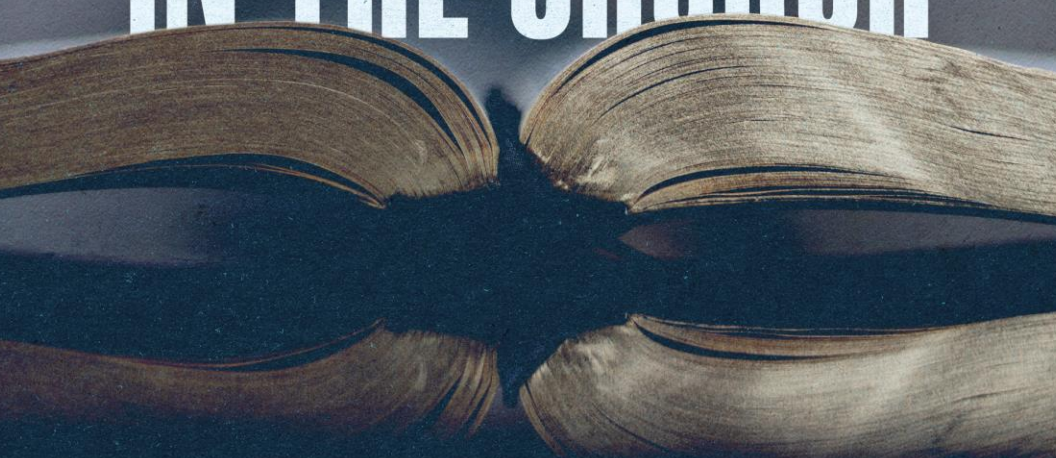


# THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH



FELLOWSHIP  
BIBLE CHURCH



## Agenda:

- Welcome, Opening Prayer, Context, and Opening Comments - *Mike Thomas*
- Creation, Fall and Redemption: A Biblical Perspective on the Roles of Women - Genesis 1-3/Ephesians 5/1 Peter 3 - *John Morrison*
- Angels and Authority - God's Purpose for the Church in His Instructing the Angelic Realm - Ephesians 3 & 6 - *Mike Thomas*
- 1 Timothy 2:9-12 - *Mark Carey*
- The Salvation of the Woman in 1 Timothy 2:13-15 - *Don Den Hartog*
- Break with refreshments
- 1 Corinthians 11 & 14 - *Mark Carey*
- Affirmations & Denials document - *Mark Carey*
- Discussion regarding specific applications in the future - *Mike Thomas*
- Q & A from question cards
- Closing prayer

## **BACKGROUND**

After many months of thorough study, research, and prayer, the elders of Fellowship Bible Church created this booklet to summarize the church's teaching on the roles of women. The hope is that it will encourage and motivate all women within the church to utilize their gifts and talents in a way that God has biblically set forth. The elders would like to acknowledge that Scripture also speaks to the roles of men within the church, and these biblical roles are equally as important to understand and apply. In the near future, there will be a correlating published statement from the FBC elders relating to the role of men. However, due to the Lord's leading of faithful women and men within our body to raise this important discussion regarding women, the elders believe that this publication needs to be released independently (in conjunction with this seminar) and be of a high priority in this season in the life of our church.

## **DEFINITIONS**

*Egalitarianism* teaches that not only are all people equal before God in their personhood, but there are no gender-based limitations of what functions or roles each can fulfill in the home, the church, and the society.

*Complementarianism* teaches that although men and women are created equal in their being and personhood, they are created to complement each other via different roles in life and in the church.

Both positions affirm the absolute equality of men and women in their being, personhood, dignity, and worth but differ when it comes to whether there are distinct God-given roles and functions associated with each gender, especially as it pertains to home and church.

**Creation, Fall and Redemption:  
A Biblical Perspective on the Roles of Women  
Genesis 1-3/Ephesians 5/1 Peter 3  
John Morrison**

Great tension and division have occurred in the past 60 years over the role of women in the home, society and church. Many women have been marginalized and dominated such that equal treatment under the law has often been withheld. Thankfully, many obstacles to fairness have been removed. Laws which directly or indirectly prohibited women from protected participation in education and employment have been rewritten. Women who have been abused physically and sexually by men are increasingly seeing perpetrators held accountable for their actions. Many men are learning to treat women with increasing respect. All that has needed to happen, yet still more work remains.

That said, not all role changes for men and women in the past 60 years have been for the better. When needed changes have been combined with unbiblical views of God, men, women, the family or the church, it can be argued that from 1960-2020, we have actually fallen further from God's design for men, women and the family and produced a less healthy society.

Here we won't attempt to resolve all the tension between the sexes, correct all the harm thrust on women by men, or fix all our society's collective departures from biblical teachings on roles. We attempt instead to establish a **foundational biblical portrait** of the roles of women for the family and church. Why those two?

First, that is the primary nature of the instruction in the Bible regarding men and women. Second, issues about women's roles raised in our community usually relate to those areas. Third, roles for women in the church flow out of the roles for women in the home. Fourth, those are the only two areas the church is responsible for; we are not called to fix society's miscues.

I expect to show that prescribed primary roles for men and for women are exemplified and taught in Creation, in the Fall, and in Redemption. And since the primary characteristic of sin since the beginning has been rejecting or twisting God's words, we should find it of no surprise that people reject or distort God's instructions regarding male and female roles – in multiple directions.

Fortunately, we have hope because the Bible teaches that Jesus is the Redeemer and offers to "buy us back" from the places sin has taken us. He buys us back so He can return us to His righteous rule, where grace and truth, freedom and responsibility, completely overlap. That is why Colossians 1:13 says, "He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son," and Romans 6:18 says, "Having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

## Creation (Read Genesis 2:15-25)

Equality between men and women is implied in Genesis 1, where we read that mankind was made in God's image, male and female. But a distinction of roles for men and women begins subtly in the creation account in Genesis 2. God doesn't state outright "here are your roles." Like so much of the Bible, God paints pictures. When we step back and observe what we see in light of ongoing revelation, we see clearly designed and intended roles of the sexes from the beginning until now.

For starters, we read that the man was made first (2:7). While it does not say here that being made first matters, in the Middle East, order mattered. In fact, it mattered in virtually every culture until the present. In our more egalitarian, individualistic country, being first does not matter much. But primogeniture – the status of the first born – always has determined position, rank and inheritance.

