

Women In The Church

1 Timothy 2:9-15

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Let's read 1 Timothy 2:9-15. Paul says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 11 Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul said, "Let all things be done decently and in order." God is a God of order. There is order in the creation, and God wants order in the church. In His first creation of the universe, God created, as we call, the cosmos, which means to arrange in order; and God has created the church. In the church, God has established order, and we must submit to that order and authority. Let me say this, lest I forget, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God—all Scripture. All Scripture means all Scripture. What we just read is the Word of God. This is not just Paul, who hates women, writing about subjecting women. Some people try to impose that on the text. They say, "Well, Paul was a male chauvinist, and he hated women. He wasn't married and was resentful toward women, so he just bashes them all the opportunities that he can." Nothing could be further from the truth.

I had a woman come up to me one time after preaching a sermon very similar to this. She said, "You know, I disagree with Paul." I thought, Well, that's your right to disagree with Paul if you want, but do you know that Paul was an apostle and spoke with the authority of God's Word? So, when you get to heaven you can work it out with Paul, but right now I think we need to be obedient to the apostle's doctrine and the Word of God. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, is valuable. It's the most profitable thing that we have, that we might know how to live godly lives in all righteousness and truth.

Paul was writing this epistle of 1 Timothy, as we learn in chapter 3, verse 15, "But if I tarry long," and didn't come to Timothy in Ephesus, "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God," set in order the church, the household of faith, the family of God. There were things that were going wrong, and Paul was writing to Timothy who was the pastor of the church in Ephesus. There was confusion over the roles in the church of men and women. The reason Paul says what he says in this passage is because there was a problem in the church. He didn't just say it, there was an issue; and he wanted Timothy to correct it. Isn't it interesting, the same kind of problems and tensions exist today.

There was a Jewish element of false teaching going on in the church, and it could be that because of that Jewish teaching and influence that when the women came to Christ they were rebelling against that first-century Judaism that suppressed and pushed women down. In the

synagogues of those days the women were allowed to come, but they were kind of looked at as second-class citizens. A rabbi actually felt that it wasn't worthy to teach a woman. They didn't want to talk to or teach a woman, and one rabbi even said (this is not me, I'm just quoting a rabbi), "It's like casting pearls before swine to try to teach a woman." They could come, but they weren't really being taught by the men. They were ostracized and kind of pushed out of the scene. It could be that when the women came to Christ they said, "I'm a Christian now. I'm liberated," and just took their liberty too far and tried to usurp their authority and position in the church against the culture that they saw at that time.

Also, under Greek culture women were oppressed and subjected and put down. It's Christianity...anyone that understands this understands that Christianity has elevated women to her rightful place. Jesus, in His relationship to women in the way He ministered to them, shared with and brought them salvation, those women that accompanied Him and His disciples and ministered to them. Mary and Martha were dear friends of His, and we also know that the women in the book of Acts had an instrumental place. In Ephesians, Paul says, "Husbands, love your wives," and he qualified it. He said, "...even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it," so he was elevating women to her rightful place.

Again, lest I forget, I want to make this very clear. There's a difference between intrinsic value of a woman and a man—before God, spiritually they're equal. There's no difference in their standing before God. In Christ, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." God doesn't love men more than women, and men aren't more spiritual than women or have a standing before God that women don't have. We're all equal in our relationship to God. If you do a study in the Bible of how many times God came, spoke to, used, and ministered to women, it's amazing; but there is a vast difference, and this is what this text is focusing on, as to roles.

We don't hear about roles in the world today, we hear about individual liberties—do what's good for you, do what you want, if anyone gets in your way just abandon them and live for yourself. It's all about myself. In the Scriptures here, we're going to see that men have their God-given ordained role and function, women have their God-given ordained role and function, and we experience the blessings of God when we are obedient to that specific function and role that God has called us to. We live in a culture today that is blurring the distinctions—that there really is no male or female, and you can be whatever you want. Right now we don't know what anything is anymore almost, but "God made them male and female," and He has a function in the marriage relationship, in the home, in culture, in the church—God has ordained that. God has ordained government, marriage and the home, and God has ordained the church. These are all divine institutions, and we need to function according to God's preordained design and role.

