

LIVING BEAUTIFULLY AS A WOMAN IN GOD'S FAMILY, PART 2

1 Timothy 2:9-15

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Note: The following are the pastor's notes used in preaching this message. This is not a complete, word-for-word transcription of what was preached. These notes serve as a companion to the complete message, which is available by listening to the audio version. Bible quotes are primarily from ESV.

INTRODUCTION

It's my prayer that this text, when diligently interpreted and applied, will help women in Christ to live life in God's family more beautifully than ever, which in turn will make God's family more beautiful than ever to Christ.

I. THE PLAIN, SIMPLE, HISTORIC INTERPRETATION OF THIS PASSAGE

Last week we saw guidelines for men in the corporate gathering (1 Timothy 2:8); this week Paul moves on to discuss guidelines for women as well.

A. Guidelines for women in the corporate worship gathering (1 Timothy 2:9-12)

1. A woman's adornment in corporate worship (1 Timothy 2:9-10)

a. Ordered

This key verb "to adorn" in 1 Timothy 2:9 is actually very helpful as a guideline. The verb in the Greek is *kosmeo*, where we get the word *cosmetics*. Its basic meaning is "to put in order," but the word also means to decorate, make neat, beautify. The adjective form is *kosmios*, which is the word *respectable* three words after *adorn* in 1 Timothy 2:9.

b. Modest

Modesty means to dress in a way that does not draw attention to yourself, to reserve yourself by not putting on display what the world says to put on display. The heart disposition behind modesty is humility.

c. Moderate

We know that Paul means *to avoid the ostentatious display of these things*, as some wealthy women and courtesans—or consorts—used to do. They used to wear their hair way up in the air with gold clips and fancy gems and pearls braided into their hair to hold the whole hairdo up in a massive display that drew undue attention to themselves. That style is what Paul was addressing here, but look, the principle is still in play as well. Women, be moderate in what you wear.

2. A woman's attitude in corporate worship (1 Timothy 2:11)

a. Learn quietly

The word for quiet here is the same word back up in 1 Timothy 2:2. Elsewhere, Paul uses the term to mean quiet, in the sense of a disposition of order, tranquility, peaceful, and at rest (1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12; 1 Peter 3:3-4). In each occurrence and in others, the term means a quieted disposition, not to be silent.

b. Learn submissively

This term is more familiar, and means simply "to fall in under." Women, in case you're feeling picked on with submission, be reminded that all of us are under submission in different ways (listen to audio of the sermon for multiple examples here).

We cannot say that women are being picked on with submission. Every Christian is called to submit in different ways.

3. A woman's action in corporate worship (1 Timothy 2:12)

a. She cannot teach men

Teach means to instruct. So women may not instruct men in the gathered church setting in the Word. Note the limitation—women not teaching is limited to men specifically. Too, the context has been dealing with instruction in the life of the gathered church.

b. She cannot exercise authority over men

This word is the single most contested word in this most contested passage. It does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament, and so has been interpreted by scholars attacking the historic interpretation to mean “abusive authority,” or “usurping authority.” But through computer analysis, recent research has scoured the entire body of extra-biblical Greek literature, and has found just over 100 occurrences of the word in the ancient Greek language, and in every occurrence, the term simply means “the exercise of authority,” not “the abuse of authority.” Thus, what Paul means here is exactly what it says, a woman cannot exercise any authority over a man in the gathering of the church.

This, by the way, is in line with 1 Corinthians 14:33-35. The word for silent is indeed the word silent in the Greek, but notice that silence and speaking (1 Corinthians 14:34) in context clearly refers to different people getting up and speaking authoritative revelation—specifically speaking in tongues. Thus, in 1 Corinthians, Paul was prohibiting women speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:27ff) in the corporate worship service. So the issue in Corinth is similar, but not exactly the same.

B. Reasons for women’s guidelines (1 Timothy 2:13-15)

1. Reason #1: the created order (1 Timothy 2:13)

Paul grounds his instruction in 1 Timothy 2:9-12 in Genesis 2:21-23, the Garden of Eden, before the fall, and his reasoning is simple: Adam was created first by God, then Eve. God made Eve from a rib taken out of Adam.

2. Reason #2: the fall and curse (1 Timothy 2:14)

The fall illustrates the consequences of a reversal in leadership roles. Part of what was the insidious nature of the fall was Satan’s approaching Eve, not Adam, thus creating a dynamic where Eve led, and Adam followed. Paul states here that Eve sinned because she was deceived, implying by contrast that Adam sinned willfully and with full knowledge.

3. Reason #3: grace amidst the fall (1 Timothy 2:15)

There are at least ten different interpretations of this verse, but the one that makes the most sense in context is: spiritual salvation through the birth of Christ.

- The context of Eve. *Who will be saved?* Eve will be (context).
- The preceding context. The flow from the Garden (1 Timothy 2:13) to the fall (1 Timothy 2:14) lends itself to seeing 1 Timothy 2:15 as salvation from that fall.
- The definite article before *childbearing*: thus *THE childbirth/childbearing*. This indicates Paul had a specific birth in mind, not just childbearing in general (cf. Genesis 3:15).
- The verb *she will be saved* is understood everywhere else in the Pastoral Epistles as spiritual salvation, and is definitely the only way the word salvation is understood in 1 Timothy specifically.
- So the sense is that she—Eve—and they—all women—will be saved through *the childbirth* (a la Genesis 3:15)—the birth of the Messiah, if they appropriate and then live out the faith and love and holiness they profess.
- This view seems to best uphold the normal use of *salvation* to mean salvation through faith in Christ, as well as to best uphold the context moving into the verse.

With those reasons in 1 Timothy 2:13-15 in mind thus grounding Paul’s instruction for women in the corporate worship setting.

C. So what can women do in the church?!?

In short, anything not contained in Paul’s instruction here! The local church is wide open for women to serve:

1. Women should teach the Word to other women (Titus 2:3-5)

In terms of teaching and leadership giftedness, our women are fantastically gifted, while fulfilling their role with ease and freedom, because they’re not burdened by 1 Timothy hanging over their head—they’re freed by this text to teach the Word in the ways God has designed!

2. **Women should teach children (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14; Acts 16:1)**

Look at the difference a grandma and mom made for the worldwide mission of the church—Timothy was a product of his mom’s teaching him!

In our context, this happens every week when around 500 children gather in Sunday school, and largely our women teach the next generation.

3. **Women helping leaders lead**

- Though our pastoral staff team run the office upstairs, and thus the operation of the church, you of course know that the women who assist the pastoral staff are the engine that make the church go.
- Where would any pastor be without the help of godly women assisting them? The church would collapse without godly women’s help and support!
- And consider as well the huge impact that the wives of the pastors and elders have on this church! They may not lead their husbands, but have you seen how our pastors’ wives sweetly and soundly help us out? We’re not leading this church without our wives’ help!

CONCLUSION

Women, a quiet, submissive spirit is beautiful in God’s eyes. And know this, without your strong, sweet work, the church falls apart. We need you to serve in all the ways you possibly can, for the sake of this church—for the sake of the gospel—for the sake of God’s design as His image-bearer. With the urgency we pressed the men with last week, women should feel this text pressing on you now today. As you heed the guidelines for gathering with God’s people—beautiful adornment, arising from beautiful attitudes, followed by beautiful actions, you will make God’s family more *beautiful than ever*.