



1 Timothy

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...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, 1 Timothy 2:9

Paul is continuing his directives for public worship within the church, as they gather and meet together. He began in the previous verse with directions for the prayers of the men. He now says, "in like manner also." In other words, "As I have directed for the conduct of men, I now direct the following." He then immediately follows up with "that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel."

The words here have been taken to unnecessary extremes, being applied to the women at all times. Some denominations have crept up where women are dressed in brown, blue, or black bags at all times. They look plain and dull with bonnets on their heads and nothing to highlight or accentuate their natural beauty. This is not Paul's intent here. The word "likewise" is being used to direct women during church gatherings, not at all times. The idea is that when gathered in church, it is the Lord, not the women who are to be highlighted.

Just as the men are to lift holy hands to the Lord as specified in the previous verse, thus placing the attention on the Lord, so women are to have the attention of others on the Lord, not on their glamorous apparel. If a woman wants to be a plain Jane 24/7, that is her decision, but it isn't something the church is being asked to impose on them. This is a directive for propriety within the church.

He next says exactly this with the words, "with propriety and moderation." As Solomon says, "To everything *there is* a season." There is a time for women to adorn themselves in glorious apparel and to wow their audience. Church is not the time for this. During church, they are to

first have what Paul says in the Greek, *aidós*, or modesty. It is derived from another word which means “to be ashamed.” The idea then is that women are to be modest in their dress. To act otherwise would be to deprive the Lord what He is due – the attention of the people on Him, not on a glamorous beauty.

The second word, translated as “moderation,” indicates self-control or soundness of mind. The more a woman accentuates her own beauty in the church, the less soundness of mind there will be concerning where her attention (and that of others, certainly) will be focused. Again, the idea is that the Lord is to be focused on. To further define this, Paul then gives an example of what would be contrary to this by saying, “not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.”

Each of these things he has mentioned are not only acceptable on a female, they can be a wonderful highlight to her natural beauty. The problem is that in wearing such things in a church setting, she is indicating that this is what she wants people to look at. It becomes a self-centered state of mind when church is supposed to be a God-centered place. Later, Peter will discuss the outward appearance of women as well (see 1 Peter 3:1-6). His words, like Paul’s here, are intended to highlight a woman’s position in relation to her relationships. Paul’s speaks of that relationship in regards to the church. Peter speaks of it in regards to the husband. Neither forbids the wearing of beautiful adornments, and it would be contrary to other parts of Scripture where such things are worn by women. But the main goal of a female worshiper of the Lord, either single or the wife of a husband, is to be naturally beautiful – with a right heart and attitude.

Life application: At times in Scripture, women’s beauty is highlighted by external adornments. Isaiah 61:10 says that a bride is adorned with jewels. It is her moment to shine when the wedding day has come. However, when gathered to worship the Lord, it is the Lord’s time to be highlighted and exalted. Everything has a place, and each moment must be handled according to the appropriate situation.

...but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. 1 Timothy 2:10

The idea of this verse is combined with the word “adorn” of the previous verse. It is that women are to “adorn themselves ... [in] godliness, with good works” instead of in “braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.” Paul is making a point that what is right and proper for a woman in church is a spiritual adornment of godliness, mixed with a physical adornment of doing that which is right and honorable. He was probably thinking of someone like Tabitha (Dorcas) of Acts 9. Peter was called to heal this woman and the same general idea of her character was seen there –

“At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.” Acts 9:36

This Tabitha was a Jewish woman who followed the noble traits of the faithful women of her culture, exemplified by the faithful wife of Proverbs 31. She was a person of deed and exemplary action. Paul is thinking of such women of God and directing the Gentile women of the church who were coming into the church of God to act in this manner. His directions are to Timothy, and it was Timothy’s responsibility (and thus that of all later pastors) to nurture this in the women of God.

In Paul’s words the “professing godliness” signifies her state as a believer in Christ. “Jesus is my Savior, and I will honor Him with my life.” This profession is then displayed in the “good works” of such a person. Albert Barnes captures the sense of how this is highlighted in the woman of God who accepts and exemplifies this station –

“The nature of woman seems to be adapted to the performance of all deeds demanding kindness, tenderness, and gentleness of feeling; of all that proceeds from pity, sympathy, and affection; and we feel instinctively that while acts of hardy enterprise and daring in a good cause especially become a Christian man, there is something exquisitely appropriate to the female character in deeds of humble and unobtrusive sympathy and benevolence. God seems to have formed her mind for just such things, and in such things it occupies its appropriate sphere rather than in seeking external adorning.”

Life application: It is a sad thing that women of the church, especially since the mid to late 1800s, have pursued roles not intended for women. When Paul says in Galatians 3:28 that all are one in Christ, he is speaking of the spiritual state of believers. However, males and females are given different roles to carry out God’s purposes within the church. To ignore Paul’s words in the pastoral epistles is to obscure what God has ordained. It has led to great dysfunction within the church, and that has led to total apostasy in many large denominations. Let us look to the structure of the church as it is outlined in the pastoral epistles, accept what God has ordained, and not fight against what is right and proper in His eyes.

