

# Truth and Spirit Ministries

## The Restoration of Women In Christ Part II

By Denise Bostic

Are women restricted from holding ministerial offices in the Church? If the answer is yes then we find a great inconsistency in Paul's Epistles. If the interpretation of *1 Timothy 2:12* is that women are not ever permitted to teach (or hold the office of a teacher) as some believe, Paul would be contradicting his other teachings regarding women in ministry. We find that Paul is not contradicting his previous statement in the book of Ephesians though, where he states that the ministry is for men and women (note that teachers are one of the ministry gifts, so obviously women could stand in this ministry gift). In *1 Timothy 2*, Paul is not prohibiting women from teaching; he is prohibiting **the way** in which they are to teach. Let's take a closer look at this scripture in the Greek. **"For I do not allow a woman to teach nor to exercise authority (over) a man, but to be in silence."** (Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Third Edition) We will look at this statement in the Greek and address two main points about this scripture. 1.) The word **silence** here in the Greek does not mean that women were not allowed to teach at all. If a woman was going to teach, let her not be trying to teach while a man is teaching. We are not to dominate over others while they are speaking. First of all this is rudeness. We cannot learn if we are talking while others are speaking. The word for silence here is *hesuchia* (2271) and is also from another Greek word, *hesuchios* (2272). These both mean, **stillness, i.e. desistance from bustle or language-quietness, silence. Keeping one's seat, still, (undisturbing)- peaceable, quiet.**

To further understand the meaning of what Paul is saying, the base word (*echo*) (2192) for this Greek meaning is used in a tense of: **to hold (possession, ability, contiguity, relation or condition)** (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible*) In other words, we can hold our abilities, thoughts, revelations etc. and not disturb others while they are speaking. Paul also taught this about those who were speaking forth revelation knowledge from God. **"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."** (*1 Corinthians 14:30-32 KJV*) Holding one's peace is translated from the Greek word *sigao*, which means **to keep silent or be silent**. Why did Paul teach this way? It is because all of us in the Church are to remain under the authority of Christ and His Spirit when speaking. If we do not have authority or permission to release what God has given us, we are speaking out of our own flesh and are not under the authority of God.

From these definitions we can get a clearer understanding that being silent does not mean that one is never allowed to speak at all. We understand that particular women were not being quiet while others were teaching and Paul had to teach them to hold their silence and not to disturb others while they were speaking. Remember that Paul taught order and that every one was to take their turn one at a time. **(Read *1 Corinthians 14:26-31*)** If a woman speaks over a man (or anyone else for that matter), it would be seen as showing domination over the person speaking. Because women in Christ were starting to obtain freedoms that were unheard of in their day, there had to be balance and some type of order.

In the culture of Paul's day, women usually were not allowed to speak at all in front of the men in a public place. The liberty given to the Church by the Lord changed all that. Many times those who have been denied freedoms in the past have a difficult time walking in their freedom at first, so women had to be taught how to walk in their newfound freedoms properly. 2.) Again, **"For I do not allow a woman to teach nor to exercise authority (over) a man, but to be in silence."** In the KJV, a comma is placed after the word **teach** and this makes the first part of Paul's statement appear to be implying two separate statements. In the Greek, a comma does not come after the word **teach**, so we can understand that this statement from

Paul is conveying an altogether different message. When the comma is removed, the word teach goes with “nor to exercise authority (over) a man...” Paul is referring to the manner in which a woman was not supposed to teach. A woman was not to try to teach while someone else (a man) was teaching.

