

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection

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Introduction

The text of study; our topic is found in 1 Tim 2:11. Some parts of this treatise will be in two columns where passages or additional remarks are introduced to support the point being made or my brief commentary is offered upon quoted text. We shall examine pertinent passages that relate to or directly discuss the issue of “women silence” in the churches.

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

1 Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

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.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

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

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

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a

This letter was from the inspired apostle named Paul unto the church at Corinth. It is also meant to be instructive unto ALL Christians in any and every place so long as they acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

Without dabbling much into the issue of ‘head covering,’ it is noteworthy that there is an hierarchical structure where God is supreme or over all, followed by Christ, then man who is trailed by the woman.

This is about the religious order in any worship setting, irrespective of whether any man and woman pair therein are married to each other or not. The point is spiritually, women are under authority to men; each woman and every man should acknowledge this truth and respect the divine edict based on the order of creation. Paul never based the directive on culture. Note that he did not negate himself in Gal 3:26-28 (For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.)

In Galatians the thrust is that salvation is available to everyone in same manner (by faith evidenced via obedience to the gospel in baptism) regardless of one’s race/tribe, gender or social status. Being children of God equally does not mean that males and females have the same role otherwise same-sex (gay) marriage

covering.

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church

1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Fulfillment of both Joel's and Peter's prophecies in Caesarea and Corinth.

Acts 21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

would be scriptural if Gal 3:28 is literally taken out of context.

The fact of male leadership is more salient and evident in marriage. A woman who is a wife is particularly to be submissive to the man; **her OWN husband** who is her specific head in the family/private/home setting. The wives should be subject to their own husbands. A woman must revere her husband above any other human including her father since the dad sort of 'transferred authority over her' unto her husband when she was given in marriage (1 Cor 7:28-38). She must be in subjection even if he is not a Christian (1 Pet 3:1-2) provided he does not require her to disobey God (Acts 4:19; 5:29). The husband must love and care for his wife sacrificially and realize they are co-heirs of God's grace though he is commanded to lead their partnership which became a union.

Recall that on the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted Joel's prophecy. Peter's sermon was effective and the Holy Spirit convicted the hearers.

Acts 2:17-18 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and **on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy...**

37-39 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your

16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. | the Lord our God shall call.

The book of 1 Corinthians is important in any study on women silence. From Chapter 12 through 13, Paul identified the miraculous gifts of the Spirit and the usage in building the church from inception. The supernatural endowments were divers; for revealing and confirming the truth in the assemblies.

Evidently, the Corinthians were misusing the gifts especially the utterance abilities such as ‘tongues and prophecy.’ Paul was inspired to correct the situation not only for them who were spiritually gifted then but for all earthly congregations evermore. He established abiding principles for orderliness and decency in all churches. He earlier stated that hope, faith and love abide but the greatest of these is love (1 Cor 13:13).

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye

In 1 Cor 14, “to speak” is to utter words either:

- by revelation (divine disclosure)
- by knowledge (supernatural understanding of facts, non-researched information)
- by tongues/interpretation (miraculous vocal expressions in or understanding of an unstudied language)
- by doctrine (exposition of a religious teaching)
- by prophesying (message with foretelling and discerning) for the purpose of edification of the church (spiritual growth), exhortation (encouragement), and comfort (consolation).

whereby someone particularly under inspiration talks to counsel or bless others. (Note: doctrine and songs may be natural)

The apostle stressed the importance of deciphering various sound signals. He illustrated with the need to distinguish the message in various musical instruments which could be for different purposes such as a call to battle or entertainment.

(Since the purpose of language is communication amongst men, it is needful that foreign languages be interpreted. Such could be done by interpreters who could translate because they studied both the source and desired target languages in natural settings as found in Gen 42:23).

He also used the barbarians as illustration which was a people reputed for speaking simultaneously in rapid unintelligible chatter. Some early Christians possessed the spiritual gift of speaking an

may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

19 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.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let

unstudied/unlearned earthly language and/or the ability to interpret such. (This was first bestowed upon the apostles who used it to preach unto people from different nations that came for the feast of Pentecost in Acts 2) 1 Cor 14:13 shows not everyone who spoke in a strange or foreign language always had the gift to interpret such hence the counsel that they pray for such ability when speaking tongues to people of their own locality rather than unto foreigners or the natural speakers of those languages.

