

## “The women are to keep silent in the churches...”

1 Corinthians 14:34

## The women are to keep silent in the churches

1Co 14:34 The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

1Co 14:35 If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.

2

## Introduction

- Many diverse opinions are held regarding a woman’s speech in the assembly of the saints
- The words used in these verses, silent, not permitted to speak and to be subject to
- But, what do these words mean from these verses as far as applying the principles behind them?

3

## Introduction

- We must keep the meaning of the words used accurate when we seek to interpret and apply the principles mentioned in these and other verses
- Silent means to say nothing
- To not speak would mean not to use words to convey their thoughts or anything else
- To subject means to obey the orderly arrangement given by God

4

## Introduction

- Some may conclude that a woman then must not speak at all in the assembly of the saints
- If she does so, she would be rebelling against God’s order

5

## But, we do read about women speaking

1Co 11:5 But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.

Eph 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

6

## The Context of 1Co 12-14

- To understand 1Co 14:34-35, we note the context of 1Co chapters 12-14
- In 1Co 12:1-11, Paul notes that different spiritual miraculous gifts were given to various saints in Corinth
- They seemed to elevate tongue speaking above all other gifts
- They used the gifts to wrongly make distinctions between one another

7

## The Context of 1Co 12-14

- Paul refutes this idea in 1Co 12:12-31 stating all gifts are given by the same Spirit
- And all members, exercising whatever gift they have, are needed for the body, the local church, to function as God would have it
- Love, 1Co 13, is to be pursued above all gifts because it will last into eternity

8

## The Context of 1Co 12-14

- Paul then says desire spiritual gifts but prophesying is more effective in the assembly than tongues
- This is so because when you prophesy, you can be understood by all so they may be edified by the Word of God
- But, unless the tongue speaker has an interpreter, no one will understand him, be edified

9

## Prophesying in a sense is greater than speaking in tongues

1Co 14:1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

1Co 14:2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries.

10

## Prophesying in a sense is greater than speaking in tongues

1Co 14:3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.

1Co 14:4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

11

## Prophesying in a sense is greater than speaking in tongues

1Co 14:5 Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

12

## Prophecy in a sense is greater than speaking in tongues

1Co 14:18 I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;

1Co 14:19 however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

13

## Prophecy in a sense is greater than speaking in tongues

1Co 14:22 So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.

1Co 14:23 Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?

14

## Prophecy in a sense is greater than speaking in tongues

1Co 14:24 But if all prophecy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all;

1Co 14:25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

15

## Principle 1 Let all things be done for edification, building up by the Word

1Co 14:26 What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

16

## Tongue speakers who have no interpreter are to keep silent

1Co 14:27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret;

1Co 14:28 but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.

17

## Those who prophesy must keep silent when another is prophesying

1Co 14:29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.

1Co 14:30 But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent.

18

## Those who prophesy must keep silent when another is prophesying

1Co 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;

1Co 14:32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets;

1Co 14:33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

19

## Women are to keep silent in the churches

1Co 14:34 The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

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20

## What speech are women prohibited from doing in the assembly?

- The context of 1Co 14 is that Paul was dealing with speaking, teaching, that was done by those who had spiritual gifts
- It was speaking the Word of God publicly addressing the assembly so they may be edified
- Men had rules to follow so they all did not speak at the same time or speak without an interpreter

21

## What speech are women prohibited from doing in the assembly?

- But, women are completely prohibited from speaking in the assembly where they teach, exercise authority over the assembly
- Therefore, women are not to lead the assembly in the role of teaching or preaching or other acts of worship like prayer and the Lord's supper

22

## What speech are women prohibited from doing in the assembly?

- Depending on the type of assembly and/or type of speech, women may speak without violating being submissive to men

23

## Principle 2 God is not the author of confusion

1Co 14:33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

24

Principle 3 women not to teach or exercise authority over men based on creation

1Ti 2:11 A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.

1Ti 2:12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

25

Principle 3 women not to teach or exercise authority over men based on creation

1Ti 2:13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.

1Ti 2:14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

26

Principle 3 women not to teach or exercise authority over men based on creation

1Co 11:3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

27

Types of speech allowed that do not violate a woman's submission to man

1. Singing is a type of speaking that does not violate a woman being in subjection
2. Confessing her faith in Jesus as the Son of God before baptism for the forgiveness of her sins
3. Bible class assembly led by a man where all participation is welcome

28

“The women are to keep silent in the churches...”

1. Principle 1 Let all things be done for edification, building up by the Word
2. Principle 2 God is not the author of confusion
3. Principle 3 women not to teach or exercise authority over men based on creation

29