We need to understand that Paul was writing Timothy and giving him answers in response to some problems that they were having in the Church at Ephesus. The problem was not that believers (both men and women) did not have authority to speak; it was **how** they were exercising authority. The key words to examine here are “**to exercise authority**”. (Greek- 831) What does this mean exactly? When we look this up in *Joseph Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*, this is translated as “**to exercise dominion over one**”. Evidently they had a problem in that particular Church with some women (or woman) exercising a dominating spirit over men, which is exactly what Jesus told his disciples not to do. (Matthew 20:25-28) The fact that Paul stated that he did not allow a woman (singular) to teach is showing us that he is speaking of a particular type of woman who had domineering traits *and that he was not addressing all other women who did not fall into this category.*

Back in *I Corinthians 14:26* Paul taught the Church that every believer (both men and women) could contribute what the Spirit had given them to the edifying of the whole Church. **Note that this included a doctrine. A doctrine is a teaching.** Paul here is addressing a public setting where both genders were present and could participate. If Paul were not allowing women to speak at all, he would be contradicting his other teachings. Women are Jesus’ disciples also. (*Acts 1:13-15*) The Holy Spirit teaches through women as well. **He is the source of the teaching, not man.** Since God is no respecter of persons, He can speak through a woman that He lives in just as well as He can through a man. In the Old Testament, God rebuked the Prophet Balaam through a donkey! (*II Peter 2: 15-16, Numbers 22:28*)

If God can speak through an animal, how much more can He speak through women, who are made in His image? As vessels of the Lord, our attitudes should be one of humility and not arrogance towards others when we are ministering to them. It is not godly for a man or a woman. We are instead to be Christ like in our attitudes. Peter taught that ministers were not to exalt themselves or be lords over the flock, but instead be humble and set the proper example for others to follow. “**Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight, not by compulsion, but willingly; nor eagerly for base gain, but readily; nor as exercising lordship over the ones allotted (to you), but becoming examples of the flock.**” (*I Peter 5:3 Interlinear Greek-English New Testament Third Edition*) \*It is interesting to note that the words exercising lordship here in the Greek mean: (katakuriuo) *to lord against, i.e. control, subjugate: -exercise dominion over (lordship) be lord over.* Here Peter is teaching the leadership of the Church not to exercise dominion over each other in an ungodly way, using the exact same meaning in the Greek (but using different Greek words) that Paul used to teach the women of Ephesus in *I Timothy 2:12* as shown above. So we realize that it is just not a lesson for the women of God but the men as well. **It was not that Paul was prohibiting women from teaching, but it was the attitude behind their teaching that he was against.** In other words, we cannot listen and learn if we are speaking over top of others, for this would be trying to dominate over their spirit. We learn best when we are listening silently and are showing respect for those who are speaking forth the Word of the Lord.

Let’s take a closer look again at *Matthew 20:25*. When Jesus was teaching His disciples about true leadership, we must note that He used two separate terms regarding how they were not to exercise dominion. This is for our learning today also, being that we are Jesus’ disciples as well. We are not to: 1. Exercise lordship over- (*to hold in subjection, to be master of, exercise lordship over*) and 2. Exercise authority over- (*to have (wield) full privilege over: -exercise authority*) each other. What does this mean? Does it mean that we are to never exercise authority? No, it is the **way** we are not to exercise authority. God’s ways are not of the world (flesh), but of the heavenly (spiritual). This is what Jesus meant when He taught His disciples not to be like the Gentiles, which was symbolic of the world’s way of doing things. Jesus not only teaches us God’s way (in His Word) of how to exercise authority, but sets us the example by the way He lives as well. We are not to wield power by force, but by leading by word and deed. We are to not lord it over one another, but be in a Christ like attitude of humility and godly submission. We are not to try to be masters over one another’s spirits for we have only One Master- the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord taught, “**But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.**” (*Matthew 23:8*)

Digging deeper into the meaning of Paul's words in *I Timothy 2:13-15*, we find a greater understanding of what he is conveying. Is Paul teaching that women are not permitted to teach at all because they are more susceptible to deception and leading men into sin as some teach? Are women more easily deceived than men? Are men above the possibility of being deceived? History proves that this is not the case. There have been many men (and women) over the centuries that have been deceived and some have led others into deception by their false teachings. (*II Peter 2:1-3, Jude 4*) What Paul is speaking about here are women that **act under their own authority**. In the Greek, "**to exercise authority over**", literally means **one who does a thing himself, the author and one who acts on his own authority, autocratic**. (*Greek 831, Joseph Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*) Again, if we are not speaking by the Spirit of God, we are speaking out of our own flesh; in other words, we are acting on our own authority and not under God's authority.

