

John 7:16 Jesus answered them, and said, My **doctrine** is not mine, but His that sent me.

1Cor. 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom **teacheth**, but which the Holy Ghost **teacheth**; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

1Tim. 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a **teacher** of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

I now and then am reminded that for the child of God, there are 3 major activities with which he is to be occupied. The first of these is the STUDYING of the Master's word (Ps. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:15). The second would be the TEACHING of His word (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 3:2, 4:11) - even though for the most part this activity relegated to men. Nevertheless, it still is that which ought to characterize the child of God (note the duty of the "aged women" in Tit. 2:4). The third is that of PREACHING/PUBLISHING/TELLING of His word (Acts 5:42, 14:21, 15:35; 1 Cor. 9:16; Rev. 14:6). The word for "preaching" is the Greek from which we have the English, "evangelize." It means literally, *good message*.

Thus we can see that there are differences, albeit subtle, between the above 3 activities. The woman is most certainly called to be a witness, but the bible seems to indicate that she is to TELL, rather than to TEACH (again, this restriction is lifted in the case of teaching other women - Tit. 2:3, 4). One fundamental point ought to be discussed here, before we proceed. The Bible is crystal clear that the unsaved are not mandated, nor qualified, to declare the Gospel. In other words, even before the investigation into the Bible's definition of women as Christ's witnesses is commenced, every individual interested in sharing the Gospel, man or woman, ought to first seriously examine himself, whether he is "in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5). Note the plain force of what God declares in the following passage:

But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. Ps. 50:16, 17

As for the role of a woman who is a child of God, here are a few things we can glean from His word. First of all, there are several known instances in which a woman is referred to as a "prophetess." Miriam, Deborah and Huldah quickly come to mind. We also must not forget the several women (there were at least 4, compare Mk. 16:1 with Lk. 24:10) who were explicitly commanded to "go quickly, and tell [*epo*]" (Mt. 28:7) the disciples what they had seen - i. e., the empty tomb. Further, we know that the Lord made a private appearance to Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9-11 & Jn. 20:11-18), and in both accounts we find her obeying the Lord's command to "go...and say [*epo*]" (Jn. 20:17). In this she is clearly fulfilling the role of a prophet. However, it is also a fact that we have *no* known examples in the scriptures of women ever *teaching* men, in the same sense of 2 Chr. 17:7-9, Nehemiah 8, Acts 20:20 or Galatians 6:6. Thus we can be reassured that Mary and other women's roles were of *telling*, not *teaching*. The biblical testimony seems to be that there is a difference between the TELLING of what is in the bible, and

the actual TEACHING of the contents. The TELLING seems to involve the mere *transference* of information, as in the distribution of a tract, or sharing with someone the fact that "I" believe that Christ is Lord, and that He has saved "me." During the Old Testament era, it was the prophets who did this TELLING. Their chief function was to faithfully re-tell that which was told them by God Himself:

Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell [*dabar*] him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go.... Ex 9:1

And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say [*dabar*] unto her...Go, tell ['amar] Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people.... 1Ki 14:5, 7

This responsibility of telling regenerate women can and ought to carry out. This is so, for the office of the prophet is NOT that which corresponds to those of the New Testament era offices of Deacons/Elders. Deacons/Elders are roles that correspond to that of the OT *priesthood*. As we may well be aware, there were NO female *priests* in the OT. There were no exceptions to this rule. Incorrectly, it is commonly taught that the only "exceptions" to 1 Cor. 14's edicts were found among female *prophetesses*, already mentioned above. However, these were NOT exceptions at all - it just happened that God used fewer female prophets than ones who were male. He was not in any sense making an exception. He would have been, had He commissioned one or two female PRIESTESSES.

This principle is clearly taught in 1 Timothy 2:12, which reads,

...I suffer not a woman to teach [*didasko*], nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Actually, the translation could better read, "usurp authority **of** a man," indicating she is not to assume the various roles God has particularly assigned to men - one of these being that of teaching other men the doctrines of God. Is it not interesting that one of the truths that could be gleaned from the following verse is that in the Jewish synagogues, it was strictly the religious rulers, being all men (the "scribes" being here mentioned), who did the teaching?

For He taught [*didasko*] them as one having authority, and **not** as the scribes. Mt 7:29

Again, however, 1 Peter 3:1-6 teach that a woman is a witness, and 1 Peter 3:15 teaches that we all, both women and men, are to be ready to share what we firmly believe when asked - thus 1 Cor. 11:5 makes sense, for here the woman is referred to as one who "*prophesieth*," rather than one who *teacheth*. The question is, Is a woman teaching, rather than telling, in 1 Peter 3? The answer is a resounding "NO." First of all, God would not contradict His explicit command of 1 Tim. 2:11 & 12. Secondly, in 1 Pt. 3, we see that her witnessing is to be "*without the word*," purely through her "chaste conversation

[conduct]." It is difficult to *expound* on a passage of the Scriptures "without the word," surely. It comes down to the heart attitude (the "meek and quiet spirit," vs. 4) matching her outward conduct. Such a woman would not assume the role God has assigned to men, for that would be an exhibition of "pride...the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6).

The solution seems to be that women are free, and even commanded of God, to be witnesses in all situations where they can "give an answer." However, to take a more proactive stance - requesting a debate, setting up a bible study with one's husband and then leading the conversation - would surely be **not** pleasing to God. After all, our Almighty God is capable of raising up those whom He will use at will (Mt. 3:9). We do not need to "help Him out just in case," so to speak.

In conclusion, teaching involves expounding, explaining, the *opening of the scriptures* (Lk. 24:16, 27, 31, 32, 45; Neh. 8:7, 8). Please read Lk. 24 carefully and the numerous references to Christ "EXPOUNDING," "OPENING UP" of the Scriptures. This seems to be how the Bible defines the action of teaching.