

Women in the Church - Part 2

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince discusses the roles of women in the church, emphasizing the need for protection and the importance of understanding authority and submission in marriage.

Duration: 36:06

Scripture: Malachi 4:5

Topics: "Women"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being called by God to be a teacher of the Scriptures. He shares his personal experience of being called by God to be a teacher and highlights the responsibility and accountability that comes with this role. The speaker also discusses the difference between the way men and women think and encourages listeners to be part of the solution rather than contributing to the problem. The sermon concludes with a warning from the book of Malachi about the consequences of not solving family problems and a reminder to seek God for guidance and faithfulness in fulfilling one's role.

Transcript

I tell you I have such a picture today, out of my own experience, of the terrible frailty of human life. I want all the protection I can get. And I want all the protection that I can give my wife.

I don't always do just as well as I should, but I'm trying. And dear ladies, you need protection. The truth of the matter is, it may not flatter you, but you need protection.

We all need protection. I need protection. Protection in the Bible comes through being under authority.

I am a man under authority. When I'm here in Fort Lauderdale, I'm answerable to the eldership of this church. When we live in Jerusalem, we are part of a Christian congregation under the authority of the rector.

And in addition to that, in the United States we have a board of directors to whom we're answerable. We also have an international council drawn from different nations to whom we're answerable. So I am a man under authority.

And I am so grateful for it. I don't fight against it. I don't feel that it makes me inferior.

I feel it makes me safe. And I tremble when I see Christians who resist divine authority. Be sure, my dear brother or sister, you're headed for a disaster somewhere.

So that's the basic picture of the relationship between man and woman. When the Bible introduces a particularly significant concept, usually the seed thoughts are in the first use of it. And I believe that's true here.

He shall rule over you. He shall be your head. He shall be your governor.

Now I'm going to move into interpretation. I believe what I've been saying up to now is just clearly established scriptural facts. At this point, I'm going to give you my interpretation of various relevant passages of Scripture.

I am sincere. I have studied it and meditated on it and prayed over it a lot. But I offer it to you as my interpretation.

You can turn it down and still get to heaven. Provided you go on loving me. All right, now I'm offering you one aspect of the difference between male and female.

And we know there are many differences. And we're talking now about what I call governmental authority, rule. I want to introduce the word government because I think it's clearer.

And as I understand it, in the ministry of the Word of God, and as a matter of fact in all areas, but let's confine ourselves to the Word of God. Governmental authority requires a comprehensive grasp of God's redemptive plan, rightly relating the main elements. It's interesting that in James 3 verse 1, a passage very little quoted today in the charismatic movement, but it's still in the Bible.

James 3 verse 1, it says, My brethren, do not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment? That's a significant thought. I find a lot of people are somewhat ambitious to be teachers. They've missed out that verse.

Why are we told not to become teachers? Because the responsibility is so great. And you have to answer to God for what you teach. Now you say, Brother Prince, are you a teacher? The answer is yes, I am.

You know why? Because God called me specifically in words to be a teacher. A long time ago, before some of you were even born, in 1944, near Haifa, in what is now Israel, God spoke to me. He said, I've called thee to be a teacher of the Scriptures in truth and faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus for many.

And if I had ever tried to comprehend how many there many would be, I wouldn't have been able to begin. Because modern communication hadn't reached the stage which it has now. And I don't want to be boastful, but I simply say, basically I'm teaching millions of people almost every day.

Through the different media. Print, radio, television, video, personal ministry. Now, I am a teacher.

Whether I'm a good teacher or not, that's for God to decide. And I know that I'll have to answer for God. But do not plan to be a teacher if God hasn't called you to be a teacher.

Now, I think there's a difference between the way men and women think. And this is why there's a division between those who are eligible to be teachers and those who are not. Now, you can question this, but minds of men and women operate differently.

Men excel at comprehensive assessment. Women at details. I couldn't handle all the details that my wife handles every day.

I mean, I would be, I would be a wreck. But she does it. She's a wonderful woman, but I have seen that's what women are good at.

