

Women in the Church

Introduction

We return today after a brief interlude for our Easter Series to 1 Timothy. Letters that Paul wrote to Timothy who he had left in Ephesus. A very large port city that had a very small but growing Christian church and a lot of worshipers of Artemis. A city of many mixed cultures and religions.

Paul has been particularly concerned about false teaching and about helping his protege Timothy run the church that they had established. He is concerned about Timothy's youth....the influence of the culture and the rising tide of false teachers that were there to bombard the truth.

He has just instructed Timothy to pray for everyone in leadership. Which at the time included the some of the most violent and wicked leaders the world has ever seen yet now he turns his attention to the members of Timothy's new church.

Paul moves to one of the most debated of all his instructions in all of his letters. Paul gives his guidance to his protege about how to lead men and women and the role of both in the church. Ephesus was a place of idol worship through ecstatic sexual dances and encounters at the Temple of Artemis.

Some of those worshipers appear to have been influencing the early Christian Church at Ephesus. Paul thus gave some very specific instructions to Timothy about the role of women in the church.

Let's look at our passage for today

Passage for Today

1 Timothy 2:8–10 (ESV) 8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 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 2:11–15 (ESV) 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.

Ok Women be quiet....I think we are done here. Thanks for coming. We will see you next week.

Ok unless you want to ignore dozens of other passages of Scripture, that can't be the take home message of what Paul is trying to teach Timothy. Paul is not the misogynist woman-hater that some have tried to make him out to be. In fact, like Jesus, he was so

far ahead of his time that he was often misunderstood. Paul is a strong supporter of women in ministry and a leader of that movement in his time.

But what Paul cared about and what he was solely laser focused on is the way our lives as believers impact others for Christ. Did you notice that we have done what everyone does? We just skipped over a key part of Paul's instruction.

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

What? Men in the early church are characterized by quarreling and anger? Paul would not have mentioned it if it wasn't a problem. I hear people all the time say, "We should just be like the Church in Acts" and I wonder if they have ever read Paul's letters.

The early church had a lot of issues. It was a mix of cultures, religious beliefs, races, economic classes, educational levels, sexes, married, unmarried, people who believed in Jesus and others who were just kicking the tires. There were people of all ages and importantly all Spiritual ages...There were at least 4 languages to deal with. Add to that the very real truth that false teachers were there to disrupt, prostitutes were there to worship in the manner they thought was normal, and some men were there to worship with them.

Add to that the reality that Ephesus was a major port city. New ideas, new religions and new people were always coming in. Many in this new church were just passing through. Staying there until their goods are sold and then moving on. No one had a very long history of following Jesus.

The mature believers were trying to grow and find their way. These were messed up people being transformed by the Word of God....Just the church that Jesus envisioned. The Gospel message was for everyone and because of that ministry was messy.

Add to that the most seasoned and educated follower of Jesus was gone and his capable but likely overwhelmed young protege was left in charge. Timothy was up for the task but he didn't know it yet.

Paul was clearly addressing situations and problems that were evident in the church at Ephesus in the first century, and these instructions don't just come out of nowhere. They were written to a specific people at a specific time, and though we don't have all of the details, some things are clear from this passage.

Paul talked about men who were either not leading in prayer at all, or they were praying in the church while fighting with one another.

Nevertheless, even though these various instructions to men and women come out of a specific historical context, God's Word still applies to all people at all times. But in order to understand how it applies to all people in all times, we've got to put ourselves in the shoes of the people who were first hearing these words.

Remember the idea of talking to God...on a personal level was completely foreign to them. That God would listen to a human much less respond to their requests was

beyond their scope of reality. Their gods were on Olympus, they didn't talk to humans, they used and abused them. The best you could do was to appease them...you couldn't talk to them....inquire of them...share with them...everything about this early church was new to everyone.

Paul mentioned in verse 8 that he wanted men to pray “in every place,” which is either a reference to the many homes that the church in Ephesus would meet in, or more broadly, the gatherings of believers across the world. Either way Paul wanted men to pray in all these places, and most importantly he wanted them to pray with purity before God.

Ok so men should pray....in every place. If this mess of humanity was going to become a functioning viable life giving church of Jesus Christ....only God would accomplish that. So before he addressed women...he first chastises the men.

Lifting Holy Hands....When men prayed in the first century they typically stood with arm bent in front of them and with their hands lifted up to receive all that God has for them. This is the typical posture taken today at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.

