

# 1 Timothy 2:11-15 (Part 1)

By  
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**“Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”**

## Introduction

Today we will discuss one of the most (at least at this time) controversial section in the Scriptures—whether or not women are allowed to hold positions of leadership within the Church and in particular, whether they are allowed by the Word of God to preach the Word of God to the gathered community of saints. There are endless volumes of commentaries you can peruse through and you can read all sorts of things concerning this particular issue. There is no end to the learning. There is no end to this study. There is no end to the nuances of every little word and every little thing that is presented to us in this portion of Scripture found in 1 Timothy 2:11-15. What is necessary to keep in mind is that we are not so concerned with the idea of jockeying for a particular theological position as we are with examining and appreciating the clarity of the Scriptures.

We talk about the idea that the Word of God is good. In fact, there is no one who calls himself or herself a Christian who would actually say that the Word of God is not good. For instance, I've been to liberal churches (whether through an interaction or because I am doing a wedding) where that particular church doesn't even preach the Gospel. What we mean by "liberal" is that these churches no longer adhere to the normal, traditional doctrines of Christianity (e.g. the virgin birth of Jesus; Jesus' bodily resurrection) and they have rejected some of the most fundamental and basic ideas of what it means to be saved. These aren't "living" churches. Yet, even in a church where the authority of Scripture and some of the most fundamental truths rejected, God's Word and its significance is at least verbally affirmed as important.

Since all Christians would affirm the importance of Scripture, we need to ask ourselves, "Are we willing (by all means necessary) to take the Word of God and believe it in at face value?" This is a much more difficult and significant question for us to answer because it pertains to both our present life and our future eternal destination. Scripture speaks authoritatively about the most significant things. The question is not whether God's Word is *clear* most of the time. The question is whether we desire to believe, accept, and appropriate the Word of God. The question for us (as those that are gathered in this community of believers) is whether we realize that we need to take the authority of Scripture for what it says. I think that's the most significant thing that we might settle our hearts upon.

Let me read you an excerpt from Dr. William D. Mounce's, *Pastoral Epistles, Word Bible Commentary*. He describes in part why this text has become so controversial when it should be fairly straightforward. He says that part of the reason that makes it such a hot topic is that the idea of a "the limited role" seems to suggest (to many readers) a diminished personal worth. He says this:

“One of the foundational issues underlying most discussion of the role of the women in the church today is the question whether worth is determined by role. The question is worth determined by our role? He says that an essential equality and functional differentiation exist side by side. Underlying much discussion lies an implicit assumption that a limited role necessitates a diminished personal worth. It is no wonder that the discussion of women in ministry can become so heated. Yet the equating of worth and roles is non-biblical, secular, and not true to reality. Nowhere in Scripture are role and ultimate worth ever equated. In fact, we constantly we find the opposite. The last will be first (Matthew 19:30; John 13:16). Whatever your roles are, it does not determine your worth because in the end those who are serving, those who are humbled, will become most exalted in the eyes of God. The suffering servant (Gospel of Mark) Himself is not worth less than the ones He served. Jesus' role in His earthly ministry was to serve us. Does that make Him less than us? Then, we would be blasphemous to say so. Paul's analogy of the church as Christ's body taught in 1 Corinthians 12 tells very clearly that the body is a unit. Though it is a unit, made up of many parts, they form one body. What if the thumb says to the eyeball, 'I don't want to be part of the body because I'm not an

eyeball!?' I want to be important like the eyeball! There are only two eyeballs in the body of Christ and I want to be one of them.' It would be ludicrous! And that is the simplicity of what the Scripture teach."

Dr. Mounce is right. Even in the Godhead, he says there is an eternal division of roles. The Father is distinct in His function within the Godhead and the Son is distinct in His function. The Holy Spirit is distinct in His and yet, They are co-equal according to the Scriptures. They are equal in essence. In fact, They share the same essence. Thus, we ought to be careful not to associate with this idea of diminished quality in the distinction of roles. Why don't we ask the Lord to teach us and prepare our hearts for the preaching of the Word and that the Word of God may have its right and excellent impact upon our lives for the sake of His glory.

*Heavenly Father,*

*As we come before You having corporately prayed and focused upon the cross of Christ, having sung some songs to exalt the majesty of Jesus and how He was indeed the Lamb who had given up His life so that we might live for You.*

*I pray that You would teach us humility of heart and that even as we approach the text, Lord, that we would come with the desire to be accurate, but more than just accuracy and understanding. Lord, that we place ourselves beneath the full weight of the authority of the Word of God.*

*Lord, we think of our Lord's words when He said that "Not a jot or a tittle; not even a small stroke would be removed from the Law, but that the entire Word of God would be fulfilled because our God neither breaks His promises nor does He fail in anything." He is that God that cannot lie and we trust in You.*

*Lord, as the Scripture lay it out for us, whatever the Word of God would teach us, may we submit unto its glory so that we might live to Yours.*

*We thank you. You are the great and awesome God that has granted us life, forgiveness of our sins, and promised eternity with You.*

*So we take great delight in the goodness of Your salvation. Now may we look as the Scripture points us to the value of women and their contribution in our church. Exalt them highly and encourage them deeply.*

*Thank you for all of the ladies, for their participation in the body of Christ. We thank You. We praise You.*

*In Jesus name,  
Amen*

### **An Overview: Differences between Men and Women**

I was thinking about the differences between men and women and I found various lists. Some were silly and humorous. Others were interesting, particularly the physiological differences between men and women.