Paul speaks about the order in the church in 1 Timothy 2:1-8. He talked about prayer, and in verses 9-15, our text, he talks about women in the church. If you're taking notes tonight (I encourage you to do that), I'm going to try to keep it as simple as I can. I think when you're dealing with a text like this, it's best to keep it simple. I want to unpack verses 9-15 for you. I'm

going to give you five marks of a mature, godly Christian woman, and her role, function, and place in the church. Here's mark number one if you're taking notes. She's marked by modesty. You might write down "modesty in dress." Look at it with me in verse 9. Paul says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves," and that they do it "in modest apparel, with shamefacedness," I'll explain what that old English word means, "and sobriety; not with broided," or braided, "hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array."

Paul opens (verse 9) with the statement, "In like manner." That statement takes you back one verse to verse 8 where he says, "I will therefore that men pray every where," and I pointed out two weeks ago that that is men or males, "lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting," so, "I will therefore." Now, remember Paul is an apostle, and he's speaking with apostolic authority. This is God's Word. Then he comes to verse 9, "In like manner," so "Here's my word for the men, and also I have a word for the women." It's "in the same way," and then he speaks to women. The word "women" in verse 9 means women. It doesn't mean mankind. Again, it means specifically women. It denotes adult women—whether single, married, widowed, or divorced. He's addressing them specifically.

Then Paul says, "that women adorn themselves," I don't want to get too bogged down here, but you can stop right there. He's not telling the husbands to dress their wives or tell them what to wear, he's telling them to adorn themselves. The women can say, "Praise God for that." He's not saying, "Ask your husband what he wants you to wear," but "you adorn yourselves," which speaks of you doing this. You're adorning yourselves. The word "adorning" is the word *cosmos* where we get our word *cosmetics* from. The origin, the etymology of the word *cosmos* doesn't just mean the universe, it literally means, in its origin, order or to lay in a row; to put in order or to lay in a row. Interesting, *cosmetics*. In the church today, *cosmetics* are a controversy for some. You know, "Women ought not to use cosmetics or makeup, that's devil paint," and "She looks like a she-devil, and she shouldn't wear that stuff." I've had guys freak out because women in the church wear makeup and stuff. I love J. Vernon McGee's old quote. He said, "If the barn needs painting, paint it." Amen, bruthah! Praise God for cosmetics, amen Ladies? He's not forbidding you to wear makeup—praise God, Hallelujah, Thank you, Jesus! I do believe it's interesting that he speaks about their apparel, but he's not giving us a dress code.

A lot of churches are legalistic and have a dress code. They have the gospel gestapo, you know. They stand in the foyer and if a woman's skirt is too short, they measure it and tell her to go home and change her skirt or whatever. By the way, men can dress weird too. If you've read James 2 where it says, "For if there come unto your assembly," King Jimmy says, not the best translation, "...him that weareth the gay clothing," it means bright or flamboyant, and he comes in with all these rings. The Greek indicates that he had rings on every finger, so he was all this bling, bling. He had all these fancy clothes and was coming to church and showing off with an ostentatious show; so dress or apparel isn't just a woman's issue, guys can be pretty spaced out the way they dress sometimes, too.

What does the word "modest" mean? To some cultures it means one thing and in other cultures another, but the word itself would best be thought of as appropriate. It means

appropriate. Modest means that you are dressing for the occasion, so when you go to church, you dress to go to church. When you are at a sporting event, you may dress for that. It just means to be dressing according to the occasion. It means to be dressing appropriately.

