

Title: Of Men and Women
Date: 10/4/26
Subject: Men and women are given different roles by God.
Scripture: 1 Timothy 2

We're going to pick up the speed and move quickly through the book of 1 Timothy because Christmas is coming. Want to get this series complete before getting into our Christmas emphasis.

Originally the books of the Bible didn't have chapter and verse divisions. 1 Timothy is a letter. What we have as chapter 2 is connected to the problem of false teaching and the marvelous grace of God in chapter 1 through the use of the word *then*.

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-8

1. Priority of prayer. vv. 1-8

The object of prayer is God's desire that everyone be saved. The Lord could have made it automatic that all people are saved from the moment of birth...but he chose to give people a choice as to whether they call out to him for salvation or not.

How be saved. Vv. 5, 6. Believe there is one God and the provision for getting to him is through Jesus Christ. He is the one and only mediator, go between. Jesus paid the ransom to redeem people from being enslaved to Satan and sin. The ransom cost him his entire life including his self-emptying entrance into humanity all the way through his sacrificial death on the cross. The gift of salvation is extended to everyone. It's up to people whether they will accept God's offer or not.

Paul was thrilled he had the privilege of participating in communicating the good news of Jesus. He was a herald who announced the King's good news, an apostle who'd been sent as an authoritative messenger and a teacher who would explain the message.

One of the maybe unexpected strategies for evangelism is to pray for those who don't know Jesus as their Savior. Charles Spurgeon and the Billy Graham Crusades credited their effectiveness to people who prayed for the ministry and for people to come to Christ. Four weeks ago, I asked us to pray for somebody who needs Jesus. How's it going?

The intensity of the need to pray is communicated by the word *urge*. It was also used in 1:3. It's not merely a polite suggestion. There's extra push behind the request. The urgency of the situation is furthered by the piling on of different kinds of prayer. Sometimes they're used interchangeably. The idea is to use any and all forms at a person's disposal to pray.

Who are we to pray for? It says everyone but specifies one group - kings and all those in authority. We can go back and forth about whether they need to be saved more than others do. Who isn't in a desperate situation of needing to be saved? Government leaders are highlighted since they affect people in so many ways as they hold power over people's lives. The point of praying isn't that authorities and those in power would be

removed from power because we disagree with them or at least be nicer, but that they'd come to know Jesus as their Savior.

It's vital to remember that the emperor during Paul's later years was Nero who was one of the worst persecutors of Christians. I think Paul prayed Nero would come to Christ as Savior. Nero didn't but it wasn't a waste of time for Paul to pray. He had wanted to go to Rome to talk about Jesus there. It's likely he came face to face with Nero prior to writing this letter.

The goal is to be able to live peaceful and quiet lives. It almost sounds selfish, but I don't think we should view it that way. There's nothing wrong with wanting to live peaceful and quiet lives. Who doesn't want that? It's like a mom trying to calm rambunctious kids and saying she just wants some peace and quiet. One of the kids says, "I'll be quiet" while another quickly adds, "I'll be peace."

Peaceful and quiet lives are free from hostility and worry about safety and security. These are coupled with godliness and holiness which are somewhat interchangeable. *Godliness* is only used in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. It's been described as "the reverent awareness of God's sovereignty over every aspect of life, and the attendant determination to honor him in all one's conduct" (Baker's Evangelical Dictionary). It's acknowledging God as the supreme being, submitting to him and desiring to live a life that pleases and honors him.

Praying pleases God. Praying for people, particularly people who are government authorities, pleases God. Praying for people, particularly people who are government authorities to be saved, to come into a relationship with Jesus Christ, pleases God.

V. 8 tells us men are to take the lead in prayer. They aren't to be passive, content to be on the sidelines, but get in the game. This instruction doesn't prohibit women from praying. Women pray throughout the Bible. The idea is for guys to take the lead, and in this particular situation, pray for government leaders to be saved.

Lifting holy hands in prayer isn't the official Christian prayer posture. Other postures are given throughout the Bible. It can be viewed as a figure of speech. People who pray are to have clean hands, ones that have been set apart to God and purity of life (James 4:8). Sin needs to be confessed before we can talk about other matters to the Heavenly Father.

