



# ZWTF

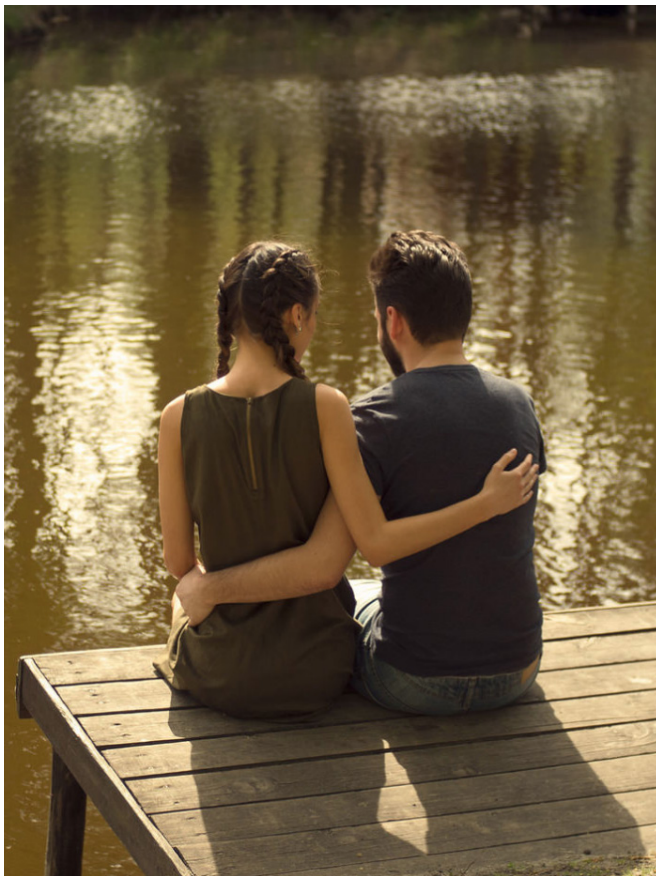
Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

Volume 7, Issue 3

## ROMANS <sup>Part 139</sup>

Chapter 16:3-5

### Priscilla & Aquila, Part 4



**Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus 4 (who, for the sake of my soul, jeopardize their own necks, whom not only I am thanking, but all the ecclesias of the nations also) 5 and the ecclesia at their house.**

Priscilla and Aquila followed Paul from Corinth—the city where they had met him—to Ephesus. Soon after, Paul left Ephesus for Antioch, but Priscilla and Aquila stayed in Ephesus for reasons unknown. I like to believe that, as a married couple, they wanted to settle in a little bit, take a break from the hyper-manic itinerary of Paul, and maybe throw some dinner parties. This was of God—as all things are—but it was especially applicable, at this time, to the furtherance of the evangel of the grace of God. Soon after Paul left town, an eloquent teacher came to Ephesus by the name of Apollos, whom God had chosen to be a champion of the gospel of the Uncircumcision, but who as yet knew only the baptism of John, that is, the Circumcision evangel. Now, “it just so happened” that, at one of Apollos’ lectures (during which he was once again strenuously and thoroughly confuting the Jews in public), Priscilla and Aquila attended. What happened next is historic because it shaped the teaching of a man who would become instrumental in promoting the gospel of Paul.

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native Alexandrian, a scholarly man, arrives at Ephesus, being able in the scriptures. He was instructed in the way of the Lord, and fervent in spirit. He spoke and taught accurately what concerns Jesus, being versed only in the baptism of John. Besides, he begins to speak boldly in the synagogue. Now, hearing him, Priscilla and Aquila took him to themselves and expounded the way of God to him more accurately (Acts 18:24-26).

#### DOMESTIC TRAFFIC PATTERN

Most Scriptural references to husbands and wives—any husbands and wives—place the man first. This is because God set up the “traffic pattern” of marriage so that husbands are to be the heads of their wives (Ephesians 5:23) and, at an impasse, wives are to yield. This

arrangement makes no commentary as to the superiority of one gender over another, any more than a yield sign at an intersection judges one driver superior to another. Where there is an impasse in marriage, the husband's decision has right-of-way and the wife acquiesces. This is a practical matter; the impasse of opinion has to be solved *somehow*, and this is probably better than flipping a coin; at least it's consistent. It's better than arm wrestling.

