

Statements about Women by Peter and Paul

Explanation

Many readers of the New Testament come away with the impression that Paul was a misogynist who did not value and esteem women. This false reaction is due in part to the King James English, which generally renders the Greek in a manner that is less flattering toward women than may be necessary. Other nuances in meaning are possible and bear reflection, even if it remains uncertain what Paul originally intended. When Paul's statements about women are read all together, especially in conjunction with similar statements by Peter, a more positive New Testament posture toward women emerges. As chart 15-14 shows, women are encouraged and welcomed as united companions working in building the kingdom of God; women are charged to train their sisters in virtue and righteousness; dress styles are to be modest and in good taste; and women are to learn in serenity and peace of soul. In reality, both men and women are given similar instructions: to be wise, reverent, orderly, and obedient.

References

Andrew Perriman, *Speaking of Women: Interpreting Paul* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998).
Joseph Fielding Smith, "Your Question," *Improvement Era*, April 1960, 224–25.

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SERVICE IN THE KINGDOM

- Phlp 4:2–3 Be of one mind in the Lord, and labor in the gospel
- Rom 16:1–4 Minister (*diakonon*; KJV, serve) as companions (*synergous*; KJV, helpers) in building the church, preaching the gospel, even risking their own lives
- Titus 2:4–5 Older women should teach younger women to be wise [KJV, sober], loving wives and mothers, and to be virtuous, holy, well organized at home (*oikourgous*; KJV, keepers at home), good, obediently supportive to their husbands, and that the word of God should not be profaned [KJV, blasphemed]
- 1Tm 2:12 The wife [KJV, a woman] should not teach or domineer over (*authentain*; KJV, usurp authority over) her husband [KJV, the man]

PERSONAL DECORUM

- 1Pt 3:3 Do not worry about outward adorning, hair styles, jewelry, or worldly apparel
- 1Tm 2:9 Avoid costly hair styles and apparel
- 1Tm 2:9 Dress modestly, in good taste (*sophrosunēs*; KJV, sobriety), in a manner that brings honorable self-respect (*aidous*; KJV, shamefacedness)

BEHAVIOR IN CHURCH

- 1Tm 2:11–12 Let women learn in serenity (*hēsuchia*; KJV, silence), with deference (*hypotagēi*, KJV, all subjection), in peace of soul (*hēsuchia*; KJV, silence)
- 1Cor 11:5 Women should dress modestly when they pray or prophesy (wearing a veil was a symbol of virtue and respectability in the world of the New Testament)
- 1Cor 14:29–33 Both men and women must speak in an orderly manner
- 1Cor 14:34–35 Women should be reverent (*sigatōsan*; KJV, keep silent) and not chatter (*lalein*; KJV, speak) but be supportive [KJV, under obedience] in church and discuss questions they may have at home with their husband

WIDOWHOOD

- 1Tm 5:3–10 Give honor to widows over sixty years of age who have served faithfully
- 1Tm 5:11 Younger widows are encouraged to remarry