

Order in Lesson 7: Appropriate Church Order

Text: I Timothy 2:8-15 “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 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; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to establish appropriate order within local church worship, so that the men and women will function in the way that God designed them to function in that body.

Proposition: God wants us to soberly follow the instructions given in this text.

Interrogative: How can we do it?

Illustration: A carefully designed system, like a car. Every detail is carefully planned and fine-tuned so the system accomplishes a practical usable function.

Part 1: Three Important Statements for Perspective:

- This section of 1 Timothy is one of the most controversial sections of scripture in the modern church.
- This section of 1 Timothy was essentially universally accepted without controversy for 20 centuries of church history.
- The rejection of the traditional understanding of this passage has nothing to do with exegetical or contextual arguments. (emotional arguments, cultural arguments, straw men arguments)

Part 2: Three Important Questions for Personal Reflection:

- **Question one concerning God’s authority:** Does God have the right to tell us how to order the church?
- **Question two concerning Scripture’s authority:** Does God’s word stand as our ultimate authority for faith and practice?
- **Question three concerning trust in God’s design:** Do we really believe that God’s design for the order of the church is better than our cultures new ideas?

Part 3: Four Important Statements for Sake of Balance:

- The roles of men and women within the local church are clearly different, and this is by God’s design.
- This passage is only addressing the roles of men and women within church life.
- This passage is about the God’s design for order within the local church not value, aptitude, giftedness, or spirituality.
- This passage does not exclude women from all areas of ministry or leadership within the local church.

Part 4: The details of the passage:

- **The character and conduct of church members:**
 - “I will therefore that men...”
 - “In like manner also, that women...”
- **The character and conduct of men in the church: (4 Important Phrases)** “I will therefore that men...”
 - **“Men pray every where:”** The men of the church are to live prayerful lives, and are to be the ones leading in the prayer.
 - **“Lifting up holy hands:”** The men should be leading in prayer with lives that are characterized by godliness.
 - **“Without wrath and doubting:”** This godliness should be accompanied with a settled controlled disposition and a settled confident state of mind.
 - **“I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man:”** Men carry the responsibility within the congregation to provide spiritual and practical leadership.
- **The character and conduct of women within the church:** “In like manner also, that women...”
 - **“Adorn themselves in modest apparel:”** The women are to dress in a way that is seen to be appropriate, well-ordered but not showy
 - **“With shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array:”** Their dress should reflect a carefully considered respect for others that does not flaunt their wealth or status in society.
 - **“But which becometh women professing godliness) with good works:”** A godly disposition and pattern of life should be the most prominent characteristic of their adornment.
 - **“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection:”** Their responsibility in corporate worship is to allow scripturally qualified men to assume the responsibilities to instruct, teach, and lead.
 - **“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence:”** Women are not to hold positions of spiritual authority or instruction over men in the church, because it is a reversal of God’s stated, delegated authority in the local church.
- **The stated reason for this instruction:**
 - **“For Adam was first formed, then Eve:”** This command is not rooted in a cultural expectation or Paul’s personal opinion, but rather in God’s design from the creation for the separate functions of men and women.
 - **“Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression:”** The fall of man is the first example in scripture of the roles that God had ordained for man and woman being reversed, and the consequences were devastating.
- **A promise associated with this reminder of role distinction and local church order:** “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety...”
 - This is a complicated scripture
 - Two critical questions:
 - **Question 1: Is she saved “in” or “through” childbearing**

- Is this salvation taking place during the childbearing process?
- Is this salvation taking place as a result of the childbearing/rearing process?
- **Question 2: In what way is she being saved?**
 - Is this an eternal spiritual salvation: **Justification**
 - Is this a temporary physical salvation: **Life preserved**
 - Is this a salvation from a temporal temptation: **Saved from the temptation to reverse God's order and purpose for role distinctions!**
- **Interpretation: Genesis 3:16-19** "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; **in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children**; and thy **desire shall be to thy husband**, and **he shall rule over thee**. And unto Adam he said, **Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife**, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return..."
 - The temptation to overturn God's appointed roles for men and women is a part of our fallenness. By women embracing the role that God has created for them, they will be able to use the gifts that God has uniquely entrusted to them, they will live lives that are full of purpose, and the end result of their faithfulness will be a rich sense of satisfaction.

Practical implications:

- God's people are to live distinctly God-centered/God-ordered lives.
- God alone has the right to dictate to the church the order that He has designed for its function.
- Men and women though equally valuable to God and often equally suited for similar roles in life are appointed to a distinction of role in the church.
- The scriptures not culture or necessity should be the final rule for our faith and practice.
- God's ways are best and should be happily embraced.
- We will be most fulfilled in life when we faithfully fulfill the purposes for which God has created us.