

# **BIBLICAL MANHOOD & WOMANHOOD**

## **THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH**

### **1 Timothy 2: 11-3:7**

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:** Need a team of 5 children. They must reproduce a pyramid built with blocks in 90 seconds. Each of 4 of the children can only put a certain color block in the pyramid. One of the children is in charge and must tell the others how to place each block. The one in charge cannot put in a block, nor can any child add their block without being told to do so. One of the children (green) has only one block to add and I will tell that child before the game begins to not cooperate. How did the rest feel when the one refused to cooperate? Will you be able to complete the pyramid without the cooperation of the one? In the same way God has given to each of us a job and the abilities to fulfill our job in order to build his church how he wants it built. All of us are important but we all have different roles and functions. The church will not be built as God wants unless each of us fulfill the roles he wants. We are going to consider today the roles of men and women in building God's church.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Give out the 8 tapes of Grudem's talk to the husbands. In two weeks we will conclude our series on maleness and femaleness. I want to do it by answering questions you might have about the things we have talked about. Write down questions and turn into me or put in offering or mail to church office. Or come prepared with questions that week.

Why does it matter how you and I live our lives? The Bible is full of commands about how we are to live. Many of God's commands, when obeyed, have an obvious human benefit. Take for example: "Do not steal." It's quite obvious that stealing from others brings harm to the victims of the theft. If you live in a society where thievery is common you are going to live in a fearful and violent place as people attempt to protect their possessions. (For example Tom and Lynn Suchy who live in Mongolia, made a high fence around their yard and keep a big dog in it.)

I don't know if you have ever thought about it, but the reason for some of the commands in the Bible is not immediately obvious. For example, Jesus commands, "Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back." Why in the world would anyone live like that? Some might say that if you treat your enemy nice he will feel bad and start treating you well. That may happen on rare occasion but usually if you do not resist your enemy and instead treat him well, he will just keep taking advantage of you. The reason, the motive for obeying a command like that has to come from something other than some idealistic, naïve hope that your enemy will change. That may happen but there is no guarantee. The rest of the verse in Luke 6 says, "Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High." In other words, the reason to do good to your enemies and lend without expecting anything back is because you desire God's reward. You do this because being God's son and pleasing him matters more to you than not having an enemy take advantage of you.

This is why, when you come across commands in the Bible, the reason for the command is always close at hand. God does not give commands and tell us to obey, "Just because." The Bible is full of reasons as to why you should do what God says. He always gives us reasons for his commands. Today we are considering a command that is highly offensive to our cultural sensibilities. 1 Timothy 2: 11-12 has to rank as one of the most distasteful commands in the Bible to modern Americans. "A woman should learn in quietness (literally it says "silence" the same word as in v. 12) and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent." This reeks of chauvinism and male domination. It sounds demeaning and condescending to women. We've been learning in recent days about how the Taliban, in the name of Islam, forbid girls and women to go to school or work outside the home. These commands would seem to fit quite nicely into their oppressive view of and treatment of women.

How are we to treat these commands? Some use them as one of the evidences that the Bible is not God's word. I can't tell you how many times in the past 25 years, as I've shared the gospel, people have told me they know the bible is not the word of God because of its view of women. The argument goes like this, "Everyone knows that God creates men and women equal. Commands like this are merely a reflection of the patriarchal society that Paul lived in and show that the Bible is merely a human book. God would never say anything like that." Others, who believe that the Bible has divine authority, seek to interpret these verses in a manner that limits them to the very specific situation that Paul was addressing and therefore they have no significance for anyone other than the church in Ephesus in about 50 A.D. There is not enough time for me to refute the enormous variety of arguments that these "biblical feminists" use to undermine the authority of these verses to us. But I can make these two points. First, for 2000 years the church has believed that these verses apply at all times and in all cultures. That position has been questioned only within the past 50 years in the Western church. The fact that the church has believed and sought to apply these verses for 2000 years doesn't make them true but if we're going to reject them, we must have clear and convincing evidence from the text itself. This evidence is lacking. Second, notice that v. 14 begins with a "for". Paul says the reason women are not to teach or have authority over men in the church is because Adam was formed first. He goes back to creation, to how God made man in his image male and female for the reason. He does not say the reason is for any local or culturally specific reason in Ephesus. My goal this morning is to help us wrestle with what these commands mean and why we should obey them. It is my goal to show that this vision of the relationship between men and women in the church is not a repressive and ugly chauvinism but a glorious and happy partnership.