Using the Garden of Eden scenario, Paul is teaching the Church that Eve acted on her own authority, she did not have authority or permission from God to eat of that tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She disobeyed God's command and she also exercised dominion that she did not possess over Adam and influenced his will. She acted on her own will when she was deceived of the devil. She was tempted by the devil to act independently from God and His will and she fell for it.

In *I Timothy 2* Paul is also combating a false teaching called Gnosticism, which had infiltrated the Church at Ephesus. There was a false teaching being taught that claimed that Eve was not deceived, but that she was actually giving enlightenment to Adam. He was setting the record straight about what really happened in the Garden of Eden and so doing tore down the Gnostic's false teaching. False teaching blinds us to truth and prevents us from seeing our true sin nature. We must all accept responsibility for our own actions, confess our own sins and not lay the blame on others. Contrary to what many believe, Paul was not against women but was teaching women how to exercise proper authority and take responsibility for their actions. We are not to act on our own authority, but are to be under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. If Eve had stayed within the boundaries of her authority and obeyed God's commands, she would not have sinned and influenced Adam to do the same. Of course, Adam was not deceived but disobeyed God of his own volition. (*I Timothy 2:14*)

God gives us laws for a reason. He knows what is best for us. He knows the terrible consequences of sin and wants to spare us from them. After Adam and Eve fell, God had to explain to them the consequences of their sins. (*Genesis 3:16-19*) When we do not obey God, we are acting under our own authority and not His. Paul and Peter taught the Church that men and women are not to act on their own authority but to stay under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His commands. Once we come to Christ, our lives are not our own anymore, but we are purchased by the blood of Jesus and He now rules and reigns over our lives as Lord. (*II Corinthians 5:15*)

Jesus Himself set the example for us and stayed under the authority of God the Father and did nothing by Himself. (*John 6:38, 7:16, 12:49, 8:38*) He only spoke and did what His Father said. Since Jesus lived this way, how much more should we follow His example? We are not to dominate over one another, but submit to one another in love. It is unbecoming for a man, woman or child to dominate over others and is not of the nature and character of God. When we think of a domineering person, we usually think of someone enforcing his or her own will on unwilling participants who do not want to receive it. God does not enforce His will on us but gives us freedom to choose His way or not. If God does this, how much more should we? We are to serve one another in love and are to have the mind of Christ. (*Galatians 5:13, I Corinthians 2:16*)

We have proven in the scriptures that women as well as men have been given power and authority in Christ. Women have been empowered by the Holy Spirit **to be witnesses** in the earth. (*Acts 1:4-8, 2:4, 16-18*) Women were numbered among the disciples of Jesus in the upper room as they waited for the arrival of the promised Holy Spirit. (*Acts 1:14*) Jesus commissioned women Himself at times. (*John 4:39, John 20:16-18, Mark 16:1-10*) These women acted under His authority and obeyed Him. The Kingdom of God is a theocracy or a Kingdom with God as Sovereign Ruler. All things in the Kingdom are subject to Him. Since God is Lord over all, this includes His creation of women. He commissions women to work in His Kingdom just as well as men. We are not to judge or criticize whom God want to use in His service. He is able to make us stand.

(Romans 14:4) Unlike unregenerate women, women who are born again with the new nature of Christ come under Jesus' authority and are permitted to (or given the power to) teach or speak because they are not acting on their own authority, but His authority.

For example, some women stand in the ministry gift of prophetess and are divine vessels of the Lord, ordained by Him to speak forth the mind, will and purposes of the Lord to others. A prophet or prophetess is someone who speaks forth the very words of God. If a woman can prophesy the word of the Lord, why would she not be allowed to teach it? Both come from the same source (God) and are not of human origin but divine. Women who act under the authority of Christ, the Head of the Church, are permitted to teach because they are no longer a gender, **but in Christ**, a vessel fit for the master's use. (II Timothy 2:20-21, Romans 9:21, 14:4) As the Apostle Paul declared, **"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."** (Galatians 2:20) When we come to Christ, our lives are not even our own to live anymore. (II Corinthians 5:15) The Lord decides our walk and determines how He wants to use us as vessels.