Next, still before the woman is created, God gives the man a physical responsibility. It is to cultivate (habad = working/caring for) and keep (shamar = overseeing/managing) the garden (2:15), which will be the primary realm in which he works and manages the dominion God has given him, as well as the means by which he will provide for the physical needs of his family.

Then, still before the woman is created, God gives the man a spiritual responsibility. He is to eat from any tree of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, lest he die (2:16-17).

Finally, he is assigned the responsibility of naming the animals (2:19-20) and his wife (2:23, 3:21). Like primogeniture, naming in most cultures has long been a mark of headship or leadership.

Regarding the creation of the woman, we read that “because it was not good for the man to be alone,” the woman was made for him and declared “suitable for him” (2:18-19). Her first job is to meet him in his aloneness. Later this is hearkened to in 1 Cor. 11:9, where we read, “man was not made for the woman’s sake, but woman was made for the man.”

The next thing we see is that God assigns the man the responsibility of leaving his father and mother and joining to his wife (2:24). That is not to say the woman does not do some leaving or joining. But the primary responsibility to leave and to cleave is the man’s. And remember, this command is for US. Adam had no mother and father. The primary burden for launching from parents is the man’s, and the primary burden for pursuing and uniting with his mate is also the man’s. It is his responsibility to lead their move from parental dependence to a joint self-reliance (not apart from God, but apart from parents), and from that, to build a home by being fruitful and filling the earth. He takes the lead in building a new home within which he and his wife operate in union – under God – as relative sovereigns.



Now as we said, these statements do not stand out loud and say, “here are roles.” But they show the man made first, given responsibility to tend, keep and provide, given spiritual leadership responsibility, and given headship over the woman. If there was no other instruction in the Bible for men and women, this might not be conclusive. In fact, some scholars say these sex and role distinctions are merely descriptive of the culture at the time. But if, as I believe is the case, the rest of the Bible teaches that the man is the leader, that he has a primary responsibility to provide for and protect her, and to lead their home, then these early descriptions are actually as prescriptive as they are descriptive.

By the way, it is interesting that “they will become one flesh” is said of both the husband and the wife. Just as Genesis 1 emphasizes their equality, this also shows the joint role the man and woman have in keeping their physical and emotional unity in place. He could have given that responsibility to either the man or the woman as he does other responsibilities, but he chose to give it to both of them.

### **Fall (Read Genesis 3:1-21)**

As we saw distinct differences in roles between men and women in creation, we will see even more starkly the difference in roles following the fall into sin.

To begin, in Genesis 3:1, it is worthy to note that the devil went after Eve first. He didn't go after the man. Is that intentional and role-related? Or is it just "the luck of the draw that he spoke to her"? Based on what we see next, and on what 1 Timothy 2 says, I think it was intentional and role-related.

As soon as sin comes and the man and the woman try to avoid God, Genesis 3:9 says God calls out the man first. He could have called out to the woman like Satan did. After all, the woman took the fruit first. Or He could have called out to both of them since they both took part. But He first calls to the man with a singular, masculine pronoun. He asks three questions. "Where are you?" "Who told you that you were naked?" "Have you eaten from the tree I told you not to eat?"

And lest we think that God calling the man first is merely **descriptive of what happened**, and not prescriptive and intentional, reflecting roles, remember what the NT says about this event.

Romans 5 tells us that, "sin came into the world through one man – Adam." He doesn't say sin came through the woman and the man. He says it came through one man – and names him: Adam. In fact, in these few verses, the Bible refers **nine times** to the man through whom sin came and **never even mentions the woman once**. That is no accident! God's going to Adam first reflected His leadership role.

By this, we are not saying the woman didn't sin. What we are saying is that because of the roles assigned by God which included headship and leadership – later directly addressed in the Bible, the man is the one held most keenly responsible for the sin that passed onto the world.

In his response, the man blames his wife and, indirectly, blames God. “The woman whom you gave me, she took from the fruit and gave it to me, and I ate.” He wasn't merely giving a thorough answer. This man was trying to dodge the spotlight of his own guilt. In doing so, he throws his wife under the bus. The man's role to lead, protect and provide for his wife was violated by his decision to eat the fruit. Now that sin and death has come, self-reliance instead of God-reliance, self-protection rather than sacrificial love follow immediately. It is no surprise that it shows up as him blaming her and offering her to be judged.

Notice the next thing that further delineates roles. When God spoke judgment with the woman, He said, “I will multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children. Yet your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.” The temporal judgment of sin will be something she would experience uniquely in the context of being a woman and the roles she uniquely experiences as a woman. As a woman, she will be affected through childbirth's pain. As a woman, she will desire her husband. And as a woman, she will be ruled by her husband – whatever that means.

None of these things could be applied to the man. They are experienced specifically within her place as a female. That is accentuated more when we look at two words in this prophetic judgment.

When God says, “yet your desire will be for your husband,” the Hebrew word *teshuqah* is used, which Hebrew scholar Susan T. Foh shows can be interpreted as a “desire to control,” as the NLT renders it. Not everyone agrees with that interpretation of the term, but I think it fits the context best. We see the same word with the same meaning in the next chapter when God says to Cain, “Sin’s desire is for you, but you must master it.” God prophesies that the woman’s desire will be to control her husband.

This tension is further amplified when we see the word used for the husband’s “control” of her. That word, “*masal*,” is not about a role or position – like head. Rather, it means harsh rule or domination – like what we call abuse. God is telling the woman that because of sin in the world, her natural bent will be to control her husband, and the natural bent of the man will be to dominate her harshly.

So as soon as sin comes into the world, the entire source of division between the sexes also enters and it should not surprise us that it directly affects them in their roles. Sin provokes the woman to want to control and sin provokes the man to dominate.

Just as the woman will experience the fall in the context of her femaleness, so the man will experience the fall in his maleness. He will experience his wife trying to control him and will tend towards selfish, overbearing, harsh rule. He will also experience a ground that produces what he does not want, as well as a ground that begrudgingly releases what he needs – but only through “toil” – which is frustrating, disappointing, arduous work marked by excessive effort and failure.