Notice that Paul says HOLY hands. Men could only lift their hands to God if their hearts were clean. Lifting your hands in prayer meant that you had allowed God to examine your heart and your motives and you were clean.

Psalm 24:3–5 (ESV) 3 Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. 5 He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Psalm 26:6–7 (ESV) 6 I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord, 7 proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds.

The posture was one of openness and surrender. Every Jewish person knew this well. They had been taught this idea since childhood. But the majority of people in the church of Ephesus were not Jewish. They were gentiles...pagans....they had to be taught to pray and how to pray.

It makes no sense to hold on to sin in your life while approaching a holy God in prayer. Instead, humbly confess your sin, be cleansed by the mercy of God through Christ, and then pray with purity before God. Though Paul was addressing men in verse 8, all followers of Christ need to ask themselves the following question: Is there a deliberate sin that I am holding on to in my life? If so, confess it now. Don't play games with God. Be pure before Him.

Not only does Paul say that we should pray with purity before God, but we must also pray with peace before others. This is what it means to pray “without anger or argument.” Ask yourself another question: Is there anything in my life right now that is unreconciled with another brother or sister in Christ? Is there anger, quarreling, or conflict? If so, make it right. Peace with God is artificial if there is not peace with others.

Clearly there were false teachers and all kinds of disputes in the Ephesian church, and the situation was apparently contributing to an attitude of anger and conflict among

believers. To this situation Paul essentially said, “Don’t pray before God when you’re not right with your brother.” We’re reminded of Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:23–24:

Matthew 5:22–24 (ESV) 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

We have a tendency to rush into corporate worship and bypass our need to honestly confess our sin before God. But a right heart attitude is crucial for prayer and for God-honoring worship in the church. By the grace of Christ, let your hearts be clean before God. Worship and pray with purity before God and peace before others.

Paul was not sexist, but he was aware that God created men and women...and they are very different. Each uniquely designed by God to complete the other. Paul was not apologetic about these differences and neither should we be. No matter what our culture teaches we have surrendered to God's truth. We must recognize that the culture is to surrender to God's truth....God's truth never surrenders to the culture.

Genesis 2:18–22 (ESV) 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.”But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Genesis 1:27–28 (ESV) 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them.

God made a helper FIT for man. Perfectly suited. Man was unfit without her and needed help. She likewise was created as a helper. Each bringing what the other needed...perfectly completed by God.

Genesis 2:24 (ESV) 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

1 Timothy 2:9–10 (ESV) 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.

Don't miss "Likewise" In the same manner that men are to examine their hearts and lift holy hands to God, women are to present themselves to God with pure hearts and clean hands.

Men tend to fight and quarrel with one another...it is part of how they are created. They tend to power up on each other...

Women do the same thing, but in a different way. Now I may get emails about this...but I believe this to be true. Women don't always dress just to attract men....They dress to show up the woman or women around them. Women notice what other women are wearing...the designer labels, the expensive perfume, the jewelry...the dress...the hairstyle..While men are quarreling, women are walking the red carpet. Women are constantly comparing themselves to other women by the way they dress and how they adorn themselves. Men compare themselves to other men by their power and strength.

So likewise here says more than just examine your heart...it speaks to the manner in which you inward heart is displayed to others...How you speak...how you power up and argue with someone, says just as much about you heart as how and why you dress the way you do.

After addressing the men, Paul turns his attention to women who had become a distraction in the church. So what exactly was Paul talking about here? Do we need to post security officers at the entrance to the church in order to check for braided hair and costly jewelry? This is another situation where it's helpful to understand the culture into which Paul was speaking, a culture that in many ways is parallel with our own.

Like many ancient cities into which Christianity was born, Ephesus was filled with sexual immorality. It was common for women to use ornate fashion to attract attention to themselves, sometimes in seductive ways. But Paul gave the women in the church at Ephesus an altogether different exhortation: Adorn yourself with modest dress. And consequently, Christian women today should also have a different motivation in their dress than the surrounding culture.

First, Paul said, do not draw attention to physical beauty. Women should not dress in a way that draws other people's attention, particularly men. Their clothing should be "modest," a word that can have sexual overtones. Modesty is a huge issue in our own culture, for we are extremely liberal when it comes to what women wear: skin-tight clothes, low necklines, high hemlines, and short shorts are the norm. This kind of clothing falls far short of the biblical ideal of modesty and self-control.