Women have been redeemed from their fallen, sinful nature by the blood of Christ. Women can serve God in the capacity that He chooses because He empowers us by His grace. It is only when we go outside the boundaries of authority that God has given us is when it is sin. When we sin, this harms other people. This is precisely why Paul taught those in the Church to submit to one another in love. He also taught that believers were to keep **the unity in the faith**. (Ephesians 5:19-21, I Corinthians 1:10) If women (or men, for that matter) act on their own authority, this is from their sinful flesh and disrupts the unity in the faith in the Church. We will take a look at two scriptural examples of how both **a man** and **a woman** acted on their own authority and with the wrong spirit behind their actions.

In the third epistle of John, we find a man named Diotrephes who acted on his own authority by not receiving the Apostle John and certain brethren into the Church and even went so far as casting some out! Clearly, he was not acting under the will of God. Under apostolic authority, John would have to deal with Diotrephes when he arrived there. One point that John makes in his letter is for brethren to walk in love, receive one another and work for the mutual good of the Kingdom of God. Diotrephes had not been exemplifying this type of godly leadership, but was only concerned with having pre-eminence over others. John was coming to deal with him because he was causing harm to the Church there. Anything that would hinder or come against God's will for His Kingdom must be dealt with properly so that serious damage does not come to the Church.

Another example is in *Revelation 2:20-24*. The glorified Christ is addressing the Church in Thyatira regarding a woman named Jezebel, a **false** prophetess. Jesus said that she called herself a prophetess, which evidently meant that she was not called or chosen by the Lord to stand in that office, but was self-appointed. The Lord made it clear that she was not speaking for Him. Whether it was her real name or an acronym for her character, one thing is obvious, she was teaching immoral doctrine and leading some in the church into sin and spiritual adultery. This woman was acting on her own authority and obviously not under Christ's authority. This woman was ministering sin (immorality) and Christ is not a minister of sin. (Galatians 2:17) She also was not acting and speaking under the authority of the Church and its doctrines. This is a perfect example of someone exercising an ungodly type of dominion or leadership over others in the Church. It is not even ever hinted at that Jesus had a problem with her being a woman, he did have a problem, however, with her being in sin, gross error and leading others in the Church into spiritual adultery and away from Him. He even gave her time to repent of leading others into sin and issued a warning of impending judgment for her and her followers if they did not. (Verses 21-23)

In the Church, we are to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. In the Bible there were many godly women who acted under the authority of God. Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, Phillip's daughters, Junia, Priscilla and Phoebe are just a few mentioned in the bible that were anointed by God to speak and act for Him. There are many women today that do the same and are not doing wrong in the sight of God, but are holy vessels of the Lord to do His will.

In *I Corinthians 14* the Apostle Paul is dealing with some issues concerning public use of tongues and prophecy in the Church. He says in verse 31 that **all** may prophecy and speaking in tongues was not to be

forbidden. (Verse 39) This included women as well because they prophesied in the Church and women were also filled with the Holy Spirit, which meant that they spoke in tongues. How do we know this? Back in chapter 11, Paul is saying that women are to prophecy with their heads covered, either by a veil (if their head was shorn or shaved) or their own hair. (*I Corinthians 11:5,6,15*) Since we know that women were obviously speaking (for you cannot prophecy and speak in tongues without making sounds **and** prophecy is for the whole church), Paul is not contradicting his previous statement. Once again he is dealing with **the way** that women were to speak. They were not to use their liberty and gifts of the Holy Spirit to interrupt or cause a disturbance, but to be quiet so that they may learn as God spoke through others. This does not mean, however, that they were never allowed to speak at all.