- Men are biological incapable of letting a women light a BBQ.
- Men catch the flu and women catch the cold.
- Men will warm their posteriors in the fire but women never do (I thought that was very insightful, but not very useful).
- A man that is a regular visitor to his mom is considered a "Mama's boy."
- A woman who does the same thing is considered a good daughter.
- The exact same haircut will cost a female \$30 more than it will for a man (I have no idea why that's the case, but if you're looking for a new career, cut women's hair!)
- Girls develop the right side of the brain faster than boys and it leads them to talking, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading earlier than boys.
- As a result, they tend to have a better memory and propensity to talk. My girls are fun because they have so much to say about so many things, but it's because physiologically the right side of their brain develops much faster than boys.
- Boys develop the left side of their brain faster than girls. This is the visual, spatial, logical skills, and perceptual skills.
- They tend to be better at math, problem solving, building, figuring out puzzles, etc.
- As both genders grow older, women use both hemispheres of the brain a little more thoroughly. In fact, the corpus callosum is thicker in women; apparently, they use both sides of the brain to better effect.
- Girls tend to use more terms of endearment than boys. I can believe that. Our daughters are wonderful in that and encouraging. They like to say wonderful things and I can imagine when my boy is born, he will probably say none of those. That's how boys are.
- In general, men are more interested in objects and things rather than people and feelings.

- Men rarely talk about their problems unless they are seeking expert advice. Asking for help when you can do something yourself is a sign of weakness.
- Men feel devastated by failure, financial setback; they tend to obsess about money and success in the eyes of the world.
- Women, on the other hand, value love, communication, beauty, and relationship.
- A woman's sense of self is defined first through feelings, then quality of their relationships. They spend much time supporting, nurturing, and helping each other. They experience fulfillment through sharing and relating.
- Women are concerned about issues relating to physical attractiveness. Changes in this area can be as difficult for women as changes in a man's financial status.
- Men are logical, analytical, and rational.
- Women are intuitive, holistic, and integrative.

Practically no one would question the statements made above (at least no one sane) and I didn't borrow these from Christian teachers or from a commentary. These are just normal things that you can find in any book (e.g. "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus"). You can find that kind of information from just about anywhere.

Now, if you come to our house, you'll see that Kathy and I are the poster children of what it means to be a woman and what it means to be a man. Kathy with her delicate nature will come by and say "Oh, how are you doing?" On the other hand, I would say, "Hey, what's going on?" For her, if there's something wrong, if you got a cut or something, she will obsess about it, she will care for you and nurture you, and if you got cut in my presence I'll say, "Dude, you're not dying. Suck it up! What is the big deal?" I need to be careful with my daughters because I have this kind of attitude (e.g. "It's just a little bit of blood. It's not going to kill you! My goodness!").

Men and women are clearly different. I think even the most staunch feminist would not disagree with that statement. That's just the fact of nature. For us as Christians, however, we ought to rephrase that and say that that's just the fact of our creation. God has designed us differently and I know that I am talking about generalities. I know that in some areas, some women are way better at math than men. The point is God has made us different and we ought to accept that and delight in that. Let me read you the text and discuss some of the particular views and look at each of the verses on their own merit.

### **The Proper Context: The Corporate Gathering in Church**

**"Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. And *it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.*"**

Now, we have just read that and I know as soon as you have read that the pings are going off in your head. "I don't know what in the world that means! What does these things concerning women mean and what in the world does verse 15 mean? How are women to be saved in child bearing?" I will get to all of this stuff because I agree that some of this is difficult to understand. Perhaps the most difficult verse to understand in this entire section is verse 15. What in the world does it mean that women might be saved through child bearing? Besides this verse, the others are fairly straightforward. What is Paul particularly referring to in that verse? It is not like he uses phrases that are weird. In verse 15, the term for "**childbearing**" is *teknotogonia* (τεκνογονία), which appears only this one time in all of the New Testament and almost never in all of the external, secular Greek writing! It's a weird term and so that it should kind of freak us out.

So the question we are faced with is this: "What is the women's role in the corporate ministry?" And keep in mind that it is the *corporate* ministry that we are talking about; in other words—the Church. Now, we are not talking about whether a woman can be a teacher in the general sense, as for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). We actually have some women among us work for the LAUSD and we are not asking them to quit their jobs because there's nothing wrong with that. We are also not saying that women are incapable of teaching (we'll stress this point a little bit better as we go through this portion of Scripture). Additionally, we are not saying that women are incapable of holding down excellent jobs either. In fact, if you asked me if women can be CEOs and if they should be paid much as men, I would say absolutely. Listen, if a woman is a CEO, of course she should be paid as much as man. Should not a person's wage be based on the person's position rather than the person's gender? Yes, obviously.

Now, remember that starting from 1 Timothy 2:1, this portion of Scripture addressing areas *in* the church and the context is *corporate* worship.

*"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men..."*

We said that "*entreaties, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings*" were in the plural form. In other words, it gives us the impression that it is the whole bunch of us, raising our voices together, on behalf of the people of the world and for those who are in authority over us (v. 2) and it's because God is the God that saves. In the corporate gathering, we are to pray for the sake of the world and for our leaders—that is right and appropriate.

*"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3-4)*

In verse 8, men (the gender-specific term **andros** is used and not **anthropos**, which we get the word "anthropology" from which signifies all Mankind) in the corporate context are to lift up Holy hands without wrath. They are to pray and lead the prayers that have just we have just mentioned.

