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Finally, brethren
WHATEVER THINGS are true
are noble
are just
are pure
are lovely
are of good report
IF THERE IS ANY VIRTUE AND IF THERE
IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY –
meditate on these things.

PHILIPPIANS
4:8

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Darwin: The Father of Evolution, Racism and Abortion

Jefferson David Tant | Roswell, Georgia, USA

The world has changed since Charles Darwin concocted the idea that we have all evolved or ascended from the slime in some primeval swamp. In many ways, the development of scientific achievements has been a great blessing to us in the way of comfort of living and other advances. But there is a dark side to the changes that have come over the 150 years since Darwin. **The Origin and Descent of Man** has produced revolutionary changes that probably were not a part of Darwin's thoughts.

An example of some of the evils that have come from Darwinism is the following quote from Roger Lewin in his book, *Bones of Contention*:

The brain of the Negro is that of the imperfect brain of a seven-month infant in the womb of a white... Racism, as we would characterize it today, was explicit in the writings of virtually all the major anthropologists of the first decades of this century (20th Century —jdt), simply because it was the generally accepted world view (pages 306-307).

This prejudicial view was the "generally accepted" theory in the scientific community, evidently overlooking the brilliant minds and worthy contributions that many of a darker skin had made to society. But this was "science," and only ignoramuses and those who just fell off the turnip truck would dare question science. That there is much bias and a feeling of superiority within the scientific community is as plain as the nose on your face. The following quotes from Richard Dawkins, well-known atheist apologist, speak for themselves.

"It is absolutely safe to say that, if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that)." (Richard Dawkins, Oxford Prof. *New York Times* book review, 1989)

"Evolution is a fact," he asserts. "Beyond reasonable doubt, beyond serious doubt, beyond sane, informed, intelligent doubt, beyond doubt evolution is a fact. The evidence for evolution is at least as strong as the evidence for the Holocaust, even allowing for eye witnesses to the Holocaust." (Dawkins, (*The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution*)) "It is a plain truth that we are cousins of chimpanzees, somewhat more distant cousins of monkeys, more distant cousins still of aardvarks and manatees, yet more distant cousins of bananas and turnips ... continue the list as long as desired." (Ibid.) (I wonder if Dawkins fell off the turnip truck.)

Those who have sought for power and superiority have often justified their abuse of those who by reason of race, mental disability or physical features are different.

The founder of Social Darwinism, the idea that poverty and wealth are inevitable as they represent the biological rules which govern society, was the philosopher Herbert Spencer...who used The Origin of Species as a rationale for the excesses of nineteenth-century capitalism. The steel magnate Andrew Carnegie was impressed by the idea that evolution excuses injustice. He invited Herbert Spencer to Pittsburg. The philosopher's response to seeing his theories worked out in steel and concrete was that "six months residence here would justify suicide" (Steve Jones, *The Language of Genes*, p. 17).

Spencer was appalled when he saw the inevitable consequences of his theory. But Darwin's cousin took another tack. Francis Galton "was all in favor of interfering with human evolution. He supported the idea of breeding them from the best and sterilizing those whose inheritance did not meet with his approval."

Next we go to Germany before the First World War. Ernst Haeckel took Galton's ideas and Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and established the Monist League in Germany, espousing the idea that certain white Europeans were a superior race. Enter Adolph Hitler, and we all know his philosophy culminated in the slaughter of millions of Jews, the disabled, Gypsies and other non-Jewish populations during World War II.

When you are breeding cattle, etc., it is only natural to breed the best, the healthiest, the strongest, the best-looking. So, if we humans are just high-class apes, then why not apply the same breeding techniques? If there is no God, as Dawkins and others believe, who is to say that would be wrong? While our "civilized" culture would think such practices would be reprehensible, where did Haeckel, Hitler, Goring, Goebbels and other of Hitler's right-hand men get their ideas? And remember that evolutionary naturalism is taught as a scientific fact in our public schools. Students have been punished if they dare take exception to this propaganda.

The truth is that there is no superior race. Whatever advantages certain Caucasians may have over the natives of Papua New Guinea, or the jungles of Africa, or the mountains of Peru, or the tribes of Borneo, are purely the result of where they were born. There is no one on a higher rung of the evolutionary ladder!

An ancient text states it well: "and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined [their] appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). If, as some racists claim, Caucasians are at the top of the ladder, and have evolved from those of a different color, it would logically follow that different races could not mate and reproduce. If apes have evolved from horses (or whatever), we know that they cannot mate and reproduce. If humans have evolved from apes, we are also aware that they cannot mate and reproduce. Logically, the same would be true if different races are just rungs up the evolutionary ladder. Yet it is quite obvious that the color of your skin has no bearing on the ability to mix with other colors and reproduce. (In truth, we are all "colored." It just depends on which color in the spectrum you happen to be.)

But there is another matter that transcends racism, and that is abortion. "Modern technology has made it possible to murder the unborn at an assembly line pace. The only justification is that they are 'not wanted.' They are not 'convenient.' They interfere with 'my rights.' They do not have to have defective genes. They only have to meet someone's definition of 'undesirable.' Like a piece of scrap, they are removed from the womb and tossed out with the garbage. Anyone who doubts that **God considers abortion to be an act of taking someone's life** is in a state of denial: "Because he did not kill me before birth, So that my mother would have been my grave, And her womb ever pregnant" (Jer. 20:17). (Calvin Fields, *Things You Never Heard*, pp. 146-147).

Consider Jeremiah's simple statement that he was not killed before birth. If, as abortionists claim, an abortion is just the removal of unwanted tissue, that would be the same as having a wart taken off my finger. How absurd! Note that Jeremiah referred to himself as "me" while he was still in the womb. My understanding is that a "me" has personality, and thus is a living being. Furthermore, you do not "kill" a wart.

Jeremiah spoke of how the Lord knew of him *in utero*: "Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; **before you were born** I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations'" (Jeremiah 1:5, emp. added). How do you "know" a blob of tissue, or sanctify the same?

