

Paul – Should Women Teach?

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MAIN VERSES

[1 Corinthians 11](#) • [1 Corinthians 14](#) • [1 Timothy 2](#) • [Romans 10](#) • [Genesis 3](#)

Paul's Letters and the Imperial Cult

When Paul was going around preaching to Corinth, Ephesus, even Rome, those letters could have gotten him killed because he was writing and encouraging a revolt against the kingdom of Rome, a revolt against the Kyrios, the master of Caesar, and encouraging an alternative society with an alternative king in the Roman Empire, our master, our Lord Yeshua Messiah. And so I'm going to be continuing the series on Paul and his interaction with the cult of Rome, the imperial cult, the worship of Caesar. We know that the Republic of Rome had pretty much just fallen and the first emperor of Rome was a contemporary of Yeshua himself. And so we have this whole new revision. The Roman Empire is expanding and now the worship of Caesar is being established. Augustus Caesar, Octavian, is being established as the son of God because his father Julius was deified. And so we have this Caesar now who is the son of God. He's distributing coins all over Judea with his head on the front, on the back it says, "Son of God." No wonder Yeshua, no wonder he was facing the Pharisees. What's your coin? You're asking if you should pay taxes? Let me see the coin. Flip it over, "Son of God." Give Caesar what is Caesar's.

Caesar in Rome is being declared the savior of the world because he saved Rome from all the civil wars. He brought peace on earth because there was no more instability in Rome because of his presence. He was solidifying the structure in the form of a republic, even though he was now the emperor. And every single province in Rome was forced to declare Caesar as Kyrios, Caesar as Lord, Master. In [Romans 10](#), when it speaks about if you believe in your heart that Yeshua is your Lord and believe in your heart that he died and God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. When it states that if you declare with your mouth, confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, that word is Kyrios. It was an affront to the cult of Caesar, the worldwide religion that was taking place. Huge, huge, huge deal. Corinth, Ephesus especially were imperial

cult cities. They had multiple temples built with a statue of Caesar in them to bow down and worship.

Women, Paul, and Roman Context

And so we're going to look at some verses where Paul's speaking this week, talking about women. I love doing gender-specific topics. When I gave that message, "The Place of a Woman," "The True Place of a Woman," I remember everybody showed up ready to get mad. I think a couple women had rocks in their purses to throw at me. And so I love having a controversial title because it throws everybody off. But we're going to go over a couple of things that Paul said about women. How many of you guys have read verses that Paul said about women? How many of you guys have just pretended you didn't read them and turned the page? You can't bring that up. If you brought it up to your wife, you might not be married. Hey, but Paul says...

Remember what we have to realize when we're looking specifically at Paul's letters. Paul's letters, like the rest of the Bible, were written for you, but not to you. And so we have to understand the context and we have to understand the audience of who Paul was writing to, right? I want to quote some of the early church fathers.

Tertullian, in his section on the apparel of women, he states, "And do you not know—he's speaking of women—you? Not men, you women. You destroyed so easily God's image. It was your fault. On account of your desertion, that is death, even the Son of God had to die because of you and what you did. You, Eve, you devil's gateway. And do you think about adorning yourself over and above the very tunics of your skin? Why do you even try to dress up?"

Now, this man wrote a lot of other stuff that was very edifying to the early church, but this one wasn't. He grew up in a Roman province. Something we have to understand about early Rome: in pre-Roman Greek society, women had a role in society. And it wasn't a bad role, but in our generation, we wouldn't call it a good role. It was an understood role of modesty, teaching children, and running the house. And of course, we would look back on that today and think, wow, they were subjected to like a prison in their home. But in Greece, they didn't really view it that way.

The Oppression of Women in Christian History

And when Rome came along, they adapted the Greek philosophy of modesty in women, but they also introduced an oppressive wave that lowered the status of wives. Women had a degraded status in Roman society. We see this in the early church. How about St. Augustine?

You know St. Augustine, right? Yeah, buddy. He wrote a lot of edifying stuff for the early church, but he also wrote this: "I cannot think of any other reason for a woman being made as man's helper if we dismiss the reason of procreation."

I'm gonna get hit. I'm really scared. And I'm not trying to discredit these men. These men were very edifying in the churches, but these men grew up in first-, second-, third-, and fourth-century believing communities that were based in Rome. They were steeped in Roman virtues. They weren't supposed to be, but they were. And we see this very clearly in their writings and their views of women. We wonder why many church denominations have oppressed women. Christianity has oppressed women. Whether you want to acknowledge it or not, throughout the last 2,000 years, it has. It has lowered the role of a woman, the role of a wife, the role of a mother below that of a peasant. It's worthless.

Well, we have some worth, St. Augustine states. This is where that idea comes from—even in churches today. Well, St. Paul says women should be quiet in church. They can't teach. Paul does say that. But what are we trying to discuss when we read Paul's letters? We need to understand who his audience was and what the context was.

Roman Law and Women's Freedom

In Rome, around 100 BC—I know, we've got to have history. I love history—around 100 BC, laws were passed by Caesar, the Lex Julian laws, if you will, if anyone's familiar with those. And they began to give women freedoms that weren't there before. It also established dress codes, and these laws began to regulate and define women's roles in Roman society. You weren't allowed to wear certain clothes. Your clothing identified your status. So you were who you dressed—a very literal thing.

