

Can women talk AT ALL "in church?" I've had a lot of people asking me questions about whether or not women can speak "in church." Inevitably, they say, "Well the law said that we couldn't, and Paul reiterates it."

Now before you start on this, please understand that you really MUST do your own research and not just trust me or any other teacher. Furthermore, even just on 1 Cor 14, there are a multitude of different opinions, such as:

- It applies only to spiritual gifts.
- It applies only to wives.
- It applies to no women and is a part of a dialog, and is refuted.
- It applies to all women—they must be silent.
- It applies only in a "worship service."
- It is an interpolation and does not belong.
- It is not an interpolation, but historically has two displaced verses which, when seen as they originally were, change the meaning.
- It applies only to the Corinthian congregation and is the result of the Artemesian priestess influence.
- Etc.

I am not going to review all of those points of view, though in my own study, and with other, more seasoned Christians, I have done so. The object of my study is to find the point of view which most closely aligns the sum of the Word, so that the fewest errors exist. Since I am throwing this out there, this, in my opinion, is one of the most solid takes on it all around, although a couple of others are somewhat decent, and there are a bunch which seem tantalizingly true, but which are a façade supported by a misapplication of scripture.

-----[MY ORIGINAL THOUGHT]-----

This deserves a little deeper look, and if you do, you'll see that neither the law NOR Paul said that. Paul, in fact, was responding to things the Corinthians were saying, and his response to the "women shut it" bit was a big ol' (paraphrased), "What!?! Do you have some special knowledge (you don't), because you're saying this for the first time?"

When Paul quotes the Law, he actually quotes it. I have made a picture using the Modern Literal Version (which is the most accurate version I can find) to show various passages in Corinthians. Please notice that after quoting the Law, there's always an actual quote...but NOTHING is quoted for women not speaking in the assembly, because that's a man-made thing, and not from God.

Indeed, after Paul wrote that one line about women not speaking, he rhetorically responded (to the Corinthians, who had apparently told him that) with a, "WHAT? Was it from YOU that the word of God went forth? Or did it arrive to you only?" Basically, Paul said, "Seriously? Where'd you get that from, because it's news to me and God!"

The Law never said it, and God didn't, either. While He has specified leadership positions for men, and

for ladies (and actually, everyone) to not be raucous, He never said that women flat-out couldn't speak in assembly.

-----[A POINT-BY-POINT LOOK]-----

Always good to research deeper. The picture below shows that when quotes are made from the Law, the source can be found. The "quote" about women not speaking has no corresponding reference, and in fact, Paul follows it up with a, "Whatcha talkin' 'bout, crazy?"

1.) The interesting thing is that, in the Greek, there are no punctuation marks to add the quotations. In fact, it's all UPPERCASELOOKINGCAPITALLETTERSWITHOUTPUNCTUATION. The translators themselves had to determine where to put the periods, question marks, and quotations. See the picture for an example. Because of this, some versions are translated with quotations in different spots than others.



As in all the congregations' of the holy-ones, ^{14:34} let your' women be silent in the congregations'; for' it is not permitted for them to speak, but to be subject, as the law also says. ^{14:35} And if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands in *their own* house; for' it is shameful for women to speak in a congregation'. ^{14:36} What? Was it from you' that the word of God went forth? Or did it arrive only 'for you'?

^{14:20} Brethren, do not become children in *your* mind-sets, (but be infants in malice), but become mature in *your* mind-sets. ^{14:21} It has been written in the law, 'I will speak to this people in other languages and by other lips, and thus they will not even hear me, says the Lord.' (Is. 28:11-12) ^{14:22} So-then *foreign* languages are 'for a sign, not to those who believe, but to the unbelieving, but prophesying *is for a sign*, not to the

Neither *should* you' become idolaters, as some of them were; as it has been written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink and rose' up to play.' (Ex. 32:6) ^{10:8} Neither should we fornicate, like some of them fornicated and

