

Title: Wait, it's All About Worship? Text: 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Have you ever seen someone post a Bible verse on social media with no context or explanation, and then the comment section explodes with controversy because of what it says? Or maybe have heard people quote Bible verses that they think means something without ever reading the verses that come before or after?

A lot of Bible verses can fall into this category of “misunderstood” and “misquoted”. Or maybe it's that people don't like what it says and so they write it off as outdated, offensive, or impossible to understand. This section of 1 Timothy often falls into that category. It covers a section speaking about how men and women should conduct themselves in God's house, the Church, and about authority within the Church. It also precedes the qualifications for church leadership, whose language has also been heavily attacked and who many paint as outdated.

But before you can accuse Paul or the Bible of anything, you should seek to understand and ask the question “Well, why did God lead Paul to write that? Why did God want to communicate that?”. Remember, it is God's church, and this chapter is about worship.

He started the chapter by saying to worship through prayer, that it should be the first thing the church participates in as an act of worship. Then, the last verses were Paul reminding us why we should worship and pray, because of what Jesus has done for us and His heart for all people. So this section still speaks with an overall theme of worship, but it shows now how we should worship by walking in faith by obeying God's order, and not becoming a distraction, but focusing on Jesus.

1. Men In Worship v8

1. Lead in Worship.

1. You don't need to be a genius to realize it's harder to find praying men than praying women! There are a bunch of Women's prayer meetings with several women assisting without a lot of notice. But Men's Prayer Meetings? That's harder to find and do.
2. Yet Paul writes that men should be the first to pray and worship. Men should be leading others to pray as God wants. To invite and show by example by being the first to pray.
3. The lack of male leadership in the church, the lack of men stepping up to lead in prayer and lead in worship, is not just a problem, it's an epidemic. A lot of problems in our world can be traced back to the failure of men to step up. One of the biggest problems in America as a whole is lack of fathers, which has been proven to lead to increased

mental health issues, poorer school performance, higher poverty rates, and higher likelihood of delinquency and substance abuse.

4. Paul's call for men to step up and lead is a call from the Lord. The world needs more godly men who are willing to step up and stand for what is right, true, and just. The lack of this is an echo of our father Adam, who forsook his role, and did not lead and protect his wife. Today, we still carry his inaction in our hearts sadly. This is likely why Paul puts weight on the call for men to lead the charge in praying and worshipping God.
5. The term everywhere is in every church. Yes, we should pray everywhere we are and everywhere we go. But the context here is that men should lead in every church.

2. Worship in faith and peace

1. Paul speaks of lifting up hands, but there is no actual commanded position of prayer, but this is how Jews prayed, with hands lifted up, so Paul references it. You can pray with lifted hands, folded hands, or hands in your pocket. The physical position is up to personal preference. What matters is the position of the heart. However the physical position can often influence the heart position.
2. He says holy hands, meaning a holy life. Many people pray, but their hearts aren't right before God. It is religious actions, not a heart of worship and submission to God. The men who lead should be men whose hearts are right before God and know Him personally.
3. Our prayers should be without wrath or anger. Remember what Jesus said to His disciples in the Gospels? That if they have any problems with a brother, they should set things right before going to worship? The principle stands true. When we pray, we should release any resentment and anger. Remember, this is about our PUBLIC worship. In your private worship, go ahead and let God know you're angry, but then pray that He will help you forgive and set things right with the person as much as it's up to you.
4. But in our public prayers, we should have settled any of those things prior and can come to pray and worship together with hearts free of anger. But also without doubting, which is unbelief. When we pray in public, we should pray in faith. Especially the men leading. If the men leading aren't men of faith, then the church will be in a sad state indeed!

3. So Paul, by guidance of the Spirit, told the men they had to step up and lead in prayer and worship. But now he's going to transfer to the women.

