



- Doctrinal Lesson 4 -

from the

Restoring Oneness Apostolic Truth In the Last Days

Comprehensive Study Guide Series

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Introduction: Why Women Cannot Preach or Exercise Authority Over Men in the Church

Paul Takes the Issue Back to Creation

The issue of women preaching or exercising authority over men in the church is not a cultural issue, a historical accident, or a temporary rule for one congregation. Paul takes the matter all the way back to creation. That settles the foundation of the doctrine.

When Paul forbids a woman to teach or usurp authority over the man, he does not base his command on local customs, Roman culture, disorderly women, or a temporary problem in Ephesus. He says:

1 Timothy 2:12–13

“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

For Adam was first formed, then Eve.”

Paul’s reason is creation order. Adam was formed first, then Eve. That means Paul is not giving a temporary church policy. He is appealing to the order God established from the beginning.

This is extremely important. If Paul had said, “I do not allow women to teach because of a problem in this city,” then people could argue that the command was local. If Paul had said, “I do not allow women to teach because they are uneducated,” then people could argue that the command changed once women became educated. But Paul does not say that. He takes the doctrine back to Genesis.

That means there is no escaping the argument. There is no getting around it. If creation still stands, then the order Paul appealed to still stands.

1. Genesis Established the Roles Before the Church Ever Existed

Before there was a church, before there was Israel, before there was the Law of Moses, and before there were apostles, God established the order of man and woman in creation.

Adam was created first. Eve was created afterward and was made as a help meet for him.

Genesis 2:18

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

This does not mean the woman has no value. It does not mean she is less human, less loved, less intelligent, or less spiritual. It means God gave the man and woman different roles.

The man was formed first and given responsibility. The woman was made as his help meet. That is the creation order Paul appeals to in 1 Timothy 2.

After sin entered the world, God also said to the woman:

Genesis 3:16

“...thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”

This verse is often misunderstood. The word “desire” is not merely speaking of affection or romance. It points to a struggle involving role, rule, and authority. The woman’s desire would be toward the position of her husband, but God said the husband would rule.

This does not give men permission to be harsh, abusive, proud, or cruel. A husband is commanded to love his wife. But it does show that the issue of role and authority began in Genesis. The conflict over authority did not begin in the modern church. It began after the fall.

Paul understood this. That is why he brings the discussion back to Adam and Eve.

2. The Principle of Headship

Many people assume that Paul's instructions concerning women in the church are isolated commands found only in 1 Timothy 2 or 1 Corinthians 14. However, Paul had already established the underlying principle long before he discussed preaching, teaching, or church authority. That principle is headship.

1 Corinthians 11:3

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

This verse establishes a divine order of authority.

- God is the head of Christ.
- Christ is the head of the man.
- The man is the head of the woman.

Notice that Paul does not present this as a cultural custom. He presents it as a universal principle rooted in God's created order.

The relationship between man and woman is therefore not an isolated issue. It exists within a larger structure of authority established by God Himself.

Just as Christ willingly submits to the Father without being inferior in nature, a woman may be under the authority of a man without being inferior in value. Headship is about order, not worth.

Paul continues:

1 Corinthians 11:8-9

"For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."

Once again Paul appeals directly to Genesis.

This is significant because it demonstrates that Paul's doctrine concerning women is not based on local church problems, education levels, or cultural conditions. It is based on creation itself.

The same apostle who says:

"The head of the woman is the man"

is the same apostle who later says:

"I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man."

The two passages are not separate doctrines. One explains the other.

Headship is the principle.

Church authority is the application.

When the principle of headship is removed, the commands concerning women preaching, teaching, and exercising authority appear arbitrary. But when headship is understood, the entire New Testament position becomes internally consistent.

3. Paul's Command Is Plain: A Woman Is Not to Teach or Usurp Authority Over the Man

The clearest passage is 1 Timothy 2.

1 Timothy 2:11–14

"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.

For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Paul gives two reasons:

1. Adam was first formed, then Eve.
2. The woman was deceived in the transgression.

Again, Paul does not say this was because of culture. He does not say it was because of Roman society. He does not say it was because certain women were being loud in church. He takes it back to creation and the fall.

The command is also specific. Paul says he does not allow a woman:

- To teach over the man
- To usurp authority over the man
- But to be in silence

This does not forbid women from speaking in every possible situation. Women can pray. Women can worship. Women can testify. Women can teach children. Women can teach younger women. But Paul forbids women from occupying the teaching and ruling role over men in the church.

