

March Questions and Answers

Franklin Church of Christ
Edwin Crozier
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PM Worship

Introduction:

On the second Sunday night of the month, we devote our lesson time to answer questions that have been previously submitted. If you would like to submit a question, you may either e-mail it to me, indicating that you intend it to be used for one of our lessons or fill out the question sheet which can be found on the table by the doors in the foyer and drop it in the appropriate box by my office door. During this lesson we will look at three questions that deal with women's issues.

Discussion:

- I. "When a husband and wife are praying together, is it okay for the wife to pray out loud also?" The second question is similar, "Is it scripturally correct for women to answer questions in a Bible class when men are present?"
 - A. No doubt, these questions stem from **I Corinthians 14:34-35** and **I Timothy 2:11-14**.
 1. *"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. 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" (I Corinthians 14:34-35).*
 2. *"A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (I Timothy 2:11-14).*
 - B. While neither of these passages are very popular in modern religion, we are not here to be popular. We are not here to do what we might like. We are here to do what God says, trusting that His order is right and best. What do we learn from these passages? From **I Timothy 2:11-14**, written as part of Paul's instructions for how one ought to conduct himself in the church (**I Timothy 3:15**), we learn that the sisters are not given the role of leadership within the Lord's body. Further, they are not allowed take control but follow the brethren submissively. From **I Corinthians 14:34-35**, we see a specific application of this rule to the assembly and only to the assembly. Sisters are not given the role of addressing the assembly, not even under the pretense of asking a question.
 - C. However, neither of these passages limit the wife from verbalizing a prayer in the presence of her husband and her family. In fact, the one passage that demands silence in the assembly (**I Corinthians 14:34-35**) explains that the proper place for what is prohibited is at home. Further, in **Acts 18:26**, we see Priscilla and Aquila together teaching Apollos the way of God more accurately. While the text does not explain the details of how they did it, the text is very clear that they were both involved in teaching Apollos. This situation was outside of the assembly and it was not a part of the church's work. This demonstrates that women are not only allowed to verbally pray in their husband's presence but are also allowed to teach others even men, outside of the work of the church, so long as they remain submissive to their own husbands.
 - D. Secondly, while **I Timothy 2:11-14** prohibits a sister from having a leadership role in a class over men, neither passage prohibits participating in a class discussion by asking or answering questions. As noted, **I Corinthians 14** specifically addresses the assembly and does not apply to the Bible class setting. On the surface, **I Timothy 2:11-14** gives some credence to the concept that women should not say anything in any part of the church's work if men are present. However, digging a little deeper we see a slightly different picture. The term translated "quietly" and "remain quiet" (NASU) or "in silence" (KJV, NKJV) is "hesuchia," a feminine form of a word which means stillness or quietness. **I Peter 3:4** uses the masculine form of this same word to describe the wife's role at home. She is to be gentle and quiet. **I Peter 3:4** does not equal absolute silence at home. Rather, it means to be submissive without being obnoxious, rebellious or seeking personal rule. **I Timothy 2:11-14** teaches the same thing within the church's work. Like at home, women are not given the role of leadership or authority. However, like at home, being quietly submissive does not mean the sisters are never allowed to ask any questions or even answer questions when asked. It simply means you do so with submission toward those God has authorized as leaders.

- II. "Are women allowed to wear pants? What about wearing pants in the assemblies?"
- A. **Deuteronomy 22:5** says, "A woman shall not wear man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to God." For many years, within our western culture, men wore pants and women wore dresses. Based on this passage, as the cultural trends in women's clothing changed, many have staunchly taught that wearing pants is a sin for women, especially wearing pants in the worship assemblies.
 - B. However, I have two problems with this approach.
 1. First, we are no longer under the Old Covenant (**Hebrews 7:12**). According to **Galatians 3:10**, we cannot pick and choose parts of the Old Law to follow, if we try to bind any part of it, we have to bind every part of it. For us today, the Old Testament provides illustration of God's relationship with His covenant people, but it does not provide our law.
 2. Second, even if that particular law does apply to us, there is no place in which God defines what are men's clothes and what are women's clothes. Essentially, He leaves that up to the culture. In some cultures men have worn skirts, calling them kilts. In other cultures, like our own, women may wear pants. Perhaps there was a time in which our culture frowned on women wearing pants, but that time is long since past.
 - C. Under the New Covenant, I believe we can find three principles for governing our dress.
 1. **I Peter 3:3-4** explains that our dress should draw attention to our godliness not our wealth, power or sexuality.
 2. **Galatians 5:19** and **I Peter 4:3** condemn "sensuality" (NASB), "lasciviousness" (KJV) and "lewdness" (NKJV). The term translated in those verses refers to that which expresses or arouses sexual desire. We must not dress in a sensual or lewd manner.
 3. **I Thessalonians 5:22** says, "Abstain from every form of evil" (NASB) or as the King James puts it, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." That is, we do not want to dress in any way that makes it look like we are involved in sin. Within our culture, this would preclude men from wearing dresses, as that would portray involvement in homosexuality.
 - D. If the clothes a woman is wearing does not violate these three principles, then the woman is allowed to wear them even if they are pants. Further, I believe she can wear them in the worship assembly. One of the Bible facts with which we will have to come to grips is that scripture never once says anything about how Christians must dress to worship God. While I am personally very sympathetic to the view that says we should dress in a manner that demonstrates great respect for God and for the occasion, I cannot find a solitary verse that explains what that dress should look like. I do think people should think very solemnly about what they are saying about worship when they will dress up for weddings, funerals and even going out on a date, but give no thought to their dress when they gather with the saints to worship God. Yet, at the same time, I have to be honest with you and myself and say that is a personal matter of conscience. I believe we see a very similar principle as demonstrated in **Romans 14:5-6**. "One person dresses formally for worship; another dresses normally. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who dresses formally, dresses for the Lord, and he who dresses normally, does so for the Lord, for he gives praise to God." In reality, the same three principles apply to dressing in worship as for every day of our lives.
 - E. Are women allowed to wear pants? Yes.

Conclusion:

I certainly hope the answers to these questions have been helpful to you. As always, if you believe I have missed it on some point, please, feel free to question me. I would love to study God's word with you. Further, if you have a question you would like us to deal with in our second Sunday night questions fill out the form and put it in the box outside my office door.