

# A Study on 1 Timothy

## Week 5 | 2:8-15

### Overview | Refocus on Godly Living

Paul turns his attention from focusing on the gospel in verse 1-7 of chapter 2 to the implications of the gospel in the lives of men and women in the church.

There are a few things to consider as we discuss this section:

- Paul views men and women as equal in value and dignity while being different in the areas of role and responsibility. This esteeming of women should not be overlooked. It was counter-cultural.
- The main focus for this section is to address ways that both men and women can demonstrate godliness in their conduct both for their own sanctification and for the witness of the gospel.
- The instructions Paul gives are not confined to the culture and context of the church in Ephesus but are rather principles that transcend the historical context.

This section can be organized in a couple of different ways with the most natural reading being the following:

- Godly behavior in men and women (2:8-10)
- Creational differences between men and women (2:9-15)

Difficult exegetical issues in this passage:

- Verse 12 – What, and why are there, restrictions on women teaching and having authority in the church?
- Verse 12 – What does it mean for a woman to remain quiet?
- Verse 15 – What does it mean that women will be saved through childbearing?

### Godly Behavior in Men and Women | 2:8-10

The false teaching that had infiltrated the church had impacted the godliness and holiness of the lives of its members. From what Paul focuses on with both men and women we can deduce some of the issues that existed within the church.

This issues that Paul addressed with the men: false teaching had led to arguments, speculations, vain discussions, envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, friction, etc. (1:4-6; 6:3-5)

Paul's instructions to counter the sinful behavior (v. 8):

- 'I desire' – not just a wish but an authoritative command
- Be men of prayer – this echoes 2:1 where they were instructed to pray for all people
- Pray "in every place" – this certainly could mean "in every gathering of God's people" but it also has the connotation of praying "wherever you are"
  - The desire is that rather than quarrels and friction be the normal interaction between the men that coming together in prayer to God for his purposes would be the norm.
- "Lifting holy hands" – more than a posture of prayer this has to do with the purity of prayer
  - This is a reference to temple worship in the OT.
  - Clean hands were a sign of a pure heart as one entered to worship God (Psalm 26:6).

- “Without anger or quarreling” – one of the outward evidences of the polluted holiness in the church was the dissension and quarrels taking place
  - Apparently this was an issue that was primarily rooted with the men in the church.
  - It’s difficult to truly and honestly join in prayer with someone if you are in a conflict that is not being worked toward resolution.
  - Jesus gives us specific instructions for cases like this (Matthew 5:23-24). “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”
- There is an aspect to this of leading God’s people in prayer as well. Those who lead God’s people in corporate worship (including prayer) should be those that take personal piety and holiness serious. “Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully” (Psalm 24:3-4).
- The implications of this instruction to the men is that they need to refocus on the gospel which should lead them to godly lives, demonstrated in purity in conduct, humility and unity in relationships, and a dependence upon God.

The issues that Paul addressed with the women: some women in the church were reflecting cultural values rather than gospel values in how they dressed (2:9-10), in how they spoke (5:13), and in how they conducted themselves (5:13-15).

Paul’s instructions to counter their sinful behavior (vv. 9-10):

- “Adorn themselves in respectable apparel” – outward beauty and fashion are not the central identifiers of the Christian woman
  - Respectable attire is a form of humble submission to Christ, not looking to draw attention to oneself and in doing so distract from the focus of Christ.
- “Modesty and self-control” – the true beauty of the Christian woman comes from the character of Christ exhibited in their behavior, both in what she wears and in how she conducts herself
  - The word used for modesty has to do with restraint from seductive or sexually suggestive attitudes and actions.
  - The word used for self-control has to do with discipline and self-restraint.
  - These would be characteristics of Christian women in contrast to the temple prostitutes.
- “Not with braided hair and gold and costly attire” –
  - These things are not inherently sinful.
  - Paul is writing to combat the culture of excessive indulgence that was prominent among the wealthy in Ephesus.
  - Having braided hair with gold and costly attire would have been an exercise in vanity that would have detracted from the focus on Christ in worship.
  - The other side of it is that the temple prostitutes to the goddess Artemis would have dressed extravagantly as well.
  - “...God wants Christian women to take their stand against everything associated with sexual immorality, as well as material luxury” (Ryken, p. 82).
- “what is proper...good works” – the display of godliness is not in outward attire but rather in the fruit of a life that is oriented toward God resulting in good works.

## Creational differences between men and women | 2:9-15

This next section focuses on the different roles of men and women in the church and he roots their differences in how God created men and women.