^{1:18} For' the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. ^{1:19} For' it has been written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and I will reject the understanding of the intelligent.' (Is. 29:14, Ps. 33:10) ^{1:20} Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this world? Has God not made the wisdom of the world foolish? ^{1:21} For' since, in the wisdom of

2.) The letter to Corinthians is partially in response to what the Corinthians themselves had said, and they were a somewhat dysfunctional lot. If we remove the man-made numbers for book-chapter-verse, it reads much more like a letter and a dialog. How do we know that he was responding to the Corinthians at all, and that maybe some of the letter is quotes from the Corinthians? Because he says in 1 Cor 7:1,

""Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."""

And in 1:11 he mentions that,

"For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you."

So they were indeed writing him, telling him about the issues that they had as a congregation. 1 Cor 3 mentions the divisions within the assembly, and how immature they were, so Paul had to do some teaching. And it had been ongoing, because he says in 5:9,

"I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people." So this isn't even really 1st Corinthians. It's really at least 2nd, but it is the first which God preserved for us. Regardless, Paul was addressing and correcting some of the things that the Corinthians (not God) was saying. So we should be aware that Paul might be referencing some things which were from the Corinthians—a dialog.

3.) Where the quotation marks go can make a difference. As I mentioned previously, translators aren't always certain where quotations should be, because they aren't always sure who each quote can be attributed to.

Let's look at an example. 1 Cor 6:13 says, *"Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body."* (NASB)

Or it says (NRSV): *"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*

But I think it would be negligent to stop there. Let's look at another verse where quotation marks make a difference. This time, we will pull from the excellent Rotherham's translation to look at 1 Cor 6:12, which says:

"All things, unto me, are allowable, but, not all things, are profitable: all things, unto me, are allowable, but, I, will not be brought under authority by any."

The word there is "allowable," or "permissible." Now let's look at it with the point-counterpoint quotations added:

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything."

As I said, where quotations go makes a difference, and I think that is critical to understanding the issue of women speaking in the assembly.

4.) The rhetorical eta is used in 1 Cor 14:36. While some translations deceptively leave it out, it's important. What if the quotations should be like this in 1 Cor 14:

QUOTE FROM THE CORINTHIANS "The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. 35 If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church."
UNQUOTE

PAUL RESPONDS: *"What? Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized."*

That makes a difference, huh? As we saw before, a dialog was definitely being had, so could this be a part of it? Well, you can decide for yourself. However, before you decide, please understand that a very important Greek grammatical symbol is used between those chunks of text, and the most accurate translations preserve this important piece of information.

That symbol is the rhetorical eta. Used alone, it looks like this: h

5.) The eta is important, and since the Greeks didn't use quotation marks, this is used as a heads-up in lieu of them. Paul uses this device many times in 1 Corinthians.

It is important here because it clearly shows a refutation of the previous passage. In fact, that is really what it's for, and Paul has a fondness for it throughout 1st Corinthians, seemingly because he had a lot to respond to.

Since the Greeks did not have quotation marks, this device serves as a notice that Paul is responding to something that the Corinthians said—not him nor God.

We can see this clearly in English, if we know what to look for. The verse states: (35) *"If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church."*

(36) What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?"

6.) With the rhetorical eta and the above evidence, it makes it seem that Paul was refuting the false notion that women are flat-out commanded to stay silent "in the congregations." This device, as mentioned before, shows incredulity and, often, disapproval for something being discussed. Consider its use in 1 Cor 16:

1 Cor. 6:15-20 *"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the*

members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? (Nonsense!) Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.' But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from fornication."

If we look at where Paul uses the eta, it is very often used to compare alternatives: one good, and one bad.

7.) Context is important, and that context is that there was some amount of chaos in the Corinthian church. In addressing the problems, Paul uses an argumental structure which resolves the dilemma in a reverse order. Here is a bullet-list on how I think he was addressing it; formally it's known as a chiasmic pattern. (All verse numbers from 1 Cor 14; letter sets (A;A2) present arguments and also resolutions or other notes.)

