

PAUL'S THEOLOGY
Lesson 52
The Church – Part 5
The Role of Women in the Church

For several weeks, I have been telling our Sunday Morning class about this pending lesson on the role of women in the church. Two years ago when we started our class on Paul, I received multiple requests that we cover this material. Then two weeks ago, as I began announcing we would be covering this subject soon, a wonderful lady came up to me after class.

“You be clear!” She began.

“No sugar coating it! There are women who need to hear that they are not men and they should not hope to have the role of men in the church. They just need to get over it! I am going to pray you are very clear about it!”

Then last week, another nice lady came up to me; one that I had not met before. She told me that, while raised in the Baptist church, she no longer frequented it. One main reason she had left was because the church did not seem open to women deacons and women in places of service that would minister to her and other women. She told me that she is coming back this week because she wanted to hear me explain that women do have a role in the church -- that woman can minister alongside men.

As I pondered these two very sincere women, and how I would approach teaching this material, the first woman sent me an email, reinforcing her concern that I “lay it out plain!”

In direct preparation for this lesson, we have studied the relevant passages from Paul, read a number of excellent books on multiple sides of the issue, and we have outlined what should be at least a six-week series of lessons. Recognizing that we need to fit it into a 45-minute segment, we will necessarily be limited in what we can set forth. In case anyone wishes to take the matter further in personal study, an annotated bibliography is attached to this lesson.

I have since teased several people that I felt a weeklong illness coming on, leaving someone else to teach. I had no takers!

So with fear and trepidation (and a bullet proof vest on under my shirt!), let us delve into this subject with sincere hearts, open minds, and a singular desire to find the heart of God on a matter that is very serious and sensitive to a number of people.

THE REASONS AND LIMITS OF THIS LESSON

The role of women in the church properly compels our attention for several reasons. First, Scripture speaks on the issue in ways that for some seem clear, yet for others, seem murky. Either way, when Scripture speaks on something, it is incumbent on believers to try and understand what we read.

Second, we always seek to build up the body of Christ. As we learned in Lesson 50 on the purpose of church as a “gathering,” Paul taught that the church was to build up the members and bring them to greater maturity before the Lord. This brings us to a third reason for studying these matters. We gather together in a desire to help bring all others to their greatest use and purposes before God and in his service. We owe it to all, therefore, to seriously study these passages to make sure that we are carefully providing the encouragement and opportunities of service for all.

In this sense, as a father of four wonderful daughters, I watch carefully as they capture the attention of various young men. One of the key things I look for is whether the young men bring out the best in my daughters, the worst in them, or simply the blah-ness of mediocrity. So may we be concerned about all in our midst. Are we a gathering of believers that bring out the best in each other, regardless of gender? Because that is our desire, we must study these passages with care to determine what choices are legitimately before us.

In this regard, however, we already need to set out one limitation of our lesson. Namely, this lesson is taught by one person (me!) who is not in the position of setting policy for our church family. What is contained in this lesson are my thoughts on this subject, not those that are the policy of this body of believers. That is not to say I am teaching something out of line with the overseers of the church, but rather that I prepared this lesson, not the CFBC leadership!

WHAT EXACTLY ARE THE ISSUES?

What is at play here, both in practice and in Scripture? In practice, we ask what specific roles can women take in the body of Christ. Consider these questions:

- Is it appropriate for women to serve communion during a service? Can they stand up and pass the trays from one row to another? Can they pass the trays down the aisle from where they are seated? Can they stand up in the aisle if the person they need to pass the trays to is unable to reach on their own?

- Can women serve as Sunday School/Life Group teachers? Can they do so in pre-school? Elementary school? Middle School? High School and beyond? At some point, are they only teaching other females or are they allowed to teach also males?
- Can women lead prayers in gatherings, either “Sunday School,” “Life Groups,” or a “worship assembly”? (None of which, we might add, are New Testament biblical terms. Scripture speaks of “church” as a “gathering.” These terms are our add-ons to describe our types of “gatherings.”) Similarly, can women read Scripture in these gatherings? Can women lead singing or be on a worship or praise team?
- How should women dress at church? Pearls? Long hair? Hats or head coverings?
- Can women serve as deaconesses? Can they serve as Pastors/Elders/Overseers?

These are practical questions and are appropriate to keep in mind as we consider the relevant passages of Scripture from Paul. We shall put them in the order in which they come in the Bible. Some are a bit lengthy, but it is useful to have them before us in this lesson. We bold print and italicize the key language.

