

1 Tim 5v14 Give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully 14th Nov 2024

“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan”.

There is a warning here by the Apostle Paul who speaking through the Holy Spirit, sets out the role of women in the Ecclesias. There was to be a family centred arrangement in the young, it is not natural to take people away from the divinely organised unit of the family and cloister them away into same sex units like some churches do, in monasteries and nunneries. Mankind was not made to live like that, and it should be remembered that Jesus, although he never married, remained in the company of both sexes, not just the twelve apostles, see Luke 8v2,3.

Was this just Paul's personal opinion? *“I will.....”* was it only his will, that is expressed in this passage, or was it his will that was honed and inspired by the Eternal, for which the Apostle was a mouthpiece? In other places, Paul clarifies that he spake in accordance with the spirit of God, 1 Corinthians 7v40 *“and I think also that I have the Spirit of God”*. When Paul speaks under inspiration, he carries the weight of divine approval as he is required to say exactly what he was inspired to do.

Verses 11 and 12 set out the importance of what was being said. It was not Paul's personal view only, although no doubt he personally believed it deeply, but it was something that affected salvation *“having **damnation** because they have cast off their first faith”*. As those who wish to be disciplined by the Holy Scriptures and to become better disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ we need to listen carefully to this teaching. To wax wanton against Christ and remarry would be fatal in certain circumstances.

The matter of how your private choices need to be considered in the effects they have on others is emphasised. We do not exist in

a vacuum. Our decisions will affect others, and we must be wary of taking any unilateral action. If we as members of the Ecclesia fail to be sufficiently circumspect then this will reflect badly on the reputation of the Ecclesia which should be held in the highest regard. It is within our remit to permit others to “*speak reproachfully*” because of what we do. We are commanded not to allow this to happen.

Does this mean that any negative comments need to be avoided, regardless of whether they are merited or not? I do not believe that this must be the determining factor. The probity of what we are doing needs to be clear, but we must not fail to act in ignorance of the damage our actions might inflict upon others. This is similar to the idea of being aware of the consciences of our fellows, 1 Corinthians 8v10-13, and that this should be a factor in our decision making.

That it is the younger women and not the older men that are singled out for comment here, should remind us that all members are in the spotlight of public attention, and there is no hiding place in the Ecclesia where actions can be ignored and passed over as being of no consequences. Everyone, not matter how lowly they might feel themselves to be, are under scrutiny for their involvement. There is not a spotlight only on the senior agents of the Ecclesia.

The fear was that younger women unoccupied by domestic considerations naturally defer to idleness in contrast to hard work, not staying settled in their particular circumstances but rather “*wandering about from house to house*” and thereby spreading gossip and unhelpful comments outside their immediate circle, becoming thereby “*tattlers*” and “*busybodies*” which is disruptive and destructive. Tattler is from the noun, the verb of which is used in 3 John v10 “*prating against us with malicious words*”. To prattle is to speak in silly or immature terms. To prate is to talk excessively and pointlessly. It should be

obvious that our sisters should avoid having this accusation having any justification against them, by being quieter less talkative and when they do speak let it be with substance and deliberation.

A busybody is someone who “*works around*”. This carries the idea of someone who will not leave something alone, but continually returns to the same subject despite it being previously addressed. It is not the same word as found in 1 Peter 4v15 “*or a busy body in other men’s matters*” which carries the idea of superiority of or the oversight of the business of another, setting oneself up as an authority, we might say. Instead, it is more like the word found in 2 Thessalonians 3v11 “*.....walk among you disorderly, not working at all, but are busybodies*” where the idea seems to be of working around as in avoidance of work! Neither of these would be acceptable to be found in our members!

The verse has before been linked with 1 Corinthians 7v5. “*Defraud ye not one the other except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give ourselves to fasting and prayer; and come not together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency*”. The idea that once awakened the sexual urges must be respected within the confines of marriage, hence the link with the advice to marry in the epistle to Timothy. There is also the verse in 2 Samuel 12v14 “*Howbeit because of this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme*” when David is upbraided for his impropriety.

So, the areas that are to be the focus of the younger women, are marriage, that is finding and supporting a man (only in the Lord) together with whom they can form a family unit independent of their parents. A new nucleus of activity that provides the complimentary advances of the inclusion of both sexes, so that the very best of God’s creative intent in humanity can be harnessed. This would normally involve the production of

children, who can be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Truth. A woman is physically framed to be the major child rearer, with breasts and wombs which eclipse the male anatomy in these areas of looking after children. God has designed it that way. Guiding the house speaks literally of being a house despot – she is to be the domestic mistress where her abilities are to reign supreme, permitted and presided over by her husband. She does not rule or “guide” over him, but she is a despot over the children and servants in a way that he is not. Her husband defers to her in domestic matters although she would of course not act unilaterally either, but within the parameters that enhance not distract from the divine arrangement whereby the man is the leader of his family overall. A working relationship should be put in place where the wife has clarity in what areas this domestic scene covers, and where the husband does not abdicate but delegates this authority to “the weaker vessel”. If this is done positively it will be far from a reproachful position that others will identify as an acceptance of the divinely ordained position that was established right from the garden of Eden, before the fall of man, when everything was “very good”. She would therefore be an help, meet to her man, her husband. Anyone who distracts from these principles, distracts from God’s standards and brings reproach upon the way He has created us.

These instructions are not restricted just to the younger women of the Ecclesia, although the direction is specifically to such. All can learn from these instructions even if they feel that they are above such behaviour. It is a matter of human nature, not sexist opinions that these things are true, and the old man will deceive us by excusing our involvement and participation in these issues.

To take up an alternative position is to “turn aside after “Satan”, not the immortal anti-god but the epitome of slandering and perverse opposition.

A Voice from the Altar

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