

## Can a woman teach from the Word?

The following have a bearing on this question:

Is it necessary to be married in order to work for the Lord?

What do a called man/woman do when stuck in a "wrong" marriage?

Can God give input through His Spirit before the marital knot is tied?

A resounding YES! God can use a woman in ministry just as He can use a man. But how can I so confidently proclaim this message, and how can we know that we are pleasing God approving this type of ministry? Because I know what Paul's letters imply. Besides, this apostle very clearly states in his Letter to the Galatians that IN CHRIST, there is neither male nor female.

What Paul then surely meant with this statement is that it is the message that counts and not sexism, something which was very much in sway in his day and age and of course fuelled by a pagan Jewish perspective as God also used women to accomplish His will, i.e. in Old Testament times (It seems the Persians were very male orientated and this civilization had a mighty influence on ancient Israel at a certain time in history).

Should we, however, then take note thereof that God also used women in ancient Israel, we will soon detect that a spirit of chauvinism and sexism had very subtly impacted on New Testament Christianity via seemingly intertestamental influence.

What one soon discovers in post-apostolic Christianity is Clement I's vehement rejection of the Corinthian assemblies' "gnostic" influence and particularly pertaining to the Gnostic women but should one retain objectivity, one can easily ask : Why only picking on the Gnostic women and not including their male counterparts? And was Clemens I indeed so truly apostolic as he is often made out to have been?

Observing closely how an alternative influence had indeed impacted on first-century apostolic teachings, and especially pertaining to Paul's gospel (he did allow Phoebe - Letter to the Romans - to hold the office of "teacher" and other anointed women would then most certainly have shared this apostolic consent) we cannot help but detect a strong spirit of prejudice phasing all women clean out of this type of first-century apostolic equation.

It seems that the influential Clemens I (Third Pope of Rome) had seen to it that, along with those women who perhaps had caused trouble in the assemblies, all anointed women be silenced, that is then on the whole. This self-same spirit was also clearly maintained by Pope Ratzinger's predecessor, Pope John, whose "castigation message" to the assertive type of woman, was quite annoying - i.e. meaning women who were bold enough to voice their opinion, also on controversial issues - and especially seen in the light of first-century Pauline approval.

Now there is certainly women called by God and then naturally also those who are not, just as there are men anointed of God and then those who clearly are self-appointed and who are then only pursuing a career in ministry.

So it seems, maintaining once again objectivity, that this age-old conflict is more about the message that is brought, than sexism - seemingly the smokescreen and clearly just because a woman and especially an anointed vessel of God, can indeed be very strong and very bold - performing then indeed God's will, like the prophetess Deborah of old, also Huldah in the days of Josiah, and then of course also thinking of God's mighty deliverance, i.e. in the days of Sisera, worked once again through a very courageous woman (Jael).

It should then be clear that God uses a vessel and He is the One who determines the stakes, not mere prejudiced man. God will then anoint a woman in a special way, i.e. for a specific time in history, just as He will anoint special vessels among the broader "male" component.

It is then all about the message and not so much about the gender of the vessel God has chosen. God is precise and purposeful in all He does and nobody can then prescribe to God as He knows whom He has called and who will be able to take the brunt of opposition boldly.

When God wants to bring about change, He will of necessity have to use a bold personality to accomplish His will and sometimes a woman is just more courageous and pliable in the hands of God than a man.

On the whole, however, male and female can more effectively be used by God than only a one-sided anointing - however, this should never be the criterium as God has anointed, throughout the ages, also single persons using them in His special way and then just as effectively. However, the challenges for a single person working for the Lord is just more intense and therefore God will often anoint them in a special way, giving them, male and female, the courage to persevere in His Spirit and through His mighty power. This type of person is usually called from the womb - and then trained throughout his/her lifetime to be shaped in and around God's will so to say.

A "calling" has then nothing to do with being of necessity a married couple, although God can use a husband-and-wife-team in a very direct also a mighty way - but many men who are called by God, do not marry women who are called the same way and therefore they may be unequally yoked and which anointing may then be ruined because of the wrong choice of a partner. But this does not mean that a (married) man can then do as he wishes, discarding for example his mate for a more "suitable" partner in the Lord! This decision should have been made before the knot was tied and therefore God can give input through His Holy Spirit guidance whether a woman is right for a called man of God, and vice versa.

Once the wrong decision is made, only God can help such an anointed vessel and therefore we must be prepared to ask God's advice, even being prepared to remain unmarried should our calling be in jeopardy, i.e. by the wrong choices having been made.