- **Rom.16:1** “I commend to you our sister *Phoebe, a servant [diakonos-deaconess?] of the church* at Cenchreae” (ESV).
 “I have good things to say about *Phoebe, who is a leader in the church* at Cenchreae” (Contemporary English Version).
 “And I commend you to *Phebe* our sister -- being *a ministrant of the assembly* that [is] in Cenchrea” (Young’s Literal Translation).
- **Rom. 16:7** “Greet Andronicus and *Junias [a female name], my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles*, who also were in Christ before me” (New American Standard).
 “Salute Andronicus and *Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles*, who also were in Christ before me” (King James).
 “Greet Andronicus and *Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles*, and they were in Christ before me” (ESV).
- **1 Cor. 11:2-16** “Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a

- **1 Cor. 14:26-40** “What then, brothers? *When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.* Let all things be done for building up. If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. Or was it from you that the word of God came?

Or are you the only ones it has reached? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But all things should be done decently and in order.”

- **Gal. 3:27-29** “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, *there*

is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."

- **Eph 5:22-33** "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. *For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

- 1 Tim. 2:8-15 "*I desire then that in every place* the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that *women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing*—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control."

How do we put these passages together? How do we fit in 1 Cor. 11 where Paul says that women who pray and prophesy are to do so with their heads covered, yet three chapters later he says they are to "keep silent in the gatherings [churches]."

Was Junias (a female name) an "apostle"? Was Phoebe (another female) a "deaconess"?

In 1 Timothy, is the dress code for women cultural? Then, when Paul follows up that women are to remain quiet because "the woman was deceived" over against Adam, is he making a theological point? What does he mean about women being "saved through childbirth?"

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

There are a number of different perspectives on these passages and issues. Time prevents us from going into all of them with great detail, but we set them out briefly nonetheless. In order to keep this section more readable, we will place some of the challenges these views face in the footnotes.

1. One view takes each scripture and tries to fit it together in a way that makes a coherent whole. This view would allow women to pray and prophesy/preach out of recognition of Paul in 1 Corinthians, but would limit that oral behavior. The praying and preaching would only be allowed when those present are either female or are children who are not perceived to be old enough to make personal decisions for Christ. In this way, the perception is that the teaching and praying is okay as long as it is not over a man, consistent with Paul's statements in 1 Timothy and later in 1 Corinthians.¹

People with this view still have a spectrum of views over whether Paul's admonitions about dress and head covering are applicable today or simply reflective of cultural differences.²

This view generally sees the passages that mention Junias as an apostle and Phoebe as a deacon as mistranslations. These folks generally view the alternate translations given above as more proper renditions of Paul's meaning.³

¹ A difficulty here is that Paul does not say that women can speak in limited church/assemblies. If Paul is truly saying, "the women should keep silent in the churches" (1 Cor. 14:34), then it would mean all assemblies regardless of age or gender. "Church" meant, "an assembling" without any determination of gender or presence. It did not carry the significance of "church worship service" in the sense that we typically understand it to mean today. For more on this, read the first lesson on "church" downloadable on the class website at www.Biblical-Literacy.com.

² There is a similar difficulty about the treatment of widows as set out by Paul in 1 Timothy 5 where Paul gives instructions for the enrolling of widows over age 60 for care by the church. Is this a literal charge and responsibility for the church or is it to be reconciled in the "custom of the day" bucket?

³ In a related sense, there must be some consideration in this view of the women who were teachers in the New Testament church. Priscilla taught, although some point out that it was with her husband Aquila, making an exception then for women to "teach" and "speak" when part of a team. Again though, this faces difficulties with a full frontal literal interpretation of the 1 Cor. 14:34 passage that women should keep silent in assemblies. It also faces question in light of Acts 18:24-28's account of Priscilla teaching Apollos. This passage must be reconciled with the Timothy injunction that Paul did "not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man" (1 Tim. 2:12).

For these people, Paul's writing to the Galatians about "neither male nor female in Christ" concerns the salvation position of people. Salvation position is no different if you are male or female. This is contrasted with those of view 2 below.

2. A second approach sees Paul's key passage to be Galatians 3:28 teaching that there is "neither male nor female in Christ." By referencing the other parts of the passage where Paul writes that there is neither "Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free," these folks believe that the passage refers to something more than the position of one in Christ. They interpret this passage as speaking of one's function in the church. Just as there was no restriction in function between Jew/Gentile and slave/free, they reason, there is no distinction in function between male and female.

