

# Women Teachers



**A Series of Articles by Arthur M. Ogden**

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# Women Teachers #1

The role of Christian women in the service of God has been one of concern to the people of God since the church began. We are still concerned today and I thank God for it. When the time comes that we cannot be aroused to study this issue, we will be in real trouble as far as other vital issues are concerned. A brother recently wrote, "I . . . note that this and related questions are being discussed more lately, and I believe it is a good thing." I heartily agree. We should always be interested in this and all other Bible subjects and study them to the fullest.

I believe the interest in the subject of "women teachers" is the highest it has been for years. Perhaps the reasons for this are twofold: (1) A new generation of Christians need to have the long standing questions of yesteryear answered to their satisfaction as did past generations, and (2) an element of opposition to "women teachers" has arisen with strong voices challenging our liberty in Christ which permits women to be teachers within certain boundaries. Cries for answers and for help are coming from many quarters. These cries should be heeded.

For the past thirteen years, I have lived in a section where the questions have been many and the opposition strong. Many long hours have been spent in search of the Truth on the subject, so that the questions could be answered and the opposition met. In this and coming issues of *Truth Magazine*, I shall discuss with you this *issue* as thoroughly as I possibly can. Attention is to be given to scriptural affirmations of women's role in teaching, as well as to a full discussion of those passages which restrict them in teaching, You are asked to weigh carefully the views expressed in these articles by the scriptures. I believe them to be the Truth, and that they will stand the test of the fiercest storm. They have already been tested and tried by the meticulous scrutiny of the opposition's strongest advocates, men who are capable of uncovering the slightest flaw in any argument, and they have stood the test without *one single serious challenge being registered against them*. The truth will always stand.

## The Charge of the Great Commission

"Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations**, baptizing **them** in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching **them** to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19-20). This is the commission given by the Lord to the Apostles after His resurrection and before His ascension to heaven. There are three parts to the commission and women are included in all three:

1. The Apostles were commanded to "Go teach all nations, baptizing them." Women were baptized (Acts 8:12), so therefore, women are included on the first part of the great commission.
2. The Apostles were commanded *to teach those who were baptized*. Since women were included on the first part, to be baptized, they are likewise included on the second part, *to be taught* after being baptized.
3. The Apostles were to teach those baptized "to observe **all things** whatsoever I have **commanded** you," and since the Lord was in the process of giving them the commandment of the great commission, women were included on the third part, "go teach all nations." Women, therefore, by nature of their inclusion in the great commission are commanded *to teach*.

## Paul's Charge to Timothy

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Though it be in reverse, this charge is the same as that of the great commission. It too may be divided into three parts:

1. **What to teach.** "The things heard of me" (Paul). There should be no question but that Paul referred to the completeness of God's revelation to him (cf. 2 Tim. 1:13; 3:14-17).
2. **Who to teach.** "Commit . . . to faithful **anthropois** (men)," human beings, whether males or females (J.H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 46). Timothy was to teach faithful Christians *to teach*. Paul did not say, "Commit . . . to faithful **andras** (males)." If he had said *males* he would have excluded women from the charge, and I suggest that if he had intended to exclude women from the charge, he would have said **andras** (males). But instead he used **anthropois** (human beings) and by so doing, included women in the charge to be taught *to teach*.
3. **Why to teach.** "Who shall be able **to teach others** also." Isn't this identical to the great commission? Faithful Christians are to be taught to teach others.

A careful study of the scriptures will show that women can teach *some* others. She can teach by singing (Col. 3:16); be a teacher of good things (Tit. 2:3-5); teach her children (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15); and even teach men under some circumstances (Acts 18:26). Are we to conclude that women can, or cannot be taught to do this teaching? Some would have us believe that women are excluded from 2 Timothy 2:2. If they are excluded, we must of necessity exclude them from Matthew 28:19-20, and Titus 2:3-5 also. It would also drive them from every place where teaching is done, lest they learn what to teach. This is the end to which error drives one.

## Women are Limited

It should be observed that if women are not limited in their work of teaching, they could teach anybody, anytime, and under any condition. They would have been included in the two above charges to the same degree that men were. But the word of God limits them. (1) They are to "keep silence in the churches" (1 Cor. 14:34-35), and (2) they are not "to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man" (1 Tim. 2:12). While these two restrictions limit her in teaching, they do not stop her. She can teach anybody, anytime, anywhere, and under any condition that does not place her in the position of addressing the assemblies described in 1 Corinthians 14, and that does not cause her to violate her submission to man as described in 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

## The Charge Implemented

In Titus 2:1-10, the charge of Matthew 28:19-20, and 2 Timothy 2:2 is implemented by commandment to Titus. Read it carefully. You will notice that Paul identifies five classes of Christians, and makes provisions for them to be taught: aged men, aged women, young women, young men, and servants. It is *right* to classify people according to age status, etc. Titus was instructed to teach four of the five classes. Where? When? What method? What arrangement? Paul did not say, so therefore, these matters were left to human judgement.

Who and what to teach were not matters of judgment however. They were commanded, but within the scope of the commands given, *generic authority* prevails and allows or permits the methods and arrangements, even the implementation of the principles of 2 Timothy 2:2.

The aged or *older* women were commanded to teach the *younger* women. Without question, women are *commanded* to teach. They are to be "teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women . . ." (v. 3-4). When? Where? What method? What arrangement? Paul did not say, and therefore, these matters are again left to human judgment, and women may fulfill their *commanded* duty according to the fullness of their ability at anytime, and in any place, and under any condition that does not place her in a position of violating either 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 or 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

## Christian Women of the New Testament

A number of Christian women are mentioned in the New Testament and commended for their part in the spread of the gospel. It should be remembered that every one of these women were under the restrictions of the law of Christ, and if they so labored without violating the law of God, then Christian women today, at the same time, and in the same place, and under the same conditions can likewise work without violating the restrictions of God's law.