The first thing I want us to look at is the ultimate motive or reason Paul gives all the commands he gives in these verses. First, look at 1: 15-17. Paul describes how the Lord Jesus mercifully saved him and every other person who believes. Then in v. 18 he breaks into praise to this great King who has had mercy on him and on all believing sinners. In other words, the saving work of Christ ends in praise or glory for God. Salvation doesn't point to the worth of human beings for we are all sinners. Rather it points to the greatness of God's mercy and power to save sinners, even those as bad as Paul. Now look at chapter 3: 14-15. Paul says that the reason he is writing this entire letter to Timothy is so that "...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth." The three phrases that describe the church give the reason why our obedience to these commands is essential. We, as a community of believers, are the house God built and in which God lives. We are the congregation of people that the living God has called together and rules over. Our existence and our obedience is the chief evidence of God's existence and his glory. In other words, the church exists by the will of God, through the power of God, for the glory of God. It's just like we read in Ephesians 3. God created the church through the work of Christ so that his greatness as the only living God might be displayed in the universe. It matters how we conduct ourselves because we are the living display of the glory of God in the universe.

I know I've used this illustration before but I think it bears repeating. My wife is a great cook. Now, what are some ways that I can glorify Jane as the great cook that she is? One way is to do what I'm doing now, to tell you how great of a cook that she is. Another way is to tell her how much I appreciate her cooking. I could invite all my friends over to our house so that you can enjoy her cooking. I won't be satisfied until everyone enjoys her cooking as much as I do. But the first way that I glorify her cooking is by making sure that I get as much of her cooking as I can get. I'll make sure I'm home for dinner. I'll stop doing other things in order to enjoy her cooking. This is what motivates obedience in the Christian. We so enjoy the greatness of God that we delight to order our lives in a way that gets us more of God and shows off his greatness to others. This is the chief concern of the Christian. It is this purpose, that God be glorified in his church that motivates Paul to give the commands he gives in vv. 7-15.

#### MAIN POINT

**The glory of God is most clearly seen in and experienced by the church in which men and women worship together in a happy partnership. Therefore...**

**I. Holy men are to lead the congregation to God.**

In v. 8 the “everywhere” in the NIV is literally, “in every place”. What places is he referring to? He is referring to every place where Christ’s people are gathered together in prayer. Paul is describing in vv. 7-15 what is to take place when the church is gathered together in public worship. The first thing he says is that men are to be leading the congregation to God in prayer. (NOTE: He doesn’t say women are not to pray in the public service. In fact, in 1 Cor. 11 he expects women to be praying in the public worship service.) But notice that he is not simply concerned with the gender of those who are leading but with their character. He wants men who have holy hands and lives that are not full of anger and fighting. In fact, it’s important that you notice that while most of the passage we are dealing with today is addressed to women, Paul spends the bulk of this letter talking to the men who lead the congregation. Paul is answering the question, what kind of church experiences the glory of God and displays the glory of God? The first thing he points to is the quality of the male leadership in that church. What kinds of men are leading? They first of all are praying men. God wants men leading his church whose chief concern is the glory of God. They are praying men because they are dependent men. Men who know they are not at the center but that God is at the center. You see, men who are full of anger and fighting and who have unholy hands are those who believe they are at the center, not God. They are men who are pursuing their happiness in the things of this world, rather than in the things that belong to Christ’s kingdom.

The leadership Paul is describing here is the same as what he describes for the husband in Ephesians 5 that we talked about two weeks ago. The godly husband is not concerned with whether his wife is cooking his favorite meals or letting him go hunting whenever he wants. He is concerned with whether his wife and their children are seeking God. He is not concerned chiefly with how his wife submits to him in the fulfilling of her wifely responsibilities but is she submitting to him by following him to Christ. The same is true of the Christian leader. Flip over a page to 2 Timothy 2:10. Paul says, “Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” Or in 2 Cor. 1:24, “Not that we lord it over your faith but we work with you for your joy...” This is what motivates Christian leaders and Christian husbands. We are not working to get our wives or those in the church to do what we say so we can be the center of attention and get our needs met. Rather, we are working for the joy of others in the glory of Christ.

A famous Scottish pastor of the last century said that the thing his congregation needed most from him was his personal holiness. The apostle Paul would agree with that. A little later in this letter he tells Timothy, “Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in faith and in purity... Watch your life and your doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do you will save both yourself and your hearers.” God has blessed our church with a group of men who desire Christ in this way. We have a group of men involved in various leadership roles who desperately want to live holy lives and lead people to Christ. We pray for more of them who will live holy, peace filled lives and seek to lead their families and our church to God in a praying life.

