

1 Timothy 2:8-15 – “Order in Worship, Honour in Roles”

Summary Statement:

In this passage Paul addresses the church’s conduct during worship and instructs men and women on their distinct roles and responsibilities.

1. The Proper Posture of Men – 2:8

2:8 - *I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;*

This chapter opened with Paul encouraging the church to be praying for all people, particularly those in authority, *“for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (2:4).

So these prayers were to encompass salvation. We may not always like what our governing authorities may be doing, but we can pray that they come to see their need for a Saviour and come to the knowledge of truth.

So prayer is important and should occupy time in the gathering of the church. But now Paul begins to direct who should be leading these prayers – men!

- This is a different word as used in vs. 1+4. The word there was *Anthropos*, speaking of mankind. But here in vs. 8 the word is *aner*, which speaks of males specifically.

And Paul desires ***that the men pray everywhere***. Now I’m not exactly sure what Paul had in mind when he says ‘pray everywhere’.

- I tried this while studying in Starbucks this week and got a bit of a stink eye from one of the baristas.
- We do know that Paul instructs us to pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17).

We know this passage is focussing on instructions for the church and for corporate worship. So Paul is more so directing how prayer should be done in the church, or at the least, when a group of believers are gathered together.

And prayer should be done by men taking the lead.

- Now I think it’s fair to say that this is not an abolition of women praying in the church.
- Paul said in **1 Corinthians 11:5**, *“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.”*

- So it seemed women had a place to pray, but it must not usurp or take the place of the men leading in this vital ministry.

Next we read how the men are to pray – **lifting up holy hands...**

This isn't so much about the posture of prayer but more so about the attitude in prayer.

- Lifting up holy hands was a common stance in prayer throughout the Old Testament (cf. 1 Kings 8:22; 2 Chron. 6:13; Ezra 9:5; Ps. 28:2; 141:2; Lam. 2:19).
- We've been taught to pray with hands folded and eyes closed, but this isn't a biblical formula for prayer. That's just practical for kids to keep from getting distracted and throwing their food off their plates.
- Paul is not instructing how to pray physically, but how to come to the Lord spiritually. It's about the posture of the heart.

Lifting up holy hands was about coming in purity and holiness.

- **Psalm 24:3–4**, *"Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully."*
- God's not inspecting your hands to see if there's any dirt under your nails, He's looking to see if there's a purity of heart.
- Our hands often symbolize what we do and Paul was instructing people to come to the Lord in prayer with an ongoing practice of holiness in their daily lives.
- Plus, this posture symbolizes a couple things for us. It communicates surrender. Someone comes behind you and says, 'Stick 'em up!', you're lifting your hands up in surrender.
- It also symbolizes your emptiness. Open hands lifted before the Lord shows we bring nothing and all our needs are met in Him.

Prayer is also to be done **without wrath and doubting.**

If there is an issue or anger you have toward another, then that's going to seriously affect your relationship with the Lord and hinder your prayers.

- **Mark 11:25–26**, *"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶ But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

- So again, lift up holy hands, be pure, don't let bitterness or wrath reside in your heart.

And do not be doubting. Now we would at first glance look at this in terms of having belief when we pray. But the Greek word is a different word than the typical one used for doubting. This word is elsewhere translated as *thought* (speaking of evil thoughts) and *disputing*. It's tied to the idea of wrath. In other words, a person who is holding on to grudges and thinking thoughts towards another that are not edifying or pleasing to God, is not going to be very effective in prayer.

So the direction to the men is about an inner posture and attitude that pleases the Lord.

Next Paul turns to the women. And again, begins by focusing on outward things that ultimately reveal an inward attitude.

2. The Proper Presentation of Women – 2:9-10

2:9-10 - *in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.*

Listen ladies, the church is not to be your Met Gala. This is not your chance to try and get all eyes on you. The focus is to be Jesus – always! So don't dress in ways that bring attention to you. This is what Paul has in mind.

- This goes for men too! But typically it's a little harder for us to adorn ourselves with braided hair or gold or pearls. We typically have a couple good shirts so there's not a lot of head turning for the men.
- Nevertheless, I grew up in church where it was put on your Sunday best and let's see how many compliments we can get. I sported a fine Miami Vice look once in a while.
- It saddened me to hear people say when invited to church, *but I don't have anything to wear*. The idea of church was you had to go all out.