1. Christian women prophesied (Acts 2:17; 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:1-5). These women under the guidance of *divine inspiration* exhorted, edified, and comforted (1 Cor. 14:3), but they did not do it in the assemblies of the whole church (1 Cor. 14:34-35), but they did not do it where it caused them to violate their submission to man (1 Tim. 2:11-12). I maintain that Christian women today can do the same things without violating any passage of scripture. You must conclude that, or be forced to the position that God endowed Christian women to *violate* His law.
2. Priscilla assisted her husband, Aquila, in teaching Apollos (Acts 18:26). She was not in the *assembly* of 1 Corinthians 14, and therefore was permitted to have a part in this teaching, as long as she did not ignore her place of submission as taught in 1 Timothy 2:11-12.
3. Phoebe was appointed by the church at Cenchrea to do a work, and Paul gave his approval by encouraging the brethren at Rome "to receive her," and "assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you" (Rom. 16:1-2). While we do not know what her business was, we do know that it was *right* for the church to *appoint* her to do this work, and that she could do it without sin.
4. Rhoda, Dorcas, Syntyche, Euodias, and others could be mentioned, none of which were rebuked for the work performed. Women may therefore, work diligently in the service of God, even by teaching others, and do it within the framework of the law of Christ without violating the restrictions placed upon them. *Do not neglect your duty to God, dear sisters, just because some false teacher keeps shouting, "women are forbidden to teach."* "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

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# Women Teachers #2

## 1 Corinthians 14:34-35: Is it Binding Today?

"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. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Cor. 14:34-35). These are the words of the apostle Paul as directed to our brethren at Corinth. That was over 1900 years ago. Is it still binding today? This is the question before us in this study.

Many brethren do not believe the passage under consideration is binding today. I am not of this persuasion. Being of a conservative mind, I find it difficult to deny the binding force of any passage, and be consistent in recognizing the binding force of other passages. Not only is that true, but I refuse to join the crowd of liberal thinkers in the church and in the denominational world who have thrown this passage and others to the wind, and are now permitting woman to have an equal role with men in religious service. This passage is not a threat to Christian women who desire to serve God in their proper realm. To the contrary, it helps to define for us the lawful realm of their activity and enhances the truth. I will think a long time before I turn loose of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

### A Universal Command

While the 1 Corinthian letter was written to the church at Corinth, it is *universal* in nature and application. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth . . . with **all** that in **every place** call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2). The commandments of this epistle are the same as those taught by Paul in *every church* (1 Cor. 4:16-17). Even the regulations of 1 Corinthians 14 "are the commandments of the Lord" (14:37), and applicable "in **all churches** of the saints" (14:33). It could not possibly be more *generic* than that, so therefore, the commandments of 1 Corinthians 14 are applicable today.

I realize that some of you are saying that since Paul was discussing *spiritual gifts* in this chapter, which gifts have been done away (1 Cor. 13:8-10), that the commandments given to regulate those gifts likewise ceased. If that is what is under consideration in the chapter, I too agree, the commandments ceased, but I challenge the accuracy of the assumption that Paul is regulating *spiritual gifts* in 1 Corinthians 14. Here are my reasons:

1. All needed regulation of the *gifts* were given to each individual endowed at the time the Holy Spirit gave the gifts. The Holy Spirit determined which one, how many, and how much of the gifts would be given to each individual (1 Cor. 12:11). The commandments of chapter 14 had nothing to do with regulating those gifts.
2. The *gifted* individual *himself* regulated the use of his gift once he had received it. This is evidenced by Paul's statement, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Cor. 14:32). Each person endowed had the power over his gift to control it, or God would have been the author of confusion (14:33). That is why they were called *gifts*. They were given to each individual to use at will within the proper confines of law.
3. The regulations of chapter 14 are designed to control the individual who had the gift; *not* the gift itself. Paul's charge, "if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence

in the church" (14:28) was designed to control the man who had the gift of tongues when he was in the assembly of the church. The same thing was true also of the prophets (14:29-30). Paul did not regulate the gifts in the chapter, but rather those *endowed* with the gifts who were participating in the service herein described. The gift was not curbed, but the man possessing it was curbed while in the church.

4. *Not all of those regulated had spiritual gifts.* To say that the women of verses 34-35 were *inspired*, is assumption pure and simple. It is not inferred, much less *necessarily inferred*. If they were inspired, then every Christian woman was inspired, because Paul said, "it is a shame for women (generic) to speak in the church" (14:35). *Every* Christian woman was under the restrictions of this passage.

## The Purpose of These Restrictions

I believe that a careful examination of the text of 1 Corinthians 14 will show that Paul was regulating *order* in the assemblies of the church. He said, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (v. 40); that there be no confusion (v. 33); that all things might be done unto edifying (v. 26); "that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (v. 31). Is it not necessary to likewise maintain *order* today? If so, by what rule; and if not, why not?

It is often reasoned that the commandments of 1 Corinthians 14 are not binding today, but that certain *principles* do apply. May I ask, what principles apply, and are they binding today? and if so, are those principles "the commandments of the Lord" (14:37)? Does the principle "if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church" (v. 28) apply today if one from a foreign country desired to address the whole church in a foreign tongue, and if so, is it a commandment of the Lord? Does the principle of *one speak at a time* apply today (v. 27, 29), and if so, is it a commandment of the Lord? And if these principles apply today, does not the principle of verses 34-35 likewise apply today, and if it does, is it not a commandment of the Lord? Most will agree, but what point have I made, if I say, "1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is not binding today," and then turn around and say that its principle is binding? You only meet yourself coming back.