So in creation, God made the man first, a picture of position. God gave him the responsibility to work the land and manage it, a picture of provision. God gave him the command about eating, a picture of spiritual responsibility. God made the woman to help the man in aloneness and in bearing children, showing a role of service and nurture. God gave the man responsibility to name her, a picture of headship. God gave the man responsibility to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, a picture of leading the two of them to a new home together, giving tender care to his wife. Then God gave both of them responsibility to be one flesh.

After sin, God held the man responsible for their sin. The woman's consequence from the fall will involve her role as a bearer of children and her role as a wife to a husband – to desire to control him but to experience his domination. The man's consequence from the fall involves a battle for control with his wife and frustrating strain in his work. When these occur together, the intended created roles will now emerge in a distorted fashion. That **distorted fashion** will be even more apparent when we see the redemptive plan of God with respect to men and women. The commands we see there will be a direct effort to offset what the fall has done to the created order and will attempt to restore the original.

### **Redemption (Ephesians 5:21-33/1 Corinthians 11:1-3/1 Peter 3:1-7)**

When we see what happens to the roles after redemption, see again how the roles are distinct from one another. Here we will see God moves from metaphors / pictures to more didactic instruction.

Before we see roles in the NT, let's remember something. The passage that is most often turned to in an effort to teach the roles of men and women in the home is Ephesians 5:22-33. But that well-known passage, which we will look at briefly, begins with Ephesians 5:21. It reads, "Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." In actuality, everything that follows from Ephesians 5:22-6:9 is an instruction of how we are to subject ourselves to one another – both men and women. But it looks different. As was the case in Genesis 1, we need to keep the "equality" of the two made in God's image in mind before we look at the instruction of how these two equal partners have different roles.

We see in Ephesians 5:23 that in the home, a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. In 1 Cor. 11:3, the man's headship over his wife is paralleled with God the Father's headship over Christ. In 1 Tim. 3, we see that he is responsible "to manage his household well."

Each of these statements reveal the man's position as head over his household, something that is not a new command, but a clearly stated implication of all the instruction on the home since the start.

These declarative statements about the identity and responsibility of the man are reinforced by comments to the women who are married. In Ephesians 5:22, she is told to "subject herself in the fear of Christ" (v. 21) "to her own husband as to the Lord" (v. 22). She is told "as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives to their husbands in everything." (Except sin – see Acts 5:2, 7-9)

She is reminded by Peter, “be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives” (1 Peter 3:1). Not only are those assignments to her consistent throughout the NT, they fly in the face of the result of the Fall.

If we were to focus on men today, we also would see that the NT assignments on him are opposite of what the fall would induce him towards naturally. Every single instruction given to him goes against the inborn, natural instinct to dominate harshly, as well as the secondary instinct of backing away from responsibility. He is to live with her in an understanding way, to treat her as a weaker vessel, to treat her as a co-heir of the grace of life. He is to love her like Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. He is to have a sanctifying effect on her, to cherish her, to love her and not be embittered against her. Each of those is the opposite of masal. Each is the opposite of what a man would want to do if his wife tried to control him. What is more, if a man treated his wife this way – an equal he wants to know, protect, cherish, love, sacrifice himself for – he would be restoring the original design when God made him to be a protective head, a loving leader, a “cleaving” lover and friend.

When we get to the church, we will see that this pattern of the man leading (elders are men, teachers in the congregation are men) is going to continue. Not as a new thought or an afterthought, but as the continuation of God’s revealed plan for men and women in community. I will leave room for the others to speak to the direct implications for women in the church.

We will see in 1 Timothy 2:12-14 and in 1 Cor. 14:34 that women are not to teach or exercise authority over men in the church, but to be silent – something I understand as referring to spiritual speech in the assembly.

My job here has been to show that God designed roles for men and women from the beginning, and that they are reflected in the creation order and the creation responsibilities. Furthermore, those roles are accentuated and made even more evident in the account of the Fall – how it happened, who did what, how God judged it, and what happened as a result of that Fall. Then, the NT continues the tradition with instructions to men and women in the home that are a direct antidote for the effect of the Fall and are a direct effort to re-establish the creation purposes of men and women.

As Mark and others address women's roles in the Body of Christ, they will show that the NT instructions for the church are completely consistent with the creation, fall and redemption pattern. They are not some arbitrary or outdated man-originated cultural idea to put a burden on women and to allow men to dominate. Rather, they are a continuation of the redemptive plan of God, doing in the church what He is doing in the family as part of His testimony to the world.



**Angels and Authority**  
**God's Purpose for the Church in His Instructing**  
**the Angelic Realm**  
**Ephesians 3 & 6**  
**Mike Thomas**

We know that God is the Creator, and we are the creation. As such we should recognize we are under His authority for Him to use us as He determines for His purposes. Besides humans, God has also created intelligent spirit beings that He communicates with and also employs to accomplish His purposes. These spirit beings are called angels.

So, what do angels have to do with gender roles in the church? Why is it important to bring them into this discussion? Angels include both unfallen angels and fallen angels also known as demons. Often in discussions about angels we concern ourselves with the impact that they have on us, particularly demons and their leader Satan. And this is good and profitable discussion. However, we don't often discuss for what purposes God uses us as the church to impact the angelic realm—both angels and demons.

## An Aspect of this Discussion on Gender Roles in the Church

- 1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me *the mystery* (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 *that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel*, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. (Ephesians 3:1-7 NKJV)
- 10 *to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord...* (Ephesians 3:10-11 NKJV)

The Apostle Paul writes to the Ephesian church a beautiful letter teaching them so much about the truth of who the church is. He describes the concept of the church as having been a mystery in the ages before Christ's resurrection. But what is God's purpose for the church? It is to make known God's manifold wisdom to the angelic realm. What is the definition of manifold? It means marked by diversity or variety (Merriam-Webster).

God's wisdom has many facets to it. One of these facets that God wants to communicate through the church to the angels and demons has to do with authority.