### WHO'S ON TOP?

Of the six times that Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned together in the Greek Scriptures (they are never mentioned apart), Aquila's name appears before his wife's only twice. This means, by my calculation, that Priscilla's name appears before Aquila's four times. As there are no random occurrences of words or word order in the Scriptures, it will be instructive to note when Priscilla is mentioned first, and why.

► Acts 18:2—Aquila named first. This is merely an account of when Paul met the couple.

► Acts 18:18—Priscilla mentioned first. Here, Paul sails with them to Ephesus.

► Acts 18:26—Priscilla mentioned first again. Here, the couple takes the great teacher Apollos to themselves and expound the way of God to him more accurately.

► Romans 16:3—Again, Priscilla is named first, except here Paul calls her by the diminutive "Prisca." Paul is telling the Romans to "greet Prisca and Aquila."

► 1 Corinthians 16:19—Aquila is mentioned first. Here, Paul extends a greeting *to* an ecclesia *from* Aquila and Prisca.

► 2 Timothy 4:19—Prisca is back on top as Paul tells Timothy to "Greet Prisca and Aquila."

The order of these names in these contexts cannot be random; we are dealing with the inspiration of the holy spirit here. Realizing this, I have digested the circumstances of each account, at the same time noting the name order associated with each particular circumstance. I have reached the following conclusion—

When the work of the evangel is under consideration, Priscilla is mentioned first. When the reference is more generic, Aquila gets the initial nod. In Acts 18:2, Luke is merely introducing the characters, thus, Aquila takes his rightful place as the head of the marriage. However, when Paul sails to Ephesus with his fellow tentmakers (for evangelistic work, obviously), and when the tentmakers take Apollos to themselves, Priscilla tops the bill.

We find the woman on top yet again in Romans 16:3, when Paul greets the ecclesia from Corinth. Considering that Paul has written this letter with the authority of an apostle, this letter is apostolic to the highest degree. Thus, in light of Paul's role as an apostle to the nations, he gives Prisca first place. Oddly, Aquila is mentioned first in 1 Corinthians 16:9, where there is also a greeting. There is one key difference here, however. This time, Paul extends a greeting *from* Aquila and Prisca. It's not coming from *him*, but from *them*.

In the final reference, Prisca once again assumes first place because, again, Paul greets them himself in his role as apostle of the nations.



### PRISCILLA, THE 200 WATT BULB

My conclusion is that Priscilla was the driving force behind the couple's spiritual apprehension. I contend that she was the "sun" of the relationship—smarter than her husband, more zealous than her husband, and certainly more spiritually astute than Aquila. When it came to the work, Paul obviously thought of her first. When it came to the regular world of husbands and wives, however, Paul (and Luke) observed the natural order of things and gave Aquila his due.



## SWEET BUT ASSURED

None of this is to say that Priscilla lorded it over her husband. No doubt she submitted herself to Aquila in the manner of Paul's instruction in Ephesians 5:22-24—

Let the wives be subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife even as Christ is Head of the ecclesia, and He is the Saviour of the body. Nevertheless, as the ecclesia is subject to Christ, thus are the wives also to their husbands in everything.

At an impasse, Priscilla always deferred to her man. Yet Aquila was smart enough to defer to her when it came to matters of spiritual apprehension. Acts 18:24-26 surrenders sparse detail as to just how the couple first approached Apollos, but I'm thinking that it went something like this—

**Priscilla:** That guy is good, but he needs help.

**Aquila:** What should we do?

**Priscilla:** Follow me, dear husband.

If Priscilla was so smart, then why does Paul forbid women from teaching in the ecclesia? To answer this important question, I now print an excerpt from my upcoming book *Eve Raised*. May this piece of writing relieve any battles now occurring (and I know there are many) between the sexes over this important matter. May it explain some of Paul's most puzzling words concerning the role of women in the ecclesia.