The principle here, before we look at the verse a little more, is that the outward adorning, of whether you're a man or a woman, should reflect the inward attitude of the heart. If you are a child of God, it should be reflected in the clothes that you wear and the way that you dress. You shouldn't ever want to dress in such a way to either stumble somebody—the opposite sex—or to draw attention to yourself. You want to glorify God. You want to be appropriate so that God is glorified. I realize that standards in clothing change from time and culture and all that stuff, so we need to be careful not to be legalistic or strict about this. By the way, we're not here... sometimes at church people think that God's given them the gift of telling other people what they ought to do. We're not here to critique how people dress. You know, sometimes non-Christians come into our church, so don't freak out if they're dressed a little spacey. You were spacey before you got saved, too! Maybe they're not born again. Be careful you don't offend them. Pray for them to get saved. Remember when they brought the woman caught in the act of adultery to Jesus? He was compassionate, kind, patient and, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." We need to have compassion on people who maybe aren't born again or redeemed yet.

Paul says in verse 9 that they should, "adorn themselves in modest," or appropriate, "apparel;" so the outward should reflect the inward. You shouldn't come into the church trying to draw attention to yourself or distract from the worship. The whole context of everything in these verses has to do with public assembly, public worship, the public gathering. Whether you're a man or a woman, when we gather to worship, you don't want people distracted from the worship of God by the attire or the clothes that you wear. Then, he mentions, before he comes back to their attire, their attitude. So, it's both the inner heart and the inner attitude that's reflected on the outside.

In the King James Bible, they have "shamefacedness." In the old English Bible, the King James Bible, it was actually shamefastness. What it actually means is an attitude that doesn't want to be ashamed, so you don't want to be ashamed of how you are dressed. He says, "with shamefacedness and sobriety;" this means sobermindedness, that you're thinking clearly. Have you ever seen somebody dressed in such a way you say, "What are they thinking?" Again, I understand that styles change, but sometimes you just think, "Man, you're not even using your head." Then, he comes back to their attire, "not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." In Isaiah 3 (I won't turn there right now, but write it down and when you get a chance, peek at it), he actually describes these women who are living in rebellion to God. In great detail he describes the elaborate hairdos, the gowns, and the jewelry that they wore in rebellion to God to try to bring attention to themselves. He's not forbidding women to do their hair, to braid their hair, but what they would do is actually put their gold and jewelry in their hair. They would put ribbons through their braids and line it with all this gold and jewelry, and have these big elaborate hairdos with gold, pearls, and the costly array.

Write down 1 Peter 3:3-4 where Peter, again talking to the wives in this context, says, “Whose adorning,” or focus, “let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart...even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” In other words, your focus and your beauty should be on your heart before God—the inner beauty that gets more beautiful as the years progress. I love what Warren Wiersbe said, “A woman who depends only on externals will soon run out of ammunition! She may attract attention, but she will not win lasting affection.” I like that. She may attract attention, but she won’t win lasting affection, so the beauty that increases is the inner beauty radiating from within, not the outer beauty that you need to be careful that that’s not the focus. He’s not forbidding that women can’t wear jewelry. Some churches become very legalistic here and say that women can’t wear makeup or jewelry of any kind, and that’s not really what Paul is saying here. He’s saying that they shouldn’t try to dress in such a way that it bespeaks that they’re in rebellion against God or trying to draw attention to themselves or disrupt the public assembly.

Here’s the second quality of a mature woman in the church, she has a godly testimony. Notice it in verse 10. It says, “But,” so here’s the contrast—the negative, don’t adorn yourself with these gold, pearls, costly things and elaborate hairdos, “(which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” I want you to note in verse 10 that there’s a parenthetical statement in the middle of that verse, “(which becometh women professing godliness)” so, I want to read it without that and we’ll come back to it. He says, “But...with good works,” so it’s “not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But,” he says, “with good works.” There are two things that are mentioned there when he uses that parenthetical statement, that you’re professing to be godly and you have good works, so that’s what you should be known by. I’ve done a lot of funerals in my day as a pastor, and I’ve never seen a woman eulogized in a funeral, “Oh, her wardrobe was amazing! Her jewelry was amazing! Oh, she just did her makeup so perfect. Her hair was always just amazing!” No. You know, those aren’t the things that people talk about when you die. They’re going to talk about your godly character. “They loved their children. They loved their husband. They sacrificed. They served. They cared about people. They ministered to others.” If you put the focus on the external, you’re going to miss the boat. It’s not saying you can’t do that, but the focus needs to be on the spiritual.