2. **Women In Worship v9-15**

1. The Key Word of Likewise

1. In the same way Paul expected the men to step up and lead in all the churches, he now also says that the directions to the women apply to all the churches. So what does he say to the women?
2. *Dress to not distract, let your character show you off.*
 1. In Ephesus, if a woman wanted to get ahead, she had to look the part. Expensive hairdos and jewelry showed off your status and brought you attention and power.
 2. But Paul is telling women, be different. Show off your character. Let Jesus exalt you, not man. It's fine to wear nice clothes and jewelry, but not if it's to mask your lack of character, or distract from worshipping God.
 3. **Wiersbe - "The contrast here is between the artificial glamour of the world and the true beauty of a godly life. Paul did not forbid the use of jewelry or lovely clothes, but rather the excessive use of them as substitutes for the true beauty of "a meek and quiet spirit"'"**
3. This next section of verses isn't a great chapter break because it leads into the next chapter. It's important to understand the flow of thought so you can comprehend chapter 3 as well.
4. *Learn in Peaceful Humility*
 1. Learn in silence? No teaching or authority over men? But what about women clearly shown in scripture to participate in teaching and discipling and ministry!?
 1. Priscilla helped disciple Apollos.
 2. Titus tells older women to teach younger women.
 3. Lydia supported Paul's ministry through her business.
 4. Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother.
 5. Jesus was financially supported and travelled with women.
 6. The first preachers of the resurrection were women.
 7. Paul mentions various women, including Phoebe, and refers to her as a deaconess.
 2. Many of these women served with Paul and he never stopped them. So what is Paul saying?
 3. You need to understand it was a cultural transition point. In the culture and time, women had little to no rights, were not allowed to learn like the men, and were often segregated. The cultural view of the Jew was they were less than men and couldn't even testify in courts. The view of the Greco-Roman world was that women were primarily for breeding and producing heirs, or for sexual fun.
 4. But here comes Christianity. It suddenly says that they have value because they too are made in God's image and made part of the church and daughters of God. Here it comes saying everyone is

equally valuable to Jesus and He died for women as much as men. Here comes Jesus placing women as the first witnesses in a way that shamed the culture that belittled them. Here comes the church where they can now learn the scriptures with the men. Here comes a place where they can be educated and treated with equal value.

5. And this made them excited. So much so that they began unwittingly using their new found freedom in a way that was disruptive and distracting during services, so Paul is exhorting them to keep calm and do things orderly.
6. Basically, Paul was asking the women to show Christian character by not being distractions whether through the way they dress or by interrupting to ask questions in the middle of the service. As believers, we should want Jesus to be the center of attention in the service, and avoid distractions that can take people's eyes off of Him.
7. Now "Silence" is a bad translation. "Peaceably" is a better word. The idea is to keep things orderly, and be calm and wait for the right time to ask questions and participate. But also connects with the idea of men leading. God has chosen to set up, within the Church and the Home specifically, that men be the ones in direct leadership of the church and family.
8. This text is not a prohibition for women to ever teach. It's about the order of service within the church and how they should teach. It's about respecting the authority structure God established. So can women teach? YES! But they shouldn't "Lord over" men and seek to take the role of authority from them.
9. This doesn't mean women can't be in leadership as we have seen several women serving with Paul in leadership roles. But they aren't in the leadership position over the whole congregation. We'll talk a bit more about that in chapter 3.
10. It's also not so much an issue of authority, but really an issue of faith and worship. Because he argues from creation and the fall.
11. Could it be that the Lord is in one sense asking us if this time within the church we'll worship how He wants to be worshipped and not commit the same error of the garden?
 1. Women are naturally more spiritual, but that's how Satan tricked them in the garden. Adam had more authority and responsibility than Eve did, and so his failure to protect and lead her is why ultimately he carries the blame. He did not believe God and did not do his duty as the leader.
 2. Part of the curse on the woman after the fall was desiring and resenting the leadership of her husband, and by connection,

men in general. Which is in part why this is difficult to teach and accept. It is hard on purpose.

3. Could God possibly be placing you in a position where you will have to make a decision in faith to trust Him and His order, and to show so by submitting to how He wants to run the Church and Family, which He created? Could it be that He wants to see if we will trust Him and worship Him His way, even if it is hard for us? A test that reflects back to the garden, where authority was flipped, leadership was neglected, and sin began?
4. It should also be noted Paul switches from saying "Eve" to "woman", connecting it to a more universal application.
5. And again, it should be duly noted that the only place the Lord sets up male leadership is within the home and the church, nowhere else. Women are free to be CEO's, presidents, or whatever else they want in other areas. It should also be noted that this is not the "shut up and make me a sandwich" leadership that a lot of men think it is. It is servant leadership. It is leadership that calls the men to be the first to protect, provide and love their wives. To put her needs before their own. To make it a priority to bring her closer to Jesus and wash her in the Word like Peter says.
6. A lot of misunderstandings come from the fact people don't understand that God created us equal in value, but to distinct in roles. Having a different job description does not make anyone less or more valuable or capable. Your value and capability isn't connected to your role, though we often think it is and are taught that it is in our fallen world.
7. God created men and women to complement each other, not fight each other. The survival of the human race depends on a man and woman becoming one flesh and creating a new being. Adding that in Ephesians we are shown marriage is a picture of Jesus and His Church as His bride. This is why sexual ethics matter and any other forms of sexual practices go against God's creation. Because they all fail to fulfill what He created it to be.
8. It should be noted the Bible is also clear this submission is not to all men, but to the specific husband and those whom the Lord has called to be leaders in the church. AND, just because it is popular in some cults and religions to do so, it doesn't mean everything they say is to be obeyed. There's a cult in PR where it is considered a blessing for the newly wedded woman to spend a night with the leader before her husband. This is

obviously against God's view of marriage, sex and authority. If the authority is demanding obedience to obvious sin, the authority should be rejected.

