

Captive's Corner



"Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"

2 Corinthians 10:5

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The Woman's Role in Ministry

And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good" - Genesis 1:31. His creation was functioning according to His will, and "God ... rested" - Gen. 2:2. Today, the key to a happy and fulfilled life for us is to know God's role for us and accept gladly His place of appointment - to fit in with His plan. He has a purpose for all His creation; therefore, He has a purpose for me. My responsibility is to discern that purpose clearly revealed in His Word. Notice

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in the creation of man and woman in Genesis 2 that there is a difference in order, manner, and purpose. This distinction is key to understanding a woman's role in the church. Paul wrote to Timothy: "I do not allow a woman to teach, nor to have authority over the man, but to be in silence; for Adam was first formed then Eve" - 1 Timothy 2:12-13. Dealing with the subject of headship (authority), 1 Cor 11:3,8,9 says, "... the head of the woman is the

man... for the man is not of the woman but the woman is of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man." So we see that the woman is honored and blessed by God as she helps the man fulfill his God appointed role, not as she attempts to lead or rule over him - Gen 1:28. In His wise design God created male and female. He put the difference there - Matt 19:4. Man and woman were to be complementary, not competitive - each contribution put in them by God. The one formed first is to lead; the one formed second and from him is to follow and give support. This is God's appointed order.

In Genesis 3 we see that after God had spoken in Genesis 2:16-17 Eve chose to believe Satan instead. This brought judgment upon God's physical creation. God said, "You will surely die!" Satan said, "You will not die." This was the heart of the matter and still is today. The key to living the Christian life,

In Genesis 2 and 3 we see that woman was 2nd in creation and 1st in the fall. Therefore, a woman is not to teach or have authority over a man in the church - 1 Timothy 2:12-14; 1 Corinthians 11:3,8-9.

functioning the way God intended us to, is to believe what He says. In believing God we take sides with Him against self/flesh, the world, and Satan when they speak to us. As we do, we depend on God (His Spirit within us) to enable us to obey what He says (this is living by faith - Hebrews 11:6; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:6-7). Happy fellowship with God is walking along side Him in agreement - Amos 3:3.

Our perspective is limited and tainted with sin. So we need to look to what God says in order to make right decisions because His perspective is infinite and His will is perfect - Ephesians 5:17. Once we see what God says on a matter, we can be sure that the world, Satan, and the flesh will tell us just the opposite. Our choice then is to either walk proudly in agreement with them or humbly with God. Who's voice am I listening to when I make choices? As believers we are always in fellowship with God or the world, Satan, and the flesh. As Adam and Eve quickly found out, if you want to

walk with God in happy fellowship, you cannot walk with the flesh, Satan, and the world because to do so is sin, and God always takes sides against sin. Therefore, when we sin, we take sides against our Lord, the One Who owns us by creation (He created us) as well as by redemption (He purchased us with His own blood). Thus, we should consider deeply how responsible we are to Him - 2 Timothy 2:19; Micah 6:8. At the heart of every sin is a lie that we have foolishly bought into to satisfy self. In Eve's sin she took the place of leadership - and what tragedy resulted! When we violate God's order and step outside of our assigned role, we can expect nothing but disorder and grief. We reap what we sow. If we are to please God, we must humble ourselves under His mighty hand - 1 Peter

God is pleased with the one who is content to do what He has said, not with the one who appears to man to bear much fruit but does so at the cost of disobeying the Lord's Word, that is 1 Timothy 2, 1 Corinthians 11 and 14; 1 Samuel 16:7.

5:6; James 4:6. As it does with creation, the New Testament also gives us the relationship of the fall to the woman's role in the church: "For I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet ... for it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression" - 1 Timothy 2:12,14. Paul also refers directly to the Law ("He shall rule over you" Genesis 3:16) in 1 Corinthians 14:34 when giving instructions for when the whole church comes together: "Let the

women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says." This message is of critical importance to our world because modern man's belief system has turned from God's revealed truth to his own thoughts and ways. In the church, the message should still be clear, but it is not because we no longer recognize the historical importance of Genesis. Thus, we do not yield humbly to His teachings to us. (They go against our natural thoughts and ways.)

In the New Testament we see in the gospels the ministry of women to Jesus and in Acts and the Epistles the ministry of women in the church. In both cases high praise is given to women and their ministry. Jesus commended the Syrophonecean woman's faith - Mt 15:21-28. Today, more than ever, the church needs women who will stand firm on God's Word as the currents of this world's agenda attempt to pull the church down to its level, esp. our young people. Jesus also praised the poor widow who gave all she had - Luke 21:1-4. Further, our Lord gave some of His most profound revelations about Himself and His Father personally to women. For example, in John 4, although the "Jews had no dealings with Samaritans" (4:9) and a Jewish teacher would not speak to a woman in public (not even his wife), the Lord Jesus conversed with this woman who was a social outcast. He revealed Himself as the Messiah for Whom both Jews and Samaritans looked - a thrilling revelation He had given to no one else! The woman believed and so witnessed about Him in her city that many of her neighbors came to Him and believed also. Another example of the Lord revealing some of His most profound revelations is in John 11:25. To Martha He first said, "I am the

resurrection and the life; He that believes in Me, though he was dead, yet shall he live. . . ." At the house of Martha and Mary in Bethany, Mary "Sat at Jesus' feet and heard His Word" - Luke 10:39. The Lord Jesus made it plain that this was pleasing to Him. He did not relegate Mary to the kitchen but respected her desire and her ability to learn of His teaching. At the same time He did not downgrade Martha's service, but gently showed her that He wants us more than He wants our service. We must take time to sit at His feet and learn from Him. The condition of our heart toward Him is more important to Him than the outward appearance and quantity of our work in the church. God is pleased with the one who is content to do what He has said, not with the one who appears to man to bear much fruit but does so at

