

STUDY ON THE BOOK OF FIRST TIMOTHY

MEN AND WOMEN IN GOD'S HOUSEHOLD!

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-15

Introduction.

In chapter 1 Paul has outlined his charge to Timothy to stop the false teachers. Now he begins to spell out the specifics that need to be corrected, initiated with the phrase: " *Therefore, I exhort first of all...*" We'll get into the details in a moment, but first let's look at the big picture of chapter 2 where Paul discusses three things that need correction:

- Exclusivist attitude towards the lost (2:1-7). Prayer should be made for everyone, and the gospel message be taught to the Gentiles, implying that the false teachers have been promoting a kind of Jewish exclusivity both in Ephesus as well as in Crete (Titus 1:10-16).
- Men engaged in angry disputes (2:8). Men should pray in holiness, not amidst the anger generated by the controversies and disputes stirred up by the false teachers.
- Out-of-order women propagating false doctrine (2:9-15). Women should conduct themselves modestly and appropriately in church, not trying to dominate or set others straight, suggesting that the false teachers had made inroads into the church through ignorant women susceptible to their false doctrines (2 Timothy 3:6-7).

As you can guess, we have our hands full working our way through the 15 verses in this chapter.

Prayer for All

"Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (vv1-4)

"First of all," does not refer to time; it refers to importance. The prayer terms (supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks) describe the wide categories of our communication with God. These are the kinds of prayer that should be offered when God's people come together.

- Supplication is simply asking for something. Prayer should never be all asking, but it should ask in bold confidence from God's Word.
- Prayers is a broad word, referring to all communication with the Lord.
- Intercessions refer to the requests we make on behalf of others. As we pray, there should be time when the needs of others find a place in our prayer before God's throne.
- Giving of thanks is an essential part of our walk with God. Those who lack a basic sense of gratitude in their lives lack a basic Christian virtue.

The object of these prayers should be universal -- all people. "Everyone" (NIV, NRSV), "all men" (KJV, NASB) is comprised of two words: **pan**, "all" and **anthrōpos**, "human being, man, person," the generic term for a person of either sex. There are two reasons given for these prayers to be made for all:

- **Civil order.** "Kings and all those in authority" are the ones who bring civil order, but also can prevent persecution of Christians, as happened from time to time during Paul's lifetime. Prayer for rulers also positions the Christian community as submissive citizens, not as a nest of subversives seeking to overthrow the government (Romans 13:1-7).

- **Salvation of all mankind is God's purpose through Jesus Christ.** God himself is titled Savior for this reason, a common Old Testament title of God (Psalm 25:5; 27:9; 38:22; 42:11; 43:5; 68:19; 79:9; Isaiah 45:15; 62:11, etc.) Prayer for the lost pleases God because he "... *desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" (2:4).

Apparently, the false teachers with their Jewish myths and genealogies had lost their focus on salvation for the Gentiles, which has been God's purpose for Israel for centuries (Isaiah 45:22; 49:6; 55:1).

One Mediator and Ransom

"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth." (vv5-7)

Through one Mediator, and One alone - the Man Christ Jesus. There is no valid way to God that does not come through Jesus. This statement of Paul simply echoes what Jesus said in John 14:6: Jesus said to him, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

It is also simply logical. If Jesus was at least a good and honest man, then He told the truth when He said that He was the only way to God. If He did not tell the truth at this important point, then it is difficult to regard Him as even a good or honest man, much less a prophet from God. If He was wrong, then He was either a liar or a lunatic. In the modern world most people think that any road leads to God, if followed sincerely or with a good heart. The Bible argues against this idea. Proverbs 14:12 is instructive: *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

The Man Christ Jesus:

This reminds us that Jesus is still human, even as He is enthroned in heaven right now. His humanity was not merely a temporary phase. When the Eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, added humanity to His deity, He added it forever — not only for 33 years.

Jesus gave Himself. You can give your time without giving yourself. You can give your money without giving yourself. You can give your opinion without giving yourself. You can even give your life without giving yourself. Jesus wants us to give ourselves, just as He gave Himself. Jesus gave Himself as a hostage, as a payment for our sins. He put Himself in our place and received the punishment and wrath from God the Father that we deserved. This is the basic message of the gospel. Paul began his ministry with an equal emphasis to both Jew and Gentile (Acts 13), but because of continued rejection by Jews, Paul began to emphasize his ministry to the Gentiles.

Men: Lift Up Holy Hands

"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (v8)

The idea that we should pray constantly, and that prayer should be a normal part of our lives wherever we go is good and valid; but it is not what Paul means here. Paul's focus is on what the church does when it comes together for meetings: PRAY. Paul assumed men would take the lead at meetings of the congregation especially at that time and culture. Such prayers must be without wrath (praying "angry" prayers) and without doubting (praying without faith). When we pray angry, or pray without faith, we can do worse than good — especially when the prayer is public.