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 1 Timothy 2:11

Paul continues with words directed to the conduct of women at church gatherings. His words are prescriptive, and they apply to all churches at all times during the Gentile-led church age. In other words, they are church doctrine. Not adhering to them is then disobedience to the word of God. He says, “Let a woman learn in silence.” This is not the only time he has said this. Similar words were written to the church at Corinth –

“And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.” 1 Corinthians 14:35

Paul’s words are consistent, and they are intended as a means of ensuring proper order within the church. For this reason, women are asked to “learn in silence with all submission.” The word “submission” here means to not exert authority, but to be in subjection to the rule which is established. Paul will continue with this line of thought in the verses to come.

It needs to be repeated that his words are not “cultural,” they are not addressing a single church with a specific problem, and they are not time-limited. Instead, they are doctrine for all churches at all times during the church age. As churches sway from the words of this epistle, they quickly break down into ineffective churches. One line which is ignored from God’s word sets the standard that it is OK to ignore others as well. Soon, the word of God is no longer treated with the respect and high position it deserves in the church, and in the hearts of men.

Life application: God is the Author of Scripture through the hands of His chosen instruments. Are we to ignore Him and His authority because we don’t like what He mandates? What a sad thing to stand before the Lord and hold up hands blackened with disobedience.

And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.
1 Timothy 2:12

There is an emphasis in the Greek of this verse which is given to indicate the set and determined meaning of the words. It begins with the word “teach.” Thus the Greek emphatically reads, “To teach, however, a woman not I do permit, nor to have authority over a man.” The words are clear, they are concise, they are prescriptive, and they are no less the word of God than any other portion of Paul’s writings. Women are not to teach men, nor are they to exercise authority over them.

Paul is writing of church matters in a pastoral epistle which is included in the word of God. It is not “culturally” driven. It is not “time” driven. The letter is for guidance of the church, at all times, and in all cultures. To be sure, both testaments of the Bible speak of women who bore authority, or who prophesied. Among these are Deborah, Hannah, Anna, Huldah, and the seven daughters of Philip. However, context applies in all matters of doctrine. All of these are either under Old Testament times, or they are in the book of Acts. Acts is a book which is descriptive in nature, and which is given to show the progression of the church until the prescriptive writings of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, would finally and firmly set church doctrine for this dispensation. Paul’s letter to Timothy is such a prescriptive writing.

Paul will explain, in detail, why he writes these prohibitions, and they have to do with the natural order of things, as ordained by God. To dismiss what he writes is to then ignore what God has ordained. Paul continues with his thought. Not only are women not permitted to teach or have authority over men, but they are “to be in silence.” This is fully in line with his words of 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35. No exceptions are given, and this is to be the practice of all churches who operate in accord with the word of God.

What this means is that women are not to be ordained to fill any pastoral position, nor any position as a deacon. They are to remain quiet within the church as is fitting with the word of God. In today’s world, one must think this through when evaluating well known female pastors and teachers. Several who are immediately recognizable are Beth Moore, Joyce Meyer, and Paula White. At times, these women will openly preach to congregations, including men in attendance, numbering in the thousands. And each word they speak is in direct disobedience to the word of God.

The question must be, “If their ministries are effective in teaching men about the word of God, then isn’t it acceptable that they continue?” The answer is clear. “No.” The end never justifies the means. God cannot violate His own word when judging such disobedience. In other words, when such a woman stands before the Lord, He will not (and He cannot) say, “What you did was in disobedience to My word, but I will overlook your disobedience because it led to a good end.” This is contrary to the nature of God to even consider. There can be no reward for their disobedience, only loss.

When a challenge to a portion of the word of God arises, one must be firm on their stand that such challenges are not based on personal feelings, but on what God has ordained. For example, when a man or a woman challenges or twists the meaning and intent of this verse, we have the full right to say, “I did not write these words, but I will stand upon them, because they are God’s words.” To challenge or dismiss them is to challenge the apostolic authority of Paul. In so doing, no portion of his writings can then be considered authoritative. All Gentile-led church doctrine becomes up to the church body.

The violation of Paul’s words here, since the first ordination of a woman in a mainstream denomination in 1853, have led to a complete degradation of adherence to the word of God in those churches where such action has taken place. From this springboard of disobedience, the natural next steps are allowing perversion to run amok, ordination of homosexuals, and a total apostasy of the church. And it all starts with ignoring 1 Timothy 1:11, 12. The issue here is that serious, and it is that destructive.

Life application: We are never to base our theology on emotion. Nor are we to base church decisions on our own personal standards or mores. Guidance for church conduct, including

ordination to various offices within the church, is to be based solely on the word of God. To depart from the word in one matter will naturally and eventually lead to a total disregard of all of God's word. Let us never depart from sound theology, even if it conflicts with culture or personal preference.