Other passages that conflict with this approach are seen as less clear, less universal, more tied to certain conditions, or simply harder to understand. There are some who parse words using more obscure meanings to try and fit the passages around the Galatians passage. For example, some will take the part of 1 Timothy where Paul says, "*I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man*" and offer the suggestion that Paul just meant they should not spread *false* teaching.⁴

This view generally regards Paul's issues on dress and head coverings as culturally bound. This point is also used to emphasize the cultural aspect of much of these social issues that are not present in the Galatians passage of "equality."⁵

This view more readily accepts that Phoebe was in fact a deaconess and considers the translation of Junias to show her with authority on apostolic level. Also frequently pointed out are the many other examples of women in teaching roles, both in the Old and New Testaments.⁶

⁴ An obvious difficulty with this passage is the insertion of "false" in the passage, for that word is not present in Paul's writings. We also ask why Paul would be concerned only with women teaching falsely, as if it is okay for men to do so? Surely false teaching is wrong, regardless of gender. This view must explain why Paul would be singling that women were not allowed to teach falsely. Further problems with this view are the way Paul ties his reasoning to theology rather than culture. Paul says, "she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" (1 Tim. 2:12-14).

⁵ Again, this suffers the same problem that Paul does not link the "silence" in 1 Timothy 2 to culture but seems to link it theologically to action taught in Scripture.

⁶ The translation issue is complicated because the word we use as "deacon" was a common word of one serving. It is in the feminine form when referencing Phoebe because she was a woman.

3. A third view recognizes the activity of women in the early church as evidenced by Philip's four prophesying daughters (Acts 21:8-9), Priscilla, and even Phoebe (whether as a deaconess or simply a ministrant in the church). Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 11 are seen as consistent with this activity of women. This view is distinguished from the view in number 2 above by the way it treats passages that seem to contradict this teaching. These people take the passages in 1 Timothy, Ephesians, and even 1 Corinthians 14 and consider them non-Pauline. In other words, these people reason that since Paul did not write those passages, they do not contain Paul's views. Interestingly, the scholars will grant that Paul wrote most of 1 Corinthians, but they carve out the portion of chapter 14 that deal with the women issue and consider it a later add into the original Pauline letter.⁷
4. A fourth view is one more of practicality than of full and complete understanding and parsing of the passages. This view recognizes and speaks of the need to keep harmony in the church (unquestionably, a Pauline injunction – "Let all things be done for building up" 1 Cor. 14:26) and yet sees a need to allow people to use their gifts and talents for God's people and kingdom. Hence that Paul speaks of women praying or prophesying, is seen to indicate that the process was certainly taking place in churches and so Paul's injunction against it several chapters later in 1 Corinthians must be tied to more specific behavior. This view will generally look for some middle ground of female involvement, but will typically not delve too deeply in explaining or justifying it. The deciding factor is more the peace of the church than the exegesis of the relevant Scriptures. To the extent that the Scriptures are probed, they are done so with recognition that good scholars fall on each side of this issue and on the different interpretations of the specific passages.

For example, in the previous chapter (Rom 15:8), Paul uses the same word in reference to Jesus! Paul writes, "Christ became a *servant [diakonon]* to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness." Surely Paul was not saying Jesus became a deacon!

⁷ See in this regard Furnish, Victor Paul, *The Moral Teaching of Paul: Selected Issues* (Abingdon Press 1985) at 84ff. In reference to 1 Tim. 2:8-15, Furnish writes, "It should be apparent that the comments about women in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 reflect the values and customs of both Hellenistic and Jewish culture. It is also clear that the ideas in these verses are very far from Paul's own, as disclosed in the unquestionably genuine letters. As stated in the last lesson, we have troubles acceding that these letters are not authentic. Some would question the seeming convenience of dismissing difficult Scriptures with a decision challenging their authority."

5. Is there room for other views? Certainly. Is there hope of harmonizing and understanding the full breadth of Scriptures? Definitely, albeit it may be in God's eternity rather than our lifetime! Still, we should never cease to study and seek God's wisdom on these passages. In the last decade alone, a significant scholastic work has come out that puts a good bit of new information into the hands of scholars seeking to understand these passages. Our goal in the rest of this lesson is to consider some of the newer and lesser-considered matters that show a different facet of these passages.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Let us consider a couple of the more difficult passages together for a moment in light of Bruce Winter's 2003 significant publication, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: the Appearance of New Women*.⁸ Winters teaches on the faculty of Cambridge and directs the Institute of Early Christianity in the Graeco-Roman World at Tyndale House there. His specialty is the intersection of the Graeco-Roman world with the New Testament. His book is worth reading!