For several years our family attended a mega church in Dallas. It was incredible the way women dressed. They left very little to the imagination. It wasn't because they didn't have modest clothes...they were husband hunting. They were trying to outdo each other. It made the red carpet at the Oscars seem tame.

With all due respect to our sisters in Christ, the way some women dress in the church is at best a distraction from honoring God and at worst an attempt to seduce men in the church to sin. Sisters in Christ should not be asking, What makes me look the most attractive? That's the wrong motivation. Instead, the question should be, What can I wear that best demonstrates a humble heart devoted to the worship of God? This biblical and God-centered perspective should affect everything about us, even our clothing.

Along the same lines Paul gave Christian women another exhortation: Do not draw attention to worldly wealth. Part of the point of mentioning the "hairstyles, gold, pearls" and the "expensive apparel" is that these things were highlighting the distinction between the wealthy and the poor in the church.

Some women were using their dress to assert their social status, and to these women Paul says not to adorn yourself with that which draws attention to you, particularly when you gather with the church for worship. Remember the One you are competing with for attention—God! You want your worship and your life in every way to draw attention to Him.

In addition to modest outer adornment, women should also adore God through a Christlike demeanor. Don't miss Paul's point here. He's not saying, "Don't adorn yourself with anything." Instead, he's saying, "Adorn yourself with godliness." This is what matters—the fruit of faith in Christ. Paul calls on Christian women to be adorned "with good works, as is proper for women who affirm that they worship God." When you look in the mirror, look for good works. Jesus' words in Matthew 5:16 come to mind:

Matthew 5:15–16 (ESV) 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

May God raise up women across our churches who refuse to get up any day, especially on Sunday, and think, "What can I wear today that will make me look good to the people around me?" Instead, may our sisters in Christ ask, "How can I dress, and what can I do today that will draw the most attention to the glory of my God?" Women in the church should not distract others but instead live to attract others to God

I tell young ladies in our church.... save for your future husband that which God gave to you for him. Don't show to others what is not theirs to see.

Paul continued addressing women in the rest of chapter 2. Again, he was likely addressing specific things that were going on in the church at Ephesus. We know from chapter 4 that teachers at Ephesus were encouraging men and women not to marry and thereby undercutting the beauty of marriage. And we see in chapter 5 that younger women were not getting married but were instead spending all their time gossiping in the church. When we turn to 2 Timothy, we find out that a group of women were giving in to false teaching and living according to worldly passions

So what we have in Ephesus is a problem, likely a significant problem, with women undercutting godly doctrine, godly behavior, and godly leadership in the church. Keep in mind, however, that Paul was not just picking on women here. He just spent all of chapter 1 railing against men in the church who were teaching false doctrine. The apostle was addressing a variety of issues in this letter.

Before we get to this next verse, I want to explore something about interpretation of Scripture.

As we think about how to understand these verses, we need to begin by considering two principles of interpretation, both for this passage and for any passage of Scripture. The first principle is the principle of harmony, which says that we interpret each particular Scripture in light of all Scripture

Scripture has one author, God. And since we know that He does not contradict Himself, whenever we see two passages that seem to contradict each other, we should look at each passage in its context with the conviction that the passages are ultimately unified

We also need to understand the principle of history. God has revealed scriptural truth in the context of specific historical and cultural settings. For example, the letter of 1 Timothy was written from Paul to Timothy for the church at Ephesus in the first century, so we have a specific historical and cultural context. This should lead us to ask at least two questions when we approach the text.

First, what part of the text is cultural expression (which changes)? What part of the text are we to leave at Ephesus....leave in the first century? It was an instruction for them, but not for all people in all cultures at all times.

A concrete example will help illustrate the point. Let's consider Paul's exhortation to women about their "elaborate hairstyles" If we were ministering to an African tribe where Christian women had preserved traditional hairstyles with intricate designs, what would we say to them? Is this sinful? Paul was not saying that all elaborate hairstyles were always sinful in all cultures; he was saying that elaborate hairstyles in Ephesus violated modesty, decency, and good sense. Hairstyles in Ephesus pointed to money and based on the style, braiding.... characterized prostitutes. So if the women in that African tribe were dressing to elicit lust or envy, then we would address that as a moral issue. But if the intricate braiding is neither a sign of wealth nor an attempt to seduce, then the answer is "no"; we're not dealing with sinful behavior

We need to ask a second question as we approach the text, namely, what part of the text is central revelation (which never changes)? What part of the text travels to us today and is a biblical truth that never changes?

