

# **GOD'S DESIGN FOR MEN & WOMEN:**

## **IN THE HOME AND IN THE CHURCH**

### **CLASS 5: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH?**

#### **INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES**

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- The goal of this series is to understand what the Bible has to say about men and women in general. Not necessarily a new controversy, but with the rise of transgenderism, homosexuality, and many other gender confusing ideologies, it is important for the Christian to know where the Bible stands.
- Before getting to the Scriptures, we are going to start with how the world views men and women. We are going to discuss the world's attack on gender and God's original design.
- Overall, we want to understand *what the world defines* as men's and women's differences, similarities, and then we are going to find out *what the Bible has to say*.
- After defining men and women from a biblical viewpoint, the rest of the classes are dedicated to viewing men and women within their respective roles.
- We are going to look at what a biblical family is, how a biblical family can influence the world around them and what some of the priorities of parents should be in their home.
- Then the final few classes we will look at what the Bible has to say specifically regarding men's and women's distinct roles, both within the church and home.
- **Here is the schedule for the upcoming lessons:**
  - January 5<sup>th</sup>: Introduction and what the World and Bible say about men and women.
  - January 12<sup>th</sup>: What is the biblical family? How can a biblical family influence society?
  - January 19<sup>th</sup>: What are the priorities of parents?
  - January 26<sup>th</sup>: What are some of the roles of women in the home?
  - **February 2<sup>nd</sup>: What are some of the roles of women in the church?**
  - February 9<sup>th</sup>: What are some of the roles of men in the church?
  - February 16<sup>th</sup>: What are some of the roles of men in the home?
  - February 23<sup>rd</sup>: What are some priorities of a husband with his wife?

## INTRODUCTION

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- The Bible does not just give instructions for women in their home. While that certainly is where much of their ministry will take place, ***they also have a place in the church.***
- There are key and vital responsibilities and roles that women have in the church and when they are neglected, looked down upon, or not offered, ***the church will inevitably suffer.***
- In this teaching, we are going to look at how and where women should be serving in the ***local church.***
- As has been said throughout this series, women are of equal value before God, even though they have been given different roles in the church.

## THE NEED FOR A LOCAL WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

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- Does a church need a ministry which is exclusively for women? Can the women in the church simply learn from the normal teaching of the Word on Sunday mornings and be, okay?
- ***This may seem oversimplistic, but I believe the Bible would say no.*** (I would assert the same for men.)
- While the normal preaching of the Word is not deficient, it is not the ***only*** area needed for growth in life.
- To be sure, I am not saying that the Bible, in any way is not sufficient for all things that we need.
  - What I am saying is that if all we have is a 45–55-minute sermon (some churches it is only 25-30) for our weekly intake of the Word, we are not going to know all that the Lord has for us.
  - If you were allowed to eat one meal a week, any food that you wanted to eat, no matter what, the one meal would not take you to the next time that you had to eat.
  - You may survive, but it would not be good for your physical or mental state.
- As we will come to see, there are commands which are given for women that need to be carried out within the context of women only *and* within the context of the church.
- “Our churches desperately need the ministries of women. Men can’t be mothers or wives. Men can’t minister to women and children the way only a women can. Even in their exercise of hospitality, their practice of good works, their growth as disciples, and their witness in the surrounding culture, women have a unique contribution to make that must not in any way be diminished or go un- or underappreciated.”
- **God has gifted women in ways which complement men.**
  - They are able to do things and even go places that men simply cannot.
- **If the effectiveness of a church is measured by the growth of their people, then a robust and healthy women’s ministry needs to be at the same level as any other ministry in the church.**

- Of course, just because something is called a women’s ministry does not mean that it is *actually ministering to the women*.
- This is the church’s responsibility to make sure that, while games and crafts may appeal to some, the content of women’s ministry must be the teaching of the Word of God.<sup>1</sup>
- No matter the setting they are in, women need to have the Word taught to them, in some cases by other women, *so that* they too can grow in Christ. (there are a myriad of ways to accomplish this in the church)

## WOMEN IN THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

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- Often times when the concept of women teaching in the church comes up, there is great hesitation to either affirm or deny.
- On the one hand, there are gifted women teachers who should be given an opportunity to share the Word of God with others.
  - On the other hand, the Bible is pretty clear that women are not to teach.
- These two facts, *gifted women and a prohibition to teach*, can leave some churches paralyzed. They are trying to be faithful to God’s Word and at the same time, be faithful to the women in the church.
- The real question is, what did Paul mean in **1 Timothy 2:12** “But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”
- Does he mean that no matter what, a woman cannot teach...ever.
- This prohibition would see to go against what Paul said about the older women in **Titus 2:3**. Those women were to be “teaching what is good.”
- The context of each of these verses must be considered and used so that we may come to a proper interpretation and not fall short of what the Bible tells us.
- To Timothy, “Paul isn’t grounding this prohibition of women teaching or having authority over men in the church in their inability to obtain equal access to education but in the creation order and the scenario at the fall.”<sup>2</sup>
- **In other words, his letter to Timothy has to do with church authority, structure, and order.**
- Paul was not telling Timothy that there could never be any women teachers in the church, he was telling him that women could not have authority and teaching roles over the church.
  - This has everything to do with how the household of God, the church, is to operate from the leadership level.

