

Fight the Good Fight
1 Timothy 2:11-15 (Week 08) 10/26/2025
Paul's Instructions for Women in the Church

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

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. (1 Timothy 2:11-15)

Introduction and Review

- **Today**, as we continue our study through **1st Timothy**, we come to a controversial passage.
- It's **controversy** centers on verse 12 where **Paul addresses** a woman's role (or lack of role) in church leadership.
- **Historically**, the church, **with slight variations**, has interpreted this passage to mean...
- That in the church women are not permitted to **teach**...
- **Specifically**, to teach doctrine, to **preach the authoritative word of God from the pulpit**
- Or to **exercise authority over a man**...
- **Specifically**, to be **the Pastor, leader or part of the leadership team of a church**.
- This is basically the **historical, traditional interpretation** of our passage for today.
- And this is the interpretation that **Bridges Church** holds.
- **But that is certainly not the case for many churches today!**
- As a woman's role has changed in society, similar changes have taken place **in the church**.
- In fact, virtually **no theologically liberal church** holds to **the historic** interpretation of **this text**.
- **Instead**, they hold to more **revisionist** or **progressive** interpretations,
- that put **little or no restrictions** on what a woman can do or be in the church.
- She can preach from the pulpit, she can be ordained as Pastor or Priest,
- And she can be installed as a **leader (elder) over the church**.
- In fact, early this month the **Church of England**, appointed **Sarah Mull-ally**...
- as **The Archbishop of Canterbury**.
- She is now responsible for **the spiritual leadership** of the **church of England** worldwide.
- And while **progressive interpretations** have been around in **liberal churches** for **some time**.
- **More recently** they've made their way into traditionally **conservative evangelical churches**.
- Churches like Bridges that **believe in the inerrancy and authority of Scripture**,
- And proclaim the **gospel message**, that salvation comes through faith in **Jesus Christ** alone.

- You might remember that in **2023 Saddleback Community Church** was removed from the **Southern Baptist Convention** because its leaders **chose to ordain women as Pastors**.
- And this is just **one of many** examples of **evangelical churches** that are revising their position regarding women in ministry.
- So why are churches **revising the historic interpretation** of 1 Timothy 2:11-15, which has been the **majority view** for most of the **last 2000 years**?
- Well, again it's clear that as women's roles have changed in society,
- Similar changes have taken place in the church.
- **Bob Yarbrough**, Professor of **New Testament** at **Trinity Evangelical Divinity School**,
- **did a survey** of the **scholarly articles** on this subject.
- **He** found that it wasn't until **1969** that **the progressive view** began to appear in articles.
- But since then, a growing **number of people** have written in support of this view.
- Yarbrough concludes...

The rise in the progressive interpretation's promotion following the women's movement of the 1960s is... indebted significantly, and at times probably culpably, to the prevailing social climate rather than to the Biblical text. (Bob Yarbrough)

- Likewise, Professor of Theology Harold O. J. Brown observes,

When opinions and convictions suddenly undergo dramatic alteration, although nothing new has been discovered and the only thing that has dramatically changed is the spirit of the age, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that that spirit has had an important role to play in the shift. (Harold O. J. Brown)

- **So, it certainly seems that** the increasing popularity of the **progressive interpretation** over last **55 years** is **derived** from **our changing secular culture**.
- **However**, it's also important for us to **understand two things**.
- **First**, just because **an interpretation** is new and differs from tradition does not automatically make it wrong, although it should certainly be questioned and carefully examined.
- And **second**, just because an interpretation is **historic or traditional** does not make it right, although its **staying power** throughout the generations should certainly **be taken into consideration**.
- **And so** ultimately **when seeking to determine the correct interpretation** of any text,
- The **main** consideration is **certainly not** how well it fits into **the current culture**.
- But neither is it how well it fits into the **church's historic position**.
- **Ultimately what matters is what the Bible actually teaches...**
- So, with **much humility** and **dependence on the Lord**,
- We now turn to our passage for today, where **Paul gives instruction for Women in the Church**.