The specific example Paul gives is "elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive apparel"; the general principle he is commending is "modest clothing ... decency and good sense." The examples will vary in different cultures, but the principle will remain the same. Clearly God has said to all people of all times in all cultures not to be adorned with things that draw other people's attention for the wrong reasons. That principle always remains true. If something is part of God's central revelation, and not merely a cultural expression, then we submit to His Word.

What could be hairstyles in Ephesus could be string bikinis today. The principle is the same the expression is different. But we must be very careful here. Many churches of today have made everything cultural and claim that we should leave it all in the First Century. They completely discount all of Paul's letters and the Book of Acts as relevant only in the First Century.

People have begun irresponsibly to throw all kinds of truths out of the Bible, claiming these truths are just commands about cultural issues. Take the issue of homosexuality as an example. Homosexuality is mentioned throughout the Old and New Testament and God is consistent in calling it sinful and an abomination. But many churches today say that it is a natural expression and not a sinful choice. They say to leave it in the First Century.

We must be extremely careful not to accommodate our culture by discarding truth that the Bible addresses clearly and repeatedly. Homosexuality, like many other sins, is identified throughout Scripture as part of man's rebellion against God, regardless of one's culture or context

Leviticus 18:22–23 (ESV) 22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. 23 And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion.

Romans 1:26–27 (ESV) 26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

When Paul forbade it, his words were grounded in God's pattern in creation

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

Sexual identity and sexual practice that honors God is a central revelation, not cultural expression. The same truth repeated throughout Scripture for all time. Not my opinion, God's unwavering and foundational truth.

In addition, we should note at least two reminders from those important early chapters. First, God created men and women with equal dignity. That is, male and female are equally valuable before God. Therefore, to demean men or women is to sin against God. Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy 2 have nothing to do with the value of men and women; rather, he was talking about the roles of men and women, which leads to the second reminder. God created men and women with complementary roles. Men and women are different and distinct in their respective roles. Man was created with a role that complements woman, and woman was created with a role that complements man. And this is all by God's good design. It is even in the nature of God.

God's good design is seen in the home as husband and wife relate to each other with specific, complementary roles. In Ephesians Paul instructed wives to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord", and husbands were commanded to love their wives "just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. In a similar way, 1 Timothy tells us that there are also complementary roles in the church. Men and women have distinct roles to fulfill when God's people gather together.

Whether in the home or in the church, God has assigned equal value to men and women, yet with roles that complement each other.

First Timothy 2:11–15 represents one of the most controversial passages in the New Testament

1 Timothy 2:11–15 (ESV) 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.

So we've considered two principles and two reminders, and this leads us to two prohibitions in this text

Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:12, “I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man.” The first prohibition sounds as though women should not teach men in the church. It sure seems that way, but did you know that men who studied under Rabbis were told the same thing? The term to remain quiet was how people of the time learned. You didn't interrupt your Rabbi. You responded only when addressed and you only answered the question asked. If you had a question, you asked it later of your Rabbi or someone else. You didn't interrupt the flow of the Rabbi's teaching.

We know Paul encouraged women to teach in some settings, since Titus 2:3 makes clear that older women should teach younger women. Paul was not making a blanket statement, as if women like Beth Moore were in sin. But what, then, was Paul saying? To understand the apostle's point, it's helpful to connect these two distinct prohibitions—do not teach and do not exercise authority over a man

In chapter 3 Paul talked about elders, or pastors, with authority in the church. And these elders express their authority by doing what? By teaching. In 1 Timothy 3:2 we see that the ability to teach is a qualification for an elder, so that you lead the church through the teaching of God's Word. That's the only authority anyone has to lead in the church

We see the same thing in 1 Timothy 5, where Paul said in verse 17, “The elders who are good leaders should be considered worthy of an ample honorarium, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”

So the picture in 1 Timothy is clear that elders do two primary things: they lead and they teach. To put it another way, they teach with the authority to lead. Therefore, when Paul said women are not to teach or exercise authority over men (1 Tim 2:12), he was pointing specifically to the two primary responsibilities of elders.