Before we discuss Winter's book, we need to learn a theological term heavily used in the last hundred years. It is the German phrase, *sitz im leben*. German Lutheran theologian Hermann Gunkel brought this unusual German phrase into theological discourse in the late 1800's and early 1900's. It caught on quickly. The phrase speaks of the "setting in life" of Scripture. It seeks to provide a more precise understanding of Scripture by placing it into a historical context both as to the form of the writing (poetry, *etc.*) and the culture of the recipient.

Winter urges that a thorough reading and understanding of the Pauline passages requires an analysis of the *sitz im leben*. What Winter seeks to do is place the writings of Paul on women into their specific cultural surroundings so that we better understand what Paul was saying as we better understand the social context into which he spoke. Then we can better place Paul's writings into our own circumstances.

In his thorough book, where Winter is not content to rely on re-quoting others, but insists on citing original and primary research material, we find that a feminism issue was prevalent in the areas where Paul evangelized in the first-century Gentile world.

Winter places the roots of this movement in the year 44 B.C. and charts its spread over the next 100 years into all the regions where Paul was evangelizing and

⁸ Winters, Bruce, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: the Appearance of New Women* (Eerdmans 2003).

writing. This movement brought about what scholars today call the “new women” of that age. Contrasted with the historical normative women, the “new women” were indulgent in sexual pleasures outside of societal norms and marriage.

Women of the age were not known by their Facebook pages! They were known by their dress. This was not simply a matter of fashion trends; it was a matter of law. Under Roman law, “you were what you wore”:

Roman jurisprudence distinguished between [high-class prostitutes and others] by means of their appearance, which was defined in terms of apparel and adornment.⁹

Step by step, Winter places Paul’s writings into a context that readily shows Paul’s concerns in ways fully consistent with his teachings throughout his writings. There was an uprising of women who choose to dress like the “new women” in apparel and clothing. In effect, these women were telling the watching world that, while claiming to be Christians, they were sexually and morally liberated from what Paul and we would consider decent Christian values. Simply put, they dressed like prostitutes.

This was shown by the way the women would wear their hair as well as their public appearances without head coverings. In addition to Winter’s book, one should see the photographs of appropriate statues on his supplemental website: www.TyndaleHouse.com/Staff/Winter/RomanChristianWomen.htm. This explains Paul’s concerns about women praying and preaching with their heads uncovered, as well as the adornment issues in 1 Timothy.

Understanding the *sitz im leben* also helps understand the role of women in teaching and speaking in church in the related Pauline passages. Consider, for example, the 1 Timothy 2:9-15 passage:

Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing.

The part about a woman learning quietly with submissiveness and not teaching is buried in the middle of Paul’s injunctions on the new woman. The dress

⁹ Winter at 4-5.

instructions of verses 9 and 10 (“respectable,” “modesty and self-control,” “not braided hair, gold or pearls,” but adorned with “good works”) stand in direct opposition to the dress and manners of the “new women.”

A second aspect of the “new women” is found in the obscure verse about women being “saved through childbirth.” Winter does a convincing job of showing the large number of sexually promiscuous women who were avoiding childbirth by doctors and potions that would provide either contraception or abortion in the case of pregnancy. Evidence indicates the great danger of the crude approaches to birth avoidance, with many women losing their lives in the process. Winter makes the case that Paul is urging believing women to understand that their own health and safety comes through bearing children, not taking the new woman approach of keeping themselves looking pre-maternal. (We should add here that the Greek word for “saved” [*sozein*] is also the word for “healed.” It is the verb used by Matthew in relating the woman who touched the hem of Jesus’ garment so she might be “healed” in Matt. 9:21-22).

It is useful to set out one of the many examples Winter points to in support of his argument. A contemporary of Paul’s named Seneca wrote sometime near 50 A.D. a consolation about his mother. In it, he described her virtue, contrasting her to the “new women:”

Unchastity, the greatest evil of our time, has never classed you with the great majority of women; jewels have not moved you, nor pearls; to your eyes the glitter of riches has not seemed the greatest boon of the human race; you, who were soundly trained in an old-fashioned and strict household, have not been perverted by the imitation of worse women that leads even the virtuous into pitfalls; you have never blushed for the number of your children, as if it taunted you with your years, never have you, in the manner of other women whose only recommendation lies in their beauty, tried to conceal your pregnancy as if an unseemly burden, nor have you ever crushed the hope of children that were being nurtured in your body [abortion].¹⁰

Seneca lauds his mother for avoiding the very improprieties Paul writes Timothy to stop in the churches!