That is the difference.

A woman teaching children is not the same as a woman preaching doctrine to the church. A woman instructing younger women is not the same as a woman taking authority over men. A woman testifying is not the same as a woman holding the office of preacher, pastor, elder, or bishop.

Paul's command is clear when we allow the passage to speak for itself.

4. Paul Was Not Addressing "Silly Women Laughing in Church"

Some try to dismiss Paul's command by saying he was only dealing with disorderly women, uneducated women, silly women, or women interrupting the church service.

That explanation does not fit the text.

Paul did not say:

"I suffer not a woman to teach because women in this congregation are being disorderly."

He did not say:

"I suffer not a woman to teach because they are laughing during service."

He did not say:

“I suffer not a woman to teach until they become educated.”

He said:

“For Adam was first formed, then Eve.”

That destroys the cultural argument. Paul’s reason was not local disorder. His reason was creation order.

If someone says Paul was only dealing with women causing confusion in one church, they must explain why Paul’s stated reason is Adam and Eve. Paul could have appealed to the local problem if that was the basis of the command. But he did not.

He appealed to creation.

Therefore, the command is not temporary. It is not cultural. It is not limited to one church. It is rooted in the order God established from the beginning.

5. Women Are to Keep Silence in the Churches

Paul also wrote:

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 any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”

This passage is also very strong. Paul says women are not permitted to speak in the governing, judging, doctrinal function of the church assembly. Again, this must be understood in harmony with the rest of Scripture.

Paul is not saying women can never make a sound in church. That would contradict other passages where women prayed or prophesied. The issue is authority, order, and public doctrinal rule.

The context of 1 Corinthians 14 concerns order in the church. Prophets are speaking. Messages are being judged. Doctrine is being weighed. Paul is addressing the authoritative function of the assembly.

In that setting, women are commanded to be under obedience, not to take the public place of authority.

This agrees perfectly with 1 Timothy 2. Women are not to teach or usurp authority over men. They are not to occupy the ruling voice in the church assembly.

6. Jesus Was a Man and Chose Twelve Men as Apostles

The pattern of Jesus Himself confirms the same order.

Jesus Christ came into the world as a man. This was not an accident. He is the Son of God, the second Adam, the bridegroom, the shepherd, the bishop of our souls, the head of the church.

When Jesus chose the foundational apostles, He chose twelve men.

He did not choose six men and six women. He did not choose even one woman as one of the twelve apostles. This matters because the apostles were the foundational witnesses and governmental foundation of the New Testament Church.

Ephesians 2:20

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

If women were intended to occupy the same governing preaching office as men, the ministry of Jesus would have been the perfect place to establish that. But He did not.

This does not mean Jesus despised women. In fact, Jesus showed great honor and mercy to women. Women followed Him. Women supported His ministry. Women were witnesses of His resurrection. Women were loved, protected, forgiven, and used by God.

But Jesus did not appoint women as apostles.

The distinction is important. Women were honored, but they were not placed in the governing preaching office over men.

7. There Are No New Testament Women Preachers, Pastors, Bishops, or Elders

There is no example in the New Testament of a woman serving as a pastor, bishop, elder, or preacher over the church.

Not one.

People may try to point to certain women in the New Testament, but none of them are shown pastoring churches, ruling over men, or holding the office of elder or bishop.

Women such as Priscilla, Phoebe, Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and others were valuable workers in the kingdom. They helped. They served. They labored. They supported the work. But the Bible never calls any of them pastors, bishops, elders, or apostles over the church.

Some try to claim that Junia was a female apostle. But even if one argues about the name, the text does not establish that she held the office of an apostle over the church. The phrase can be understood as being well known among the apostles, not necessarily as holding apostolic office. And even if she was highly regarded, that still would not overturn Paul's direct command in 1 Timothy 2.

Doctrine cannot be built on a debated phrase while ignoring plain commandments.

The plain passages must govern the unclear passages. Paul clearly says a woman is not to teach or usurp authority over the man. He clearly says the bishop must be the husband of one wife. He clearly says elders must be men who rule their houses well.

That settles the office question.