While this is not a treatise on whether or not the fetus is a living being (I believe it is), the point is that Darwin's theory makes abortion all the more acceptable. If Haeckel and Galton could inspire Hitler to

eliminate less desirable humans, then certainly there would be no problem in eliminating less desirable or unwanted infants in the womb. Thus since Roe vs. Wade in 1973, in the United States some 57,000,000 babies have been murdered in the womb.

These atrocities of racism and abortion must, in some way, be laid at the feet of the theory of evolution. (And in reality, evolution is not a theory, but an hypothesis.) Far from being a harmless idea, it has contributed to unimaginable tragedy on the earth. Those who propagate this false theory are described by our Lord in Matthew 7:15-16: "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits." And what are the "fruits" of evolution—unprecedented genocide.

And all of this has come from an unproven and unprovable doctrine that is forced upon our children in our schools as an established fact.

Consider just a couple of statements from scientists who believe in evolution, but are willing to speak the truth about it.

"Biologists would dearly like to know how modern apes, modern humans and various ancestral hominids have evolved from a common ancestor. Unfortunately, the fossil record is somewhat incomplete as far as hominids are concerned, and it is all but blank for apes. The best we can hope for is that more fossils will be found over the next few years which will fill the present gaps in evidence." That's an empty hope! "David Pilbeam [a well-known expert in human evolution] comments wryly, 'If you brought in a smart scientist from another discipline and showed him the meager evidence we've got he'd surely say, **"Forget it: there isn't enough to go on."**' (Richard E. Leakey, **Making of Mankind**, Michael Joseph Limited, London, 1981, p. 43)

"If there were a basic principle of matter which somehow drove organic systems toward life, its existence should easily be demonstrable in the laboratory. One could, for instance, take a swimming bath to represent primordial soup. Fill it with any chemicals of a non-biological nature you please. Pump any gases over it, or through it, you please, and shine any kind of radiation on it that takes your fancy. Let the experiment proceed for a year and see how many of those 2,000 enzymes [proteins produced by living cells] have appeared in the bath. I will give the answer, and so save time and trouble and expense of actually doing the experiment. You would find nothing at all, except possibly for a tarry sludge composed of amino acids and other simple organic chemicals. How can I be so confident of this statement? Well, if it were otherwise, the experiment would long since have been done and would be well-known and famous throughout the world. The cost of it would be trivial compared to the cost of landing a man on the Moon...In short, there is not a shred of objective evidence to support the hypothesis that life began in an organic soup here on Earth." (Sir Fred Hoyle, British physicist and astronomer, **Intelligent Universe**, Michael Joseph, London, 1983, pp. 20-21, 23.)

Many such quotes could be cited, and yet our school textbooks ignore the evidence, and proceed to mislead our children. The general theory of evolution is taught as a fact in high school textbooks. "Darwin's theory of evolution presented a new way of life...This view...continues to be upheld by research today... All organisms on Earth are united into a single tree of life by common descent." (**Biology**, Prentice Hall, p. 386)

So there is the contrast. Scientists say evolution cannot be proven, even that it is unlikely to have happened, yet our schools textbooks indoctrinate our children by claiming it is a proven fact. Let us be informed, and instruct our children in the truth of God's word.

A final thought. I have never had a theistic evolutionist (one who claims God planted that organism in the primordial soup) explain to me how the soul came to be in the human species. Does the banana (as Dawkins mentioned) have the germ of a soul, which then progresses through the aadvarks and apes, and then is fully developed in the human? Just wondering.

Themes of Proverbs : The Lazy Man

Tanner Campbell | Rapid City, South Dakota, USA

The book of proverbs addresses a wide range of subject, but some of them seem to resurface over and over again. These subjects are the themes that run through the Proverbs. If, in God's word, we find instruction, we must give serious attention to it. If we find instruction resurfacing many times, then we have no excuse to not pay close attention to it; it must be of great importance. A casual reading of the Proverbs will show that the lazy man is referenced about 15 times throughout the book, making it very clear that we should take some time to learn what the wisdom of God has to say about this man.

It is evident from the theme of laziness throughout the bible that God wills to have us be hard at work. Putting effort into the things that we have responsibility for, and especially in our Relationship with God and our spiritual growth, is what is expected out of us. Many great scriptures can be referenced for this point, like Romans 12:11, "not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" but the proverbs are the largest source of information on this subject. So then, let us consider some of the points made in the proverbs in application to spirituality.

Proverbs 10:26 "As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy man to those who send him." From this text, we see what an abomination that laziness is to God. He has sent men to the task of spreading the gospel. What are these individuals to God when they fail to fulfill their responsibility? They are the bitter and irritating abomination like vinegar and smoke.

Proverbs 13:4 "The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich." Shamefully, this is the current condition of many Christians today. They desire all that God has to offer but will never have these same things, because they are not diligent to receive them. They may very well be at nearly every scheduled assembly, but that's the easy part; they desire a heavenly home, but will they live the diligent life of a truthfully defined Christian? The proverb writer is quick to show the opposite choice when he says "the soul of the diligent shall be made rich." How plentiful is the blessings of the diligent Christian! They are the recipients of every great thing that God has promised.

Proverbs 15:19 "The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright is a highway." This proverb addresses the difficulties that the lazy man creates for himself. His laziness turns into hardships and increasing anxieties. The only hard work that laziness does is digging a deep hole of struggles. Pain and unhappiness is what the proverb writer is highlighting about the lazy man. All could be reversed by a change of mind.

Proverbs 20:4 "The lazy man will not plow because of winter; He will beg during harvest and have nothing." This verse focuses on the excuses of laziness. It is an interesting illustration; the lazy man's actions demonstrate that he does not have his best interest at heart, for even the work that is of absolute necessity he does not do for himself.

