

Women's Ministry in the Local Church

Chapter 9: *Scripture*

In this chapter, Ligon Duncan explains more fully his fifth reason why a women's ministry is important in every healthy evangelical church. (This was first mentioned on pages 38, 41-42.)

The denial or the twisting of the Bible's clear teaching on manhood and womanhood is one of the central ways that biblical authority is being undermined in our times.

THE TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:6-7, 14-15

The text for this chapter shows that Scripture is the unequivocal keystone of a women's ministry in the church.

The Undeniable Need for a Women's Ministry

Paul profiles the lovers of self:

- 1 *lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy*
- 2 *heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous*
- 3 *reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure, having an appearance of godliness*

Paul describes weak women as:

- 1 *vulnerable to false teachers*
- 2 *burdened with sins*
- 3 *led astray by various passions*

The Unequivocal Keystone of a Women's Ministry

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|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 Tim. 3:15-17 | <i>God's Word</i> |
| 2 | Deut. 32:45-47 | <i>God's Word</i> |
| 3 | Isaiah 55:10-11 | <i>God's Word</i> |
| 4 | Heb. 4:12 | <i>God's Word</i> |

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

The Old Testament gives a graphic description contrasting two types of women in the church:

- 1 *Lot's wife became a pillar of salt*
- 2 *daughters who are like corner pillars*

Two marks of maturity are:

- 1 *submission to God's Word*
- 2 *a teachable heart that listens to and learns from others*

Lois and Eunice are examples of corner pillars that were both beautiful and functional:

- 1 *His Word is their authority.*
- 2 *His glory is their purpose.*
- 3 *He is their sufficiency.*
- 4 *He is their strength.*

THE TASK

The Bible should be the centerpiece of a women's ministry. There needs to be a principled and personal approach that gives theological, educational, and relational integrity to women's Bible studies.

First, the leaders of women's ministry should formulate an overarching purpose for Bible studies that assimilates the principles we have seen in the Pastoral Letters:

- 1 Ecclesiastical submission: *Bible study leaders and materials are under the oversight of the elders.*
- 2 Covenantal compassion: *Bible studies should teach biblical reasons for ministries of compassion and provide ministry opportunities.*
- 3 Covenantal community: *Bible studies should be a time for women to develop relationships.*
- 4 Discipleship: *Bible studies should equip women to pass on the legacy of biblical womanhood and offer opportunities in discipling one another.*

Second, women's ministry needs to consider how and when women are taught principles of biblical womanhood because:

- 1 *sometimes there's a disconnect between Scripture knowledge and the application of it*
- 2 *sometimes feminism is the only paradigm for womanhood that many women and girls have considered*

THE TOOLS

Resources to equip Bible teachers for this kind of covenantal, complementarian, integrative ministry:

- 1 *Pastors and Elders: can keep Bible teachers connected to the doctrine and direction of the church.*
- 2 *Women's Ministry Leadership: will give oversight and communicate with the Bible teachers.*
- 3 *Biblical Foundations for Womanhood: will equip teachers to weave foundational principles of biblical womanhood into whatever they are teaching.*
- 4 *A Team: of women could work alongside the Bible teacher to plan for other aspects of the Bible study.*

These questions can help a leadership team to be intentional to incorporate biblical principles:

- 1 *Why are we doing this?*
- 2 *How will this glorify God by reflecting His character?*
- 3 *How will the gospel be presented?*
- 4 *How will this teach women to think biblically?*
- 5 *What will this teach women about biblical womanhood?*
- 6 *What will this teach women about living covenantally?*
- 7 *How will this build community among the women?*
- 8 *How will it build community with other members, age groups, and ministries of the church?*
- 9 *How will this extend the boundaries of the community to enfold those outside the church?*
- 10 *How will this demonstrate the compassion of Jesus?*
- 11 *What characteristic of the covenant does this express?*
- 12 *Will what we do and how we do it have a life-giving or a life-taking effect in our church?*
- 13 *Will what we do and how we do it help or hinder the leaders of our church?*
- 14 *How will we communicate our answers to the above questions to the church so they understand why we do what we do?*

Observations and insights from a seasoned pastor, Chuck Betters:

- 1 *The peace and prosperity of the local church depends on all of its member understanding how to apply sound doctrine to daily life as well as to Body life.*
- 2 *It was in women's Bible studies that they learned how to live out their roles as women in the church and were confronted with the command that women are to use all of their gifts to build God's Kingdom.*
- 3 *It was in women's ministry that they learned how to study Scripture and what it means to be a helper in the church.*

Biblical Foundations for Womanhood resources:

- 1 Topic: *A covenantal perspective of Scripture*

Book: *Heirs of the Covenant*
- 2 Topic: *The teaching process*

Book: *Heirs of the Covenant (chapter 6)*
- 3 Topic: *Psalms 144:12b*

Book: *The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood (chapter 3)*