8. Old Testament Women Do Not Justify New Testament Women Preachers

Some people point to women in the Old Testament, such as Deborah, Miriam, Huldah, or other notable women, and argue that this proves women can preach or rule in the New Testament Church.

That argument fails for several reasons.

First, the Old Testament is not the governing pattern for New Testament church offices. The Church is built on Christ and the Apostles. We do not establish New Testament ministry by selecting unusual Old Testament examples and using them to cancel Apostolic instruction.

Second, many Old Testament women were used by God in specific ways, but that does not make them New Testament pastors or preachers. Deborah judged Israel during a time of national weakness and disorder. Her case does not overturn Paul's command to the church. Huldah gave a prophetic word, but she did not pastor a New Testament assembly. Miriam was a prophetess, but she was not a bishop or elder in the Church.

Third, unusual examples do not cancel the established order. God may use a woman in a unique situation, but that does not create a general rule allowing women to hold authority over men in the church.

If Old Testament exceptions could cancel New Testament doctrine, then nearly any doctrine could be overturned by appealing to unusual historical examples.

The correct order is this: the Apostolic writings define church doctrine.

Paul defines the order of the church. Paul forbids women from teaching or usurping authority over men. Paul establishes male qualifications for bishops and elders. Therefore, Old Testament examples cannot be used to overthrow Apostolic commandments.

9. Women Have a Biblical Role in the Church

The Bible does not silence women because they are useless. It gives women an honorable role within God's order.

Women can be powerful in prayer. Women can be examples of holiness. Women can worship. Women can testify. Women can serve. Women can help the ministry. Women can influence their homes. Women can raise children in truth. Women can teach younger women. Women can teach children.

Paul wrote:

Titus 2:3–5

“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness...

That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands...”

This is the biblical teaching role of women: older women teaching younger women how to live godly lives, love their husbands, love their children, and walk in holiness.

That is not a small role. That is vital to the health of the church.

But notice what Paul does not say. He does not say older women are to teach men. He does not say they are to pastor the church. He does not say they are to preach doctrine over the assembly. He says they are to teach the younger women.

This is God's order.

The modern church often despises this role because it has adopted worldly ideas about authority and equality. But in Scripture, submission to God's order is not inferiority. It is obedience.

10. Bishops and Elders Were Required to Be Men

The qualifications for church leadership are unmistakably male.

1 Timothy 3:2

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife..."

Titus 1:5–6

"...ordain elders in every city...

If any be blameless, the husband of one wife..."

The bishop must be the husband of one wife. The elder must be the husband of one wife. He must rule well his own house. His children must be in order. These qualifications clearly describe male leadership.

Paul does not give parallel qualifications for female bishops or female elders. He does not say "the wife of one husband." He does not establish women as overseers of the church. The language is male because the office is male.

This fits perfectly with everything else Paul taught.

- Adam was first formed.
- The woman is not to teach or usurp authority over the man.
- Women are to keep silence in the authoritative church setting.
- Bishops and elders are to be husbands of one wife.

The doctrine is consistent from Genesis to the Apostolic church.

11. The Real Issue Is Submission to Scripture

This subject is difficult for many people today because modern society has rejected God's order. The world teaches that any distinction in role must mean oppression. But Scripture does not teach that.

Jesus submitted to the Father, yet He was not inferior in nature. A wife submits to her husband, but she is not inferior in value. A woman does not preach over men, but she is not less important to God.

The issue is not value. The issue is order.

God has always worked through order:

- Christ is the head of the man.
- The man is the head of the woman.
- The husband is the head of the wife.
- Bishops and elders are men.
- Women are given honorable roles within the boundaries of Scripture.

The question is not whether a woman is talented. Many women are talented. The question is not whether a woman is intelligent. Many women are highly intelligent. The question is not whether a woman loves God. Many women love God deeply.

The question is: what does Scripture permit?

Paul answers clearly. A woman is not to teach or usurp authority over the man.

Once Paul takes the matter back to creation, the discussion is settled for everyone who accepts the authority of Scripture.

12. Experience Does Not Override Scripture

One of the most common arguments raised in favor of women preachers is not actually based on Scripture at all. Instead, it is based on experience.

People will often say:

- "But she was a powerful preacher."
- "God used her."
- "Thousands were blessed by her ministry."
- "She won souls."
- "She pastored a successful church."
- "I know a woman preacher who was more effective than many men."
- "God can use anyone."

