

1 Timothy 2
January 16, 2022

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: I want you to picture yourself as a young pastor who has been under great teaching by your mentor, or seminary professors. You are well-versed in Scripture, you feel called to ministry, and you have just been asked to pastor a new church that has been recently planted. You know that corporate worship is a focal point each week. What do you think would be your greatest challenges in leading corporate worship? [Let people engage.]

Transition: We just started our study of first Timothy last week. You will recall that Paul was a mentor of young Timothy, and Paul had taken Timothy with him on a missionary journey serving together as a plan to churches. We learned last week that Paul most likely was writing a letter to Timothy for Macedonia, while Timothy was asked to stay behind to pastor a church in Ephesus.

Ephesus was not an easy place to Pastor. This culture worshipped the goddess Diana, who represented sexual immorality. Prostitution was a serious issue in the city. Paul is quite aware of Timothy's circumstances, who is leading a church in this city! Last week, Paul began his letter to Timothy by giving him recommendations on how to handle false teaching within the church. This week, which will be our text for this morning, Paul is going to Address what worship looks like.

As we read this text, it's important that we understand what is happening in that culture. And I would invite you to read this text through the lens of young Timothy who has quite a challenge in front of them. He needs to oversee corporate worship, so how do men and women fit in the roles we find in worship? What distractions might he need deal with? What are key components of worship? How can Timothy design worship so that everyone who attends worship gets the most out of it? If we will look at it from Timothy's camera angle, I think this chapter is very digestible for both men and women. I don't think it's as controversial as it may look. Let's begin.

BOOK:

Instructions on Worship

2 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. ⁷ And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.

⁸ I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

⁹ I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

¹¹ A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women will be saved (or restored) through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

If the basis for prayer is the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross, then prayer is a most important activity in a church. Not to pray is to slight the cross! To pray only for ourselves is to deny the worldwide outreach of the cross. To ignore lost souls is to ignore the cross. "All men" [people] is the key to this paragraph: We pray for "all" because Christ died for "all" and it is God's will that "all" be saved. We must give ourselves to God to be a part of His worldwide program to reach people before it is too late.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 2, pp. 214–219)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40) is a basic principle for the conduct of the ministry of the church. Apparently, young Timothy was having some problems applying this principle to the assemblies in Ephesus. The public worship services were losing their order and effectiveness because both the men and the women members of the church were disobeying God’s Word.

“The church is an organism,” a pastor told me, “so we shouldn’t put too much emphasis on organization. We should allow the Spirit to have freedom.”

“But if an organism is *disorganized*,” I quickly reminded him, “it will die. Yes, I agree that we must permit the Spirit to have freedom, but even the Holy Spirit is not free to disobey the Word of God.”

Often, what we think is the “freedom of the Spirit” are the carnal ideas of some Christian who is not walking in the Spirit. Eventually this “freedom” becomes anarchy, and the Spirit grieves as a church gradually moves away from the standards of God’s Word.

To counteract this tendency, Paul exhorted the men and women in the church and reminded them of their spiritual responsibilities.

The Men—Praying (1 Tim. 2:1–8)

The priority of prayer (v. 1a). “First of all” indicates that prayer is most important in the public worship of the church. It is sad to see how prayer has lost importance in many churches. “If I announce a banquet,” a pastor said, “people will come out of the woodwork to attend. But if I announce a prayer meeting, I’m lucky if the ushers show up!” Not only have the special meetings for prayer lost stature in most local churches, but even prayer *in the public services* is greatly minimized. Many pastors spend more time on the announcements than they do in prayer!

The late Peter Deyneka, Sr., my good friend and founder of the Slavic Gospel Association, often reminded me: “Much prayer, much power! No prayer, no power!” Prayer was as much a part of the apostolic ministry as preaching the Word (Acts 6:4). Yet some pastors spend hours preparing their sermons, but never prepare their public prayers. Consequently, their prayers are routine, humdrum, and repetitious. I am not suggesting that a pastor write out every word and read it, but that he think through what he will pray about. This will keep “the pastoral prayer” from becoming dull and a mere repetition of what was “prayed” the previous week.

But the church members also need to be prepared to pray. Our hearts must be right with God and with each other. We must really want to pray, and not pray simply to please people (as did the Pharisees, Matt. 6:5), or to fulfill a religious duty. When a local church ceases to depend on prayer, God ceases to bless its ministry.

