



## Is it “disgraceful” for a woman to speak in church?

**No, it's not!** God does not consider the voices of his daughters in the Church shameful! This teaching grieves his heart. Where does the idea come from? In his pastoral letter to Corinth, Paul the church planter, corrects a dysfunctional church. Let's dig into 1 Corinthians 14:34-40.

### Key Term

## Corinthian Slogans

Spirituals ————— Ascetics

<sup>34</sup> *Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.*

<sup>35</sup> *If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.*

<sup>36</sup> *Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?*

<sup>37</sup> *If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. <sup>38</sup> But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.”*

## PAUL REPEATED AND CORRECTED CORINTHIAN SLOGANS

### Two hyper-polarizing groups in Corinth — Spirituals and Ascetics

Within the church of Corinth, two groups pushed their extreme perspectives. Paul repeatedly corrected both groups. **The Spirituals** wanted to indulge in everything - eating food sacrificed to idols, no limits on sexual practices, appetites without restriction, total freedom of tongues, total freedom of dress and hair regardless of modesty or proper custom. On the other hand, **the Ascetics** wanted to restrict anything that looked like freedom - no eating idol food, no sexual relations, no marriage, no tongues, no prophecy, no women speakers. (See *One-Pager on Chiasm in 1 Cor. 14*).



### Who said what?

In his letters to the church in Corinth, Paul often used direct quotes *by the Corinthians*, and then he corrected those statements. For example, the Corinthians said, “I follow Paul. I follow Cephas.” or “The stomach for food.” or “Everything is permissible for me.” or “A man should not touch a woman.” Greek has no punctuation, so readers must understand the context in order not to confuse Paul's corrective words with ungodly Corinthian slogans.

We can be confident that the phrase “*it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church*” is NOT God's view. It is NOT Paul's instruction. This phrase was a Corinthian Ascetic argument to which Paul brought sharp correction!

### How did Paul correct this terrible “disgraceful/shameful/improper” slogan?

Paul used a Greek symbol (ὃ) which, when used to answer a question, shows emphatic opposition - “What?!” “No way!” “Nonsense!” The letter is not a word, but more a grunt of disapproval. Paul challenged the slogan in 11:36, “Did the Gospel *start* with you? Did it *finish* with you?” Did these Ascetics think they were the Alpha and Omega? Were they God? Essentially, Paul said, “Who are you to limit ALL women and say a woman's voice is *disgraceful*!” Note that Paul used ὃ twice to correct the legalistic Corinthians.

γάρ	ἐστίν	γυναικὶ	λαλεῖν	ἐν	ἐκκλησίᾳ.
<sup>1</sup> for	<sup>2</sup> it is	for a woman	to speak	in	a church.
36	ὃ	ἀφ' ὑμῶν	ὁ λόγος	τοῦ θεοῦ	ἐξῆλθεν,
	Or	from you	<sup>2</sup> the	<sup>3</sup> word	- <sup>4</sup> of God <sup>1</sup> went forth,
ὃ	εἰς	ὑμᾶς	μόνους	κατήντησεν;	37 Εἰ
	or	to you	only	did it reach?	If

### Conclusion

**Paul challenged both indulgent & legalistic Corinthians.**  
**Paul's correction freed women to speak, sing, pray, prophesy, and speak in tongues like any other person in the Body of Christ - with order and respect for others.**  
**May we not teach a Corinthian slogan as God's plan!**

### 4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?