While some these statements may or may not be true, they completely miss the real issue. The question is not whether a woman can be intelligent, persuasive, gifted, or influential. The question is whether God authorized women to preach, pastor, or exercise authority over men in the church.

Scripture must always judge experience. Experience must never judge Scripture.

If experience becomes our authority, then every doctrine becomes unstable. One person can point to a successful woman preacher. Another can point to a sincere Trinitarian pastor. Another can point to a devout Catholic priest. Another can point to a moral unbeliever. If success, sincerity, influence, or visible results become the standard, then biblical authority immediately collapses.

Our doctrine and the Word of God are not established by experience. Doctrine must be established solely by the Word of God without the influence of experience.

Paul did not say:

"I suffer not a woman to teach unless she is gifted."

He did not say:

"I suffer not a woman to teach unless she is successful."

He did not say:

"I suffer not a woman to teach unless many people are helped."

He simply said:

1 Timothy 2:12

"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

The command stands regardless of the apparent success of those who violate it.

Throughout church history there have been women who preached, taught, and even pastored churches. Some were undoubtedly talented speakers. Some may have been highly respected. Some may have appeared to have fruitful ministries. Yet none of these things give them authority to overturn Scripture.

A person may be sincere and still be wrong.

A person may be gifted and still be wrong.

A person may be influential and still be wrong.

A person may even appear successful and still be wrong.

The issue is not whether God can use imperfect people. God has always worked through imperfect people. The issue is whether those people were operating within the boundaries established by Scripture.

No example from church history has the authority to overturn a commandment from the Apostles.

No testimony has the authority to overturn Scripture.

No revival has the authority to overturn Scripture.

No preacher has the authority to overturn Scripture.

No movement has the authority to overturn Scripture.

The moment experience is elevated above the written Word of God, doctrine becomes whatever appears to work rather than what God has commanded.

This principle applies far beyond the issue of women preachers. We would never accept a false doctrine simply because a charismatic speaker taught it. We would never accept baptismal error simply because a church grew large. We would never accept Trinitarianism merely because many sincere people believe it. In the same way, we cannot accept women pastors, women elders, or women preaching over men simply because someone appears gifted or effective.

Scripture must remain the final authority.

The examples of women who preached, pastored, or exercised authority over men in church history do not prove that such practices are biblical. At most, they prove that people have ignored or rejected the biblical pattern. A violation of Scripture does not become obedience simply because it becomes common.

For the believer who accepts the authority of God's Word, the matter must always return to the same question:

What do the Scriptures say?

And the Scriptures remain unchanged:

"I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man..."

No amount of success, popularity, influence, or historical precedent can overturn a command that God has already spoken.

13. No Scriptural Support for Women Preachers

There is no scriptural support for women preachers — not one verse. There is not one explicit command, not one apostolic example, and not one New Testament pattern that authorizes women to preach, pastor, evangelize, serve as bishops, serve as deacons in ministerial authority, or hold governing ministry over the church. Not one. Those who defend women in the ministry must rely on assumption, sentiment, modern culture, isolated examples taken beyond their scriptural limits, or vague appeals to "my calling," but they cannot produce one clear apostolic text that authorizes the practice.

This is especially serious because the Scripture does not leave the matter unclear. Paul's declaration is explicit: **"Let your women keep silence in the churches"** and **"I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man."** These are not obscure verses. These are explicit apostolic instructions given to the church along with other passages about ministerial gender requirements and examples. Any doctrine that permits what Paul forbids must produce authority greater than Paul's apostolic command — and no such authority exists in the Word of God.

Therefore, if any man or woman can produce a Scripture that overrides Paul's command, or a Scripture that explicitly states that women may preach, pastor, evangelize, serve as bishops, serve as deacons in ministerial office, or hold authority in the ministry of the church, let them bring it forth. Let them show the verse. Let them produce the apostolic command. Let them give the New Testament pattern. But if they cannot, then they must be silent, turn away from unbiblical doctrine and practice, and forsake a system of ministry that God Himself has not authorized.

This is not a matter of preference, tradition, culture, ability, personality, or popularity. It is a matter of apostolic order. The church does not have the authority to create offices God did not create, authorize ministers God did not authorize, or reverse restrictions the Holy Ghost gave through the apostle Paul. Women in the ministry is not merely unsupported by Scripture; it stands against explicit apostolic instruction. And every doctrine and practice that men defend without the authority of God's Word will one day be judged by the same Word it refused to obey.