There are two things you need to have as a good testimony: godliness and good works. Note those two things. He’s saying that the women in the church need to be godly, and it needs to manifest itself by their good works. What kind of good works should be manifested by these women? Turn with me to 1 Timothy 5:9-14, and let’s look at some of them. We’ll get this in several weeks, but he says, “Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old,” or 60 years of age, “having been the wife of one man, 10 Well reported of for good works,” same concept, and here’s the breakdown, “if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers,” the gift of hospitality, she’s opened her home and her heart, “if she have washed the saints’ feet,” you might say today that’s serving others, “if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.” We’ll get this in many weeks, but Paul’s talking about women who are widowed and need to be helped by the church. They had to qualify for that help by having this kind of a lifestyle.

In verse 11, "But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry," they turn their back on their commitment to Christ. Getting married isn't the problem, the problem is their commitment to Christ. He says (verse 12), "Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith." Notice verse 13, "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." So, Paul says in verse 14, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give non occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." He goes on to continue to talk about widows and their deeds, but the note that I want to make is that they have brought up children, they've lodged strangers, they've washed the saints' feet, they've relieved the afflicted, and they've done good works. Go back with me to chapter 2. A woman that is godly in the church should be known not by her attire but by her actions, not by how she dresses, but how she serves others in the church. We all know that God has provided women in the church that are that and are a blessing indeed.

I think of Jesus and His relationship to Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. It's interesting that Jesus was God in the flesh, but He was also a human being—man in the flesh—so He had the human need of companionship, fellowship, and friendship. I believe that Jesus just liked to hang out at their house. Maybe they had a really killer tv and a comfortable couch, I don't know. I'm joking. Some of you are looking at me like, "What?" Whatever it was, He liked to hang out with them. Remember the story when Jesus was at their house and the Bible says that Martha was busy serving in the kitchen and Mary was sitting at His feet hearing His words?

I believe in every woman there needs to be a little bit of Martha—get busy serving—and there needs to be a Mary. You can't say, "I'm just a Mary." You know, your husband comes home from work, the house looks like a bomb went off, and he's like, "What happened?" You say, "I've just been sitting at the feet of Jesus." "Well, what about dinner?" "Dinner?" The wife says, "I have meat you know not of." "Well, can you put some of that meat on my plate, Sister?" You know, she says, "My will is to do the will of the Father that sent me." "Yeah, but get to cooking right away," you know. You need to have a Martha and a little Mary in you. You need to have both, where you're serving but also taking time for devotions and waiting on the Lord. Godliness and good works, read Proverbs 31. Every woman should do a study of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31. By the way, it says, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised," right? So, it's not a woman that knows how to do her hair or makeup or has killer jewelry, it's the woman that fears the Lord. She's the one who will be praised.

The first quality is out of modesty, and the second quality is that of godly testimony. Here's the third quality (verse 11), spiritual receptivity. The mark of a godly or a mature woman of God is she's spiritually receptive. I found this verse fascinating. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." When you get into this section of the text, you understand why most preachers won't touch it with a 10-foot pole. If looks could kill...when I do a wedding, we get a lot of non-Christians that come into the church. When I read Ephesians, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands," if looks could kill, I would have died a thousand times! You can see the

hair stand up on the back of their neck. “What cave did he just crawl out of?” I’ve gotten to the point now where I almost delight in saying it, you know, “Women, submit to your husband, hahahaha,” and just kind of rub it in. “It’s in the Bible. Husbands love your wives, children obey your parents, parents don’t provoke your children to wrath, servants obey your masters, and masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal.” Submission isn’t just for the women, it’s for men too; and we have to submit in our culture and in our society.