## Angels Struggle with Authority

- 14 “You were the anointed cherub who covers;  
I established you;  
You were on the holy mountain of God;  
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery  
stones.  
15 You were perfect in your ways from the day you  
were created,  
**Till iniquity was found in you.”** (Ezekiel 28: 14-15  
NKJV)
- 12 “How you are fallen from heaven,  
Lucifer, son of the morning!  
How you are cut down to the ground,  
You who weakened the nations!  
13 **For you have said in your heart:**  
‘I will ascend into heaven,  
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;  
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation  
On the farthest sides of the north;  
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,  
I will be like the Most High.’ ” (Isaiah 14: 12-14)

Lucifer, and the angels that followed him, had a problem with God's authority. They were created perfect and holy without iniquity; but at some point, likely between day seven of creation and the temptation of Eve in the garden of Eden, Lucifer was found to have iniquity within. He said in his heart “**I will be like the Most High.**”

## Authority in the Church Demonstrates God's Wisdom

- **But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. 6 For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. 10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. 12 For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God. (1 Corinthians 11:3-12)**

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians for a number of stated reasons. He was in Ephesus at the time that visitors came from Corinth and gave a report to Paul of how things were going in the church there. Mostly it was not a good report and Paul starts his letter by addressing things that the Corinthians were just wrong about. These include divisions, sexual immorality, lawsuits. Then in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul begins to answer questions that the Corinthians had posed written in a letter sent to him by the visitors to Ephesus. He continues to address these questions until Chapter 11, verse 17, where he shifts his focus to the purpose of and proper behavior in what he calls “The Gathering.”

The last question that Paul addresses in this second section is regarding head coverings. Should women wear head coverings? Should men cover their heads? In answering the question, Paul states foundational truths that address the issue. These truths address authority and headship and the reasons for them. Christ is the head of every man, and the man is head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. Man is the image and glory of God and therefore should not cover his head. Woman is also the image of God as is established in the first chapter of the Bible, but she is the glory of man. This is emphasized by the creation order of man not from woman but woman from man. Man was not created for the woman but the woman for the man. Then Paul makes this remarkable statement that the woman should have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels.

Everyone in proper relationship—God, Christ, man, woman—instructs the angels of God’s wisdom. Much has been said and much should be said about proper authority. One key aspect of that discussion should be what God is communicating to the angels through the church functioning as God designed regarding authority.

### **All Authority Has Been Given to Me**

- 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” (Matthew 28:18 NKJV)
- 29 Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.” (Matthew 22: 29–30 NKJV)
- 7 “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Revelation 19:7–8 NKJV)

After the man Jesus completely accomplished all that the Father had purposed for Him by being obedient, even unto death on the cross, He was given all authority by God in heaven and on earth. That authority is complete and over every angelic being and every human being and indeed over all creation. Complete authority can only be held by one person. Otherwise it is shared or subordinate authority. Only Jesus has all authority. No one else has it.

From His complete authority, Christ delegates partial authority to different ones for a time. The authority the man has toward the woman is partial and for a time. While here on earth, men and women of the church are placed in the church as the Holy Spirit sees fit and this includes gender as well as spiritual gifts. But gender is for a time only as Jesus explains to the Sadducees in Matthew 22. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection from the dead and Jesus disputes their claim and example by stating the over-arching truth that in the resurrection there is no marriage, but we will be sexless as the angels are. The authority of a man to the woman will end in the resurrection.

However, in the resurrection there will be a marriage that will last forever in eternity: the marriage of the Lamb to His Bride. For all eternity the saints, the church, both men and women will be the Bride of Christ, we will all be in the role of the wife to our Husband who is our head. Before the resurrection we who are alive in the church are to live out this image of Christ and His church as an instruction God uses to the angels and demons.

So, in summary, we should be aware of God's intent to use us as the church to instruct the angels and demons regarding authority. As we live out in this life biblical authority, God demonstrates a facet of His manifold wisdom to the angelic realm. This is one reason why we should accurately understand our roles within the church and walk accordingly.

## 1 Timothy 2:9-12

### Mark Carey

Bible study is not easy work. To do it correctly takes time and effort – and even then it is hard not to succumb to personal biases or apply interpretive principles wrongly and miss the intended meaning of the original author.

And after all – that is what we are after: What did the original author intend when he wrote what he did?

Applying consistently sound hermeneutical principles is crucial in attempting to understand any piece of literature – and that is certainly true when it comes to the Bible. God communicated His revelation through a human author using words: verbs, nouns, participles, etc. And what God communicated and the author wrote down was without error. Trying to interpret what that author wrote down is the tricky part because we are subject to error.

As we look at these key passages of Scripture relating to the role of women in the church, we realize that there are different perspectives, various interpretations and conclusions drawn and because of that, it can be confusing and frustrating in trying to figure out just what God has said on this subject. However, I believe that if sound principles of interpretation are applied properly, we can come to understand each passage's meaning – maybe not fully; maybe it will take more time and effort and prayerful study, but a correct interpretation can be reached.



1 Timothy 2:8-15 is one of those key passages of Scripture that must be understood to have a correct understanding of God's heart in the matter of the role of women within the church. Paul wrote:

*8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.*

*9 Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,*

*10 but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.*

*11 A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.*

*12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.*

*13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.*

*14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.*

*15 But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.*

Verses 11 and 12 are the key verses in this discussion about the role of women in the church, and volumes upon volumes have been written about these verses. But a quick reading of them would indicate that something is being prohibited by Paul – the question is what. Understanding the context is crucial in answering that question.

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 3:14-15,

*14I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;*

*15but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.*

Conducting ourselves properly in the “household of God” was obviously important to the Lord which is why He inspired Paul to write to Timothy. Some of Paul’s instructions of that proper “conduct” had to do with guarding against false doctrine (1:3-11); some about proper church leadership (3:1-13; 5:17-20); how church “family” members should treat one another (5:1-16; 6:17-19); and general directives for Timothy as he shepherds the church in Ephesus (1:18-20; 4:6-10, 11-16; 5:21-25; 6:20-21). Some of Paul’s instructions focused upon the gathering of the church and the proper decorum when worshippers met together (2:8-15). This is what the passage we are considering is concerned with. Paul wants Timothy to guard against any kind of disruption during the church service and he addresses both men and women. In 2:8 he starts with the men.