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE ECCLESIA

### *Subjection to protection*

**I**n Paul's second letter to Timothy, the apostle calls his spiritual son to a life of teaching:

And what things you hear from me through many witnesses, these commit to faithful men, who shall be competent to teach others also.

—2 Timothy 2:2

He immediately follows with:

Suffer evil with me, as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus.

—2 Timothy 2:3

Paul equates teaching with warfare and suffering, and teachers with frontline warriors. And well he should. Paul, a frontline warrior himself, was shipwrecked, flogged, stoned, consigned to a swamp, left naked and shivering, and lowered from the Damascus wall in a basket to escape assassins (2 Corinthians 11:23-33)—all due to teaching. Do we really want to see these things happening to Priscilla? *Do* we?

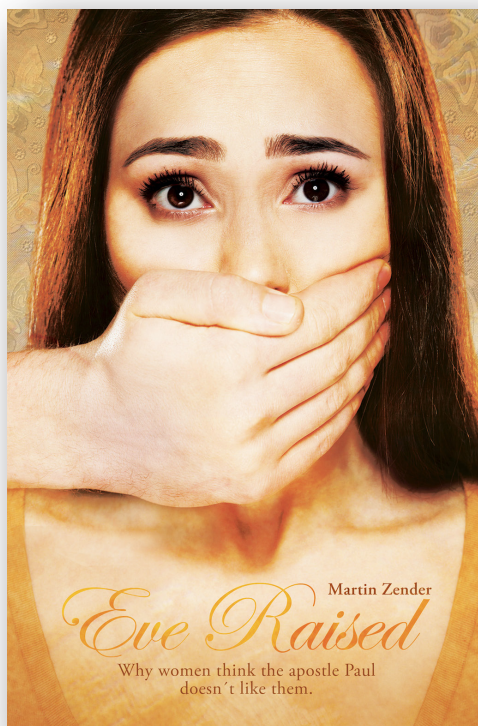
"Let a woman be learning in quietness with all subjection. Now I am not permitting a woman to be teaching" (1 Timothy 2:12).

Nothing is too good for the glory of the man, that is, for the woman. Her subjection to the man (who seeks to spare her) is her protection. His desire to subject her in this matter is a gift to her. She may want to teach and be quite able for the task, but instead subjects herself to the man for her own good. The man has a better assessment of her value than she does. Where she would endanger and waste herself (for she is blinded by her own talent and ambition), he says, "No. I will not allow you. I will spare you."

The ecclesia did the same for Paul in Acts, chapter 19. The silversmiths of Ephesus had enriched themselves selling handmade silver images of Artemis, goddess of the Ephe-

sians. In Acts 19 they are in full riot on the heels of Paul's unpopular statement, "They are not gods which are coming into being by means of hands." The silversmiths "rush with one accord into the theater, gripping Agius and Aristachus, Macedonians, fellow travelers of Paul" (vs. 29).

Hearing of this, Paul's first impulse is to venture into the theater. *Who better than me*, thinks Paul, *to explain my motives, placate the silversmiths, and probably save some of the throng through the heralding of the evangel?* And yet, if Paul ventures into this theater, there will *be* no heralding of the evangel; the rioters will tear him to pieces. Paul is blinded to this reality by his own ambition, and





is saved from it by his friends:

Now, at Paul's intending to enter into the populace, the disciples did not let him. Yet some of the chiefs of the province of Asia, also, being his friends, sending to him, entreated him not to venture into the theater himself.  
—*Acts 19:30-31*

It was friends, not enemies, who kept Paul from the mob, subjecting him to their will. The friends might have said to the apostle (I am adapting this from 1 Timothy 2:11-15):

"Let yourself be hushed, Paul. We are not permitting you to speak. Be subject to us, in this matter. It would be a shame for you to be speaking to this dangerous ecclesia. We are not permitting you to be domineering over us in this matter. We know how capable you are; your inclination to domineer springs from your ability, we know this. But please be in quietness. Do not let this enemy either hear or see you. You shall be saved through this trial if ever you should be remaining in our advice, with faith and love and holiness with sanity."

What happened next?