At the very least two things are being prohibited in 1 Timothy 2:11–15. First, based on what we've just discussed above, it is clear that women should not teach as elders (or pastors or overseers) in the church

Men who don't have a gift of teaching or who don't meet the qualifications of an elder likewise should not teach as elders in the church. Paul was making clear here that even a woman who has a gift of teaching is not intended by God to teach as an elder

Instead, women listen willingly to the biblical instruction of elders. When the text says that they should “learn in silence with full submission” (v. 11), it is not saying that once a woman steps into the gathering of the church, she should go mute.

You must understand here...that the shocking thing in the first century was not that women should be silent. The shock was that Paul expected women to be taught. In Jewish culture, women essentially were never taught. They learned home responsibilities from their mothers.

Women were often illiterate and untrustworthy in Jewish culture. They were essentially slaves who couldn't even testify in court. They had no idea how to be students in the church. The prostitutes were loud and brash and trying to lead others in the church-

particularly men- and influence them like they did at the Temple of Artemis. But Godly women were to remain attentive and quiet, not drawing attention to themselves.

We know that because at other points in the New Testament we see women praying or prophesying when Christians gather (1 Cor 11:5). Jesus never told women to be silent when the followers gathered. This text is simply saying that a woman should listen attentively with a teachable spirit to the God-ordained leaders in the church when they are teaching the Word. Which again, is the exact same instruction given to men who were studying under a Rabbi. They should listen attentively with a teaching spirit and with their mouths closed.

1 Corinthians 11:2–5 (ESV) 5 but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.

Paul and other New Testament authors also made clear that women should teach in various settings of the church in accord with elder instruction. This means that, outside of elder leadership, there are all sorts of teaching possibilities for women. In addition to the command in Titus 2:3 for older women to teach younger women, Scripture mentions a number of instances where women played a significant teaching role. Consider the following:

Timothy received instruction from his mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5; 3:14). Pricilla and her husband Aquila both took Apollos aside and “explained the way of God to him more accurately” (Acts 18:26).

There is also a more general teaching role in the New Testament, applying to both men and women. For example: • Men and women both make disciples, which involves going, baptizing, and teaching people to obey everything Christ has commanded us (Matt 28:19–20). • Paul told the whole church—men and women—to be “teaching and admonishing one another” as the word of Christ dwelt in them richly (Col 3:16). • Paul seemed to allow for women praying and prophesying in public worship, though with proper humility and submission (1 Cor 11).

Women who are gifted at teaching should use their gifts to build up the body of Christ but not in the role of elder. Their teaching should be in accord with, and not contrary to, what the elders of the church teach. Of course, this requirement applies to both men and women who are teaching in the church

After the prohibition for women not to teach as elders, Paul gave a second and related prohibition in verse 12: Women should not lead as elders/pastors/overseers in the church. Instead of exercising authority, women should “learn quietly with all submissiveness” (v. 11 ESV). By God’s grace women submit gladly to the servant leadership of elders. I emphasize the term “servant leadership” because it needs to be emphasized, for elders are intended by God to lead by serving, or more specifically, by serving the body with the Word of Christ.

An elder or pastor is intended to love, care for, nurture, and serve the body of Christ by diligently and wisely teaching the Word of Christ. And as this happens, Paul said, women (and other men who are not elders) should gladly submit to such servant leadership. They shouldn’t rebel against the leadership of qualified, Christlike men in the church.

Does that mean, then, that a woman can never be in any type of leadership position in the church? I don't think that's what Paul was saying at all. Based on the rest of the New Testament, women should lead in various positions of the church under the authority of elder leadership. In other words, when they submit to elders, women are free to lead in a variety of different positions. They are intended by God to thrive in various ministries across the church.

When you look throughout the New Testament, you see women teaching, helping, serving, equipping, and spreading the gospel. With the exception of the elder role, the opportunities are endless ... for the entire church to be mobilized in ministry, male and female. Nobody is to be passive while the world spins toward Hell.. God intends to equip and mobilize [all] the saints [under the leadership of] a company of qualified men who take primary responsibility for leadership and teaching in the church

Neither Jesus, nor Paul, nor any of us are going to tell Lottie Moon or Amy Carmichael or Elisabeth Elliot or Kay Arthur that they are sidelined in the church. These women have embraced exactly what Scripture has outlined, and they have thrived for the glory of God through ministering in the church under the guidance of elders.

Some might ask, "Apart from an elder, are there any other positions a woman should not lead in? What about a small group? What about teaching theology in a class or at a seminary?" There are so many different scenarios and possibilities, each of which I believe need to be approached by the elders of the church with care and consideration. However, I think there are at least two questions that should guide elders on these issues.

