

1 Timothy
B.) The Church and its members
2. 2:8-15 Propriety of women
2:11-15
“The hand that rocks the cradle”

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 11-12 Silence?

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I. Introduction

We come now to that controversial passage in First Timothy chapter 2 verses 11-15. As I said last week the importance in facing any difficult section of scripture is to approach it with an open heart and fresh eyes. It matters not what you think it means nor what the culture today says it must mean; no students, what matters is what it *does mean* and we must aim to inquire of the Holy Spirit the original intent of the writer to the readers of this letter. **There are three keys as to unlocking the meaning of this passage:**

- **Context:** This is always an important first step as “context” asks what is the occasion of the writing of this letter, what if any truth does this shed upon the meaning of the passage.
- **Word meanings:** It is also important that we define English translated words to what the original readers would have understood the word to mean. Sometimes the translators in their well-meaning attempt to use the shortest amount of English words fail as the word has a broader scope than the use of the word as the context of the phrase bears out.
- **Illustrations:** Finally it is important to look carefully to determine whether or not Paul uses “*cultural*” or “*creational*” illustrations. If this was a localized situation then we could safely expect that Paul would illustrate his point with “*cultural illustrations*”. But if it was a *general* or *universal* truth then we would expect that the Holy Spirit would have planted in Paul’s mind “*creational illustrations*”. The importance of this fact can help in determining if what Paul is speaking of is still a truth that the church ought to obey or if it was merely a truth that this specific church should obey.

II. Vs. 11-12 Silence?

Vs. 11 The topic of the church service is still the focus when Paul changes from the place of women in prayer to *the place of women in teaching the word*. At issue for us is what exactly does Paul mean when he says in verse 11 to “*learn in silence*” and verse 12 “*to be in silence*”? The same word “*silent*” in verses 11-12 is also found as an adjective in verse 2 rendered “*quiet*” where **no one interprets** this word to mean that as citizens we are to live silently. There the word means that *we are to live without being a hassle or hassling others*. Paul uses the same word in 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 12 that believers are to “*work in quietness and eat their own bread*” and again he is not saying that they should work in silence but that *they should work in a way that is peaceable and peaceful*. Paul’s use of the word means that women are to learn “*peaceably*” as are the men, *not argumentatively*. He is saying that women are **ALWAYS** to be “*peaceable learners*” but he is **NOT** saying that they **ALWAYS** be learners and **NEVER** be teachers of any type. What is at issue is **the attitude of the women** Paul is addressing in Ephesus which seems to have been *assertive, argumentative, aggressive and stubborn in nature*. The way this is worded in English implies something that Paul didn’t mean and that is that women were “**ALWAYS** and **ONLY** to be learners while men were **ALWAYS** and **ONLY** to be teachers”. Paul is saying is that **WHEN** women are in the position of learners or teachers, that they do so without an attitude that is aggressive, loud and challenging in an assertive way.

Vs. 12 We move into a further detail explanation of Paul’s with regard to women teaching in the church service. This is **not a prohibition of women teaching** “*anywhere, anytime to anyone!*” When Paul wrote his letter to Titus he instructs older women to

teach younger women. There was also indication that women instructed men in specific cases as with in Acts 18:24-28 where Aquila and Priscilla take Apollos aside and instructing him further of the doctrine of the grace and love of Christ.

The key to understanding this passage is the proper translation of the word “authority” *over a man* in verse 12. The word in the Greek means to “domineer, to usurp authority, to take what is not yours” and in the context deals with women “*taking over the church and becoming the final authority on teaching and teachers.*” I believe that this passage should not be stretched to be used with regards to leadership as clearly there were women in the early church involved in leadership roles. But the question is, “*Can a woman be a pastor*” and that depends on the context of how a person uses that word.

- If the word “*pastor*” is being used biblically to mean a “*shepherd*” then the answer is **YES** as women have been shepherds of flocks since the beginning of the Church. Their “**FLOCKS**” have been made up of women, children and in specific situations men and they have been faithfully guiding them through the word of God. In fact we have many such Women “*pastors or shepherds*” here in our fellowship.
- If the word “*pastor*” is being used in the conventional sense of the word where they are the “final authority” on teaching and teachers with in the local church (which is the way that Paul is using the word in this sentence) then Paul says the answer is **NO**.