*"Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension." (1 Timothy 2:8)*

Since we still talking in the corporate context are women forbidden by the Scriptures to pray corporately at church? Absolutely not! Women are encouraged to participate in prayer. Are women supposed to be so quiet as not to sing? That would be pretty funny. Can you imagine coming together and we are singing praise songs and it is just the men singing, all out of tune and kind of lame? The ladies are to join in with all of that. They are not to be silent as in the sense of literally closing their mouths. We will see later what kind of "quietness" is the verse is actually referring to.

Men are to lead in the worship service. In verses 9-10, we said that women are to be careful and modest and discreet in their exterior dress. They are to adorn themselves not on the exterior, but in the interior (i.e. their heart) *"by means of good works as befits women making a claim of godliness."*

*"Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness." (1 Timothy 2:9-10)*

On that basis, we come to verses 11-15. However, if you are not convinced of the context of this passage being the church and the corporate church ministry, do this in your Bibles. If you look at it right now, remove that big bold statement in chapter 3. Look at the passage and read it again.

*"Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint. It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience." (1 Timothy 2:11-3:9)*

The context here is clearly understood to be about leadership within the context of the corporate church. In my mind, that's undeniable. To pretend that it's not about that would be tantamount to lifting off these particular verses and making them just kind of walk around on their own. Anytime you do that, it is not proper hermeneutics. You have to see what the context says and why the context mentions these things. Why mention that the issue of women teaching? It is because we are just talking about the proper things in the corporate gathering and we are about to address the whole issue of what kind of man is capable of and called to teach. This is an important thing.

### **Popular Misinterpretations of 1 Timothy 2:11-15**

Let me take some of the popular (wrong) views or interpretations on the topic of women not being allowed to teach in the church.

- **Paul View was Wrong:** One interpretation some hold is that Paul was simply wrong about his view. Paul K. Jewett was one of those who favored this view. He argued that Paul believed in what he wrote because of his background as a Pharisee (remember how the Pharisees viewed women, e.g. a traditional Pharisee prayer would be "Thank you God that I am not a Gentile, a sinner, a dog, or a woman"). Women were not highly regarded in the culture at that time.

It is not that different in the Muslim world today. Women are denigrated to second-class citizens. The pinnacle of heaven for the Muslim faith in general that man gets to go and delight in earthly pleasures. They have harems. But what about women? What happens to them in heaven? I don't know. Do they get to be head of the harem? That is weird to me. The whole Muslim concept seems to denigrate women and not uphold them as highly as our Scriptures regard women.

- **Gender Egalitarianism:** The people who hold to this view like to use [Galatians 3:28](#) as support for their argument of gender egalitarianism and uniformity in Christ.

*“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

This verse appears to supersede any gender role distinction made in Scripture. It appears to be a significant verse supporting the idea of a new humanity united under Christ. This verse *is* significant; however, it is given to us in the context of our justification and not referring to gender equality, uniformity.

In other words, we are co-equal in the eyes of God in terms of salvation. This verse is saying that God does not look upon us with any favoritism based on race or gender or any criteria other than Christ Jesus. Salvation is given to all of us richly and freely. Men and women are joint heirs in Christ.

A lot of evangelical feminist scholars are trying to take Galatians 3:28 and they eradicate any teaching that has to do with the concept of submission, subordination, or headship. It is not proper hermeneutics (nor evangelical) to take one verse and reinterpret everything else based on that one verse. This is common in feminist hermeneutics.

You know who else does that? The gay and lesbian element in society. They claim that because this verse says “there is neither male of female” there is no gender distinction at all. Thus, they would argue that a man could be in love with another man as long as they both love Christ, as long as they are both committed to Him. Could they not co-exist in a homosexual relationship?

We can see that sloppy hermeneutics can provide justification for not just feminism, but also (more significantly and more dangerously) for homosexuality. But because this verse just does not fit the proper rules of context and hermeneutics, we can toss it aside as a poor attempt to justify unbiblical ideas.

- **Radical Feminism in Ephesus:** Another view we ought to consider is that Paul was only correcting the feminist element in Ephesus. The idea was that there were these strong, Ephesian women that were aggressive and who were influenced by the cult of Artemis rather than the gospel; and Paul was speaking directly to that particular group at that particular time. This is a legitimate possibility. Historically, this idea was put forward by a husband and wife team, Richard and Catherine Kroegers, in their book, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence*.

There was an article written by scholar Steven M. Baugh, “A Foreign World: Ephesus in the First Century,” *Women in the Church*, which pointed out (historically speaking) that Ephesus was never a center for ancient feminism.

*“Ephesus was a very conventional Roman provincial city with no women magistrates and with a pagan cult hierarchy controlled by men.”*

In other words, the religious system was controlled. Everything else was typically Roman which meant that the women did not get to go out of their houses, which was in fact worse than how women were treated in Judaism. Where would these feminists come from? They certainly did not exist in Ephesus during that time. This view is looking for something that really isn't there.

- **Prohibiting a Domineering Attitude:** Another view believes the term translated “**to exercise authority**” to mean “to domineer.” This view says that Paul was essentially saying to women that they cannot teach in such a way that is to teach error or to domineer over men. That's a possibility, but I think that the plain teaching of Scripture will show that this is not the case.
- **Paul's opinion:** The final view is that Paul was just asserting his personal opinion on this topic. Notice that how he says, “*I do not allow or give permission to teach or have authority over men (editor's emphasis).*” Maybe, he's just expressing his personal opinion and we'll talk about that because I think it is authoritative instead.

Personally, I hold to a traditional view of this particular portion of Scripture and what I mean by “a traditional view” is the interpretation that the Church has held for about 2000 years. The Church has always held this position. In fact, one particular scholar, Robert Yarbrough (professor of New Testament Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School), looked back to study when the concept that this passage does not prohibit women to teach or to be a pastor or an elder in the church started and found that it only started to appear in academic literature beginning from 1969.

