
Biblical Watershed Issues: Who Teaches the Believer? #3

The Bible gives commands and parameters to different groups to teach believers.

1. Pastors Teach Believers – Pastors are given to equip the *saints* (Eph 4:12) – all believers, not just the men or the adults. This would include teaching men, women, and children (not exclusively – pastors teach children, but so do their parents & others). Pastors are appointed by God to oversee **local** assemblies and are required to be men.

2. Believers Teach One Another (Col 3:16; Heb 5:12-6:2) – We are all to teach and admonish one another. This is not limited to the men or adults. In light of James 3:1, this pertains primarily to passing on what we have been taught by our pastors.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, **teaching and admonishing one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

- *Compared with James 3:1, this seems to relate to repetitive teaching, repeating what one has been taught.*

Heb 5:12 – 6:2 For though by this time **you ought to be teachers**, you need [someone] to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ...^{2:1} Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary [principles] of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,^{2:2} of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

- *This pertains to each and every believer. Each is expected to learn, understand, and be able to repeat the first principles of the Christian faith.*

With this category of teaching:

- There is **no specific qualifications or skills.***
- There is also **no formal appointment.***
- There is **no elevated accountability.***
- This implies only **informal teaching** while interacting with one another*
- The content concerns learning and passing on (six) **basic truths.***

3. Those Gifted with the Gift of Teaching Teach Believers – These are some (a few?) that are given the spiritual gift of teaching. If this giftedness is not limited to pastors, all restrictions must still be identified and observed (1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 1:3-7; 2:11-14; James 3:1).

1 Cor 12:28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third **teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. (cf. 1 Pet 4:10-11)

- *As it parallels Eph 4:11 listing apostles & prophets, “teachers” seems to relate to the position of pastor-teacher, and thus limited to men.*

Rom 12:6-7 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, [let us use them:] if prophecy, [let us prophesy] in proportion to our faith; or ministry, [let us use it] in [our] ministering; he who **teaches**, in teaching;

- *There are some that are specifically enabled by the Spirit with special teaching ability.*

a) Reasons the gift of teaching may be limited to appointed men (pastors)

- 1) *“he who teaches” is masculine (as are the articles in v. 8 also: exhorting, giving, leading, showing mercy)*
- 2) *There are no separate qualifications listed for non-male teachers anywhere in Scripture.*
- 3) *There is no evidence of “authoritative” female teachers anywhere in Scripture. If spiritual gifts are for all (and likely they are), teaching for most would be repetitive teaching. (James 3:1 vs Col 3:16)*
- 4) *There is no assignment to teach “authoritatively” in key passages discussing women’s roles (Gen 1-2; Prov 31; 5:9-14; Titus 2:4-5)*
- 5) *There are specific restrictions against women teaching (or teaching men, or teaching authoritatively): 1 Tim 2:11-15*

b) Reasons why spiritual gifts are likely not limited to men:

- 1) *Preceding the list in Romans 12:6b-8, The context of Romans 12:3-6a discusses all believers, and each has been given a measure of faith.*
- 2) *This teaching gift is not limited to authoritative teaching. One can use his or her ability to research, organize, relay, and communicate what he or she has been taught.*

1 Pet. 4:10-11a As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹ If anyone **speaks**, let him speak as the oracles of God. ... [This directs the approach, energy, effort, & attitude of the teacher.]

SCOPE: Teaching must remain within the boundaries of the rest of Scripture. Women cannot be pastors and thus do pastoral (“authoritative”) teaching. (This would apply to writing of the same nature, it seems. Further, only men appointed or approved by those appointed (in light of 2 Tim 2:2) would teach in a formal capacity too. See 1 Tim 1:3-11 for restrictions on teaching, including those who are teaching but do not understand what they teach. Acts 20:28-31 also requires control of the realm of teaching within a flock. (And dangers: 2 Pet 2:1; 2 Tim 4:3)

- **1 Cor. 14:34** Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.
- **1 Tim. 2:11-14** Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.
- **James 3:1** My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.