I want you to go back to verse 11. Notice the statement, “Let the woman learn,” stop right there—let the woman learn. After all these years of teaching this passage, I was struck by that this morning as I was studying it. It just kind of jumped off the page, and I did a little more research and study into its background. It’s interesting, in that statement, “Let the woman learn,” actually implies that women are equal spiritually. It’s interesting that the Jewish women would go to synagogue, but they weren’t being taught or they weren’t learning. The Greek women couldn’t talk, couldn’t go out in public, had to stay in one room, and they could only have their husbands come in. They were just chattel or like a living thing, but these women were learning.

The word “learn” in verse 11 we get our word disciple from. So, women are equally spiritually standing before God. They are to be disciplined. They are to be learning. They are to be taught the Word of God. They are to be brought into the church and taught, nurtured, and fed the Word of God. They are to be learning as well as the men. It indicates that they’re spiritual equals; and in our standing before God, woman and men have an equal standing. In Christ, there’s no bond or free, male or female.

The controversy comes in verse 11 when it says how should they learn—in silence with subjection. It’s like, “Oh, no! Does the Bible really say that?” Yes. The word “silence” there, the Greek word that is translated “silence” could carry the idea (and I say could, it seems to carry the idea) of not debating, arguing, questioning, or fighting with someone. When Paul the Apostle was going to Jerusalem and the disciples begged him not to go, and they discovered that he was going to go anyway, it says, “we ceased,” debating, when they stopped arguing. The same Greek phrase is used here. Now, it’s true that in the synagogue the women sat on one side and the men sat on the other. It’s possible, as we read Corinthians where women are to ask their husbands at home if they have a question, that women were interrupting in the synagogue service asking questions or trying to debate with the speaker. It could be that he’s trying to just say, “Look, just don’t argue. Don’t debate. Don’t question. Be receptive. Be teachable.” I think the same quality needs to be true of men as well.

I have people come to me all the time with Bible questions, and I so appreciate those that will listen very clearly and carefully and be receptive. I’m not asking anyone to believe what I say just because I say it, but I love people that are just, “Okay, I’ll listen to what you have to say.” Sometimes they ask a question, they already know the answer, and they put up a wall. You feel like you’re just hitting a brick wall. They don’t really know what you want to say anyway, but I think that we should be teachable. That’s why I call this a receptivity to spiritual things and to the Word of God. That’s what it means to be silent. Certainly, it will tie together with verse 12, “But I suffer not a woman to teach,” so she’s not to be the public speaker. She’s not to be the

teacher. She's not to have the office of a pastor or the preacher in the public assembly. She's to be the learner, the disciple. Certainly, we know that women can teach women. In Titus it says to love their husbands, to be chaste, to be pure, keepers at home. They can teach children, and they can speak the Word of God in what we would call prophecy. They can speak forth God's Word. They can sing the Word of God, but they're not to have an official position or role of authority in the church in the teaching ministry, especially as it involves teaching other men in the congregation. They are to learn in silence with subjection.

The word "subjection" in the King James translation would be better translated submission. Subjection indicates an unwillful subjection, but submission indicates a willful, deliberate, surrender of yourself to authority. Now, it's important for you to understand, again, submission isn't just for women. Jesus submitted to the Father. We submit in the home. We submit in our culture, but the word "submit" is actually a word that means to rank under. It is a military concept, so it means that you place yourself under and you do it voluntarily and willingly. So, when the women come to churches with men, they have leadership over them as well they should do it with submission in their hearts. You need to be a spiritual learner, you need to be receptive, and you need to do it with submission.

You might say that whether you're a man or woman, we as Christians should be marked by humility and service. It doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman, God's people should be marked by humility and service, so I don't know why we would rebel against these principles in this passage. So, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." We do that in the home, in the church, and in 1 Corinthians 11, God has established headship. You know, in the trinity, we have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Paul actually says that the head of Christ is God, the head of the man is Christ, and that the head of the woman is man; so there's that order that God has established. In the trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all equal, but they're different functions and different roles.