Everyone should have respect for one another and take their turns and in this way there would be no confusion but godly order. Note in *I Corinthians 14:27-30* that the command to be silent was also given to the men so does this mean that they were never allowed to speak at all? Of course not! There have been many over the centuries who have twisted Paul's words to their own advantage as was attested to by the Apostle Peter. **“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of those things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”** (*II Peter 3:15-16 KJV*) There have been many over the centuries that have taken Paul's words out of context due to ignorance. We can have understanding of what God desires us to learn. We must pray and ask God to give us His wisdom and understanding of the scriptures by His Holy Spirit. (*I Corinthians 2:9-16*)

How has God's statement to Eve in the Garden come to pass since then? (*Genesis 3:16, last part*) God knew that because of what happened in the Garden, that all of mankind would inherit the fallen, sinful nature and that men and women would seek to dominate one another. The results over the millennia have been evident. Domestic abuse, arguments, vindictive behavior, adulterous affairs, divorce, control and other ungodly behavior have been some of the ways that couples seek to dominate or rule each other in their relationships and this has brought prophetic fulfillment to God's statement. Many women over the centuries have hated their unjust treatment by men and rebelled against their domination (men have hated it when women domineer as well).

Even though women have seemingly “come a long way baby” in this western civilization, the fallen nature of men and women keep the war on a continual march. Jesus has the solution to this problem. When Jesus came to die on the cross to pay sin's penalty, He also paid the price for us to have a new nature. We receive this new nature when we accept Him as our Savior and Lord. Women of God now should not be seen in terms of the fallen, sinful nature but now as new creatures in Christ, restored to God's original purpose. Both men and women of God cannot only be restored back to a right relationship with God, but also with one another. It is now possible as we submit to God, crucify our flesh and walk in the fruit of the Spirit daily. If we do these things, we will no longer be fulfilling the lusts of our fallen nature and doing what it wants to do. (*Romans 6 & Galatians 5*) Even though we have this ability within us because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we will make mistakes, should repent and be quick to forgive one another. I think this is more in line with what Paul was teaching in Ephesians 5 when he taught that we in the Church and all husbands and wives are to submit to one another in love. If we all are submitted to God and one another in the unity of the Spirit, then we would not seek to dominate one another, but work together for the glory of God and His Kingdom.

If we walk in the new nature of Christ, we will love, cooperate with and be a blessing to one another instead of hurting each other. If we have a Christ like attitude, we will walk in humility and not try to “lord” it over one another. We all need to let the Lord have dominion over our lives instead of trying to dominate one another and only then will we begin to see a great difference. If we submit to the Lord's authority in our own lives and let Him make the changes from within instead of us trying to change one another from without, we would all spare ourselves a lot of trouble and heartache. Godly husbands, wives, men and women can have dominion together in the earth if they understand God's will and stay submitted to Him and one another in love.

Finally a very important point needs to be made here. What did Adam and Eve lose in the Garden of Eden? They lost eternal life and were separated from God. They lost their God-given authority to rule in the earth as kings. This is what Jesus came to restore! It's true that because of Adam and Eve, death has come to us all, but eternal life comes through Jesus Christ and the finished work of the cross! (Romans 5) They lost the nature and character of God, but this too is restored in Christ. We are now born again of His Spirit. Do you understand it brethren? God has forgiven and cleansed us from our sins and is no longer counting them against us. This includes women of Christ. There are many who believe that God somehow punished all women and placed them in a subservient role or inferior position because of the sins of Eve. God is not counting it against women for the sins that Eve committed any more than He is counting it against men for Adam's sins. (*Jeremiah 31:30*) Why not? The crimson blood of our Savior and Deliverer has washed our sins away! He no longer counts them against us. (*Romans 4: 6-8*)