Paul who was miraculously gifted to speak foreign languages more than all the saints in Corinth would rather utter a speech that can be understood, beneficial to a congregation than display his gift or sagacity.

It is significant that the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues or unlearned languages was for the purpose of convincing unbelievers especially foreigners. Prophesying or foretelling via the word was for the benefit of those who already believe upon God; the source of prophesy.

During the first century, the utterance delivered by a believer in Corinth was often by spiritual enablement; someone could have a song or a teaching or tongue or interpretation to share which given by direct inspiration -vs 26. (Natural speeches evident in division)

It is required that the audience, comprising the church and any visitor must be able to comprehend what is enunciated by 'a speaker' hence the requirement that the one who speaks in an unfamiliar language should keep quiet if there is no interpreter.

How could such 'keep silence in the church and speak to himself and to God' as mandated in vs 28?

him speak to himself, and to God.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

35 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.

36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

Simply by stopping or refraining from saying anything in that strange tongue while at the gathering of the saints, he could only SPEAK IN PRIVACY elsewhere (such as at home) while he is alone with God. The verse is not enjoining such persons to speak in low voices in the assembly as that will contradict the message in the passage. If every tongue speaker without an interpreter began to mutter unto himself, the assembly would look like a gathering of mentally unbalanced persons. Such confusion and disorderliness cannot be from God.

In his message to the brethren which came together, inspired Paul **particularly addressed the leading men** who gave doctrine or revelation, speak with tongues or interpret and the prophets in verses 27-32 and 36-38. Let us designate these “*inspired speakers*.” Apart from context/ grammar, even logic/ reason help in identifying who the phrase “your women” refer to in verse 34. It is more tenable to hold that *it denotes only those women who are married to [some of] the inspired speakers in the church than to affirm it simply indicates all the women in the church at Corinth.*

Chapter 7 suggests that all the women in the congregation were not married (and unto Christians) while all the married men therein may not necessarily have believing wives. Perhaps every married person also wasn't living with the spouse. Yet 1 Cor 14:35 must be obeyed! If “your women” refers to the church's inspired female speakers *they would still be wives of the inspired men* because of verse 35.

Irrespective of how spiritual any man considers himself, no matter how knowledgeable or inspired such posits to be or is regarded, the instructions written by Paul are divine decrees.

The principle of having few speakers to sequentially address the assembly, in intelligible or interpreted speech is established.

Paul clearly meant that the wives of the prophets, of tongue speakers and of other inspired men who instruct the assembly with the word should not interrogate such men openly. Each such woman is rather to allow her own husband to demonstrate his headship and rule over her as pronounced in Gen 3:16. She should get clarification on whatever the inspired male instructors were teaching outside the church, in particular from her own husband at home. However, “at home” means “in private.” Recall 1 Cor 11:22,34 (What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? ...And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation) The passage does NOT forbid one from taking a meal at an inn/restaurant or at the house of a friend, relation, etc. It implies eat natural food at home or anywhere except at a church service; such must not be mixed up with the spiritual meal of the Lord's Supper at the assembly of the saints.

In Christ's spiritual kingdom, leaders' wives are NOT church leaders! Even in ancient Israel, it was the Levite men who were divinely appointed to minister in the tabernacle and later in the inner temple (Num 3, 1 Chro 23:27-32), their wives could not assume such duties. Note that even when Zechariah became mute he completed the scheduled period of his religious ministrations, his wife did NOT stand in for him therein -Lk 1:5-23. However, at their child's naming ceremony (a social event), Elizabeth stood in as a helpmeet to name their baby John before he wrote it -Lk 1:57-64