Today we don't have that. I mean, you can dress a certain way, but you don't have to dress a certain way by law. In Rome, yeah, they passed laws. If you dress like this, then obviously your job is a prostitute and it's legal. That's how we know what your job is. If you dress like this, you're a married woman. If you dress like this, you're obviously a freed woman, not a slave, but you're still very poor. If you dress like this, obviously you are a matron. You are an elite patrician, right?

Well, with Lex Julian laws regulating and limiting certain activities of women, on top of many other law reforms, women started becoming freer in marriage circles. So before 100 BC, if you left a marriage in Rome, you wouldn't leave with anything. It would be detrimental to your life if you left a marriage. And so you would stay in a marriage for the sake of your own status.

Well, law reforms came, and suddenly women were able to have wealth when they left a marriage, take wealth when they left a marriage, get rich if they left a marriage, right? Kind of like today.

This was a revolutionary thing in society. It wasn't a bad thing. We would say it's a good thing, but it was a shift in the dynamics of Roman society. A couple of resources before I really go into the message: a book by Bruce Winters, **Roman Wives, Roman Widows**. Academic book, highly recommend it. It's boring, but it explains the social atmosphere of women in first-century Rome. **Paul and the Empire**, which I use for the rest of this series, and also Tyler Rosenquist over at theancientbridge.com. I was speaking with her on the phone yesterday about this subject. She hosts a website where she broadcasts and covers this topic.

Understanding Social Dynamics

We were talking about sociology—social studies. The idea of a dyadic social structure. Anyone ever heard of that term? A dyad, dyadic social structure. It's pretty much a study of how people interact with each other and recognize roles within society. An example: does anyone watch **Downton Abbey**? Yeah, all right. Who's that witty elderly lady—Maggie Smith? I always liked the guy with the cane, Bates. He was so cool.

In the house, in the estate, you had two groups of people, right? You had the people upstairs, right? And their job was to run the estate but also contribute through their status to society. The mindset was that everything was becoming unstable, but they had to carry on to hold society together.

Dyadic Structure

We have a role to play within greater society by being the patricians, by being the wealthy. We're not just sitting here all day watching TV. We are holding society together on a higher realm. And then you have the people downstairs—the staff, the workers.

Now, some of them complained about their work life, but they each understood what their role was. Why did they understand it? Because they understood that if their role did not exist, then the upstairs wouldn't exist, and then all of society would fall apart. Subconsciously, they knew what their role was—to stay in the position and status they were in downstairs, to hold the upstairs together, to hold society together. So it's kind of a view on dyadic structure.

When the Upstairs Falls Apart

Now, what happens when the upstairs falls apart and society starts falling apart? And then the staff downstairs no longer has an expected role of what they were doing and how they were living. They break out of that mold. It's like freedom. It's a revolution. And society shifts.

I was talking to Jason about this the other day. Right before World War II, marriages were pretty good, right? I mean, we came out of the 30s, but we dealt with it. We survived. And then the war came. And then what happened to the men? Where'd they have to go? Lock and load, right? Pearl Harbor, let's go. And so men were being shipped off overseas, leaving the role they previously held in society as the husband, as the caretaker, as the provider of the household empty.

And they went off to war. Now, what was the encouragement of the governmental programs to the wives? Go work. Let's work. Let's go work. And so women began to work. They began to go to the factories. They began to understand what it meant to be independent without their husbands. They began to make a livelihood. They began to fill in the role that their husbands previously left.

It's not a good thing, not a bad thing. This is just history. When the war ended, the husbands came home and divorce rates skyrocketed. Because the husbands came home to a new social structure and they did not know how to fulfill the role that they previously held because it was occupied by their wife. Not good, not bad, but it is what it is. There was confusion, there was chaos, there was a social revolution. Roles were redefined.

A Revolution in Roman History

This happened in Rome, specifically with a phenomenon that Bruce Winters calls the new women or the new wives of Rome. We had women that were no longer satisfied with just having the traditional view of marriage. We had women that were jealous of the influence slaves and freed women had over their husbands. Did you guys know in Roman law that it was illegal for a wife to have adultery? But it was expected for a husband. That doesn't seem right.

What happens when women have a redefined access to freedom in Roman law? Around 44 BCE, evidence of a new type of woman emerged in specific high-profile realms in Rome—a woman of high class, claiming the attitude and freedom within the pleasures of sexuality as a woman, as a female prostitute. Higher class women that had been subjected to the laws of traditional Rome, things like raising a family, things like dressing modestly, things like protecting their household, were no longer relevant.

Abortion began to rise because women didn't want to deal with stretch marks—because stretch marks would affect their body and they couldn't show that off anymore if they wanted to live an immodest lifestyle now. We have reports in ancient Rome of wives going out and playing the prostitute to gain patrons for their husbands and for their households and the husbands just looking the other way.

All of this happened within a hundred years. One generation in Rome. This attitude of self-assuming dominance within many of the high-class wives in Rome.

The New Woman of Rome

You ever see any TV shows of Rome or movies of Rome that depict first, second, or third century Rome? And the women, do they look modest? Typically? Anyone ever? Not typically. Barely wearing anything, not covering their head. This was the attitude of the new woman of Rome.