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<sup>1</sup> Fellowship times, having mom’s times together about raising kids, engaging in common interests are all good things.

<sup>2</sup> Andreas J. and Margaret E. Köstenberger, *God’s Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 210.

- Women are not to be elders or pastors, this is for men only, but they can have other roles in the church which pertain to teaching.
- Now, looking at **Titus 2:3**, Paul is not contradicting himself.
  - In fact, there is a completely different context that Paul is writing.
- **Titus is the one over the church and he directs how the body life ministry operates.** Paul is not instructing Titus on church leadership, rather he is talking about the regular ministry of the church.
  - This is all about discipleship in the church. Paul does not have in mind that women should have an authoritative role, *but rather they have responsibilities within the church authority.*
- Therefore, the older women of the church are responsible, *not just for their own behavior*, but for the advantage of teaching the younger women in the church.
  - “Discipleship that takes place within God’s ordained authority structures and that includes equipping women for ministries of community and compassion will invigorate women and the church.”<sup>3</sup>
  - If the church is to make sure women know they are loved and cared for, they are going to have ministries which are dedicated to just that.
  - The church must do more than just say they care about the women, they must pursue them, teaching them what the Bible says is necessary for their life and growth in Christ.
- Adams rightly states about this verse “The word in the phrase younger women, might be translated “recently married women.” Surely they need the sort of training that is mentioned in verses 4 and 5, but it would also be appropriate in part, at least, to train those who are approaching marriage. Plainly, here is the place where others in the congregation, *rather than the pastor or elders*, can do a superior job of teaching.”<sup>4</sup>
- This shows the need for a ***robust body life ministry***, one that is not led ***exclusively*** by the pastors or the elders of the church. Therefore, it can (and rightly should) be led by the women in the body.
  - The older women are there to make sure the younger women know what they need to know about topics which pertain to women.

### **Some of the content of what is to be taught by the women in the church.**

- What are the good things (**2:3**) that the older women of the church are to teach the younger?
- Paul lists several areas that the church should make sure are being taught to the women.
  - By the way, this is great for discipleship topics for women.

<sup>3</sup> J. Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt, *Women’s Ministry in the Local Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 117.

<sup>4</sup> Jay E. Adams, *I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus, The Christian Counselor’s Commentary* (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 111–112.

- **They are to encourage them to love their husbands and children.**
- Such a simple point, but it is necessary to remind these young women that they need to love their husbands.
- Notice that there is no requirement for the husbands to meet in order to gain the love of their wife.
  - This does not mean that husbands are free to act as they please, they are addressed in other letters from Paul to the church.
- What this does mean is that younger women, newly married women, may have a tendency to have a love which will compete with her love for her husband.
  - I don't believe this is a love for another man, but rather a love for something that may be in the world. Whether it is something tangible or ideological, the wife seems to need to work on her love towards her husband; especially early on in the marriage.
- **The same can be said about her love for her kids.** Having children in the marriage definitely changes how the marriage will be from then on.
- There may not be the same freedom that was there before kids. There will be more work now that there are kids. It may seem that the husband has more freedom than the wife.
- There are many things which can happen to cause a young woman not to love her husband and children.
- If the older woman can teach her and warn her, she will be better set up for success in her marriage.
- **They are to teach them to be sensible and pure.**
- Being sensible “goes beyond the idea of not losing one’s temper to a disciplined lifestyle generally with proper priorities in view.”<sup>5</sup>
- *In other words, a sensible life is one that touches all areas of her life. This is not just about one thing, but about an overall focus of where the house is going.*
- **The sensible wife is one that thinks through decisions that she must make for the house.** Since she is the one who is most invested in the house, she has a greater idea of what needs to be done and where money should be spent.
  - Since she also has a broader understanding of the needs of the children, she will know when money needs to be saved and/or spent and where priorities should be placed.
- To be pure speaks of her character towards her husband and her children.
- She should be known as a woman who dresses modestly, speaks with honesty, and stays away from the appearance of evil.
- Her priorities are towards her husband, **and he has her heart**. This is something that is seen in the way she talks about him, how she acts towards him, and her thoughts about him.

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<sup>5</sup> Köstenberger, *God's Design for Man and Woman*, 233.

