most likely come to learn the gospel?

Who has the responsibility for teaching children about the Lord? Deuteronomy 4:9-10, 6:4-9, 11:18-19, Ephesians 6:4.

16. What in 1 Timothy 2:13-14 indicates whether 2:11-12 is a cultural idiosyncrasy or a timeless truth still pending? Both the order of creation and the transgression of Eve are culturally transcendent (they are timeless truths). In fact, both occurred before the Fall. Adam was created prior to Eve (before the Fall) and Eve was deceived in a state of perfection (before the Fall).

How long should we adhere to the prohibition of 2:11-12? As long as it is still true that Adam was formed first and Eve was deceived — in short, always!

Some have tried to link Paul's prohibition to some problem unique to Ephesus, such as presence of female priests at the temple of the goddess Artemis (Acts 19:27). They say that Paul wanted to avoid the appearance of paganism, so he prohibited the women in Ephesus from teaching. Since we don't have that problem today, women should be allowed to teach (or so they reason). Even if there was some unique Ephesian situation that initially prompted Paul's thoughts on this issue, the reasons Paul gave for the prohibition are clearly unrelated to any local problem. The appeal to creation makes it universal in scope.

A woman who teaches doctrine to the church is violating the very Scriptures that she is seeking to teach.

17. It is a fact that, through the cross, Jesus effectively removed the curse of sin. Why would Paul's reasoning in 1 Timothy 2:13 not be affected by the redemption Jesus accomplished? See 2:14.

******According to 1 Timothy 2:15, how shall women be "saved" (NASV: "preserved")?**

What does the word "saved" (NASV: "preserved," 1Ti 2:15) mean? It is from *sozo* (4932), "to save, to keep safe, to rescue from danger." *Sozo* can refer to salvation from injury, peril and disease, or to salvation from spiritual judgment (Thayer).

18. From what will women be "saved" (1Ti 2:15)? See *Genesis 3:1-6, 1 Corinthians 7:8, 25-28, 39-40, Philippians 2:12, 1 Timothy 5:9-15*. They will be saved from neglecting their God-given ministry of home and children. Said another way, they will be saved from violating God's prohibition that they not take up a teaching ministry nor exercise authority over men.

19. How can Titus 2:3-5 be harmonized with 1 Timothy 2:11-15?

- 1) The students are younger women (not men).
- 2) The training is fundamentally in home economics, not theology nor Biblical exegesis. The teaching in Titus 2 refers to teaching primarily application, using Scripture to support those applications. The teaching in 1Ti 2 refers to teaching primarily doctrine (Scripture).
- 3) Titus 2 indicates an informal, one on one setting anyway, not an official class sponsored by the church.

20. Why is Acts 18:26 not a violation of 1 Timothy 2:11-12?

- 1) The word "teach" is no where found in Acts 18:26ff. Instead, the word "explained" is used, from *ektithemi* (1620), "to set forth, to expose." *Ek* means "out of" and *tithemi* means "to place, lay, set" (Thayer). Also used in Acts 11:4 were Peter explained his actions to the church. As an example, I explain to my boss why I am late for work; I do not teach him why I am late!
- 2) The text does not state anywhere that Priscilla did most of the explaining. It simply says that they both talked with Apollos. It was a mature Christian couple having a conversation with a less knowledgeable brother.
- 3) Though less knowledgeable, Apollos was no dunce. He was already "mighty in the Scriptures" (18:24).

- 4) That women can have the gift of prophesy illustrates that there is nothing wrong with men learning from women. Pilate would have done well to listen to his wife concerning Jesus, and Nabal would have been wise to listen to Abigail's thoughts on David. What Scripture does prohibit is a woman taking on the role of teacher in the church, to the church.

21. Learning can be the effect of both teaching and prophecy, yet teaching is denied to women while prophecy is permitted. What is the difference between the two gifts?