In Corinth, were the inspired speakers' wives permitted to pose doctrinal questions to the teachers during the church gathering? No. Thus women who were spouses of the inspired speakers in the church, women who were plausibly also endowed with spiritual gifts, were barred from controverting those teachers and were not allowed to raise any query under the guise of seeking more information *to learn anything aside from* that which has been divinely uttered. **Could the other women in Corinth ask questions in the church?** That is the unmarried (virgins, widows and the separated) and those married unto unbelievers /new converts /uninspired men. Someone might aver these other women were not expressly forbidden from asking questions in the assembly while another might assert such women were not expressly permitted either. What can be inferred from the text with sound reasoning? 1 Cor 14:35 conclude that: 'it is a shame **for women to speak in the church**' NOT 'it is a shame for YOUR women to say anything in the church.' This implies it is dishonourable for any woman to be a religious speaker in the church. If the other women teach or ask questions in the church, would it be a shame? Yes! Should we suppose that the other women may freely question the inspired speakers when the speakers' own wives (*who by human nature would be highly regarded as amongst the most influential females in the church*) could not do so openly? No, because women are to honour and be submissive unto their husbands; any other display by the leading members' wives would be a bad example (Esther 1:17-20) contrary to expectation (1 Tim 3:5, 11-12). The virgins, young wives / widows are supposed to emulate and be trained by the older women who have married and kept homes (Tit 2:3-5). To reject this necessary inference is to claim Paul implies: '**let the other women not keep silence in the churches: for it is permitted unto them to speak; they are not commanded to be under obedience, as also saith not the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them not ask their non-existent or non-spiritual husbands at home: for it is a pride for women to speak in the church.**' Those who posit so would also have to first literally probe any woman who signifies intention to ask a question in the church on whether she is married, if her husband is alive, if he is a believer / church speaker / at home or not, etc. before allowing her! That is preposterous. There is **no proof** under the New Covenant that any woman (henceforth) raised a doctrinal query while a man was exhorting the church. (How long could leaders' wives really tolerate some 'lesser sisters' frequent interrogation of the leaders without picking a quarrel?) Christ's command in 1 Cor 14:34-35 effectively means unto both the church speakers' wives and the other women:

- a. They are not to teach the word of the gospel unto a church gathering of male and female worshippers.
- b. They should realize that it is disgraceful for women in general to speak in the church.
- c. During worship, they should not query the inspired men about the messages delivered by those speakers.
- d. In private, they may ask question for additional exposition outside the worship session. Note that inspired Paul did not bind or rigidly specify who the other women must approach with their questions since they have numerous options (ministers, fathers, brothers, etc.) unlike the inspired speakers' wives who were directed unto their own husbands.

Does this mean that the Lord forbids women from opening their mouths to **say anything** when the church is assembled? No! That they '*keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak*' means they should not be speakers who deliver spiritual speeches as those who utter doctrine, tongue or prophesy in the assembly. They should rather *give audience to the approved speakers and be hush* as the multitude were while Paul and Barnabas related their exploits to the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:12). It does not imply the women must be mute throughout a service, recall that '*to every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven... a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*'

1 Cor 14:34-35 doesn't preclude or exclude women from:

1. **Singing when the congregation offers praise.** We collectively open our mouths to sing together. See Eph 5:19, Col 3:16, 1 Pet 2:9
2. **Saying 'Amen' to a congregational prayer led by a man.** Everyone should say 'Amen = let it be so' to a thanksgiving or request spoken with one accord as a body. See Neh 8:6, Pls 106:48
3. **Answering a question** (*provided it would not connote spiritual contribution to a topical Bible study*). E.g. in dispute resolution (Mt 18:15-17) or in an interview to ascertain a widow's age and welfare before the church consider enlisting her for support (1 Tim 5:3-10)
4. **Giving information on a member unto the church or a segment thereof** (e.g. *house fellowship*). It may be to respond during announcement of Absentees. E.g. when a sister's believing husband is sick and through her, requests the prayer of the Elders/Saints (James 5:14). It could be to report that a saint has been arrested or has been released from detention.
5. **Attending her congregation's 'business meeting,'** observe to support the decision of the leaders, work with others for the realization e.g. in selecting representatives and discipline (Acts 6:1-6, 1 Cor 5:1-5)
6. **Making a personal request before God's people.** The church at Rome was advised to assist Phoebe, a visiting sister (Rm 16:1-2). Any needy Christian, male or female, could ask for support from the church just as a wealthy one could volunteer to finance a gospel project so that the church is not burdened.

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore **let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips** giving thanks to his name.