I maintain that there is no essential difference in their assemblies and ours today. While it is true that many of the participants in those services were miraculously inspired, for this was their only means of receiving the revelation, we can do the same things in the assemblies nonmiraculously today that they did by the Holy Spirit. One may speak in a foreign tongue. One may edify, exhort, and comfort (14:3) as the prophets of 1 Corinthians 14, delivering the same message on the same occasion, and for the same purpose by using the inspired Word, the perfect revelation. I cannot think of one single reason why a man possessing a spiritual gift would need to be regulated when speaking in the assembly of the church, that would not also be true of the man today speaking the same message from the inspired Word of God. The Christian man must be regulated in the assembly of the saints regardless of where he gets his revelation.

## It is Specific and Generic

"Let your women keep silence in the churches ... for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (v. 34-35) is both specific and generic. It is specific as to *where* she is to keep silent, *in the assemblies* (that is: those under consideration), but it is generic as to *who*. *All* Christian women are under the commandment, and in all such like assemblies. The generic

nature of the command covers every Christian woman in every place that compares specifically to that restricted (cf. v. 23). Therefore, every Christian woman today when "in the church" is commanded to "keep silence."

Someone will say, "women cannot sing, then." If we are going from the sublime to the ridiculous, we had just as well say, "she cannot sneeze either," or "whisper to her baby." The truth of the matter is that Paul was discussing those who addressed the assembly, and this is the thing under consideration. If the commandment to "keep silence" forbid her to sing, it would likewise forbid the prophets and the tongue-speakers to sing, for both of them are commanded to "keep silence under certain conditions (v. 28, 30). The context determines the matter in which women were to keep silent. "It is not permitted unto them to speak." They were not permitted to address the assembly.

## Women in Submission

Paul said, "they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (v. 34). Women are still to be "under obedience" today. (1) They are to be obedient to God (Heb. 5:8-9), (2) recognize the general headship of man (1 Cor. 11:1-5; 1 Tim 2:11-12), and (3) submit to the rule of their husbands (Eph. 5:22-24; Tit. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1-6). God's law relative to a woman's relationship to Himself and to Man has not changed. She is still under the same charge to be "under obedience" as she was then. Therefore, from the standpoint of her relationship to God and Man, she is still under commandment to "keep silence in the churches . . . for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

For these and other reasons, I believe that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is still binding today. "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. 3:16).

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# Women Teachers #3

## 1 Corinthians 14: Truth, the Roadblock to Error

Many have concluded, that if 1 Corinthians 14 is binding today, Christian women could not scripturally teach a class of other women or children when the church is arranged in various Bible Classes to study God's Word. This they conclude because Paul said, "Let your women keep silence **in the churches**" (v. 34). They *assume* that "in the churches" means any assembly or class the church may arrange, and upon the basis of this assumption either (1) forbid Christian women to teach Bible Classes, or (2) deny the binding force of the chapter, depending upon which way their reasoning takes them.

The conviction of this scribe is that both conclusions are wrong, and have been reached without proper contextual considerations. *To extend a passage beyond its legitimate boundaries* is error indeed, but *to fail to recognize the right to extend a passage to its lawful limits* is likewise error. We must "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). 1 Corinthians 14 defines for us the proper realm of its application in such a way as to show that the Bible Class arrangement is not and can not be considered as the realm of its specific application, and that those who would so apply it must take it out of its context and apply it contrary to its context. In this article, I shall show its proper place of application, and why it cannot be applied to the Bible Class arrangement.

### The Context

In our last article, we pointed out that Paul was regulating *order* "in the churches" (1 Cor. 14:26, 31, 33, 40). But what does Paul mean by "in the churches?" Common sense tells us that Paul is not talking about the church in either the *universal* or *local* sense, because if he were, any woman obeying the gospel, being added to the church and identified with a local congregation, would have to shut up and never open her mouth again as long as she lived, and he is not talking about the church *building* because the word *church* is never used in the Bible to identify a church building or meeting place. The only other sense in which the word **ekklesia** (church) is used in the New Testament is to identify an *assembly* that has been called together, and that is the meaning of the expression "in the churches" in this text. It means *in the assemblies* that God has called together.

Look now at the context of 1 Corinthians 14. In verses 4, 5, and 12, Paul discusses the "edifying of the church." When we come to verses 18-19, we find the expression "in the church" first used. "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet **in the church** I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." In verse 23, "If therefore **the whole church be come together into one place**, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?" This is where Paul defines "in the church." It is **the whole church come together into one place**. It is further identified and regulated in verses 26-35.



According to this chapter, three acts of worship are identified as practiced in this assembly: (1) edifying (v. 26), (2) praying, and (3) singing (v. 15). Paul's language in 1 Corinthians 11, "when ye come together in the church" (v. 18), and "when ye come together therefore into one place" (v. 20), indicates that this is the same kind of assembly in which the Lord's Supper was observed; that is, an assembly of the whole church together in one place. We also conclude that it is in this same assembly that we *contribute* on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Other passages use the same kind of language to describe an assembly of the whole church (Acts 20:7-8). We have always concluded, and rightly so, that in the absence of other Bible authority, the *Lord's Supper* and the *contribution* are to be observed on the first day of the week when the *whole church* is together. We understand that by Bible authority, edification, prayer, and singing may be engaged in at other times other than the first day of the week, and at times other than when the whole church is together, but we do not understand that this is true of the Lord's supper and giving. They are to be done upon the first day of the week in an assembly of the *whole church*. We defy any man to change it.

