



First Baptist Church Selmer

"ORDER IN THE... CHURCH!" • BIBLICAL AUTHORITY •
1 TIMOTHY 2:9-15; ROMANS 16:1-2; TITUS 2:1-5 • 3/24/2024

MAIN POINT

God-ordained authority is essential to the growth and maturity of a healthy church, reflecting God's good design for creation, the home, and the church.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is your typical reaction when someone tells you that you can't do something?

Did that make you want to do that thing more or less? Why?

Have you realized later that the reason you were told you couldn't do something was because of a very good, understandable reason?

Today's lesson will likely stir many emotions that likely will be coupled with various opinions about the subject. Unfortunately, what Paul was instructing to Timothy specifically for the church in Ephesus has been used oftentimes outside of its original context. It is important not to speak beyond what is in the passage itself nor avoid the passage either. We must faithfully, and respectfully, look into the truth of God's Word.

Paul said, *"I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man"* (1 Tim. 2:12). For the vast majority of church history, this verse has been interpreted to mean that the office of pastor and the formal practice of preaching in corporate worship are both limited to men in the church.

Although the passage may be difficult to understand, the Bible is clear that *"all Scripture is inspired by God"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It would, however, be foolish to limit our understanding of

God's plans for women in the church to this one verse in 1 Timothy. Therefore, today, we will look not only at Paul's command to Timothy concerning women but also the vital role women played in the early church. As we do so, we will see that both women and men are called to proclaim the gospel and make disciples.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIMOTHY 2:9-15.

9 "likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, 10 but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. 11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control." (ESV)

Why would Paul address these specific things to women in the church of Ephesus?

How do Paul's instructions help us see the appropriate inward disposition of the heart for someone living a life of true godliness?

In first-century society, women were often left out of education. Paul was ahead of his time by affirming that women should learn. Both men and women benefit from sound Biblical teaching and preaching. Bible scholars have wrestled with the exact implications of Paul's expectation that, in Christian worship, women should be silent. He was surely not demanding that Christian women never say a word aloud. Being quiet or remaining silent doesn't refer to the volume or absence of one's speech but rather that the things spoken should be peaceable, unlike the frequent disruptive speech occurring in the church of Ephesus.

After all, in 1 Corinthians 11:5, Paul wrote about situations in which women participated vocally in worship. His point was that women should have a teachable spirit, rather than promoting themselves and being disruptive. The submission Paul urged was not a matter of surrendering their minds or their responsibility to judge truth for themselves. Rather,

he was warning against attacking the leaders of the congregation by disrespectful or disorderly conduct.

**Does Paul's teaching here prohibit women from the office of pastor or elder?
Why or why not?**

When Paul said, *"I do not allow"* (v. 12), he was giving more than a personal opinion. He was speaking as one of Christ's apostles as well as through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He was prohibiting women from assuming the role of primary spiritual oversight. This is supported by the qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, both of which limit the office of elders to men. Women were not to teach or to have authority over men in public worship. It's important to remember that Paul's focus was on public worship. It goes beyond the biblical context to apply Paul's instructions towards forbidding women from ever teaching a Sunday School class or from having any leadership roles in any church-related activity. The teaching Paul prohibited for women was that which elders are called to provide: official doctrinal instruction in the Scriptures.

What point did Paul make by bringing up Adam and Eve (vv. 13-14)? How does the gospel help us understand our gender roles?

Why is it important that we recognize that women and men are equal but have different roles in the church?

By bringing up Adam and Eve, Paul rooted the different roles of men and women in God's created order (see 1 Peter 3). Genesis 2 reports that Adam was created first. Only later was Eve created. This order is to be echoed, not only in the Christian home but also in congregational worship. Gender roles are rooted in God's original purposes in the way He created male and female (see 1 Cor. 11:8-9). God gave men and women different roles and responsibilities, all of which have the shared purpose of bringing Him glory.

What does Paul mean in verse 15 when he says that women *"will be saved through childbearing"*?

Certainly, Paul did not mean that childbearing was a good work by which a woman would be saved. Paul is not speaking of salvation in terms of justification but in terms of sanctification. In other words, bearing children is one of the unique ways women can grow in Christlikeness.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 16:1-2 AND TITUS 2:1-5.

(Romans 16) 1 "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well." (ESV)

(Titus 2) 1 "But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. 2 Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled." (ESV)

What do these two passages tell us about the role women played in the early church? What does it tell us about the role women should play in churches today?

What are some examples of vital leadership roles women should fill in the church?

Paul goes out of his way at the end of the Book of Romans to highlight the indispensable ministry contributions of many women, including Phoebe and others. In Titus 2, Paul even encourages women to actively engage in the teaching ministry of the church by teaching other women and children. Though Paul limits the office of pastor to men, as we look over the New Testament, we see clearly that the roles of women and men are equally critical to the health and vitality of the church.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How might our church suffer if we neglect these roles outlined in the passage today?

Why is it important that we not extend Paul's commands for women in the church further than he intended them?

Why is it important for Christian men and women to be aware of their roles in the church?

How are each essential to our church's disciple-making efforts?

PRAYER

Thank God for the women and men He has given your church. Ask Him to use them to make disciples.

COMMENTARY

| 1 TIMOTHY 2:9-15

2:9-10. Good works as Christian women (and men) are to call attention to God, not ourselves. Character, not clothing, should identify us and promote proper corporate worship.

2:11-12. Quietness here means peaceableness. It could be that as women experienced new freedoms within the Christian community at Ephesus, they began to throw off restraint. Their disagreements, questions, and assertions then became not a learning experience but a disruption that worked against true worship. Paul did not want the women to be contentious. Rather, God has an order for leadership and a preference for character which, in the case of women, includes the qualities of peacefulness, gentleness, and the willingness to surrender questions of spiritual authority to church elders. Women were free to question, contemplate, and formulate ideas, but the characteristics of peace and submission were to prevail.

