

1 Corinthians Part Two

Lesson #20, Chapter 14:34-40

Please review Chapter 14 before beginning this lesson. Don't forget to ask the Lord to help you understand and apply the content of this lesson.

1. What is the main topic of discussion in Chapter 14 verses 1-33?
2. It makes sense to consider that the rest of the chapter is dealing with that same topic, especially when we read verses 39-40. What are verses 34-38 going to be about if they follow the pattern?¹
3. Explain the protocols the early churches instituted as discussed in verses 26-32.
4. What reasoning undergirds these regulations? See verse 33.
5. What instruction is given in verse 34?
6. Many commentators feel that the end of verse 33 fits best with verse 34. The ESV and NIV both translate it in that way, so verse 34 would read: "As in all the churches of the saints, the women should remain silent in the churches." How does adding the end of verse 33 to verse 34 give extra weight to these instructions?

¹An important Bible study principle is simply studying the context. What comes before and after a difficult section can give insight into what the author meant in the more "difficult" section. This can be illustrated like this: If you stand on a bridge overlooking a stream, you'll observe that the water flows down toward the bridge, disappears under the bridge, yet when it emerges on the other side of the bridge it's still flowing in the same way. So it's reasonable to assume that the water under the bridge is flowing in the same direction also. That's exactly how we can approach our passage in this lesson. The topic Paul addresses in verses 1-33 and in verses 39-40 is the same issue he discusses in verses 34-38.

7. Based on the command in verse 34 and the details of the rest of the chapter, what can you surmise was happening in the Corinthian church?

8. Now read 1 Timothy 2:11-12. What instruction is given?
 - a. Now read 1 Timothy 2:8 and consider: *When* or *in what venue* are men to apply this command?

 - b. Notice that verse 9 begins *likewise* or *in like manner* or *also*. What does that tell you about verses 8 and 9?

 - c. Without any break whatsoever Paul continues his instructions for women in verses 11-12. How does the unbroken flow of verses 8-12 help us understand the context of these commands in verses 11-12?

 - d. A couple reasons why God chose to order things this way are given in verses 13 and 14. What do you learn?

9. All right, back to verse 34. According to the context of Chapter 14, *when* or *in what venue* are women to keep silent (verse 34)?

10. Are women the only ones who have to keep silent in this situation? See verses 28 and 30. According to the context of Chapter 14, what kind of speech are women to refrain from? See verses 39-40 too.

11. Rather than speaking, what are women to do according to the end of verse 34? Why (verse 34)?
12. To what or to whom are women to do this? See verse 37; Acts 3:22-23; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Titus 2:1, 15; Hebrews 13:17.
13. Why would God set things up this way? See verses 33, 40. See also Gen. 3:16²; 1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-9; 1 Timothy 2:13-14.
14. As we discovered in verse 34 the context of Chapter 14 greatly helps us understand the focus of these instructions. In verse 34, women are not to speak in what way? And now also in verse 35, what way are women not permitted to speak?
15. What accommodation is made for women in verse 35?
16. What do we know about the Corinthians that would make the instruction in verse 35 necessary? See 1 Corinthians 1:10-12; 3:1-3; 4:5; 11:16.

²“One of the continuing consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin is a woman’s desire to lead. In Genesis 3:16, when God dealt out the consequences for Eve’s sin, He said to her, “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” Now desiring our husbands doesn’t sound like a punishment, does it? Most would say it’s good for a wife to desire her husband! So what are we missing?

It’s best to understand Genesis 3:16 as saying, “Your desire shall be for your husband’s position as head, but he shall rule over you.” Now that fits with the context of the passage and explains what “desire” means! The grammar of the original Hebrew text indicates women would so strongly desire their husband’s leadership position they would almost make themselves sick longing for it. As a consequence for sin women would desire to be in control, but God called men to lead, and thus the agelong battle of the sexes ensued. Bible teacher John MacArthur wrote, ‘Sin has turned the harmonious system of God-ordained roles into distasteful struggles of self-will.’” Lisa Hughes, *God’s Priorities for Today’s Woman* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2011), pg. 207.

17. Some may think that this instruction for women not to lead in the worship services only pertained to the times when they used the sign gifts of tongues and prophesying. How does the instruction in 1 Timothy 2:8-14 nullify that argument?

18. Paul heads off some “bad attitudes” on the part of the Corinthian congregation in verse 36. Why does he admonish them in this way? How would this reminder help them submit to God's plan for the church?

19. How does verse 37 help us understand the importance of these instructions?

20. Some might be tempted to disregard these instructions, but what admonition is given if that happens? See verse 38.

21. And finally, we come to Paul's wrap-up statements for this chapter. Explain how these summary comments pull all the details of the chapter together.

22. What principles for your life have you learned from 1 Corinthians 14:34-40 and 1 Timothy 2:8-14?
 - a. What principles govern women's roles in the church?

 - b. What have you learned about God and His plan for the church?

- c. What have you learned about how men are to receive these commands for the good of the church?
23. What attitudes should govern how we respond to these instructions from the Lord? How can you encourage yourself and others in these truths?

“It is not coincidental that, like Corinth, many of the churches today that practice speaking in tongues and claim gifts of healing also permit women to engage in speaking ministry. Many charismatic groups, in fact, were begun by women, just as many of the cults that have sprung from Christianity were founded by women. When women usurp man’s God–ordained role, they inevitably fall into other unbiblical practices and delusions.

Women may be highly gifted teachers and leaders, but those gifts are not to be exercised over men in the services of the church. God has ordained order in His creation, an order that reflects His own nature and that therefore should be reflected in His church. When any part of His order is ignored or rejected, His church is weakened and He is dishonored. Just as God’s Spirit cannot be in control where there is confusion and chaos in the church, He cannot be in control where women take upon themselves roles that He has restricted to men. It is improper [*aischros*, “shameful, disgraceful”] for a woman to speak in church. That statement leaves no question as to its meaning.” ~John MacArthur³

But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God. ~1 Corinthians 11:16

³John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), pg. 392.