

# Biblical Notes — 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

**34-35 – The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. [35] If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.** (34. αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν· οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν, ἀλλὰ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει. 35. εἰ δέ τι μανθάνειν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοῦς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν· αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ)

“Let your women keep silence ... - This rule is positive, explicit, and universal. There is no ambiguity in the expressions; and there can be no difference of opinion, one would suppose, in regard to their meaning. The sense evidently is, that in all those things which he had specified, the women were to keep silence; they were to take no part. He had discoursed of speaking foreign languages, and of prophecy; and the evident sense is, that in regard to all these they were to keep silence, or were not to engage in them. These pertained solely to the male portion of the congregation. These things constituted the business of the public teaching; and in this the female part of the congregation were to be silent. “They were not to teach the people, nor were they to interrupt those who were speaking” - Rosenmuller. It is probable that, on pretence of being inspired, the women had assumed the office of public teachers. In 1 Corinthians 11:4, and he had shown, that “on that account,” and “in that manner,” it was improper for them to assume the office of public teachers, and to conduct the devotions of the church. The force of the argument in 1 Timothy 2:11-12.”

— Albert Barnes, Albert Barnes Commentary, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 14:34.

“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. (1 Timothy 2:11-12) For women to speak in public would be an act of independence, as if they were not subject to their husbands (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1). For “under obedience” [ *hupotassesthoosan* (Greek #5293), as A B 'Aleph (') read; or the infinitive, as Delta G f g, Vulgate], translate 'in subjection' or 'submission,' as the Greek is translated Ephesians 5:21-22; Ephesians 5:24. The Law - the whole Old Testament here (Genesis 3:16)”

— Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible - Unabridged, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 14:34.

---

## Titus 1:5-16 NASB

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, [6] namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. [7] For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, [8] but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, [9] holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. [10] For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, [11] who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. [12] One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." [13] This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, [14] not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. [15] To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. [16] They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

## 1 Timothy 2:11-15 NASB

A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. [12] But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. [13] For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. [14] And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. [15] But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

---

Noteworthy is the fact that in each of these three passages Paul takes his readers back to the creation account to show that his teaching is in accord with the Old Testament (see 1 Corinthians 11:7-9; 14:34b; and 1 Timothy 2:13). The apostle is saying that what he is teaching in these epistles has been the case from the beginning. God established this authority structure at the time of creation, and it is not to be altered. The Biblical position elucidated by Paul on this matter, in the words of Warfield, is “precise, absolute, and all inclusive.”<sup>5</sup> And as Gordon Clark commented, when the apostle says “that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37), he deals “the crushing blow to those who reject any of Paul’s instructions on the ground that they are culturally conditioned.”<sup>6</sup>

As Warfield pointed out nearly a century ago, whereas the feminist movement sees the woman as just another individual alongside of man, with no differences between the two, the Bible, while clearly recognizing the ontological equality of men and women, also identifies authority structures. The man has authority over the woman.<sup>7</sup> Women are not permitted to teach men publicly, in the church; to do so would violate the authority structure which God has established in his church from the beginning of time. Calvin agreed. The role of teaching, wrote the Geneva Reformer, has to do with authority. Since the woman is under authority, "she is consequently, prohibited to teach in public."<sup>8</sup>

5. Warfield, "Paul on Women Speaking in Church," 215.

6. Gordon H. Clark, First Corinthians (The Trinity Foundation, 1991), 248.

7. Warfield, "Paul on Women Speaking in Church," 215.

8. John Calvin, Commentaries, Volumes 1-22 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), Commentary on 1 Corinthians 14:34. Calvin went on to say that women should never be in any position of governing authority. He wrote: "And unquestionably, wherever even natural propriety has been maintained, women have in all ages been excluded from the public management of affairs. It is the dictate of common sense, that female government is improper and unseemly."

Website References: <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=253>

<https://bible.org/seriespage/9-what-does-it-mean-not-teach-or-have-authority-over-men-1-timothy-211-15>