The Lord came to rescue us from our fallen state and now has restored to us authority and dominion to rule with Him once again in the earth. As a matter of fact, Paul says in *Ephesians 2:6*, "**And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly place in Christ Jesus.**" Jesus declared after his resurrection that, "**All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**" (*Matthew 28:18*) He, in turn, gave power to the Church to rule and reign in the earth as kings and priests. (*Revelation 1:5, I Peter 2:9*) *Our God given authority and dominion does not come from the kingdom of men, but a Kingdom not of this world.* (*John 18:36*) We are now ambassadors of God's Kingdom. (*Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20, Ephesians 1:17-23, II Corinthians 5:20*) What have we been given dominion over? We have been given dominion over the things in the earth. (*Read Genesis 1:26-28*) Also, Jesus gave us power to heal the sick, raise the dead, power over Satan and demons/evil spirits, and to preach the Gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God. (*Luke 9, 10:19, Mark 16:15-18*) This was given to women as well as men. This is the way that God originally ordained it, that men and woman have dominion over the things in the earth and not over one another.

Jesus came to restore what was lost! If God were counting these sins against us, His word would not be true. He is restoring us back to mankind's original condition as He has purposed and ordained it from the very beginning. Our Father no longer looks at us or treats us as if we are in a fallen state but instead He looks and treats us as being in a restored state because of what Jesus has done for us. We cannot treat each other as if we are still in the fallen nature because that would not be true to who we are in Christ. We would be saying that Jesus' sacrifice did not do the job and we know that His sacrifice was sufficient. When we take on the new nature of Christ, we are new creatures, old things are passed away and all things have become new. (*II Corinthians 5:17-19*)

We must not look upon women of Christ as unregenerate sinners, not to be trusted and not qualified because of our gender. God does not see us this way. We are qualified because of what the Lord has done for us and because He lives in us! "**Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**" (*Colossians 1:12-13 NIV*) What the Father sees is His Son Jesus, His atoning sacrifice and that we are new creatures in Christ! He sees us all as one in Christ and all as being Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise! (*Galatians 3:26-29*)

Thank God for His wisdom, knowledge and understanding! We must know whom we are in Christ in order to go where He is taking us. Jesus has set us free from those things that would prevent us from conforming to His image. When God gives us something, no man can take it away. We all need to receive revelation knowledge from God. He has great and marvelous things to teach us. We are to lay hold of those things that God wants to give us; we cannot reach the potential that He has called us to if we do not. Women of God are restored to all things in Christ! Jesus treated women with dignity and respect when He walked upon the earth and the glorified Christ still shows this same respect today. He loves women and knows the injustices and sufferings of women; he understands how we feel for he has suffered these things as well. (*Hebrews 4:15*)

Men who would suppress their wives and sisters in Christ should look to the example of Jesus. Who are we to dictate to God who He can work through as His servants? (*Romans 14:4*) If we are seeking the understanding of God's purposes and plans for women, let us not look to what we see after the fall, but what

God has originally ordained for women and men before the fall and what Jesus has restored after the Cross, for it is here that we will find the will of God. What we see after the fall of man was Satan's plan to thwart God's will for all mankind to have dominion in the earth under the Kingdom of God. God releases women into their destiny; he does not prevent them from it. Satan has tried to do that and unfortunately has succeeded in the lives of many **but he does not have to succeed in the lives of those of us in the Church**. We need to ask God to expose the devil's lies to us. We must be aware of the devil's devices and not aid his cause but instead, aid the cause of Christ and His Kingdom. When we deny women their inheritance in Christ, we are playing into the hands of the devil and hindering the purposes of God and His Kingdom. If we desire the victory, we must look to Christ, for our victory is in Him. It was He who defeated Satan and his dark kingdom through the Cross. He did this for us in order that we might walk in all of God's purposes.

We need to become all that He is calling us to be. Women of God are a threat to the devil; otherwise he would not try to oppress them so much. One woman in particular is the biggest threat of all and that is the Bride of Christ. Obviously Jesus does not have a problem with women ministering when He has entrusted the Church, His Bride (**symbolized as a woman**) to rule and reign with Him in the earth as co-heirs! One day we will all stand before the Judgement seat of Christ. We will be judged on how we treated our fellow human beings. (*II Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 25:31-46*) We will be held accountable. Love will honor, prefer and respect one another. We must not hinder one another but instead help each other for the glory of God and His Kingdom's sake.