

"I Will That Men Pray In Every Place ..."

"... *lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing*" (1 Tim. 2:8). This passage, and the verses which follow, are sometimes cited to "prove" Paul was one who "put down" women and that what he wrote for his day might have been all right, but is outdated and out of order for an enlightened age. In our present age where seeing women preachers, even as heads of denominations is not uncommon, 1 Timothy 2:8-11 stands out like a sore thumb to those who so act, denying, in essence, part of the book they call God's word.

Although there are several Greek words for "*men*" in the scriptures, there are two used most prevalently. One is *anthropinos* which signifies a human being; the other is *aner* which means a male, a husband. It is this latter word found in the text here in 1 Timothy. Paul commanded that "*men*" (*aner*, a husband, male) pray in every place. Since in the text from 1 Timothy 2 distinct commands are given both to men and to women, it is evident that the male is set in contrast with the female. We are to understand, by his instructions, that the male is to lead in prayer in every place; although certainly the woman is to pray as she (and the rest of the congregation) follows he who directs the prayer.

"*Lifting up holy hands.*" "*Lifting up*" tell us "how" men prayed in the days when the New Testament was being written. Men prayed with upturned faces toward God, a practice which today would signify irreverence to many. The Pharisee lifted up his face toward God, so signified by the contrasted publican who would not lift his eyes toward heaven (Lk. 18:11-13). The practice of stretching out one's hands toward God was in vogue in Isaiah's day (700 years earlier) for God said of that generation, "*When ye spread forth your hands, I will turn mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood*" (Isa. 1:15). Our hands are our instruments in the deeds we do. "*Holy hands*" signify the person who seeks to live a holy life, hands full of blood indicates that person was guilty of even murder -- although his hands would have likely been washed from literal blood. We must have "*holy hands*" in approaching God, for the person who seeks God in prayer, but who has not kept himself back from the practice of sin, will be denied the requests he makes in prayer.

The apostle mentions two things which turn our hands into unholy ones: "*wrath*" and "*disputing.*" "*Wrath*" is a stronger form of anger. Paul was fearful to go to Corinthians when he had planned lest he find wrath there (2 Cor. 12:20). Wrath is one of the works of the flesh, which work the Galatians and Ephesians both warned against (Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:31). We must

remember that *"the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God"* (James 1:20).

In addition to wrath, the apostle mentions *"disputings."* Hands cannot be *"holy"* if there is disputing. This same word is found in Romans 14 where Romans were urged to receive those *"weak in faith"* but not unto *"disputings,"* or as the KJV puts it: *"doubtful disputings."* Paul's command that men lift up holy hands without disputing tells us that our time should not be spent in quarreling over the scruples and doubts of others -- doubts in the realms of matters of no real consequence, eating of meats and observing of days.

Man was made first by God. Woman was made from man. Paul, in his Corinthian letter explains: *"I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is man and the head of Christ is God"* (1 Cor. 11:3). Because of this, the man is to pray in every place.

Jim McDonald