Harold O.J. Brown (John R. Richardson Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary) observed:

*“When opinions and convictions suddenly undergo dramatic alteration, although nothing new has been discovered and the only thing that has dramatically changed is the spirit of the age, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that that spirit has had an important role to play in the shift.”*

In other words, he is saying how curious is it that during the pinnacle of the feminist movement in America in 1969, that is when the literature begins to change on what this passage means. Is it not too coincidental? For generations, over a course of a couple of millenniums all bible scholars found that this is what the Scripture taught. Whether they agreed with

it or not, this is what it taught. Now of all the sudden, since the late 1960s (at the pinnacle of feminism in the states) things changed. I think this is an appropriate criticism.

The text begins with the idea of the privilege of learning in the corporate context.

### **The Proper Attitudes of Women Disciples (v. 11)**

**“Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.”**

The term *gunē* (γυνή) that is used for “women” in verse 11 is gender specific, in the same way that we were talking earlier about how men (*anēr* is gender specific) were to lift up holy hands in prayer. By not using the definite article “the,” it leaves it open to be applied generally to all women. The idea here is that women are to “**quietly receive instruction.**”

Let’s first talk about the idea to “**receive instruction.**” That in itself is quite remarkable. To us, it’s not remarkable at all. We’re used to women sitting among us, learning with us, in our classrooms as well as in our churches. But in the synagogue, back in the time of Jesus, women were not allowed to come in and study or read (let alone participate in any kind of service).

The Word of God, the *Torah*, was not open or available to them. That’s why when they used to pray, “Lord, thank You that I am not a Gentile, a sinner, a dog, or a woman” they did not think that that was weird. They thought that if they were any of those other things, including being a woman, they could not even read the *Torah*. I could not study the Word of God and the Law either as a Gentile. So, they thought that it was a righteous and excellent prayer; which is why the Pharisees prayed it. In fact, the *Mishna* says at one point, “Better to burn the Torah than to teach it to a woman.” Think about what women have undergone throughout history and it’s abysmal, it’s degrading, and it’s ridiculous.

The Word of God (both the New Testament and the Old Testament) has never denigrated women. In fact, it has upheld them as equals and has given them the strength and virtue that God has designed them to possess. Take for example the witness of Jesus’ resurrection. Who were the first ones to witness Jesus’ resurrection? It was the ladies! They wanted to anoint His body because there was no time to do that before and so when they come to the tomb, it found it empty. What did they do? They ran to tell the disciples. What did the disciples do? Did they all rejoice at His resurrection? No! Do you know why? Because a woman’s testimony could not be upheld in a court of law in that culture.

When Jesus appeared on the road to Emmaus to two of His disciples, they related to Him how these women were telling them that Christ had risen from the dead, but they disregarded those claims because they were women. That was the common view of women. Their status in society was very low. According to the divorce laws, one particular teacher in Judaism taught that you can divorce your wife for burning your dinner!

The fact that Paul emphasized a women should “**receive instruction**” is significant. The term used was *manthano* (μανθάνω) which was a passive term meaning “to be taught” or “to be a learner.” She was to learn. That, in itself, is a great blessing and very different from what many others have taught, including other religions. She was to be a learner. Interestingly, this term is the same root word used for “disciple.” In essence, women can be a disciple and a learner of Christ just like men. Paul continues this remarkable statement by saying let the women be disciples both “**quietly**” and “**with entire submissiveness.**”

The situation at Ephesus was this: there were some women that learned to be idle; they were idle talkers. They would go around from house to house and not merely be idle, but also gossip. They were busybodies, talking about things that are not proper to mention. They do all this bad stuff. He doesn’t say that *all* the women were like that and he’s not suggesting that it’s universal to all women, but he *is* saying that there was an issue there. Paul was addressing those women when he said, “let them come to the church in the corporate gathering and let them receive instruction. Don’t hinder them, but let them do it quietly and in full submission.”

**“Let a woman quietly receive instruction... ” (emphasis mine)**

“Quietness” is an important thing here. There are 2 possibilities: either a literal quietness (i.e. to close your mouth and be silent) or an attitude of the heart (i.e. to be willing to learn and to be silent). If he meant the former, Paul didn’t mean absolutely no one was to speak. It was more a sense of an order of things, where everyone stops speaking and only one or two representatives speak. For example, in Acts 11:17 the Jews were “silenced” when Peter spoke in regards to coming of the Spirit of God upon the Gentiles.

*“If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way? And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, ‘Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.’” (Acts 11:17-18; emphasis mine)*

They quieted down, i.e. they didn’t speak. It means that they stopped the forum. The whole discussion was they’re saying “No! The Gentiles can’t be saved! Are you kidding? That’s crazy!” And Peter is saying, “No, we saw it! The Holy Spirit came upon them” and they all shut up. They listened and concluded (or the representatives concluded) “Well, then God

has granted Gentiles also repentance that leads to life." Clearly, the idea of silence is not just that they need to be quiet and do nothing, but they are to have instead a demeanor of quietness. It is used this way in 1 Thessalonians 4:11 and 2 Thessalonians 3:12, where it talks about how we are to live and work in quietness; all of us as believers.