Proverbs 24:30-31 "I went by the field of the lazy man, And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding. And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; Its surface was covered with nettles; Its stone wall was broken down." This is an important observation from the proverb writer. As he sees the field of the lazy man, he notices that it isn't planted and flourishing, but overgrown and covered with thorns and nettles. Also of significance, he observes the wall broken down. The wall is important in keeping the enemy away, the wild animals that spoil the field. Spiritually, the lazy man has allowed an overgrowth of obstacles in his life that hinder his relationship with God and his brethren. He has not been busy at work, keeping his life, home, and family in an environment that is able to flourish spiritually and be fruitful. He has no wall of defense against the beasts that will infiltrate his life. The Christian is not to give a place for the enemy in their life; this takes work that the lazy man is not willing to do.

Proverbs 26:13 "The lazy man says, „There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!"" It is in 1 Peter 5:8 that we hear the instruction to: "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." The lazy man sees the adversary in the road before him, he says "there is a lion in the road," but he is not willing to put forth the effort to defend himself against the lion. Some Christians are this way, unfortunately. They are all talk, but no application. They may talk a good talk, but they take no action in their lives against the same adversary that they tell others about.

This article can only scratch the surface of this subject, but I hope it will properly impress upon the reader the dire importance of living diligently for God. A lazy life is an unfruitful life, not pleasing to God. May no man place himself in this condition.

The Way It Was

Patrick Farish | Lancaster, Texas, USA

"You were dead," Ephesians 2:1, but God made you alive together with Christ. Why did He do that? Well, first of all, because He, rich in mercy, loved us - Paul called it His "great love." In Romans 5 he wrote that "Christ died for the ungodly" (v 6), and that "God shows his love for us in that ... Christ died for us" (v 8).

When we think about it, we realize that man cannot reverse death. We stand at caskets containing the bodies of those we have loved. With hot stinging tears we would reverse it if we could; but we can't. God can. God did. He raised Lazarus, and Dorcas, and the daughter of Jairus; of course, they died again.

But Paul has written here that the Ephesians were "dead," and this is not the physical death to which all of us are appointed (Hebrews 9:27). This death we have earned (Romans 6:23) because yielding to temptation we have sinned; and by that sin we are separated from God (Isaiah 59:1, 2). We are as helpless to reverse this as we are to reverse physical death, all the good deeds and good life we may live are of no avail against the wages of sin. We would change it if we could; but we can't. God can. God did. "God made us alive together with Christ." We do not have to die again. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

Secondly, God made you alive together with Christ "so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (v 7). God and His works are *immeasurable*: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1); and "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Have you tried to count the stars in the sky? What we can see are stars of the "Milky Way", one galactic system among several. It boggles the mind. To look at those stars, innumerable; and to know that there are more systems, like them; and that God *made them, every one* - is beyond comprehension. This is similarly the way Paul describes His grace, it is "immeasurable."

One measure of His grace is seen in the scope of redemption: when Scripture says Jesus died on the cross for us, it was not just for the people of the twenty-first century, alone; nor for the first through the twenty-first centuries; but for all. From the beginning to the end, "the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people" (Titus 2:11). So Christ died, the grace of God appeared, for all people: those of Adam's generation, those of your generation and mine - and continuing till He comes again.

Not everyone will enter the grace of God, but that is a matter of their choice: salvation by grace was brought for all people, entrance is by faith, Romans 5:1, 2. When Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate..." (Matthew 7:14); and "Strive to enter in" (Luke 13:24) He was but reflecting the need of the right choice. When He said, "Come to me ... and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28) He is admitting His desire that all be saved, 2 Peter 3:9.

Those who accept Jesus' invitation are made alive, and raised up, and seated with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus. Because, in Christ Jesus is where we find "every spiritual blessing," Ephesians 1:3.

Mark Well Her Bulwarks - No. 6

Tommy Thornhill | Etna, Arkansas, USA

Last month's article, in discussing God's bulwark of worship, we noticed the activities God's people practiced in worshipping Him publicly. We read of these things on the pages of the New Testament, establishing the authority to do them in the way authority to do anything is known, through commands, authorized examples and necessary inferences, or in more modern terms, telling, showing and inferring. His people assembled on the first day of each week to partake of the Lord's Supper, sing, give, pray, teach the word of God. All of these things were simple in design, nothing elaborate, to be offered to God from hearts filled with a sincere desire to praise and honor God. None of them are designed to glorify or entertain man's fleshly desires.

But today, many local congregations that claim to be "the church of Christ," as they meet in their various locations, no longer ask for Bible authority as they conduct their worship services. They have trampled down God's worship bulwark, no longer guided by the word of God. They have redesigned the church's worship service where they

meet, to incite the emotions, rather than edify the soul by doing the things God has commanded. We find them practicing such things as contemporary type singing worship, praise dancing, hand clapping, even instrumental music in some places, and several other things done by men to be attract the world by entertaining and stirring human emotions? God designed worship to honor and glorify Him, not for men's personal preferences and feelings. Any other type will be rejected by God Romans 13:14; 1.Pet.4:1-2. But this thought doesn't enter their mind. They do just like the people did during the days of the judges of Israel. "In those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Judges 17:6; 21:25.

When asked why they do these type things in their worship services they respond in much the same way people reacted in the prophet Malachi's day. Notice Malachi 1:6-14. Speaking for God, Malachi writes, "'A son honors his father, and a servant his master, If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is my reverence?' Says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise My name, Yet, you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?...In what way have we defiled You?'" vs.6-7. Malachi then points out how they offered defiled food and other cast offs on the altar. By showing such contempt for the table of the Lord, he then challenges them, by asking, would you "offer it then to your governor?" v.8. They had so little regard for worshiping God in an acceptable manner that they said, "Oh, what a weariness!" v.13. Their attitude was so bad that Malachi asks, "Who is there among you who would shut the door, so that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you," says the Lord of hosts, nor will I accept an offering from your hands" v.10.