Write down the fourth mark of this mature and godly woman; that is, she respects authority or has respect for authority. So, modesty, godly testimony, spiritual receptivity, and fourth, a respect for authority, verses 12-14. This is the heart of the passage. Paul said, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over," or lord it over, "the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve," he gives the reason behind it, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Again, if I were just kind of picking and choosing passages to preach, I don't know that I would ever preach from these verses. It's one of the benefits of preaching through the Bible—we don't skip over things that are uncomfortable or might offend or upset somebody. In the church today, this passage is quite a controversy. There are the liberal theologians that explain it away as being cultural and was at the time Paul was in and doesn't apply to today, you know. Women are liberated and we gotta get with the times, so we have women pastors, women preachers, women elders and leaders in the church, women priests and bishops. Some of the more liturgical churches are talking about the ordination of women and all that issue. We think, "Oh, isn't that wonderful," but we need to remember that the Bible is our authority not our culture, not

popular opinion, and it supersedes the culture around us. We follow the dictates of God's Word, and I believe that's important for us as a church. Otherwise, we throw out the Scriptures and just become adrift on a sea of no standards, no morals, no absolutes, and the church changes and ebbs and flows rather than having the anchor of God's Word, which is the lamp and the light and the rock of holy Scripture. I believe that when we follow God's Word, it's best for all of us, whether you're a man or a woman, whether it be in the home, whether it be in the church, or whether it be in our culture.

One of the problems in the world that we live in today is we've gotten away of God's standard and role for marriage. As I said today, we've got this identity crisis in the standards of what is a man, what is a woman, and the roles in marriage, the functions in marriage, and how far our nation has drifted from what would be called traditional marriage and the traditional home, or what I would say is a Biblical or God-designed home, which is healthy for the culture and for the church as well. I believe the church strengthens the home and the home strengthens the church—as goes the home, so goes the church; as goes the church, so goes the culture. The reason we're in the mess we're in today is because we've fallen away from God, the Creator, the Designer of these things.

So, she has a respect for authority. Let's look at it, verses 12-14, Paul says, "But I suffer not," this is not an option. This is not whenever you feel like it, this is an apostolic command. This is an imperative. Paul is saying with all certainty, "I suffer not a woman to teach," now, she can teach other women—she can share the Word of God with other women, with children—but I believe that this teaching here as we're going to find in chapter 3 next week...Next week, you gotta hang with me next Wednesday night as we move into chapter 3, we're going to get the qualifications for a pastor, and the Bible starts there in chapter 3, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work...the husband of one wife." In the New Testament, all pastors were men. There weren't any women pastors. All the apostles were men. In the Old Testament, all the prophets...there were women who prophesied, but the prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel—were men. I'm just throwing out some information for you, okay? Don't get mad at me. Those who wrote the Bible were what? Men. Now, there's books named after women, but they didn't write the books. Men wrote the books. No New Testament book was written by a woman. No New Testament church was pastored by a woman. I say this...I grew up in a church that had a woman pastor, but I've come to believe that that's unscriptural and unbiblical.

If you were married to a woman that was the pastor of your church, at home you're the head; but then when you get to church on Sunday, she takes the leadership role. That would cause confusion. I believe that God has ordained that the spiritual leadership of the church be men, and their qualifications are spelled out in chapter 3. We're going to go into great detail looking at that.

Paul says, "But I suffer not a woman to teach," now what has become so fashionable and so popular and so en vogue today is for women to preach in the church, is for women to be put into the teaching position and to have authority over the men and to be teaching because we

consider it to be kind of with the times. There are pastors and congregations that view the pastor's wife as being a pastor. My wife is not Pastor Kristy, okay? We don't do a big billboard: John and Pastor Kristy, Revival Christian Fellowship. My wife is my wife, praise God for that; and I thank God for her humility and her submission and her godliness and her hunger for God's Word. She can teach others, but she's not to fulfill the position of authority in the church of being a pastor. So, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp," or lord, "authority over the man, but to be in silence," and that "silence" there in verse 12 could carry the idea of not preaching and not teaching the Word of God.