*"and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you;" (1 Thessalonians 4:11)*

*"Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread." (2 Thessalonians 3:12)*

We are to live a tranquil and quiet life which was just mentioned in verse 2 of this same chapter. We are to pray for kings and for those in authority, so that we, as Christians, could live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

Quietness has to do with the demeanor or the heart. In fact, the idea here is that this was the means by which they would learn. Not just ladies, but men also. Ecclesiastes 9:17 says:

*"The words of the wise heard in quietness are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools."*

In other words, if you hear the Word of God in quietness, that's the appropriate way to learn. We do it here. I noticed that no one here is standing up and saying, "No, I want to read a different portion of Scripture while he is talking." Even in the Corinthian church, where there was the issue of speaking in tongues, Paul says that God is not a God of confusion, His style is not that everyone gets to do whatever they want in the midst of the congregation. There is order.

Both, men and women are to sit and receive instruction in quietness and in entire submission. The point is not that women need to be quiet and submissive in the congregation while men can be loud, arrogant, and overbearing. No, not at all! We are all supposed to do that. Apparently, there were some women, for whatever reason, thought that it wasn't a big deal, so he's saying that this is what is appropriate for those who are disciples that are learning.

**"Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness." (emphasis mine)**

There is much to be said about the concept of submissiveness and so we won't go into too much detail here. It is a concept that is most precious in Scripture. Let us not denigrate submissiveness to something that is only used to keep women "down" or suppressed. That is just ridiculous.

The Scriptures clearly say that Christians are to be in submission to God the Father (Hebrews 12:9; James 4:7).

*"Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" (Hebrews 12:9)*

*"Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)*

All Christians are to be in submission (in fact, all things, all of creation is to be in submission) to Christ (Ephesians 1:22).

*"And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church"*

All Christians are to submit to one another in the fear of Christ and encourage, build one another up because that's that we do for each other (Ephesians 5:21).

*"and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."*

We are to be in submission to those in authority over us (Romans 13:1-2). It also is used in the New Testament for wives to be in submission to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22-24).

*"Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves." (Romans 13:1-2)*

*"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything." (Ephesians 5:22-24)*

I think it's curious that nowhere in the Scriptures is there a command that *all* women are submissive to *all* men. Not one command for that! In stead, submissiveness is designated for wives in relation to their husbands.

Here, the kind of general submission spoken of for the ladies (in the corporate gathering during the preaching of the Word) is not unlike what it says for the men and that's my point. Paul is saying that there is a privilege of sitting under instruction, of being a disciple under the Word of God; something that was denied explicitly before the time of Christ. He's saying "Now, women can come and learn. Receiving instruction is excellent. They are to be honored as joint heirs of

grace. They are to join us, but they are to do it in a proper manner. They are to be quiet and receive instruction with submission.”

John MacArthur (President of the Master's Seminary; Pastor/Teacher Grace Community Church) says this: “Women need to stop believing the devil's lie—the only role that is significant is that of leadership.” People usually desire place of prominence, not to humbly serve others, but to boost their egos and gain power and control. Leaders, however, bear a heavy burden and responsibility. In comparison, a subordinate role one often finds greater peace and happiness. Subordination is not punishment, but a privilege. That's absolutely true.

James tells us very clearly that not all of us should desire teaching because we incur a stricter judgment and righteously so. I imagine that I will appear before the Lord one day and based on what He has determined to be the good in my life, in terms of what I have done unto His glory, He will give me a position in the throne room of heaven. I doubt that it'll be close to the throne! Why? Any error of character, of conduct, or of words, He has promised to hold me to a stricter accountability. Stricter judgment comes with the responsibility of teaching.

Understand one other thing. It is true that the Scriptures (in my mind I think it's very clear) prohibit women from taking position of authority in preaching, *but that is also true of most men!* Do you think every man here is supposed to be a pastor? Thank goodness, no! Not every man is supposed to become a pastor or a minister. It is a divine privilege that women get to participate in the congregation and they can do it the same way men do it, but they need to do it orderly (the men also) and receive instruction quietly and with entire submissiveness.

### **The Proper Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:12**

**“But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”**

Here, we are confronted with the biblical structure of authority in the church and its corporate gathering. This is significant. Notice that a woman and man are both mentioned in the verse and that they appear in the singular. This was to convey that this was a general principle for a man and a woman.

Some have tried to suggest that Paul was expressing his own personal opinions and not necessarily expressing apostolic authority. This hardly seems the case since Paul had just talked about his apostolic authority.

*“And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” (1 Timothy 2:7)*

Why does he emphasize, “I am telling the truth? I'm not lying?” Why is he interested in validating his apostleship? Because all of the things he is about to talk about (i.e. men leading the prayer in the corporate gathering, women not being able to preach, men being elders of the church, men and women being deacons and deaconess) come with an authoritative zeal. There is only way to take this which is that this is not a Pauline suggestion, but an apostolic authoritative command. Take for example, the subsequent exhortation by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:8:

*“Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.”*

If we were to break down the statement “I want the men in every place to pray,” we might believe that it was Paul's opinion that men should pray in every place, but they did not necessarily have to pray in every place. But, it makes you wonder then why he uses the phrase “in every place?” He could have just as well have said “in some places.” Consider also that Paul uses a pattern of increasing intensity in the terms he chooses. The term “want” in the Greek is *boulomai* (βούλωμαι) which means “the desire to do that.”

In verse 12, he uses the Greek term *epitrepo* (ἐπιτρέπω) which means “I do not allow.” This indicates an increasing tone of intensity, not a lessening of intensity. His apostolic authority is clear. He is saying absolutely that women are not permitted in the church to speak. He says the same thing in 1 Corinthians 14:34:

*“Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says.”*

They are to learn and not to take positions of pastoral preaching. The term for “to teach” is *didasko* (διδάσκω) that means “to teach” or “to teach one.” Here is a prohibition against women in the preaching ministry. Some have suggested that the prohibition was against teaching falsehood. Do you know why that doesn't make any sense? Paul had described the false teachers (the heretical elders in the Ephesian church, unlike at the Corinthian church) as well as other places. The heresy had risen from their own leaders.

