



# Can Women Preach & Teach?

By Michael Ray Garvin





# 1. Understanding the Importance of Context & Culture

18 Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? **Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision.** Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision.

**1 Corinthians 7:18 NRSV**





# Cultural Background

Let him not seek to remove the marks of **circumcision.**

**1 Corinthians 7:18**

**DID YOU KNOW**

**7:18** *become uncircumcised.* Greeks exercised naked, and when Greek culture invaded Judea two centuries earlier, adherents of its "progressive" culture ridiculed Jews for circumcision. Some Jews therefore submitted to an operation to pull the remains of their foreskin forward and make them appear uncircumcised. Other Jews regarded this procedure as an act of apostasy.



# 2. Objective & Subjective Commands

## Objective VS Subjective

Objective-not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudice; based on facts; unbiased: an objective opinion

Subjective-existing in the mind; belonging to the thinking subject rather than to the object of thought

### Commandments From God

10 To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife should not separate from her husband

**1 Corinthians 7:10 NRSV**

### Commandments From Men

12 To the rest I say—I and not the Lord—that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever and she consents to live with him,

**1 Corinthians 7:12 NRSV**



# Subjective Command

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him **write her a bill of divorcement**, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

2 And when she is departed out of his house, **she may go and be another man's wife.**

**Deuteronomy 24:1-2 KJV**

8 He said to them, "It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

**Matthew 19:8 NRSV**

Jesus says Moses wrote the command in Deuteronomy 24 because from the beginning it was NOT SO.



# Subjective & Objective Command

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.

1 Corinthians 14:34 KJV

34 Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak but should be subordinate, as the law also says.

1 Corinthians 14:34 NRSV

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# The Command

16 **To the woman he said,**  
“I will make your pangs in childbirth  
exceedingly great;  
in pain you shall bring forth children,  
yet your desire shall be for your husband,  
and **he shall rule over you.**”

Genesis 3:16 NRSV



**There is SAFETY in SUBMISSION**

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# Jesus Subject to His Parents

49 He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” 50 But they did not understand what he said to them. 51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth **and was obedient to them**, and his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

52 And **Jesus increased in wisdom** and in years and in divine and human favor.

Luke 2:49-52 NRSV



**The Son of God was obedient and submitted Himself to His parents.**



# 3. Can Women Preach?

There is **NOT** one command in the Bible that says women cannot preach. Preaching is usually done publicly to unbelievers to draw them into the faith. Women should preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Outline of Biblical Usage [?]

- I.* to be a herald, to officiate as a herald
  - A.* to proclaim after the manner of a herald
  - B.* always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed
- II.* to publish, proclaim openly: something which has been done
- III.* used of the public proclamation of the gospel and matters pertaining to it, made by John the Baptist, by Jesus, by the apostles and other Christian teachers

## Strong's Definitions [?]

(Strong's Definitions Legend)

**κηρύσσω** *kērýssō*, kay-roos'-so; of uncertain affinity; to herald (as a public crier), especially divine truth (the gospel):—preacher(-er), proclaim, publish.



# Can Women Teach?

## 1. Paul's Subjective Command

12 **I do not permit a woman to teach** or **to have authority over a man**; she is to keep silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve, 14 and Adam was not deceived, but **the woman was deceived** and became a transgressor.

**1 Timothy 2:12-14 NRSV**

17 And to the man he said,

**“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife**

**Genesis 3:17 NRSV**

p. 120 [also as above; cf. Winers Grammar, § 2, 1 c.); **to govern one, exercise dominion over one: **τινός**, 1 Timothy 2:12.**

1) One can help instill doctrine without exercising authority over that person. During those times teachers were also authoritative by giving commands to disciples and followers.

2) Some women have better doctrine than some men. We see Priscilla along with her husband helping Apollos in doctrine.