- **And the first thing we see is...**

1. Paul's Liberation

- In today's **egalitarian culture**, many if not most people who read **1 Timothy 2:11-15** see sexism,
- They see the **repression** of women that demands correction.
- But what they fail to see is the **extremely liberating** words that begin this passage...
- **In verse 11 Paul writes...**

11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. (1 Timothy 2:11)

- With this simple statement Paul **destroys many prejudices against women**,
- Not **modern prejudices, but ancient ones**.
- In the **Greco Roman world** of Paul's day...
- women were considered to be **intellectually and academically inferior to men**.
- So, the **educational system (learning)** was designed **for men, not for women**.
- And if possible, the **Jewish rabbis** were even more **sexist**.
- According to the **Jerusalem Talmud** (a commentary on **the Torah**)...

It would be better for the words of Torah to be burned, than that they should be entrusted to a woman. (Jerusalem Talmud)

- So, in their view, **educating women was a waste of time**.
- This is also expressed in the **Babylonian Talmud**.
- **Speaking** of what took place in the **Jewish synagogue** (Jewish Church) **it says...**

The men came to learn, the women came to hear. (Babylonian Talmud)

- But Paul says **the exact opposite....**

Let a woman learn

- **Now this is a change in how the Rabbis interpreted Scripture**,
- But it was not based on culture, **in fact it confronted the culture of the day**.
- It was based on the word of God...
- God's word teaches **that men and women are made with a mind in His image**.
- Therefore, God wants women to learn.
- It's their responsibility to become students of Scripture.
- It's sometimes argued that **Paul had negative attitudes** about women from his training as a **Jewish Pharisee...**
- Or that **the New Testament is tainted by ancient, patriarchal attitudes** about woman.
- **But here we find the exact opposite.**

- And the same is true throughout **the New Testament**.
- If you read through the book of **Acts and the epistles**,
- You'll find, **sprinkled throughout**, examples of women engaged in or commended for ministry.
- Just read Paul's personal greetings in **Romans 16** if you doubt this.
- **He begins by writing...**

¹ I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, (Romans 16:1)

- He then goes on to mention **a number of men and women** who were part of his ministry.
- It's not too much to say that Paul desired women to use their gifts to **their fullest extent**.
- Unfortunately, throughout church history there are those who don't understand this.
- There have been **abuses of women** by "male leadership."
- Including **not allowing women** to fully engage in **the ministries God** has for them.
- The church certainly has reason **to be ashamed** of the way it has sometimes treated women,
- but no reason **to be ashamed of what God** has said **about women in his Word**.
- In fact, we should be **encouraged** by what **applied biblical truth** has done to improve the status of women throughout history.
- The church **has not always lived up to what the Bible says about a women's roles in the church**, but whenever it has, women have been greatly blessed.
- A document signed by "**Women of Renewal**" states:

Because the Bible is the most effective force in history for lifting women to higher levels of respect, dignity, and freedom, we join an historic succession of women whose Christian faith is forged from biblical truth and whose lives are shaped into Christ's image on the anvil of obedience. (Women of Renewal)

- And Paul's instruction to "**Let women learn**" certainly brought freedom to the women of his day and beyond.
- He then tells how women are to learn...

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness

- Now this might sound **sexist** to certain ears but let's examine what Paul is saying.
- The word "**quietly**" (Greek hēsychia **Hes-ee-kia**) is repeated at the end of **verse 12**.
- Where Paul says a woman is to **remain quiet**.
- "**Quiet**" is a much better translation than **silent** which is found in the **KJV and the pre 1984 NIV**.
- The word does not mean that women have to **keep their mouths shut**.
- Instead, it refers to a **gentle tranquil demeanor**,
- We see this in **verse 2 of Chapter 2**, where Paul says **that all Christians** should...

² ...lead a peaceful and quiet (Hes-ee-kia) life... (1 Timothy 2:2)

- This doesn't mean we walk around with our mouths shut, it just means we live a tranquil life.
- We refrain from causing trouble for ourselves and others.

