

#### 4. Learning How Women Minister Effectively

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to pray for the salvation of others. We saw that one group that we are to pray for is those who are leaders because they are the ones who make it possible for us to live a quiet and peaceable life as we share the Gospel. We also saw that it is the desire of God for all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. In our topic today, we are going to see that God also shares with women some of the things that they can do to have an effective ministry to others.

In our last topic, we concluded by seeing that God wants men to pray everywhere. That verse is closely related to the instructions to women for effective ministry. 1 Timothy 2:8-10 says, “I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.” Just as men are to pray with holy hands because they have confessed their sins, women are also to confess their sins so that they can pray with holy hands. They are also to pray without anger toward others or with doubts in their own hearts.

Paul went on to talk about some of the other things that will help women to minister effectively. He began this section by pointing out the fact that what we are in our hearts is much more important than how we appear on the outside. As a result, he encouraged the women to focus on the attitudes of the heart instead of their outward appearance. The word that is translated “adorn” means *to arrange or put in order*. 1 Peter 3:3-5 says, “Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel—rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.” Here, we see that both Paul and Peter focused on the inner attitudes rather than the outward appearance.

Often, people use their outer appearance to attract attention to self. Paul and Peter make it clear that it is the inner attitudes of a person that will attract people to God. The only other place the word translated “modest” is used is in 1 Timothy 3:2 where it is translated “*of good behavior*.” That verse says, “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach.” Here, we see that people who have the good behavior that either a man or woman are to have will bring glory to God by the things that they do. Paul made it clear that more people would be attracted to the Lord by the good works of a woman than by a woman who wore fancy hairstyles and expensive clothes.

Paul went on to write in 1 Timothy 2:11-14, “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.” Here we see that this verse begins with a command when it says let the woman learn. In the time of the New Testament, neither the Jewish nor the Greek culture gave women the opportunity to learn. As a result, the church was the first place where the women were

given the opportunity to learn right along with the men. The word that is translated “silence” is translated “quietness” in 2 Thessalonians 3:12 where we read, “Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.” In Thessalonica, the men who were busybodies were told to work in quietness. Here, the women were instructed to learn in quietness since they were being given the opportunity to learn.

We see that there was a very important reason why women were to be given the opportunity to learn the Word of God. Titus 2:3-5 says, “The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” Here, we see that God gave the older women the responsibility to help the younger women in their spiritual growth. The only way that could happen was if the women were given the opportunity to learn the Word of God so that they could teach the next generation of women how to apply the Word of God to their lives. In these verses, we see that this teaching was to include practical instruction for the younger women about how to apply Biblical principles in their daily lives. The women were also to learn with a submissive attitude so that they could make their full potential available to the Lord and to their husbands.

However, in making their full potential available to their Lord and to their husbands, as well as the church, the women were not to misuse their opportunity to learn to try and control their husbands or the church. The word that is translated “permit” means *to allow*. The word that is translated “teach” in this verse means *to be a teacher*. In the context of a meeting of the whole church, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.” Instead of asking their questions in the church service, the women were to ask their husbands at home so that the husbands would learn how to explain the Word of God in their homes as a preparation for explaining the Word of God to people in other situations.

At the same time that a woman was not to teach the whole church, she was to be given opportunities to teach in many other situations. We have already seen that the older women were to teach the younger women. In addition, Acts 18:26 says, “So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” Here, we see that both Aquila and his wife Priscilla were involved in explaining the Word of God to Apollos. As a result, a husband and wife were involved as a teaching team.

In the context of the whole church and with her husband, there was one other thing that Paul said the woman was not allowed to do. Here, we see that a woman was not to have authority over a man. The word that is translated “have authority” means *one who acts on his or her own authority*. Matthew 28:18 says, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” Here, we see that all authority has been delegated to Christ by the Father. In 1 Peter 5:2-3, the elders of the church are told, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but

eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” Then, 1 Corinthians 11:3 says, “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.” In the church, the elders are to take the leadership and oversight; and in the home, the husband is to take the leadership and oversight. Both the elders of the church and the husband in the home are to exercise their authority under the authority of Christ and to lead by their godly example.

This exercise of authority by the elders and the husband is delegated to the elders and the husband. Leadership is delegated to the man because he was formed first. Adam failed to exercise that leadership and Eve was the one who was deceived. Men are to take leadership because they are the ones that are held accountable by God for the way that they exercise their delegated authority. Genesis 3:6 says, “So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” Adam failed to take that responsibility even though this verse says that he was right there with his wife. As a result, Adam was the one held accountable in Genesis 3:9-11 where we read, “Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where *are* you?’ So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’ And He said, ‘Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?’” Part of a husband’s responsibility is to protect his wife from deception.

Although Eve committed sin and was guilty when she disobeyed God, we see that God chose to show His grace to women in a special way. 1 Timothy 2:15 says, “Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.” The word that is translated “she shall be saved” means *to save, to preserve, to heal or to restore*. Here we see that it talks about the ministry that God gives to mothers who are a part of the church. Because mothers usually spend much more time with children during the early years of their lives than their fathers, they have the privilege to influence the next generation of godly leaders who will provide leadership in the home and in the church.

As a result, mothers are told that they will have a very positive impact as they continue in faith, love and holiness with self-control. According to 2 Timothy 1:5, Timothy had been greatly influenced by the faith of his mother and grandmother. Mothers also have a great opportunity to demonstrate godly love to their children. Finally, as they exercise self-control so that they live a godly life, they will give their children an example to follow. May the Lord richly bless you as you help women to learn to minister effectively in the church and in the home.