2:8 -- *Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.*

- *“in every place”* = this phrase indicates Paul is concerned with the church gathered and how they ought to “conduct themselves.” ( Cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:8.) Wherever the church meets to worship (“in every place”) the men are to lift up “holy hands” in prayer.
- The word for “men” is *aner* meaning the male sex, as opposed to the female sex. Men are to conduct themselves with holiness and avoid any wrath and dissension.
- The way the verse is written, the directive is for men to pray, and when they do, they are to do it with a holy and reverent attitude and not with wrath or dissension. Apparently the way the early church conducted their worship service, men could get quite agitated. 1 Cor. 14:26 says, *“When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”* Paul goes on to say that only two or three “prophets” should speak and others were to “pass judgment.” And when a *“revelation is made to another who is seated, let the first keep silent . . . so that all may learn and all may be exhorted” (14:29-31).* Paul also says in vs. 40 that all things should be done *“properly and in an orderly manner.”*

2:9-10 -- *Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.*

- Paul’s directive to women also has to do with their attitudes. He directs them to dress properly, not ostentatiously to draw attention to themselves, but modestly and to make their claim to godliness through their good works.
- According to Gary Hoag (*Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to Timothy*, pp. 61-99) and Steven M. Baugh (“A Foreign World,” in *Women in the Church*, 3rd edition) there is first century evidence that the hair styles of prominent women in Rome, like the wives of the emperors, impacted how women in Ephesus and elsewhere were wearing their hair. This is captured in the term “braided hair.” This also carried over to the wealthy women in Ephesus who were part of the Artemis/Isis cult that was well entrenched in Ephesian society. Thus how one wore their hair or the kind of clothes and accessories they wore could be a status symbol, and Paul is saying let your godly behavior be your status symbol.
- NOTE: Steven Baugh also points out that even with the Temple of Artemis, Ephesian society was very typical of the Greco-Roman metropolitan centers of the day. Ephesus was not unique and in no way was a hotbed of feminist society (as egalitarians commonly assert).

**2:11-12 -- A woman must quietly (KJV – in silence) receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.**

2:11

- First of all, the change from the plural of vv. 9-10 to the singular in vs. 11 simply reveals that Paul is speaking generically of all women. He doesn't have one particular woman in mind in the Ephesian church.
- Furthermore, although the terms *aner* (man) and *gune* (woman) are the same words that can mean "husband" or "wife," it is important to understand that the context is what determines the meaning. In this context, Paul has been talking about men in general and women in general (2:8-10 = men are to lift up holy hands and pray; women are to adorn themselves properly). Nowhere in the context is there a shift to husbands and wives.

Some writers say that because there is some similar wording with 1 Peter 3:1-7, which clearly speaks to husbands and wives, that this is how we should understand the words in 1 Timothy 2. However, the key hermeneutical principle is that the immediate context determines meaning and the context of 1 Timothy shows us Paul is referring generically to men and women. It seems improbable that Paul would insert a teaching on husbands and wives in the midst of his teaching on worship order in the church. Furthermore, despite some parallels with 1 Peter 3, there are still clear differences.

The context in 1 Peter tells us that *aner* and *gune* mean husband and wife – the context in 1 Tim. 2 tells us he is referring generically to men and women. If one insists he is talking about husbands and wives in 2:11-12, then why isn't Paul talking about husbands and wives in 2:8-10?

- “quietly” or “in silence” = the same word is used in 2:2 = to lead a tranquil and quiet life. This refers to a quiet demeanor and spirit that is peaceable instead of argumentative. It's repeated again in 2:12.
- Secondly, women should learn “in all submission,” which again speaks to a woman's demeanor and general attitude toward the teaching of God's Word in the gathered church meeting. Just because the concept of “submission” is used in Ephesians 5 of wives being submissive to their husbands doesn't mean that's the meaning here. Again, context determines meaning. Paul is calling upon women to have a respectful and accepting attitude as the Word is being taught in the church. Certainly this should also be the attitude of any man sitting under the teaching of God's Word as well, but there was something happening in the early church that required Paul to specifically call out women and direct them to learn quietly and submissively.

By the way, notice that women are not hindered to learn the Word. This verse doesn't prohibit learning theology and truth, only a disruptive and unsubmissive attitude while learning.

2:12 -- has been the “ground zero” of the debate regarding the role of women.

- Some believe the prohibition here was only directed at the particular church that Timothy was leading and therefore has no relevant application to churches today. This has to be rejected because Paul actually ties his directive back to the order of creation in 2:13-14 as we will see shortly. In other words, Paul is communicating timeless principles that are grounded in creation order.
- The key to understanding this verse centers on two infinitives that are connected together by a conjunction.
  - Those two infinitives connected by a conjunction are “to teach” and “to exercise authority over.” *“I do not permit a woman to teach nor exercise authority over a man.”*
  - There are a couple of key syntactical and lexical issues in this small phrase that are crucial to understand correctly if we are going to interpret this phrase correctly.

- First of all the lexical issues. The Greek word for the second infinitive is the word *authenteo*. Some writers insist this word has a negative connotation to it so that it should be translated to *domineer over a man in an improper way*. Thus what Paul is prohibiting, they say, is an improper, domineering attitude that some women have within the church.
- The verb *authenteo* is a rare word used only here in the N.T. and can be found only seven or eight times prior to the fourth century A.D. (and about 114 times altogether) (Wolters p. 66 in Women in the Church, 3rd ed.). Thus there is not much evidence to go on.
- It was probably derived from the noun form, *authentēs* – but there were two different meanings for this noun in ancient Greek: “murderer” and “master.” “Murderer” is attested to 24 times in the Attic Greek literature of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. After that this meaning is rare and is taken over by the meaning of “master.” There are 30 other cases of the use of this noun up until AD 312 – and in each of these cases the meaning is not in a negative connotation. Again – that’s the noun form. The verbal form, *authenteo*, is found only eight times prior to AD 312, and a little over 100 times thereafter – the overwhelming majority use is not in a negative light but neutral, “master.”