Thus, either the practice of allowing women preachers must be dropped, or the claim to be Apostolic must be dropped. We cannot honestly call ourselves Apostolic while embracing doctrines and practices that the apostles never taught, never commanded, and never authorized. Neither can we claim to stand for Apostolic truth while rejecting the very apostolic order delivered to the churches. If a doctrine is not apostolic, it does not become apostolic because it is popular, traditional, emotional, or widely accepted. The church must choose: keep the label while departing from the doctrine, or return to the doctrine and forsake the practice. But we cannot have both.

14. An Important Observation Concerning Modern Apostolic Churches

Sadly, many modern Oneness and Apostolic organizations have followed the broader religious world in licensing, ordaining, and promoting women as preachers and ministers. Yet no passage of Scripture authorizes such a practice. Neither Jesus nor His Apostles licensed women to preach over men, pastor churches, serve as bishops, or occupy positions of spiritual authority over the congregation.

This development is not a restoration of Apostolic doctrine but a departure from it. The New Testament consistently establishes male leadership within the governing ministry of the church. When churches disregard those boundaries, confusion concerning biblical roles inevitably follows. The issue is not whether women are gifted, intelligent, sincere, or capable. The issue is whether God has authorized them to occupy those offices.

The consequences of abandoning biblical order extend beyond the pulpit. When churches teach that women may occupy positions of spiritual authority over men in the congregation, the distinction God established between authority and submission becomes increasingly blurred. Once the church begins treating authority as interchangeable, confusion naturally spreads into other areas of life as well.

The New Testament presents the church and the home as operating under the same principle of headship. The husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23). When women are encouraged to exercise authority over men in the church, many begin to question why similar authority structures should exist within the home. The result is often confusion concerning roles, responsibilities, leadership, submission, and spiritual authority.

This is one reason the issue is so important. The doctrine is not merely about who stands behind a pulpit. It is about whether the order established by God in creation, affirmed by Paul, and practiced by the Apostolic Church will be preserved or discarded. When biblical order is preserved, there is clarity. When biblical order is rejected, confusion inevitably follows.

The modern church often evaluates ministry by talent, popularity, education, charisma, or visible success. Scripture evaluates ministry by obedience. A practice does not become biblical simply because it becomes common, accepted, or institutionalized. The authority of the Church rests not in modern trends, denominational policies, or ministerial licensing boards, but in the Word of God. The church was never intended to comply with societal norms as a means of being more mainstream or reaching the world. In fact, the opposite is true.

If the Apostolic movement truly desires to restore New Testament Christianity, it must be willing to restore all Apostolic doctrine—not merely the doctrines that are popular or convenient. The same Bible that teaches the oneness of God, water baptism in Jesus' name, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost also establishes God's order for authority, ministry, and the role of women in the Church. We do not have the authority to preserve one part of Apostolic doctrine while discarding another.

For this reason, the licensing and promotion of women as preachers, pastors, and ministers is not merely a disagreement over church policy. It represents a departure from the Apostolic model and contributes to a broader confusion regarding God's established order for the church, the family, and the home.

The examples of women who preached, pastored, or exercised authority over men in church history do not prove that such practices are biblical. At most, they prove that people have ignored or rejected the biblical pattern. A violation of Scripture does not become obedience simply because it becomes common.

For the believer who accepts the authority of God's Word, the matter must always return to the same question:

What do the Scriptures say?

And the Scriptures remain unchanged:

"I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man..."

No amount of success, popularity, influence, historical precedent, denominational acceptance, or ministerial licensing can overturn a command that God has already spoken.

The question therefore remains the same: Will we follow the examples of modern religious institutions, or will we follow the pattern established by Christ and His Apostles?

Conclusion

Women are precious to God. Women are needed in the church. Women can pray, worship, testify, serve, teach children, teach younger women, support ministry, strengthen families, and be mighty examples of holiness.

But women are not permitted by Scripture to preach doctrine over men, pastor churches, serve as bishops or elders, or occupy the governing teaching office in the assembly.

This is not because women are inferior. It is because God established order.

Paul did not base this doctrine on culture. He based it on creation.

Adam was first formed, then Eve.

That is the foundation. That is the Apostolic teaching. That is the order of God for the Church.