I'm not saying it's the only thing that women are good at. Please understand that. But they do excel at handling details.

I mean, they can change the baby and heat the bottle and do all these other things almost simultaneously. I couldn't. I would be a wreck if I tried to do those things.

Now, as a historical illustration of what I'm telling you, as far as I know, historically, women have not achieved success in composing an opera or a symphony or in formulating a mathematical or philosophical system. I don't think there's a record in history because it's not the area of women's gifting. When you have to put all those parts together and make a comprehensive whole and see the one thing as a whole, it's not the way a woman's mind works.

But when she walks into a room and sees something out of place, she sees it ten times faster than her husband. Because her mind is created to deal with details. And we need both.

I need a woman and a woman needs me. It's not a competition. It's not that one is inferior and the other superior.

The truth of the matter is, we are different. You know why we're different? Because God created us different. And nothing that ever happens can change that difference.

We can fight it. We can argue about it. But it still remains.

God has the last word. I'm going to say something and I wonder if you will agree with me. God is always right.

He never makes mistakes. Can you say that with a whole heart? God is always right. He never makes mistakes.

Amen. If you can get over that, you've come a long way. Now I'm going to enter into what is a somewhat controversial subject.

I'm going to speak about the ministries that are open to women and the ministries that are not open to women. Whether single or married. One of the questions that's very much to the fore in the church at the moment is, Should women be ordained? My answer is, that's much too vague a question.

My answer is, ordained to do what? Personally, I don't attach too much importance to a religious ceremony of ordination. Jesus said, I have chosen you and ordained you. I have set you apart.

You're mine. That's what really matters. I'm not saying there shouldn't be an ordination service, but I think it is secondary to God's ordaining.

And so, if people say to me, should women be ordained? I say, ordained to do what? To do some things and not to do others. Excuse me, I think I better blow my nose while I'm about it. Ruth, with her attention to

detail, tells me that I should blow my nose rather than wipe it.

Now, I'm going to go through a list, four lists of ministries in the New Testament and discuss briefly which of them are open to women and which are not. Bearing in mind that women are not eligible for governmental authority. There's a Bible teacher in Britain named David Pawson, maybe known to some of you.

He and I are not close, but we're friends. He has published a book which says, Leadership is Male. And basically, I think that's true.

He's not very popular in some corners, but I think he spoke the truth. I want to suggest to you that when it comes to governmental authority, normally it is not open to women. Now, let's look at Romans 12, 6 through 8. Here's a list of different ministries.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us. Let us use them. If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.

Or serving, or teaching, or exhorting, or giving, or leading, or showing mercy. I think there are altogether seven ministries mentioned. I would say of those, five are open to women.

Prophecy, serving, which is translated ministry in this translation. Exhorting, giving, showing mercy. Two that are not normally open are teaching or leading.

And when I speak about teaching, I mean teaching that is the administration of governmental authority. If you don't get that concept, you really can't get clarity. Then in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 5, Paul says, But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.

Let's leave out the question about the head covering for a moment. And just point out that it's all right for a woman to pray or prophesy, provided she fulfills the requirements. So those two ministries are open to women.

Praying and prophesying. And then in 1 Corinthians 12, verses 28 through 30, Paul gives a whole list of ministries. And God has appointed these in the church.

First apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers, are all workers of miracles, do all have gifts of healings, do all speak with tongues, do all interpret. If you analyze that list, here are the ministries which I believe are open to women.

Prophets, miracles, healings, helps, administrations, tongues and interpretation. That is six. The two which would not normally be open, are apostles and teachers.

And then in Ephesians 4.11, the fourth list. It says, he himself, Christ, gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and some teachers. There are five ministries there.

Out of them I would say, prophets and evangelists are open to women. Apostles, pastors and teachers are not normally open to women. Because they all involve governmental authority.

And then, this is one of the passages that many people find hard to swallow. In 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 34, Paul says, Let women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. But they are to

be submissive, as the law also says.