- Thus, to understand *authenteo* in a negative way does not fit the overall lexical evidence.
- Furthermore, some writers attempt to make the case that the two infinitives are merged together to convey a singular idea: “to teach *domineeringly over a man*” (the first infinitive merges with the second infinitive which conveys the negative idea of dominating over someone in an improper way. And thus Paul is prohibiting a woman to teach in a dominating way over a man).
- However, first of all, the conjunction used is the word *oude*. *oude* is a coordinating conjunction, meaning that its normal use is not to join two separate ideas into a single idea but to join two separate concepts that retain their distinctiveness, yet can be close enough to convey a larger overall idea. Thus, Paul’s intent is not to prohibit women “teaching authoritatively” or “teaching in a *domineering way*.” Rather, Paul is prohibiting two things: teaching and exercising authority over men in the local assembly.
- In addition, the pattern in the Greek syntax is that when two infinitives are connected with this coordinating conjunction (*oude*), they share the same force: either both are positive or both are negative . . . but not one positive and one negative.

- The first infinitive (“to teach”) is a positive action in the Pastoral epistles (1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2) -- unless there are contextual qualifiers associated with it (as in Titus 1:11). There is nothing in 2:12 that would indicate improper or negative teaching. Therefore, the second infinitive that is connected with “to teach” must also have a positive force to it – not negative.
- Thus, Paul is not talking about false or improper teaching and false or improper authority – as if what he is writing against are women who teach false doctrine or exercise authority in a domineering fashion. The syntax and lexical evidence won’t permit that. And in fact, all major Bible translations down through the years do not put a negative spin on this phrase.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Given the syntactical and lexical evidence, I believe one must only conclude that Paul is instructing that when the Church gathers, women are not to be the teachers or spiritual authorities over men, but are to exhibit an attitude in learning God’s Word when the church is formally gathered of a submissive and quiet spirit.

## **The Salvation of the Woman in 1 Timothy 2:13-15**

### **Don Den Hartog**

*“Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.” NKJV*

*“But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.” NASB*

*“Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety.” KJV*

*“But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety.” NIV*

*“Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” ESV*

*“ὁ δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, ἐὰν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἀγιασμῷ μετὰ σωφροσύνης.” Westcott & Hort The New Testament In The Original Greek, & Farstand & Hodges, The Greek New Testament According To The Majority Text Greek New Testament. (Both identical.)*

### **The Context of 1 Timothy 2:13-15**

#### *The Broad Context (1 Timothy 3:15)*

*“but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:15)*

1 Timothy 3:15, a thematic statement (i.e. stating the purpose of the epistle).

*The Immediate Context (1 Timothy 2:1-12)*

τοὺς ἄνδρας (“the men” in 2:8) & ἄνδρός (“man” in 2:12)

**The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:13-15**

*“For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.”*  
NKJV

Paul is certainly not stating that men are immune from deception.

The identification of false teaching in 1 Timothy.

The term γέγονεν (“fell”) in 2:14 is in the perfect tense.

Saved from what in 2:15? (Cf. 1 Tim.4:16)

The term τεκνογονίας (“childbearing”, plural), modifies μείνωσιν (“they continue”, 3rd person future plural), rather than σωθήσεται (“shall be saved”, 3rd person singular).

Paul writes in his second epistle to Timothy, “...when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.” (2 Timothy 1:5)

And again in 2 Timothy 3:14-15, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Old Testament Examples: The midwives of Exodus 1.  
Hannah of 1 Samuel 1 & 2.

## 1 Corinthians 11 & 14

### Mark Carey

1 Timothy 2:11-15 is the clearer passage. It addresses more definitively the role of women in the formal gathering of the Church. 1 Corinthians gives us a window into the life of one particular church, the Corinthian Church, and though we may not understand conclusively some of the issues going on there, we do learn some general principles of how God intended His Church to operate when they met together.

The key verses in question are in 14:34-35 –

*The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.*

To understand these verses we must first understand what Paul meant by that last prepositional phrase “in church.”

If we go back to 11:17, it is obvious that Paul begins to write to the Corinthian church instructions regarding their assembled meetings. Verse 17 talks about “I do not praise you because you come together not for the better but for the worse.” Again, vs. 18: “when you come together,” 11:20 – “Therefore when you meet together,” 11:33 – “when you come together to eat,” 14:19 – “in the church...” 14:23 – “therefore if the whole church assembles together,” 14:26 – “when you assemble,” 14:28 – “in the church.”

So the instruction given in 11:17--14:35 has to do with activities that take place when the local church formally assembles to partake of the Lord's Table and participate in public instruction and worship.

According, therefore, to 14:34-35, Paul was prohibiting women from "speaking." In the immediate context, "speaking" involved several things. 14:26 says – **What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.**

It seems that Paul is focusing on revelatory or instructional communication within the assembly and he instructs that women were to keep silent in the assembled gathering in those specific areas.

Paul delineates specifically in vs. 27 speaking in tongues and in vs. 29 prophesying.

*If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; 28 but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. (But then in vs. 34 he says) women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak.*

Apparently, when the church gathered for worship, women were not allowed to participate in the conveying of God's revealed truth via teaching or speaking in tongues or prophetic utterances.

It is commonly held that in the Corinthian church that after a prophet spoke others would critique or even argue with what had been spoken. Some hold, therefore, that what is also being prohibited is women speaking out in this “passing judgment” upon the prophets who are prophesying (14:29). However, the little phrase “**and let others pass judgment**” does not necessarily mean speaking out in some evaluative or judgmental way. All Paul was saying is that the Corinthians needed to be discerning regarding who was claiming to speak revelation from God and being a “spokesman” for God in prophesying.

The conclusion the FBC elders have drawn is that the apostle Paul was prohibiting women from speaking revelatory truth when the church was formally assembled for worship and instruction and that the communicating of revealed truth from God was to be presented by men. Women were to keep silent in that particular area. In fact, vs. 35 says it is “improper” or “disgraceful” for women to speak in this way. This coincides with what Paul said in 1 Timothy 2.

Notice, also, that Paul ties this instruction to the “Law” (“**just as the Law also says**”). Paul is basing his instruction not on something unique to the Corinthian church, but on the timeless principles ordained by God of the proper roles of men and women in creation order as found in the Pentateuch, especially Genesis. In other words, the solution to this problem in the Corinthian church was a timeless truth grounded in the O.T. Again, this coincides with 1 Timothy 2 also.



But this seems to potentially contradict what Paul had written earlier in chapter 11 when he gives instruction about women “praying and prophesying.”