*The glory of God is most clearly seen in and experienced by the church in which men and women worship together in a happy partnership. Therefore...*

- *Holy men are to lead the congregation to God.*
- *And therefore...*

## **II. Christian women must live in a manner that is fitting for those who profess to worship God.**

There are two things that need to be said about vv. 9-15 before we look at the details. First, Paul has a very limited objective in these verses. He is not trying to set out all that women are to be or to do in the life and ministry of the church. He is seeking to describe how women are to relate and not relate to men in the church with a special emphasis on the public worship in the church. Second, what Paul is describing here is how Christian women are to live in the context of the church. I do not think that you can take what Paul says here and apply it to women in contexts outside of the church. These verses cannot be used to say that women cannot be in positions of authority in the world of commerce or government or education. Just as there is a pattern to how husbands and wives relate to each other to the glory of God so there is a pattern for how men and women are to relate to each other in the church that will bring praise and honor to God. But it is a pattern for the church, not for all other male-female relationships.

The first thing he says to women seems so trite and legalistic. It seems to us that he is sticking his nose into something that he has no business talking about. Why does he care about how women dress? What difference can it possibly make to God what a woman wears to church? There are several clues in vv. 9-10 to help us sort out what Paul is saying. First, as the New American Standard makes clear, the first word in v. 9 is “likewise” or “in the same way”. In the church of the living God, men are not to be known for their ability to win arguments and get their own way but for their holy and prayerful lives. In the same way, women are not to be known for their beauty or fashionable dress. They are to be known as women whose first concern is the worship of God. They are to display the centrality of God in their lives by their modest dress and their lives that are full of good deeds. “Modestly, with decency and propriety” emphasize that she is not to draw attention to herself either by the extravagance of her clothing or by clothing that is sexually provocative. Paul confronts both men and women with how each naturally seeks to gain influence and standing in the group. Men often use power and intimidation to get their way. Women often use beauty and sexuality to get their way. Paul condemns both approaches for Christian men and women and exhorts men to pray and live holy lives and women to dress appropriately, not extravagantly or provocatively but to cloth themselves with good deeds.

Just as when he tells men to pray he is not forbidding women from praying, so also, when he tells women to do good deeds he is not saying men should not do good deeds. What does Paul mean by “good deeds”? If you’ll look over at 5:9-10 you’ll see a partial list. “...good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.” I think of Tabitha in the book of Acts who helped the poor and made clothes for widows. There is Lydia, who owned her own business and when she became a Christian invited Paul and his traveling companions to live at her house while they stayed in her town. She showed them hospitality. Then there is Priscilla, who along with her husband Aquila, had a local church meeting in their home and whom Paul called a fellow worker in the gospel. There are all kinds of good works that women can and must engage in. God will not be glorified in and through our church unless women engage in a whole host of good deeds. These are not “lesser” tasks than those given to men. They are necessary and essential if the church is going to know and share the glory of God. When they serve others because they are God-worshippers, then they join with the men in the church in bringing great glory to God.

Now we come to the hard verses. The NIV tries to soften the harshness of these verses by translating the same Greek word two different ways. In verse 11 “quietness” is the same Greek word as “silence” in v. 12. In doing this they obscure what Paul is saying and actually make it seem harsher than is necessary. There are four questions to answer in order to figure out what these verses mean. First, does this verse mean that women cannot speak at all in the church? Second, what does “to teach and to have authority over men” mean? Third, why does Paul say this? Fourth, what in the world does v. 15 mean?

Are women forbidden from speaking in the church? It says she must be silent. Let me make this even more difficult for us. In 1 Corinthians 14:33b-34 Paul says, “As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.” The Bible does not forbid women from speaking in the church gathered in prayer and worship. There are numerous examples in the NT of women speaking and praying in the church. In 1 Cor. 11 Paul gives instructions as to how women are to conduct themselves when they pray and prophesy in church, but he expects women to be fully involved in the life of the church. The context of both 1 Corinthians and here in 1 Timothy make clear that Paul is not forbidding women from uttering any words in the church. He is forbidding women from speaking certain kinds of words.

What kind of speech does Paul forbid women from practicing? He forbids the language of teaching and authority over men. What does it mean to teach and have authority over men? Notice that women are to be silent while learning within the context of the church gathered in worship. Also notice that silence and submission are synonymous in v. 11. To whom are women to be submissive? They are to be submissive to the male leadership appointed in the church. They are not submissive to every man, but to the men God has appointed to leadership. This submission is something that is also commanded for all the men in the church who are not appointed to leadership. Hebrews 13:17 says to the entire church, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.”

In v. 12 the speech that is forbidden to them is the speech of teaching and of authority over men. Teaching in Paul's letter to Timothy always refers to the authoritative teaching of God's word. In 4:11 Paul says to Timothy, "Command and teach these things." The authoritative teaching of God's word in the context of the gathered church is limited to certain men. The authority that Paul forbids women to exercise is the authority of final, spiritual leadership in the church. What women cannot do is be in the position of having final authority on matters of doctrine and practice in the church. What immediately follows this prohibition of women teaching and having authority over men is Paul's instruction on what kind of men can be elders/pastors/overseers in the church. What Paul is prohibiting women from doing is being in the offices of pastor and elder in the church. He is forbidding women from teaching the Bible to and having spiritual authority over men in the church. In our particular setting this means that women cannot hold the position of teaching pastor, of elder or of Discovery Group Leader. Women are not to be in the position of teaching the Bible and giving spiritual direction to men in the church as it is gathered together.