Earlier we observed that one of the obligations placed on God's people in the local church is that of the members assembling regularly together. This is part of living the Christian life. Some, in seeking to destroy God's bulwark of worship, say this is not so. The idea that all of life is worship is clearly stated by Mike Root in his book, "Unbroken Bread." "Worship is a life given in obedience to God. It's not a when or where proposition, but a what. It is what we are. You can't go to it or leave it, dress for it or from it, and you can't start it or stop it ...it doesn't open and close with a prayer, and it doesn't have a human leader or a special day." (p.115).

He, and brethren like him, are trying to do away with the public and regular assembling of brethren together on the first day of the week. To them, if all of life is worship, regular assembling is not necessary. But, what do the scriptures teach? Let's reason together. 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 implies the church was accustomed to assembling together. 1 Corinthians 11:17, 20 ff tells us why, to worship God. Acts 2:42 suggests regularity in these things and implies an assembly. Acts 20:7 teaches that assembling was a regular first day of the week occurrence. That is why the traveling disciples, on the 3rd missionary journey tarried 7 days, to meet with the disciples in Troas on the first day of the week. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 shows that saints were in the habit of assembling regularly on the 1st day of the week. The passage in Hebrews 10:24-25 places very strong emphasis on the necessity of God's people assembling on a regular basis.

In one sense all of life is worship, if by this you mean service (Gk – latreuo), which means to render religious service or homage – Philippians 3:3) to God. But there is also another word for worship (Gk-proskuneo), which means to make obeisance or do reverence. Note the underlined words. They are verbs of action. When proskuneo is used for worship it is an act of homage or reverence which would include a public display of reverence to God Matthew 4:10; John 4:21-24.

In the next issue I will show why all of life is not worship (proskuneo).

A Lesson From Fishing - Patience

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

On a recent trip to the lake, as I was fishing, I began to think there are many valuable lessons this sport can teach us. Obviously, I probably would not have been thinking about this if I had been successful at what I was attempting to do, catch fish. I had been there for several hours, yet not even one strike on my lure. Even as I observed others, I saw no fruits from their efforts either. I saw boats come and boats go, yet no fish. I love to fish, so I decided to move to another part of the lake, and try for a little longer before going home. Once I arrived at a different spot, I threw out my lure a few times, and finally I caught a fish. Patience paid off on this occasion.

The word “patience” is defined as “tolerant and even-tempered perseverance” (Collins English Dictionary, online edition). Look at this list of words that are synonymous with patience; forbearance, tolerance, composure, serenity, cool (slang), restraint, calmness, equanimity, toleration, sufferance, even temper. This is certainly a good quality that Christians must possess. Peter tells us that it is one of the virtues that you and I must add to our faith. “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love” (2 Peter 1:5-7). The footnote in my Bible, says for perseverance, patience.

If you and I are going to be effective fishers of men, then we’ll need patience. Many people we try to lead to the Lord do not favorably respond upon first approach. It is only through our continued efforts, prayer, and a manifestation of love for their souls, that we might finally get the opportunity to study with them. When Paul was preaching in the city of Athens, there were different responses to his sermon. Notice what Luke said, “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter...However, some men joined him and believed...” (Acts 17:32, 34). Those who do not initially listen, when we patiently work with them, just might want to hear you again on this matter. Don’t give up if there is any hope of progress. Keep fishing!

Eternal life will be obtained by those who have persevered. After one’s obedience to the gospel, having been saved by the grace of God through faith (Ephesians 2:8), faithfulness to the Lord is an absolute requirement. There are a number of things that cause people to give up serving the Lord. It could be persecution, overtaken in a sin, the pull of the world, becoming weary while doing good, or the disappointment of seeing family or friends fail, etc. Regardless of the problems that we may face and deal with in life, we must be patient in serving our God. Jesus said, “But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

Success comes to those who endure. Henry Austin said, “Genius, that power that dazzles mortal eyes, is oft but perseverance in disguise.” “Perseverance is the rope that ties the soul to the doorpost of heaven” (Frances J. Roberts). Remember the words of Jesus, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). Want to succeed? Keep fishing. Don’t give up. God will help us to be triumphant.

Is That Really What It Means?

No Private Interpretation

William J. Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Many potentially enlightening Bible discussions have been avoided by fluffing off differences as merely a matter of opinion. “*You believe it your way, I believe it my way,*” is a sad but all too common Bible conversation closer. I recall one discussion when I had simply read a passage of Scripture, and before I could say anything about it, a hostile accusation was levied, “That’s your interpretation!” The person was not really interested in what the Bible said, let alone what I might have to say about it.

An interpretation is defined as “the action of explaining the meaning of something.”¹ In the scenario described above, I gave no interpretation - I wasn’t given the opportunity to explain the text. There are many verses in the Bible that require no explanation; they are self-explanatory. And yet there is absolutely nothing wrong with discussing, explaining, and interpreting a text; that is the nature of Bible study. However, in doing so, we must be careful not to misrepresent or misuse the text, but “rightly divide” God’s word (2 Timothy 2:15).

Some semi-savvy Bible students have found a Bible-based retort when they are confronted with a “*That’s your interpretation*” copout. The apostle Peter is on our side, for he declared:

...*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation...* (2 Peter 1:20)

Now, don’t stick that verse in your Bible study arsenal just yet. Let’s take a few moments to interpret the “*no private interpretation*” text, if you will.

Do you and I get to decide what the Bible means?

Of course not. The Bible is God's word, not my word or your word. It is identified as truth (John 17:17). Most are able to grasp the nature of truth when it comes to mathematics (2+2 is 4, not 5), but for some reason, folks get a bit fuzzy when Bible truth is the topic. Truth is consistent, it does not change from place to place or from person to person. There is no such thing as "your truth" or "my truth." The truth is the same for both of us, the question is whether we are willing to accept it or not.

It's been said that close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades. Maybe, maybe not; but one area where close is not enough is truth, be it math or Bible. There are an infinite number of ways to be wrong, but there is only one truth. We will either accept it or reject it, but we cannot change it.