--A) v26—All Christians may have a verbal contribution in assembly.

--B) v27-28—Tongues – be silent [sigao] if there is no interpreter.

--C) v29-33—Prophecy – be silent [sigao] if another speaks.

--D) v33-35—33-35 Some Corinthians say. "Women be silent! [sigao]"

--D2) v36-38—Paul responds with the eta, and asks Corinth if this "new" Word of God somehow got to them first, because no one else has heard it.

--C2) v39—Prophecy—desire it.

--B2) v39—Tongues—don't forbid them.

--A2) v40—All things done decently and in order in the assembly!

It seems that some legalists wanted to utter silence women, perhaps because they were being rowdy, as could happen in the synagogues. Paul refutes this as being from man rather than God.

8.) Referencing the use of "silence" in the assemblies above, the word "sigao" is used. This word means to be utterly silent. Here are two examples:

Acts 12:17, "But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison . . . "

1 Cor. 14:30, "But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent."

The Corinthians were suggesting that women can't speak at all in assembly. Period.

9.) Some go to 1 Timothy 2 to back up this refuted notion. Let's consider the context of 1 Timothy 2. It says, starting in verse 9,

"Likewise also, let the women adorn themselves in a respectable array, with modesty and self-discipline; not with braided hair or gold or pearls of costly garments, but what is suitable to women professing godliness through good works. Let a woman lean in quietness with all subjection. Now I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to DOMINATE a man, but to be in quietness."

Consider that. Women were NOT allowed to teach, and the whole passage is referencing proper decorum. But it also says that they are to learn in quietness, and not to DOMINATE a man. How many times to you say, "Don't dominate that person?" It's a very strong term. Obviously women were being told to let the men have the authority that God gave men, and to be learners.

10.) But with the above said, does that mean that women just can't talk, as the Corinthians said? Is quietness "absolute silence?" The word for absolute silence is, "sigao," which means to say nothing.

In 1 Timothy 2, that word IS NOT USED. The word used is instead, "hesuchia." From Vines Expository Dictionary of the New Testament, we see that this word means,

"<Adjective,hesuchios>

"indicates "tranquility arising from within," causing no disturbance to others. It is translated "quiet" in 1 Tim. 2:2, RV (AV, "peaceable"); "quiet" in 1 Pet. 3:4, where it is associated with "meek," and is to characterize the spirit or disposition. See PEACEABLE

11.) This word is used in other places. If we contend that women absolutely cannot speak, then we misuse this term, and also have to use our distorted definition in each place that "hesuchia" is used. Look at this from 2 Thess 3:13, where it is used:

"Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread."

Is God saying that these people cannot speak at all? What if someone asks them a question? Must they be utterly silent? No. We know that God is simply saying, "Be tranquil and now rowdy." And the people He is talking to were those who, "are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies."

Please consider the implications that this has on 1 Timothy 2. The meaning is, "Men are the teachers, and you need to be tranquil. Quit dominating men."

It did not mean that women had to keep their lips zipped in assembly.

-----[CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS]-----

Please consider some of these questions and thoughts:

- 1.) Does a woman being tranquil and peaceful while learning mean that she can't speak, period?
- 2.) God says for women to learn. Part of the learning process in any classroom involves a teacher (in God's church, the men) asking a question and picking on people to answer. Does it usurp man's authority, or dominate a man, by a man calling on a women to answer a question he asked, especially if she does it in a peaceful manner?
- 3.) 1 Cor 11 discusses women praying and prophesying, and instructions are given. Paul says of the instruction, *"But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse."* So apparently there were women, at least then, doing some praying when they came together "as a church." Would this not make the absolute-silence approach found later somewhat contradictory?
- 4.) If we instruct women to be silent (sigao), that means that they also cannot sing songs, hymns, etc., which we are all commanded to do in various passages. Wouldn't this make God contradict Himself?
- 5.) If women are not allowed to speak in the assembly, this reminds me a bit of a non-instrumental CoC question that asked, "Can we use a pitch-pipe, or is that a mechanical instrument of music and thus forbidden?" The response was to stop "the worship" until the sound waves died down. By trying to make the Lord's Day assembly something it wasn't, these people also had to make up rules upon rules which God didn't state, because they were missing the guiding principle.