- **The next teaching is to be a worker at home.**
- This was covered in our previous lesson on women’s responsibilities at home, but I briefly want to cover a few things here.
- When the older woman trains the younger in this sphere, she is training her to “devote her energies to running her household and managing her home.”<sup>6</sup>
- Her home is very important, even in the life of the church.
  - If the home is not taken care of, then the church is going to suffer.
- “The church should seek ways to strengthen families since the home is also a powerful center and springboard for ministry. If you look at the ministry of the early church in the book of Acts, you’ll find that ministry often flowed from the homes of the individual believers.”<sup>7</sup>
- The church, while having the focus of spiritual worship, is connected to the home of its members. As church members meet on Sunday morning, this is just for a short period of time.
- **“Real ministry”, the real training takes place throughout the normal course of the week as people are meeting in homes, eating together, and discussing real life ministry.**
- As the wife takes care of the home, she is an indispensable instrument in the Lord’s hand to promote fellowship, discipleship, and growth in Christ. *She does all this, perhaps even from her own kitchen table.*
- **The last training point that Paul makes is to train them to be subject to their own husband.**
- There is a God given order to the family; the husband is the head of the wife. As younger women, they may need some encouragement or exhortation from the older that their husbands are indeed the head.
- Paul never says how they are to teach them these things, but there is no doubt that this behavior can easily be modeled for something to see.
  - Therefore, this may be something that is “caught more than taught.”
  - It is easy for someone to tell you that *you* need to submit, but when you see this attitude in action, it may be something better to see as an example.
- It is sad that many churches (and believers) underestimate the importance of a healthy women’s ministry in the church.
- “We need to help Christian women appreciate the manifold areas of service that are open to them in the church and to equip them distinctively as women to fulfill their ministry. But this will never happen if our approach to discipleship in the church is androgynous—that is, if it refuses to take into account the gender distinctives of the disciple.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Köstenberger, *God’s Design for Man and Woman*, 234.

<sup>8</sup> Duncan, 127.

- Women serving the church is not just about the older training the younger. They also have a responsibility to train the next generation of believers through a robust teaching ministry at home.

## **Women teaching their children.**

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- While this may or may not take place in the church, moms have a responsibility to teach their children at home. **Deuteronomy 6:7** “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”
  - While this command was not given specifically to the women, *it was for both parents*, moms are generally the ones who are at home more and spend more time with the children.
- A great example of this is **2 Timothy 1:5** “For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.”
  - It is likely that Timothy’s grandmother shared the faith with his mother and then subsequently it was shared with him. This is just an example of how a mother can impact the faith of her children.
- In a day and age when stay at home mothers are looked down upon, the Bible is very clear about the roles and responsibilities of mothers to their kids.
  - Imagine the impact that Christian mother’s may have on the church if they commit to preaching the gospel and teaching the Word to their kids on a consistent basis.
  - The church would be overflowing with mature men and women, who from their youth, know God and His plan for their lives.
- Regarding women teaching children in the church, this would be up to the leadership of the church.
- There are no passages of Scripture which prohibit or command women to teach the children.
- Since this is not an authoritative role in the church, many churches have women who fill these roles of teaching their kids.
- There are times where women may be better equipped for the job, but that does not mean men should never teach kids in the church.

## **WOMEN AS DEACONS IN THE CHURCH**

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- Many churches throughout history have disagreed on this.
  - Should women be deacons or is it limited to men only in the church?
- In the context of deacons, Paul says in **1 Timothy 3:11** “Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.”
- Is Paul talking about women serving as deacons, or the wives of those men who are serving?

- One of the fundamental points that must be established is that of the role of the deacon.
- If deacons are seen as exceptional servants in the church, with no authoritative role, then there is no reason that women cannot serve as deacons.
- But, if the deacons have authority over the church and/or men in the church, then the office should be limited to men only.
- If our church believes that women are not deacons, this should never discourage women from serving in roles that deacons oversee.
- While there are good arguments for and against women deacons in the church, one thing is for sure...
- “Those who believe that, biblically, women shouldn’t serve in authoritative church offices should make it especially clear that they are very much for women being involved in active ministry.”<sup>9</sup>
- In our church, I would surmise that more active ministry is done by the women on any given Sunday than the men. The women are also actively decorating, overseeing times of gatherings, funerals, etc. Women play a vital role in the life of the church, even if they do not have the official title of deacon.

## CONCLUSION

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- We have seen how women in the church need to be active in the church.
- The older women need to teach the younger women many important things about their life and home.
- The women should also be active in teaching their children and even participating in the children’s ministry at the church.
- Finally, even though they may not have the official title of deacon, women play a vital role in the life and ministry of the church.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

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- How do you see yourself either participating in or promoting women’s ministry in our church?
- Where do you think our church could be better regarding ministry to and for women?
- Are there any changes that you would make in your family so that you would be able to minister better as a wife and/or mother?

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<sup>9</sup> Köstenberger, *God’s Design for Man and Woman*, 229.