But God works in strange and marvellous ways and if we think of Hosea, the prophet, and what God has decided for him, there is hope for those called ones who may feel that they are trapped in a wrong marriage. The best is then to sit it out like Abraham, waiting upon the Lord (doing so with utmost dedication for this is what such an unequally yoked marriage will then require and if such a one wants to remain faithful to God) for God will steer the unequally manned boat through the stormy waters AND He will accomplish His will regardless of the wrong choices that were made, i.e. IF faithfulness of heart is detected by God and concerning then that one who has been called by God. Once the marital knot has been tied, a man cannot just divorce his wife in order to "go and preach the Gospel". Trusting God fully is then necessary in the former case.

And this is why it is so necessary to take responsibility for our own choices made and making things out with God for He will direct us what to do. Should an incompatible marriage be dissolved, remarriage does not just come automatically for those who are truly called, for such ones it would be best to remain unmarried after such an "incompatible" marriage - an option that always comes with great challenges and which option not everybody is able to pursue effectively (see Paul - 1 Cor. 7). So every choice, be it to remain single, or married, or for that matter to divorce the wrong partner and remaining single afterwards, comes with a heavy price!

The Christians seem to be trained that everybody MUST be married else they are not normal but if we are remaining true to Scripture, there is room for all sorts at the Cross! Not only then for the married couples AS LONG AS we remain IN CHRIST performing His will, i.e. to DO what Scripture prescribes for us for God is NEVER going to change His Word to suit our personal whims and our carnal minds and pleasures (=the lust of the flesh and the lust of the mind).

God is also able to help us even though we have made a mess of our lives. There is always hope in our Lord Jesus who was sent to stand by us through thick and thin BUT then we must side with God and persevere in His will - His will is always linked to His revealed Word (the Scriptures).

I myself am for premarital counseling and especially asking God's input through the Holy Spirit BEFORE the marital knot is tied\*. Many are called but just as many's calling never come to full fruition and this is then a serious matter that has to be given good thought as we are punched nowadays with this idea that one "must" be married if you want to work for the Lord - a fallacious idea and especially considering the calling of the first-century called of God.

Now, coming back to a woman's calling, choices will also be of cardinal importance here and we ourselves will then be confronted with definite options to exercise, whether to remain single or whether to marry and then oftentimes sitting with the "wrong partner" and which marriage will then not be compatible with the called one's intentions in mind, i.e. to work for the Lord the proper way.

Just as the prophets of old were on the whole not popular, likewise God will anoint vessels with an "unpopular" message - with the purpose to bring about change in one or other way - and this is then of importance to God and not so much concerning then the male or female factor or, on the other hand, being single or married.

Teachings are then all about what God wants for His flock and naturally then building upon the foundation that was laid by the apostles of Jesus as only one foundation was laid according to Paul's Corinthian Letters.

Jesus very clearly remains the chief cornerstone and all of us, believing in Him as Messiah and Lord, are just the mere bricks that are used by God to complete the building, adding of course the rest of the layout and especially the furniture and all its equipment, everything functioning holistically to the glory of Him who died to bring forth a spiritual building reflecting the beauty of the apostolic gospel that was planted by our precious Saviour and His hand-picked first-century apostles.

On this foundation and in accordance with the pattern that was conveyed by them to us, we all will have to build and therefore we all will have to, in the Day of all days, give account to God what we have done to God's building (this once again from Paul's New Testament directives given to the Corinthians - there where Clemens I ruled as (self-appointed) Apostle and successor of Saint Paul and where he also silenced the so-called "Gnostic" women and clearly along with all the other women who boldly performed, like their male counterparts, the office of "teacher". Therefore we are sitting, since then, with a totally transformed church and only led and taught by men.

It is no wonder that there are so many who still reject a woman of God's teachings, clean forgetting to take stock of what indeed had happened to those saintly women who, like Blandina, had sacrificed their lives in martyrdom for Christ, whilst encouraging martyrs from her own assembly to persevere to the bitter end! (Blandina's body was amongst others ripped open and her martyrdom was done to the extreme yet she remained courageous to the end, encouraging others to do it for the sake of Christ). And there is evidence that the names of the early female martyrs were not mentioned like their male counterparts' names were - isn't this sexism to the extreme?

Therefore, let us consider the MESSAGE that is brought, be it by a man or a woman, for many who are boasting in their "male" identity - giving them carte blanche to serve the flock of God - are not true servants of God, for what they are OFTEN doing is to dilute the Gospel for their own glory and their own gain!

No wonder Paul states so very clearly: "In Christ there is neither male nor female!"

