

1 Timothy – The Household of God

This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare (1 Timothy 1:18 ESV)

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that,¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15 ESV)

Women In The Church

January 9th, 2022

1 Timothy 2:11-15

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Introduction:

Good morning! Please turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 2. We are jumping back into our Household of God series and, as you will soon see, we are diving straight into the deep end. Our passage this morning is difficult – to say the least. It's difficult on a personal level, as it offends our Canadian sensitivities. It's difficult on a relational level, as it has caused debate and schisms within churches and even within families! It is difficult. There is no getting around that.

And yet, I want to reassure you this morning that it is good.

By way of reminder, 1 Timothy represents something of a blueprint for how to structure a healthy church, and THIS detail is in the instructions! Maybe you wouldn't have included this. Maybe. But God DID! So, do you trust Him? This is His word to us today. So, let's approach the text – not with a posture of suspicion – but with a posture of EXPECTATION. Amen? We're going to jump right in because we have plenty to unpack this morning. Look with me to 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Hear now God's holy, inspired, inerrant, living and active word to us today.

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve;¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.¹⁵ Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. (1 Timothy 2:11-15 ESV)

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

I wouldn't normally do this, but before we go any further, I think it would be helpful to put some of my cards on the table. I have had a complicated relationship with these five verses over my Christian life. In my earliest years, I simply ignored them. Then, I grew older, and as I developed my convictions, I grew to hate this passage. I come from a family filled with female pastors. Some of my best friends were female pastors. This verse – I believed – was a carryover from an ancient, irrelevant time. It was a verse that was used to question the legitimacy of the role of so many of the people I loved, and I debated this passage through tears on numerous occasions.

Then, much to my dismay, all my reasons for rejecting this text were revealed to be flimsy at best and I begrudgingly submitted to this text. I would often say, "I don't understand it, and I don't like it, but I believe that this is God's word, so I'm going to obey it." At the time, that felt like a noble thing to say. But deep down, I still felt like I needed to apologize for what God's word said. Imagine that! I thought I had the right to apologize for God! I was wrongheaded. So, let me make amends today. I can honestly say that I love this passage. I love it because I love my Heavenly Father and I believe that He knows what's best for me and for my sisters in Christ and for my daughters, and for His church. I love it because I believe that all of God's ways lead to life.

Before we go any further, I want to invite you adopt a disposition of humility as we consider this passage. And that humility should alter our approach in two ways.

First, I believe that this passage is clear and I'm going to explain why, but there ARE godly men and women who do not share our conviction – people that I love and have ministered with and would happily sit next to in the trenches of gospel work. If you leave today questioning the salvation of your brothers and sisters who hold to a different conviction, then I will be extremely disappointed with myself and how I've presented the text. We believe this is clear. We believe this matters. But we also acknowledge that we see through a glass dimly. While our position might cause offense, let our posture towards our brothers and sisters who disagree be one of humility.

Second, but more importantly, let's adopt a posture of humility before God. This is His word. We see an example of what humility looks like in Isaiah 66:2, where God says:

But this is the one to whom I will look:
he who is humble and contrite in spirit
and trembles at my word. (Isaiah 66:2b ESV)

Some of us will find today's passage offensive. Some will feel uncomfortable as convictions are challenged. But let's resolve this morning to let the word of God speak. Forget how you feel. Forget what you've been told. What does God's word say?

This morning, we're going to ask and answer three questions.

What does this passage say?

What does this passage mean today?

What are the implications for us as a church?

First, let's ask the question:

What Does This Passage Say?

By way of reminder, this letter was written by the Apostle Paul to equip his young protégé Timothy for the equipping of the church in Ephesus. Our passage this morning is part of an extended teaching on how men and women should conduct themselves in the church. In verse 8 he gave instructions for the men: They were to stop fighting and to start praying. In verses 9-10 he began his instructions for the women: They were to stop treating the corporate worship gathering like it was a beauty pageant and they were to instead clothe themselves with good works. Our text today represents the second half of Paul's instruction on how women were to conduct themselves *in the worship gathering*.

Hear that, because it's an important detail. These instructions are not for the workforce or the home front. There are other texts that speak to those scenarios, but this text is **about the corporate worship gathering**. And the first thing this passage says about the gathering is that:

1. Women should learn quietly with all submissiveness in the church

We find this command in verse 11. Interestingly enough, this verse would have been offensive to its original audience for exactly the *opposite* reason of why it's offensive today. Many, if not

most, of the people living in the city of Ephesus would have held an extremely low view of women. They would have been shocked by the command that women should learn. Learning was for men!