- And along with learning quietly...
- Paul says women are to learn with all “**submissiveness**” (hypotagē **Hi-po-ta-gay** in the Greek).
- **This word means to be obedient, to yield to authority.**
- And in context this means **women** are to **yield to the leadership and authority that God has given to the elders of the church.**
- It means to receive **their teaching in a spirit of joyful agreement.**
- Which by the way, **men in the church must do as well...**
- In fact, these two words, **quietly and submissiveness**, do not describe an **unusual style of learning that is just for women.**
- **Instead**, they describe the only way **any person (male or female) can learn at all.**
- **Any teacher** knows it’s impossible to teach someone who’s talking when they’re teaching.
- Good teachers **maintain order** in their classrooms because good learning requires quietness, good listening from the student.
- Learning also requires a **teachable, humble spirit.**
- It’s impossible to **teach someone** who thinks he or she **knows all the answers already.**
- To learn is to **submit to the knowledge and authority of a teacher.**
- Every **good student is quiet and receptive.**
- **A great example** of this is found in **Mary**, the **sister of Martha and Lazarus.**
- Jesus had stopped at **their home** to rest and while he was there...

40 ...Martha was distracted with much serving... (Luke 10:40)

- Meanwhile...

39 ...Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. (Luke 10:39)

- Seeing her sister lounging around when there was work to be done **angered Martha.**
- And in her frustration, **she finally complained to Jesus,**

40 ...“Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” (Luke 10:40)

- But Jesus did **not tell Mary** to go back to **the kitchen where she belonged.**
- He did not relegate her to so-called women’s work. **Instead, he said,**

42 “...Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:42)

- The words of Christ confirm that women are to learn, **they are to be students of the Bible.**
- They also **serve to rebuke** any **man or woman** who thinks **theology is mainly for men.**
- What Mary was learning from Jesus was **the Word of God.**
- She was learning **true doctrine and how to apply it in daily life.**
- God wants women to be **knowledgeable in the Scriptures and sound in their theology.**

- And again, how did Mary learn, she...

³⁹ ...sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. (Luke 10:39)

- Mary was **listening rather than talking**.
- and she was sitting at Jesus' feet, **which was the place of submission to teaching authority**.
- In other words, **as Mary sat under the teaching of Jesus, she**

learned quietly and with all submissiveness.

- This is the way **all God's people are to learn**.
- We are to sit at the feet of our Master, even when he's speaking through the voice of a minister.
- And this is true for **men as well as women!**
- When I have opportunity to hear another man preach (here at Bridges or in other places).
- My goal should be to **learn in quietness and full submission**.
- **I must strive to resist the urge to say, "Well, that's not how I would teach that passage."**
- Rather, I must **submit**, not so much to **another preacher, but to the Lord himself**,
- who wants me to sit at his feet the way Mary did and the way **Paul liberates all Christian women to do**.
- **So, Paul begins with words of liberation, and then he turns to the prohibition...**

2. Paul's Prohibition

- **1 Timothy 2:2** simply states:

¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. (1 Timothy 2:11-12)

- This is at **the heart of the controversy** that's **engaged many churches, even ours**.
- In recent years, there have been several long-term, very involved members of Bridges,
- who've chosen to leave because of **our interpretation and application** of this, and other related verses.
- They left because **we hold to the historic, traditional**, and what we obviously believe is the **correct interpretation**.
- Choosing to hold instead, a **more recent, progressive interpretation**.
- And so given the real **controversy over this verse**,
- I think it's important that we not only understand the **historic interpretation**,
- but that we first get at least a feel for...

A. The Progressive Interpretations

- **I say interpretations plural** because there have been a number of proposed interpretations aimed at **revising and rebutting the historic interpretation**.

- Now some interpretations (**if you can call them that**) come from those who do not hold to the **inerrancy or authority** of Scripture, and in those cases, **we really have no common ground**.
- If God's word is not **authoritative** and can contain errors,
- **Then no passage is safe from false interpretation.**
- So, I'm just going to focus on **several prominent interpretations** that at least try to adhere to the authority and inerrancy of Scripture.
- **The First way some have tried** to do away with **Paul's teaching** is to argue that female leadership was out of control in **the pagan society and religion of Ephesus**.
- **And therefore**, Paul's **prohibitions** were aimed specifically at a problem found in **Ephesian society**, not against normal teaching and exercising authority.
- The problem is that a **"female dominated Ephesus"** never existed,
- as **Professor S. M. Baugh** has shown in his critique against this interpretation...
- Titled ***A Foreign World: Ephesus in the First Century...***