Now after the tumult ceased, Paul, sending after the disciples and consoling and saluting them, came away to go into Macedonia. Now, passing through those parts and entreating them with many a word, he came into Greece . . . Now it was arranged for him to be met, as far away as the province of Asia, by Sopater Pyrrhus, a Berean, yet of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gaius the Berbian, and Timothy, yet of the province of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. Now these, coming before, remained for us in Troas. Yet we sail off from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came to them in Troas in five days, where we tarry seven days.

—*Acts 20:1-2, 4-6*

Paul first of all consoled and saluted the disciples who had saved him. Why would they require consolation? They had kept Paul from doing his duty, or what he thought was his duty. They had dared to confront the great apostle. They put their foot down: "You have persuaded us before, Paul. But not this time." In this calm after the storm, they might have feared apostolic retribution. The same calm, however, turns Paul reflective. He realizes that they had been right. Not only does he console them, he salutes them.

The Greek word translated “salute” in the *Concordant Literal New Testament* is *aspazomai*. The two elements of this word are “simultaneous” and “pull.” Like this: *simultaneous-pull*. What a picturesque word for “hug.”

My goal in writing is not only to tell the truth, but to cause that truth to soothe and heal hurt feelings between the genders. The misconstruing of Paul’s “women can’t teach” passages have turned women not only against God and Paul, but against men. Some men have deserved it. They have treated women—at least in their attitudes—as second-class saints. These passages, to men, have become text-weapons with which to belittle the female rather than protect and cherish her. The males, flattering themselves, read Paul’s words and crown themselves kings. Strange. These passages, rightly grasped, make the men dedicated guardians of the fair sex.

Let us together-pull—men and women—with new understanding.

After he is spared, Paul greets and entreats his close acquaintances. Here is a picture of the teaching ministry suited to women. Following the Ephesian melee, Paul is met by Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus. These are the good guys. Paul was never happier than when sharing God’s greater graces with beloved acquaintances. I hinted earlier at Priscilla’s teaching ministry to that godly man, Apollos. She and her husband took a teachable soul to themselves and expounded the way of God to him more accurately. Read the account for yourself in Acts 18:24-26. Again, women are best suited, not to the breaking of ice, but to the molding of ice—already broken—into beautiful sculpture.

### *Quietness the ideal*

And so: “Let a woman be learning in quietness.” This is not the quietness of “shut up,” but the quietness of “be at peace; be hushed.” In the same context, Paul writes:

I am entreating, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, pleadings, thanksgiving be made for all mankind, for kings and all those being in a superior station, *that we may be leading a mild and quiet life in all devoutness and gravity, for this is ideal and welcome in the sight of our Savior, God.*  
—1 Timothy 2:1-3

Did Paul live a mild and quiet life? Hardly. A teacher—especially a teacher of grace in an era of Judaizers—was unlikely to live either mildly or quietly. Thus, the teacher does not lead the ideal life. This is one reason James says in James 3:1, “Not many should become teachers, my

brethren, being aware that we shall be getting greater judgment.”

A teacher puts his neck on the line, both in this life and in the next.

Women, as we have seen, are our better selves. It is our duty to keep them from struggle and harm. They are too precious to be exposed, challenged, shot at, stoned, tortured, shipwrecked, and raped. Why not spare the sons of Adam, that is, males? Because Adam was first molded, thereafter Eve. He is the expendable one; the one of whom we require this kind of sacrifice. The woman is his glory, and her we must preserve.

What nation sends its women to the front lines of wars? Any civilization worthy of the name protects its women and children from armed conflict for the same



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reason the Smithsonian protects the Hope Diamond. Is it that the Hope Diamond is not good enough to mingle with the other rocks? No. It's *too* good; it's *too* precious. It belongs to a more esteemed category than the other rocks.

The apostle Peter also wishes for women, “a meek and quiet spirit, which, in God’s sight, is costly” (1 Peter 3:4). Would that more women wished the same for themselves—and that more men wished to provide it. A quiet life is a promotion; it is an *upgrade* from teaching. It is more *costly* than teaching.