First, the church is not about quota filling. I think the main question is not should women be doing this...the main question elders face is should this specific woman or man be leading or teaching. I have had some women tell me that because they are women, they should be allowed to teach. Yet they lack the gift of teaching. So elders consider a few things....

First, As a woman teaches or leads, is she reflecting God's pattern in Scripture? We see women doing many different things in the New Testament, and where we see these things happening in healthy ways in the early church, we can be encouraged to see the same things happening in the contemporary church.

As a woman teaches or leads, is she reinforcing God's priorities in the home? This applies to men as well. We want to be careful not to undercut God's design in the home with the way we lead in the church. Especially in our day, we want to display godly, humble, loving, and sacrificial leadership by men in the church in a way that models that kind of leadership for men in their homes. And we also want to display glad, willing, godly submission of women in the church that models that kind of life for women in their homes. When we gather as God's people, we should point one another toward biblical faithfulness on these issues of gender.

To be clear, I'm not saying these two questions make everything easy or that all of the answers become evident. However, I do believe these questions are helpful in considering what teaching or leadership roles a woman should have. Scripture is clear on the prohibitions against teaching and leading as an elder; beyond this it's not quite as

clear. So we need to be clear where Scripture is clear, and we need to be wise where Scripture is not as clear.

1 Timothy 2:13–15 (ESV) 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

First, God's design in creation: God gives authority to man. As Paul says in verse 13 of our passage, "Adam was created first, then Eve." This statement tells us that what Paul is saying here is not just cultural expression—this is central revelation. The basis for what Paul says goes all the way back to Genesis 1–2 when God created man before woman, a reality that undergirds the headship of man. Paul is not basing his view merely on human opinion, which changes, but on divine revelation, which never changes.

Eve was given to Adam as a helper....not the other way around. She was given the role of supporting him in the assignment God gave to him....the naming and caring for God's creation. The fall that they both participated in was the direct result of Satan attacking this very structure that God had put in place.

The original sin was the direct result of Adam and Eve failing to fill the gender roles that God had given to them. Satan's distortion of creation: man abdicates authority and woman assumes it. When Paul said in verse 14 that it was the woman and not the man who was deceived, he was not saying women shouldn't lead because they're more easily duped. No, he was pointing back again to the picture of sin entering the world in Genesis 3, when Satan subverted God's design by approaching Eve instead of Adam, thereby undercutting Adam's responsibility as the leader of his home. In turn Adam sat back and did nothing, and God's design was distorted.

In short, sin entered the world when man abdicated his God-given responsibility to lead. Man didn't step up with godly, gracious leadership. The result however, of the fall as it regards women is two fold. They will have painful childbearing and then....

Genesis 3:16 (ESV) 16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you."

God uses the covenant of marriage to indicate the Spiritual Authority that He has designed. Men are the Spiritual Leaders of the home and the church, but women will have a desire to rule over them. It is part of the punishment that God placed on mankind because of our sins.

Paul used this truth to say to the church that God's design in the home and in the church is good. God's design for qualified men to lead as elders is good, just as God's design for godly men to lead as husbands is good. The church's spiritual leadership and direction must be protected from a woman's desire to rule over it. That is why the highest leadership of the church is a male role and why God designed the family in the manner that He did so.

1 Timothy 2:13–15 (ESV) 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

First, Is 1 Timothy 2:15 talking about salvation through the offspring of Eve? I believe that this verse is a deliberate reference to the fact that, even though the woman ate the fruit first and sin entered the world through her, the promise remains that the Savior would enter the world through her. According to Genesis 3:15, a child would be born through Eve's line that would one day trample the serpent

This passage does not mean a woman must bear a child in order to be saved. If Paul believed that, he would not encourage some women to stay single, as he did in 1 Corinthians 7. He'd say, "Get married and have a kid ... fast. Your eternity depends on it!" There are a lot of things we know Paul was not saying and some difficult questions about what he was saying; however, two things we do know for sure. First, women are sanctified, set apart by God, as they glorify God in the distinct roles and responsibilities He has entrusted to them

There is meaning and significance behind a woman's gender, so sisters in Christ should be working out their salvation, not as generic persons but as women of God with inherent beauty and value as well as distinct giftings and opportunities. Sisters in Christ should thrive in their roles as wives, mothers, and women of God.