So, the Bible is not open to private interpretation. That's what 2 Peter 1:20 says, right? No, that is NOT what the apostle was addressing. Though it is true that we're not to have private interpretations of God's word, to use this verse to answer those who say, "That's your interpretation" is a misuse of the text.

What was the apostle really saying?

In context, 2 Peter 1:20 is about the revelation and inspiration of Scripture. In 2 Peter 1:12-15, the apostle said he would leave a reminder for the saints. The book itself is that reminder. At verse 16, he contrasts false teachings with the truth. Peter did not write down humanly devised fables; he was an eyewitness of Jesus Christ and the things which happened to Him. In fact, he tells his readers of the time he was with Jesus at the mount of transfiguration (verse 18, Matthew 17:1-8). Peter, James and John heard directly from heaven that Jesus is the Son of God, and they should hear Him. These and others wrote down a message which was confirmed by God through miracles and signs (Hebrews 2:1-4) and which calls upon us to obey it.

So, how does verse 20 fit into this discussion? Peter affirms that what he wrote (Scripture, the written word of God) did not come from him, but from God. Peter did not give us an interpretation of what God revealed to him; the very words he wrote came from God.

If those who misuse the verse would just read the next verse, they would see the text has nothing to do with how people understand the Bible, but deals with how we got the Bible. Notice:

...for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

This is true, not just of the writing of Peter, but the entire Bible. It is not the word of men, but the word of God (2 Samuel 23:2; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:11; etc.).

We need to be honest in how we use God's word. Though it is true that we are not entitled to a personal interpretation of Scripture (truth is truth), let us not misuse 2 Peter 1:20 to make our point. Plenty of texts emphasize the need for us to be united in our understanding of God's word (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 John 9-11; etc.).

I'm Not Ashamed Of The Gospel

Sean P. Cavender | Raymore, Missouri, USA

One of the greatest statements in all of the Bible is found in Romans 1:16 where Paul stated, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

When you pause to consider what Paul was saying, it is very impressive. He was stating he was not afraid of the gospel. He was not afraid of being associated as a preacher and apostle of the gospel. He was not afraid of being associated with Christ. He was not ashamed of the salvation that is availed to everyone. He was not afraid to tell others about his confidence in the gospel. This is an impressive list because too many times we find ourselves acting ashamed of many of these things.

I know many of us will quote this verse and say that we are not ashamed of the gospel. However, do we

show this by our actions? That is an entirely different question.

You are ashamed of the gospel if you are not ready to teach the gospel. Paul said he was “ready to preach the gospel” to the Romans (Romans 1:15). Sadly, we want to say we are unashamed of the gospel when assembled with the brethren at the church building, but throughout the week we will not speak to our friends, neighbors, or closest family members about the gospel and the need to be obedient to the truth found in God’s word. We are not ready to teach. We fear being rejected, or we fear that we will mislead them – but honestly, we are ashamed. We need to be ready to preach the gospel to the lost world around us. The world needs to hear the gospel. If we refuse to carry the message of Christ and share it with others then who will? And how will someone be saved if we refuse to teach them? Sometimes, even preachers are ashamed of the gospel. They would rather be known as a “facilitator” of discussions rather than a preacher (Romans 10:14) or evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5). Have we become ashamed of such religious terms like “preacher” and “evangelist?” Imagine if Paul was ashamed to call himself an apostle of Jesus Christ. Would Paul have been ashamed to preach the gospel of the resurrected Christ and preach the gospel of grace to those who needed to hear it? That is absurd. Paul confidently and unashamedly identified himself as a preacher, minister and apostle of our Lord (Romans 1:1, 5).

You are ashamed of the gospel if you are not living by the gospel. So much of the Roman epistle is about salvation and God’s scheme of redemption. Paul writes about faith (Romans 1:16), repentance (Romans 2:4), confession of faith (Romans 10:9, 10) and baptism (Romans 6:3-6). It all points towards the “obedience of faith” (Romans 1:5) and our need to obey the truth (Romans 2:8). Furthermore, we are called to not be like this world, but to be changed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:1, 2). Our behavior and conduct is supposed to be different; we are to be conformed to the image and behavior of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). Yet, when we allow sin to linger on in our lives and we willingly compromise in areas of our conduct such as immodest dress, corrupt speech, social drinking and fornication then we are really ashamed of the gospel. Our actions prove that we are ashamed of the gospel. When we do not live according to the gospel and its principles then we are hiding the gospel and the power of salvation.

You are ashamed of the gospel if you distance yourself from the gospel. Those who are Christians are “called Christians” (Acts 11:26). They are saints (1 Corinthians 1:2). They are the children of God (Romans 8:14). But sometimes we do not want people to know that we are Christians. We are afraid of the stigma attached with that name. We think people will judge us for being “conservative” and for being a “freak.” Let them believe what they want to believe and think what they want to think. Never be ashamed of the name of Christ. He was unashamed of us and went to the cross, enduring the shameful death on the cross, to die for our sins (Hebrews 12:2).

You are ashamed of the gospel if you separate yourself from the church of Christ. Sadly, many people do not want to be called a Christian or even be recognized as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. But what is also sad, is that people do not want to be associated with the church of Christ. The apostle Paul closed his epistle with the statement “...*the churches of Christ salute you,*” (Romans 16:16). If the churches (in the plural form) were called “churches of Christ” then what was one (singular) congregation called? Identifying ourselves as the church of Christ is important. “Church of Christ” is not the only, Scriptural name we could call ourselves. The church at Corinth was recognized as the church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2). Paul called the church, “the church of God” in Acts 20:28, but interestingly Paul contends that God purchased the church with His own blood. Whose blood was shed? The blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore the church of God is the church of Christ. Let’s not be ashamed of Christ and His church.

Paul was unashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ because he knew it contained the powerful message of salvation. He understood the importance of sharing the good news of salvation to the lost. He was eager to preach and share the message of Christ and Him crucified. Paul knew that preaching the gospel would improve the lives of those who would hear it and obey it. Thus, he was unashamed of it.