Ephesus was a very conventional Roman provincial city. It had no women magistrates and the pagan cult hierarchy was controlled by men. (S. M. Baugh)

- So, this interpretation **that appeals to history has no basis in history**.
- **A second attempt** at lessening Paul's teaching is to **give the Greek word translated here**

to exercise authority (au-then-te-ō)

- A negative meaning such as **to domineer** or **control**.
- So, Paul was prohibiting a **negative activity**...
- *I do not permit a woman to teach or to domineer a man.*
- This, they say, would allow women to teach and exercise authority over men as long as it's not done in a **controlling, domineering way**.
- However, even though the Greek word **au-then-te-o** could mean **domineer in some contexts**,
- **it cannot mean this here** because of the word...

or (oude – OWED in Greek)

- This word connects **to teach** and **to exercise authority**
- And in Greek grammar, (**oude**) always requires that both words it connects be **either positive or negative**.
- If they were negative, the phrase could read,
- "I do not permit a woman to teach error or to domineer over a man."
- But this cannot be the translation here because **"to teach"** is always viewed positively in the New Testament **and in its many uses in 1 and 2 Timothy**.

- A third attempt to set aside what Paul says here is to argue that when Paul says,

I do not permit

- He uses **the present indicative** and not **the imperative**,
- and that he is therefore **speaking personally about a temporary arrangement**.
- **However**, this ignores the fact that Paul often used **present indicatives** to give universal and **authoritative instruction**.
- For example, in **1 Timothy 2:8** which we looked at last week, **Paul writes...**

⁸ I desire then (this is also in the present indicative and not the imperative but that does not mean that what follows is temporary) that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; (1 Timothy 2:8)

- **Also**, to argue that **Paul's instruction is temporary** ignores **the context** because in the next verse we'll see that he rests his prohibition against women teaching and exercising authority on the **unchanging order of creation**.
- **Therefore**, Paul's prohibition here is **universal and enduring**.
- **And finally**, a widely used way to **discount Paul's prohibition** is to **misinterpret Galatians 3:28** and then to use it to **erase 1 Timothy 2:12**.
- **Galatians 3:28** reads,

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

- This is a major statement of **our spiritual status in Christ**.
- In context this verse means that every believer, **every male and female** who is "**in Christ**," fully inherits God **promises to Abraham, by grace apart from works**.
- This is a statement of **our radical spiritual equality** before God whatever our **ethnic background, status in life** or **gender** may be.
- **However**, this verse in no way **erases gender distinctions or roles**.
- And this should be **totally obvious** since **Paul wrote Galatians** at least 10 years before he wrote **1 Timothy**.
- So, if he intended to erase **gender distinctions** in Galatians why does he refer to them in 1 Timothy?
- So, we've seen some of the **progressive** ways this text has been interpreted or revised.
- All in an effort to discount Paul's plain teaching and bring it in line with current cultural thought.
- **Now let's turn to the...**

B. The Historic Interpretation

- What has the church historically taught that Paul meant when he said...

¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. (1 Timothy 2:12)

- We need to back up a **bit before moving on**.
- One of the most important rules of **interpretation** is “**Context is King**”.
- You need to put a passage **in context** in order to **understand it correctly**.
- And this is one of the things that **most, if not all, progressive interpretations** fail to do.
- Now the **immediate context** includes the **verses** that come **before and after the passage**.
- We’ll look at the after **verses** in our next point.
- But let me first remind you of **Paul’s point** in the **preceding verses, verses 1-10**.
- **In verses 1 & 2** Paul urges prayer for **all kinds of people**,
- Including kings and government officials so that the church...

...may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. (1 Timothy 2:2)

- Then in **verses 3-7** he gives the reasons why **we are to pray for all kinds of people...**
- And really why it’s important that we lead a **peaceful quiet godly dignified life...**
- Because taken together this **will promote the spread of the gospel...**
- This will promote **God’s desire for...**

⁴ ...all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

- And then in **verses 8-10** he again **exhorts the church regarding prayer and conduct...**

⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrel; 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. (1 Timothy 2:8-10)

- And so, as we noted last week, **the context shows...**
- the way we pray and conduct ourselves has everything to do with both the effectiveness of our prayers and **ultimately the cause of the gospel**.
- **And evidently**, in Ephesus, **some men were quarreling** before or while offering public prayers,
- and some women were going to church with hair styles and lavish clothing of the **wealthy** and the **wanton**.
- And this **ungodly, undignified** conduct was causing both their **prayers and thus the spread of the gospel to be hindered**.
- Now having mentioned **women’s propriety** when church gathers.
- Paul expands his discussion with respect to women **teaching and having authority in the church**.
- **So, the point is that verses 11-15,**

and specifically, the prohibition of verse 12.