This is the place where Paul said he would not speak in tongues (v. 19), and in which he tells all tongue speakers to "keep silence in the church" if no interpreter is present (v. 27-28). This is the same assembly in which Paul instructs certain prophets *to hold their peace* (v. 29-30), and the same assembly in which the women were to "keep silence" (v. 34-35). The place where Paul said for them to "keep silence" is the place where the whole church is together in one place.

## **This Assembly Further Identified**

Careful examination of the context of 1 Corinthians 14 will reveal a number of things that must be remembered which identify this assembly from other arrangements the church might use to carry out its mission. (1) The arrangement of 1 Corinthians 14 is a *Divine Arrangement* regulated by commandments (14: 37) in which Christians are *to do together the things commanded to be done together in an assembly* of the church. (2) It was an arrangement where the whole church was together, with the *unlearned* and *unbelievers* welcome (v. 23). It was not restricted in attendance. (3) It was an arrangement where only one was to speak at a time (v. 27-31), and (4) all other were to keep silence (v. 28, 30). (5) The design of this arrangement was that *all* (the same as the whole of verse 23) learn and be comforted (v. 31). With only one speaking at a time, all learned the same lesson in this arrangement. (6) Here the women were to "keep silence" (v. 34-35). They were not permitted to speak; even ask a question. They were not to address this assembly, but rather to be under obedience.

## **The Bible Class Arrangement**

Having considered the identifying features of the assemblies described in 1 Corinthians 14, and the governing principles of these assemblies, let us now seek to apply them to the Bible Class arrangement. We are told by some that the Bible Class arrangement is the same assembly as that of 1 Corinthians 14. If it is, we should be willing to treat them as the same in all points. If one of the commandments apply to Bible Classes, then all must apply. Let us see if we are willing to accept the consequences.

1. Since it is claimed that both arrangements constitute the assembly of 1 Corinthians 14, then we ought to be able to observe the Lord's Supper and take up the contribution in the Bible Classes. Can we? Can the Adult Class observe the Lord's

Supper and contribute when they see fit, and the Young Men's Class and the Young Women's Class do the same? If you answer that question "No", you have recognized and admitted that the Bible Class arrangement and the assemblies of 1 Corinthians 14 are not the same, and if you answer that question "Yes," you have admitted that we can take a *human arrangement*, for that is what Bible Classes are, and substitute them for the *Divine Arrangement*. The consequence is that you have done away with God's arrangement. If we can substitute one human arrangement for God's arrangement, we can substitute another arrangement and put all the requirements of worship in the home, and thus do away with any assembly. We have fought the Bible Class contribution all of our lives, and the reason for it is that there is no Bible authority for its practice. While the Bible Class arrangement may scripturally be used as an expedient in carrying out the mission of the local church, it may not be substituted for any God ordained arrangement, nor may the regulations given to govern commanded things be used to regulate the realm of expediency.

2. If the Bible Class arrangement is the same as the assembly of 1 Corinthians 14, then all regulations placed upon that assembly must apply to the Bible Classes. Only one could speak at a time therefore, and all other teachers would have to remain silent while all learned from the one speaking. If not, why not? If Christian women must keep silent because Bible Classes are the assembly of 1 Corinthians 14, then likewise only one may speak at a time. We must keep the lamb's legs equal.

I suggest that the Assembly of 1 Corinthians 14 and the Bible Classes are not the same, and for the following reasons (1) One is a Divine Arrangement, while the other is a Human Arrangement. (2) Bible Classes are restricted in attendance, while the assembly (1 Cor. 14) is not. (3) Only one may speak at a time in the assembly, while many may speak at the same time in the various classes as each teacher teaches. (4) All other teachers except the one who has the floor must keep silence in the assembly, while no teacher remains silent during Bible Classes. (5) All learn the same lesson in the assembly, while each unit learns a different lesson in the classes. If the Bible Class arrangement is different in these five points, what makes one think it is the same when it comes to Christian women? I (you) have no right to so abuse the Word of God, and extend it beyond its legitimate boundaries.

One of the stoutest advocates of the "No Women Teacher" theory is on record as saying, "they did not have Bible Classes in the Corinthian church." I do not know how he knows that, but since he does, I wonder what it is that makes him think 1 Corinthians 14 regulates Bible Classes? How could Paul have regulated something that did not exist?

## Conclusion

It is my conviction that the truth will destroy every false doctrine. Every false way will fall before the sharp edges of this two edged sword (Heb. 4:12), but you must handle the sword right (2 Tim. 2:15). You may cut the other fellow if you take hold of the wrong end of the sword, but you will also cut yourself. This is true of every passage, and especially true of 1 Corinthians 14. The truth on this passage supports my position that a woman may teach classes of other women and children, and it destroys the position of those who oppose it, and there is no way that I am going to turn loose of it.

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# Women Teachers #4

## 1 Timothy 2:11,12

### Its Truth, and Its Power

God's revelation is so beautiful; so marvelous. Its bits and pieces so entwined that every partial of it fits harmoniously together to make one complete embodiment of truth. If this were not true, we could never determine when one was teaching the truth, but since every jot and tittle of the truth harmonizes, we can know the truth and expose error. Any position taken on any Bible passage that does not perfectly harmonize with every other passage on that subject must be identified as a *false* position.

