

# WOMEN AUTHORITATIVELY TEACHING THEIR ADULT MALE RELATIVES

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most prevalent claims that I have heard brethren make is that women somehow do not have the same limitations in teaching their relatives that they have in teaching strangers. This claim was repeatedly made by Jerry McDonald in my debate with him (2011). Let us examine this claim from the standpoint of sound hermeneutical principles applied to the Scriptures. Do women have fewer restrictions upon their teaching (and any other authoritative type spiritual activities) of adult male family members than they have upon teaching (and any other authoritative type spiritual activities) of adult male non-family members?

## SOURCES OF AUTHORITY FROM WHICH THESE QUESTIONS ARE TO BE ANSWERED

The question of authority was introduced on pages 5-7, 13-18, 155-159, and 175 of Fox, Vol. 1 and pages 109-115 in Fox (2003, Vol. 1). We are forbidden to practice anything without authority from our Lord (Col. 3:17). How do we determine that we have authority from the Lord to practice anything? Clearly sound brethren had accepted the principles of: (1) apostolic approved examples, (2) commandments, and (3) necessary inferences to determine what the Lord has obligated us to practice (cf. Vol. 1, pp. 8, 48, and Vol. 2, pp. 147, 155, and 168).

First, there are no apostolic approved examples of women authoritatively teaching adult males (in spiritual matters) who were their family members in a manner that would be forbidden of them if they were teaching non-family adult males.

Second, there are no commandments obligating women to authoritatively teach adult male family members (in spiritual matters). Perhaps some will “beg the question” by appealing to such passages as “The Great Commission,” but they have no commandments (unless we allow them to “beg the question”). The question of a modern-day application of The Great Commission to women teaching men has been addressed in Fox, 2007. The reader should note that The Great Commission was applicable to: “all the nations” (Mt. 28:19 and Lk. 24:47) or “the whole creation” (ASV) or “every creature” (Mk. 16:15 - KJV). This includes all adult males (both relatives and non-relatives).

Third, let us examine the possibility that they have a “necessary inference” that women are allowed to authoritatively teach their adult male family members (in spiritual matters). Their argument must have the following form:

Major Premise: All “A” are those who are allowed to authoritatively teach their adult male family members.

Minor Premise: Women are “A.”

Conclusion: Women are allowed to authoritatively teach their adult male family members.

The letter “A” is what is called: “The middle term” in a categorical syllogism (cf. Fox, Vol. 1, 2003, Appendix A for a more thorough discussion of the middle term). What middle term

can these brethren supply to make this argument to be sound? If they make the middle term “A” to be “women,” they have “begged the question.” If they make the middle term to be: “Those that commentators say are allowed to teach their adult male family members (in spiritual matters),” they have committed the fallacy of appealing to an authority. If they make the middle term to be: “Those that prominent brethren say are allowed to teach their adult male family members (in spiritual matters),” they have appealed to human tradition for their authority. Will these certain men supply a suitable middle term for this argument?

### ADDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

The Scriptures clearly teach that it is a sin to add to the Word of God (Deut. 4:2, 12:32, and Rev. 22:18-19). But one might think that this only prohibits adding text to the Scriptures. How can one arrive at this conclusion? Obviously one could add to the Word of God by adding text to the Scriptures, but one could add to the Word of God by adding (either orally or implicitly) to the Scriptures. Denominational people add the word “only” to passages that teach that faith is necessary for one to be saved. These denominational people are certainly adding to the Word of God when they (either implicitly or explicitly) add the word “only” to these passages.

Those who add the words “non-family member” to 1 Tim. 2:12 are certainly adding to the Word of God. Note how they implicitly make 1Tim. 2:12 to read:

1 Tim. 2:12 But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion (or usurp authority) over a **non-family member** man, but to be in quietness.

While they have not explicitly caused their Bibles to be written in this manner, their interpretation has implicitly inserted the words: “**non-family member**” into the text of 1 Tim. 2:12. These brethren are fundamentally no different than denominational people who (either explicitly or implicitly) add the word “only” to passages discussing salvation by faith.

I was once told that I was not using sound hermeneutics to make Deut. 4:2, 12:32, and Rev. 22:18-19 apply to the entire Bible. Allow me to apply the *a fortiori* principle (cf. Fox, Vol. 1, 2003, Appendix B) to these passages and prove that I am using sound hermeneutics to apply the truths in these passages to the entire Bible.