The guiding principle here, to me, is that ladies are to learn tranquilly and not to take leadership away from men. If we make up a rule, as the Corinthians did, that women "have to be silent, period," we have to make up exceptions. Can they sing? I guess. Can they ask their husbands quietly in the seat beside them? Yeah sure. Can they ask another lady a question? Ok, mayyybe. Can they talk about off-topics? When do they have to apply the shut-up rule, and when can they speak a little? Do they shut up at 10:00 sharp? What if a man asks a question to a lady, and she refuses to answer? Does that not take away authority from him?

That is the problem with making rules where God gave principles.

-----[A DISCLAIMER]-----

Disclaimer: It is ABSOLUTELY true that the Old and New Testaments place man as the head of woman. (Gen 3:16, 2:18, etc.) Furthermore, some positions in the New Testament church are given only to men, such as the positions of evangelist and elder. For example, "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife." (1 Tim 3:2) Men are also the ones designated to be the teachers.

If we were to make a woman an elder, it would "usurp authority from a man." The idea of "teaching a man" as a violation of that law, or speaking in the assembly answering questions as part of the audience is, however, at least in my mind, far-fetched. Did Priscilla usurp authority over Apollos when she (and her husband) taught him the word of God (Acts 18:24). Probably not. It's important to not usurp authority and overturn God's order, but as men, the mere act of a woman speaking, in assembly or out of it, should not make us feel "dominated."

-----[1 TIMOTHY 2]-----

There is more to be discussed about 1 Timothy 2, so let's do that.

This is a quote from the Modern Literal Version, which aims to be the most literal and accurate version. It has roots in the Restoration Movement.

"11 Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection.

12 Now I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to dominate a man, but to be in quietness.

{Footnotes: 1 Tim 2:8-12 is probably meant in a religious place or congregation* otherwise verse 12 would be a Bible contradiction.}"

1.) My note: The Bible contradiction would be due to the instructions given to women to teach, such as Titus 2:2, 3, but the setting must be different, such women presiding over men vs women being with only women. Given the nature of "teaching" and this passage, it also does not contradict 1 Cor 11 or other places, which do address a public, mixed assembly, where women are mentioned as praying and/or prophesying.

2.) It's important to look at that word, "dominate." This is an unusual term, used only once in the New Testament, and seems to be addressing and correcting a serious problem in Ephesus. The Greek goddess Artemis was the city's favored deity—the Temple of Artemis, located in Ephesus, was one of the Seven

Wonders of the Ancient World—and pagan beliefs were seeping into the young Christian church. Timothy's charge was to urge the Church to stay true to the Christian faith, and to correct problems that the assembly had. Apparently one of the problems dealt with women; it may have been because of the influence of the pagan worship of Diana, which, if you look for pictures has a pretty gross looking, many-breasted woman. In the Hellenic sense, though, she was a goddess of the hunt, and protector of women.

3.) Since context is important, please consider the following thought process. While I do not think this is an accurate thought process, it brings up a good principle:

For those among us who have been taught to approach the New Testament as a law book, here is a command. Do you obey it? How? All the time?

"Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. "

(James 4:9)

Or is there a need to understand scripture in the context and for the purpose it is given? Should we be able to disregard this command to us IF WE DON'T fit the circumstances it was spoken to correct?

So what about this statement:

"Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. Now I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to dominate a man, but to be in quietness."