***But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved. (11:5)***

Clearly women can pray and prophesy; Paul is just instructing them to do it properly. But the apparent contradiction between this passage and 14:34-35 is nullified by understanding the distinction between the different settings of the two passages. As noted previously, Paul’s instruction about the formal assembly meetings of the church begins in 11:17. What Paul is addressing prior to that is more general instructions regarding how the church should function.

The general principle Paul is wanting to communicate is found in 10:31 – ***“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*** God’s glory is what should be foremost in the mind of believers, and God is glorified when we do not seek our own profit (10:33) but to seek the profit of others. And then Paul adds in 11:1 – ***“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”*** Paul’s life was a testimony of that Christ-like attitude of caring for the benefit of others ***“so that they may be saved”*** (10:33) and thus living a life that glorifies God.

These instructions go beyond just when the church is gathered for worship. In fact in 10:27 Paul is talking about how to behave when invited into an unbeliever’s home and is offered meat to eat that had been sacrificed to idols.

Now in chapter 11, Paul addresses some concerns he has with believers in Corinth who were violating the principles he had just stated: i.e., seeking the benefit of others and glorifying God. The issues involved the proper God-ordained roles (11:3) and the appropriate behavior, specifically for women, in fulfilling their role. Apparently, the conduct of some women was bringing shame on their husbands and discrediting the God-given headship role.

1 Corinthians 11:3-9 says:

*But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake. (1 Cor. 11:3-9)*

Women were obviously praying and prophesying. Paul wanted to make sure they were doing it with the proper heart attitude. However, starting in 11:17, Paul begins to focus on proper order within the gathered church services; and based on his instructions in chapter 14, women were not allowed to speak prophetic utterances when the church had assembled together as already noted.

Chapter 14, however, says nothing about women not praying in the worship gathering, nor does 1 Timothy 2. Men are specifically called upon to pray in 1 Timothy 2:8 but to say women can't pray in the worship gathering is an argument from silence.

How can the Corinthian women bring an appropriate sense of honor to their husbands? By having their heads covered when they pray and prophesy in public. This would have been very important in that first century Corinthian context. This simple act of submission and humility reflects the goodness of God's design in the creation order and keeps glory moving away from oneself. In doing so, not only is the husband honored, but more importantly, God is honored and glorified.

**FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH**  
**The Elder's Statement on**  
**The Role of Women in the Church**  
**October 2020**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Bible is not silent on this topic of the role of women within the church. No matter your position regarding women's roles in the church, it is easy for us to agree that numerous locations in the New Testament address this subject. Passages such as 1 Timothy 2:9-15, 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are the common verses that have been analyzed and referenced in books and articles written over the years. These passages are at the center of the interpretive debate over this issue.

Unfortunately, there is various disagreement over two critical issues: (1) what these passages are teaching (the interpretation of the text) and (2) how these passages should be carried out within the church (the application of the text).

The most important of these two areas of contention is the first disagreement: understanding what the text is teaching. There is always only one interpretation of a passage; one correct intended meaning by the original author. There is probably one intended application by the original author as well. However, there may still be multiple ways the passage can be legitimately applied depending on such factors as time, place, culture, etc.

Evangelicals who take the Bible seriously would all agree that God has designed certain gender roles within the church – and actually, within society at large.

And most evangelicals who take the Bible seriously would affirm that passages such as 1 Timothy 3:1-2 and Titus 1:5-6 teach that the role of elders, at least, has been designed by God to be filled by qualified men. But is that the only role that men should exclusively fill? Is every other role within the church open to both men and women equally?

Since Hebrews 13:17 teaches they will have to give an account to God for their role of leading Fellowship Bible Church, the FBC elders are concerned about what God's Word says regarding the role of women. Therefore they are convinced that where the Bible speaks, they need to speak and where the Bible is silent, they need to be silent. When reading the key biblical passages on the role of women in the church (1 Corinthians 11, 14; 1 Timothy 2) it would seem that the Apostle Paul places limitations on that role. The challenge is to "rightly handle the Word of Truth" and attempt to understand what these limitations are and then to properly apply it in our local church context in a way that honors God's Word and glorifies His name.

### **WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS**

***A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.***

***1 Timothy 2:11-12***

***The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35***

Verses such as these are quite shocking in our 21<sup>st</sup> century modern culture. Verses like these embarrass many Christians today and cause the unsaved world to scoff at our “irrelevant and archaic” beliefs.

Granted, these are indeed difficult verses that fly in the face of our modern-day culture. As previously stated, there is much disagreement among Christians as to how to understand and apply them. To reiterate, the common disagreements on these verses are related to (1) how to interpret them and then (2) how to apply them (even if there is an essential agreement in the interpretation).

### INTERPRETATION

Regarding how to interpret these verses, some Christians today scramble to come up with logical explanations as to why these verses aren't saying what they seem to be saying. Attempts at interpreting such verses have led to various conclusions:

1. These verses reflect the apostle Paul's biases against women and should be ignored.
2. These verses reveal certain localized problems in the churches to whom Paul was writing but are not binding for us today.
3. These verses, if exegeted properly, are indeed prohibiting something that is binding on us today.

In keeping with historic, orthodox teaching, and sound hermeneutical exegesis, the elders at FBC believe that the third conclusion is the best. 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 are indeed relevant today and are prohibiting something that should continue to be prohibited in our churches today. Key questions we must ask ourselves are these: What is being prohibited in these passages? What was Paul not allowing in 1 Timothy 2:12? What did Paul consider to be “improper” (or even “disgraceful” or “shameful”) in 1 Corinthians 14:35?

After years of careful and prayerful study, both as individuals and together collectively as an elder board, the elders of FBC have consistently concluded the following:

- These verses have to do with how things should be ordered when the local church gathers collectively for regular, weekly worship.
  - 1 Corinthians 11:17 – “you come together not for better but for the worse.”
  - 1 Corinthians 11:18 – “when you come together as a church . . .”
  - 1 Corinthians 14:19 – “however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind . . .”
  - 1 Corinthians 14:23 – “if therefore the whole church should assemble together . . .”
  - 1 Corinthians 14:26 – “When you assemble..”

