

God's Woman

All too often, our discussion of women and their service to God is relegated to one sermon, generally around Mother's Day. However, it is extremely important that we remember the role of women in the church much more often than that. My NEWSLETTER articles almost always talk of Christian characteristics or examples of men (both good and bad) and the lessons we can learn from their lives. But women are equally important to God. Their lives, their examples, their influence have made a great impact on many of us.

Because the public teaching and preaching of the gospel of Christ in the church of Christ is strictly male-oriented, we seldom think of what the word says about how important women are to Christianity. When we think of “women in the church,” we think of scriptures where they are instructed to “learn in quietness and full submission” and it being “shameful for women to speak in church.” But what we forget are the subtle ways women “teach” others how to live simply by living for Christ themselves.

Mothers live their lives in such a way that they influence their children to be the kind of people God intends for them to be. They are, as Paul tells Timothy in I Timothy 2:11-15, to “continue in faith, love, holiness, and self-control.” They are, as Paul says earlier in I Timothy 2:9-10, to adorn themselves with “good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.” It is not the outside appearance that is important, but the example of a good life that should be shown to all around them. Chapter 3, verse 11 instructs women to be “worthy of respect, not malicious talkers (gossipers) but temperate and trustworthy in everything.” Peter elaborates on the same subject when he says in I Peter 3:1-6 that wives should show “the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.”

Paul told Titus to “teach the older women to be reverent in the way that they live, not to be slanderers..., but to teach what is good.” They are to be treated as “mothers” even if physically they are not. They have a world of experience to tell those they contact. Younger women are to “love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands. Sounds a lot like the description of the “wife of noble character” that Solomon speaks of in Proverbs 31:10-31.

There are many of these women throughout the New Testament—women who by their lives “preached” the gospel. Mary and Martha, seeing to Jesus' needs as he revealed himself to the world. Tryphena and Tryphosa and Persis of Romans 16:12 who “worked very hard in the Lord.” Euodia and Syntyche of

Philippians 4:2 who, Paul says, “contended at my side in the cause of the gospel.” Priscilla, who along with her husband Aquila, were called “co-workers in Christ Jesus” by Paul in Romans 16:3. And there were many more who recognized the role God had given them.

Let me close with a quote that was written in the obituary for sister Gladys Mims written by her son John:

“Above all, Gladys was an outstanding model of a Christian wife, mother, and friend. Her strong faith provided a foundation of values that were passed on to her son, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. Nothing interfered with the attention she gave her family. She will always be remembered for her strength, perseverance, and kindness.”

Exactly what God called her and every other Christian woman to be.