Now, to show us that it's not culture, Paul mentions verses 13-14. He says, "For," so this is the explanation, "Adam was first formed, then Eve," duh! We know that, right? You know, it's kind of like: which came first the chicken or the egg? If it takes a woman to make a man, then which came first the chicken or the egg? In God's economy, God first made whom? Adam. (You guys are quiet tonight. Am I that boring or that weird? You're looking at me like, "John's back. What do we do?") Genesis 2, day 6, God took the dirt—so, guys are dirt clods—and formed the man. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and after each successive day of creation, God said, "It is good, it is good, it is good, it is good." Then, He creates Adam and what does He say? He said, "It is not good, man's aloneness." He makes man, looks at the dude in the garden and says, "Man, this dude hasn't got it. He needs help." It is exactly what He said, "I will make a helper suitable for him."

Someone said, "God made the woman because Adam would get lost and be too embarrassed to ask for directions," or "His fig leaf would wear out and she had to make him a new one," you know, or "God created the man and said, 'I can do better than that,' and He made the woman." I like that one. So, God creates the woman and He brings the woman to the man, and she becomes the helper that is suitable for him. I believe that God created them to be different, to be unique, but to compliment one another. Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." God created the man and created the woman and brought the two together in the marriage relationship. So, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." It's not culture, it's creation—order. God first made the man, and then He made the woman. This is why Paul, later in Corinthians, said that the man is the head of the woman. Headship speaks of protection and care.

Notice the second rationale (verse 14), "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." You say, "Well, what's with that? I don't understand that." Again, it's very clear in Genesis 3 that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit with his eyes wide open. Eve was the one who was deceived. The serpent came with subtlety and tempted her with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. She was tempted and was deceived and ate the fruit. Then, Adam, knowing that she had disobeyed, ate the fruit and brought sin and death upon the whole human race. It's interesting, when God came to Adam and said, "Adam, have you eaten the fruit that I told you not to eat of?" What did Adam do? He said, "The woman that You gave me," not only the woman but, "You gave her to me, God. I was doing fine with the animals just hanging out here in the garden. I took a nap, woke up, and found out I was married. That messed everything up. She tempted me." God comes to the woman, "What

have you done?" "The serpent. The devil made me do it." It's where Flip Wilson got his line, "The devil made me do it," passing the buck. The interesting thing is that Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression.

There's a whole lot of theories that I don't think are necessarily supported by the Scriptures that, you know, women are weaker spiritually or that they can be deceived easier. It is true that a lot of cults were founded by women as well as men; but in the spiritual leadership of the church, God has ordained that men take the lead. It's not culture, it's creation, and it's the result of the curse that Adam brought upon the entire human race.

The last quality is in verse 15, and I call this her contribution. You might put underneath that, motherhood. "Notwithstanding," which is nevertheless, a wrap-up, "she," that's woman, "shall be saved in childbearing," or some translations have "the childbearing," that's the key," if they," the "they" there could be women or the husband and the wife together, which is very possible, "continue in," four things, "faith and charity," love, "holiness," or purity, "with sobriety." It's possible that verse 15 could be viewed as the most controversial and difficult one to interpret in the whole passage. I believe verses 11-14 is very clear, that spiritual leadership and authority of teaching the Word in the church is given to men, but when you come to verse 15, "...she shall be saved in childbearing," what on earth does that mean?

There are all kinds of ways to interpret that. Let me give you the four most common and the last of which I believe is the correct view. First, some say it means that if you're a godly woman, when you have children your labor will be easy. Why are you laughing? Because it doesn't happen, right? I laugh right along with you. That's not, I believe, the right interpretation. ("Oh, if you're really godly, when you go into labor you won't feel a thing. It'll be really smooth." That's not what it's saying. The second view is that you'll go to heaven if you have children. You'll be saved because you had a baby. I mean, that would contradict the clear teaching of Scripture that, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

There's the third view, which is more plausible; that is, the woman's salvation will come through a woman bearing the Saviour Jesus Christ. Isn't it interesting that sin came into the world through Adam. We don't think of sin coming in the world through Eve. When you prick your finger on a rose bush, you don't say, "Oh, Eve, why did you blow it?" We say, "That Adam, you messed everything up!" It's interesting that through a woman, the Redeemer, the Saviour, would come. It's also interesting that Jesus had a heavenly Father and on earth He only had an earthly mother. The Saviour of the world had a mother on earth. Her name was Mary, and salvation came through the womb of a woman, so there's redemption there. That's what some think and interpret it.

