

Bible Questions and Answers

(By Robert C. Veil, Jr.)

Question: I have heard it said that Paul disliked, or even hated women. Is this true?

Answer: It is not only untrue, it is a scandalous and unfair accusation. I will never forget the first time I heard this. I was sitting in a college class, with about 20 other students. The teacher, an older woman, called Paul a “misogynist.” At the time, I didn’t even know what that word meant! When I heard the teacher call the apostle that name again, I decided to look up the word. It means a *hater of women!* When it happened a third time, I raised my hand and calmly asked the teacher for the passage or passages upon which she was basing her accusation. She, of course, could not provide any.

After class that day, I spoke with the teacher privately. As soon as I shared with her the literal meaning of her word, she immediately admitted that it was probably too strong a word. I agreed. Then I shared an actual statement of the apostle Paul which sheds great light on his appreciation for women: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious *church*, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself,” (Eph. 5:23-28). Far from being a hater of women, Paul commanded the highest level of love toward our wives, “as Christ loved the church,” even to the point of dying for her.

I wonder how many people, including the students in her classroom that day, have heard such statements about the apostle Paul, and simply accepted them as true without investigating what he actually said. It is unfortunate indeed that the beloved apostle has been so vilified in the minds of so many.

Remember too that Paul, and the other Bible writers, were writing with guidance by the Holy Spirit, (see 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21, etc.). So, when a person attacks the written statements of Paul, or the other inspired writers, they are in reality attacking the word of God. “For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but *it came to me* through revelation of Jesus Christ, (Gal. 1:11-12).

It is true that Paul, as well as other New Testament writers, sets out roles or standards of conduct for women. He does so for men as well. We would do well to read and understand these, and be sure we are honoring God’s will in the matter, rather than attacking the messenger! Those regulations may be found in such passages as 1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:1-6; et al. Those standards are imposed by God, not man, and they are done in love, not hatred. Women and men alike will be blessed by observing God’s will in this and all other matters.

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