There are testimonies of this type of pre-marital prophecies and especially in the case of anointed of God, however, unfortunately such prophecies (especially coming from an anointed vessel of God and someone whose prophetic ministry has then been widely known as "true" and "Biblical") and where such anointed prophet was labelled a false prophet. This is very sad as God eventually proves that what He has spoken is true and therefore those who are guilty and who have especially slandered the name of the prophet, must confess their sin, not only in private but also publically in the churches where those with whom the relevant prophetic word was shared assemble.

Once a prophet who is a servant of God has been labelled as "false" then such one's ministry is usually harmed, and sometimes on a much larger scale than we may think, as many eventually are then getting involved. And it is also then not only the prophet who suffers, but going much wider than a mere "prophetic" ministry and eventually even his family and their spiritual welfare are affected.

Therefore God's will to confess properly must speedily be enacted. Accusing a truly anointed of God as "false" is a very serious matter in the sight of God and especially once a breach in the marriage of that one who has received the prophecy, becomes clear.

God, in His grace and goodness, can then indeed give a timely warning beforehand (timely) and which has to be obeyed should someone who has a calling receive a prophetic word to take heed before tying the knot. The best is to take to fasting once a prophetic word is received namely to take heed before acting, and especially with something as serious as planning a marriage which naturally involves a lot of emotion and often then not giving proper attention to the warning lights that are already flickering. How many have tied the marriage knot only to discover that "the wrong choice" was made and only to divorce later, choosing a new partner (oftentimes done too quickly after the divorce) yet still not finding happiness?

God takes a special interest in those whom He has called and He will make known His will especially if we ask Him to guide us. Often we consult the Lord "faithfully" in prayer, however, when God answers us, using a truly anointed vessel of His and through whom He then conveys His message "timely" to us, we are apt to reject the counsel of God, preferring our own way. And in the process the truly anointed prophet who faithfully delivered the message of God, is ridiculed and much mockery is made not only of the so-called "false" prophecy, but especially of the prophet. This can be very painful and we must always know that prophets are mere flesh and blood people who themselves have feelings and emotions yet they are demanded by God to remain faithful no matter the outcome of the prophetic word brought by them! For this very reason God states in the Psalms : "Touch not mine anointed, do my prophets no harm!"

We must therefore take God serious and listen to what He is advising us. Should we deliberately cast aside the message in order to (1) either have our own way, or (2) please our parents or our siblings, friends, or whoever, then the onus is on us to "grin and bear" the consequences.

Many prophets and truly anointed of God has suffered severely due to the prophetic word God has placed on their tongues and which does not come cheap and which must always be respected else those who are disobedient to God will have to (1) confess their sin of disobedience to God defying his servants and (2) causing slander to be brought in motion against such a prized (!) vessel of God, which is something God indeed takes extremely serious. Our prayers can, as a result of our disobedience and defiance of God's guidance, even remain unanswered, i.e. should we decide to rather suffer in silence before confessing the proper and wholesome way (the Biblical way).

The upshot? If you want to do as you wish and having your own way, rather don't opt for a calling. Then only can you let go of many proviso's opting for the "good life" here below. But should you want to be found the "faithful" servant of God then you will have to manage your whole life God's way! And that will mean listening to God and often denying your own desires and even pleasures in life.

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I know from experience the deep suffering a true prophet of God had gone through in his lifetime. He was sometimes so weighed down by slander and the ridicule of carnal Christians that his health and wellness were often in jeopardy. This is the path all the true prophets and prophetesses of God were used to and therefore God is always on the side of those whom He has called with a special anointing. They are the "policy makers", and they are then those vessels who are sent by God to timely bring about change and so that the true message can remain to His glory, keeping then the believers in Him on the proper path of righteousness (the right standing with God).

In these days the average Christian is on the whole very carnal and therefore the called of God will often be harshly crucified by them. Being flogged by people's slander is a serious matter with God as He is the One who demands absolute faithfulness of His called.

A prophet/prophetess can indeed still be anointed to this day but because the true prophetic word is so direct (so revealing/illuminating to the extreme), modern man are inclined to be soft-soaped, not wanting then to be corrected and reprimanded - in other words thinking that the prophetic word is the prophet's own words and attack against his/her self-esteem and then not understanding that GOD is just speaking through mere lips of clay - truly anointed prophets of God is almost something of the past. And once the "eye of God" (=the prophethood) has left the scene, then the body of the Lord is left in total darkness.

The Apostle Peter clearly states in his letters that the prophetic word is the lamp shining in the darkness and once we extinguish this precious light of God - given to us to illuminate our lives, helping us find our way through life the proper way (!) - nothing but delusion and even total deception will remain.

What have we done to the truly anointed prophets/prophetesses of God? No wonder the sheep are milling around, not knowing where to go and how to find true, proper grazing!

Ester Blomerus

[www.housealtarnetwork.com](http://www.housealtarnetwork.com)

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