The attitude of prayer is to be "without anger or disputing." Can you imagine trying to pray with anger and disputing? It could be competing to see who has the best prayer. The person who prays shouldn't have ill will towards others, be abusive, hold a grudge, or be divisive. These hinder prayer even as the lack of forgiveness extended towards someone hinders prayer.

2. Dressing for spiritual success

A. Attire. READ 2:9, 10.

The proper attire for women is good deeds. Another place in the Bible states "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight" (1 Peter 3:3, 4).

When Samuel was trying to find the new king for Israel from Jesse's family, he was enamored with the oldest son who was tall and good looking. He had king written all over him. It was if he was from central casting. Samuel thought surely he was the Lord's (1 Sam 16:6). The Lord had other ideas. He told the prophet, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (v. 7).

The Lord's focus is the character of a person. The inner life is more important than the external. Holiness is the order of the day just as it was in vv. 2 and 8. It's understanding the person has been set apart by God. God has cleaned up the inside, forgiven and erased sins. Therefore, they're to live a life set apart to God, dedicated to him, desiring to live to please him.

Good deeds are an outward indication of the inner reality of trusting in God alone for salvation. Pile on the good deeds. Love others. Take care of others. Fulfill all the "one another" commands. Doing good deeds doesn't open the door for a person to enter a relationship with Jesus Christ. They're an expression of appreciation for what God has done.

We move from the principle of the priority of the internal to the application of how it affects the outer appearance. These styling directives reflect the desire to please God. Women are to dress modestly with decency and propriety. They speak of being free from shame, exercising self-control, restraint, humility and discretion. This isn't a prohibition about having nice things, dressing up, wearing jewelry or makeup. External appearances aren't unimportant. It's about the intent. The opposites are immodestly, indecently and impropriety.

Ephesus was a center for the worship of the goddess Artemis. She was viewed as one of the main gods, as she descended from the heavens, was the mother of all life, the goddess of fertility and childbirth as well as the ongoing abundant provider. Her temple was a place of pilgrimage for pregnant women. Women worshippers elaborately dressed up to send signals to gain the attention of Artemis.

Women would also use temple attendance as a means to show off their wealth and status. "If you got it, flaunt it." It was done with braided hair, gold, pearls and expensive clothes. Braided hair refers to over-the-top elaborate hairstyles with ostentatious gold ornamentation consisting of picks, pins, bows, ribbons and combs. It would make the hats people wear to the Kentucky Derby look like trash. They were extravagant and proud displays of their wealth, status in society and themselves. It was immodest, indecent and improper.

I heard of a reality TV show about pastors' wives in LA. They called themselves the "first ladies of the churches." They felt they should show other women how they should dress to look good - outfits costing thousands of dollars, loads of expensive jewelry, extravagant hairstyles. They wanted to set the fashion attitude...and evidently not the spiritual tone. It stressed what is superficial. It was really about vanity.

There's another application of dressing modestly with decency and propriety.

Most of the temples to gods and goddesses in the ancient world included cult prostitutes in their perverted sense of worship. The women utilized braided hair, gold, pearls and expensive clothes to show their sensuality to invite improper attention and entice somebody.

The goddess Artemis permeated the social and economic spheres as well as the religious. It influenced how people acted, interacted, communicated and dressed. Things that were accepted in the temple became common in society and culture. As one source notes “ostentatious dress, in the ancient world, sometimes could signal a woman’s loose morals and independence from her husband.”

First century Christians came from diverse backgrounds. Some had a Jewish setting and familiarity with the teachings of the OT. Others came from pagan environments with little to no familiarity of God's teachings. Paul writes to another church (1 Cor 6:9 - 11) that some of them had been sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers, swindlers. He emphasized “were” – in the past. When they placed their trust in Jesus Christ, they had been washed, sanctified and justified by God. That setting wasn’t all that different from Ephesus. The churches probably had wealthy folks sitting next to former prostitutes.