The variety of prayer (v. 1b). There are at least seven different Greek nouns for “prayer,” and four of them are used here. *Supplications* carries the idea of “offering a request for a felt need.”

Prayers is the commonest term for this activity, and it emphasizes the sacredness of prayer. We are praying *to God*; prayer is an act of worship, not just an expression of our wants and needs. There should be reverence in our hearts as we pray to God.

Intercessions is best translated “petitions.” This same word is translated “prayer” in 1 Timothy 4:5, where it refers to blessing the food we eat. (It is rather obvious that we do not *intercede* for our food in the usual sense of that word.) The basic meaning is “to draw near to a

person and converse confidently with him.” It suggests that we enjoy fellowship with God so that we have confidence in Him as we pray.

Giving of thanks is definitely a part of worship and prayer. We not only give thanks for answers to prayer, but for who God is and what He does for us in His grace. We should not simply add our thanksgiving to the end of a selfish prayer! Thanksgiving should be an important ingredient in all of our prayers. In fact, sometimes we need to imitate David and present to God *only* thanksgiving with no petitions at all! (see Ps. 103)

“Prayer and supplication [petition] with thanksgiving” are a part of Paul’s formula for God’s peace in our hearts (Phil. 4:6). It is worth noting that Daniel, the great prayer-warrior, practiced this kind of praying (Dan. 6:10–11).

The objects of prayer (vv. 1c–2). “All men” makes it clear that no person on earth is outside the influence of believing prayer. (We have no examples of exhortations that say we should pray for the dead. If we should pray for the dead, Paul certainly had a good opportunity to tell us in this section of his letter.) This means we should pray for the unsaved and the saved, for people near us and people far away, for enemies as well as friends. Unfortunately, the Pharisees did not have this universal outlook in their prayers, for they centered their attention primarily on Israel.

Paul urged the church to especially pray for those in authority. Godless Emperor Nero was on the throne at that time, and yet the believers were supposed to pray for him! Even when we cannot respect men or women in authority, we must respect their offices and pray for them. In fact, it is for our own good that we do so: “that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Tim. 2:2b, NIV). The early church was always subject to opposition and persecution, so it was wise to pray for those in authority. “Quiet” refers to circumstances around us, while “peaceful” refers to a calm attitude within us. The results should be lives that are godly and honorable.

To be sure, Paul has not named all the persons we can and should pray for, since “all men” covers the matter fully. We can’t pray for everybody in the world by name, but we certainly ought to pray for those we know and know about. Why? Because it’s a good thing to do and because it pleases God.

The reasons for prayer (vv. 3–4). The word “good” is a key word in Paul’s pastoral epistles (1 Tim. 1:8, 18; 2:3; 3:1, 7, 13; 4:4, 6; 5:4, 10, 25; 6:12–13, 18–19; 2 Tim. 1:14; 2:3; 4:7; Titus 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14). The Greek word emphasizes the idea of something being intrinsically good, not just good in its effects. “Fair” and “beautiful” are synonyms. Certainly prayer of itself is a goodly practice, and brings with it many good benefits.

But prayer is also pleasing to the Lord. It pleases the Father when His children pray as He has commanded them to. The Pharisees prayed in order to be praised by men (Matt. 6:5) or to impress other worshipers (Luke 18:9–14). True Christians pray in order to please God. This suggests that we must pray in the will of God, because it certainly does not please the Father when we pray selfishly (James 4:1–10; 1 John 5:14–15). It’s often said that the purpose of prayer is not to get man’s will done in heaven, but to get God’s will done on earth.

What is God’s will? The salvation of lost souls, for one thing. We can pray for “all men” because it is God’s will that “all men” come to the knowledge of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. God loved the world (John 3:16) and Christ died for the whole world (1 John 2:2; 4:14). Jesus died on the cross that He might draw “all men” to salvation (John 12:32). This does not mean all people without *exception*, for certainly the whole world is not going to be saved. It means all people without *distinction*—Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, religious and pagan.

If God doesn't want anyone to perish, then why are so many lost? God is long-suffering with lost sinners, even delaying His judgment that they might come to Christ (2 Peter 3:9). But salvation depends on a "knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Not everyone has heard the truth of the Gospel, and many who have heard have rejected it. We cannot explain the mystery of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility (see John 6:37), but realize that both are taught in the Bible and are harmonized in God's great plan of salvation. We do know that prayer is an important part of God's program for reaching a lost world. We have the responsibility of praying for lost souls (Rom. 10:1) and making ourselves available to share the Gospel with others.

