

Exploring the Question of Women in Ministry

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“A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.” (1 Tim 2:11-12)

Part 1: Handling Controversy Without Becoming Ungodly

What then do we do with a controversy—

in which both sides are trying to uphold the meaning of Scripture as the inerrant and authoritative Word of God?

in which both sides want the best for both men and women?

in which both sides represent people who love and serve Jesus?

in which the issues are not something that is central and inextricable to Christian faith?

Stay humble. Even if you’re right, you still have a long way to go to be conformed to Christ’s image.

Stay teachable. You don’t know everything. And you might be wrong. There’s still a lot you can learn from people on both sides of this question. Try to learn why each side believes what it does, and how that makes a difference in how they live. Is there anything you and I can learn from them? Resolve to remain submitted to the authority of Scripture, no matter what it may cost me in terms of my present beliefs.

Be gracious. Your opponents in this controversy (many of them, anyway) are not enemies but brethren, family. It’s more important to love than to “be right.” Don’t lose the war trying to win the battle. Obey the command to honor others above yourself—including those whom you believe to be “wrong” on this question.

Keep seeking. Let the controversy drive you back to the text again and again as you seek an answer. Keep listening to the Holy Spirit, to the Word of God, to others (especially those who disagree with you!). If you become convinced that one or the other position is right, keep seeking to understand the other position—and not just to know how to refute it.

Keep your heart right. It doesn’t matter if you have the right doctrine if your life doesn’t reflect Jesus.