In this study, I want us to take a good look at 1 Timothy 2:11-12 in its context, and its relationship to other passages which deal with the same subject, in order that we might harmonize it with all that the Bible says on the subject, and be consistent in our conclusions. Paul said, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:11-12).

### It Must Be Qualified

Those who would forbid Christian women from teaching classes of other women or children quote this passage loud and long. It is their sugar stick. They want to leave the impression that Paul is saying, "I suffer not a woman to teach, period." They know as well as I, that it cannot be so. It *must* be qualified. If it were not qualified, Christian women could not *sing* (Col. 3:16), be teachers of good things (Tit. 2:3), teach their children (2 Tim. 1:5), or even teach as Priscilla did in Acts 18:26. If Paul was saying, "I suffer not a woman to teach period," then we have Christian women doing what Paul forbid. You can see that Paul's statement *must be* qualified, but there is only one way to qualify it and harmonize it with all other passages on the subject, and that is to believe the Truth. The false teacher *will never* harmonize it by his position.

### Thayer on *Didasko*

Some try to qualify it by qualifying the word **didasko** (to teach). *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* is quoted to try and prove their contention. Thayer defines **didasko**, "(a) to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses. (b) To be a teacher. (c) To discharge the office of teacher, conduct oneself as a teacher" (p. 144). Now, it should be remembered that though Thayer is an authority in his field, *he is not an infallible authority*, and when he cites a text as an example of the use of a word according to a given definition, as he cites 1 Timothy 2:12 in conjunction with (a), he is giving his *personal opinion* as to its use in that given text. Thayer did not understand 1 Timothy 2:12 any more than any other false teacher. By giving this restricted meaning to **didasko** in this text, he sought to solve his problem. But Thayer understood that **didasko** meant more than the above definition. He further defines it, "to impart instruction, instil doctrine into one. . . . Col. 3:16; to explain, expound, a thing; to teach one something." You see, **didasko** means all of this, and Thayer knew this, but he seeks to give the meaning of words as *he understands* them to be used in given texts. It should be noted, however, that if Thayer misunderstood a text, he might well misunderstand the use of a given word in that text.

I suggest that the majority of the world's greatest Greek scholars have not agreed with Thayer's use of **didasko** in 1 Timothy 2:12. There are hundreds of them in the translations and more than two-thirds of them recognized that the rendering of **didasko** as "to teach" was the correct rendition in this text. Surely, if **didasko** had had the restricted meaning that Thayer gives it for this text, they would have known it, and would have translated it accordingly, but they did not so translate it. The word means "to teach" and that is the way they translated it.

Look at Thayer's definition again. Note (a) "to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses." One would get the impression from that definition, that Thayer is talking about *preaching* a sermon. Maybe he intended to leave that impression, but if you will check the words "didactic" and "discourse" you will find that these words identify any logical line of reasoning that is "intended to instruct." Now, think about it. Isn't that what we do when we sing spiritual songs (Col. 3:16)? Isn't that the way Eunice and Lois taught Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5), and the way Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos (Acts 18:26)? Surely, all of that teaching was "intended to instruct."

Thayer's second definition is (b) "to be a teacher," The very thing that Paul commands the aged women to be in Titus 2:3. He said they were to be "teachers of good things." You see, you cannot qualify 1 Timothy 2:12 by Thayer's definition. The same is true of his third definition.

## Other Qualifications

When false teachers use Thayer's definition to qualify the passage, they realize that they have forbidden women to be teachers in the Public School System, so they must qualify it even further. They then say 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 are parallel passages and both apply "in the church." We sing *in the church*, don't we? So, therefore, according to this false position women cannot *sing* "in the church." Also, since false teachers seek to qualify the text by *in the church*, they leave the door open for women to teach and usurp authority over men at any time and place that is not described as *in the church*. I tell you, they cannot harmonize 1 Timothy 2:11-12 with the Bible. They cannot harmonize it with their own teaching.

To further qualify their false position on 1 Timothy 2:12, false teachers will say that a woman is not to be a teacher in "any class the church may arrange." This is supposed to permit women to teach by example, teach her children, be a teacher of good things, and even teach as Priscilla did in helping to teach Apollos, as long as the church does not arrange it. The problem with it is, (1) Paul did not say it, and (2) it still will not permit women to sing in any grouping "the church has arranged."

Recognizing that the above qualifications would not forbid Christian women from teaching any group that would not be described as "in the church" or "class the church may arrange," false teachers are forced to further qualify it. They usually add *in public* or *in worship*. Even that addition will give them no comfort for it too prohibits women from *singing* (worship) in the *public* assemblies of the church.

All of these and other qualifications are put on 1 Timothy 2:11-12 in an effort to sustain a false doctrine. Recently, in public debate, I charged my opponent with changing God's Word to read: "But I suffer not a woman to teach (that is: be a teacher, deliver a didactic discourse), in the church, or in any class the church may arrange, or in public, or in worship; nor to usurp

authority over the man, but to be in silence." He accepted this and his and Mr. Thayer's rendition of the passage. It certainly is not what the Bible says.

## The Truth Harmonized

There can be no substitute for the truth. As stated in the first paragraph of this article, the truth perfectly harmonizes with every partial of it. There is no lie of the truth (1 Jno. 2:21). When the truth on 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is found, it too harmonizes perfectly with every other passage. Let us consider the context.