He begins by saying that women should learn quietly with all submissiveness (v. 11). This is a command of opportunity.

- It's easy to miss with our modern ears but this statement is incredibly honoring to women.
- In the first century culture women were considered to be intellectually inferior to men where educating women was often seen as a waste of time.
- The fact that Paul instructs women to learn is esteeming and honoring to them and their abilities and gifts that they have to offer. It's important for women to know the truth of Scriptures.
- "Quietly" – gentle demeanor
- "With all submissiveness" – To submit is to yield to an authority. The instruction is to yield to the authority of the elders who are teaching the Word of God. Submission in this sense is ultimately submission to Christ, who is the head of the Church.

Next, Paul teaches that women should not teach and exercise authority over men within the context of public worship (v. 12).

- The word "teach" has a very specific definition in this letter – the exposition of Scripture.
  - Women are not to exercise the doctrinal and authoritative discipline that comes with the ministry of the preached word.
  - "This verse does not mean that all men are to teach all women. Nor does the Scripture say that all women are to submit to all men. Rather, these verses teach that all women are to submit to the teaching and discipline of the pastors of the church. In this respect, they are no different from the Christian laymen who are not ordained elders." – (Ryken, p. 95).
- The idea of "exercising authority" has to do with the positive ruling and oversight of the church that has been entrusted to the elders of the church. This is not about gifting or value but rather a different role given to men and women.
- "She is to remain quiet" – This does mean women can't speak but rather has to do with the gentle demeanor of living within one's role.
  - "Accordingly he bids them be 'quiet,' that is, keep within their own rank." – (Calvin, p. 68)

All of this is rooted in creation which shows that this is not just a cultural issue in Ephesus but a principle for the Church throughout time (vv. 13-14).

- The creation order gives us insight into the different roles of men and women. Adam was formed first and Eve was formed second as a helper to Adam.
  - This order has implications for the roles within marriage as well as roles within the church.
- The fact that Eve was deceived by Satan and then influenced Adam to sin does not mean women are more prone to deception or are less capable or trustworthy. Rather, it shows the power of the Enemy and his deception and what happens when men fail to lead.
  - Adam, not Eve, is the one held responsible for the first sin (Romans 5:12).
  - "Rather Paul is simply rehearsing the events of the fall as a way of showing what had happened when male leadership had been abrogated..." – (Macleay, p. 105)

- The truth is that both men and women are equally capable of failing to lead well just as they are capable of leading well. This ultimately is not about capability but God-ordained roles for men and women.
- Part of God's curse in Genesis 3 says that there will be tension between men and women over these roles. "Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you" (Genesis 3:16).

Paul concludes this section with a phrase that can seem a little puzzling – "Yet she will be saved through childbearing..." (v. 15).

- What this does not mean:
  - Women must give birth to children in order to be saved.
  - Women are promised safety in childbirth.
- Two interpretations that have merit:
  - "Saved through childbearing" refers to the normative pattern of a godly woman pursuing her unique role within marriage and family.
    - Whereas some were teaching that marriage is forbidden (4:3), marriage and raising children should be seen as something godly to pursue, as a proof of their salvation.
    - "...in general, bearing and bringing up children far from being against God's will, is actually a normal and godly way for a saved woman to live...Paul wants the women to have full assurance that they are on the path to salvation if they rejoice in God's creation, which includes marriage, childbirth and childbearing and if they rejoice in God's salvation by continuing in faith and love (the very signs identified by Paul at 1:5 which signify the goal of God's work in us.) – (Macleay, p. 107)
  - "Saved through childbearing" is a reference to the fact that Jesus Christ, our savior, came into the world through a woman.
    - In the Greek, "childbearing" has the definite article which means it could be more literally translated as, "Women will be saved through the bearing of a child."
    - This option makes sense based on the context of chapter 2 with the mention of creation and the curse and the promise in Genesis 3 that through the offspring of the woman there would come one who would defeat Satan.
    - In this option it highlights the unique role of a woman in the history of salvation. Men may be called to lead but women have the unique privilege of bringing life into the world. It was through this role that God brought our savior in to the world and ultimately our salvation.
- Faith, love, holiness, and self-control
  - This is the demeanor, the motive, and the means by which women demonstrate their salvation.

### **Resource List**

*Teaching 1 Timothy* by Angus Macleay (Primary Source for class)

*1 Timothy* by Philip Graham Ryken

*Let's Study 1 Timothy* by W. John Cook

*1-2 Timothy & Titus* by Philip H. Towner

*Commentary on 1 Timothy* by John Calvin

*ESV Study Bible*