The high status women in Rome began to compete for male attention in the arena that was formerly held by slaves and freed women. Remember, men could have adultery as long as it wasn't with another Roman citizen. With slaves and foreigners, it was not uncommon. Wives knew this. It was illegal for wives to do it, but not for men.

Well, if my husband gets to go out and have adultery, why can't I? I'm an empowered woman. Does that make sense? Dragging people along here.

The Testimony of Ancient Plays

The wives—this is a second century citation from a play revealing the competition between high-class wives and hetaira. It's a class of women that were pretty much escorts in Rome. They were freed women and also slaves that made their living dancing, singing, and escorting high-class men around. And the inscription goes like this: "The wives claim we always go with their men. They say we are their concubines and try to squelch us. Because we are freed women, we can do what we want pretty much. Both your mother and I became prostitutes."

This was the attitude that was limited to the lower class, and now the high class are getting involved.

The New Woman's Ambition

The new women favored the security of the title in marriage, but yearned to emulate the ideals of Hightower within it. Stripping away traditional models of modesty and subjection to identity roles, the new woman wanted to expand the idea of her role into something contemporary, without restriction and filled with unchained lust.

So when Paul's writing these letters to new believers, he's competing with someone. He's competing with a huge social shift, a revolution. A revolution that was unexpected in Roman culture. A revolution where freedom was given to many, and because of that, it implemented a mindset of self-assuming dominance into Roman women, where they would dominate their husbands. They would dominate the men of the courts. They would dominate the senators. They had the power to now. Rebelling against even the highest of Roman law, they went out ripping off their head coverings in public, wearing immodest clothing to the *semporia*, the banquet dinners.

Philosophy and Rhetoric

In the first century, women really did not have a career path to become lawyers. They really did not have a career path to become a senator. They really didn't have a career path of public speaking. But they enjoyed the idea of philosophy. Philosophy was really big, learning the arts. Philosophy was there to train you to be self-controlled. It was supposed to be knowledge that was supposed to make you a better person. And this is kind of the area that men typically studied in Rome.

But it was also taking a turn to teach rhetoric, to teach argument of speech. So how to take knowledge, absorb knowledge, and argue other people with that knowledge, like lawyers do, right? Or senators?

And so these new women began to yearn for this power, and they began studying philosophy. Not just any knowledge, but the rhetoric, the argument of philosophy with their brothers. The only issue in society, in the social sphere with this, is their brothers had an outlet. They could go to court and they could use these new skills of arguing, dominating people in conversation. They could go to the Senate. Anyone ever seen videos of how the Senate worked in Rome? It wasn't like a peaceful...

The Limitations of Power

These new women became experts, it seems, in dominating conversation and arguments. But the only places they could utilize these things were in the *symposia*—in banquet dinners,

private dinners, in private gatherings and conversation, or in the ecclesia, the churches held in private homes.

We'll get to that a little bit later on. This is a quote by Kelly Olson: "A married woman's rank, status, and morality was always supposed to be indicated by her dress, long tunic, stola, and palla, or a mantle drawn over her head when the woman was outdoors and hair bound with fillets." This description is offered by several modern scholars as that of an everyday clothing for women, a true Roman matron.

In other words, women, when you go out and you're married, do you wear something to signal everyone that you're married? Ring. We have three ladies over here that wear a ring. The attitude of the Roman new woman: so what would it mean? I'm going to put you in a situation. OK, let's say you're going out to dinner, a bar, whatever. You're going out to the movies or something with all your lady friends and none of the husbands are going and you arrive at this atmosphere where other singles are meeting but you're there hanging out with your friends and you go up and before you walk in, you do this. What does that mean? What does that mean your intentions are?

In the first century, they didn't wear wedding rings. Women had a veil over their head when they went outside the home. This wasn't necessarily for modesty. It was necessary. The purpose of this was to signal that they were married. Don't talk to me.

The new women, self-assumed dominance, would walk around with their heads uncovered, wearing clothing that was mesh, see-through a little bit. You know, their husband will look the other way. He understands.

Roman Social Classes

Though they were generally foreigners, slaves, and freed women. Do you guys understand what I mean by freed women? So at the bottom of the barrel on social structure in Rome, you had slaves, right? Most Judeans were slaves, right? A large population of Rome were slaves. Now, if you somehow saved enough money to buy your freedom, legally bought your freedom, now you're still as poor as you were, but you're not bound to a master. So you're free. You can actually buy property now. You're still poor, very poor. You're doing the exact same work as a slave, but now you have a few more rights. Above that were the plebeians. Some people call them the middle class, but they were not the middle class.

They were like the freed people who may have owned a shop or something. The artists, even doctors, were low class. And then way above here were the patricians, and these were the elite

—a very small portion of Rome. Their freedom was greater—the freed women and the slaves' freedom was greater than that of a married woman who was bound by seclusion. So they did not wear hood coverings. They dressed modestly to lure and please clients, right? And they trained in the art of sensual companionship.