First Premise: If the New Testament is greater than the Old Testament, then the principles of Deut. 4:2 and 12:32 apply to the New Testament. (*a fortiori* principle)

Second Premise: The New Testament is greater than the Old Testament. (Heb. 7:22, 8:6, etc.)

Conclusion: The principles of Deut. 4:2 and 12:32 apply to the New Testament.

Note also the following argument:

First Premise: If the whole is greater than the parts, then the principles of Rev. 22:18-19 apply to the entire New Testament.

Second Premise: The whole is greater than the parts. (axiomatic)

Conclusion: The principles of Rev. 22:18-19 apply to the entire New Testament.

If we link these two arguments together they supply proof that it is hermeneutically sound to apply these principles to the entire Bible. It is manifest that the prohibition forbidding

changing the Word of God is an eternal principle (cf. Vol. 1, pp. 154-155 and Vol. 2, pp. 84-85).

### IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DOCTRINE

There are other implications of implicitly adding the words “non-family member” to the text of 1 Tim. 2:12. First, if these words are added to the text of 1 Tim. 2:12, it means that this passage does not obligate a woman to “be in quietness” (silence – KJV) with an adult male family member (cf. Vol. 1, Chapter Four for a further discussion of this word.) Second, if these words are added to the text of 1 Tim. 2:12, it means that this passage does not forbid a woman “to have dominion (or usurp authority) over” an adult male family member. Consider the following argument:

First Premise: If the commandments of 1 Tim. 2:11-12 are limited to adult male non-family members, then women are not forbidden to teach adult male family members (unless there is another passage in the Scriptures that forbids her teaching an adult male family member).

Second Premise: The commandments of 1 Tim. 2:11-12 are limited to adult male non-family members (claim of certain persons).

Conclusion: Women are not forbidden to teach adult male family members (unless there is another passage in the Scriptures that forbids her teaching an adult male family member).

Regarding this conclusion I ask: “Would this apply ‘in every place’ (1 Tim. 2:8)?” If so, then the following argument applies. (Remember that many of the men teaching this doctrine also limit the expression “in every place” [everywhere – KJV {1 Tim. 2:8}] to the assembly.)

There are serious implications of the doctrine that woman may (are even obligated to) authoritatively teach adult male family members the Scriptures. The following scenario will illustrate the implications of this doctrine.

Jane Doe, who is a 90 year old Christian lady knows the Scriptures quite well. In fact, Jane has studied the Bible all her life and has taught both children’s classes and ladies’ Bible classes most of her adult life. Jane can quote most of the Bible and has a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. Jane has five sons who attend the local congregation where she is a member (three of them are elders and two are deacons). The congregation is composed of her descendents (no non descendents are members of the congregation). Since Jane can authoritatively teach her adult male relatives, is it not lawful for her to teach the Sunday morning Bible class (composed solely of her family)? Can she preach for this congregation, if not, why not? (Remember that 1 Tim. 2:12 applies “in every place” [ASV] or “everywhere” [KJV] – 1 Tim. 2:8-12.)

Does her authority to teach adult male relatives include her sons-in-law and grandsons-in-law? If so we could have an interesting scenario here. This justifies women teaching mixed Bible classes (with both men and women present) and women preaching to mixed groups (including groups with adult Christian men in the group). Where will this foolishness stop?

This would mean that a missionary who moved to a city to establish a congregation could have his wife to preach to the assembly of the congregation until non-family adult males were converted and attended the worship assembly. Note the following scenario: John and Jane Doe move to a city in Russia to work as missionaries. There are no other Christians in this city and they rent a building to worship God. They are the only persons attending the worship for the first month (Jane could do the preaching – assuming 1 Tim. 2:11-12 only applies to her teaching a non-family adult male). Suppose they convert several women in the next month (no adult males are converted). Under these conditions, Jane could continue preaching to the assembly. Jane would not have to cease preaching to the assembly until a non-family adult male was converted (or at least attended the assembly). Suppose two brothers (John and Sam Doe) took their wives (Jane and Sue) to this same city, this would also apply to them. Both Jane and Sue could preach to the assembly until a non-family adult male was converted (or at least attended the assembly). If 1 Tim. 2:12 is limited to the Christian adult male (as some falsely claim), Jane and Sue could continue preaching to the assembly (until a non-family member adult male was converted and attended the assembly).

