



A Firm Foundation

FOLLOWING THE FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMATION

Welcome & Opening Icebreaker

The Millennium Tower: In 2009, a luxury 58-story skyscraper was completed in San Francisco. By 2016, engineers discovered it was sinking and tilting—eventually leaning nearly 29 inches at the top. The issue? Instead of drilling all the way to solid bedrock (200 feet deep), developers settled for a "friction pile" design only 60 to 90 feet deep in sand. The sand shifted under the weight. Repairs finally wrapped up in 2023 at a cost of over \$120 million to anchor it to bedrock.

- **Icebreaker Question: What is something you own or have built that looked great on the outside but turned out to have a major structural flaw or broken piece underneath?**

Part 1: The Foundation and the "Slump Test"

Read Matthew 7:24–27

In construction, a "slump test" is performed on freshly mixed concrete before a foundation is poured to test its water-to-cement ratio and ensure its long-term integrity.

1. **Jesus says the difference between a wise builder and a foolish builder isn't whether they *hear* His words, but whether they *do* them. Why is it so tempting to mistake "hearing truth" for "building on truth"?**
2. **The sermon noted that many today build their lives on cultural norms or the opinions of others. In what areas of daily life do you feel the strongest cultural pressure to compromise on the plain meaning of Scripture?**

Part 2: God's Design for Men and Women (1 Timothy 2:8–12)

Read 1 Timothy 2:8–12

This is an undeniably challenging text in our modern culture, serving as a "slump test" for how we view the authority of God's Word.

1. **To the Men (v. 8): Paul calls men to pray "lifting holy hands" without anger or disputing.**
 - **Why do you think men are uniquely prone to substituting prayer with anger, control, or passivity?**
 - **What does it look like for a man to practically "lift holy hands" as a spiritual leader in his home or church today?**
2. **To the Women (v. 9–10): Paul calls women to focus on modesty and good works rather than external vanity or seeking attention.**
 - **How does the pressure to look for validation through materialism or physical attention challenge women today? What does a life adorned with "good works" look like in modern life?**

3. **The Hard Saying (v. 11–12):** Paul speaks of women learning "quietly" (Greek: *hesychia*, meaning peaceful, orderly, not meddling) and states he does not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man in the church assembly.
 - **Why does our culture have such a visceral, negative reaction to the word "submission"?** How does the Bible define submission differently than the world does?

Part 3: Is it Contextual or Universal? (1 Timothy 2:13–15)

Read 1 Timothy 2:13–15, Genesis 3:6, 16–17

Some argue this command was just for the city of Ephesus because of the massive cult of the goddess Artemis, where women ruled the temple. However, Paul doesn't point to Artemis; he points back to Genesis.

1. **The Great Role Reversal: Paul anchors his argument in the Created Order (Adam formed first) and the Fallen Order (the deception at the Fall).**
 - **Look at Genesis 3:6.** Where was Adam while Eve was being targeted? How did Adam fail his wife long before he ever bit the fruit?
 - **How do we see this twin temptation play out today:** men falling into *apathy/distraction* and women feeling the burden or desire to *take control*?
2. **The Curse and the Blessing (v. 15):** Paul references women being "saved through childbearing." We know salvation is by grace through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8–9).
 - **In the sermon, this was explained as a link from Eve to Mary—that while a woman brought the curse into the world, a woman also brought the Savior into the world.** How does understanding God's grand story of redemption change how you view the distinct, unique roles He gave to men and women?

Part 4: The Sinking Sand of Compromise

In 2019, theologian Colin Smothers wrote an article for *9Marks* demonstrating a historical reality: churches and denominations that compromise on biblical gender roles (moving to egalitarianism) are more likely to compromise on biblical sexuality and marriage down the road.

1. **Why is modifying or cutting corners on the "hard parts" of Scripture a slippery slope? If we decide we can overrule Paul on gender roles because of modern culture, what stops us from overruling Scripture on everything else?**
2. **Throughout the New Testament, we see incredible women playing vital roles: Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary Magdalene, and the Woman at the Well.** How does the Bible demonstrate that a restriction on *authority over men* does not mean women are less gifted, less valued, or less important to the mission of the Gospel?

Application & Prayer

Take a moment of personal reflection or quiet confession before sharing prayer requests.

- **Men:** Are you leaning into spiritual leadership, or have you drifted into apathy? Where do you need to start "lifting holy hands" in your home or church?
- **Women:** Is your primary focus on seeking cultural attention/validation, or on Gospel impact? Are you willing to champion and support God's design for order in the church and home?

Group Prayer: Pray for your church and your families. Ask God for the courage to stand firmly on the bedrock of His Word, even when the cultural sand beneath us begins to shift.