1 Corinthians 14:16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of **the unlearned say Amen** at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

Paul expected the Corinthians to give thanks in the breaking of bread and for the entire congregation to say 'Amen' on such occasion -1 Cor 11:23-26

Acts 5:7-8 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? **And she said, Yea**, for so much.

Acts 12:5, 11-15 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him... And when Peter was come to himself, he said, now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; **where many were gathered together praying**. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when **she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told** how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so...

Acts 15:4, 22-23 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church... **Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church**, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch... And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting...

Acts 16:14-15 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, **she besought us, saying**, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

So may women speak or query male teachers in the church whether or not miraculous spiritual gifts of utterance are in usage?

To resolve that we need to examine our main text for this study. However, note that:

- a. A gospel Preacher/Teacher is instructed to ‘*avoid foolish and unlearned questions*’ that cause strife -1 Tim 1:4; 6:4; 2 Tim 2:23, Tit 3:9.
- b. A Christian must ‘*be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*’ -1 Pet 3:15.

The first point is applicable with respect to all the people he encounters while the second primarily relates to unbelievers and skeptics. Both points suggest that a believer of the word may attend to reasonable questions about the hope of eternal life and godliness; queries that are not designed to controvert or drag him into contention. After all, outside a church setting, Phillip answered the questions of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-38). Also, inspired Paul attended to enquiries: on salvation from the jailor (Acts 16:30) and on doctrinal matters written unto him by the church (1 Cor 7:1a). It shows he would address religious questions from the men of the church at Corinth if he were physically present in that church. He remarked in his epistle unto them that he would address any outstanding issues he did not write on whenever he gets to visit them (1 Cor 11:34).

1 Timothy 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

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

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

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

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Since the epistle to Timothy was written so **that people may know how to behave in the church** (1 Tim 3:14-15), it follows that a man of faith rather than a sister is to lead public prayers of the church at services having an audience of mixed gender.

In contrast, inspiration remarked that women should be clad modestly; they should shun exhibitionism, extravagance and rather display godliness.

The inspired apostle declares that **a woman is to learn in silence or stillness in total submission**. She should submit and be quiet when learning as a man is teaching or leading. She is prohibited from teaching or usurping (assuming religious authority over) a man at every gathering of the church. Why? Simply because man who was first created and put in charge in this world, lost his initial fellowship with God after he derailed upon allowing his helpmeet; the woman at his side (Gen 3:1-6) to:

- a. engage the enemy
- b. take the initiative in speaking about God’s word that was committed unto him
- c. instruct him on a matter of faith

The woman will be delivered as per pain and sorrow in childbearing if she humbly abides in her divinely assigned role with holiness and faith.

The directive on “women silence” in 1 Tim 2:11-12 **is valid for all assemblies and perpetual** since the reasons adduced therein are based on ‘the order of creation’ and the fact that sin originated via the woman who enticed the man into wrong-doing though he wasn’t deceived as she was. God seeks to mitigate ‘the fall’ from re-occurring hence a woman is not to teach men at His house; the church. This has nothing to do with use or misuse of miraculous gifts. When Timothy was based with the church in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3), the inspired epistle sent to him requires **ALL the women** in the congregation to learn in silence and not to teach or appropriate authority over a man. **This harmonizes with the truth in 1 Cor 14:34-35**. The Holy Spirit could NOT have meant Corinthian church leaders’ wives should keep silence while other women speak or query teachers in the assembly, only to instruct otherwise for Ephesian church women. **Inspired Paul taught the same things in every church** (1 Cor 4:17).

