

INTRODUCTION

The Corinthian church had problems with disorder in their worship services and studies. The reason is not hard to figure out: they were using their spiritual gifts to please themselves and not to help the body. The key word was not **building up**, but **blowin' up**. If we think that our contribution to the service is more important than our brother's contribution, then we will either be impatient until he finishes, or we will interrupt him. Add to this problem the difficulties caused by "over-bearing women" in the fellowship, (women using their freedom in Christ to attempt to spiritually rule over men See 1 Cor. 11:3) coupled with the confusion which sprang from pure carnality (the act of satisfying selfish fleshly desire rather than universal spiritual need) created chaos where there was supposed to be peace.

1 Corinthians 14:32-40 (NKJV)

³² And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

³³ For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

³⁴ Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says.

³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

³⁶ Or did the word of God come *originally* from you? Or *was it* you only that it reached?

³⁷ If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

³⁸ But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

³⁹ Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

⁴⁰ Let all things be done decently and in order.

³² **And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.**

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³⁴ **Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says.**

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Vs. 32 If someone were to exhibit a spiritual gift during an assembly, regardless of the timing or order, that person would blame it on the uncontrollable urgings of their spirit or even the Holy Spirit. Paul is telling us that the spirit cannot control the flesh, but in reality the flesh controls the spirit and that the Holy Spirit is a gentleman and will not function in us without our invitation or our consent.

Vs. 33 Paul is telling us that if we are attending a church service that is out of control, wild and disruptive, then the probability of God being a part of it is negligent. This verse also implies that confusion has an author and since it's not God then it follows that Satan is.

Vs. 34 - 35 We already know that women prayed and prophesied in church (1 Cor. 11:5). What Paul is telling us today is not to allow women to usurp the role of the man in the church service. (Reread 1 Cor. 14:33 and 1Cor 11:3 if necessary).

One of the Holy Spirit's ministries is to bring order out of chaos. One of the ministries of men is to be the spiritual leaders in their homes and in their churches as part of God's design. Co-Pastors and Co-Ministers as husband and wife teams are not natural or scriptural. Some would say that verse 35 is out of step with the rest of the world and they would be correct! The world does not dictate the moral value, or order in church meetings, God does. The world does not order the steps of the good man, God does (**Psalm 37:23** ²³ The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way.)

Things that were misunderstood or not understood at church were to be discussed outside of the church service, not during. Just like men today are not wanting to stop and ask for directions, the chances of a man stopping services and asking the elder or pastor to explain a hard to understand subject was unlikely. So, the direction to the women not to ask questions in service was to keep order in the service, not to squelch a woman's freedom in Christ. There are many ministries that women are in charge of and God will and does bless them.

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³⁷ **If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.**
³⁸ **But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.**
³⁹ **Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.**
⁴⁰ **Let all things be done decently and in order.**

Vs. 36 If someone has an opposing opinion to the previous verses, or any other scriptures, have them read 1 Cor. 14:36. Here Paul uses sarcasm in the form of a question and should remind us of the sarcasm God used with His servant Job when God asked him in **Job 38:4-5 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. ⁵ Who determined its measurements? Surely you know!**

Vs. 37 Paul challenges the prophets and those that professed to be spiritual to test what Paul has stated, whether these words came from God or if these words originated from Paul's own predisposition towards women. Once they are informed by the Holy Spirit that Paul's words are true, they are going to have to acknowledge that fact to the body. This will help heal any division that may result from this teaching.

Vs. 38-40 Of course there will be those who will seek answers from their own intellect, or by their "feelings", or by the urgings of some of the women in the church. These are the ones who will pick and choose which scriptures that they agree with and follow, and if they don't agree, they won't follow. Paul says that these folks are ignorant and probably will remain so. Don't bother them; just beware of them! (Phil. 3:2) Paul wraps up this portion of scripture as he started. The church should desire prophesy. The church should speak in tongues as appropriate, but do all in order.