Paul's continued concern is for order, for respect, for a good reputation within the community. The word "*silent*" is used as a noun in 2 Thessalonians 3:12, where people are urged to "*settle down.*" In Acts 11:18, it is used in reference to people who had no further objections; literally they "*held their peace.*" And Paul instructed everyone in 1 Thessalonians 4:11: "*Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life.*"

2:13-14. Paul supported his instructions for men and women upon a theological structure that reaches back to the order of creation and sin's entrance into human affairs. It is a section which is hard to understand in its implications. But it is inspired of God, and so we must attempt to understand what Paul was saying. He declared, "*For Adam was formed first, then Eve.*" It appears that Paul was implying a Biblical authority structure from the very start, even before sin. The order of creation evidenced a role structure that placed man in leadership and woman in a supportive position. Perhaps the difference between life before and after the fall is that these structures and positions of authority changed

from joyful harmony to festering conflict, from loving leadership to insensitive authoritarianism, from willing submission to agitated compliance. However, by returning to the Genesis account, Paul affirmed that these structures existed from the start and were still valid and operative.

2:14. Paul continued to draw on the Genesis record as he wrote, *“Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.”* Paul was not trying to cast all blame for humanity’s mess upon Eve or women in general. Nor was he portraying Adam as better or more spiritual. On the contrary, Adam’s sin was more blatant, more intentional. It is good to remember that Paul was writing a personal letter to a fellow minister and a specific group of believers. Timothy’s mission was made clear from the start (1 Tim. 1:3); he was sorting out truth and deception, order and chaos, propriety and license. This reference to Eve’s deception may be a link in understanding Paul’s concerns—women in the Ephesian church were usurping the authority of the church leaders. Perhaps they were also being carried along by the deceptions of the false teachers. What God says is often contrary to our natural inclinations. But we must remember that we see through the skewed lens of fallen humanity.

2:15. Two points may be made. First, the apostle emphasized that women are included in salvation just as much as men are. Second, Paul encouraged every Christian woman to grow in Christ-like character. Women demonstrate the reality of their relationship with Jesus by continuing in faith, love, and holiness. Childbearing, raising children, and serving as a good mother and wife call for continuing in all of these virtues with good judgment. Paul’s remarks assume that motherhood is a role appointed by God and that it is therefore a high and holy calling. Though universal in scope, salvation carries with it evidence in the life of the one who is saved. It included continuing in faith, love, and holiness. Though addressed specifically to women, in this passage, it is a universal principle—salvation rests with those who bear the marks of genuine Christianity.

| ROMANS 16:1-2

16:1-2. Before Paul begins his greetings to his friends in the church in Rome, he commends to them a fellow believer, Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. It is widely agreed that Phoebe was likely the carrier of Paul’s letter to Rome. Her designation as a servant probably implies a position of responsibility in the church at Cenchrea, perhaps that of deaconess. Paul’s request that she be given any help she may need is doubtless a response to the great help she had been to many. Paul’s reference to Phoebe

as a great help is probably more than just physical assistance, meaning that Phoebe was possibly a woman of means who had helped to support the Cenchranean church and possibly Paul himself.

| TITUS 2:1-5

2:1. The phrase, "*but as for you*" shows the contrast between Titus and the false teachers (see 1:15-16). Instead of teaching based on empty talk and deception, Titus was to ensure that his instructions were consistent with sound teaching. The theme of sound teaching is a constant refrain throughout Paul's letters to Titus and Timothy (see 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9). Such teaching will not only build up the faith of believers, it will protect them from the destructive influences of false teaching.

2:2. Because the older men were those most likely to be looked up to as mature and influential leaders in the body of believers, Paul began with them. His list is similar to the qualifications for overseers from Titus 1. Level-headed literally means "sober." Maturity implies a consistent use of good sense and judgment. To be worthy of respect suggests being dignified, as opposed to being silly or juvenile. Sensible implies being self-controlled or disciplined (see Titus 1:8). Sound in faith, love, and endurance means demonstrating a healthy expression of these great Christian virtues. Instead of the more familiar, "faith, hope, and love," Paul referred to endurance, a quality especially appropriate for older men who might be tempted to "coast" morally in their senior years or to have a sense of uselessness because of their age.

2:3. The apostle directed older women to be reverent in behavior, a unique phrase that is found only here in the New Testament. It focuses on the sacred responsibility Christian women have as representatives of a holy God. Not slanderers is a form of the word also translated "devil," for the Devil is the chief slanderer. The implication is that older women are to have mastery over their tongues. Not addicted to much wine implies having mastery over the appetites. The exhortation to teach what is good is specifically applicable to older women's responsibility to younger women.

2:4-5. In thinking of what the older women were to teach, Paul described the qualities desirable in the young women. His focus was on married women with children at home. Single adult women were much rarer in Paul's day than in ours. Older women could teach these young married women to love their husbands and their children. While this might seem obvious, we need to remember that one of the ways Christianity is judged is by the kind of families it produces. The wife plays a critical role in the success of every family.

Self-controlled is the same word translated “sensible” in 2:2. The term pure especially focuses on having sexual integrity, being faithful in marriage. The word rendered homemakers literally means “busy at home,”—that is, being good managers of domestic responsibilities. Kind translates a word often rendered “good.” The phrase submissive to their husbands echoes a commonly found New Testament theme about the relationship of wives to their own husbands (see Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1,5). Submission does not imply that wives are inferior but that they have a distinct, God-given role in the home.