Later on, Paul addresses Timothy about the proper manner to rebuke an elder, which was with a spirit of gentleness, as a young man or son to a father. He talks about these individuals and he says:

*“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless*



*genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.” (1 Timothy 1:3-4)*

The term Paul uses for “strange doctrine” combines the same root word, **didaskalos** (διδάσκαλος), which actually means “teacher” or “the one who teaches the things of God” and the prefix **heteros** (ἕτερος) which means “of another” or “different.” It would be the same construct as our term “heterosexual” which means sexual fondness for someone that is of another. It literally means “different” and that’s why we translate that one word as “strange doctrine.” If he had used that very technically and specifically to address what was being taught by these erring elders (that they’re teaching other doctrines) why wouldn’t Paul use the same word **didaskalos** in this instance? It is clear that he doesn’t. The term he does use is **didasko** or “to teach.” Clearly, a woman who is not allowed (an apostolic command, not merely a suggestion) “**to teach or exercise authority over a man.**”

George W. Knight says in his excellent commentary, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*, the following:

“In 1 Cor. 14:34, 35, the instruction that women ‘keep silence’ is given in the context of various Christians getting up and speaking. Both there and here Paul’s prohibition of women teaching would prevent them from serving as elders and ministers, but it is unwarranted to limit it to such a restriction from office-bearing. Paul uses functional language (“to teach”) rather than office language (“a bishop”) to express the prohibition. Here he prohibits women from publicly teaching men, and thus teaching the church.”

He points out that it’s not just about the office; it is about function. Some may say, “Well, as long as she is not called the pastor, she can preach.” But, notice the words that he uses (and this is what George W. Knight mentioned above) and you will see that it is an issue of function, not office.

For example in the Korean church, women can be given the title, *Jun do san nim*, which essentially means “Evangelist.” There are many of them in a Korean church. They justify these designations because Scriptures talk about evangelists (although not as an office in the church) and on that basis, they create these pseudo-positions in the church. Supporters of this will say “Yeah, but they are not the pastor so we’re not disobeying Paul’s disallowance of them being teachers.” But the term is not “teacher” (substantive, noun); it’s “to teach” (verb, function). She’s not to teach or have exercised authority over a man. These are functional ideas.

The idea to “**exercise authority**” means “to be master over.” Again, we mentioned that some people think that this means “to domineer” or “to usurp authority” or even “to be excessively mean” in their authority. Some suggest that as long as women are not excessively mean and domineering, they can be pastors/preachers. But in this context, Paul is referring to the exercise of a leadership role and we’ll see that grammatically it is not possible to come to the previous conclusion.

It says “**to teach or exercise authority**” and the conjunction used is **oude** (οὐδέ) which means “or.” But curiously enough, it can only be used of two things that are either either positive ideas or both negative ideas. In other words, it cannot mean (as some have suggested) that Paul is saying “I do not permit a woman to teach (a positive thing) nor to domineer over men (a negative thing).” It either means that Paul is saying that women are prohibited from teaching error (negative) and that they are not to domineer (negative) or as the traditional position holds, that they are prohibited from teaching (positive) and they are prohibited from exercising authority (positive).

They are “**to remain quiet.**” This repeated emphasis on “quietness” is significant because there is no leisure room to get around the direct command of Scriptures here. Some have suggested that Paul is only ruling out teaching or exercising authority apart from a man’s oversight or just in certain types of authoritative teaching, but the insistence here is on silence and quietness. That’s significant! Either it is significant or you throw that out. I think every word of God needs to be significant to us. The women cannot exercise authority over man.

I know you’re thinking “What does not mean? Women can’t teach anybody, anywhere, anytime?” No! Titus 2:3-4 says that women are to teach other women. Acts 18:26 describes how Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside to teach him in the privacy of their home.

Are women not to exhort one another as commanded in the Scripture? Of course they are! Should they not do it with the Word of God? Absolutely! Is my wife prohibited by this particular verse from instructing me by way of rebuking me or reproving me when I am erring? Of course not!

What is dealt with here is the concept of the corporate gathering. A woman cannot come up and preach to a mixed congregation. She cannot have a position of authority as an elder in the church. In fact, how clear is that in the next chapter right after these verses? Paul is going to address the issue of what it means to be an overseer and the first thing he says is that if any man aspires to the office of the overseer, it is a good work he desires to do and what is one of the first qualifications? He is to be above reproach (v.2) and the husband of one wife. Women are not mentioned except in the qualification that an elder is to be the husband of one wife.

On the other hand, the office of a deacon is open to women. There were clearly women who were deaconesses, but no examples of a bishop or an elder or an overseer that was a woman. Women are to teach (other women) and know the

Word of God; they are to exhort the Word of God, even to their fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord. They are to do all of these things on a consistent basis and have the desire to participate in those things. They are just not allowed to be pastors and teachers.

I think the evidence is pretty indelible and hopefully, I have convinced you of what I think are straightforward in Scriptures regarding this particular issue of women being pastors-teachers. We should not be afraid to proclaim that and I think for awhile I did fear that because I studied at UCLA, and like many of you guys, I remember thinking that maybe the Scriptures were a little mean to women in this regard. But when you study and you learn, you realize that the Scriptures open the doors to so many things for women; e.g. the excellence of what it means to be a woman. It upholds womanhood and its distinction and it holds them in high esteem. God prizes women. Woman was created because God thought that man was incomplete by himself. That's a true statement. I think it's so important that we do not belittle the concept of womanhood by any design.