Naturally, a non-inspired speaker is not necessarily always smarter than every member of his audience and some sisters are more knowledgeable in the scriptures than some brothers. We all know that a question may be asked innocently for one to be informed or cynically so as to expose a perceived flaw and constrain a teacher to adjust his view. **God foreknew all possible intents of any enquirer, varying personal abilities of the saints and evolving education methods before giving us the precepts on “women silence.”** Human reluctance to obey and their civilized excuses are untenable since the foolishness of God is wiser than men. If a woman questions a man while he teaches in church, can she really be said to be *‘learning in silence and with all subjection’*? It may be she did not pay sufficient attention to grasp what he said or she grasped it yet disagrees and means: “by what authority do you make that doctrinal claim?” If it was an obvious lapse of clarity or audibility by the teacher then a brother would likely pose whatever question could be justified in such situation. When a woman makes a contribution to a man’s lesson in church; she is usurping his authority, encroaching on the man’s role and attempting to teach all the listeners in contravention of God’s commandments. Thus no man should request a woman to contribute in a Bible study in the church or even ask her a doctrinal question. She would inadvertently teach over men in response attempt to expound the word. The man should respect his head (Christ) and ensure a woman is subject to her head (every man present in worship) -1 Cor 11:3. [A doctrinal question from the serpent initiated a discussion that got Eve to sin and to lead Adam astray]

Acts 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.
25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.
26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.
27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:
28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

This seems an apparent occasion for a Christian woman to question a male [non-inspired] teacher of God’s word and to contribute to a public religious discourse. Priscilla did NOT take such action but along with her husband, privately engaged the speaker to teach him more accurately. They refrained from reasoning or disputing with him in the synagogue as Jews often did with Paul. Could a man question a male teacher in the church? Yes, that is permissible when necessary since any man who is or aspires to be an officer in Christ’s kingdom must be: *“holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped...”* (Titus 1:9-11). Recall Acts 15:1-2, 1 Cor 14:29 and Gal 2:11-14. Why then did Aquila not question Apollos openly? Plausibly because Apollos made no error of commission in his speech; he gave truthful though partial information, based on his knowledge. His sincerity, zeal and natural vastness in the word within his reach was acknowledged by the Holy Spirit.

Those who advocate that women teach men or ask questions in church always defend their position with *“I think ...I feel”* rather than with *“the scripture states”* Kindly reflect on that again. How come a wife could ask her husband a doctrinal question at home which she may not ask him in the church? Well, that is how God wants her submission to be displayed in the two distinct institutions. Recall that a believing woman could teach both unbelieving men (Jn 4:28-30, 39) and believing ones (Acts 18:26) outside of the church but may not teach a man in the church (1 Tim 2:12). **If at a gathering of the whole church, God does not want a woman to communicate her ideas on doctrinal matters or to rule; in what way could He have passed the instruction clearly other than by requiring women to learn in silence while men alone teach the entire brethren and that from such men, overseers be appointed? Kindly provide an answer:**

SOME OBJECTIONS ADDRESSED

Claim: Paul only stopped the women from asking questions in Corinth because that violated the culture of that city. Besides, 1 Cor 14:34-35 is not applicable today since it was to stop women having miraculous gifts of utterance from teaching and asking questions in the church.

Response: On the issue of women silence, Paul did NOT allude to Corinthian culture as presumed but rather to divine instruction (1 Cor 14:34-38), he noted that even under the law (Patriarchal and Mosaic era), women were to submit to men. Was Eve using miraculous gifts of prophecy or tongues when she was put under Adam's rule? If the inspired women in Corinth were to be silent, were the non-inspired women there to lead in querying or teaching the church the doctrines/songs they knew and recite/read the OT scripture they have? No, it was a shame then and still is now. If the inspired women of Paul's time could be restrained from addressing the whole church, shouldn't the non-inspired women of today be also?

Claim: There were prophetesses in the Old Testament (OT) such as Miriam, Anna who spoke to people after Jesus was born and Deborah a female judge of Israel. Also, Zelophehad's daughters asked Moses a question before all the leaders and people of Israel. The assertion that the law prohibited women from speaking in the assembly is inaccurate.

Response: *In the OT, a prophet/ess occasionally addresses the people to deliver God's original word, draw them to the LORD's law and also warn them about divine plans via foretelling. Such differ from priests who minister in the sanctuary daily to offer sacrifices, adjudicate religious matters and present the worshippers to God in the Tabernacle or Temple.* The Elders and judges of each city ruled on the civil matters.