- is part of Paul’s specific instructions for order in the church.

- And what this means (among other things) is that **this prohibition** has nothing **directly** to say about teaching and authority **in business** or **academics** or really anywhere outside the church.
- Also, this prohibition along with the **submissiveness** of verse 11,
- teaches that women (like men) must submit to the leaders of their church.
- It does not, however, allow **all man** in the church to **exercise authority** over all women.
- **Lastly**, Paul's instructions have nothing to say about **male and female equality**.
- Such **equality** had been established **from the beginning**...

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)

- The fact that both male and female were created in the image of God,
- And that Paul goes out of his way in

Galatians 3:28, which we looked at earlier,

- to declare the **spiritual equality** and status of **men and women "in Christ"**
- This should leave **no doubt in our minds** that **men and women are equal** before the Lord!!
- **So the question comes, how then...**

Paul's prohibiting women from teaching and exercising authority over a man to be understood?

- What is he actually prohibiting here?
- Well, I (along with many others) believe the **answer** is found in the **verb teach** or...

to teach (Greek **didaskō Dee-Das-Co**)

- This word, along with its noun forms "teaching" (**didaskalia Dee-Das-Ka-LIA**)
- and "teacher" (**didaskalos Dee-Das-Ka-Los**) are all used in **the New Testament** to describe the careful and authoritative transmission of Biblical truth.
- And in the Pastorals (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus), teaching **always has the sense of authoritative public doctrinal instruction**.
- **So**, what is **prohibited** is what we would **call preaching**.
- That is, **the public proclamation, interpretation, exposition, application** of God's word when the church gathers.
- This is what Paul charges Timothy to do **2 Timothy 4:2...**

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. (2 Timothy 4:2)

- And along **with preaching**, in the context of church order,
- women are also **prohibited** from **exercising authority over men...**
- That is, they are **prohibited** from **the role of elder in the church**.

- **Why? Because elders** are those who are to **exercise authority in the church**.
- And elders are those who are **to teach the authoritative word of God to the church**.
- That's what we will see next week in **chapter 3...**

² Therefore an overseer (a Pastor or elder) must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, (1 Timothy 3:2)

- So bottom line, Paul **prohibits women from preaching**, declaring the authoritative word of God to the Church.
- And from being one of the **Pastors or Elders** who have responsibility for teaching and exercising authority in the church.
- This, however, does not **prohibit Christian men and women** from instructing one another in other ways. **In fact, it's expected.**
- Paul directed the **Colossian church**,

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

- To the **Corinthians** he **likewise** told the whole congregation,

²⁶ ...When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. (1 Corinthians 14:26)

- These verses remind me of small groups and adult Sunday school classes,
- where Christian brothers and sisters come together to discuss, teach and learn from one another.
- Over the years, I've certainly benefited from the wisdom of women in these and other settings.
- And on a more personal level, **Priscilla and Aquila** taught and corrected **Apollos** in their home.
- **Apollos** learned his theology from both of them.

²⁶ [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. (Acts 18:26)

- So, within **the divinely given order of the church**, women are expected to develop into teachers.
- The writer of **Hebrews chided** his readers in this respect, saying,

¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers... (Hebrews 5:12)

- Our task, as a church, is to **equip**, both men and **women for ministry**.
- Understanding that **Scripture** does not permit a woman to preach or exercise elder-like authority

- **And why is that?** Well that takes us to our next point...

3. Paul's Reasoning

- Following **the prohibition**, Paul goes straight to the reason for it...

¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. (1 Timothy 2:13-14)

- Notice first that Paul grounds **the order of authority in the church** upon the **order of creation before the Fall, Adam was formed first, then Eve.**
- John Stott says of this...

