

Did Paul Forbid Women to Teach? A Biblical Study

Shalom Family, let's dive into this topic together and see what the Word of Yah reveals.

The writings of Paul are often cited to argue that women cannot teach or lead in the assembly of believers. But when we examine the whole counsel of Scripture, including Paul's own words and actions, we see a very different picture.

The Passages in Question

Two verses are commonly quoted:

- 1 Timothy 2:11–12

“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.”

- 1 Corinthians 14:34–35

“Let your women keep silence in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak...”

At face value, this seems like a ban on women teaching. But Scripture must always be read in context and in harmony with the rest of the Word.

Paul's Endorsement of Women in Ministry

Paul himself worked alongside women who ministered, taught, and led:

- Phoebe the deaconess – Romans 16:1–2

Paul commends Phoebe, a servant (diakonos, the same word used for male deacons).

- Junia the apostle – Romans 16:7

Paul greets Andronicus and Junia, calling them “outstanding among the apostles.”

- Priscilla the teacher – Acts 18:26

Priscilla, alongside her husband Aquila, taught Apollos, a powerful preacher, correcting his understanding of Scripture.

- Women prophesying – 1 Corinthians 11:5

Paul gives instructions for women who pray and prophesy in the assembly. Prophecy is teaching under inspiration of the Spirit, and he assumes women will be doing it.

Clearly, Paul recognized women as active ministers of the Word.

The Context of Paul's Restrictions

So why did Paul write what he did in 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14?

1. Cultural Setting
 - In Corinth and Ephesus, women were often uneducated in Scripture and influenced by pagan temple practices. Paul urged them to first learn quietly before attempting to teach (1 Timothy 2:11).
2. The Word "Authority"
 - In 1 Timothy 2:12, the Greek word is *authentein*, meaning to usurp or domineer authority. Paul is not forbidding women from teaching altogether, but from teaching in a domineering or improper way.
3. Order in Worship
 - In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul's concern is order in the assembly, not silencing women permanently. In fact, earlier in the same letter (1 Corinthians 11:5), he permits women to speak in prayer and prophecy.

Paul's True Teaching

- Paul taught that in Messiah, all are one:

Galatians 3:28 – "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yahshua."
- He worked side by side with women leaders, acknowledging their gifts and ministries.
- His restrictions addressed specific issues of disorder and false teaching, not a universal law against women teaching.

Paul did not forbid women to teach in all circumstances. He encouraged women to minister when equipped by the Spirit and grounded in the Word. His concern was order, proper authority, and sound teaching, the same standard required of men.

Women like Phoebe, Priscilla, Junia, and many others stand as proof that Yahuah calls and equips women to teach, lead, and minister in His assembly.

A woman who is Spirit-filled, grounded in Torah, and walking in humility has every right, and responsibility to teach and proclaim the Word of Yahshua, just as the men do.

Until we meet again, may we continue to walk in the undeniable truth of Yah's Word.

Shalom,

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