

Female Preacher: How the Church Should Have Responded to John MacArthur

My heart has been saddened this week as I have read the articles about, and then the responses to, the words of John MacArthur concerning Beth Moore and her role in ministry.

I, as a woman in ministry, do have opinions that are based on the Bible concerning the role of women in ministry. You might be surprised at how moderate I am. That is not the purpose for this article, though.

I am not as concerned about where a person stands on the issue of women in ministry as I am about how we treat one another publicly and privately.

The purpose of my writing today is to address our heart attitudes toward one another. If we don't get this right in the body of Christ, we will be ignoring a great portion of Scripture. When a respected leader mocks a brother or a sister who is made in the image of Christ, a serious wrong has been committed. When a follower of Christ, who is passionately in love with the Scriptures, is labeled "narcissistic" publicly, it tells me more about the heart of the accuser than it does about the heart of the accused.

You see, grace has no stones in its pockets. Grace would have dealt with this in a much different manner, indeed.

Not only have I listened to the audio that recorded the words of John MacArthur and others on that panel, but I have also diligently read Beth's public responses this week:

"Hey, y'all. Let's cool it on the slander toward JMac et al. Doesn't honor God. Let's move on."

“Here is the beautiful thing about it and I mean this with absolute respect. You don’t have to let me serve you. That gets to be your choice. Whether or not I serve Jesus is not up to you. Whether I serve you certainly is. One way or the other, I esteem you as my sibling in Christ.”

We were all called to be fruit-bearing Christians whether our ministry takes place on a very public platform or within the walls of an obscure home on an unknown street. We are all called, as sons and daughters of the God who is love, to honor one another with our words and with our actions. When a difficult conversation needs to happen, it needs to happen privately and honorably.

I am outraged. But I am not just outraged on behalf of all of the anointed women who I know who have given their lives to ministry—I am outraged that a brother of mine would treat a sister with such public shaming.

I grieve that a well-respected conference such as The Truth Matters would allow this type of mocking and degrading. Perhaps in years to come, The Truth Matters conference should be renamed to “Fruit Matters,” just as a reminder of our call in Christ.

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, reminded all of Christendom yet to come that as believers in Christ, it is our goal to “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). I have learned after 42 years in ministry that if I cannot address a difficult issue with deep and gracious love, then it is not my call to speak to it.

“Each tree is known by its own fruit” (Luke 6:44a).

Beth—thanks for sharing your fruit with us this week. It was delicious. Brother MacArthur, you are deeply loved by the body of Christ, and I pray that you will be able to lead by example and remove the rocks from your pockets. {eoa}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books: *No More Ordinary, Holy Estrogen!*, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*, *Defiant Joy!* and *Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire*. Her teaching DVD *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.