Now, I have already pointed out in the same chapter, just a few verses higher up, Paul says a woman may pray or prophesy. So he is not saying that women have to sit with their mouths closed all the time. I think the key to understanding this is understanding the word church.

Which in Greek is ecclesia. From which we get the English word ecclesiastic and so on. Now in Greek culture, ecclesia was the word to describe the governmental body of a Greek city-state.

It is essentially a governmental word. This brings out the fact, as I have already said, that God governs humanity, in a large measure, through His church. But when it comes to what I would call governmental assemblance, women are to keep silent.

They are not to exert the function of governing. That is my understanding. Now, we are going just a little further.

Because all these passages, I believe, are consistent. 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 12. Paul says, I do not permit a woman to teach, or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

Notice, teaching is directly connected with authority. So Paul says, where teaching implies the exercise of authority, government, I don't permit it. Now that's Paul's personal statement.

But I think we need to give attention to what Paul says. After all, if we compare his results with the results of the feminists, he is a long way ahead. Then in 1 Timothy chapter 3, verse 2. A bishop, which is an overseer.

Without going into it, there are three different names for the same office. Overseer, pastor and elder. So we are talking about somebody who is a pastor.

An overseer must be blamed as the husband of one wife. But it never says the wife of one husband. And then it says in verse 4, one who rules his own house well.

Notice again, the word rule. My personal conviction is that in every family, the man should be the ruler. That's not popular everywhere, but God hasn't changed.

And ruling is a tremendous responsibility. Don't compete for it if you are not qualified for it. Let me suggest to you the three functions of a man who rules his family.

He represents Christ to his family in three main ministries. Prophet, priest and king. As prophet, he speaks on behalf of God to his family.

As priest, he speaks to God on behalf of his family. And as king, he rules his family on behalf of God. And remember, the first man that God chose, out of all humanity, for himself, was called Abraham.

And why did God choose Abraham? Because He could trust him to rule his family and his children. That was the first requirement of Abraham. There's a strange silence.

Now I've heard some very strange theories advanced about Phoebe. Probably you haven't heard them, but I had some questions from somebody about them. So let me turn to Phoebe just for a moment.

Phoebe in Romans 16, 1 and 2. Paul says, I commend to you Phoebe, our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cancia. That would be a deepness. She's a servant.

That you may receive her in the Lord and a man worthy of the saints. And a sister in whatever business she has need of. For indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

Now somebody, I read this most mixed up argument, said that Phoebe took charge of Paul and taught him what he ought to preach. So let me just point out, it doesn't say that. I checked the best Greek lexicons.

The best translation for helper is protectress. So Phoebe was a protectress. After all, you remember Paul was beaten five times with 39 strikes.

It's almost incredible to think he received 195 strikes in his life. And I think sometimes he needed someone to look after him. A woman to take him into her home, care for him, nurse him, feed him.

Maybe Phoebe was one that did that. But she didn't tell him what to preach. I've had some of the strangest arguments that you could ever imagine in favor of women doing things that they're not supposed to do.

And the arguments are put forward by men. But usually there's a woman behind the man. Now let's come to requirements for married women.

There are certain special requirements. Ephesians 5.22 Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. That's very clear, isn't it? There's no mistaking the meaning of that.

You may not like it, but it's obvious what it says. You say, well Paul was unmarried. He didn't really understand.

But I have to point out to you that Peter said even more as a married man. If you turn to 1 Peter chapter 3, verses 1 and 2. Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands. That even if some do not obey the word.

They without a word may be won by the conduct of their wives. When they observe your chaste conduct, accompanied by fear. Now Peter begins that chapter with the word likewise.

You need to find out what that refers to. If you go back to chapter 2, verse 21. It says, for this to this you, all believers, were called.

Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example. That you should follow His steps. Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth.

Who when He was reviled, did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten. But committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.

Then the next chapter says, likewise you wives. Like who? Tell me. Like Jesus.

That's right. That's a pretty high calling, isn't it? But there's a lot of responsibility goes with it. Submit to your husbands, whether they are believers or not.