It is buried in the middle of Paul’s concerns of the “new woman’s” dress and child bearing we find the admonition that women are not to teach and take authority over men. A careful dissection of Paul’s Greek writes a compelling argument that

¹⁰ Seneca, *De Consolatione ad Helviam*, 16.3-5 from the translation by John Basore, Loeb Classical Library volume 254.

Paul has not boycotted his concerns over the “new woman” while writing about women learning quietly and not exercising authority over men.

The issue of learning quietly contrasts the loud, boisterous, and attention-garnering/ loose woman approach of the “new woman” with the submissive and godly spirit of the mature Christian woman. It is not, in itself, a proclamation that women are not to speak as learning. Rather, it was a recognition that most women at the time had no real education and in the process of attending a church assembly, rather than drawing the attention to themselves through inappropriate verbal or visual displays, they were to learn quietly.

Similarly on the issue of teaching and authority over men, Paul is using a most unusual word for “authority.” The word *authentein* appears nowhere else in Scripture. The Mother of all Greek Lexicons (Lidell and Scott) defines it as “to have full power or authority over.” Its usage in classical works prior to Paul’s writing conveys such authority that some translate it as “domination.” It is even used for one who through absolute control takes the life of another.

As Paul wrote, it seems in the context of the “new women,” Paul made it clear, they were not to dominate men. These new women might try to flex their power and assertiveness in the world, but it would not be so in the church. They were not the full authority over men, by virtue of their manners or provocative dress.

This scripture should not surprise anyone, nor should it force a retreat as being “anti-Paul.” This Scripture makes wonderful sense as we consider its *sitz im leben!*

This same understanding sheds a great deal of light on the issues that Paul raised with the Corinthians as far as the adornment of women while praying and prophesying. We might word it as follows, “Don’t dress like a prostitute and unruly person while you are proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus!”

One other passage worthy of additional consideration is the Galatians 3:28 passage where Paul wrote:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, ***there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*** And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.

There are early roots to a Jewish prayer set out in the Prayer book Simeon Singer wrote where males entered the synagogue offering a morning prayer blessing God for not making him a heathen [Paul “Greek”], nor a bondman [Paul “slave”], nor a

woman [Paul “female”].¹¹ Bruce traces these roots of this three-fold prayer that contrasts with Paul’s Galatian letter before 150 A.D. when they were reduced to writing in tractates of the Talmud.¹² (The “Talmud” is a written capture of rabbinic traditions of oral law and commentary.)

SO WHAT IS “RIGHT”?

This is where I cause those who petitioned me in the prior weeks to recoil in horror. For what is “right” is going to depend on several things. I would set out my “what is right” as follows:

1. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for our study and training. This includes 1 Timothy and other writings whose authenticity some question.
2. Women are integral in God’s kingdom. They are independently the Lord’s just as much as any man.
3. God has plans for all his children, male and female. We should all seek to follow God’s plans in our lives as he reveals them to us.
4. Our temptation is always to justify our views and superimpose them on others. We must be careful as we do so, knowing that it is often our own insecurities that push us to that extreme.
5. Women (and men) should dress and behave in ways that draw glory to God, not to the individual. This should be true always, but especially when we gather before the world as an assembly of God’s people.
6. Our assembling together should be marked by peace, harmony, sensitivity, and enrichment for others. It is not about “me.”
7. Women are not to have full authority over men, but are to live and operate in a realm of cooperation.
8. There are some areas where women can minister that men cannot and probably should not!
9. There are some areas where men can minister where women cannot and probably should not.

¹¹ *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, translated by Rev. S. Singer (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode 1904) at 5-7.

¹² Bruce, F. F., *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Epistle to the Galatians* (Eerdmans 1982) at 187.

10. Jesus will come again! Praise God!

POINTS FOR HOME

1. *“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church”* (Rom. 16:1).