Why do we act so ashamed of the gospel? If we are afraid of ridicule, we need to understand that Christ

and the gospel are never going to be the popular thought in society. Jesus taught that many will follow the path that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13). If we are afraid others will reject us, are we more concerned about being accepted of men more than being accepted of God (cf. Matthew 10:33-35; Romans 12:2)?

Be of good courage, dear brethren. Do not be afraid and ashamed of the Lord and His wondrous gospel. It is the way of salvation and we ought to be teaching the gospel, living by the gospel, identifying ourselves with the gospel of Christ and unashamed of the church that Jesus built.

Riding Bulls In Church

Mike Thomas | Beaver Dam, Kentucky, USA

A preacher in Ohio decided to ride a bull in the church building to get people to services. *Christian News Network* (May, 2015) reports, "Lawrence Bishop II, 48, co-pastor of Solid Rock Church in Monroe, announced last month in a video that he was going to ride the bull..." He said, "What God has laid on our heart to do is to buck two wild rodeo bucking bulls inside the church sanctuary...It's a tool to get people to come in to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to stop the 'bull' in their lives of suicide [and] of drugs, and satan—the ultimate bully—being exposed in their lives and then giving their hearts to Jesus."

The article then went on to describe a similar gimmick in Birmingham, Alabama when a mega-church celebrated "the opening of its \$26 million dollar, six-dome entertainment center, which features a 12-lane bowling alley, a basketball court, a fitness center, a banquet hall and cafe, a teen dance club, and an adult alcohol and smoke-free night club."

It is unfortunate that Jesus and His disciples did not have enough sense to use these tactics in making disciples. Our Lord and Savior was not smart enough to realize that people would not listen to His gospel unless it was dipped in chocolate and nestled in layers of entertainment. Poor Jesus. He had no clue on how to win souls to Him. He had the crazy idea of taking His gospel into the world (Mark 16:15-16). What a foolish plan. If He was half as smart as preachers in America, He would have known that people cannot learn of His death and resurrection unless it is packaged in cotton candy and lights. But now that bull-riding and bowling alleys are in church buildings, we can know the Lord's will, right?

The truth is, those who use gimmicks to get people to church not only violate Jesus' will on the work of the church, they never teach the truth about salvation. They don't even have a clue about the Lord's church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4) and how to enter it (Acts 2:47; Galatians 3:26-27). If they truly knew Jesus, they would know that those who follow the Lord for carnal reasons will never be satisfied (John 6:26-27). These tactics never save anyone. They might hold people's attention for a while, but down the road is another religion with brighter lights and bigger toys. Instead, Jesus tells His disciples to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). Our burden as Christians is not to entertain people, but to prepare ourselves to teach the life-saving gospel of Jesus. If speaking the truth in love won't get the job done, it's time we get a different job.

from the e-book, "And They Shall Become One Flesh"

When Storms Come

William J. Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

*Now when neither sun nor stars appear for many days, and no small tempest beat on us,
hope that we would be saved was finally given up. ...now I urge you to take heart...
(Acts 27:20, 22)*

Be Prepared For Storms

Many folks, dependent upon their location, are accustomed to dealing with storms. Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, ice storms, blizzards, torrential rains; all these will bring normalcy to a screeching halt and demand a refocus on our attention, for survival sake. The ill prepared may suffer great loss, perhaps even the loss of life itself. For this reason we get adequately and trustworthy insurance; we board up windows; we have storm cellars; we have planned escape routes; we have emergency kits and supplies; etc..

We take measure to lessen the impact that a storm will have on us, and certainly it is wise to do so. Friend, shall we not also "storm-proof" our marriages? As certain as weather related storms will come, we can be assured that storms of life will beat upon our relationships. Whether our marriage survives the storm or is a casualty will depend

in large part on our preparation to endure and overcome the tempest.

Storms will come in various forms and degrees of intensity, as different as a sunshower is from a hailstorm. The Scriptures stress preparedness:

- To do good works (Titus 3:1)
- To defend our hope (1 Peter 3:15)
- and to meet the Lord (Matthew 24:44; 25:10; Luke 12:40)

Shall we not also prepare ourselves to overcome the trials which may challenge our marriages? Consider some of the storms that may challenge our marriage:

- Loss of a child
- Financial difficulties
- Accident / tragedy
- Disagreements
- Health concerns
- Unfaithfulness
- Loss of employment
- Loss of interest

Weathering The Storm

Acknowledging the need to prepare for challenges which will confront us, we must then have some method or tools at our disposal. What is the storm shelter of marital trials? How do we effectively equip the emergency kit of our relationship?

Consider some essentials which will enable our marriages to weather the storms of life:

- One Flesh. As husband and wife, we are to meet the joys and disappointments of life together. The unity and intimacy which God intends for marriage is powerful (Genesis 2:24)!
- Good communication. Poor communication will make difficult circumstances worse. We must be open with our spouse, and use wisdom when it comes to our speech (Proverbs 12:18).
- Eye on the LORD. When the winds and waves threaten to pull us down, let us have our eyes planted firmly on the Lord (Matthew 14:30-31).
- Positive perspective. For some folks, the smallest troubles in life seem like mountains, whereas for others, the monstrous difficulties appear to be molehills. The perspective we have makes a huge difference (Acts 16:25; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

Rising Above The Storm

The first time I flew was on a commercial flight from Buffalo NY to Charlotte NC. Already afraid of flying, the prospect of taking off with a storm in the area did not sit well. As we rose from the tarmac, my fear intensified as the wind beat on the plane. But upward we continued, riding the turbulent winds, until... the storm was gone and the sun was shining. We had risen above the storm! While stuck in the storm, it can be hard to see anything but the threatening tempest. We need to rise above the storm.

