The Most Excellent Way
Discipleship/Leadership Bible Study Homework

"Women as Leaders"

HEART ATTITUDE: Acceptance of God's Anointed, Including Women

Jesus raised women from degradation and servitude to fellowship and service. In the Jewish culture, women were not allowed to learn from rabbis. By including women in the company of followers who traveled with Him, and in whose homes He visited, to whom He appeared after His death, Jesus showed that all people are equal under God.

The Most Excellent Way welcomes women as meeting leaders so long as their motives are not to "lord it over" the men. God's qualifications for leaders and teachers is a "servant's heart" — the qualification required for both genders. Men and women submitted to the Lordship of Christ should and would not exhibit an attitude of superiority.

1 TIMOTHY 2:9-15 (NIV)
I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety,
not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes,
[10]But with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.
[11]A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.
[12]I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.
[13]For Adam was formed first, then Eve.
[14]And Adam was not the one deceived;
it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.
[15]But women will be saved through childbearing—
if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

The Holy Bible, New International Version.
Copyright 1978 by New York International Bible Society.

- **FOCUSING**

1.   What are some examples of women seeking their personal rights?

    _____
    _____

2.   What are some of the ways women influence the world for good? For bad?

    _____
    _____
    _____

3.   What examples show that people in our society are obsessed with their physical appearance?

    _____
    _____
    _____

- **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

To understand these verses, we must understand the situation in which Paul and Timothy worked. In first-century Jewish culture, women were not allowed to study. When Paul said women should "learn" quietly and humbly, he was offering an amazing new opportunity. Even today, some young women are bound to old traditions, and may only study selected Scriptures which relate directly to their part in celebrating Jewish feasts and holy days.

Paul did not want women to teach because they didn't yet have enough knowledge or experience. The Ephesus church had a serious problem with false teachers. Evidently the women were especially susceptible to their teaching (see 2 Timothy 3:1-9), because they did not yet have enough Biblical knowledge to see through the false claims.

In addition, some of the women were apparently flaunting their new-found Christian freedom by wearing inappropriate clothing.

Paul was telling Timothy not to put anyone (in this case, women) into positions of leadership who were not yet mature in the faith (see 5:22). The same principle applies to the Church today (see 2 Timothy 3:6).

4. How should women dress? (2:9-10)

_____

Some Christian women were apparently trying to gain respect by looking beautiful rather than becoming Christ-like in character. It is not unscriptural for a woman to want to be attractive. Beauty, however, begins inside a person. A gentle, modest, loving character gives a light to the face that cannot be duplicated by the best cosmetics and jewelry in the world. A carefully groomed and well-decorated exterior is artificial and cold unless inner beauty is present.

5. What instructions did Paul give women? (2:9-12)

_____

_____

_____

6. How did Paul instruct women to learn? (2:11)

_____

_____

7. What didn't Paul permit women to do? (2:11)

_____

Verse 12 is interpreted by some to mean that women should never teach in the assembled church. However, other commentators say that Paul's words "I do not permit" ("I suffer not," KJV) can be more literally translated "I am not allowing." Paul did not forbid women from ever teaching men.

Paul's co-worker, Priscilla, taught Apollos, the great preacher (Acts 18:24-26). Paul frequently mentioned other women who held positions of responsibility in the church. Phoebe worked in the church (Romans 16:1). Mary, Tryphena, and Tryphosa were the Lord's workers (Romans 16;6, 12); so were Euodias and Syntyche (Philippians 4:2).

As to women being silent in church meetings, the word silence here is often translated "be in quietness," expressing an attitude of composure. (A different Greek word is usually used to mean "complete silence.")

In addition, Paul acknowledges that woman publicly prayed and prophesied (I Corinthians 11:5). Apparently, however, some women of the early churches were abusing their newly acquired Christian freedom. Because these women were new converts, they did not yet have the necessary experience, biblical knowledge or maturity to teach.

8. What explanation did Paul give for not allowing women to teach or have authority over men? (2:12-14)

_____

_____

> Paul wrote about male/female roles in marriage (see Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3;18-19). Here he talks about male/female roles within the Church. Some scholars see these verses about Adam and Eve as an illustration of what was happening in the Ephesian church. Just as Eve had been deceived in the Garden of Eden., so the Ephesian women were being deceived by false teachers. And just as Adam was the first human created by God, so the men in the Ephesian church should be the first to speak and teach, because they had more learning. This view, then, stresses that Paul's teaching here is not universal, but applies to churches with similar problems. other scholars, however, contend that the roles Paul points out are God's design for His created order. He established these roles to maintain harmony in both the family and the church.
>
> Paul was not excusing Adam for his part in the Fall (Genesis 3;6-7, 17-19). On the contrary, Paul placed primary blame for mankind's sinful nature on Adam (Romans 5:12-21).

9. In what way did Paul say that women would be saved? (2:15)

_____

> There are several interpretations of verse 15:
> (1) Man sinned and so men were condemned to hard labor. Woman sinned and so women were condemned to pain in childbearing. Both men and women, however, can be saved through trusting Christ and obeying Him.
> (2) Women who fulfill their God-given roles are demonstrating true commitment and obedience to Christ. One of the most important roles for a wife and mother is to care for her family.
> (3) The childbirth mentioned refers to the birth of Jesus Christ. Women (and men) are saved spiritually because of the most important birth, that of Christ Himself.
> (4) From the lessons learned through the trials of childbirth and all that includes (the marriage relationship, parenting, caretaking, etc.) women can develop qualities that teach them about love, trust, submission and, finally, service.

- **UNDERSTANDING**

10. What does it mean to dress modestly?

_____

11. How does your church understand and apply Paul's restrictions on women?

_____

_____

12. How are women incorporated into the leadership of The Most Excellent Way ministry at your church?

_____

_____

13. Women only: What opportunities for service are you interested in pursuing?

_____

_____

14. Women only: Are you comfortable with Paul's restrictions on women? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

- **DOING THE WORD**

15. How can you focus your attention on Christian service and worship of God over outward appearance?

_____

_____

_____

16. Who are the women leaders in your church that you admire? Why?

_____

_____

_____

17. Women only: What do you think about your role as a women? Explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. Men only: How can you show support for the women in your life?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

May God richly bless you as you study His Word!