We miss the import of 1 Timothy 2:12 by mistaking teaching for the ideal life. It is hardly that. Rather, it is a life fraught with mental, spiritual, and physical perils. When we appraise teaching in this new light, new light dawns. Paul wants females ducked into the relative safety of the trench. “Be quiet,” he says. “Hush.” *He must be worried the women will say something stupid and embarrass the men.* No; that’s our modern interpretation; that’s *our* opinion of women. Paul wants women protected; undetected. Protected and undetected by whom? By the prince of darkness himself.

Now a slave of the Lord must not be fighting, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, bearing with evil, with meekness training those who are antagonizing, seeing whether God may be giving them repentance to come into a realization of the truth, and they will be sobering up out of the trap of the Adversary, having been caught alive by him, for that one’s will.

—2 Timothy 2:24-26

Shall we cast our fair sex into the arena of evil to wrestle Satan? Rather, let us protect it. Let us cherish women and bestow upon them peace and quiet, that they may lead the ideal life, which is costly. Costly to whom? To men. Let *us* fight on their behalf, and die for them defending truth, if necessary. Let them teach privately and peacefully, as did Priscilla, discerning in the likes of Apollos a teachable spirit. Let women elucidate the riches of Christ’s grace, one-on-one, to those primed by God to receive their wisdom. Let us neither ask them nor allow them to break down stone walls of unbelief. Let us neither ask them nor allow them to face the antagonism that accompanies public discourse. To do either thing would be to expose our glory to Satanic fury. This is no melodrama. The religious world is infested with “the teachings of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).

The public teacher, with Scriptural argument, fights Satan. His goal is to save his hearers from deception. Our Lord Jesus Christ also fought Satan, from the cross, with the goal of saving sinners from death. Christ’s relationship to the ecclesia provides a parallel example of a man’s relationship to a woman—and a husband’s relationship to a wife—in reference to protection and duty:

*I am not permitting the ecclesia to be going to the cross, nor yet to be domineering over Christ, but to be in quietness, (for Christ was first molded, thereafter the ecclesia, and Christ was not seduced, yet the ecclesia, being deluded, has come to be in the transgression).*

It is clear to see, in this example, the gift of a) “I am not permitting you,” and b) “be in quietness.” Who among us would want to face Calvary? Who among us, in that awful hour, would not welcome the comforting words of Christ: “No. You stay here. *I* will go. For I was first molded, thereafter you. I know Satan; he will seduce you. You cannot withstand him. Me, he has never deceived. Remain here; be in quietness. Rest. *I* was first molded; I am the responsible One. I will win this battle—for *your* sake.”

\* \* \*

Women are jewels, and men their temporary caretakers. We will never fully grasp either the elemental mystery of the diadem or its inherent worth. We can only marvel that such a prize is entrusted to us. May God inspire us to embrace this role for ourselves, for God, and for the glory of womanhood. —MZ (*To be continued.*)

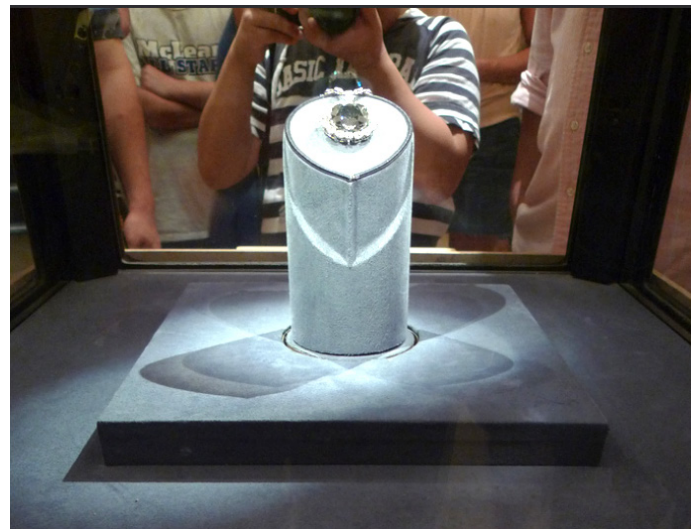


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