Miriam was a prophetess who led women and addressed individuals in Israel (Exo 15:20-21). When she and her sibling Aaron the high Priest, murmured against Moses and claimed to be equal "inspired speakers," the LORD was angry with the duo, interestingly God chastised her alone - Num 12. Women had a section or court by the Tabernacle where they assembled to serve as attendants (Exo 38:8, 1 Sam 2:22). Deborah was a prophetess who also served as a civil judge of Israel -Judges 4:4-5. Huldah the prophetess was consulted by Hilkiah the priest and some men at the behest of the king of Judah (2 Kg 22:12-20). Anna the prophetess, a widow indeed was always within the precinct of the temple, fasting and praying. When baby Jesus was taken for dedication at the temple, it was recorded: "And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Lk 2:38). Anna merely gave a personal prayer of thanks like Simeon did and henceforth discussed Christ with individuals around not that she coordinated temple worship and delivered a sermon about Jesus. All the women mentioned above did NOT perform the functions of the OT priests. None presided over a worship session or religious convocation in God's sanctuary. That is the import of the allusion Paul made that it is not permitted for women to speak in the church "as also saith the law." Even in this era that all saints are priests (1 Pet 2:5), women are restricted from ministering religiously over men in the church. It was significant that after their father's death, Zelophehad's daughters went to the nation's leaders to enquire on a matter. They specifically made a request about their inheritance before Moses and the people of Israel (Num 27:1-7). The maidens did not stand up to query Moses' or Eleazar's religious lesson as some do after a teaching in worship today. Their action corresponds to making a personal request, see the 6th item listed on page 7.

Claim: A woman contributed to Christ's teaching (Lk 11:27). Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:8-16). These are indications that women spoke in church.

Response: A cursory look at the text shows that the claim that a woman contributed to Christ's teaching is inaccurate.

Luke 11:27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. 28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

After the Lord taught some things such as importunity and how he could cast out devils with divine power not by Beelzebub, that woman merely

interjected his speech to express goodwill on his mother in appreciation of the wonderful lesson she just heard from Christ. It was an exclamation of her satisfaction with his message; it was not a contribution (modification / addition) to Christ's lesson. It is akin to someone interjecting a speaker delivering an impressive sermon today with something like: "*you are blessed, your parents are fortunate, praise the Lord!*" Such action is not very decent but listeners sometimes get emotionally carried away. That was why Jesus remarked it is blessed for the hearers of God's word to be doers.

Acts 21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

We cannot really determine whether the four daughters of Phillip prophesied during family devotion or church service or sisters' class or elsewhere unto individual Christians (since prophecy is for believers). Luke simply recorded that they 'DID prophesy.' He wanted to convey the fact that each of these unmarried sisters had the spiritual gift of the word of prophecy, he did not record the exact place or gathering where they exercised it.

Note: women were NOT altogether forbidden from speaking in tongues, giving thanks (praying) or prophesying in 1 Cor 14, they were simply instructed not to do so in the whole church, they may do so in other settings. In a sisters' class, women could pray, speak the word of prophecy, exhort and ask questions. They could also pray or speak in tongues at home and even teach their children songs and the inspired word.

1 Cor 11 teaches on head covering when a man or woman is praying or prophesying which may be privately (e.g. at home) or in public (e.g. in the church). The woman who interrupted Jesus and Phillip's daughters' prophesying does not prove that women were speakers in the whole church.

Claim: The ancient world mostly used the discipleship method whereby the master simply delivers his homily without the followers querying his statements. We use a modern teaching method of two-way communication involving Lecture, Questions and Answers. A teacher can ask his audience/class questions to gauge their understanding. Any listener/student too may pose questions but that does not turn such into a teacher.

Response: Really? During His earthly ministry, Jesus had thousands of disciples both male and female. Whenever He was with the multitude or His disciples, He usually taught and afterwards asked the men questions and/or responded to men's queries. His open encounters with women were mostly to tell them to be attentive listeners (Lk 10:38-42; 11:27-28), to commend their faith (Lk 7:36-48; 8:43-48) and to attend to their healing requests (Mt 15:22-28). He only had a private religious discussion with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:4-27).