It’s improper to distract from worship or lead people astray whether it’s dressing to boast and brag about wealth and status which could incite someone to envy, jealousy, covet OR be in a state of undress. Dress modestly, with decency and propriety and with good deeds. Show reverence and devotion for God and love for the church body. Don't dress like Hollywood stars.

B. Attitude. Read vv. 11-15.

V. 13 presents the basis for the surrounding teaching. It’s founded on a creation principle. Adam, the first man, was created first. This wasn't simply because somebody had to be created first so God had the angel Gabriel flip a coin: “Heads it's a man. Tails it's a woman.” Man was the winner and woman was the loser.

Man was created first and then Eve was created as a helper to work alongside Adam.

The creation order of humans provides an illustration of the interworking of the Trinity. The Son of God gives honor to the Father and comes under his authority (1 Cor 11:3). They have different roles in effecting salvation, but it doesn't mean the Son is somehow a lesser God. They aren’t independent of one another as if they were separate gods. They’re dependent upon each other. But there needs to be one head for functionality.

Likewise, men and women are equal before God but have different and complementary roles and functions according to his design and plan. The difference isn’t to be misconstrued as a commentary on women's inferior status or nature. Neither gender is superior, more special or more spiritual than the other. Both are created in the image of God and equal as sinners who need to be redeemed. But there needs to be one head for functionality.

As seen earlier in the chapter, again in chapter 3 and other places, men are to take the lead role, more specifically as elders - the spiritual leaders of the church. John Piper puts it this way, “*authority* refers to the divine calling of spiritual, gifted men to take primary responsibilities as elders for Christ-like, servant-leadership and teaching in the church. And *submission* refers to the divine calling of the rest of the church, both men and women, to honor and affirm the leadership and teaching of the elders and to be equipped by them for the

hundreds and hundreds of various ministries available to men and women in the service of Christ” (Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, p. 53).

That quote is from a great resource - Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. I loaned the book to somebody...but don't remember who. If you happen to have the big blue book, I'd like to have it back.

The devil's temptation of Eve was to subvert the order that God had created. He sought to bypass Adam and have Eve take the lead. Eve was deceived first and played a role in Adam succumbing to temptation. We shouldn't jump to the erroneous conclusion women are less morally competent and more easily deceived.

The Artemis worship in Ephesus was woman-centric and pushed men to the margins. The instructions in 1 Timothy aren't only correcting an attitude that had spilled over into that specific church. They apply throughout the centuries in all cultures.

V. 11 says women are to learn in quietness and full submission. Quietness and the later reference to being silent speak to being peaceable, having a readiness to learn, a respectful receptivity.

Submission is a military term describing how lower ranks relate to higher ones. It doesn't degrade the privates because they aren't generals. We can go back to how Jesus the Son of God submitted to the Father to bring salvation to people. The Father is the originator and architect of the plan. Jesus is the fulfiller and achiever of it. It wouldn't have worked well if Jesus wasn't willing to submit or was trying to circumvent God's plan.

Women aren't to assume elder function of being the primary spiritual leaders in the church responsible for the public group teaching of God's Word, the authoritative doctrinal instruction, when men are present. Nor are they to have direct authority over men. They shouldn't have a self-assertive desire nor be argumentative or contentious. They aren't to seek to lead or dominate.

V. 15 is regarded as one of the trickier verses to interpret: “Women will be saved through childbearing.” There are various interpretations but I'll focus on the one I think is best. Whenever the word *saved* or related words are used in the pastoral epistles by Paul it always refers to the various aspects of spiritual salvation.

Here it's not focusing on how a person is saved but what happens after they're saved. It's working out salvation (Phil 2:12), living it out as v. 15 phrases it: “She is to continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.”

After Adam and Eve sinned, God told them the consequences of their actions. Adam would receive his through difficulties in work. Eve would receive hers in giving birth. Her primary, normal and natural duty would be having and raising children (1 Timothy 5:14, Titus 2:3-5). It would be her usual sphere of influence where she's able to shape kids through a godly example. This is part of the good deeds as presented in V. 10.

I mentioned at the beginning that we were picking up the pace. Trying to cover this chapter in one sermon may have bordered on the ludicrous, but I trust that the Lord granted insight into extremely important matters.