All attempts to get rid of Paul's teaching on headship (on grounds that it is mistaken, confusing, culture-bound or culture-specific) must be pronounced unsuccessful. It remains stubbornly there. It is rooted in divine revelation, not human opinion, and in divine creation, not human culture. In essence, therefore, it must be preserved as having permanent and universal authority. (John Stott)

- Paul bases his prohibitions not on current events in Ephesus, **but on the created order...**

For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

- Throughout Scripture, **firstness corresponds to** authority and/or privilege.
- To the Colossians, writing of **Christ's Preeminence over all, Paul says...**

¹⁵ [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. (Colossians 1:15)

- Whether we understand it or not, **being first is significant to God.** And God created Adam first.
- He could have created **Adam and Eve** at the same time, **but he didn't.**
- Also, He created **Eve for Adam**, in **Genesis 2:18** we read...

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Genesis 2:18)

- Eve was created **second** to be **Adam's helper.**
- Which does not mean **she was created second best.**
- Being a helper must never be seen as an indication of being less than the one you help.
- **In fact**, if you do a study of the Hebrew word **Helper (or Help)** you'll find that GOD himself is our main helper. **For example, the Psalmist writes...**

²⁰ Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help (or helper same Hebrew word) and our shield. (Psalms 33:20)

- So, Eve was certainly not created less than Adam, **but she was created after and for Adam.**
- And the unchanging fact is that **God desires** that the order of His creation be reflected in His church, **the Body of Christ.**

- We miss the point of **verse 14** entirely, if we think that Eve was **more gullible** than Adam,
- and therefore...

was deceived and became a transgressor (sinner)

- Eve's sin was not **gullibility** but willful disobedience to God, which included **overthrow the creation order**.
- She was **deceived into believing** what the **serpent said**...
- that **eating the forbidden fruit would mean**...

⁵ ...your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:5)

- And so, buying into the serpent's deception...

⁶ ...she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate (Genesis 3:6)

- Eve took charge here; she chose to eat the fruit, **and she led her husband to do the same**.
- **And what about Adam?**
- Apparently, he just stood there and did nothing when Eve ate, **and then he followed her lead**.
- **Therefore**, God said to Adam...

¹⁷ ...Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; (Genesis 3:17)

- As **Phillip Jensen** explains:

Eve's sin involved overturning the order of creation and teaching her husband. Similarly, Adam's sin came from 'listening' to his wife, in the sense of heeding and following her instruction. He was taught by her, thereby putting himself under her authority and reversing God's good ordering of creation. (Phillip Jensen)

- So, **Adam and Eve's sin (their disobedience to God)** involved the reversal of God's **creation order**.
- And it's to **this created order that Paul appeals**.
- In God's church women are **NOT** prohibited from preaching and exercising authority over a man **because they are inherently more easily deceived than men**.
- They are prohibited from preaching and exercising authority over men because of God's divinely created order of **male firstness and male authority**.
- **This order was established at creation and God ordains it to continue in HIS CHURCH**.
- **So, if you have a problem with it, take it up with HIM!**
- So, we've seen, **Paul's Liberation - Let women learn**,
- His **Prohibition** against women preaching and exercising authority over men in the church.
- And **the Reason for that Prohibition – God's divine order as established at creation**.

- And I **kind of wish Paul** had stopped there... but he didn't so now we turn to...

4. Paul's Encouragement

- Paul closes these instructions with some encouragement to women **that on the surface is not particularly clear: Verse 15...**

15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. (1 Timothy 2:15)

- **This is a notoriously difficult passage to understand.**
- But we do know that Paul can't mean that just having children results in **salvation**.
- Also, we know that continuing in **faith and love and holiness with self-control**,
- Whether you have a child or not certainly does result in **salvation**.
- **We are saved by grace through faith...**
- So, what's going on here?
- What does Paul mean that women are **saved through childbearing**?
- Well, some people think this is a reference to **the Incarnation of Christ**, they believe that...

saved through childbearing refers to the **birth of Christ and his ultimate atoning work**.