But Paul corrects this by saying, dress in ***modest apparel***. With ***propriety and moderation***.

- Propriety speaks of a respect for convention, or what is proper. Now that can be difficult to gauge. What is considered proper or improper. We don't

want to get legalistic where you're bring a tape measure out to make sure that skirt is the right ratio in length to the knee.

There's an element of common sense needed here. It's just that common sense can be very uncommon for some people.

- Moderation looks for the middle ground. In other words, don't go to the extreme to not draw attention to yourself. Don't come wrapped in your housecoat as though you just came straight out of bed without passing a mirror. That's gonna draw some equal attention. A different kind, but attention nonetheless.

This is where you choose to be moderate. Not overdoing it, but doing something.

Now if there's anyone listening to this right now with braided hair, this is not a condemnation to you. The idea here is wearing your hair in an overly elaborate way that again is making things about you. Same with **gold or pearls or costly clothing**. Those things aren't wrong in and of themselves, but they can be the source of misplaced values and focus.

Remember here in Paul's day, Ephesus was home to the great temple of Diana (Artemis in Greek). Artemis was the chief deity in Ephesus and her temple there was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The temple had several priestesses serving Artemis who became associated with fertility. It's probable that prostitutes were part of the worship there as they were in Corinth.

It could be that women in the church began dressing a little too closely to those serving in the temple of Diana/Artemis and it was bringing confusion in the church and reproach to the name of God.

- It's important that Christians don't take their cues from the world in how we are presenting ourselves.

Now again, Paul is wanting to emphasize the inner beauty and attitude that is important to God and should be to us. The inward must always trump the outward. But the outward is often a reflection of what's going on inwardly.

- But be careful that you don't begin to judge others based on external things, because we never know where their heart is.
- It's easy to gossip saying, *'Did you see what she was wearing today?? She must be craving a little attention. They're obviously not a strong Christian.'* We really don't know what's going on inside. So be careful you don't start

making judgments and drawing conclusions that you don't really have clarity on.

Verse 10 reveals what's really important to God and what really makes a woman a woman of beauty – it's a life of good works.

“For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do.” (1 Timothy 2:10 – New Living Translation)

- “They should depend on their faithful service in the name of Christ to render them attractive to others. This was no plea for women to make themselves unattractive; it was simply an exhortation to reject the world's yardstick for measuring beauty and adopt heaven's standard (1 Sam. 16:7). One should expect nothing less from women who profess to worship God.”¹

3. The Proper Place of Women – 2:11-15

2:11 - *Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.*

This word submission can really grate on people today. Many don't really like that word today. But it's what we're all called to do in our relationship with Jesus Christ. And our submission to Christ will be demonstrated in our submission to others.

- Paul writes in **Ephesians 5:22**, *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”*
- Your submission to your husband is ultimately submission to the Lord.
- The word submit literally means to ‘rank under’. God has given an order because without order you have disorder – chaos.

But please hear me, this order has nothing to do with inferiority, ability, or inequality – it is simply about God's divine order.

- The Trinity shows this order. One God revealed in 3 persons, all completely equal, all God, but the Son has come to do the will of the Father, and the Holy Spirit comes to testify of Jesus. There's submission and order yet perfect equality.

Some think Christianity and the Bible suppresses women. But there's really no other religion in the world that elevates women as does Christianity. There is

¹ Litfin, A. D. (1985). 1 Timothy. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 735). Victor Books.

value and intrinsic worth given to women through Christ that women in other cultures and religious views don't enjoy.

Notice what Paul is saying – ***let a woman learn***... She's given a place where she is invited in to learn and grow.

The idea here is that the women are to not be unruly or contentious. With the new freedoms they were given in the Christian community it was tempting to throw off all restraint and begin asking questions in the church or synagogue that would have become a hindrance to true worship.