What is limited here is a particular office, function in the church. Men are limited in the same way. If men don't fall into the qualifications of the overseer they are similarly disqualified from holding the office of an elder and/or a pastor-teacher in the church. Women are disqualified by God's creative design.

### **Paul's Supracultural Argument (v. 13)**

**"For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve."**

Paul makes a very interesting argument here there can only be one way to interpret what this verse can mean—that Adam was born first and then Eve, or rather that he was made first and then Eve. There are only six Greek words here (Ἀδάμ γὰρ πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη, εἶτα Εὔα) which translated literally would say, "For Adam was first created than Eve."

The idea here is not purely for chronological purposes. In fact, let's go to the end of Genesis 1, where God says very clearly that he would create man and woman.

*"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness... And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.'" (Genesis 1:26-27)*

It is a beautiful statement and it states very clearly that God created man and woman to be both human and perfectly equal in every dimension in His eyes. He delights in both men and women. From the first chapter of the entire book of the Bible you can make a clear declaration that God never viewed women inferior to men in any sense.

There was a reason why God created Eve later. The narrative itself tells us that God had a particular design in following that sequence.

*"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.' And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man 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.'" (Genesis 2:18-23)*

God parades the animals in front of Adam for the specific purpose of having Adam realize that there was no suitable helper for him. The word used for "suitable" means "corresponding;" it's like my gaps and weaknesses. There was no animal that fit those gaps perfectly. God has made it clear that He purposely designed Eve (woman) to be an aid unto Adam (man) and that Adam is to delight in her. The creation order of man and woman tells us that that was God's intention from the beginning.

Now you get some ridiculous arguments against that—arguments like those from Paul K. Jewett who said that Paul was wrong. He says if we are to go by a chronological order from this verse, then shouldn't both Adam and Eve be in submission to the animals? Or at least Eve should be in submission to the animals since they were created before her or maybe Adam should be in submission to dirt! Was he not created from dirt? That is just plain dumb. It's not even worth talking about—it's simply craziness. It's tantamount to me saying that in a particular family that has a child, that first-born child is not as significant as Fido because Fido was there in your house first. No one would argue that line of reasoning. Similarly, neither should those who are completely unknowledgeable about any of these issues fall for that kind of logic—it's ridiculous.

God made animals male and female purposefully and had Adam name them in order for him to realize that the animals had suitable helpers to work together, but none for him. There was no suitable helper for him among the animals. He does

not say that he was discontent. He just notices the fact of what God had created. All this happens before the fall. Sin had not entered into the context yet.

Paul uses argues that God purposefully paused for the creation of the woman. He didn't just create Adam and Eve out of the dirt. Could He have? Yes! Would that have made significant difference in any of the things that we teach? No! But God had done that on purpose and in the same way in 1 Corinthians 11:8-9.

*"For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake."*

In other words, she had been designed to be his helpmate. In case we think, "Okay, then again we come fall back on this issue that she is inferior or worth less" read what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12.

*"However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God."*

Paul has always been clear that women are to be held in high regard because they are co-equal to men in everything. But there is distinction in our roles. God has created us differently as men and women. He even desired for us to be named differently. It is inappropriate when we cast that aside and think that that's not significant.

#### **Deception Due to Design (v. 14)**

**"And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression."**

It is obvious that Adam was created first and then Eve (even the Genesis account stresses this order of events), but what does it mean that Adam was not deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression? There are a couple possibilities that are legitimate.

- **Economic or Functional View:** Woman was deceived first and as a result, that inversion of the male headship is what is being addressed here. It makes perfect, reasonable sense. There are a lot of excellent scholars who hold to this view and I think that it makes perfect sense to me. Phillip Jensen (Dean of St. Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney) summarized this well in his work, *To the Householder*:

*"Eve's sin involved overturning the order of creation and teaching her husband. Similarly, Adam's sin came from 'listening' to his wife, in the sense of heeding and following her instruction. He was taught by her, thereby putting himself under her authority and reversing God's good ordering of creation."*

She was deceived by the serpent and she gives to the husband and the husband follows along. There is an inversion of spiritual order there. As Phillip Jensen had mentioned, Adam's sin came from following his wife, listening to her and not God.

*"Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life." (Genesis 3:17)*

He was taught by her, putting himself under her authority and essentially reversing God's good order of creation. Adam was to be the spiritual leader. That's how God designed him. That's why He had created him first and had given him instructions clearly about the Garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil; that they were not to eat from it. When he allowed Eve to invert that order and to take prominence and to take the lead spiritually, all kinds of bad things ensued. Sin entered into the world. It's a reasonable argument. In fact, I could have easily been swayed to that view (because that's not the one that I hold to) and if you hold to that argument, I wouldn't be disappointed with you because I think it's a reasonable argument and it makes sense. It provides an excellent view of some of these things.

The reason why I cannot hold that view is because the emphasis here (at least how the verse reads) is not on Eve being deceived. It is clear that the emphasis is neither Adam's non-deception and nor Eve "being quite deceived." In fact, the emphasis (grammatically or syntactically) in Greek is on the inversion of subordination in headship and spiritual things. This inversion resulted in sin entering the world. How terrible is that. That is true. All of that is excellent and that may possibly be what Paul had meant.