The four principles mentioned above will help us to not only weather the storm, but to rise above. Time and again in the Scriptures, we see couples caught in the storms of life (Elkanah & Hannah's battle with infertility, 1 Samuel 1:5, 8, 11; Job & his wife's loss of all they had, Job 1:13-19; David & Michal's in-law problems; etc.). Time and again, we see that the Lord will provide the way for His people to rise above, victorious, if we will take it. Jesus comforted His disciples with these words:

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

May a Woman Be a Preacher? (2)

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Arguments from YouTube Video

Lauren defended her work as a preacher by asserting the Lord had made it very clear she was to preach by giving her a feeling of peace about doing the work. I do not deny that Lauren honestly feels she should preach, and I do not deny she has a feeling of peace about the issue, but I absolutely deny that has any bearing whatsoever on whether or not the Lord approves her work.

The Lord formerly spoke to His people in various ways (Hebrews 1:1), but He has never revealed His will by human feelings. Jacob felt for eighteen years as strongly as anyone ever felt anything that Joseph was dead (Genesis 37:33-35), but Jacob's feelings deceived him. Joseph was still alive in Egypt.

During the days of the judges of Israel, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25). The inspired author tells two stories to illustrate the results of this state of affairs: the idolatry, corruption of the priesthood, and immorality of Micah and of the entire tribe of Dan (Judges chapters 17-18) and the homosexuality, rape, and murder leading to a bloody civil war by the men of Gibeah (Judges chapters 19-21). The result of everyone doing "what was right in his own eyes" was moral, spiritual, religious, and civil chaos and disaster (modern America?).

Buddhism is based on the belief that enlightenment comes from within oneself through meditation. Maybe Lauren doesn't use meditation, but depending on a "feeling of peace" to determine what is right is simply looking within oneself to find truth. "O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

The only way to determine and follow the will of God is to search the doctrine of Christ and to believe and follow it (John 12:48-49; 2 John 9-11).

Lauren maintains, "The gifts I have are from the Lord." Amen! (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:11) And allow me to add that Lauren is an excellent public speaker, a gift that she could well use speaking to women, teaching classes of women, and teaching children. My wife and daughter have accompanied me overseas repeatedly and have been very effective in these divinely approved and important roles. The congregation where I am an elder has annual "Ladies Bible Studies" in which women speak to other women about the Scriptures, and some women have traveled hundreds of miles to participate. But we recognize and obey the scriptural limitation on a woman's role as a Bible teacher. "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet" (1 Timothy 2:12, New American Standard Bible).

Both Lauren and Nancy Baughman claim they are maintaining the "unity of the Spirit" in their respective roles. Lauren puts the onus of divisiveness on those who oppose her work by asking, "When people feel called of God, why do other people get in their way?" One of the seven "ones" that compose the "unity of the Spirit" is "one faith" (Ephesians 4:1-6), the one body of doctrine we must all believe and obey (Jude verse 3). And that one faith commands, "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." Should Christians have opposed Aimee Semple McPherson, founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, when she felt called by God? She certainly was a gifted public speaker. I oppose all who defend and practice departures from the faith (Romans 16:17-18; 2 John verses 9-11).

Patrick Mead argues that he reads Paul through Jesus, not Jesus through Paul, claimed that not every part of the Bible is equal to every other part, and that Paul was simply a fellow student with us. The Lord did not reveal all His will while He was on earth but sent the Holy Spirit to His apostles to lead them into all the truth (John 16:12-15). Paul and the other apostles of Christ received the Spirit from the Lord and preached and wrote all the truth of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; Ephesians 3:1-7). To hear the apostles of Christ is to hear Christ, and to reject them is to reject Him (Luke 10:16). Paul is far more than a fellow student with me. Paul with the other apostles rules the church through the word the Holy Spirit gave them (Luke 22:28-30). Besides, where did Jesus ever authorize women to teach over men?

Lauren paralleled her work as a preacher to Abraham sacrificing Isaac (Genesis 22:1-18). What Abraham was commanded to do was murder, but he was willing to do it because God commanded him to do so. Abraham was a prophet of God (Genesis 20:7), so the Lord spoke to Him directly (Amos 3:7). The gift of prophecy has ceased (1 Corinthians 13:8-13), and the only way the Lord speaks to us today is through Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Scriptures forbid women teaching over men (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:12).

“Supplemental Document on Women in Worship and Ministry”

The Fourth Avenue Church has put out an online document, “Supplemental Document on Women in Worship and Ministry,” which defends their position on women preaching. It maintains that First Corinthians 14:34-35 and First Timothy 2:11-12 “were meant to address specific concerns in a specific location and were not meant to apply to all women in every place throughout the centuries.” Why then did Paul defend his position in First Corinthians 13:34 by observing, “as the law also says.” All the way back in Genesis 3:16 the Lord taught that the husband would rule over his wife. Feminine subjection is not temporary or local; it is everywhere for all time.

The Fourth Avenue folks parallel feminine submission as teachers (1 Timothy 2:11-12) to men lifting up their hands in prayer (1 Timothy 2:8) and women not wearing fancy hairdos or jewelry (1 Timothy 2:9). Since the Scriptures present several approved postures in prayer (e.g., Luke 18:13-14; Acts 20:36), no one posture is bound. And Paul does not forbid women from having their hair done or wearing jewelry and expensive clothing. By denying the lesser to emphasize the greater (cf. John 6:27; 1 Peter 3:3-4), he teaches women to place their emphasis on inward character rather than outward appearance.

They claim Paul was dealing with some kind of “proto-Gnostic” heresy in Ephesus, where Timothy was (1 Timothy 1:3) which elevated women and denigrated men. Why didn’t he just forbid teaching the false doctrine, which he in fact did (1 Timothy 1:3-4)?

Yes, the word “silence” in 1 Timothy 2:12 means “quietness” (ASV; NASB; ESV; Arndt & Gingrich. 350; Mounce. 1166), but “keep silent” in First Corinthians 14:34 is from a different word, which does indeed mean not to speak (ESV; Arndt & Gingrich. 757; Mounce. 1269).