I dealt years ago with a dear woman. She was a very committed fiery Christian. She was out ministering and her husband was at home, an unbeliever.

She told me this personally. She said, I used to think that because my husband wasn't a believer, he wasn't in my head. I was answerable to him.

She said, one day God showed me out of the Bible that he was still in my head. Whether he was a believer or an unbeliever. She said, I was so shocked that I actually fell out of bed.

I think of another couple. I had been ministering deliverance. And at the end a woman came up to me and said, I need deliverance.

And God gave me wisdom. I said, where's your husband? She pointed backwards. He's at the back.

As though he really wasn't a significant figure. I said, call your husband. Very reluctantly she did so.

Then I said, now the Bible says that your husband is your head and your priest. I'm not the one who should pray deliverance for you. Your husband should pray deliverance.

Well that did not suit her the least bit. But I pressed the point. And I said, are you willing to ask your husband to pray for deliverance? So very reluctantly she said, will you pray for me for deliverance? And when she said that she was instantly delivered.

She had made God's condition, see. So anyhow, let me tell you. A delightful incident that happened in a family that we know well.

Who are friends of ours, I will not name them. But the woman was a Baptist. She knew the Lord and she married an unsaved man.

Because she said, I knew he would let me have as many children as I wanted. And actually they ended up by having ten. But he was not saved and he was a pretty riotous character.

He drank and all sorts of things. And she would bring evangelists and preachers to the house. And he just did not want to listen to them.

Then she read 1 Peter chapter 3. Let them observe the chaste conduct of the wife. And so she decided to change. So she smartened herself up.

She had her hair done nicely. Put on her attractive clothes. And her husband was a fireman.

So he would come back at all hours of the night. Normally she would just say, there is something in the oven for you. But now she was there ready with a nicely cooked warm meal.

And her husband thought, something is happened to my wife. And he thought, she must have a boyfriend. So he got one of his friends who was a fireman, not on duty at the same time, to watch the house.

And see who was the boyfriend. Well no boyfriend came. Now at times he was actually violent.

At one time he pushed her head through a partition wall. Held her by the neck and said, aren't you afraid? She said, no. Well it worked.

Today they are both believers. Raising a family of believers. But she took the Lord seriously.

How many people would take that risk today? This is a true story. I mean they have a lovely family. So when you obey the Bible, it works.

Now we have a lot of trouble about this word submission. I have a background in a movement which is well known to many of you, where submission was one of the key words. We heard it so often, we nearly threw up when we heard it.

But mind you, there was a lot of good in that movement, I want you to tell you. Actually their aims were good, their means were not right. And I want to point out to you, there are two words, submission and submissiveness.

Now I do not believe that a wife is obligated to obey her husband, if he demands something that is contrary to scripture and contrary to her conscience. I think she has a right to say, I honor you as my husband, but I cannot do what you ask, because this, this and this. But, she can still maintain a submissive attitude.

So let me suggest that, even when submission may seem impossible, submissiveness is your role. Now, let me ask you dear married sisters, first of all, are you really ready to submit to your husband? Because if you want him to be your head, you have to submit. Every place where this is discussed, submission of the wife comes first, then headship of the husband.

Why? A husband cannot be head over an unsubmitted wife. That means a dictator. So if you want headship, you must practice submission.

If you, the choice is yours. Then I want to ask you one other important question. You dear wives, those who are maybe more spiritual than your husbands, do a lot of praying for your husbands.

Will you be satisfied to see the good you do manifested in another person's life? This is the example. There is a very spiritual wife and a rather unspiritual husband. But the spiritual wife spends hours in prayer for her husband and eventually prays him through into a ministry in which she's successful.

So everybody sees the good the husband does and very few people are aware of the good the wife does. Would that satisfy you? Or do you demand to have your good recognized? But let me tell you there's a P.S. to that. In eternity it will be recognized, be sure.

I picture this husband and wife arriving before the throne to receive their rewards and he gets a crown. But her crown is twice as bright as his. And one angel says to another, Why does she get a brighter crown than he? Well, the other angel replies, If she hadn't got a crown, he wouldn't have one at all.