During symposia—imagine a private banquet where people would come together to discuss certain things. You'd have dinner, drink, and so on. Patricians, politicians, and philosophers would gather to discuss ideas, reform, religion, news, and other sorts of conversation. These meetings would typically be held in the main banquet hall of a home. Most upper-class Roman homes had a main banquet hall, and it was essentially a public area. We can't really imagine a public room in our homes that's open to the public. They did—they had a little hallway you'd go through, and there were public areas. When an event was being held, the public was invited.

It was typical for the escorts, if you will, to accompany men to these events. And it was also common for them to give something called after-dinners to the men, or anyone else from whom they thought they could gain something, through sensual acts. This is something that around 44 BCE and around the beginning of the first century, married women began to engage in in Rome. "I'll join some other man at these parties. I will do him favors. Maybe I can meet someone at the party and I can make him my patron."

We think Babylon was the worst society to ever exist. Do you guys know that in ancient Babylon abortion was illegal?

Paul's Alternative Society

1 Corinthians 11. Who's Paul writing to? Corinth. Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the tradition even as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ. The head of every wife is her husband. And the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors God.

Now what was Paul's objective for writing to the churches of Rome or the ecclesia? Church is the wrong word, ecclesia. He was trying to develop an alternative society for Romans. He was trying to develop the true faith of God in terms they could understand. They were used to submitting to Rome and submitting to Caesar—hail Caesar. My kyrios, he was writing them letters saying, "No, there is a kingdom above Rome and its ruler is greater than Rome, and I want to introduce you to your true kyrios, your true master, Yeshua Messiah, right?" That was his objective, especially to these towns.

How many of you guys have ever read this verse and had a problem with it? No one, just me, okay.

The Roman Priest's Practice

"Men, don't cover your heads when you pray or prophesy." This is a statue of Augustus Caesar. See, he was not only king, he played the role of a priest—a priest-king in first-century Rome. And this is a statue; his right arm is missing here, but he was holding a dish to pour out libations. Look how he's dressed. He's dressed like a typical Roman priest. When they pray and they prophesy, they pull the toga up over their heads. This was a Roman religious practice.

Many people jump up in arms and say, "Yeah, but the Jews—" Not really. They wore the tzitzit on the corners of their garments. The tradition of how it was worn began to change around 100 AD, but it didn't develop into the full tallit that we have today—that I put around my neck earlier, the mantle—until about 1000 AD. In 1000 AD, the tallit as we know it today was truly formed. It didn't exist the way that the Romans had it in the first century. Is it bad? No, not at all. I know, isn't it cute?

When Paul was telling men not to pray with their head covered, he was saying don't look like that when you pray and prophesy. Why? When people come into your ecclesia, to church, they're going to see you praying like this and they're going to be like, "What? So you're Roman priests? That's how Augustus Caesar prays? What is this tradition?"

The New Women of Rome

Let's go to a more controversial part of the verse. How many women in here have ever been shown this verse and been like, "Why is your head covered?" One, two, three, four. "Immodest. What's wrong with you?"

Do you guys know that modesty—Paul's going to talk about it here in a minute, and I'm setting this up because I just want to say this one word in Latin, and I apologize for the Latin—but modesty in the Greek word comes from the Latin word pudor. And so Paul is encouraging women to pudor. It's modesty.

So what does this mean? When we just prayed, I didn't see very many women with their heads covered. Right? All the guys have their heads covered. Everything's wrong! Remember, matrons, married women, are supposed to have their heads covered when they're in a public place so they

don't look like the new women of Rome—so they don't look like the women that take off their wedding rings whenever they go and hang out with a bunch of other men and women.

The ecclesia was something that was public. We think of these private homes. In the first century, they weren't necessarily private. It's kind of like what we have now—got signs out: "Come on, come to Ecclesia." People passing by the homes would peek in. Women, make sure that when you're praying, you look modest. Make sure that when you're praying, people do not get you confused with the new women of Rome.

What's he talking about with the head cover? "A woman that doesn't cover her head should cut her hair." I think he's being sarcastic. You might as well just cut your hair because it's a disgrace to shave your head. Why? Why is it a disgrace to shave your head, women? Because a woman guilty of adultery shall have her hair cut off according to the law, and she shall continue to play the prostitute. This was the punishment for adultery. If you have your head uncovered and you're married and you're sitting there praying and so on and so forth with a bunch of other guys and girls, you look like a prostitute in Roman culture.

Remember I was saying Paul wrote the letter for you but not to you? He was writing to them. In Roman culture, that's what it appeared to be in the first-century believers' homes.

Man Came First

"For man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image of God. But woman is the glory of God. For man was not made from women, but women made from man."

You ever realize why he's trying to remind them of this? Anyone ever studied Gnosticism a little bit? So in the first century, I'm not going to go too deep into it. Essentially, imagine a spinoff of the Judean faith that is focused around one thing. Now, we may not understand this in Hebrew roots or Messianic circles, but let me help you out a little bit. Their whole faith and the reason of their worship and the reason of their commitment to God was for one thing and one thing alone, and it was not for love. It was not relationship. It was not for anything else but knowledge, right? And this knowledge increased, and they felt that if they could have enough knowledge of God, then that would bring them closer to God. In a nutshell, there are many other different areas, but in Gnosticism, they actually taught that Eve was created first in some sects.