Women: Show Modesty with Decency and Propriety

“...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, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.” (vv9-10)

The word also refers to the statement that the men pray everywhere in 1 Timothy 2:8. Paul thought the principle of 1 Timothy 2:8 should apply in various congregations, and so should the principle in 1 Timothy 2:9.

Modest Apparel

This is how Christian women are supposed to dress, especially at their Christian meetings. The words propriety and moderation help explain what modest apparel is.

Propriety asks, “Is it appropriate for the occasion? Is it over-dressed or under-dressed? Is it going to call inappropriate attention to myself?” Moderation asks, “Is it moderate? Is it just too much — or far too little?” Moderation looks for a middle ground.

The braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing Paul mentions were adornments that went against the principles of propriety and moderation in that culture. How you dress reflects your heart. If a man dresses in a casual manner, it says something about his attitude. Likewise, if a woman dresses in an immodest manner, it says something about her heart.

The most important adornment is good works. If a woman is dressed in propriety and moderation, with good works, she is perfectly dressed. Good works make a woman more beautiful than good jewellery.

Women Learning in Quietness

“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.” (v11)

This unfortunate translation has led some to believe that it is forbidden for women to even speak in church meetings. Paul uses the same word translated silence in 1 Timothy 2:2, and it is translated peaceable there. The idea is without contention instead of total silence. In other places in the New Testament, even in the writings of Paul, women are specifically mentioned as praying and speaking in the church (1 Corinthians 11:5). To learn in silence has the idea of women receiving the teaching of the men God has chosen to lead in the church, with submission instead of contention.

Submission is the principle; to learn in silence describes the application of the principle. The word for submission here literally means, “To be under in rank.” It has to do with respecting an acknowledged order of authority. It certainly does not mean that men are more spiritual than women or that women are inferior to men.

Women Not Permitted to Teach

“And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.” (v12)

"Have authority" (NIV, NRSV), "exercise authority" (NASB), "usurp authority" (KJV) is *authenteō*, "to assume a stance of independent authority, give orders to, dictate to" While some contend that this word simply means "to have or exercise authority" without any negative connotation, others (including myself) see this as a word used specifically here (and nowhere else in the New Testament) to describe a kind of unhealthy pushiness that is well described by the KJV's translation, "usurp authority." It is derived from *autos*, "self" + *entea*, "arms," from an earlier usage, "one who with his own hand kills either others or himself."

Elsewhere in the New Testament, verbs of exercising authority come from the word groups based on *kyrieuō* ("to be lord of, have dominion over") or *exousia* ("power, authority"). But this word is different, unique. Paul is making a special point here of the self-anointed authority being exercised by would-be women teachers. In this context, it is believed that the word is likely to have carried "the negative valuation of inappropriate exercise of authority -- perhaps 'domineer.'"

The Example of Adam and Eve

"For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." (vv13-14)

The first reason for male authority in the church is order of creation. Adam (man) was created first and given original authority on earth.

The first command God gave to the human race is found in Genesis 2:16-17: *Of every tree of the garden, you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.* This command was not given to woman at all. At the time that command was given, Eve was not yet created from Adam. Therefore, Adam received his command and his authority from God, and Eve received her command and authority from Adam.

The second reason is the difference in the sin of Adam and Eve, as connected to their difference in authority. Both Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, and Eve clearly sinned first. Yet, the Bible never blames Eve for the fall of the human race, but always blames Adam (through one man sin entered the world, Romans 5:12). Adam is responsible because of there was a difference of authority. Adam had an authority Eve did not have; therefore, he also had a responsibility Eve did not have. Adam failed in his responsibility in a far more significant way than Eve did. As well, Eve was deceived, and Adam was not deceived. Eve was tricked; but Adam sinned knowing exactly what he was doing when he rebelled.

Saved through Childbearing

"Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control." (v15)

Many people regard this as one of the most difficult passages in the whole Bible. On the surface, it could be taken to mean that if a woman continues in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control, that God will bless her with survival in childbirth — which was no small promise in the ancient world. Yet this interpretation leaves many difficult questions. Is this an absolute promise? What about godly women who have died in childbirth? What about sinful women who have survived childbirth? Doesn't this seem like just a reward for good works, and not according to God's grace and mercy?

A better way to approach this passage is based on the grammar in the original Greek language. In the original, it says she will be saved in the childbirth. This has the sense, "Even though women were deceived, and fell into transgression starting with Eve, women can be saved by the Messiah — whom a woman brought into the world."

Probably, the idea here is that even though the "woman race" did something bad in the garden by being deceived and falling into transgression, the "woman race" also did something far greater, in being used by God to bring the saving Messiah into the world. Don't blame women for the fall of the human race; the Bible doesn't. Instead, thank women for bringing the Messiah to us. Most of all, we should note these positives. "Faith, love, and holiness, with self-control" are all qualities God wants to be evident in women, and that women have effectively nurtured in their children through generations.