See *Romans 12:6-7*, *1 Corinthians 12:28-30*, *James 3:1*. First, it should be noted that teaching and prophecy are two separate and distinct gifts, despite the fact that they may occasionally overlap in their effects (i.e., learning results from both). This distinction is also alluded to in *1 Corinthians 14:26*. Teaching is the ability to communicate God's truths in an effective manner. The truth presented in such teachings is obtained through hours of diligent labor and effort in Bible study. With the gift of prophecy however, the truth expressed by the prophet is derived spontaneously by divine revelation from the Holy Spirit (cp. *1Co 14:30*, *1Th 5:19-20*). Prophecy is not the result of study. Another difference between the two is seen in *1Co 14:5*, wherein Paul expressed his desire that everyone prophesy, and in *James 3:1*, wherein James warns that not many are to become teachers!

Wayne Grudem, in *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, offers the following (pgs 135f):

- 1) Though both are verbally expressed and result in "learning" (*1Co 14*), prophecy is the result of a personal (individual) revelation from the Holy Spirit, whereas teaching is based on the written Word of God.
- 2.) Whereas prophecy is spontaneous and unplanned, teachings are generally come from hours of research and study. Teaching involves intellect, training, skill, and planning. Prophecy, by contrast, is from the Spirit, not the intellect.
- 3) Prophecy and teaching are always treated as two separate and distinct spiritual gifts in the New Testament.
- 4) Teachings were not judged by a collective body of prophecies, but all prophecies were to be judged by the Scripture and the collective body of apostolic teaching. Regular teaching that is based on the written Word of God is far more authoritative than an occasional prophecy based on a personal impression that a prophet thought he got from God.
- 5) Teaching is associated with leadership. To teach the church is to assume a form of "authority" (*1Ti 2:12*). One requirement for all elders is that they be "able to teach" (*1Ti 3:2*), not prophesy. *Ephesians 4:11* refers to one type of ministers who serve the church as "pastor-teachers", not "pastor-prophets".

The verb tense in *1 Timothy 2:12* is present tense. Thus, some say it should be translated, "I am not presently permitting a woman to teach . . ." Under this scenario, the prohibition was only intended to be temporary. How would you evaluate this argument?

- 1) The present tense is used throughout Scripture and rarely is this argument made for its other uses.
- 2) This is in fact what is known as a "gnomic present," indicating a universal and timeless truth: "I do not, as a rule, ever allow a woman to teach . . ."
- 3) The reasons given for the prohibition (*2:14-15*) remain true today.

22. According to 1 Timothy 3:14-15, why did Paul pen this letter to Timothy?

23. Some have bypassed the application of 1 Timothy 2:12 for today by taking it as merely Paul's opinion. Why is this not a valid option for dismissing this text? See 1 Timothy 1:1, 3:14-15, Matthew 10:1-5, 40, Luke 10:16.

Think: Can anyone think of any instance in the New Testament of a woman teaching men the Scriptures, or of a woman who was an authoritative doctrinal instructor?
There are no examples of Christian women teachers of Scripture in the entire New Testament.

Why is it that there are no New Testament examples of women Bible teachers? It is because such a ministry was specifically denied to them. The only exception to this is found in Revelation 2:20-25, but not many feminists are willing to cite her in support of their cause!

Summary: These restrictions are permanent. They are authoritative for the church in all times, places and circumstances — as long as people are descended from Adam and Eve. This is one of those instances where we may be tempted to “fly” by the seat of our pants, looking out the window of our experience or culture to set our course. However, if ever there was a time to “fly” by using instruments (i.e. going by what the Bible says), this is it!

Even Back in 1912: “Queer lot of people on this ship. There are a number of obnoxious, ostentatious American women. Many of them carry tiny dogs and lead husbands around like pet lambs.” Quote by artist Francis Millet, taken from a letter posted from the Titanic at Cherbourg. Millet perished when the ship when down.

Joke: A man is alone in the forest. He speaks, but no woman is present to hear him. Is he still wrong?

Optional Reading: Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), and the on-line article on women as teachers at www.ntrf.org.

Next Lesson: E-mail the next set of discussion questions out to the class (or print them up and hand them out at the end of this lesson). Ask everyone to consider the issues, answer the questions and be prepared to discuss them at the next meeting.

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www.NTRF.org
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