The basis for prayer (vv. 5–7). Many believers do not realize that prayer is based on the work of Jesus Christ as Savior and Mediator. As the God-Man, Jesus Christ is the perfect Mediator between the holy God and His failing children. One of Job's complaints had to do with the absence of a mediator who could take his message to the throne of God. "There is no umpire between us, who may lay his hand upon us both" (Job 9:33, NASB).

Since there is only one God, there is need for only one Mediator; and that Mediator is Jesus Christ. *No other person can qualify.* Jesus Christ is both God and man, and, therefore, can be the "umpire" between God and man. In His perfect life and substitutionary death, He met the just demands of God's holy law. He was the "ransom for all." The word *ransom* means "a price paid to free a slave." His death was "on behalf of all." Though the death of Christ is efficient only for those who trust Him, it is sufficient for the sins of the whole world. Jesus said that He came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

Christ died for "all men," and God is willing for "all men to be saved." How does this Good News get out to a sinful world? God calls and ordains messengers who take the Gospel to lost sinners. Paul was such a messenger: he was a *preacher* (the herald of the King), an *apostle* (one sent with a special commission), and a *teacher*. The same God who ordains *the end* (the salvation of the lost) also ordains *the means to the end*: prayer and preaching of the Word. This Good News is not for the Jews only, but also for the Gentiles.

If the basis for prayer is the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross, then prayer is a most important activity in a church. Not to pray is to slight the cross! To pray only for ourselves is to deny the worldwide outreach of the cross. To ignore lost souls is to ignore the cross. "All men" [people] is the key to this paragraph: We pray for "all" because Christ died for "all" and it is God's will that "all" be saved. We must give ourselves to God to be a part of His worldwide program to reach people before it is too late.

The attitude in prayer (v. 8). Paul stated definitely that "men" should pray in the local assembly. Both men and women prayed in the early church (1 Cor. 11:4–5), but the emphasis here is on the men. It is common to find women's prayer meetings, but not often do we find men's prayer meetings. If the men do not pray, the local church will not have dedicated leaders to oversee its ministry.

It was customary for Jewish men to pray with their arms extended and their hands open to heaven. Our traditional posture of bowing the head, folding the hands, and closing the eyes is nowhere found or commanded in Scripture. Actually, there are many prayer postures found in the Bible: standing with outstretched hands (1 Kings 8:22); kneeling (Dan. 6:10); standing (Luke 18:11); sitting (2 Sam. 7:18); bowing the head (Gen. 24:26); lifting the eyes (John 17:1); falling on the ground (Gen. 17:3). The important thing is not the posture of the body but the posture of the heart.

Paul stated three essentials for effective prayer, and the first was “holy hands.” Obviously this means a holy life. “Clean hands” was symbolic of a blameless life (2 Sam. 22:21; Ps. 24:4). If we have sin in our lives, we cannot pray and expect God to answer (Ps. 66:18).

“Without wrath” is the second essential, and requires that we be on good terms with one another. “Without anger” might be a better translation. A person who is constantly having trouble with other believers, who is a troublemaker rather than a peacemaker, cannot pray and get answers from God.

“Doubting” suggests that we must pray *in faith*, but the word really means “disputing.” When we have anger in the heart, we often have open disagreements with others. Christians should learn to disagree without being disagreeable. We should “do all things without murmurings and disputings” (Phil. 2:14).

Effective praying, then, demands that I be in a right relationship with God (“holy hands”) and with my fellow believers (“without murmurings and disputings”). Jesus taught the same truth (Mark 11:24–26). If we spent more time *preparing* to pray and getting our hearts right before God, our prayers would be more effective.

The Women—Submitting (1 Tim. 2:9–15)

In these days of “Women’s Lib” and other feminist movements, the word “submission” makes some people see red. Some well-meaning writers have even accused Paul of being a “crusty old bachelor” who was anti-women. Those of us who hold to the inspiration and authority of the Word of God know that Paul’s teachings came from God and not from himself. If we have a problem with what the Bible says about women in the church, the issue is not with Paul (or Peter—see 1 Peter 3:1–7), but with the Lord who gave the Word (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

The word translated “subjection” in 1 Timothy 2:11 is translated “submitting” and “submit” in Ephesians 5:21–22 and Colossians 3:18. It literally means “to rank under.” Anyone who has served in the armed forces knows that “rank” has to do with order and authority, not with value or ability. A colonel is higher in rank than a private, but that does not necessarily mean that the colonel is a better man than the private. It only means that the colonel has a higher rank and, therefore, more authority.

“Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40) is a principle God follows in His creation. Just as an army would be in confusion if there were no levels of authority, so society would be in chaos without submission. Children should submit to their parents because God has given parents the authority to train their children and discipline them in love. Employees should submit to employers and obey them (Eph. 6:5–8, where the immediate reference is to household slaves, but the application can be made to workers today). Citizens should submit to government authorities, even if the authorities are not Christians (Rom. 13; 1 Peter 2:13–20).

Submission is not subjugation. Submission is recognizing God’s order in the home and the church, and joyfully obeying it. When a Christian wife joyfully submits to the Lord and to her own husband, it should bring out the best in her. (For this to happen, the husband must love his wife and use God’s order as a tool to build with, not a weapon to fight with—Eph. 5:18–33.) Submission is the key to spiritual growth and ministry: husbands should be submitted to the Lord, Christians should submit to each other (Eph. 5:21), and wives should be submitted to the Lord and to their husbands.

The emphasis in this section (1 Tim. 2:9–15) is on the place of women in the local church. Paul admonished these believing women to give evidence of their submission in several ways.

Modest dress (v. 9). The contrast here is between the artificial glamour of the world and the true beauty of a godly life. Paul did not forbid the use of jewelry or lovely clothes, but rather the excessive use of them as substitutes for the true beauty of “a meek and quiet spirit” (see 1 Peter 3:1–6). A woman who depends only on externals will soon run out of ammunition! She may attract attention, but she will not win lasting affection. Perhaps the latest fashion fads were tempting the women in the church at Ephesus, and Paul had to remind Timothy to warn the women not to get trapped.

The word translated “modest” (1 Tim. 2:9) simply means “decent and orderly.” It is related to the Greek word from which we get the English word “cosmetic.” A woman’s clothing should be decent, orderly, and in good taste. “Shamefacedness” literally means “modesty, the avoidance of extremes.” A woman who possesses this quality is ashamed to go beyond the bounds of what is decent and proper. “Sobriety” comes from a Greek word that means “having a sound mind and good sense.” It describes an inner self-control—a spiritual “radar” that tells a person what is good and proper.

Ephesus was a wealthy commercial city, and some women there competed against each other for attention and popularity. In that day expensive hairdos arrayed with costly jewelry were an accepted way to get to the top socially. Paul admonished the Christian women to major on the “inner person,” the true beauty that only Christ can give. He did not forbid the use of nice clothing or ornaments. He urged balance and propriety, with the emphasis on modesty and holy character.

“It’s getting harder and harder for a Christian woman to find the right kind of clothes!” a church member complained to me one summer. “I refuse to wear the kind of swimsuits they’re selling! I simply won’t go swimming. Whatever happened to old-fashioned modesty?”

Godly works (v. 10). Paul did not suggest that good works are a substitute for clothing! Rather, he was contrasting the “cheapness” of expensive clothes and jewelry with the true values of godly character and Christian service. “Godliness” is another key word in Paul’s pastoral letters (1 Tim. 2:2, 10; 3:16; 4:7–8; 6:3, 5–6, 11; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 1:1). Glamour can be partially applied on the outside, but godliness must come from within.

We must never underestimate the important place that godly women played in the ministry of the church. The Gospel message had a tremendous impact on them because it affirmed their value before God and their equality in the body of Christ (Gal. 3:28). Women had a low place in the Roman world, but the Gospel changed that.

There were devoted women who ministered to Jesus in the days of His earthly ministry (Luke 8:1–3). They were present at His crucifixion and burial, and it was a woman who first heralded the glorious news of His resurrection. In the Book of Acts we meet Dorcas (Acts 9:36ff), Lydia (Acts 16:14ff), Priscilla (Acts 18:1–3), and godly women in the Berean and Thessalonian churches (Acts 17:4, 12). Paul greeted at least eight women in Romans 16; and Phebe, who carried the Roman epistle to its destination, was a deaconess in a local church (Rom. 16:1). Many believing women won their husbands to the Lord and then opened their homes for Christian ministry.

