



1 TIMOTHY

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEN & WOMEN

WEEK 6 | 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15
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My goal each week we gather is to explain to you as clearly as possible what God's Word says. I try to refrain from simply giving you my opinion or feelings on things but truly aim to say, "Thus says the Lord." The reason for this is that I believe the word of God is sufficient and true and contains everything we need to live in a way that honors and glorifies the Lord while producing the most joy in us. However, I know that when I do this, some messages will be less palatable to us than others. I have come to realize that this is simply because we are sinners who live in a sin-ridden world, and because of that, we are jaded and bent not to see things the way that God sees them. I would lie if I said everything I read in Scripture was automatically palatable to me initially, but with time, God opens my heart to see what He is saying and the good it creates. If we are not careful, we allow the world to tell us how to interpret things rather than God, and when that happens, we can always expect disaster. I have learned to never set out to please the audience when I preach but instead set out to please God. When I do that, I know I am faithful to Him and you, regardless of how you see it.

I say this because today and in the next several weeks, we will look at some passages that will challenge our way of thinking. Some of these verses will challenge how our culture views things, and some may challenge our religious traditions. I request that you listen to what God's Word is saying by asking God to remove your bias and help you understand what He is saying to us. Today and in the next couple of weeks, we will look at how a church functions in an orderly way.

Instructions to Men and Women -

Nothing exists in a vacuum, so these instructions are more than likely given to deal with some specific problems in the church of Ephesus. However, just because they are given to this individual church does not mean they do not apply to us as well. Understanding the history and culture will help us better understand the what and why behind what Paul is sharing. It is important to note that what Paul is sharing is regarding the gathered body, most specifically in corporate worship. That does not mean there might not be some carry-over into other parts of the church, but the primary address has to do with the gathered body in what we would call a worship service.

Praying Men (v.8)

First, Paul addresses the importance for men to pray and how they are to pray. This is not a command for only men to pray. As we see in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul expects that women

will also pray in the church. The focus is on how they are to pray. We know that there is division due to false teaching in the church. This clearly spills over into all facets of the church, and Paul wants the men to pray and do so with the right heart and attitude. The idea of raised hands is not a command, although it isn't wrong either. To raise your hands in prayer speaks to the posture of the heart, that is, in purity and holiness, free from anger and argument. When we come into the presence of God in prayer, we must do so in the right posture and with the right motives. If there were divisions in the church, they must be dealt with appropriately in order for their prayers to keep from being hindered. Paul will address male leadership further and what they should do later in the letter, but for now, he turns his attention toward women in the body.

Instructions and Prohibitions for Women (vv.9-13)

In recent history, much has been made about the Bible's instructions to and about women. It has led some to say that the Biblical way of thinking is antiquated and outdated. Some have said that the Apostle Paul was a misogynist and wrote what he did because he didn't like women. I recently heard a quote from a female celebrity that stated that the story of Adam and Eve was written by misogynistic males to oppress women. While this shows much of the attitude toward a Biblical worldview, these statements couldn't be further from the truth when you seek to understand what the Bible teaches. God, in His sovereign plan, has created men and women equal, yet with distinct and differing roles. Neither male nor female are better than the other but have been made to operate distinctly, complementing each other. This is by Divine design. This is true both in marriage and in the life of the church. As we look at these instructions, it is important that we see them through the lens of what God is doing rather than what culture deems appropriate.

The first thing that Paul addresses is that women are to dress in modesty, with decent and good sense. First, we need to point out what this passage is not saying. It is not saying that women cannot dress nicely or must refrain from jewelry and makeup or getting their hair done. The concern is about the type of attention that Godly women are seeking. Like our modern world, Ephesus was filled with sexual immorality. It was not uncommon for women to dress in ways that were sexually seductive and intent on drawing attention to their physical beauty. Others were dressing in a way that was about flaunting their worldly wealth. It drew clear distinctions between the wealthy and poor, the haves and have-nots. Often, this type of adornment was about social status and setting one apart from others based on what they had.

Sadly, this was becoming common in the church and drawing attention from the worship of God and the unity of the church. His instruction is based upon keeping the focus where it needs to be rather than drawing attention to oneself. Rather than drawing attention to wealth or physical beauty, a Godly woman is to adorn herself with good works.

So, before we move on, let's be clear about what is being said and what is not said. Paul isn't saying don't adorn yourself with nice clothes, jewelry, or makeup. He is saying, don't dress in a way that draws attention to yourself, your wealth, or your worldly status; instead, adorn yourself with godliness, Christlikeness, and the fruit that comes from your relationship with Him. When you think of a godly woman, what do you think of? Nothing physical. She may be physically beautiful and well-dressed, but when you think about a truly godly woman, it is her character that stands out and points you to Jesus. This is what women

The next thing Paul addresses is the posture that women are to take in the gathering of the body. Paul is likely addressing specific issues in this church, but we will see that Paul's instruction is to be taken in all churches. He first tells women they are to take the position of quiet submission while learning in the worship gathering. There must have been some women who were not doing this for Paul to feel the need to address this. Whatever they were doing was undermining the church's leadership and was interruptive.

The next thing is the prohibition against a woman teaching and having authority over men in the church. This text doesn't say that women cannot teach in the church, but rather that they are not to teach or exercise authority over men in the church. Titus 2 shows that women are called to teach other women. We know that both Aquila and Priscilla, a husband and wife, were instrumental in teaching and explaining things to Apollos (Acts 18:26). Timothy benefited from the teaching of his mother and grandmother. If that is the case, what kind of teaching is Paul referring to? It seems it is connected to the context of the gathered church and teaching that carries pastoral authority. The clearest way to interpret this is that women are not to teach in the authoritative way that an elder or pastor teaches the congregation. This poses many questions like Life Groups, home studies, etc... I don't have time to dive into all of these, but I think the mode of teaching has a lot to do with it. I believe that in most, if not all, instances where men and women are involved, women should refrain from teaching men in a way that looks like the pastoral or elder-like teaching we see in the church and Scripture.

Paul's argument is not just a cultural issue causing problems in one church. It is based on creative order. His argument is that this is how God designed it from the beginning. Men were called to take the primary leadership role in the home and church, not because they are better but by design.

Don't just focus on the prohibition; focus on the possibilities.

It is easy to look at this verse and focus on what it says women cannot do, but that would be shortsighted. Just because Scripture prohibits women from the role of elder or pastor and the type of teaching that comes with it for the congregation doesn't mean women are prohibited from other areas of leadership and ministry in the church. There are many different ways that women can and should serve in the context of the body. We should be quick as a church to never prohibit where Scripture does not prohibit but instead affirm and encourage women (and men) to serve in all the areas God has gifted them. I have two very capable women and a little girl in my home, and I want them to succeed in any and all ministry God calls them to. I work with very competent women on our staff. I never want to prohibit them from doing anything Scripture doesn't prohibit them from, but instead, I want to see them excel in ministry.

The goal is for us to trust that when we submit to Scripture and trust God's ordained roles and how they function, we will experience the full blessing of God. Stepping outside of that to appease the culture is going against God; nothing good will come from that. This means that we should never allow anyone to do what Scripture prohibits and never prohibit anyone from doing what Scripture allows.