In the first seven verses of the chapter, Paul talks about God's will for all men to be saved through Jesus Christ who died for all, and that he had been ordained to preach the gospel to them. In verse 8 he says, "I will therefore that men (Greek; **andras**, males) pray every where." 'The nature of this statement in view of its context shows that women cannot pray every where. Why? The same reason women are told in verses 9-12 to (1) dress modestly, (2) "learn in silence with all subjection," (3) not "to teach," and (4) "nor to usurp authority over the man." The reason is her *relationship to man*. She cannot pray everywhere because of her relationship to man (cf. 1 Cor. 11:1-16). She is to be in subjection" (v. 11), and she is "not to usurp authority over the man " (v. 12). She cannot pray or teach in any capacity that causes her to violate her submission to man, but when she does not sustain a relationship to any man, she *cannot* violate the passage. That is why she does not violate it when she teaches a class of other women or children. In these classes she does not have a relationship to men when teaching.

Paul then gives the reasons for the regulation. (1) "Adam was first formed," and (2) "Adam was, not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (v. 13-14). The first reason is as old as Eve, and the second nearly as old (Gen. 3:16). From the beginning it was not so that woman should violate and ignore their submission to man and she must not do so even today, but let us not dare to forbid Christian women to do what they are commanded to do.

Women are commanded to sing (Col. 3:16), and they can do so as long as they do not violate their submission to man. Likewise, they can be teachers of good things, teach the younger women (Tit. 2:3-5), teach by example, teach their children (2 Tim. 1:5), and. teach like Priscilla (Acts 18:26), and do it all without violating their submission to man and without' exercising authority over man. That is the truth about it, and it is the *only* way 1 Timothy 2:11-12 can be harmonized with those passages teaching women to teach.

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# Women Teachers #5

## Wells Without Water

This is the fifth Article in a series on "Women Teachers." In the four previous Articles, I have sought to show that the truth on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 permits Christian women to teach classes of other women and children. These two passages do not forbid it.

In this the final study in this series, I am turning my attention to a consideration of some positions taken by some of our brethren on the subject before us, which I feel are out of harmony with the truth. These arguments are "Wells Without Water" and hinder the cause of truth. I assure you, that the things presented for consideration in this article are not intended just to find fault. They are presented that you might prayerfully consider them for their merit, with the hope that by logic and reason, we can come to present an impregnable front to the force of error. I beg you to consider them carefully in the same spirit with which they are written. If they are in error, feel free to call them to my attention.

### Public and Private

I once attended a debate on the subject of "Women Teachers," in which about half of the time was spent trying to prove that the real point at issue was whether Bible Classes are *public* or *private*. The disputants argued for hours on the point. Both must have been under the impression that Paul said, "I suffer not a woman to teach *in public*," and "Let your women keep silence *in public*." The Bible does not read that way, however, and I suggest that until it does, there is absolutely no reason to discuss the point.

Call Bible Classes *public* or *private*, it does not matter. It has nothing to do with the issue. The truth is, Christian women are not permitted to violate their submission to man anywhere, whether public or private, and she *can* teach anywhere, whether public or private, that does not place her in the position of addressing the assembly of the whole church (1 Cor. 14:34-35), and that does not place her in a position of ignoring her submission to man (1 Tim. 2:11-12).

Arguing the issue over public and private with those who are opposed to "Women Teachers" is a serious mistake. First of all, you join hands with the false teachers, saying, "in public" is what qualifies 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, and 1 Timothy 2:11-12. That is an error within itself. It is a disaster to try and qualify these passages with "in public" as we have already seen. Secondly, you find yourself in an endless battle of meaningless words which prove nothing. The words *public* and *private* are *relative* words and their meaning cannot be pinpointed to be absolute. So what may be in one sense public, may in another sense be private. According to Webster's definitions of *public* and *private*, Bible Classes may be considered as both. I have found in my experience that the admission of the fact that Bible Classes are public is a thorn in the flesh to the opposition. Since most of their arguments are based upon Bible Classes being public, they are at a loss for words when you admit that they are public.

## The Prophet's Wives

Many brethren have been arguing for years that in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Paul is talking about the "prophet's wives," and since we have no prophets today, the passage is not binding. The argument is based upon the premise that Paul had been addressing the prophets (v.29-33), and since he says, "let **your** women" in verse 34, it is felt that he is speaking of the prophet's wives. Support is also found for this position in Paul's statement, "let them ask their husbands at home" (v. 35).

I find great dissatisfaction in this argument. First, because it is built upon false premises, and second, because it ignores plain statements. The premise that Paul is addressing the prophets is *false*. Nowhere in these verses does Paul direct his remarks to the prophets. We must go all the way back to verse 26 to find those addressed. "How is it then, brethren?" The remarks following are directed to the *brethren* regarding the tongue-speakers, the prophets, and the women. The brethren were to "let the prophets speak" (v. 29), and "let your women keep silence" (v. 34). The brethren were to regulate order in this assembly (v. 40). This involved bringing their ("your") women "under obedience" to "keep silence in the churches." "Your women" were the women of the church, and it included all Christian women, for Paul said, "It is a shame for women to speak in the church" (v. 35). To limit this passage to the prophet's wives is to ignore the fact that the command covers *every* Christian woman.

Let us suppose for a moment that the application of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 was just to the prophet's wives. Would that not mean that all other Christian women were not under the restrictions of the passage? Could all other women speak in the church? If not, why not? And if not, *what is the point of the prophet's wives argument?* Can Christian women today speak in the churches? If not, why not? And again, what is the point of the prophet's wives argument?