26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when **Priscilla** and **Aquila** heard him they took him aside and **explained the Way of God to him more accurately.**  
**Acts 18:26 NRSV**



# Women Teach

3 Likewise, **tell the older women** to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or enslaved to much wine; they are to teach what is good,<sup>4</sup> so that they may encourage the young women to **love their husbands**, to love their children,<sup>5</sup> to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, submissive to their husbands, **so that the word of God may not be discredited.**

Titus 2:3-5 NRSV

There is  
**SAFETY in  
SUBMISSION**



# Great Women of Faith 1

Perpetua (l. 181-203 CE) is famous as an early Christian martyr who, along with her slave Felicitas, refused to renounce her faith and was executed for it. Scholar I. M. Plant notes that "in nearly every case, stories of Christian martyrs are fictional...the martyrdom of Perpetua, however, is generally taken to be an exception to this rule" (164). A citizen of Carthage, Perpetua was arrested during a persecution of Christians under the Roman emperor Septimus Severus c. 202-203 CE. She was 22 at the time and nursing her newborn when she was taken to prison. Her father, a pagan in good standing with authorities, begged her to renounce her faith, but she refused and was executed along with Felicitas. Based on details of the original narrative concerning motherhood, scholars believe the account was written by a woman – the early part, perhaps, by Perpetua herself – which, as I. M. Plant points out, would make her story "the earliest extant Christian literature written by a woman" (165).



# Great Women of Faith 2

**Amma Syncletica of Alexandria** (l. c. 270 - c. 350 CE) is one of the best-known Desert Mothers and an early founder of the monastic tradition. Syncletica was the daughter of wealthy parents in Alexandria, Egypt, whose beauty attracted many suitors. She refused them all, however, due to her devotion to Christ. After her parents' death, she cut her hair, gave her inheritance to the poor, and left the city with her younger sister (who was blind) to live a life of chastity, poverty, and solitude near the crypt of a relative. In solitude, she is said to have wrestled with demons who tried to convince her to resume her previous life of wealth and pleasure, but she remained true to her faith. Having attained the enlightenment and closeness to God she sought, she consented to teach others who sought her out and provided guidelines for this early monastic order of women. These rules, recorded by her biographer (possibly the bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, l. 296-373 CE), would later influence European monasticism.



# Great Women of Faith 3

**Saint Marcella** (l. 325-410 CE) was a wealthy Roman Christian woman who, after her husband's death, devoted herself to her faith through a life of chastity and service to others. She opened her lavish home on the Aventine Hill of Rome to others seeking a life of self-denial, prayer, fasting, and mortification of the flesh. She was a friend of the future Saint Paula and correspondent with Saint Jerome. Marcella, formerly one of the wealthiest women in the city, gave away or sold her worldly goods, including all her clothes, jewelry, and expensive cosmetics to benefit the poor and to live free of possessions in communion with Christ. Like many early Christian women, Marcella reclaimed her identity through chastity, refusing to remarry even though the law dictated she should, and dedicated herself to her improvised monastic order which would inspire other women to follow her lead. She died in the Visigoth sack of Rome of 410 CE.



# Great Women of Faith 4

through [**Blandina**] Christ pointed out that the things among men which appear mean and obscure and contemptible with God are deemed worthy of great glory because of the love for Him shown in power and not boasted of in appearance.

For, while we all feared, and her mistress in the world, who was herself also one of the contenders among the martyrs, was in distress lest she be not able even to make her confession boldly because of weakness of body, **Blandina** was filled with so much strength that she was released and those who tortured her in relays in every manner from morning until evening became exhausted, even confessing of their own accord that they were beaten, since they had nothing further to do to her, and that they marveled at the fact that she was still alive, **for her whole body was broken and opened, and that they testified that one form of torture was enough to drive out life**, to say nothing of the different nature and number of the tortures.

But the blessed woman, like a noble athlete, renewed her strength in the confession, and her comfort and rest and release from the pain of what was happening to her was in saying: **“I am a Christian woman and nothing wicked happens among us.”** (tr. Roy Defarrari, 5.18.19)