- The synagogue was divided in two with women on one side and men on the other side. Even today at the western wall in Jerusalem, women have their own section they need to pray at. So it was common in public worship services for men and women to be seated across from each other. So when questions came up, Sister Sue would yell to her husband across the sanctuary, *'What's he talking about? Is that true? He just said women are to be silent! I'm not so sure about that?!?'*
- Paul's instruction is for the women to learn in silence. Be peaceable. Ask those questions at home or after when you can do so in an orderly way (1 Corinthians 14:35).
- "The word, *hēsychia*, translated "quietness" in 1 Timothy 2:11 and silent in verse 12, does not mean complete silence or no talking. It is clearly used elsewhere (Acts 22:2; 2 Thes. 3:12) to mean "settled down, undisturbed, not unruly." A different word (*sigāō*) means "to be silent, to say nothing" (cf. Luke 18:39; 1 Cor. 14:34)." ²

This next verse however is where the real controversy and debate sets in.

Before we get to that, let me just say the feminist movement of the 60's, which still continues on today, did much damage in looking to remove the God given role of the woman and to cause them to essentially replace the role of a man. I think it's so sad. We've largely removed in society the place of a man to care for and provide for a woman. Who doesn't want to have their door opened for them, to have the dinner bill paid for, to have a man to come alongside and be a protector.

² Litfin, A. D. (1985). 1 Timothy. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 735). Victor Books.

- Instead we've inherited women who think shaving their head and growing their hair in all the wrong places can replace the need for men.

Doing manly things today gets seen as toxic masculinity and men have become emasculated to the point they're afraid to rise to their God given calling.

We end up blurring the lines of gender and we've come to the point now where society would rather remove all gender lines of difference.

- But this just isn't Biblical.

Christianity stays true to God's original intent and design. And that is that God created Adam and Eve as equal yet distinct individuals.

- "Equal in importance but different in performance." – Gary Hamrick

We'll see this as we continue...

2:12 - *And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.*

This verse has been a dividing verse between 2 camps of thought:

Complementarian view and Egalitarian view. Let's give some definitions...

Complementarian

vs.

Egalitarian

Definition:

Men and women are equal in dignity/worth, but have distinct, complementary roles.

Men and women are equal in worth and can occupy the same roles. Leadership is not restricted by gender.

Core Beliefs:

- Male headship in the home and the church.
- Distinctions are good and grounded in creation order.
- Male-only pastors and elders.

- Mutual submission in marriage.
- Role distinctions in the Bible are cultural.
- Women may serve as pastors and elders if gifted.

Key Passages:

- 1 Timothy 2:12-13
- Ephesians 5:22-33
- 1 Corinthians 11:3
- 1 Timothy 3:2
- Galatians 3:28
- Acts 2:17-18
- Romans 16:1-7
- Judges 4-5

Now I hold to a complementarian view as do Calvary Chapel churches. Not all Christians and Churches hold to that view. And sometimes you'll have variances within that particular view (ie. soft complementarian).

And I believe that when you read the Bible and take it for what it is saying (a literal reading) you'll land on a complementarian view. Egalitarians will say this is really the only verse to substantiate a complementarian view. But it isn't. Throughout Scripture you'll see the design and order God has given between the two sexes. Again, differences not in importance but in performance.

Now why do some take the position of an Egalitarian view? It's in the way that they interpret or contemporize this verse.

Some Egalitarian arguments are as follows:

1. Paul was just stating his opinion in saying, ***I do not permit***... This wasn't then a command but a personal opinion. But Paul elsewhere gives instructions with this first person reference, and they are every bit an apostolic authoritative command (cf. Romans 12:1).
2. The 'I do not permit' was just for a limited time. It was to combat a present issue and wasn't meant to be a permanent injunction. Again, other verses that Paul gives instructions are never dismissed in this way.
3. Not permitting a woman to teach was really just about not having her teach false doctrine. Since this was the issue that Timothy had to deal with in the church, Paul just didn't want women to teach falsely. Or they'll say that they just needed to be educated first before they teach.
4. Not to ***have authority***. Egalitarians will say this was really more about not having woman teach in a domineering way or begin to hijack the authority in the church in a selfish way. But Paul is implying that the teaching of Scripture is the authority that they're not to take over a man. "It's specifically about spiritual leadership in the church. (The same hierarchy of authority is

extended to the home in Eph 5:22–33; Col 3:18–19; and 1Pet 3:1–7, with clear commands and responsibilities extended to the husband.).³

5. This was a counter to the Artemis cult that was pervasive in Ephesus. Some will say that this was chiefly a female only cult where women were taking on the role of leadership and authority over men. So this instruction is just push back against what was going on in Paul's day. This passage is not for today then. But these Artemis claims are just not true, many men were a part of this cult.