From Peter's inaugural address on the day of Pentecost to Paul's evangelistic journeys, the apostles always taught, asked men questions or responded to queries from men within and outside the church. While teaching in a congregation of the saints, none of them was openly, doctrinally questioned by a woman. That one may teach by asking questions is evident in "rhetorical questions." There are "leading questions" which are also intended to compel the hearer to reason out a particular reply, invariably making the questioner the indirect leader of a discussion. Both types were utilized by Jesus (Mt 22:41-46; 21:23-27) when he posed questions that the religious leaders of his day ruminated over but did not answer. Even Paul used same approach to teach the Corinthian church in his epistle (1 Cor 1:13; 6:5-6). God is aware of this teaching technique and that could be one of the reasons why He disallows women from asking questions in church but rather instruct them to learn in silence.

Claim: If women can sing and respond 'Amen' to prayers and it does not infringe on the "silence command" then women can as well ask questions for learning in church. If a female prospect is touched during service, she may have questions to clarify some things.

Response: The comparisons made above are improper hence it makes the conclusion suspect. We all sing to extol God, we all say 'Amen' to affirm consent to a statement in one accord. God instructs all Christians to do both whenever they gather in Christ's name. However, no passage shows His permission or approval for women to ask doctrinal questions for learning, when the whole church has come together. A woman can learn without asking questions in the church. She could learn, by listening attentively to what the teacher and other male contributors say, by checking her

scriptures and by privately engaging her mature believing husband or another Christian after the service. Once a lady prospect indicates she has a query, a brother and/or a sister should be assigned to attend to her privately immediately or after the service. If during a service, an unbelieving man or woman acknowledges the truth (1 Cor 14:24-25), such should be pulled aside and prepared for baptism.

Claim: In 1 Tim 2:11, silence is not literal, it means submission.

Response: Let us take a closer look at the text to ascertain if the statement is factual or presumptuous. [1 Timothy 2:11-12 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.](#)

Silence (stillness, quietness) is a different thing from submission (compliance, obedience). Hence the text actually requires a woman to **add** SUBJECTION to her SILENCE as she learns from a man in the worship assembly. The text is not requiring women to be silent and for men to be noisy. It simply demands that women be calm and submissive without becoming interrogators or alternate teachers for the assembly. Her submission is reflected when she does not assume authority over a man to rule him, her silence by not attempting to teach him in church.

Claim: God is only against a woman voicing out her question or input to a topic in the assembly because some were unruly in Corinth. To ensure she remain silent as commanded and not speak disrespectfully, a woman should write down her question or contribution and pass it to the teacher. The man could discretionally consider whether to read or address ‘her private message’ publicly.

Response: The substance or embedded principles in the instructions which God gave to the church at Corinth are meant for all Christians in every place (1 Cor 1:2) till the end of this age. The precepts were not merely because of ‘decency and orderliness’ but also given for righteousness and godliness. Allowing or requesting that women write their views/queries and pass unto a teacher is sneaky. That approach seeks to circumvent God’s directive, nevertheless disobeys Him! How? She still reviews the speaker’s view and *indirectly tries to achieve her intent to uniquely influence a man during the church session* (the teacher at the pulpit) which could immediately impart his message to the congregation. A woman could be rude or confrontational even in writing, if she wants to. The precept on women silence wasn’t given so insolence may be directed in private.

The one who communicates with another via writing is not observing silence or stillness! Even the Lord ‘speaks’ today to whoever privately studies His written word without reading the text aloud -1 Tim 4:1, Heb 4:7; 12:5, 25.

God is concerned about a woman’s attitude to remain subject to authority not merely on her voice being heard in teaching at the assembly.

Otherwise it would be okay for a woman to now stand before the whole church, display her lesson via a projector and use speech synthesis software set with male voice to read it out without her uttering a word. She could also type, display and automate the vocalization of her response to any question. **That is another ingenious way to flout the spirit of God’s law on “women silence” while pretending to keep to the letter, should churches adopt it?** Or is it preferred that a woman stay in a corner in church service and dictate her lesson to a male on the pulpit (wearing an electronic earpiece) or to a male interpreter who would deliver it on her behalf? Some aver that there is nothing different between these scenarios and a male teacher using a book authored by a woman to prepare his lesson or the church using hymns composed by a woman. There are differences! Would anyone claim that there is no difference between Apollos receiving private instruction from Priscilla and him being openly instructed or admonished by her as he spoke to the Jews about the way of the Lord? Prior, private instruction or interaction is different from real-time, open tele-guidance. We do not focus on who composed a hymn, the male song teacher has learnt it privately before coming to teach the church same. If we could altogether always recollect songs offhand, there would be no need to use hymnbooks. Anyone delivering a sermon could consult several materials in preparation but that does not warrant that the authors of such resources be declared as ‘the teacher in the assembly.’