This is something that Paul battled with. He mentions it throughout his letters. Guys, no, we're gonna bring it home. I know a bunch of other guys—crazy folk in the city. Man came first and then Eve. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the

angels. How many of you guys have ever read that verse? In other words, women, listen, you need to cover your head when you pray and prophesy. Okay, forget modesty. You need to cover it because of the angels. And of course, people start, "Oh, that's the Nephilim! Oh, book of Enoch, yada, yada, yada." And yeah, the book of Enoch's great, and I love it. The ideas in the book of Enoch were ingrained in first- and second-century Judaism, but the book of Enoch was not written by Enoch, guys. It was written by multiple authors between 350 and 100 BC. It was finalized about 100 years, one generation before Yeshua, okay? Not to take away from it, that's fine, but because of the angels—like maybe you're going to attract an angel, right? And according to the book of Enoch, angels have a thing with raping women, and you don't want that to happen to you. So [1 Corinthians 11](#), you need to cover your head, right? Has anyone studied that? I've studied that before. It's amazing.

Different Roles, No Status Difference

This is an interesting verse that we never see because Paul brings it home. He says, listen: "Men, you're not independent without your wife. And women, you're not independent without your husband. You guys are together. There is no status difference here. There is a role difference, but there is no status difference here. In other words, when you were created and you married, then your status with each other was equal. You respect each other with equal respect. Men, you are not greater than your wives. You have a role that is different than your wives. And yes, that role is to be the leader of the family. You're this one that's supposed to be getting the machete out and going into the woods and clearing the path, and being the example that your wife wants to follow and your children want to follow her. That's what Paul is saying. You do not have the authority to give the machete to your wife and say, 'Hey, go into the woods and go down that path.'"

Husbands and Wives

I told you to go down that path. Go. No, you're supposed to lead the way. There are women, even today, who disrespect their husbands and believe that they are greater than their husbands. That is not true. At least it's not supposed to be the case. Women are supposed to edify the husband and the husband is supposed to edify the wife in their positions as equals in the marriage. Because guys, I can't do my marriage alone. It is that simple. You can't be married alone. And if you think you can, then you're highly mistaken. And if you both have machetes and you're going through the woods clearing two different paths, you're not on the same field anymore, guys. You're not supposed to ever be independent from each other. In your walk, in

the way you lead your family, and even in your roles, you're supposed to support each other. So man is now born of woman and all things are for God. You see why Paul says that? For women came from man. And then he says, oh, men, do you know where you came from? I want to go back to this angels thing.

Messengers and Coverings

So I looked up this word angels and guess what it is? Angelos. It can mean angels or just like in the Hebrew, it can mean messengers. I'm going to push that the term angels means messenger. And I'll tell you why. Matt, that doesn't make any sense because the women need to cover their head because of the messengers that are coming to deliver a message. Well, in Greek, a messenger could be two things. It could be someone that's coming with a message, or a messenger can be someone who comes, looks around, takes in data, and then has a message to take somewhere else. If it's your first time here today, you're a messenger. You're going to take data up. You're going to connect with people in here. You're going to look at the teaching, praise and worship. And maybe when you go home, you're going to give that message to someone else.

Remember, the ecclesia was public domain. Women need to cover their head for the sake of the messengers, for the sake of the people coming in that could misconstrue communication, misconstrue what's going on in the first century government or churches, and take it somewhere else. Hey, have you heard about this Yeshua? I went to one of their gatherings. All the women have their heads uncovered. Sometimes we make things more complicated than they might be.

Whatever the motive in sending messengers, the report would have gone back telling of certain Christian women who were engaged in praying and prophesying activities that would be interpreted in a religious concept as connected to an important priestly office. Their deliberate removing of their veils while praying and prophesying would have sent a signal that they were identifying themselves with this religious gathering as well as the new women who behaved loosely at banquets which were often held in these very same private homes in the very same private settings. The banquets where new women flourished looked very similar to a banquet of believers, as well as the structure. It was in the same location, they may have had some food, they may have all sat around, men and women talking. This is why Paul's writing them, guys, you've got to be careful of how you represent our king.

Understanding Roman Context

Judge for yourself. Is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? Now that you know the context, is it proper in Rome? No, not if people are gonna be watching her. If you are what you wear, and in a public arena, you're taking your wedding ring off and then acting like you're praying to God, this sends a very confusing message for those people who are looking for hope and trying to gain access to a closer relationship to God. If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no practice, nor do the churches of God.

I got really excited because for the first time, I understood what verse 16 meant. If you've ever studied this topic or been taught this topic, I was taught that verse 16 meant that this was Paul's opinion and you didn't have to follow it. In other words, if you want to look like a hussy in church and act like all these things, then you can go ahead and do that because if you're contentious about it, don't worry about it. We have no practice in the ecclesia or this tradition, right? Anyone else? That's just what I was taught. The thing is, now that we understand the context, Paul wasn't just wasting all of this parchment ink just to let you know what he thinks. That was my rhyme. Paul wasn't wasting paper and ink to sit here and try to blab about his opinion that really doesn't matter. I believe that he was legit. Listen, women, if you're in Corinth, do not pray in a public area with your head uncovered. Men, don't act like Augustus Caesar while you're praying to the God of Israel. You're acting like you're praying to Augustus who was a god, or at least viewed that way, so it looks like you're praying to Augustus. Stop it. Unless you're contentious about it, then there's no practice. You can just go ahead. No.