Finally, the second thing we know for sure is that women are saved not through the birth of a child but through the death of Christ. For that matter, women and men are saved through the death of Christ. Sin has disordered this world we live in, and Satan has distorted God's design for our manhood, our womanhood, our marriages, our families, the church, and the culture. But Christ has come, and He has conquered sin and trampled the Devil. In Christ we can all thrive. He died to make us the men and women God created us to be.

The church today should be known for healthy families led by parents who embrace their God-given roles. As soon as parents abdicate the role God has given to them, the family structure falls apart. Women have a desire to lead over men both in the home and in the church...Scripture is clear, but that is not the role God entrusted to them. In addition, men have left a vacuum in the church and home by not leading in their God-given role. Just as both Adam and Eve failed to obey and fulfill the role God gave to them and , sadly so do most families in our culture today.

So what does this mean for Remnant?

At Remnant we of course follow God's guidance in Scripture. We are an Elder led church. We believe that biblically the world Elder and Pastor is the same. Thus all of our Pastors and Elders are men. It is clear in Scripture that this role is to be filled by men only.

So our Elders and Pastors will always be men. They have oversight over the church and function in that capacity. They are responsible for everything that is taught and the Spiritual decisions made by the church. Their job includes making sure that women do not try to rule over the church. It is one of many roles and responsibilities.

There are two teaching scenarios to discuss...The Pulpit addressing the entire church with Spiritual Authority and then teaching everywhere else.

When it comes to teaching the Sunday Morning Service from the Pulpit, we believe that teaching the entire church at one time falls to the Elders and it thus a male role. Women may of course speak from the stage as our missionaries often do, but if teaching is coordinated with and approved by the Elders. They are part of the message but not responsible for the entire message.

All other teaching is allowed by anyone, male or female, whose teaching gift has been endorsed by the Elders. The Elders prescreen teaching materials and often attend these various teaching environments to ensure doctrinal oversight. Only our partners with the teaching gift are put in a position to teach.

So under the Elder umbrella, when the teaching gift is evident in either a man or a woman, we allow them to lead Bible studies that include men and women, to teach small groups that include men and women. and to mentor others of the same sex. People who have leadership roles in our church must first be partners with a signed covenant. That covenant outlines the Spiritual oversight of the elders and pastors.

We do not allow anyone to teach or lead who can't submit to the authority structure of the church.

God's word tells us that we have all been reborn in Christ. When it comes to ministry and the spreading of the Gospel....

Galatians 3:25–29 (ESV) 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

All of us have received Spiritual Gifts that are for the benefit of each other. But we must remember that Spiritual gifts are not roles. Spiritual gifts are given by God to be used under the authority structure that God has already put in place.

Ephesians 4:11–12 (ESV) 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

God wanted to make sure that we understood and allowed the Spiritual Gifts to be fully expressed under His authority structure.

1 Corinthians 12:1–8 (ESV) 1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ...7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

To Each Individually...Not to Men Only. God gives the teaching gift to individuals, not males. Allowing them to exercise that gift brings good to all of us. That is true of all the

Spiritual gifts for everyone. He gives to each of us INDIVIDUALLY. The expression of all the gifts of the church fall under the oversight of the elders. To not allow someone to ever use their Spiritual Gift given to them by God is to say the Holy Spirit made a mistake. Those with gifting of any kind must use those gifts in roles that align with God's structure of the church.

Those who refuse to attend a study led by a women need, in my opinion, to go to more bible studies. They have misunderstood Scripture and misapplied it. They are essentially saying that the Elders have failed to lead the church in a biblical manner. Usually this position is driven by spiritual arrogance and honestly spiritual ignorance. In addition, they are not submitting to the leadership of the Elders of their church and are ignoring the model Jesus' taught in His own ministry. The loss is purely theirs. The rest of us are blessed.

Next week Paul will lead us through the criteria for elders and deacons so we will unpack church leadership more as we go.

Under the Spiritual Protection of the Elders, men and women are encouraged, supported and allowed to use their gifts, including the gift of teaching if they have it, to nurture all of us and to bring honor to God. Every role, under our elders, is open to anyone with the appropriate gifting.

God ordained leadership of the church in this manner so that it would not be an issue of division. The Elders of Remnant are not going to abdicate our role to lead you Biblically. That is why our Partner Covenant is a two way covenant. We make promises to you and agree to submit Jesus as He leads us. Just as God designed.