- But this would be a strange and unlikely way for Paul to make this point.
- Most likely, in this context, he speaks of childbearing because it is a universal example of the God-given **difference in the roles of men and women**.
- Contrary to what some in the west would say...
- Men do not give birth, **and most women in every culture do!**
- So, when Paul says, "**she will be saved through childbearing**,"
- he probably means that by trusting God and not seeking a man's role
- but instead embracing her God given role as a woman (symbolized by childbearing),
- As one who has trusted God in this area, she is more likely to continue in **faith** that brings about salvation, along with the results of such

love and holiness, with self-control.

- Now if that is not super clear, or you don't think that's what Paul means, that's fine.
- **Again, it's a difficult passage...**
- But no matter what we understand **the first part of this verse to mean**,
- **The second part is clear...**
- Paul is encouraging Christian women to trust God **with regards to the prohibition** and to **continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control**.
- OKAY!

- So, we've seen **Paul's Liberation**, setting women free to **learn the word of God**.
- **Paul's Prohibition against and Reasoning why** women are not to teach or exercise authority over a man in the church.
- And finally, **Paul's encouragement** to trust God with the role he has given them and to continue in faith, love, holiness and self-control.
- Now **as we conclude**, I want to **summarize, emphasize and apply** what Paul is really saying.
- So, I ask...

What is this Passage all About?

- **First**, we need to know that it is not **about male superiority**.
- Intellectually speaking, any honest man knows that there are plenty of women who are smarter than he is.
- Having married the **class salutatorian** (Christina was voted most likely to succeed)
- Having **3 sisters-in-laws** that were **valedictorians and college professors**,
- And having Bible Study and discussion with many women in this room...
- **I know this firsthand**.
- **Also**, this passage is not about **a woman's inability to teach or lead**.
- It's a **statistical fact** that American women read more **Christian books** than men and they attend church in greater numbers.
- They are more **relationally oriented** and more **naturally empathetic**.
- They are more **intuitive** about where people are.
- They are **more verbal** and more **natural communicators**.
- So, if this passage is not about which sex is **smarter or more capable** of teaching or leading in the church.
- **What is it about?**
- **Frankley**, it's about **remaining true to (obeying) the Word of God**.
- It's about allowing **God's Word to shape the life and order of HIS church**,
- rather than letting the culture lead us where it desires.
- **And make no mistake** - if we do not let the Bible **define who we ought to be**, culture will!
- This passage is about living out the **creation order in the church**.
- And this order come from God who is good and who desires all things to work together for our good.
- **Therefore**, we **must rejoice with Paul** when after explaining how **God in his goodness** and Sovereignty works to save his people, **He concludes...**

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:31-32)

- When we live out our salvation in obedience to God,
- **We can expect to receive everything we need.**
- When we live out God's **creation order**, it is a **joyous journey**.
- **Paul lived it out**, and his life and ministry were greatly enriched by **both his brothers and sisters in Christ**.
- **Again, just read Romans 16**, it's filled with names of both men and women who he considered servants of Christ **and fellow workers for the gospel**.
- **So ultimately** this passage is about **seeing the gospel go forth**.
- AGAIN, Paul's concern was that the **church pray and behave itself** so God's desire might be fulfilled... **That...**

4 ...all people [would] be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

- Paul believed that if the church joyfully lived out the creation order in God's household, the church.
- Then the gospel **would continue to go forth to all people**.
- And so, I would encourage each and everyone of us, **male and female**.
- Instead of concerning ourselves with the rights our culture thinks **we deserve**.
- We should concern ourselves with **humble obedience** to **our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**.
- And we should trust God **with the roles** and rights **he has given or not given us...**
- And we can look to Jesus who provides us with the **greatest example of doing this...**
- We see this clearly in Paul's words to the church in Philippi...

4 Let each of you (men and women) look not only to his (or her) own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:4-8)

- Jesus **gave us his rights**, he **denied himself**, and in **humble obedience** he **fulfilled his God given role, which included death on a cross for you and me!**
- So, if you (especially you women) struggle with your God given role,
- If you're being pulled by **culture** to claim your rights as a woman, **to be just like a man!**
- Then I would encourage you to look to Jesus for strength and encouragement,
- **To not look at what your current culture wants you to do and be,**
- but to **see** what your loving, good, heavenly Father has called you as a woman **to do and be!**

Prayer...