- **Ontological View:** I lean towards the view that he is talking about some ontological difference. There are some created differences between men and women. There is a tendency in women, as there was a tendency in Eve, to be deceived. Can I say something else? This is very important. Make sure you understand this. The Scriptures do not remove responsibility from Adam. Hopefully, you guys know that. If you read through the Old Testament, you would know that. Some of the Pharisees later would hold Eve to account. They would get mad at Eve.

In Romans 5:12-21, when it talks about how sin entered into the world and death through sin, who does it say brought sin into the world? Does it say Eve? It doesn't even mention Eve. It just says Adam. Paul is consistent

because the Holy Spirit is consistent. God is consistent. It is saying "Man is the head of the house and the spiritual leader." If that house goes spiritually bankrupt, who is responsible? Is it the rotten kid? Is it the gossiping wife? It is the man!

*"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--" (Romans 5:12)*

I have to admit, it would be hard to be Adam. In the new heavens and the new earth, I will be glad that I am not Adam because that guy brought sin and death to all mankind! It is put squarely on his shoulders. God doesn't say "Eve and Adam both sinned in the garden." God never says that. The word of God never says, "Eve brought sin" it clearly says that Adam is held to full account in Romans 5:12.

The Adam who is our father of fathers, he is the one that is responsible for sin entering the world. So, don't pretend, don't fall into the foolishness of thinking that Eve was deceived, but Adam was righteous. No. In fact, when you read the Genesis account, remember the whole time Eve was conversing with the serpent and eating from the forbidden fruit, Adam was right there. His transgression was in some ways more severe than Eve's. He was sitting there watching. She didn't have to call him from across the garden to come taste of the fruit. She ate. She gave and he ate.

Her sin was deception and the reason why Paul says, "**And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived**" is because that's the term Eve uses for herself in Genesis.

*"And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' And the man said, 'The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.' Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'" (Genesis 3:11-13, emphasis mine)*

Paul is using the same language that Eve used. She was "deceived" by the serpent. She was "quite deceived" and they both (and all of humanity) "**fell into transgression.**"

Curiously, Paul uses the perfect tense and we understand what the perfect tense is right? It means a settled reality; something that has occurred and the reality of which still echoes forth today. We are all (all of mankind) still under that sin and transgression because of Adam and Eve's sin, particularly because of Eve's deception.

So ontologically (or in the make up of us) there is something about Eve and about women in general that makes them more susceptible to deception. Doesn't sound so chauvinistic and horrible? It does, but I cannot get around it. That's what the scriptures say. Let me come back and remind you of the differences between men and women.

There were some articles about CEOs and why in America they tend to be men instead of women. It is certainly not because of academics. Like I said earlier, I studied at the best university on earth (UCLA) and all the ladies that studied with me there, they all probably did better and got better GPAs than I did. They excelled and they were smarter. I'll give them that.

I don't feel any superiority intellectually, just in the physical sense. I'm stronger than them and I'm satisfied with that. That's part of being a man—to be satisfied with foolish things. Women are not less intelligent which unfortunately in the history of the church some men have suggested that. I think that's stupidity and foolishness. Charles Darwin believed that women couldn't hold the same mental capacity as a man (i.e. their design made them intellectually inferior). It is kind of interesting; the whole evolutionary theory. We all evolved except women did not evolve. Are women dumber than men? Of course not! But, they are definitely distinct.

One of the main reasons why there tends to be less female CEOs can be found in a survey. It said that about 90% of women said that they find happiness through relationships, human fulfillment, and families. Ninety percent said that that is the main thing that determines their happiness. Men, on the other hand, to almost the same degree (in terms of percentage) say that their success is determined by their authority, what they get to do, who they become, what they present themselves as. We are different by design and in that design, men have been given (it's a blessing and a curse at the same time) a capacity to be more bold when it comes to someone erring from them.

Last time I checked, I don't remember women starting to fight over some legislation. In United States history, men have not only fought, but have killed each other, often dueling over their beliefs. There have been brawls that happened in our legislation, guys beating each other down. Women would rather desire a harmonious, relational impact than doctrinal purity in a lot of ways.

Men and women are different by design. Part of God's design and intention is not that women are less intelligent, not at all. I don't even want to say that they are more gullible! I think the idea is that for whatever reason, Satan is capable to deceive women easier than men. That seems to be what Paul is suggesting. That is part of our ontological makeup.

Why should women not teach and be elders in the church? Because part of the function of elders and teachers is to defend the faith and the doctrines of the church. Men are a lot more "cold-blooded" and they are a lot better at rooting out error. They go into battle over things that women would think are non-essential. Men err on the side of making some small

thing so great that they would kill each other over it. Conversely, women could err on the side of for the sake of harmony, they'll allow almost anything. We'll talk more about that next week. Let's close in prayer.

*Heavenly Father,*

*As we come before You in full humility and in desire to learn, help us to appreciate what the Word of God says in its clarity.*

*Forgive us Lord, if we have seen ourselves at one point or another to be superior or inferior in one way or another apart from what the Scripture say.*

*Lord, we have affirmed that the Word of God holds women in great regard. In fact, we're able to share this Sunday about the supremacy of women being able to bring children into the world and in particular, the birth of Christ and what that means for us.*

*Lord, I just pray that You would help us to appreciate the distinctions that You have made in us, to delight in the things that You have given to us and just honor You; and may Your glory be more significant than any kind of earthly sense of accomplishment and fulfillment and may we take delight in You.*

*Lord, forgive me if there was anything in error, anything that has been in inaccuracy or misjudgment.*

*Lord, may that be irradiated and may You forgive us for that. But Lord, where the Scriptures speak clearly, may we desire with full clarity and desire...*

**(Recording Ended)**