(1 Timothy 2:11-12 ESV)

What if THIS statement ALSO has a context that is a specific problem within the audience? Can we then consider whether WE fit the context and should follow or do not fit the context and do not have to follow? Can we determine if it is a blanket statement?

---->**3b)** Now I think the argument above has a number of fundamental errors (it creates a dichotomy by assuming that "non-codified law" excludes principles just because it may lack a number of conspicuous rules), but it does at least bring up the necessity of using context instead of blanket application.

----->**3c)** My personal opinion, however, is that this is blanket application and is correct to be viewed as such.

4.) What does "to dominate" mean? Along with teaching, this is what women are not to do. Looking at Thayer's (or any other," it has two possible meanings. Here are two sources, but all agree:

831 authentēō (from 846 /autós, "self" and entea, "arms, armor") – properly, to unilaterally take up

arms, i.e. acting as an autocrat – literally, self-appointed (acting without submission).

a. according to earlier usage, one who with his own hand kills either others or himself.

b. in later Greek writings one who does a thing himself the author" (τῆς πράξεως, Polybius 23, 14, 2, etc.); one who acts on his own authority, autocratic, equivalent to αὐτοκράτωρ an absolute master; cf. Lobeck ad Phryn., p. 120 (also as above; cf. Winers Grammar, § 2, 1 c.)); to govern one, exercise dominion over one: τινας, 1 Timothy 2:12.

5.) Is a woman answering a question asked of her not being tranquil? Is answering a question somehow dominating a man?

I was asked to address the subject of what it means to be in...uh...subjection, and also in submission. Not quite the same things, but pretty close. Well grab your hats and let's get ready to roll. And please remember, do your own research. I am not an infallible person, and have a lot of growing to do myself. It's fine to trust, but excellent to verify. :) As Acts 17 says,

"Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

-----[THE WORDS]-----

It's always easy to start off looking at words, so let's review Eph 5 for a minute, starting in verse 21

"Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."

The first word used is, "be subject." That's from a Greek word, "hupotasso," which means, "primarily a military term, "to rank under" (hupo, "under," tasso, "to arrange").

So right off the bat, we see that we are each told to consider ourselves "ranking under" each other. Put in another light, we should not be considering ourselves as better than others. God then immediately springs into the husband-wife relationship, noting that wives should submit themselves to their husbands.

This is of great importance, because wives, as far as I can tell, were not told to be in submission to "all men," but rather always to their husbands. To re-iterate, consider:

Ephesians 5:22—*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

Ephesians 5:24 —*Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

Colossians 3:18—*Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

This can get a bit hairy, as sometimes the word for "wives," is the same as "women." For example, many find that 1 Cor 14 reads more plausibly when it says, *"The wives are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a wife to speak in church."*

What? Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?"

Regardless, wives are told to consider themselves as being subject to their husbands. In each case, it comes back to the husband and wife relationship every time. From 1 Tim 2, we read,

"But I do not allow a woman to teach or rule over a man, but to remain in quietness. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."

Key points here:

- God goes back to the beginning.
- He says that women may not rule over/dominate a man.
- Women will be preserved through child-bearing.

Those key points all tie in with subjection as we've seen from Ephesians and Colossians, which relates to

the husband and wife relationship. Since God went back to the beginning, let's go there, too. Read Gen 3:16,

"To the woman He said "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Right there we have all the elements: childbirth, and the husband ruling over the wife. It seems to me that Timothy was dealing with a problem where women were ruling over their husbands. Wives were designed to be suitable helpmates, and men to be protectors and leaders.

-----[SILENCE or SUBJECTION?]------

It is very important here, though, to note that God does not demand silence from women. He made them to be helpmates and not slaves, and allows them to be participants, but not leaders. In fact, no requirement for silence is imposed in the assembly, with the exception of when gifts such as prophecy was in use, or if someone were utterly ignorant. The quietness in view here is that of due acceptance of authority, respect for God's rule of prohibiting women from taking over the public leadership, and the quiet acceptance of their womanly role as child bearers and mothers of our human race. Certainly, in the asking of questions in dialogue and teaching situations, and in such things as singing or readings, women do not violate this passage by their participation. Can a woman not stir up others to love and good works while still being in submission?