This is further illustrated by silence in the fact that there were no women apostles or conventional pastors in the early church. There were many godly women serving in the early church, Jesus mother Mary, Mary Magdalene just to name a few, yet Jesus didn’t appoint any to that position. At the time of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out there were many women present that fit the specific qualifications of an apostle mentioned by Peter but none were given this position. In all the New Testament letters we don’t read of any women given the position of a conventional pastor. This has nothing to do with giftedness or capabilities as there were and are many godly and gifted women available but there was never one put into the position to become the final

authority on teaching and teachers within a local church. Paul is saying that the church should not recognize women as the ones having authority in the church regarding matters of doctrine and Scriptural interpretation. Whatever teaching is done by a woman must be done in submission to the men God has appointed to lead the church. If a women Bible teacher was teaching at a different time then our Sunday morning teaching then people would be free to attend or not attend so she would not be usurping any authority over men.

III. Vs. 13-14 Priority not superiority

Vs. 13-14 It is to that “*conventional*” pastor position that women are denied and Paul lists **two illustrations** as reason and neither are taken from the **culture** of the day instead they are drawn from **creation**:

1. Vs. 13 “*For Adam was formed first, then Eve*”: The first reason for male authority in the church is found in **the priority 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. In fact Eve was not yet created from Adam as he was given the job of tending the garden and naming the animals which was to examine them and name them based upon their characteristics. This took a considerable amount of time as Adam researched each animal noting that they came in pairs male and female yet he saw that there was not one animal suitable for companionship for him. So from

Adam's side God formed Eve to which Adam exclaimed "Wow-man" as he said "I'm calling her this because she has taken a long time to get here." And now you know fellas that our wives being late isn't there fault they were created that way! In this example we must keep in mind that "priority" **does not equal** "superiority" as men and women were both created in God's image. The issue is authority of which God establish by creating man first before Eve.

2. Vs. 14 "For Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression": Paul 2nd argument also comes from creation and deals with mankind's fall into sin as Eve was deceived while Adam's sin was with his eyes wide open. The difference in the sin of Adam and Eve, flows from their difference in authority. Adam had a God given authority Eve did not have, but he also had a God given responsibility Eve did not have. Eve's sin was the violation of God's order of authority as she usurped her husband's authority to which Adam listened instead of following God's word. Eve was deceived not by the desire to do something wrong but rather with a heart that wanted to be more godly. Women have that wonderful quality and desire to have a relationship with God. They want to extract everything they can from God's word, to worship and Satan knows this about them. This very desire makes them more susceptible to deception. **Paul's point is that there is a difference in creation between the leadership roles of men and women.**

Paul is saying, women have a different role within the church and being the final authority on teaching and teachers does not fall into that role because God did not create

her that way! Women are to teach, pray and exercise their gifts within the body of Christ adding qualities to church life that men cannot because they have been created by God differently. The point is not to focus on what we are not created by God to do but instead to put into practice what we are called to do.

IV. Vs. 15 Rocking the cradle

Vs. 15 The translation of this verse into English causes the confusion as we need to define two phrases “saved” and “bearing children”. The word “*saved*” holds the key to understanding the meaning of “*bearing children*” as Paul writes “*she will be SAVED through CHILDBEARING.*” We know that SAVED cannot refer to a woman’s regeneration as a lot of women believers have not had children. In 1 Timothy 4:16 Paul writes to Timothy saying, “*Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will SAVE both yourself and those who hear you.*” Timothy didn’t need to be born again, the context the word “SAVED” means to be “*fulfilled, to find significance*”. Paul’s statement to women it that they would find their “*Significance, uniqueness, sphere of influence within the body of Christ with regards to teaching primarily through bearing children and instructing them to continue in the faith and love of Christ.*” The primary ministry of women is not to run the church, but to care for the home and raise children to the glory of God and they will have abundant opportunities to minister the Word in their local fellowships as well. Truly the “*Hand that rocks the cradle rules the world!*”