But God's word teaches that it is good and right for women to learn. Thankfully, God OFFENDED their cultural assumptions! They thought they had it right, but they needed a correction.

Pause there: If the Bible never challenges your thinking – if you can sit down and read your Bible year after year and never find your convictions challenged and your life turned upside down – then I would ask you to consider whether you are really reading it honestly. Are we the first culture who has gotten it exactly right? Are you the first person who's every preference and conviction perfectly aligns with God's will? Listen: God's word OFFENDS every man and every woman from every culture. It unsettles us and confronts us with a dilemma: Will I take Him at His word? Or will I bend His word to my personal convictions and preferences?

So, let's jump back into this verse. As the women learn in the corporate worship gathering, they are to do so *quietly* and *with all submissiveness*. Let's unpack those terms.

The women should learn quietly. While the word Paul uses here *could* be interpreted to describe absolute silence, that is unlikely. For starters, in chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians, Paul gives instructions on how the women are to pray and prophesy in the worship gathering. If the women were to remain silent in the gathering, then those would be odd instructions. It's hard to prophecy silently! Also, Paul uses this *exact same word* in the beginning of the chapter we're looking at today, and it clearly does not carry the sense of "silence". Look back at verses 1-2 of chapter 2:

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and **quiet** life, godly and dignified in every way. (1 Timothy 2:1-2 ESV)

That's the same word that he's using in our passage. It appears, then, that he is not referring to silence, but to **a quiet, peaceable disposition**.

But what does it mean that the women should learn with "all submissiveness"? Does that mean that they should blindly follow the church elders? Is this a command to listen without discernment? I found one commentator's description to be particularly helpful. He writes:

The injunction is not directed towards a surrender of mind and conscience, or the abandonment of the duty of private judgement; the phrase ‘with all subjection’ is a **warning against the usurpation of authority**¹

I think that’s a helpful and biblical qualifier. Elsewhere, for example, Paul COMMENDED the church in Berea – a church that would have included men and women – because they searched the Scriptures to see if what he was saying was true! Therefore, he wouldn’t command the women in Ephesus to check their brains and discernment at the door! In fact, in Acts 28 we find an example of Priscilla and Aquila – a husband and wife – taking Apollos aside after a time of corporate teaching to correct him. We find that in Acts 18:

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and **explained to him the way of God more accurately.** (Acts 18:26 ESV)

Paul is not calling on the women to blindly obey whatever they’re told from the pulpit. He IS, however, calling them to adopt a posture that welcomes and affirms the leadership of the church elders. That looks like bringing concerns to the elders rather than gossiping around the town about disagreements – a live problem in Ephesus that he addresses in chapter 5. That looks like trusting the elders when they warn you not to listen to false teachers like Hymenaeus and Alexander. That looks like asking questions after the gathering rather than standing up and shouting a challenge.

That leads to the second and most offensive thing that this passage says:

2. **Women should not teach or exercise authority over men in the church**

We find this in verses 12-14:

I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve;¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. (1 Timothy 2:12-14 ESV)

These verses have been dissected, analyzed and debated exhaustively (and exhaustingly!) over the last 60 years. Within evangelicalism, there are two understandings of how men and women are to function in the church. First, there is the Egalitarian position which holds that men and women are equal in worth and dignity *and that therefore there should be no differentiation or distinction in their roles.* Second, there is the Complementarian position which agrees that men and women are

¹ W. E. Vine as quoted by Ralph Earle, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Ephesians - Philemon)*, ed. Frank A. Gaebelein, vol. 11, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 361.

equal in worth and dignity but which holds that *men and women are called to different yet complimentary roles in the home and in the church*. That is the conviction that we hold to in this church.

In my first draft of this sermon, I had an entire page devoted to Greek word studies, but I realized that only two of you would find that kind of summary helpful. That being said, if you would like to talk to me offline about that, I would be more than happy to walk through it with you. Instead, I will reference Gordon Fee – a well-known and highly respected biblical scholar who holds to an Egalitarian view – who concedes:

It is hard to deny that *this* text prohibits women teaching men in the Ephesian church.²

Now, he goes on to explain his reasons as to why he doesn't think that this text applies to us today – and we'll deal with that question later – but he concedes that this text means what it says – at least for the first century church in Ephesus. Women should not teach or exercise authority over men in the church.