The Fourth Avenue brethren argue that the head covering and hair teaching of First Corinthians 11:2-16 is parallel to First Timothy 2:11-12 and First Corinthians 14:34-35. In First Corinthians 11:16, the apostle specifically states the head covering is a matter of “custom,” but there is no such qualification in First Timothy, and Paul plainly states the principle of feminine subjection he demands in First Corinthians 14:34 was also true under the law.

The document parallels biblical permission of slavery with its prohibition against women teaching over men, and contends both were temporary. Actually, in both Old and New Testament times slavery could be voluntary (Exodus 21:5-6; 1 Corinthians 7:23). The Scriptures forbid capturing and selling people into slavery and cruelly treating servants (1 Timothy 1:8-11; Colossians 4:1). The most basic divine law pertaining to human relations is “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8). We must treat all others as we desire to be treated (Matthew 7:12). All these principles were true then and are true now.

These brethren argue that First Timothy 2:15, “Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing,” demonstrates First Timothy 2:11-12 doesn’t apply today. They can’t tell us what the passage means and why it applied then but not now, but they’re confident it negates verses 11-12. Actually, both passages were true both then and now. It is through the feminine role of child bearing that the Savior came into the world, and no human father was involved. Thus, the woman is elevated, in that through her unique role salvation has come to all.

Then they assert that since Paul said “I do not permit” (1 Timothy 2:11) rather than “God does not permit,” this is just Paul speaking, not the Lord. They parallel it to First Corinthians 7:12. In First Corinthians 7:12 the apostle is introducing legislation about marriage that Christ had not given while on earth. It is still authoritative, since Paul is an apostle of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:37).

The document asserts “man” in First Timothy 2:12 would be better translated “husband.” If so, is it wrong for a married woman to preach while her husband is in the audience? **The King James Version, New King James Version, American Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, English Standard Bible, and New International Version** all translate it as “man.” The **NIV**, the least reliable of the aforementioned versions, does have a footnote which says, “Or over her husband.” The marriage relationship is not the subject of the context. But we’re told “man” makes it contradict other passages. What passages? It certainly doesn’t contradict First Corinthians 14:34-35.

The authors assert, “Paul frequently speaks of women holding high positions in the church” and give as proof, “that

Junia – a female name – was ‘chief among the apostles.’” This is a reference to Romans 16:7, which the English Standard Version correctly translates “well known to the apostles.”

There is an assertion without proof “that Priscilla and not her husband, Aquilla, was noted as an active and effective teacher in the early church.” Priscilla (also called “Prisca”) is always mentioned in Scripture with her husband Aquilla (Acts 18:2-3,18; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19), and the only mention of Priscilla teaching is in conjunction with her husband (Acts 18:26).

Then the document argues, “He addresses women by name and treats them as fellow workers and fellow laborers with him in Romans 16.” Well, Amen! Every faithful Christian is a “fellow laborer,” as Romans sixteen demonstrates. And there is much labor in and for the church open to women (e.g., Romans 16:1-2). What does that have to do with a woman teaching over a man?

We’re told, “We know that Philip had four daughters who preached alongside him (Acts 21:9).” We know no such thing. We know Philip “had four virgin daughters who prophesied” (Acts 21:9). The passage neither states nor implies they preached alongside their father. Their prophesying was in harmony with their role as women (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12).

“Jesus went out of his way to include women in his work and life.” Amen! So do I. But He nowhere authorizes them to preach.

We’re informed that with the New Testament there is “no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile, free or slave, or male and female” (Galatians 3:28). So there are no roles in the home. The husband is not really the head of his wife. Galatians 3:28 speaks of salvation (verses 24-29). We’re all saved the same way.

There follows the most damning assertion of all. “In Ephesians 5 we are told that submission is for both males and females, not for females alone.” So the husband is not really the head of his wife (Ephesians 5:22-24). There are no headship roles. Furthermore, since the headship of the husband parallels that of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33), Christ is not really the Head of the church. We need not submit to Him. And they certainly do not!

We’re told the women at Corinth were just being disruptive, and Paul was telling them to tone it down. Yes, there were disruptive women at Corinth, just as there are in some congregations today. But Paul forbade them to do the kind of speaking they were doing. They were to “be submissive” (1 Corinthians 14:34). This wasn’t just a temporary rule at Corinth, even the law required it (Ibid).

Yes, women prophesied (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17-18), but they didn’t do it over men (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12).

We’re informed, “At Fourth Avenue Church, when a woman sings, or reads scripture, or passes a communion tray, or shares a story she is not usurping authority but obeying it, for she has been asked to do this by the leadership team.” I don’t know what a “leadership team” is, but when any human authority contradicts divine authority, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Finally, these brethren assert, “Churches of Christ had women serving in worship and ministry from its beginnings until around the year 1900.” The first century church certainly did not have women preachers or women teaching over men with apostolic approval, and that’s all that sets an approved precedent for us (Philippians 3:17). So what if some later churches of Christ disobeyed the Lord? “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:9).

Conclusion

Godly women have a legitimate and important role as teachers of the precious word of God. There is one limitation in principle upon their teaching: a woman may not teach in a position of authority over a man. This is in harmony with her role of subjection based upon her purpose in creation. But there are so many legitimate and important outlets for the ability that women have to teach that there is no excuse for knowledgeable, able women not to be Bible teachers.

Churches, use good women in proper capacities to teach the word. Women, use your ability and knowledge, in keeping with your role as a woman, to God's glory, the eternal benefit of the precious children, and the edification of the church.

But recognize that, as long as God is over Christ, and Christ is over man, the man is over the woman (1 Corinthians 11:3). This is neither local nor temporary. It is universal and age lasting. Women must not teach over men nor in any other way exercise authority over men in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12). Thus women must not preach nor in any other way take leadership roles in worship assemblies where men are present nor be the teachers in charge of classes that include men.

To refuse to recognize the headship of the man in the church and in the home is to deny the headship of Christ. It is rebellion against divine authority.

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber (2 Peter 2:1-3).

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage" (2 Peter 2:19).

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