Quiet learning (v. 11). “Silence” is an unfortunate translation because it gives the impression that believing women were never to open their mouths in the assembly. This is the same word that is translated “peaceable” in 1 Timothy 2:2. Some of the women abused their newfound freedom in Christ and created disturbances in the services by interrupting. It is this problem that Paul addressed in this admonition. It appears that women were in danger of upsetting the church

by trying to “enjoy” their freedom. Paul wrote a similar admonition to the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 14:34), though this admonition may apply primarily to speaking in tongues.

Respecting authority (vv. 12–15). Women *are* permitted to teach. Older women should teach the younger women (Titus 2:3–4). Timothy was taught at home by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). But in their teaching ministry, they must not “lord it over” men. There is nothing wrong with a godly woman instructing a man in private (Acts 18:24–28); but she must not assume authority in the church and try to take the place of a man. She should exercise “quietness” and help keep order in the church.

Paul gave several arguments to back up this admonition that the Christian men in the church should be the spiritual leaders. The first is an argument from *Creation*: Adam was formed first, and then Eve (1 Tim. 2:12–13). (Paul used this same argument in 1 Cor. 11:1–10.) We must keep in mind that *priority* does not mean *superiority*. Man and woman were both created by God and in God’s image. The issue is only authority: man was created first.

The second argument has to do with man’s fall into sin. Satan deceived the woman into sinning (Gen. 3:1ff; 2 Cor. 11:3); the man sinned with his eyes wide open. Because Adam rejected the God-given order, he listened to his wife, disobeyed God, and brought sin and death into the world. The submission of wives to their own husbands is a part of the original Creation. The disorder we have in society today results from a violation of that God-given order.

I do not think Paul suggested that women are more gullible than men and thus more easily deceived; for experience proves that both men and women are deceived by Satan. On one occasion, Abraham listened to his wife and got into trouble (Gen. 16). Later on, she gave him counsel and God told him to obey it (Gen. 21). In my own pastoral ministry, I have benefited greatly from the encouragement and counsel of godly women; but I have tried not to let them usurp authority in the church. In fact, the godly women I have known have no desire to “run” things in the church.

The creation of humans and their fall both seem to put the woman in an inferior position, but she does have a ministry from God (1 Tim. 2:15). There was probably a close relationship in Paul’s mind between what he wrote here and what Moses wrote in Genesis 3:16—the promise of the Savior who would be “made of a woman” (Gal 4:4). It was through a woman that the Savior came into the world. (Keep in mind that Jesus had an earthly mother but not an earthly father—Matt. 1:18ff; Luke 1:34–35.)

Godly women do have an important ministry in the local assembly, even though they are not called to be teachers of the Word in a pastoral sense. If all is done “decently and in order,” then God will bless.

Litfin, A. D. (1985). 1 Timothy. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge

III. Instructions concerning Conduct in the Church (2:1–15).

A. Instructions concerning prayer (2:1–7).

2:1. From his concerns about false teachers Paul turned to matters relating to the conduct of the church broadly (cf. 3:14–15). Paul began with what he considered most important: prayer. What too often comes last in a church’s priorities should actually come first. Not much weight should be placed on the presumed distinctions between **requests**, **prayers**, and **intercession**. The

terms are more likely designed to build on one another for emphasis. It should be noted, however, that **thanksgiving** should have a prominent place in the church's prayer life.

2:2. The Ephesian church was to pray "for everyone" (v. 1, lit., "all men"), but especially for the leaders of civil government. Paul did not specify here the content of these prayers, but almost certainly he was instructing that requests be made for the salvation of the populace and its governors. This can be seen clearly from the following verses. With Nero's growing resentment toward Christians—which came to full bloom after the fire in Rome in July, A.D. 64—and the general disintegration of the Roman Empire due to Nero's profligacy, Christians began to suffer persecution from the Roman authorities. Having recently been released from his Roman imprisonment, Paul was greatly aware of the deteriorating political atmosphere. Thus he urged prayer for the salvation of all men, but especially rulers, so that the stable, noninterfering environment of previous days might be recovered. This is the minimum requirement if Christians are to live **peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness**. (This is the first of 10 times Paul used the word *eusebia*, "godliness." These 10 occurrences are all in the Pastoral Epistles: 2:2; 3:16; 4:7–8; 6:3, 5–6, 11; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 1:1. Its five other usages are in Acts 3:12; 2 Peter 1:3, 6–7; 3:11.) Times of political and social upheaval are excellent times in which to die for Christ, but hard times in which to live for Him.