But look again at verse 13. I want you to notice that Paul does not root this command in situational circumstances. Meaning, he doesn't justify this command by pointing to the temperament of the women in Ephesus, or to their lack of education, or to the cultural norms of the city. Instead, he roots this command all the way back in the creation of the world. Look again at verses 12-14:

I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.¹³ **For** Adam was formed first, then Eve;¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. (1 Timothy 2:12-14 ESV)

Paul tells Timothy that the church should function this way – not because of the challenges unique to Ephesus – but because God built this into His design. Adam was formed first. Adam was given God's instructions. As J.I. Packer notes:

the man-woman relationship is intrinsically non-reversible ... This is part of the reality of creation, a given fact that nothing will change. Certainly, redemption will not change it, for grace restores nature, not abolishes it.³

² Gordon Fee as quoted by William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles – World Biblical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 142.

³ J.I. Packer, "Understanding The Differences" in *Women, Authority & the Bible*, edited by Alvera Mickelsen, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 299.

Adam was the first steward of God's word, and he abdicated his responsibility. Adam's role – his responsibility – was to share with Eve the instructions that he had received from God. He failed, and HE was held responsible. We see this in God's response to their sin. Even though it was Eve that was deceived, who did God confront in the garden?

But the Lord God **called to the man** and said to him, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9 ESV)

This was ADAM's responsibility. This was the MAN's assignment. But the serpent went around Adam and approached Eve. He deceived her. He flipped the script of God's directions. Adam was to instruct Eve, but instead Eve instructed Adam. And the rest is history.

Some have insinuated from this passage that women are by nature more susceptible to deception. I would argue that that is an unnecessary and an unhelpful stretch. This isn't about gullibility or lack-there-of. Paul is pointing us back to God's created order! He is reminding us that our enemy has been trying to deceive us into flipping the script from the very beginning.

Now, I want to very quickly remind you of something that we observed at the very beginning and that is that this passage is giving restrictions for the GATHERING. Can a woman teach in the home? Yes! Can she exercise authority over men in the workplace? Yes⁴! This passage is referring to the gathered assembly of the people of God. Teaching and exercising authority is the particular responsibility of the elders and – according to Paul's instructions here and in his letter to Titus in Crete – the office of elder is to be filled by qualified men.

Finally, our passage teaches us that:

3. Women will be saved by trusting in the plan that God has for their lives as women

Now, where am I getting that? Look with me again at verse 15:

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

⁴ Some complementarians understand this verse to apply to all of life. They would acknowledge that the passage itself is about the church, but they would argue that the principle should be stretched to all of life. John Piper holds to this position and advocates for it in his book, *What's the Difference?*. While I can appreciate the intention behind that application, I believe it is just that: application. I would strongly caution against to stamp our applications of the principle of this text with God's unquestionable authority.

This passage just doesn't get any easier, does it? What does THIS verse mean?

It can't mean that women are saved from *sin* through childbearing because Paul consistently teaches elsewhere:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. (Ephesians 2:8a ESV)

Paul's theology hasn't changed, so that option is off of the table.

And it can't mean that women are saved from *death* because that is observably untrue; Christian women have often tragically died in childbirth. That can't be what he's saying.

So, what does it mean? There are two plausible answers. Some argue that Paul is alluding back to the promise of Genesis 3:15 where God declared to the Devil:

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15 ESV)

This promise pointed forward to the coming of Jesus – the Son who was wounded for us but who ultimately crushed the serpent's head. Lest we fall into the temptation of devaluing the contribution of women to the church, Paul reminds us that a woman made the greatest contribution of all! It was through a woman doing what only a woman could do – giving birth to a child – that salvation came into the world!

The second possible interpretation is not entirely different. It argues that Paul is here calling upon women to EMBRACE their distinctiveness. While there is a role that is reserved exclusively for men, there is also a role that is reserved exclusively for women, and it ought to be embraced, honoured, and celebrated! If this reading is correct – and I would argue that it is the best option available – then Paul is saying that women will be saved from deception by embracing who God has made them to be. He uses the example of childbearing because that is a role that is unique and specific to women – a role that is actively and aggressively devalued by the enemy.

By embracing their distinctiveness as women, they will be saved – not from sin or from death – but from DECEPTION! There is an enemy who – from the VERY BEGINNING – has been actively working to deceive women into thinking that they only have worth and value when they

act and live like MEN! That's the lie! I would argue it is the BIGGEST LIE in modern western culture!