Contentious Attitudes

Guys, if anyone be contentious, here we go, Misonius Rufus is a first century Roman author. Here's what he says. He's speaking about the contrast between the new women of Rome and the traditional women, and he says, "...but it is also necessary for a woman to be self-controlled, and on the one hand she is free from luxurious recklessness, and on the other hand concerning other pleasures, not a slave of desire nor contentious. Not lavish in expense, nor extravagant in dress." These were things that the new women of Rome, this new, defiant attitude, was spreading. When Paul's talking about if anyone's going to be contentious, we have no practice like that here, nor in any of the churches of God, nor in any of the ecclesiastical of God. Get out. You're not going to come here with your contentious attitudes trying to rebel against the practice and tear down the faith of Yeshua with your attitude and your self-assuming dominance, trying to argue, trying to tear others down, trying to spread some type of rhetorical knowledge that you have, and trying to act like someone who is not under anyone's authority. If you're not under your husband's authority, then you're obviously not under Christ's authority,

then you're obviously not under God's authority. If you're going to have a contentious attitude, we have no practice like that here.

From Sunday Christianity to Hebrew Roots

When I was studying the dyad or dyadic structure of social societies, it became very evident to me that in Hebrew roots and messianic circles, where have we come from? A lot of us come from a church, right? Sunday church. And a lot of us just kind of blanket that whole past as Christianity or church Christianity or Sunday Christianity, right? And we understood our role there and we understood where our purpose was there and we understood what we were supposed to be doing there until we found the truth of Torah, until we found the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith, until we began studying outside the sphere of what we thought we were supposed to be doing, and then we broke free of that role, which was a good thing. We're here because of that, but if we're not careful, we will end up like the new women of Rome in a revolution in our own mind, trying to dominate with our excess freedom that we've given to ourselves now because we're no longer bound by the church or whatever malarkey we like to make up. It's true. I see it all over the place.

Women, Speech, and the Law

1 Corinthians 11:34: "The women should keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submissive, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them go ask their husbands at home, for it is a shameful thing for the women to speak at church." Amen! All the men just looking so straight.

Many denominations won't let women teach because of this verse. Nope. You can go home and talk to your husband. You got a question about a Bible verse? Why don't you raise your hand? Go home. See, and they'll cite, as the law also says, obviously Torah says this, right? Until I took a second look and I said, wait a second, Torah doesn't say women can't yak, right? Torah never addresses that. I mean, a lot of people will cite Genesis 3, which is speaking about the structure of Adam, then Eve, and so on and so forth, but it never talks about Eve being prevented from talking to anyone else. What law is Paul talking about? Guys, he's talking about Roman law. It was passed during the time of Augustus that women were banned from interceding in public settings or coming between two parties, and an imperial ban was in place from allowing women to intervene on behalf of their husbands in the context of legal arguments. In other words, because the social sphere of lawyers, because the social sphere of law, because the Senate was

all run by male figures, women were banned from intervening. It was a social mold, as the law says.

The True Meaning of Ecclesia

So we talked about Ecclesia. I forgot to define this. You guys know that, of course, Ecclesia, which is the term that is translated as church, doesn't mean church. That's a word that came later through a Latin word. It actually means legal governmental assembly. Now in the Septuagint, for those of you who care, it was used to define the assemblies of God when all of Israel came together in one place in one meeting, right? But in Rome, these were not one place, one meeting. These were Ecclesiastes of Rome and Galatia and Corinth and Ephesus, spotted all over the place. And it actually complements the Latin word "pilos," which talks about governmental meetings. An Ekklesia was an official legal meeting in the context of discussing government.

It wasn't just a Bible study, the first century church. It was a first century revolution against Rome. What do you mean a government? People were rejecting the government of Rome and Paul was setting up an alternative government that they were now citizens of, and that was the government of Yahweh, the government of God with Yeshua as their king. They were setting these legal establishments up to support the people in their new government. That's a lot to take in, wasn't it? I know. I'm sorry. You can research that. If it is a governmental meeting, then what's going on?

The New Women of Rome

Guys, this isn't talking about just any women. We always like to pick and choose verses, right? Look, Paul says women cannot speak. Earlier in the same chapter, who was Paul addressing? The contentious ones. Who were the contentious ones? They were the new women of Rome. The new women that were studying rhetoric and argument of speech. The new women that were studying philosophy just so they could dominate men in public settings, in banquets, just so that they would have an outlet at church.

In other words, there were new women in Corinth that were coming to the ecclesia. They were not allowing the teachers to teach. They were not allowing the pastors to pastor. They were not allowing the evangelist to do their work. They were not allowing the prophets to prophesy. All they wanted to do was yak about how much they know about a certain subject of the Bible or philosophy or whatever it is that they're yakking about. And they would take over the entire

assembly and they would cause problems and they would spread doctrine and they would tear the Ecclesia apart. And this is who Paul is addressing—these women. Stop it.

A Spirit of Dominance

Do you guys realize that we have the spirit of new women in Hebrew roots and messianic circles? It's not just in women. It's men too. I've met many of them who love to not study the Bible for the sake of having a cleaner and more intimate relationship with God, but they study the scriptures so that they can approach someone else who they know doesn't know the scriptures as well as they are, and so they can attack them and show them that they're dominant in the Bible. That is horrible. That is absolutely horrible. It's of the devil. I'll say it. I don't care.