But some may say: “Her authority to teach her adult male family members is limited to private teaching, not to public teaching.” Where is their scriptural justification of this distinction? I suggest that they do not give any Scripture, but they either merely assert it (pure naked “begging the question”) or they appeal to emotions rather than to the Scriptures. Are they not admitting that 1 Tim. 2:8-12 applies outside the assembly, by this argument?

The Lord’s church is in grave danger when we leave the Scriptures to follow other sources of authority in spiritual matters. Remember the words of our Lord: “... making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do.” (Mk. 7:13).

These brethren have rejected sound hermeneutics. They have neither: (1) an example, (2) a commandment, nor (3) a necessary inference that women were either obligated or permitted to teach non-family adult males in a different manner than they were permitted to teach adult male family members. Without any one of these three hermeneutical principles as authority for their actions; they are forced to either develop a new hermeneutics to support their claim or reject biblical authority for their actions. Those who teach this doctrine are merely “change agents” and are fundamentally no different than the liberals who have gained control of many congregations.

Consider the following argument:

First Premise: If the commandments of 1 Tim. 2:11-12 are limited to adult male non-family members, then women are not forbidden to have dominion (usurp authority) over adult male family members (unless there is another passage in the Scriptures that forbids her having dominion [usurping authority] over an adult male family member).

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Conclusion: Women are not forbidden to have dominion (usurp authority) over adult male family members (unless there is another passage in the Scriptures that forbids her having dominion [usurping authority] over an adult male family member).

Regarding this conclusion I ask: “Would this apply ‘in every place’ (1 Tim. 2:8)?” If so, then the following argument applies.

If John and Jane Doe are missionaries to Russia and they establish a congregation in a city that has no other Christians in the city (John and Jane are the only Christians), then Jane may lead singing, lead prayer, etc. in the worship assembly (until a non-family member adult male is converted and attends the assembly).

Some may object by saying that they agree with my interpretation of 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 (Vol. 2, Chap. 7). It is good that they agree with my interpretation, but these arguments would still apply to a Bible class scenario (because 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 is limited to the assembly and a Bible class is not an assembly). This doctrine implicitly teaches that women may be in leadership roles over men in non-assembly situations (e.g. in Bible classes, in private studies, etc.).

#### THE CONTEXT OF 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-12

The immediate context of 1 Tim. 2:8 and 12 is found both in the verses preceding and following these two verses. Clearly, Adam and Eve are discussed in this immediate context. At the time of creation, there were only two persons (Adam and Eve). Therefore, the context demands that this apply to a woman teaching her husband and exercising her husband’s authority. The interpretation that a woman has freedom to teach her husband in authoritative ways is hermeneutically unsound (it fails to interpret the passage in its proper context).

#### SUMMARY

There is neither an example, a necessary inference, nor a commandment for women to have fewer restrictions upon their teaching (and any other authoritative type spiritual activities) of adult male family members than they have upon teaching (and any other authoritative type spiritual activities) of adult male non-family members.

Sound hermeneutics demonstrates that it is sinful to either add to or diminish from the Word of God. Those who implicitly add to the word of God and make the Scriptures teach that women have different limitations on their actions regarding teaching adult male family members than on teaching adult male non-family members have modified the Scriptures (implicitly). Their actions are sinful and should not be endorsed by any Christian. We anxiously await a response with scriptural evidence of two sets of rules (one for adult male family members and one for adult male non-family members).

The doctrine that women have two sets of rules for their teaching of adult males has serious implications and will eventually affect not only the doctrine of the church, but the practices of the church. In fact, these men are ungodly, because they do not appeal to the Word of God for their authority (they either appeal to their own emotions or to tradition for their authority). They revere their emotions or tradition more than they revere God (they are ungodly). Remember that following profane babblings is a form of ungodliness (2 Tim.

2:16). Is not the elevating of the traditions of men and elevating of our emotions above the Word of God a form of profane babbling?

When will this foolishness end? When will these men “come clean” and tell the brotherhood what they teach? When will they get the intestinal fortitude to publicly defend what they teach on these matters?

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