Verse 12 says, *"But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness."*

Since God does not lie, let's look at some areas of scripture that this can't violate, which, if we understand it better, will help us understand subjection.

This does not and CANNOT violate the following (so it instead becomes critical in helping us understand the relationships it applies to):

—Titus 2:3, where older women are told to, *"be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good."*

—Ephesians 5:18-19, where we are told to, *"be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart."*

—1 Cor 11, where women and men are told how to pray in assembly.

—1 Cor 14, where all were told to, *"desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."*

—Acts 21:9, where Stephen had *"four unmarried daughters, who prophesied."*

—Luke 2:36-38, where Anna spoke in front of the temple: *"Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel... which departed not from the temple ... and spoke of Him (Christ) to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."*

— Acts 2:17, where the apostle Peter, on Pentecost, cited the Old Testament Scriptures which prophesied that in the times of the new covenant, *"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."*

From these passages from the New Testament, it is clear that the total exclusion of women from any public speaking did not occur, nor was the action of such women construed as "usurping authority/dominating" a man. Anna spoke openly in the temple to everybody; and all Israel went "up to Deborah" for judgment.

But we can also see that, in the Old Testament, God also made exceptions. I want to make that clear. EXCEPTIONS. For example, in 2 Kings 4, the Shunammite woman wanted her son to be alive, but, for reasons not explained, the husband didn't do anything. She took it upon herself, and God blessed her.

Let's look at some other exceptions:

(a) *Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her* (Exodus 15:20).

(b) *And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time ... and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment* (Judges 4:4,5).

(c) *So Hilkiyah the priest ... went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum ... and they communed with her* (2 Kings 22:14).

Clearly, the prophetesses of the Old Testament exercised their gift publicly, even the priests and the king being subject to what they said.

The whole tenor of the Bible, therefore, forbids the arbitrary enforcement "women must be silent," in relation to subjection to husbands, but it does NOT overturn some things about which God is extraordinarily clear. For example, he tells women not to teach, being used in respect to men in the assembly, which makes sense. For this reason, the positions of elder, deacon, or evangelist, must, in the light of the entire New Covenant, not be given to women. The rules for elders, for example, require

them to be the "husband" of one wife. Women, to put it simply, are to be helpmates, and not leaders. God goes on to reference Eve taking the reins and stepping out onto a limb (proverbial) to partake of some forbidden fruit, and while it didn't leave Adam blameless, it did confirm the arrangement God desires: men as the leaders.

-----[HUSBANDS and WIVES]-----

Which, by the way, takes us back to Ephesians 5, where wives are again to be in subjection. We have to view this, though, under the obligation for the husband to love his wife even as Christ loved the church. God designed a system that is headed by men, and every system needs leadership, including even a hill of ants. God ends Ephesians 5 by saying that a wife must, "*fear (as in respect) her husband.*"

Now we've covered a lot of ground, but I have to make something clear: if a man isn't around, through circumstance, or is unwilling, through spirit, to do what is right, and to spread the gospel, women are not absolved of this responsibility. We ought to obey God rather than men, and a husband, for example, being ungodly, not does mean that the woman is allowed to say, "*I shall be in subjection to him utterly.*" *This subjection can only go so far as is "in the Lord."*

We've now looked at a good chunk of subjection, and we'll return to the relationship between husband and wife again, but before we do, I think we need to address subjection in other places. Paul preached `submission,' or `subjection' to authority in Romans 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 16:16; and Titus 3:1. Titus is especially nice, because while it discusses being in subjection, it reminds us to be "*ready for every good deed.*" I think that really sums up the goal of everything. Overall, God made a system in the beginning with men first and women second, both combined as a team to accomplish His good pleasure. If a man views a wife as a mere tool, or a wife views a man as a tyrant, very little good will come out of it. Furthermore, if a wife tries to hinder a husband, or a husband tries to degrade and make a woman merely subservient, instead of a teammate which completes him, God's will cannot be accomplished.