So postpone your crown till eternity. Amen? Now I'm coming near the end. I want to say this, I've said it already but I'll say it again.

Women are different but not inferior. Okay? Some of the areas in which women excel, as I've seen it, they are quick to recognize and respond to the Holy Spirit, much quicker often than men. They often excel as evangelists.

Much of the progress of the church in China today is due to teenage girls. Girls who work as evangelists and bring the gospel to whole villages. I believe evangelism can be a primary call for a woman.

They are compassionate. They are brave. And they are loyal.

Let me just give you four examples of women's loyalty. In John chapter 19, verse 25. These are the last moments of Jesus at the cross.

John 19, 25. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother and His mother's sister Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. There were the three Marys closer to the cross than anybody else but John.

And then you read in Matthew 27, verses 55-56. This is the crucifixion. And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar.

Among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. Many women. Most of the men had left.

But the women were still there. And then Mark 16. This is one of my most exciting passages in the Bible.

Mark 16, verse 9. I suppose one of the greatest privileges ever granted to a human being was to be the first witness of the resurrection of Jesus. To whom was it granted? Let me read. And when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.

No other human being has had that privilege that excels that. Of being the first witness of the resurrection. Who was it? Not an apostle, but Mary Magdalene.

And it's stated specifically in that context that Jesus had cast seven demons out of her. I tell people who have been delivered of demons, you never need to be ashamed. You never need to hang your head.

That was her proud testimony. Jesus cast seven demons out of me. And when He rose from the dead, it was to her that He appeared first.

And one more passage in Matthew 28, verses 5 through 7. Again it's the resurrection. But the angel answered and said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said.

Come, see the place where the Lord lay, and go quickly and tell His disciples. So the women were the messengers to the apostles. You understand, it's not a question of rank.

It's a question of your function, your calling, and how faithful you are. And many, many women are more faithful than many, many men. As I say, if there's one characteristic that I have noticed in women, it is loyalty.

They'll hang Him there, and all the men will disappear. But dear sisters, believe me, I am not interested in putting women down. I'm interested in helping women to take their God-appointed place and function in it.

Now, everybody comes up with exceptions. And one of the favorite exceptions about women as leadership is Deborah. Well that's true.

She was a leader because there was no man to do it. Shame on the men. Not on Deborah.

But, bear in mind she was an exception. There are 13 persons mentioned as judges in the book of Judges in 1 Samuel. Only one of them was a woman.

The problem is when we make the exception, the rule, then we are outside God's blessing. Let me close now by a statement about America. America has two critical problems.

One of them I have spoken about for at least 30 years. It is delinquent males. That's problem number one.

Males who reneged on their responsibility. Problem number two is rebellious females. And the problem is they each make the other worse.

Every time a man is delinquent it tends to make a woman rebellious. And every time a woman is rebellious, it gives a man an excuse for being delinquent. And this is the critical basic problem of this country.

Let us not contribute to it. Let us be part of the solution, not part of the problem. I turn closing to Malachi chapter 4, verses 5 and 6. The last two verses of the Old Testament.

Chronologically, these are the last verses written in the Old Testament. And notice the last verse is a curse. Thank God for the New Testament.

Because if the Old Testament was the end, God's last word to us would be a curse. This is what it says. God is speaking.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

And that word translated curse means something that is totally rejected by God. There is nothing more to do about it. It's gone.

And if we do not solve our family problems, we do not have reconciliation between husbands and wives, and parents and children. The result will be a curse. It's a serious topic.

We each need to take it seriously. You may not agree with everything I say. But seek God for yourself.

And ask Him to show you what is your role. And ask Him to make you faithful in fulfilling that role. May God bless you.

Amen. We recommend the following cassettes. The Grace of Yielding, No.

4040, and How to Face the Last Days Without Fear, No. 4382. For further information and a complete list of cassettes and books, contact Derrick Prince Ministries, Box 19501, Department T, Charlotte, NC 28219, Telephone 704-357-3556.

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