9. I remember a pastor who gave terrible advice on this. The man wanted his wife to perform a certain sexual act that she felt uncomfortable doing. The pastor said she had to submit to him and do it. Is the act itself wrong in the bonds of marriage? No. But is forcing the wife to do it under the premise of "authority" a loving and caring thing to do? Absolutely not. And husbands are called to love their wives and show them affection and protection. The idea of authority is of a servant leader, who may need to "pull rank" at times, but is leading from the front, not a dictator, in either the home or the church.
10. **David Guzik - "The failure of men to lead in the home and in the church, and to lead in the way Jesus would lead, has been a chief cause of the rejection of male authority—and is inexcusable."**
11. In other words, in this issue of authority, you need to take the whole of scripture together. The two extremes come from rejecting scripture because we don't like it, or from taking a verse by itself and not using the whole counsel of God, because it suits what you want to believe.
12. Lastly, though many accuse Paul of chauvinism or say this is outdated, I think Wiersbe says it well to conclude these verses:
 1. **Warren Wiersbe - "Because of its oppressive connotations, the word submission makes some people see red. Some well-meaning writers have even accused Paul of being a "crusty old bachelor" who was antiwomen. Those of us who hold to the inspiration and authority of the Word of God know that Paul's teachings came from God and not from himself. If we have a problem with what the Bible says about women in the church, the issue is not with Paul (or Peter), but with the Lord who gave the Word."**
13. Now verse 15 is a hard verse for people to understand because of how it is often translated. Some think it means women are saved by giving birth, but we know that's now how salvation works. Some think that if they live a godly life following God's order and submitting they'll have safe child births. But many godly women have died in childbirth, so it isn't that.

1. The key is in the original Greek grammar, which helps us to understand what Paul meant. The original Greek says “in THE Childbirth”. The idea then is that though the woman race was deceived and fell into transgression in the garden, it was through a woman that the Savior was born, and so women can find their redemption by faith in Him who was born of a woman!
12. Both men and women are called to worship. How we show that worship may be different, but in the end is all about worship. Let the Lord lead you in the area and role He has for you. Don’t think you’re inferior or less capable because of where He has you or what He has you doing.
13. This goes for both men and women. Because not all men are called to an official leadership role within the Church. They may not be Pastors and teach from pulpits, but they may be called to faithfully teach teens or children. So where God calls you, be faithful and worshipful there.
14. Realize that this is about worship, and us showing faith by allowing Him to organize His church how He sees fit and worshiping how He wants to be worshipped. We are all equally valuable, but called to different roles. And all of it we do by faith, trusting He knows best as the designer of the Church and family. And through that we worship and show Him reverence. Let’s choose to trust Him, to point people to Him and make Him the focus, so we may worship and honor Him!

Discussion Questions:

Why do you think 1 Timothy 2:8–15 is often misunderstood or controversial?

- How does viewing the passage through the lens of worship instead of merely rules or authority change your understanding?

Paul calls men to lead in prayer and worship.

- What does biblical leadership look like in the church and in the home?
- How is servant leadership different from worldly leadership?

Paul emphasizes "holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

- What attitudes or unresolved issues can hinder our public worship?
- How can we prepare our hearts before gathering with God's people?

We emphasized that both men and women are called to make Jesus the focus rather than themselves.

- What are some ways Christians today can unintentionally distract others from worship?
- How can we instead point people to Christ?

Why is it important to interpret difficult passages in light of the whole counsel of Scripture rather than isolating individual verses?

- Can you think of other passages that become clearer when viewed in their broader biblical context?

The Bible teaches that men and women have equal value before God but distinct roles within the church and home.

- Why do you think our culture often struggles with the idea that different roles do not imply different worth?
- How does the gospel shape our understanding of both value and responsibility?

One of the key themes of the message is trusting God's design even when it is difficult for us to understand or it is hard for us to accept.

- Can you think of an area in your own life where God has asked you to trust His wisdom over your own preferences, views and ideas?
- What makes that difficult?