Teaching for Edification

You study and you teach to edify. That's it. If you're not edifying someone with your learned ways, stop it. What is your agenda then if not for edification, if not for bringing others closer to Messiah?

This law was passed in Rome because of these women, because of this attitude. Men were shamed for having it, so it was under control for men. They weren't prepared. Women in law, what are you doing? That is shameful. That term, to be silent, actually means to be quiet and peaceful in a learning. It's a student term, to learn peacefully.

1 Timothy 2:9

We'll keep going. [1 Timothy 2:9](#). This is the other big scripture that we have an issue with. Likewise also, women should not adorn themselves, should adorn themselves in respectful apparel and modesty, self-control, not with braided hair and golden pearls and costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.

Let's break this down. Why? Why? How many of you have got jewelry today? Braided hair? My wife!

What was the context in Rome? Seneca. You guys know Seneca? First century author, right? He was speaking about, he was writing a letter to his mother. And I know I'm quoting a lot, but I want to drive this point home, so bear with me. He was writing a letter to his mother encouraging her because she was not falling for the same junk that the new women were.

Nor did you abort your children. You have never defiled your face with paints or cosmetics. Neither have you fancied the kind of dress that exposed no greater nakedness by being removed. In other words, never have you worn anything that you were the same amount of naked before you took it off as you were after. Your only ornament, the kind of beauty that tie does not tarnish, is great honor of modesty.

Now notice Seneca starts and ends his letter with his mom based on two things. What she's wearing, what she's wearing. Who was he writing to? The new women of Rome were breaking the traditions of modesty.

Modesty and Appearance

This is why they began wearing—not that jewelry wasn't something that was worn. Jewelry was definitely worn in Rome, but not like it was with the new women. Sparkly. We got rock stars on the music awards coming out. Sparkles everywhere. You can just paint it on now. Why? What does that do? Draws attention. What kind of attention? And what is the draw? Why would you want to draw that attention? That's your uniform if you're a prostitute. That's the uniform.

So Paul's sitting here saying, listen girls, don't be braiding your hair. Don't be wearing the earrings. Don't be wearing those kinds of clothes with that purple. I know it's pretty. Stop it. Why? Because it's a bunch of prostitutes that worship Jesus. What are you doing? Why are you doing this?

Yet she shall be saved through childbearing if they continue in faith and love.

The Role of Women

This is a very debatable verse, but from what I've read, the new women were big on after dinners, which meant that they were also big on abortion because who wants to sit there and hold a baby, get stretch marks? That would ruin my body, and then I wouldn't be able to continue my lifestyle. No, you need to continue in childbearing. You need to continue in the role that God has planted in you. Your husband can't do this! We can't! Even if we try! Lots of guys trying to do it today, it's not working!

I'm gonna get in trouble for bringing up gay marriage or the social aspect of the gay community. I'll be politically correct as I can. Ever since gay marriage was legalized, Supreme Court decision, okay, whatevs. Not a whole lot's changed, but whatever. What has been the response from the gay community? Gay community would go to a state, and go to a clerk which they knew would

not issue them a marriage license. And they wouldn't just go alone. They would call the media. They would say, "Look at this. Look what we have the power to do now because we're free and we're in a revolutionary state in society and we are no longer held back by the dyadic structures that were previously bound to us. So now let's go over the freaking top of every single spotlight that we can get in and try to shame everybody with our self-assumed dominance."

Breaking Free With Caution

It's part of nature. It happens. Every single generation that breaks free of whatever mold they were in is susceptible of it. That's why I'm concerned for Messianic believers, Hebrew Roots believers. That's why I'm concerned about us because we need to be careful not to be so arrogant to think that we have all of this self-assumed dominance that we can just spread around, that we're better than everyone else because we're not. We're not. We believe we found truth. We have the Torah of our king. I'm so, so happy and honored that I would have access to such a thing and to call upon the name of my Messiah, my King, Yeshua. Doesn't make me better than anyone else. Sure.

She who first began to practice the tearing out of her tender progeny deserved to die in her own welfare. Can it be that to be free of the flaws of stretch marks you have to scatter the tragic sands of carnage? Why will you subject your womb to the weapons of abortion and give dread poisons to the unborn? The tigress lurking in Armenia does no such thing, nor does the lioness dare destroy her young, yet tender girls do so, though not with impunity. Often she who kills what is in her womb dies herself. She dies herself and is born to the pyre, the fires of her funeral, with her hair unloosed, and for all to behold. Many women would die during an attempt to destroy their children. There you are, hair unloosed, lying there burning to death. How's that freedom feel?

Interpreting Paul's Restriction

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. So that term quietly in Greek actually is a student term and it means to sit and pay attention. But I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise. That word exercise is very interesting. I'm very thankful for the Bible software I have now because it's actually accurate with the terms and comparisons and the meanings of words. It actually means to dominate. To dominate. Those words "authority over a man" aren't even in there. Those who dominate man. But I do not permit women to teach and to dominate men. Rather, she is to remain peaceful and quiet, like everyone else.