Paul commended Phoebe to the Romans because Phoebe was commendable! She served the church, the assembly of believers. We should commend those who serve the fellowship of believers. This is commendable whether we give that person a title or not. The commendation is not because a person has achieved something noteworthy. The commendation is because someone has chosen to love and put others first. This is a true reflection of Christ and his love -- one of sacrifice without regard to personal needs. We have lots of Phobes in our churches. Let's commend them and seek to live a similarly commendable life of service!

2. *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Gal. 3:28).

God reaches down for all people, regardless of race, gender, or economic position. In Jesus Christ all come equally needy and all leave fully satisfied. The woman at the well was shocked to find the Lord speaking to her, just as was Zacchaeus perched in his tree. Jesus sought both to follow him and have abundant life. The road to eternal fulfillment starts at Calvary for everyone. As we walk that road, may we never lose sight of how we got there. As God works in our life, may we remember that it is God at work. We are called to his service, not our agenda. So when he makes his plans clear to us, let us walk in them as well as his Spirit enables us.

3. *“Women should adorn themselves...with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works”* (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

God calls us to be his not simply in actions, but in our hearts. Then as our hearts unite in his, we grow from the inside out, just as fruit, the spiritual qualities that set us apart. We do not look for chances to stand out in a spotlight; we look for chances to turn the spotlight on our Lord. These are the good deeds of adornment for both men and women of God!

APPENDIX

Aubert, Jean-Jacques ed., *Seculum Iuris: Roman Law as a Reflection of Social and Economic Life in Antiquity* (The Univ. of Mich. Press 2002). A non-biblical scholastic work that explores the Roman law on issues including the relationships between men and women and other social issues.

Clark, Gillian, *Women in Late Antiquity: Pagan and Christian Lifestyles* (Oxford 1993). An historical look at the lives of women in the post-New Testament times going through late antiquity (the sixth century).

Corley, Kathleen, *Private Women Public Meals* (Hendrickson Publishers 1993). A heavily footnoted revision of a doctoral dissertation that sets out the classical information relevant to the roles of women in the times of the gospels with a special focus on the roles at mealtimes.

Croom, A. T., *Roman Clothing and Fashion* (Tempus 2000). A well illustrated historical (not Biblical) work that sets out the dressing customs in biblical times.

Doriani, Dan, *Women and Ministry: What the Bible Teaches* (Crossways Books 2003). A conservative, well footnoted book concluding that women have many roles in church including teaching in some formats, but not the role of church Pastor or elder that delivers the public authoritative instruction in doctrine.

Furnish, Victor Paul, *The Moral Teaching of Paul: Selected Issues* (Abingdon Press 1985). A liberal work establishing full freedom for the roles of women while disassociating Paul from any of the writings that seem to put constraints on women.

Grenz, Stanley, Kjesbo, Denise, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (IVP 1995). A fairly extensively footnoted effort to set out multiple arguments, itself standing for the propositions promoting the involvement of women in most levels in church structure, while maintaining a conservative approach to Scripture.

Hawley, Richard and Levick, Barbara, *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments* (Routledge 1995). An historical and non-biblical collection of

scholarly articles on the lives of women in the Greek and Roman era both before and during the time of Paul.

Keener, Craig S., *Paul Women & Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Hendrickson 2004). A conservative approach to scripture that sets out exegetical arguments on the key passages drawing a conclusion for full roles of women in churches of today.

Mickelsen, Alvera, *Women, Authority & the Bible* (IVP 1986). A collection of essays from some of evangelicalisms most prolific authors (J. I. Packer, etc.) that seek to find give insight into the issues from a conservative scriptural base.

Miller, Patricia Cox, *Women in Early Christianity: Translations from Greek Texts* (The Catholic Univ. of America Press 2005). A collection of writings on the subjects from the first five centuries of the church. Most of these writings are very restrictive in their role for women in the church.

Payne, Philip B., *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (IVP 2009). A thorough discussion and very recent consideration of the arguments and issues.

Piper, John and Grudem, Wayne, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Crossway 2006). A compendium of articles by noteworthy Christian scholars divided into sections for clearer selective reading and study.

Pomeroy, Sarah B., *Goddesses, Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (Schocken 1995). A scholarly work from a classics professor. Not a biblical book, but rather a historical look at the secular writings reflecting the lives of women (the *sitz im leben*) both before and after the time of Paul's writings.

Winters, Bruce, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: the Appearance of New Women* (Eerdmans 2003). A full scholastic well-footnoted work thoroughly setting forth the *sitz im leben* for Paul's writings, as well as applying that analysis to key passages of Paul.