the cost of disobeying the Lord's Word, i.e. 1 Timothy 2, 1 Corinthians 11 and 14; 1 Samuel 16:7 etc. Disobeying God is flesh, not fruit. God pleasing, God honoring, and true fruit bearing service is the natural outflow of a heart content with humble obedience to God. When His will becomes our will, we will be greatly used of God, bear much fruit, and our joy will be full - John 15:1-16; 2 Chronicles 16:9. C.C. Ryrie

notes that whenever ministry is spoken of as being rendered directly to Jesus, it is the ministry of either angels or women! How blessed one is to be among those who ministered to our Lord! In the example mentioned above He was welcomed and cared for by two devoted sisters. Also, there was apparently a group of women willing to suffer the discomforts of the traveling ministry of Jesus in order to care for the needs of the Lord and His disciples - Matthew 27:55; Luke 8:23. Our Lord further honored women by appearing to them first after His resurrection. They had the privilege and honor of carrying the good news of His resurrection to His disciples - John 20:1-18. As far as we know, none of the disciples were at the cross except John, but the women were there - Matthew 27:55! At the empty tomb, the women were there. As a result, their sorrow was turned to joy, and they ran to tell others the good news. It still rings true today that if we are occupied on Him, humbly submitted to His Word, our sorrow will be turned into joy - Is.40:31; 57:15!

The Apostle Paul also benefited from and gave high compliment to the ministry of women. Timothy was charged with carrying on where Paul would leave off. We learn in 2 Timothy 1:5 that two women (Timothy's mother and grandmother) were responsible for carefully teaching young Timothy "the holy Scriptures" relating to his salvation - 2 Timothy 3:15. Can you imagine the joy of Lois and Eunice even in heaven as they hear the angels make mention of Timothy laboring with and after the apostle Paul, and that two letters which Paul wrote to Timothy are now included in God's Word to man. Lois and Eunice had not labored in vain had they, in devoting themselves to nurturing and teaching young Timothy in the home?! Their labor was greatly rewarded as Paul and now us as well as the whole world are benefiting from their labor of love. The true magnitude of it is obviously not comprehensible to us, but the Lord knows - Hebrews 6:10. The

children women bear and rear, teaching and nurturing them in the home, are the church's future overseers/shepherds, teachers, missionaries, servants, etc. - 1 Timothy 2:15. Paul instructed more mature women to teach younger women to live in a way that pleases God - Titus 2:3-5. In 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 we see that when men are not present and, thus, the women can take an active role as leader (as exemplified above in ministering to children and other women) she is commanded to wear a head covering. As she does, she teaches by example the wisdom of God in His order in creation and, thus, in His church. Her silence when men are present in the assembly examples this also. Praying and prophesying are specifically mentioned because when one prays out loud when the church is assembled, they are at that moment taking the lead in speaking to God, and when one prophesies, they take the lead in speaking to the assembly - 1 Corinthians 14:3. For more

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information on the subject of head coverings, read the Captive's Corner *To God Be The Glory*. This world is waiting for a vision of what can be done through women's ministry as women reach out to other women and through them to countless children, husbands, and friends.

In Romans 16 and Philippians 4:2-3 Paul names several women, describing them as servants, helpers, and laborers in the early church. Priscilla was even willing to give her life for Paul's sake. In Acts 9:36-41 Dorcas is called a "disciple" as she lived out the new life within her by her love and care for others in making coats and garments for the needy in the church. She exemplified the kind of faith that works, true faith - Ephesians 2:8-10. Lydia is another example in Acts 16:11-15. When the Lord opened her heart to know Him, she opened her home in a ministry of hospitality to Paul and others which marked the opening of the

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continent of Europe to the gospel. See also 1 Peter 4:9 and Hebrews 13:2. As you can see, the ministry of women in the New Testament to Jesus, Paul, and the church in general is prominent and inexpressible in its value. Two thousand

years later the ministry of women is no less important and essential for the body of Christ to fulfill its mission in the family, the local church, and the world. In each of these areas the scope and magnitude of needs and opportunities is too great to

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cover in a book, much less in this short paper. But, a servant's heart sees the needs and springs into action as Lydia, Dorcas, Eunice, etc. did. Prayer, certainly, is one of the greatest ministries of all and, perhaps, the most neglected in the church. Helping and supporting men in their role of leadership and teaching is also vital (just as every army needs ten men working behind the lines for every frontline soldier). Someone said, "If people measure their lives by what others do for them, they are going to be very disappointed and unfulfilled, but if they measure life by what they do for others, there is no time for despair." Ask yourself: "What higher honor could there be than to be called a servant of the church or a helper in Christ Jesus?" -Rom 16:1-3.

In closing, the ministry of women is essential for the body of Christ to mature.

Every member has been gifted and empowered by God's Spirit to serve. Yet, no one person has all the gifts. Therefore, each member is dependant on the rest of the body to use his or her gifts in service to others. For every need there is a gift, but is there a willing servant? As for knowing your gift, take advantage of every opportunity to serve Christ and His body. In doing so, look for the areas in your church that need more attention, e.g. do you see more compassion is needed? Such burdens may point to the area of gift God has given you, i.e. the gift of mercy. Further, consider what service you do that you really enjoy and that others seem to really be blessed by. This too could be an indication of your gift - 2 Corinthians 3:1-3. Above all, love others, looking out for their interests as you would your own. This will always lead to active and effective service. See also Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-16. Now fix your eyes on Jesus Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross so that we would no longer serve self but serve the living God - Hebrews 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:15. He will enable you to do all He has purposed for you!

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