Claim: A woman does not usurp authority over the man in church *if the teacher or moderator permits her* to ask a question or to contribute.

Response: That would only be true if God allows a man to grant a woman such permission. The Lord does not suffer (allow) a woman to teach or to ask questions in the whole church (1 Tim 2:11, 1 Cor 14:35) but some men ignorantly permit such. Can we recollect 1 Cor 14:37-38? The things that Paul wrote unto churches on “women silence” are the commandments of the Lord. If any man who claims to be spiritual may validly permit a woman to teach or to interrogate a male teacher or to exercise authority over a man in the church then he could also rightly grant her the permission to say a prayer or to teach or to be ordained as an overseer in the church! Many in denominations realize this hence a typical ‘General Overseer’ “permit” his wife to be ordained a ‘Pastor.’ [They simply twist 1 Tim 2, 1 Cor 14 and ignore the scriptural criteria for that office stated in 1 Tim 3] Jesus expresses his disapproval for such purported “humanly granted permission” in his message unto the messenger of the church in Thyatira: *“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because **thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.”*** – Rev 2:20-22. The fact that this ‘feminine figure’ was teaching the saints was bad enough a transgression while being a false teacher made it worse. Unfortunately, whenever ‘anyone or religious group’ persist in disobedience such could only advance in error. No matter the symbolism one may ascribe to the Lord’s message unto Thyatira, it is indisputable that there was NO prophetess under the New Covenant though some women prophesied. [Philip’s four daughters were not described as prophetesses. That one prophesied does not make such a prophet/ess since that alone does not necessarily confer the office on a person; Saul was never referred to as a prophet (1 Sam 10:10-13), Caiaphas the high priest wasn’t either though he also prophesied (Jn 11:47-51) just as the disciples taught by Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-9). Likewise, every Christian is not an Evangelist though virtually each of us somehow proclaim the Lord’s death and preaches the gospel in one way or another from time to time.]

Claim: Reading is not teaching the word so a woman may serve as a Bible Reader in the church. She may also teach the brethren choruses.

Response: Not necessarily. Reading could be a reverent activity by itself for instruction wherein nobody (including the reader) bother to explain what is read. In such scenario, the reader approximates a teacher as what was read was deemed sufficient to teach an audience without additional elucidation -Joshua 8:34-35, Acts 13:15; 15:21, 1 Thess 5:27, Col 4:16. There was another form of reading where expository comment is offered on the material read unto the audience, by the reader or by someone else -Neh 8:1-9, Lk 4:15-21, 1 Tim 4:13. (When a Bible Reader is not the one who explains the word then such only assists and is not the teacher, such merely help the speaker to read the text) Both types of public reading of scripture were always done by males to edify as the public teachers of God’s word. ***It is expedient to maintain that practice.*** Women should participate in reciting or reading out a text (e.g. scripture passage) only when the whole assembly is requested to do so simultaneously. Since our choruses are spiritual songs, a sister ought not to teach the church when gathered. She may teach a brother privately and he could teach same to the brethren. Note that if a brother sings alone with the church listening then it is basically as a song-teacher so the congregation may thereby learn or revise a song, a sister would not do likewise due to 1 Tim 2:11-12. It is only in teaching/learning and rehearsals that some Christians with similar voice parts (Alto, Treble, Tenor, Bass, etc.) may be asked to sing together while others quietly listen to judge if each group correctly grasp its own part. In rendering worship after a song is known, everyone present would collectively sing to praise God.

Conclusions

The command on “women silence” –that they not be speakers of the word in the whole church is to be obeyed whenever saints gather “as a church” or spiritual kingdom to worship and/or serve the Lord. It would be obeyed by those who seek to please the all-knowing God. Human reasoning considers it archaic/ unfair in this age of feminism and modernism to deny women equality in church leadership. A man ought not to abdicate his spiritual headship and responsibilities even in the home. God-fearing women serve well at home and in the Lord’s house, based upon His word.