Paul's purpose in writing vs. 12 is not because of inability or inferiority, but because it goes contrary to God's order. Woman can certainly have a place to share and to teach, but not in an ongoing manner where she is the one with authority over an assembly. This would be contrary to what God has put in place. Paul indicates that next...

2:13-14 - *For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.*

God made Adam first. Eve came from Adam. There was an order established right from creation. They're equal but they are to live with distinct roles. This shows we're not just dealing with a cultural situation.

Now a lot of people will use verse 14 to say, that women can't be pastors because they're more easily deceived. I don't think that's what Paul is intending here. So far in Timothy the people Paul called out who have gone wayward were both men.

It's true Eve was tricked into sinning and possibly because she acted independently of her husband. She should have come under his covering but chose not to. The curse that came from this threw a wrench into God's perfect design and order.

- Again, it's not that Eve is being blamed for all sin because Adam disobeyed willingly. Paul elsewhere in Scripture puts the responsibility on Adam for the sin of humanity (Romans 5:12-21).

Now before we get to this last and much simpler verse (haha) let me just say that what Paul is saying regarding women not teaching or having authority over men

³ Larson, K. (2000). *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (Vol. 9, p. 170). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

is given for the church and for the home. It's not a universal instruction given for all settings.

In other words, Christian women are not prohibited from leadership in other areas, such as being a CEO of a company, or leadership in politics, or para-church ministries, and the list can go on. We are dealing primarily with the conduct within the church in this passage.

So does that mean that women have no place to serve in the local congregation? Absolutely not. In fact, Titus 2:3-4 instructs older women to admonish the younger women. There are giftings that can be exercised in the church. There's plenty of ministry that unfolds besides the ongoing teaching of the Word to the whole body. So, women are vital in the functioning of the church.

2:15 - *Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.*

Now this is a confusing verse that has left many scratching their heads and trying to find the right interpretation.

A few views:

- Some see this as being just as it says, that women will not die during childbirth. Which back in the day was no sure thing. So they're saved physically. But this isn't always the case.
- Some see this as meaning saved spiritually through having kids. That there's a redeeming quality in this. But this goes completely against what Scripture teaches that salvation is by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ.
- Others see this verse as speaking about the Messiah. And that it is more accurately rendered, they will be saved in the childbirth... speaking of the birth of the Messiah. The promise of the Messiah was prophesied to come through the seed of a woman (Genesis 3:15). This is a stretch.
- What seems to be the most probable is that this is speaking of women being saved through proper female roles. Which one of them is bearing children and raising these children. The real ministry of women is found in raising up their kids to be followers of Jesus. This is such a wonderful ministry and service to be active in; to be training up your kids in the way they should go.

Women have such an amazing role in raising kids and being the primary influence in their lives. You get to shape the next generation – the next doctors, inventors, leaders, etc. What an incredible opportunity women have to teach and

pour into people that will in turn potentially be those that are a godly influence in the culture.

Timothy is a living breathing example of this. We read in **2 Timothy 1:5**, "*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.*" Timothy had godly women in his life that taught him and shaped him to where he is now a leader in a very important church in Ephesus.

- **2 Timothy 3:15**, "*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.*"

So ladies, don't leave here today feeling repressed and held back. You have a vital role to play that honours God and blesses the Christian community. Continue in ***faith, love, and holiness, with self-control***. Don't try to take on things you're not called to do. But be faithful in what you are called to do.

What if I don't have children? You still get to have a nurturing role in coming alongside others to mentor younger women or teach children in Sunday School for example. Plenty of ways to be active in ministry and serving the Lord.

God's design for men and women in the church is not about superiority or suppression - it's about beauty, order, and purpose. When we walk in His ways, we reflect His character to the world. So may we be a church where men lead with holiness, women shine with godliness, and together we display the wisdom of God in how we worship, serve, and live.

Points to Ponder:

1. Is my prayer life hindered because of unresolved anger or bitterness?
2. Men – are you leading spiritually or living passively?
3. Women – what defines your beauty – culture or Christ?
4. Women – where is God calling you to influence others through good works?