- 1 Timothy 3:15 – *“I am writing so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church...”*
- These verses are prohibiting the exercise of doctrinal teaching and directional authority over the church by women in these gathered assembly meetings.
  - 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 – *“let the women keep silent in the churches . . . for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.”*
  - 1 Timothy 2:11-12 – *“let a woman quietly receive instruction...but I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”*
- These verses are based not on some localized problem with these 1<sup>st</sup> century churches but are based on how God has designed His creation order from the beginning.
  - 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 – *“For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.”*
  - 1 Timothy 2:13-14 – *“For it was Adam who was first created and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman . . .”*



These verses, when properly exegeted and interpreted, teach that when the church is assembled for corporate worship, women are to take on a quiet and submissive role while the function of doctrinal instruction and directional authority (leadership) is reserved for men.

### **APPLICATION**

Even if this interpretation is held by everyone, not everyone will agree on how to apply this teaching. What constitutes the weekly gathering of the assembled body? What about a Community Group setting? What about a Biblical Training Center (BTC) class? Furthermore, what constitutes doctrinal teaching and exercising authority? Does singing a solo or reading a passage of Scripture? How about sharing a personal testimony in the assembly meeting or co-teaching a BTC class with a spouse?

Such questions, of course, arise from the fact that our modern-day church ministries look a lot different from the first-century church to whom the apostle Paul wrote. The first-century church did not have BTC classes or women's and men's ministries, or youth and children's ministries. The early church gathered the first day of the week, celebrated the Lord's Table together, received instruction from God's Word, and engaged in the mutual edification of sharing spiritual gifts with one another. They had one overseeing body for this simple structure – a group of spiritually qualified men called elders who were solely responsible for the spiritual direction of each local church.

The FBC elders desire to be true to the timeless principles and functions set forth in the Scriptures, but when applying the non-negotiable functions within our church body, we want to be careful not to go beyond what God intends for His Church as we work out the “forms” of those functions. Though the functions should not change, the forms can change, and we have to guard against forms becoming legalistically entrenched and elevated to the level of biblical functions.

The FBC elders have re-evaluated the application of the Scriptural teaching on the role of women within the church and have concluded the following:

- Women should use their gifts to the glory of God within the formal worship gathering except in roles of obvious leadership and doctrinal exposition (i.e., primary worship pastor, teaching pastor, elder prayer role, etc.).
- Women may offer prayers, songs of praise, and personal testimonies that are part of the approved worship liturgy under the authority of the Worship Pastor.
- Women may assist in the welcoming ministries of FBC, as directed by our Deacon ministry, which includes greeting, hosting, ushering, collecting the offering, and serving communion as needed.

- Women may use their teaching gifts in a mixed-gender audience in venues other than the formal worship gathering upon elder approval and under pastoral oversight. This would include such things as leading a counseling conference session or assisting in the teaching of a BTC class, provided there is a male co-teacher.

Knowing that there will be further applicational questions asked concerning other various ministry opportunities for women, the FBC elders reserve the right to evaluate and decide such opportunities as they arise. However, it is our desire that women will increasingly sense greater freedom and a culture of “pursuit” rather than a culture of “permission” within our FBC body. We regret and apologize that such ministry pursuit has been stifled and the giftedness of women undervalued in the past. We believe that through God’s wisdom and leading of the Holy Spirit, we can be true to God’s heart for His Church regarding timeless gender roles within the home and the church family while rightly honoring the giftedness and roles of women within both institutions.

**AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS**  
**THE ROLE OF WOMEN AT FBC**

WE **AFFIRM** that both men and women have been created equally in the image of God and are entitled to the privileges and held accountable to the responsibilities that come with reflecting the image of God.

WE **DENY** that either gender has been given or is entitled to greater dignity and worth in society, the home, the church, or the coming kingdom of God.

WE **AFFIRM** that there is a Divine order in creation and that Adam, being created first and given the initial commands of God, was in a position of spiritual leadership to carry out those commands and that Eve was created as Adam's complementary helper, uniquely made in God's image to carry out her role.

WE **DENY** that the Divine order of the creation of man and woman and the different roles designed for them by God detracts from the woman's value, dignity, or importance since she is equally created in God's image.

**WE AFFIRM** that Jesus all throughout His earthly ministry befriended women, taught women, accorded them legal rights, and offered them the full benefits of discipleship. From the beginning to the end of His ministry, women played vital roles. However, we also affirm that Jesus selected twelve men to be in His leadership team of apostles.

**WE DENY** that by selecting these twelve men to be His apostles, Jesus's high view of women was in any way diminished or invalidated or that He could be labeled sexist.

**WE AFFIRM** that the primary spiritual leadership role of the church, as stated in the New Testament, is the office of elder and is to be held by spiritually qualified men.

**WE DENY** that male leadership in the role of spiritual overseers is only relegated to the First Century church and is not applicable today.

**WE AFFIRM**, likewise, that roles of church-wide spiritual oversight, such as Pastors and Pastoral Leadership Teams, are extensions of the role of elders that work in conjunction with elders and in tandem with elders and should also be held by spiritually qualified men.

**WE DENY** the claim that men in such spiritual oversight roles lessens the effectual overall ministry of women and ministry to women.

**WE AFFIRM** that male leaders, to be effective in their oversight roles, need to pursue the voices of women to help shape the spiritual direction of the church and to honor women's roles as co-equal image bearers of God.

**WE DENY** that male leadership can provide effective spiritual oversight without listening to and incorporating the spiritual concerns, insights, and wisdom that women can and must offer in order for FBC to fulfill their mission of "preparing and deploying dependent disciples of Jesus Christ."

**WE AFFIRM** that spiritual gifts are distributed to members of the Body of Christ regardless of gender, race, social standing, etc. and should be used "for the common good of the Body" in building up the Body towards Christ-likeness.

**WE DENY** that restrictions placed on how certain gifts (e.g., teaching) are used by women within the assembled gathering of the church negates their value or hinders the impact of the use of spiritual gifts beyond these restrictions.

**WE AFFIRM** that all members of the church, in keeping with Hebrews 13:17, should be in glad submission to the elder body and that all should be in glad and sacrificial submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

**WE DENY** that all women are subject to the leadership and authority of all men. We further **DENY** that biblical submission is indicative of subordination or inequality or that it lessens the co-equal image bearing of God.