The authority Paul is describing is spiritual authority, not all kinds of authority. Women can give leadership in all manner of church activity. Women can lead in singing and in reading the Scripture and in organizing various projects in the church. Women are not to be in the position of telling the church gathered together as men and women what the Scriptures mean and how they are to be applied to us. Women can teach women and in fact are commanded to do so in Titus. Women can give direction to men in the church in fulfilling the tasks of the church. For example, Cheryl Martin is the Administrator for our church. She regularly assigns men to fulfill a variety of functions in our church and tells them when and where to do so. Cherie Wojciechowski is the leader of our Missions Team. She sets agendas for their meetings and directs the activities of that team which has men on it.

Why must women not be in these positions of teaching the Scriptures and having spiritual authority over men? In vv. 13-14 Paul gives 2 reasons. First, he says women must be in submission to the male leadership of the church and not teach or have spiritual authority over the church as men and women because Adam was formed first, then Eve. Paul's reference to the creation of men and women back in Genesis 2 takes us back to what it means to be male and female. God made humans in his image but he made them male and female. God will not be glorified in the world and the world will not be cared for by us unless we do it in the partnership of maleness and femaleness. That partnership is a partnership of equality as persons but distinction in role and function. As Ray Ortlund says, "In the partnership of two spiritually equal human beings, man and woman, the man bears the primary responsibility to lead the partnership in a God-glorifying direction." The human race being male and female reflects the image of God as Trinity. Men and women are equal in value just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each fully God. But we are different in role and function just as each member of the Trinity is different in role and function. The Son always submits to the Father and the Father always leads the Son. The reason women may not teach the Scriptures or exercise spiritual authority over men in the church is because God made man the head of the relationship and woman the helper in order to display the greatness of his being one God, eternally existing as three persons in a loving relationship of leadership and submission.

The second reason women are not to teach the Scriptures or have spiritual authority in the gathered church is because, "Adam was not deceived but the woman, after being deceived, became a sinner." This is not saying that women are more spiritually gullible or more easily deceived and that is why women should not teach. Paul is pointing out that the way sin entered the world was when Eve did not remain in submission to Adam but took it upon herself to engage in a theological debate with Satan and then took authority over Adam by giving Adam the forbidden fruit to eat. When Eve taught Adam that the fruit would make him like God and took authority over him by giving him the fruit, sin entered the world. This is not saying that Adam did not sin or that the fall is the woman's fault. He is simply drawing attention to the fact that when God's created order is not followed, God is dishonored and human beings are harmed.

What does v. 15 mean? This is a notoriously difficult verse to translate and to interpret. The key to understanding the verse is to see it as part of the argument that Paul is making based on Genesis 1-3. Verse 14 ends by saying that the woman "became a sinner" after she was deceived. What did God say to the woman after she was deceived? Genesis 3: 16 says in part, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give

birth to children.” God tells the woman that one of the results of and evidences of her sin and therefore her separation from God will be difficulty in bearing children. Difficulty in the bearing and raising of children is the mark of God’s curse upon women, just as difficulty in subduing the earth is the mark of God’s curse upon men. Then the preposition “through” does not mean “women will be saved by means of bearing children or of fulfilling their domestic duties”. It can’t mean that for two reasons. First, it would be teaching that salvation is by works. Second, this verse would only apply to mothers. Paul clearly is talking to all women. Rather this verse says, “women will be saved even while they are experiencing the results of sin in their lives, while living in this world under God’s curse”. How will women be saved? They will escape the final curse of sin, which is hell, if they continue to trust in and love Christ and advance in holiness in the ways that are unique to them as women. Paul is simply stating that salvation is by grace through faith and the faith that saves persists to the end of life. The way women and men know they are Christians is not because they asked Jesus into their heart one time or because they had some sort of religious experience. Rather you know you are a Christian because you are right now trusting and loving Christ and growing in holiness. The phrase, “with modesty” shows that the way a woman grows in holiness is in some sense different from how a man grows in holiness. Female holiness looks different from male holiness because females are made different by God for a different role in honoring him.

The Bible is not chauvinistic. It does not teach that women are inferior to men. Rather, men and women display the greatness of the God who is a Trinity as they serve him together in a complementary partnership. In the church godly men teach and give spiritual direction to the congregation and godly women submit to their leadership along with all the other men in the congregation and help fulfill this grand purpose of displaying the greatness of God by their good deeds. The limit God puts on what women can do in the church is very narrow. There is much women can and must do.

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