

Gender Roles In The
Assembly:
Elder's Wrap Up

OVERVIEW

- Today's Purpose: To wrap up this quarter's study (Not to be a complete study)
- Background: The history of our studies of this topic
- Guidelines: How to study the Bible
- Findings:
 - High Level
 - Contradicting Passages?
 - Other Issues Against Traditional or Complimentarian Views
 - Possible approaches
 - The Elders' Conclusions
- Path Forward:
 - What changes, if any, will we make?
 - Guidelines For Our Discussion

BACKGROUND

We have studied the issue of Gender Roles In The Assembly three times:

1. In late 2013 and the results were presented in the auditorium & are on the website
 2. In early 2018 and the results were presented in the auditorium and are on the website
 3. In this 12-week study in the combined adult/teen's class & the lessons are on the website
- Each of these studies has gone progressively deeper
 - However, in all three cases the findings have been the same

GUIDELINES FOR BIBLE STUDY

1. No Contradictions:

- Scripture is God's word. God does not contradict Himself, nor does Scripture
- If our understanding of one passage appears to be in conflict with another, we don't understand it or them correctly

2. Context & Consistency

- Understand the context of the passage
- Treat everything in the context consistently – don't pick and choose
- It has to fit with the rest of the chapter, book, testament, and Bible

3. No Blinders:

- Don't read the Bible through our "traditional" lenses
- Read to understand how God intended for us to live our lives

FINDINGS: High Level

Main Question: Do 1st Cor 14:34 & 35 and 1st Timothy 2: 11 & 12 mean that women everywhere must remain silent and cannot teach men?

As we will see, using the study guidelines it is fairly straightforward to realize that reading those passages in that manner is improper as it puts them in conflict with other passages in the same chapter, in other books by the same author, and in many other books of the Bible.

Second Question: If the answer to the main question is “no”, then what do those passages mean?

What takes more study, and what we’ve spent the last 12 weeks on, is what Paul actually did mean in those passages. Our understanding is that it is highly probable that Paul was countering gnostic claims as well as addressing issues arising from pagan temple worship practices that were rampant in the cities to which he wrote – Corinth and Ephesus.

FINDINGS: Contradicting Passages?

The Only Passages Appearing to Say Women Are To Be Silent or Cannot Teach

- 1st Cor 14: 34 & 35 “Women should remain silent”
- 1st Timothy 2:11 & 12 “I do not permit ... teach”

Our traditional approach of reading the above passages as saying women must be silent in the assemblies ignores the fact that reading them that way contradicts many other passages in the Bible where women took a leading role.

Last, it directly contradicts what Paul said in Galatians 3: 28 - “...nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”.

Some Of The Many Passages Where Women Led or Taught

- 1st Cor 14: 26 – 33 Women & men praying, singing, & teaching
- 1st Cor 11: 5 Women praying & prophesying
- Acts 18: 26 Priscilla taught Apollos
- Acts 2: 17 Your sons and daughters will prophesy
- Micah 6: 4 Miriam led God’s people
- Judges 4: 4 Deborah was a prophet
- 2nd Kings 22 Huldah was a prophet
- Rom 16: 1 Phoebe – a minister or deacon
- Rom 16:7 Junia – an apostle
- Colossians 3:16 Singing is teaching & admonishing
- John 20: 18 Mary was commissioned by Jesus himself to deliver the message that He was risen

FINDINGS: Other Issues Against Traditional or Complementarian Views

- No differentiation in scripture between locations for assemblies. In other words, the idea of “class time” vs “worship” is one that man has contrived to get around a perceived issue.
- Spiritual gifts are not ever connected with gender in the New Testament. Again, in Galatians 3: 28 Paul said “...nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”. So why are we not using all of the gifts?
- Choosing to follow at face value the statement in 1st Timothy that “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet” without following the other 6 things in the same passage flies in the face of our study guidelines.

POSSIBLE APPROACHES

Guideline 1 No Contradictions	Guideline 2 Context & Consistency	Guideline 3 No Blinders
-------------------------------------	---	----------------------------

1. FACE VALUE: The difficult passages mean exactly what they appear to say, & women cannot speak or teach in any fashion in any assembly, men must pray with their hands raised, and women cannot wear gold, pearls, or expensive clothing



2. PICK & CHOOSE: Out of a list of 7 things in only 5 verses we could choose to accept only 2 of them – the ones about women being silent & teaching



3. SPECIFIC ISSUES: The two difficult passages are dealing with specifics in the two churches – Ephesus & Corinth



THE ELDERS' CONCLUSION

- The only answer that is consistent with the ground rules of studying Scripture is that Paul's statements in 1st Corinthians and 1st Timothy are to be understood as addressing issues specific to those churches – Corinth and Ephesus.
- In other words, Paul did not tell us that all women everywhere must remain silent and cannot teach.
- Therefore women can scripturally do everything a man can do in the assembly. In other words, it is scripturally appropriate for a woman to preach, lead singing, make announcements, pass communion, read scripture, teach a class or lead the congregation in prayer, etc.
- We realize that this doesn't fit with our traditions. But our aim as leaders of this church is to apply teachings in a way that is consistent with Scripture, regardless of tradition.
- Having said that, Paul said in 1 Cor 10 that "I have the right to do anything" – but not everything is constructive." Therefore we have to balance "right" with being constructive.

PATH FORWARD

- Four years ago we said:
 - We will not have women as Elders, Deacons, or Evangelists
 - We will have women “prophesy”, as appropriate, and we will do that in what we consider worship or class settings.
 - One near-term plan is for the ladies who are currently in India to provide us with a first-hand view to their trip and how God used them to touch the lives of others.
 - We are not going to have women as active, up front teachers in our classes that include adult men.
- Now we need to figure out what our to-be path forward is for the next several years:
 - The Elders have not made a decision with regard to our path forward.
 - Instead, we want to hear from you. For the remainder of today’s class period we will hold a “listening” session where you tell us what you think. What should change? How fast should we change? What concerns do you have?
 - If not everyone has had their opportunity to speak today then next week we will have another listening session.
 - In addition, if you want to meet with us privately we are happy to do that.
 - Then after all of the input has been provided the elders will determine the path forward for the next few years and present it in the auditorium – probably on May 20th.
 - Our intent is to do a thorough job setting out our freedoms and plans such there will be no disagreement due to terminology.
 - In addition, we will have this plan, this path forward, set out in prominent places so that all who come understand what the Bible actually says with regard to this topic.

GUIDELINES FOR THE DISCUSSION

- Notice that Paul's statement in 1 Cor 10 that "I have the right to do anything, but not everything is constructive" is just prior to getting into the chapters we've been studying.
- Three chapters later in the same book, sandwiched between the very chapters we've just been studying, he wrote what we call the Love chapter. In other words, those instructions were written to the church in Corinth who were going through issues with gender roles in the assembly.
- So we must treat each other with love, even if we disagree
- And with that we will open the floor to those who have questions or comments. But, we want everyone to be able to hear as we want everyone to know how others feel, so if you speak softly we will bring a microphone to you so that others can hear. In addition, we are going to stop the recording at this time to make things less intrusive for you. We are all family, so tell us what you think – with love.