Faith is always exercised in the context of a particular challenge! And often, for women, that challenge has to do with childbearing. Sometimes the challenge is believing in God when you can't have children, but for many women, particularly today, the challenge is believing that having and raising children is a worthy occupation and calling. God says it is. The devil says it is not. Faith – as always – will be about deciding who to believe.

That's what our passage says, but what does it mean for us today?

What Does This Passage Mean Today?

This is the question that Egalitarians and Complementarians disagree on. We don't have much time, so I need to answer this quickly and succinctly. What does this passage mean today?

1. Exactly what it meant when it was written

Our Egalitarian brothers and sisters would argue that there are a number of reasons why we can't simply carry over the meaning of the text to our context today, and I will strive to address those as quickly and as fairly as I can.

It has been argued that these instructions were limited to the city of Ephesus. The argument goes that Ephesus was a *bastion and bulwark of women's rights*! The temple of Artemis was there, and the women commonly domineered over men. But historical studies haven't supported that claim. One historian notes:

The majority of these deities, even the goddesses, were served by male priests at Ephesus. This is a bit unusual, since "a priestess very commonly officiated for goddesses and a priest for gods" in Greek cults. Certainly "a bastion and bulwark of women's rights" would have had as many priestesses in evidence as in contemporary cities – not fewer as we find at Ephesus.⁵

⁵ S. M. Baugh, Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner eds. *Women in the Church (Second ed.)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 19.

So, even in the temple of Artemis, MEN were serving as priests in Ephesus. The claim of a radically feminized city simply doesn't line up with the evidence. Not only that, but when Paul instituted elders in Crete – *an entirely different city* – he again instituted MALE elders. Therefore, the principle of male eldership in the church was observably NOT limited to Ephesus.

Another argument is that the principle was limited to the *problem of uneducated women*. Women in the ancient near eastern world didn't receive the same education as men, so – it is argued – it would be DANGEROUS to allow them to teach. The premise, then, is that they would naturally gain permission to teach and exercise authority *after* having learned. But, while that is plausible, it is significant that Paul doesn't state that they should learn *until they are able to teach*. His restriction doesn't include any such qualifications. And, there were uneducated MEN in those days too. If education was the problem, why not mention them? And, there WERE educated women in the ancient world – see Priscilla, for example – so why would Paul make such a blanket statement? This proposal doesn't seem like a fair handling of the text.

Finally, some point to other New Testament texts to argue that this passage in 1 Timothy is an outlier. I quoted Gordon Fee – a good Egalitarian scholar – earlier. Let me finish his quotation:

It is hard to deny that *this* text prohibits women teaching men in the Ephesian church... But **it is a unique text in the New Testament**, and as we have seen, its reason for being is *not* to correct the rest of the New Testament, but to correct a very ad hoc problem in Ephesus.⁶

The argument, then, is that the rest of the New Testament stands in contradiction with Paul's instructions here. But is that a legitimate claim? Let's consider very quickly the two most cited examples. First, in Romans 16:7 Paul writes:

Greet Andronicus and **Junia**, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. (Romans 16:7 ESV)

The word translated “to” is more often translated as “among” and it has led some to believe that Junia was an apostle. If Junia was an apostle – it is argued – then she would have been teaching and exercising authority in the church, so 1 Timothy 2:12 *can't* be a universal command! The problem here is that, for starters, we're not even sure whether or not Junia was a man or a woman. But assuming that she *was* a woman, it is also a leap to argue that “well known among the

⁶ Gordon Fee as quoted by William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles – World Biblical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 142.

“apostles” means that Junia was an apostle. This is a tenuous verse to use as a proof text for your theology. Especially when it is used to subvert a clear and direct command like 1 Timothy 2:12.

Finally, Galatians 3:28 is often cited in this discussion as a defeater verse. There, Paul writes:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, **there is no male and female**, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28 ESV)

It is argued from this passage that Paul is eradicating all distinctions in the church. Therefore, the distinctions mentioned in 1 Timothy 2 are null and void. In Christ, gender does not matter! The problems with this interpretation are obvious. First of all, 1 Timothy was written *after* Galatians, so it’s odd that the same man who wrote to eradicate distinctions in Galatia would then go on to enforce them in Ephesus. But more obviously, Galatians 3 is a passage about SALVATION. It has nothing to do with roles in the church! Paul is explaining that there is not one way of salvation for Jews and another for Greeks, or one way for slaves and another for free, or one way for men and another for women. No! We are ONE in Christ Jesus! That doesn’t mean that our diversity disappears! It just means that we are united under the blood.

