

1 Corinthians 14:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Analysis

And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home— Greek *ei de ti mathein thelousin, en oikō tous idious andras eperōtatōsan* (εἰ δέ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἴδιους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν, "if they wish to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home"). This clarifies verse 34: the issue is learning/questioning behavior, not prophecy or teaching. **For it is a shame for women to speak in the church** (*aischron gar estin gynaiki lalein en ekklēsia, αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἔστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ*, "for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church").

The "shame" language reflects cultural sensitivity: in Greco-Roman culture, women publicly questioning men was scandalous. Paul applies the order principle (vv. 26-33, 40) to a culturally volatile situation. The solution—"ask at home"—suggests the issue is inappropriate public interrogation during worship, not all female participation. This interpretation coheres with Paul's affirmation of women's ministry elsewhere (Rom 16:1-7, Phil 4:2-3).

Historical Context

Greco-Roman honor-shame culture viewed outspoken women as shameful. New female believers, learning Scripture for the first time, may have disrupted worship with questions. Paul channels learning into appropriate contexts without suppressing women's ministry.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the 'ask your husbands at home' command clarify what Paul is prohibiting?
2. What cultural factors might make certain behaviors 'shameful' in one context but not another?
3. How do we apply culturally conditioned commands in different cultural settings?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δέ	τι	μαθεῖν	θέλουσιν	ἐν	οἴκῳ	τοὺς	ἰδίους
if	And	any thing	learn	they will	at	home	G3588	their
G1487	G1161	G5100	G3129	G2309	G1722	G3624		G2398

ἄνδρας	ἐπερωτάτωσαν·	αἰσχρὸν	γάρ	ἐστιν	γυναιξὶν	ἐν
husbands	let them ask	a shame	for	it is	for women	at
G435	G1905	G149	G1063	G2076	G1135	G1722

ἐκκλησίᾳ λαλεῖν
the church to speak
G1577 G2980

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:12 (Parallel theme): For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.