Here's my view. I've had a lot of people argue against it with me, but I still think after many, many, many years I'm still convinced. I'm in good company with some great New Testament scholars, that it actually is implying there that she'll find her purpose, that her salvation, her real fulfillment, her contribution in life will come through motherhood—that God giving her children

and raising those children to create a godly generation is one of the highest and holy callings that a woman could ever have. When it says there, “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in,” or through, “childbearing,” I actually believe that the salvation there is not the salvation of her soul but the idea that she finds purpose, meaning, and fulfillment. One of the arguments I get is, “Well, what about women that can’t have children?” I think this is a general statement, that generally speaking, God made you, designed you, to bear children, and that you find purpose and fulfillment. I’m sure you can talk to about any mother that’s here tonight and say, “What are some of the greatest rewards and most fulfilling things in your life?” You’ll say, “My children—that God gave me children, that I invested in my children, and my children are going off to be a blessing to and serving others.”

Kristy and I have four adult children, and they’re off doing their adult lifestyle and doing what they do. They love the Lord, are serving the Lord, walking with the Lord, and we’re blessed by that. That’s a mother’s reward, that’s the parent’s reward—the fruit of the womb is the Lord’s reward. It’s a gift from God, and I really believe as I’ve studied this for years, over and over and over again, that that’s what Paul is saying.

Paul lists all these things—women have to be modest, have a godly testimony, have to be spiritually receptive and learn in silence in the church, to respect authority—and then he says, but you have a contribution. God gives you children, and you can actually train those children in the way that they should go. I don’t think anyone would question but what a mother has the greatest influence on the children and in the early years, the woman’s influence. It’s said, “The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.” I believe that. How about Timothy who was being written to in this passage? He had a godly mother and a godly grandmother, Eunice and Lois. He was taught the Scriptures from the time he was a little boy.

I think in my own life. I had a godly grandmother. I had a godly mother. I have a godly wife. I was raised in a home with four sisters, two older and two younger. I was right smack in the middle, so I do like women, okay? Then, I get married and the first three are girls. I think it’s my destiny to grow up and to live in a home with women my whole life, so don’t accuse me of not liking women—I’m married to one, I had a mom, I had a grandmother, I have daughters—but the influence that these women had. I think the list could go on and on.

I think of Jochebed. What a great woman. God gave her a son. Do you know what his name was? Moses. Have you ever heard of Moses? Nobody’s heard of Jochebed. “Who’s Jochebed?” She’s the mother of Moses, and she was given her son back for only a short time, maybe two to three years, and then she had to give him to Pharaoh’s daughter who adopted him. You know as a mom, can you imagine how difficult that would be to give your child over to a pagan princess? But in those first three years, as she rocked him on her knee and she prayed for him and taught him, she whispered in his ear, “Jehovah is God. Jehovah is God. Jehovah is God. You’re a child of God,” and encouraged him. Moses never forgot who he was, and the point in time came in the life of Moses that he took a stand and suffered affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. What a great influence you can have on your children in those first and formative years to send them on the way that

they should go. One of the greatest men of history is Moses, and we owe it all to Jochebed.

I think of Hannah who wanted a child, and God gave her Samuel—the last of the great prophets, first of the judges, and turned the nation back to Jehovah. I think of Mary, the mother of Jesus, that God gave to her the Saviour of the world, and she was humble, submissive, teachable, receptive, and godly. How powerful is the testimony, the witness, the contribution of a godly mother.

Women, God has called you to live in all modesty, in all godly testimony, with good works, with spiritual receptivity to the Word of God, the things of God, to do it in silence and subjection, to respect authority that God has established over you, and to be a contributor. God has called and gifted you. Let's pray.