1 Timothy 2:11-12 is usually cited as the passage that will not permit Christian women to speak in the assembly today. This passage does not silence women. We all recognize that, 1 Timothy 2:11-12 permits women to teach, as long as she does not violate her submission to man. I maintain that a woman can ask a question, answer a question, read scripture, and make a comment, even in a Bible Class where men are present as long as she is not ignoring her place of submission to man. Most of you agree with that too, but how many of you would let a woman read a scripture from her seat just before we observe the Lord's supper? How many would allow her to make a comment from her seat after reading the scripture? Would you permit a woman the same liberty in the assembly of the whole church, that you permit her in the classroom? Before you throw 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 out the window on the shoulders of the prophet's wives, I believe it would be wise to consider the consequences of your position.

## Inspired Women

Others have been contending that the women of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 were "inspired women," and since we have no inspired women today, the passage is not applicable. This position is based upon the premise that all of those regulated in the chapter were inspired.

I have previously referred to this position in Article 2, "1 Corinthians 14:34-35: Is It Binding Today?" I pointed out in that article that this conclusion is based upon an assumption, which is not inferred, much less necessarily inferred. In fact, Paul's statement in verse 35 precludes this position, for he said, "it is a shame for women to speak in the church." He did not say, "inspired women."

## Inconsistencies

In Article 3, "1 Corinthians 14: Truth, The Roadblock to Errors," I made mention of the fact that we do not have the right to take the regulations given to govern commanded things, and use them to regulate the realm of expediency. This is to extend a thing beyond its legitimate boundaries. To illustrate my point, the Lord commanded the use of the cup (Matt. 26:27-29). There can be only one element, the fruit of the vine. It is specified, and must be observed. The container is not specified. It comes within the realm of expediency. Which kind, and how many are left to human judgment. We understand that it is wrong to apply the rule for determining the element to the realm of expediency.

Applying these principles to 1 Corinthians 14, we find that the regulations of the chapter are commanded, and are designed to control a *divine arrangement*. Bible Classes are a human arrangement. They are *not* commanded. They are simply an expedient method of grouping people in order to teach them the Word of God. The only rules governing them are those rules which govern the realm of expediency (1 Cor. 10:23), and those commands which have generic application. For that reason, there is not one single rule in 1 Corinthians 14 that applies to the Bible Class arrangement. Some brethren wish to apply the rules of verses 28-30 to the Bible Classes, but will not apply verses 34-35. That is an inconsistency. The truth of the matter is, none of those regulations apply to the Bible Class arrangement.

### "as also saith the law"

Paul says that the women are to keep silence because they "are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (1 Cor. 14:34). Many rightly contend that the principles of "obedience" as taught by Paul in this verse, is the same principle taught in the law from the beginning. Miriam (Ex. 15:20-21), Deborah (Judges 4:46; 5:7), Huldah (2 Chron. 34; 2 Kings 22), and Anna (Lk. 2:36-38) are cited as examples of women who taught (even men) without violating this principle.

I hesitate mentioning this argument because it has some merit. My main objection to the argument is that I consider any appeal to the Old Testament to prove anything under the New Testament, a weak argument (Gal. 5:4). Even if we proved that women could teach under the Old Testament without violating the principle of "obedience" we still would not have proved they could do it today. It is also weak, because it places one in the position of having to justify other things done by those Old Testament women which are not permitted of Christian women. Never give a man a board with which to beat you.

## New Testament Women

Rhoda, Lydia, Euodias, and Syntyche are often cited as proof that Christian women can teach. These examples actually teach nothing about the scripturalness of women teaching. What Lydia did after she became a Christian, I do not know, and what she did before she became one, certainly could not help me to understand what Christian women can do. Rhoda "constantly affirmed" (Acts 12:15) before a group of Christians that Peter was at the door, but I do not know who was present, nor whether she sinned or not. I do know that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 teach that *if* Rhoda did not sin, it was because she was not in the assembly of the church, and did not exercise authority over any man. But that is all I know. Euodias and Syntyche "labored with me (Paul) in the gospel" (Phil. 4:2), but I do not know what



they did. What they did was approved, but I do not know what it was. So, you see, I cannot use them to prove that Christian women can teach classes of other women or children. We must go elsewhere to prove that women can teach.


## Conclusion

Other examples of "Wells Without Water" could be cited, but these are sufficient. It is my honest opinion that in dealing with false teachers, we should make arguments that are strong and that cannot be answered by the opposition. We must use reasoning that proves the point, and that does not prove too much. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). May God help us to study, understand, and rightly use His Word.

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# God's Limitations Upon Women

## 1 Cor.14:34-35 & 1 Tim.2:11-12

 biblical discussion of contemporary woman and her role in God's service must take into account the restrictive passages of the New Testament. A lack of faith in God's Word is demonstrated when we ignore these passages, call for a new hermeneutical rule, or rule them out upon the basis of this being a new age. Man made rules, designed to eradicate the binding force of these scriptures, also destroy everything else God has ordained. We must accept all God has said or we destroy the basis upon which we accept anything He has spoken. This is how faith in God is determined (Rom.10:17).

## 1 Timothy 2:11-12

*"Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."* We discuss this text first because it is broader in application.

Through the years most of our efforts were directed toward answering those who would deny godly women the right to do the teaching God accepts and requires (Acts 18:26; 2 Tim.1:5; 2:2; Tit.2:3-5). Today, we must deal with those who wish to ignore these texts.

## The Anti-Women Teacher Position

1 Timothy 2:11-12 is used by those opposed to women teaching. They forbid women purposely teaching anyone at any time. They have insisted that Paul was saying, *"I suffer not a woman to teach,"* period. This could not be what Paul was saying, however, because that would mean Christian women could not do the teaching God requires of them. They could not teach by singing (Col.3:16), be teachers of good things (Tit.2:3), or teach the younger women (Tit.2:4) as directed, if forbidden to teach, period.

