

Seeking God Bible study

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Women serving in positions of spiritual leadership need to live above reproach. The counsel Paul gave the young evangelist Timothy applies: “Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young [or female]. Be an example for all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity” (1 Tim. 4:12, NLT, bracketed material added).

Paul said to the women serving in his time: “And I want women to be modest in their appearance ... for women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do” (1 Tim. 2:9).

And Peter admonished them, “Don’t be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to the Lord.”

Taken in context, Peter was not condemning physical beauty or advocating that women be doormats who never speak up or contribute significantly to church matters.

Rather, both he and Paul were describing the conditions in which women might be best received.

Like humility, modesty goes a long way in breaking down barriers. As one female CEO said, “A teaspoon of honey goes a lot further than a gallon of vinegar!” Women in leadership need to be surrendered to God ... and also wise!

Men or women who use their gifts to create personal platforms that draw attention to themselves abuse their callings. Women who desire to serve the Lord should accept responsibility for living above reproach and as far as it is possible, be at peace with all men (see Rom. 12:18). A rebellious spirit pollutes church fellowship, whether it comes from a woman or a man. God is not glorified when we fight over positions and power. According to the Word, those who humble themselves and serve faithfully will, in due season, reap sure rewards (see Gal. 6:9).

There may be times when God calls a woman to stand up in spiritual authority and lead militantly, just as He called Deborah to lead her people into battle. However, according to Scripture, Deborah was known as the "wife of Lappidoth," in addition to being named a prophetess and judge. Her domestic title suggests that she remained under the supportive covering of her husband (see Judg. 4:4). If at all possible, a woman should remain under the authorities God has given for her protection.

It is difficult to fight against humility and impossible to thwart the divine purposes of God. Any woman who diligently seeks her King, to be possessed entirely by her King, will not fail to find her place in the kingdom of God (see Proverbs 22:29).