See, in Titus, he's talking about the circumcision. Some Judean parties that were doing the exact same thing that the new women of Rome were doing, right? And in Titus, they must be silenced. Why? Because since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.

Who This Is Really About

Ladies, don't ever let someone tell you that this verse is talking about you just because your gender makes you somehow lesser than a man's and you're not qualified to teach and you're not qualified to learn and you're not qualified to be a part of the faith and grow closer to your God. That is heresy according to the scriptures. What Paul is saying is listen, you need to take these people who think they're better than everyone else who all they want to do is dominate people with knowledge and arguments about the scriptures in these fellowships and you need to silence them. They need to learn how to sit down and shut up. Men and women. I don't permit these women to teach and dominate everyone else.

Women have taught me a lot about God and about the Torah and about the scriptures from angles and aspects that I would have never, ever, ever been able to understand without their influence.

Paul Commended Women Leaders

Paul's commended coworker, Priscilla—if you will, the transliteration—taught Apollos, the great preacher in Acts, Herner Usland. In addition, Paul frequently mentions other women who held positions of responsibility in the ecclesia. Phoebe, I call her Phoebe because it's fun. Phoebe worked in the ecclesia. He mentions her in Romans. She was a deacon—a female deacon—and he's sitting here being like, yeah, she's doing a banging job teaching others the ways of God. Mary, Trifina, and Trifosa were all considered the Lord's workers. Women who Paul commended for the work that they were doing above and beyond in the new government, the kingdom of God.

Can't read it. [1 Timothy 1.5](#): "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother, Lois, and your mother, Eunice, and I am persuaded now lives also in you." Titus, nice young upcoming leader in the church, if you will, the ecclesia, was taught by his grandmother and his mother about the ways of God. Paul says, yeah, I can see their teaching in you clearly.

A Lie from Satan

This idea that we have in Hebrew roots and Christianity and all circles of believers that somehow women are not capable of teaching a topic or not capable of hearing from God or not capable of prophesying is a lie from the devil. A lie from Satan himself.

So another quote by Maserius Rufus: "If they give up their households and go about with men and practice giving speeches and argue with attack premises when they ought to be sitting at home spinning wool, providing for their family. Above all, we must examine the doctrine that we think women who practice philosophy should follow to determine if the study that shows restraint to the greatest good makes them arrogant and if the study that leads to deportment makes them more careless, and if the study that reveals that the worst evil is self-indulgence does not teach self-control, and if the study that establishes household management as a virtue does not encourage them to manage their households."

This was the motivation of this new attitude in the society of high-class Roman women. They wanted to study philosophy not for the benefits philosophy was made for, but because in their own arrogance they could go and attempt to dominate men in man's land. What cooler thing? They've been oppressing us for this long. Let's take them out. I'm better than you. I've seen people in fellowships, guys, that have the attitude of the new women of Rome.

Checking Our Motives

We have to be careful and we have to check our motives and we have to check our hearts. Why are we studying the Torah? Something that teaches restraint? Does it give us an outlet for self-indulgence? The women of Rome were leaving their households, leaving their children behind, leaving their families, no longer supporting the traditional family structure to go and study all day so that they could have this knowledge, to go and argue all night and drink all night to show their power and independence. This is what Paul was battling because it was affecting the first century ecclesia, it was affecting the first century fellowships. And we have to be very, very careful, both men and women, not to have this spirit of Rome in us. Because we may think that we have a great relationship with God, but we need to check our heart because we could have all the knowledge of the world and be far from him.

Plutarch, the last quote. He's talking about Fulvia. I think she was the second wife of Mark Anthony, the widow of so-and-so. She was a woman who took no thought for spinning or housekeeping, keeping up the house, managing the house, not just cleaning, but supporting the children in the household. Nor would she bind to bear sway over a man of private station. But

she wished to rule a ruler and command a commander. Plutarch speaking of this woman who abandoned her role in the house, in the family, and went after dominance of others. All she wanted to do was get in the same room as a senator so she could tell him and show him how stupid he was because of how smart she was and she's been studying too. We need to be very careful.

Women Should Teach

Guys, I know that seemed exhaustive. That was not actually an exhaustive study. But I hope that when you revisit these verses from Paul, and he's talking about women be quiet, that you'll read the whole chapter and now maybe you'll be able to have enough. You'll take away something today that will at least drive you to search and study the context of what Paul is talking about. He wasn't attacking women. He was commending women who had the strength and endurance to teach others, to be deacons, to be respected, just like he was with the men. We are supposed to be a support system for each other. We are supposed to be a family. We're supposed to be the ecclesia of Messiah, the supporters of the legal kingdom of God. What does that look like? It looks like edifying one another. It looks like searching after God. It looks like crying out for God. It looks like repenting. It looks like leaning on one another. It does not look like: "Hey, I studied for a solid week and I read all these books and I know you had that cool Torah portion review that you just did, but you're completely wrong because I have this commentary and it's better than yours." Jean, you did awesome, by the way. I took a picture because she was up here teaching and we had—should women teach? Yes. Yes, they should teach. That's what Paul says. Phoebe the deacon. Phoebe. Phoebe.

So women, do not be discouraged by Paul's writings, and do not be discouraged by some guy who has no idea what he's talking about.

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