2:3. As in modern times, some in the Ephesian church were prepared to question the validity of a prayer for the salvation of all men. Thus Paul defended his instructions by pointing out that such a prayer **is good, and pleases God our Savior** (cf. 1:1). Literally, the Greek says that such a prayer is "acceptable before" (in the presence of) God. Many prayers are unacceptable to God, but not this one.

2:4. The reason this prayer is acceptable to God is that it is a prayer "according to His will" (1 John 5:14). God, who is by nature a Savior, **wants all men to be saved**. Paul repeated the words "everyone" (1 Tim. 2:1) and "all men" (vv. 3, 6). The same Greek word (*pas*, "all") is used in each case, referring all three times to the same group (cf. 4:10). God desires that no one perish (2 Peter 3:9), that the entire human race come to know the truth through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the Truth (John 14:6). (Of course, not all do come to salvation; Paul was not teaching universalism.)

2:5–6. To further buttress his argument Paul cited the commonly accepted teaching about God and His work in Christ. Verses 5–6 may represent a fragment of a familiar confession of the first century. In any case, Paul cited these unquestioned truths of the gospel: (1) **There is only one God**. (2) There is only one way for men to approach Him—through **the Man** who was God in the flesh, **Christ Jesus**. (3) This Jesus **gave Himself** up to die on the cross **as a ransom** (*antilytron*; cf. *lytron*, "ransom" for a slave or prisoner, in Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45) for the human race. (Cf. the chart, "New Testament Words for Redemption," at Mark 10:45.) This act is a clear **testimony**, offered at just the right **time** (Gal. 4:4–5; Heb. 1:1–2), of God's desire to save **all men** (cf. Titus 1:3).

2:7. The exclusivists in the Ephesian church evidently felt that the gospel was only for Jews. This was a common problem, as seen preeminently in the case of Peter (cf. Acts 10:9–43; Gal. 2:11–13). Thus Paul cited his own commission as **apostle ... to the Gentiles** as a clincher. Paul had been **appointed a herald** (*kēryx*, "messenger"; cf. 2 Tim. 1:11) to take the gospel to the majority of the human race that the Jews had considered beyond the pale. Thus, as Paul reminded the Ephesians, it can be seen that God desires everyone to be saved. Paul's assurances of his truthfulness were stylistic devices designed to stress the importance of his point (cf. Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20).

B. *Instructions concerning men and women (2:8–15).*

2:8. Undoubtedly Paul wanted all Christians to offer up prayers for a widespread spiritual awakening among the populace and its rulers. Yet in the public assembly Paul specified that **men** (*andras*, lit., “males”) **everywhere** are to lead the congregation in **prayer**. Moreover, these prayers were to be offered with lifted **hands**. This was a common Old Testament practice (cf., e.g., 1 Kings 8:22; 2 Chron. 6:13; Ezra 9:5; Pss. 28:2; 141:2; Lam. 2:19). It was also common in the pagan mystery religions of the first century and in the early church. Paintings on the walls of the catacombs in Rome portray this posture. The hands were to be **holy** (*hosios*, “devout, undefiled”), signifying an internal cleanness on the part of these spiritual leaders. Further, such leaders must be men of sound relationships, not characterized by **anger** (*orgēs*, “outbursts of temper”) **or disputing** (*dialogismou*). Broken human relationships affect one’s ability to pray (cf. Matt. 5:22–24; 6:12; 1 Peter 3:7), which would include leading others in prayer.

2:9. Next Paul turned to the females in the congregation. For their adornment they should not emphasize the external, but the internal. They should dress **modestly, with decency and propriety** (cf. v. 15). These terms stress not so much the absence of sexual suggestiveness, though it is included, but rather an appearance that is simple, moderate, judicious, and free from ostentation. The specifics Paul mentioned (**braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes**) are not wrong in themselves, but become inappropriate when they indicate misplaced values (cf. 1 Peter 3:3). In the Ephesian church these styles may have been associated with the local temple prostitutes. Christians must be careful about letting a pagan culture set their fashions.

