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# Words of Truth

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## Can A Woman Ever Act In Authority Over A Man?

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In the beginning God created a male and gave him authority over the living creatures on earth (Genesis 1:26-30). God saw that it was not good that the man should be alone. So, God made him an help meet for him (Genesis 2:18-25). They both erred (Genesis 3:1-12). To the woman, part of her punishment was that her desire was to be to her husband (Genesis 3:16).

When you come to the New Testament, you see this pattern laid out in the Law of Christ: *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 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. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing... Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord... The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”* (Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18, and Titus 2:3-5).

Other texts show that this applies even when a woman is married to a non-Christian. Notice: *“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement”* (I Peter 3:1-6).

It is so important that a woman not only be in subjection to her husband at home, but even how she wears her hair matters. A woman is supposed to have long hair as a covering as showing her subjection to her husband (I Corinthians 11:3-16).

Another principle to consider, outside of the home, comes from the saints in Corinth. There were many problems going on in their assemblies. One of their problems is that there

was an abuse of spiritual gifts in the worship assembly (I Corinthians 14:1-40). In the first century there were female prophets (Acts 2:1-18 and Acts 21:8-9). However, if you back up to the text I mentioned above, they were not permitted to speak in the worship assembly (I Corinthians 14:34-35). Now, I don't mean to blanket statement this. We know that wasn't absolute silence as women would have had to have sung (Ephesians 5:19), been able to confess sin (James 5:16), etc. However, as a general rule, women were to be in subjection.

In a text written to an evangelist, there is teaching about prayer “everywhere” (I Timothy 2:1-8). In that context we read: *“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; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety”* (I Timothy 2:9-15). In that text it says a woman may neither teach or usurp authority over a man. Again, the context is about “everywhere” discussing prayer (I Timothy 2:8).

Now, to our question. Could there be exceptions? We know that many of God's laws have certain exceptions. For example, regarding marriage, we read that, *“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”* (Mark 10:1-12). However, other contexts allow one to put away their fornicating spouse (Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:1-12). We also know that the death of a spouse allows for remarriage (Romans 7:1-6 and I Corinthians 7:39). In some places we see that a young widow ought to remarry and guide the house (I Timothy 5:11-14). Yet, in other texts we find that is not always wise (I Corinthians 7:1-40). Therefore, we know exceptions are possible with some things God has stated in one place or another. We know we have to rightly divide the Scriptures to come to the truth (II Timothy 2:14-18 and II Peter 3:15-18).

Consider something... We read earlier that a Christian woman is bound to be in subjection to her non-Christian spouse (I Peter 3:1-6). In the framework of the home, it is the father's responsibility to raise up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). However, in another account, we read of a young man that turned out to be an evangelist whose father was not a believer (Acts 16:1-4). Yet, this young man knew the Scriptures from the time he was a child (II Timothy 3:15). Did his father teach him? No, it was his mother and grandmother that brought up this young man spiritually (II Timothy 2:5). Brethren, that is an exception to the rule. That is a case wherein two godly women had to step out of their roles and step into the role designed for the man of the house.

I kept this study simple. My hope is to get us all to think about how there is rarely a blanket answer to a question even when you can line up Scripture after Scripture.