## The Passage Must Be Qualified

Everyone who studies this passage knows that it must be qualified. Even the Anti-Women Teacher advocates realize this. One proponent's position on the passage, once he finished qualifying it, went something like this: *"I suffer not a woman to teach the Bible, (that is: to be a teacher, deliver didactic discourses), in the church, in any class the church may arrange, in public, or in worship, nor to usurp authority over the man, the woman, or the child, but to be in silence."* His qualifications were found in his writings. He could not and did not deny them.

We do not argue with one's attempt to qualify the passage, but we do question one's right to qualify what he contends must be, *"I suffer not a woman to teach"* period. Such is blatantly inconsistent.

All of us must qualify the passage. Do we qualify it by our own arbitrary rules designed to suit our theories, or do we qualify it by God's own established rules?

## The Scripture's Qualification

The context of 1 Timothy 2 shows how Paul qualified these statements. Verse 1-7 discuss the universal nature of salvation. Of this salvation, Paul was ordained a preacher, teacher and an apostle. The varying roles of men and women in respect to this work are addressed in verses 8-15. Men (males) could pray everywhere (v.8). The exclusive nature of this statement means women cannot pray everywhere. Why not? The context will reveal the reason.

The conduct of women is examined in verses 9-15. First, they are to dress modestly and conduct themselves as *"women professing godliness."* Second, women are to *"learn in silence with all subjection"* and are not *"to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man."* To whom are they to be in subjection? Obviously, the one over whom they cannot exercise authority, man. The reasons given were: (1) the creation, *"Adam was first formed,"* and (2) the curse, *"the woman being deceived was in the transgression"* (cf.Gen.2:23-24; 3:16). From the beginning, God recognized man as the head of the woman. For this reason, female Christians cannot teach in any capacity that violates their place of submission to man. On the other hand, they can teach in any capacity required by the scriptures that does not violate that position. Godly women do not violate this principle when they teach their children (1 Tim.2:15), other women (Tit.2:3-5), or even when they teach men submissively (cf.Acts 18:26).

### 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

*"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. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."* This text deals with one specific place where the rule of submission applies, the assembly of the saints. Women must not address this assembly. They must remain silent. It is a shame for them to speak in the assembly.

### Inconsistent Positions

The Anti-Bible Class people have used this passage to condemn the Bible Class arrangement, insisting that it only authorizes an assembly where the whole church is together in one place (cf.v.23). Their position is inconsistent because it permits the teaching of the Bible only in an assembly where the whole church is together in one place. Bible examples of the word of God being taught in places and at times other than when the whole church is together in one place prove this position to be in error.

The Anti-Women Teacher advocates who believe classes are scriptural apply this text to the Bible Class arrangement. To them, *"Let your women keep silence in the churches"* also means *"in any class the church may arrange."* However, consistency would demand that all the principles of this text likewise be applied to Bible Classes. This would mean conducting only one class at a time because two or more would violate the principle of only one speaking at a time (cf.v.29-32).

Some brethren have argued through the years that 1 Corinthians 14 is not binding today. There are two theories: (1) The passage is regulating the conduct of "inspired persons." Since divine inspiration ceased (13:8-13), they contend the restriction no longer applies. (2) The passage controlled the conduct of "the prophets' wives" (deduced from the expression *"your*

women" in KJV) and, since the prophets no longer exist, it is no longer binding.

Few have questioned these positions through the years. I question them. Were only the "inspired women" or "the prophets' wives" to be under obedience? If these positions contain validity, all other women (except the categories mentioned above) could speak in those assemblies. If not, why not? If all other women could speak, then God penalized these women, not because they were to be under obedience but, because of who they were. Who can believe it? On the other hand, if the other women could not speak, what is the point of the argument? Negating the force of this text upon the strength of these arguments would actually negate the teaching of the entire New Testament.

The reason our sisters at Corinth were forbidden to speak was that *"they are commanded to be under obedience."* To whom were they obedient? They were subject to the general headship of man (cf.1 Cor.11:1-16).

## Nothing Has Changed

Man has been the head of the woman since creation (Gen.2:23-24; 3:16; 1 Tim.2:13-14). While the Old Testament does not argue the point as powerfully as the New Testament, it is evident that man was the head of the woman (cf.Num.30:3-8,13). The New Testament thoroughly establishes the point. First, *"the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God"* (1 Cor.11:3). For this reason godly women must recognize and keep the customary rules that distinguish her as a woman (1 Cor.11:4-16). Second, godly women must not violate their place of submission to man when teaching others (1 Tim.2:11-12). Though they can teach other women and children, and even men submissively (Acts 18:26), they cannot teach in any capacity that violates this rule. Third, godly women must not address the assemblies of the saints (1 Cor.14:34-35). Finally, godly women submit to their own husbands (Eph.5:22-33; Col.3:18; Tit.2:5; 1 Pet.3:1-6).

Has God changed His law? If so, where? Since God established His order with the creation, and He has not changed it, what right do we have to change it for Him? The law of Christ emphasizes this principle and we are still under law to Christ. Women who profess godliness have never had a problem with the rule. They praise God by remaining in subjection to man.

## Conclusion

Seeking to nullify the binding force of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is a serious matter. Those who do so are *"perverting the gospel of Christ"* (Gal.1:6-8), are not abiding *"in the doctrine of Christ"* (2 Jno.9), and they are inviting the wrath of God upon them (Rom.2:8-9). It is far better that female Christians adorn themselves with the beauty ordained of God as a daughter of Sarah (1 Pet.3:1-6) than to enjoy all the glory this world has to offer.