2:10. Instead of stressing external beauty, according to the world’s standards, Christian women should manifest a different set of values. They should adorn themselves **with** (lit., “by means of”) **good deeds**. They should depend on their faithful service in the name of Christ to render them attractive to others. This was no plea for women to make themselves unattractive; it was simply an exhortation to reject the world’s yardstick for measuring beauty and adopt heaven’s standard (1 Sam. 16:7). One should expect nothing less from **women who profess to worship God**.

2:11–12. In emphasizing godly conduct for women, Paul stressed, with Peter, “the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight” (1 Peter 3:4). The females in the congregation should receive instruction from the male leadership with **quietness and full submission**. They should not attempt to turn the tables by clamoring for the office of congregational teacher or by grasping for **authority over** men. Rather they should, literally, “be in quietness.” The word, *hēsychia*, translated “quietness” in 1 Timothy 2:11 and silent in verse 12, does not mean complete silence or no talking. It is clearly used elsewhere (Acts 22:2; 2 Thes. 3:12) to mean “settled down, undisturbed, not unruly.” A different word (*sigāō*) means “to be silent, to say nothing” (cf. Luke 18:39; 1 Cor. 14:34).

2:13. Why is such a quiet and submissive spirit “of great worth in God’s sight”? (1 Peter 3:4) Because it manifests an understanding and acceptance of His design for the human race. As elsewhere (cf. 1 Cor. 11:8–10), Paul here based his view of male/female relationships in the church on the account of Creation recorded in Genesis 2. He made no reference whatever to the so-called “curse” of Genesis 3:16. Rather, the roles Paul spelled out here are a product of God’s fundamental design wherein **Adam was formed first, then Eve** (cf. Gen. 2:7–25). More is involved here than mere chronological priority. Paul saw the priority in time as indicative of the leadership given to the male, to which the woman, the “helper suitable for him” (Gen. 2:18), should respond.

2:14. Further, Paul contrasted the experiences of Adam and Eve. **The woman ... was deceived and became a sinner**, but **Adam was not the one deceived**. Some chauvinists see Paul arguing here that women, as represented in their archetype Eve, are more gullible and thus more susceptible to error, than men. Thus, they say, females should not be in places of teaching or authority in the church. Others believe Paul was saying, in effect, “Look what happens when the Creation order is reversed and the man abdicates the leadership role to the woman.” In any case, Paul was emphatically not excusing or absolving Adam of blame for the Fall. Elsewhere Paul put the responsibility squarely on Adam’s shoulders (cf. Rom. 5:12–21).

2:15. This is one of the most difficult verses of the New Testament to interpret. The ambiguous words **kept safe through childbirth** have given rise to several diverse interpretations: (a) preserved (physically) through the difficult and dangerous process of childbirth; (b) preserved (from insignificance) by means of her role in the family; (c) saved through the ultimate childbirth of Jesus Christ the Savior (an indirect reference to Gen. 3:15); and (d) kept from the corruption of society by being at home raising children. The interpretation of the verse is further clouded by the conditional clause at the end: **if they**, that is, mothers, **continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety**. Whatever one understands the first part of the verse to be affirming, it is contingent on a woman’s willingness to abide in these four virtues. Hence the second of the preceding options seems most likely. A woman will find her greatest satisfaction and meaning in life, not in seeking the male role, but in fulfilling God’s design for her as wife and mother with all “faith, love, and holiness with propriety” (i.e., self-restraint; cf. 1 Tim. 2:9).

Dockery, D. S. (1998). The Pauline Letters. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (pp. 604–605). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

CHURCH WORSHIP (2:1–15)

From his concerns about false teachers Paul turned to issues relating to the worship of the church. Paul began with instructions concerning prayer and then moved to matters regarding the roles of men and women.

2:1–7. Paul urged that “requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone.” Prayer is an exceedingly important part of the church’s worship. The apostle stresses the importance of special prayer for persons in high places of authority in the state.

Prayer is addressed to God “who wants all men to be saved.” Paul here cited three basic truths of the gospel. (1) There is only one God. (2) God can only be approached through the Man who was God in the flesh, the man Christ Jesus. (3) This man gave himself as a ransom for the human race. Paul was not teaching universalism for salvation is possible only for those who know the truth through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

2:8–15. Christian men and women should pray to God. Women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly. Some maintain that Paul’s teaching about women here is historically conditioned. Others see these verses as normative teaching for every age. Some type of prohibition remains. Some believe that Paul prohibited teaching only by women who had not been properly taught themselves. Such women tended to domineer over men. Others suggest that Paul did not allow women to be official teachers in the Christian community, meaning they could not function as overseers (see 3:1). Christian churches differ about the role of women in the church, but the abiding authority of Scripture must not be jettisoned in the ongoing discussion.