Finally, as we noted earlier, Paul roots this command *in the creation account*. Why is that? It’s because this particular strategy of the enemy – this lie that women only have worth and value when they act and live like men – is not unique to Ephesus! The devil is like a bad cover band – he plays the same songs over and over.

What does this passage mean today? Exactly what it meant when it was written. We’re facing the same problem, and God’s word continues to be the solution.

That leads to one final question as we conclude: What are the implications for us as a church?

What Are The Implications For Us As A Church?

In light of what we have seen, I would like to propose two resolutions for us as a church as we move forward. First:

1. Let us resolve to take God at His word – no matter the cost

We see in the text that the roll of elder and overseer – the office that is entrusted with the task of teaching and exercising authority in the church – is an office that is reserved for men. So, we will operate accordingly – even when our unbelieving neighbors think we’re insane and our Christian neighbors think we’re archaic. We don’t hold this conviction to be “quirky”. This conviction is a fruit that grows from our ROOT conviction that God’s word is right even when our cultural convictions say otherwise.

When I came to see this in the text, I remember one of my best friends (and he’s still one of my best friends!) looking me in the eye and asking with concern and frustration: “You mean to tell me that, with all of the ministry that needs to be done in the world, God would have us cut our ministry team in half?!” I didn’t have much of an answer at the time, but I do now.

First of all, this text isn’t calling us to “cut our ministry team in half.” That is an untrue and unhelpful way of framing this discussion. This passage is setting a restriction on **the office of elders and overseers**, but ministry is NOT reserved for elders and overseers! Amen? Ministry is not reserved for the pulpit! Ministry happens in the home, in the workplace, in the nursery and in the neighbourhood, and to claim otherwise in order to win an argument is to delegitimize the amazing gospel work that is being accomplished all around us. We are a kingdom of priests! All of us! We are all called to go into the world and to make disciples! All of us!

And second, hasn’t it always been the case that God has called us to obey Him in plans that seem counterintuitive? I’m sure that there were some folks asking the same question when God called Gideon to send his entire army away save for 300 men. “Don’t you want to win, Gideon? Why wouldn’t you take as many men as possible into the battle?” The answer, of course, is that God told him to take 300. Gideon believed God, Gideon obeyed God’s instructions, and Gideon watched God work a great victory!

We believe that there is blessing in obedience. Amen? So, we won’t risk losing that blessing by following our own intuitions or the latest advice from the cultural pundits. We won’t sacrifice that blessing for comfort, applause, or acceptance. God’s way is right, so we will walk in it. God’s instructions are good, so we will delight in them. God’s word leads to life, so we will preach it. And we will obey it. Every word of it. No matter the cost.

Second, and finally:

2. Let us resolve to celebrate the diversity of our roles

I think that William Mounce captures the heart of what makes this discussion difficult for so many. He writes:

Underlying much of the discussion lies an implicit assumption that a limited role necessitates a diminished personal worth... Nowhere in Scripture are role and worth ever equated.⁷

This was my objection. If there are roles and functions that are off limits for women, then how can we ever say that women are equal in the family of God? That's an honest question that deserves a robust answer. It deserves an answer from God's word. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul writes:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many.¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be?²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it,²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (1 Corinthians 12:12-26 ESV)

Hear me this morning: You are not less than because you serve a different role in the body. Your worth is not tied to what you do. The world thinks that way. The devil wants you to think that way. But that kind of thinking is unbiblical, and it will crush your spirit. Some of us in this room

⁷ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles – World Biblical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 148.

will be called to teach in the church. Others will be called to teach in the home. Others will carry a life in our bodies and will give birth to little image bearers of God. Others will be called to use their hands and their strength to meet the tangible, physical needs all around us. Others will be called to mentor younger women and to serve as Christian sisters, mothers, and grandmothers. Others will be called to use their empathy and their gift of encouragement to lift up the people who are slipping through the cracks. Others will evangelize in their apartment building.

We must ACTIVELY fight against the lie from the devil that our worth is tied to our role.

It. Is. Not!

It is not. And, according to the Apostle Paul, it is the roles that seem to be the least spectacular in the world's eyes that will receive the greatest honor in the final reckoning.

We are the body of Christ. We all have a role. We all have a function. And God will place us exactly where we ought to be. We don't need to look at each other with envy. We don't need to claw our way into positions of prestige. We simply need to trust and obey. As we walk in obedience, we will experience His blessing. As we embrace who God has made us to be, we will be saved from the deception of the evil one. To that end, let's pray together.