1 Peter 3 also discusses how wives can be submissive, saying,

"In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior...let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered."

That's a lot, but how can we really sum it up? What does it all mean? Well, God tells us in the next paragraph, saying,

"To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing."

We are to be active in our subjection. As one person said, merely sitting quietly does no good. The word for "quietly" in 1 Tim 2 for example, means, "tranquility coming from the inner man." It is totally possible to be inwardly rebellious while "sitting back and taking it," having a terrible attitude. In that sense, no amount of silence does any good. It is the attitude which matters.

-----[TOTAL TEAMWORK]-----

Since we've looked at a bunch of stuff, let's look at the narrative of one of the greatest husband and wife teams noted by God, who must have been getting subjection, leadership, and being a helpmate right. If you guessed that we're going to learn about Priscilla and Aquila, you're right.

Starting in Acts 18:

"After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks...."

...Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, [an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.]"

Continuing in 1 Cor 16:19,

"The churches in the province of Asia send greetings to you. Aquila and Prisca greet you warmly in the Lord, with the church that meets in their house."

And Roman 16,

"Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their own necks for my life. Not only I, but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. 5 Also greet the church in their house."

Priscilla and Aquila were fantastic. They worked together in trade, and they instructed people together. Paul said that he and the Gentile churches owed them, and they even had an assembly in their house. The fact that Priscilla is often mentioned first is very unusual, as well, especially given the culture of the time. Obviously, she was a very influential person.

-----[LACKLUSTER SUMMARY]-----

When we try to make rules for subjection and such, we lose sight of principle and attitude. Our goal is to add living stones. God gives us the framework: men as loving leaders and protectors, and wives as nurturers who complete the missing chinks. Like a puzzle piece, we should fit together. Matthew Henry wrote: *"The woman was made out of Adam's side. She was not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved."*

Wives are to be participants, not silenced observers. I should also note that God's will is going to be accomplished anyway, and that husbands and wives, like Christ and the church, should be in constant communication; a wife may often speak great wisdom. An example of this communication is in Gen 21, where Sarah grew angry with Hagar and told Abraham to remove her, to which God said, *"Listen to her."*

They are to be helpers, and not leaders, unless there is no one else to lead. And like the church, they cannot forget their first love. Proverbs 31 describes the most excellent wife, which is also a description of Christ's bride, which is the church.

*"She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
She looks well to the ways of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
"Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all."
Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the gates."*

Notice that the wife opens her mouth with wisdom. To be completely silent in any relationship is to have no WORKING relationship at all, and our objective is to work for God. God does not give us a set of rules on how to be in subjection, but through the marriage relationship, and the creation account, He gives us the principles on how it works.

-----[POST-STUDY CONSIDERATIONS]-----

1 Cor 14 where it says women must be silent, as the Law also says, and this does exist. However, it occurs in Rabbinical texts, not Biblical ones. Please note:

"Any male member of the synagogue might be asked by the ruler to read from the law or the prophets, but the woman was to preserve strict silence, The woman does not read out of the Torah for the sake of the honor of the congregation."

—Megillah 23a [Baraita]:

Please also consider how strange it would be for Paul to revert to binding Law. Look at his other writings on Law:

Romans 6:14 *For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

Romans 7:6 *But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

Galatians 5:4 *You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.*

The last interesting thing is in reference to how, "man is the head of woman." This term is used in the sense of "head of a river," or "the source." Man is the source of woman. Yet Paul responded with, *"For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God."* The importance is that we are from God.