Fields, W. C. (1972). 1 Timothy. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (pp. 763–764). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

Behavior in Worship (1 Tim. 2:1–15)

At this point Paul begins the discussion of some special items for Timothy's attention. Prayer is the foremost concern (2:1–8). Pray for all men. Yes, pray for kings and those in authority. Nero was emperor then (A.D. 54–68). Pray *for* him, not *to* him. This is appropriate in God's sight. Men should lead out in the prayer life of the church, but it must not be an empty performance. Their words must be matched by dedicated Christian living.

He continues the matter of appropriateness in worship with some special advice about the public role of women in the Ephesus church (vv. 9–15). The social customs of the time made it unbecoming for upright women to do public speaking or teaching. The women prominently seen and heard in public places then were generally prostitutes and others of ill repute. Paul warns Timothy to be mindful of the social realities of the time and of the circumstances of his city. The women of the congregation must not even give the appearance of evil or give the slightest excuse for their pagan neighbors to misunderstand or misconstrue the nature of the Christian fellowship.

Under these circumstances the Christian women would serve the cause of Christ better by dressing modestly and appropriately for public worship. For the same reasons, it would not be fitting for them to be teachers. Paul did not exclude women from the work of the churches and from influential roles, as seen in his mention of several by name in his epistles—Lydia, Dorcas, Priscilla, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Julia, Euodia, and Syntyche. His appeal to the relationship of Adam and Eve (vv. 13–15) seems to be intended to remind them that this primacy of the man and the domestic role of the woman have a long history that will not easily be changed.

Special points.—The statement in 2:4 about God “who will have all men to be saved” is no ground for the idea of universal salvation. A better translation is “who wants all men to be saved” (TEV).

Jewish tradition taught that during pregnancy women were ceremonially disqualified for worship and, therefore, forfeited something in their relationship to God. Apparently, in Ephesus some were speculating as to whether or not a Christian woman was “saved” during this period. Paul indicates (v. 15) that her salvation is unaffected by child-bearing. The real question is: Does she persevere in faith, love, holiness, and—to pick up the subject he had been talking about—modesty? Christian obedience is the clue and key to salvation!

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (p. 1801). Holman Bible Publishers.

2:4 God genuinely desires the salvation of all people (2 Pt 3:9). Nevertheless, not all individuals will be saved (2 Th 1:5–9). See note on 1 Tm 4:10.

2:5 Although this verse emphasizes Jesus' humanity, Paul also affirmed Jesus' deity in this letter. He referred to Jesus' special relationship with the Father (1:1–2; 6:13) who grants Him the divine title Lord (1:2, 12; 6:3, 14). He implied Jesus' heavenly existence before the incarnation (3:16) and said that Jesus' saving of sinners (1:15) is a divine activity (4:10).

2:9 Paul sought to prohibit extravagant, expensive styles (recognized as immodest and seductive) accompanied by the wearer's neglect of her own character.

2:11–15 Paul was no sexist but rather a champion of the equality of men and women before God (Gl 3:28)—a sharp contrast to the chauvinistic teaching of many of his contemporaries. Paul recognized that male-female equality did not require abolishing all role distinctions, which were defined by God in creation. The woman was created to be a helper for the man (Gen 2:18–25). Eve's exercise of authority over Adam brought disaster, illustrating the dangers of upsetting the family's divinely ordained leadership structure. Evidently, the false teachers taught that male authority in church and home and the woman's childbearing role were curses for sin, which Jesus' atoning work had eradicated (Gen 3:16). Paul recognized that Eve's curse involved *oppressive* male leadership and *pain* in childbearing, but male leadership and childbearing were part of God's plan for pre-fall creation (Gen 1:27–28; 2:18). Paul therefore insisted Christian wives were "saved" (restored to their pre-fall state) by submitting to their husband's compassionate leadership and through bearing and raising children. This is one way these Ephesian women could "work out" their final salvation (Php 2:12).

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Tim 2:1-15). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

© 2022 Lee Ann Penick