

Study 7: 1st Timothy Chapter 2

Introduction

Paul is giving instructions to Timothy to set the disorderly church in order. In this chapter he begins dealing with the practices in the worship of the church.

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Homework and preparation for next week:

- *What are some of the roles that women do have in the church? What roles can they do better than men? What verses tell us about these roles?*
- *What are the practical applications of what Paul has to say in this chapter, for the church today? How do we put these things into practice?*
- *Read the notes as a review of the study*
- *Read chapter 3 in preparation for the next study,.*

Notes for study 7: 1st Timothy Chapter 2

Paul is giving instructions to Timothy to set the disorderly church in order. In this chapter he begins dealing with the practices in the worship of the church.

Instruction for prayers

The first instruction for the orderly worship of the church is with respect to prayer. This was of prime importance, and Paul uses the strong term “...*I exhort...*” or “*urge*” that it be done “...*first of all...*” (1:2:1).

Four different nouns to describe prayers are used in this verse. They are to be made with:

1. “...*Supplications...*” (Requests) which is much like gently asking “Please”.
2. “...*Prayers...*” means requests that are always directed to God
3. “...*Intercession...*” has the idea of an intimate conversation, and a petition to a King. So, we carry our troubles to God in an intimate conversation (prayer) with Him.
4. “...*Thanksgiving...*” means that our giving of thanks to God should always be included in our prayers.

Our prayers should not be self-centred, and neither should they just be reserved for praying for Christians, but also “...*for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence...*” (1:2:2 NKJV). Paul reminds us in that “...*there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God...*” (Rom 13:1 NKJV). So, even though the governments under which we live might seem to be troublesome and corrupt, yet they are there because they are serving God’s purpose. There are many examples throughout the Old Testament where God used the cruel and corrupt powers to discipline and correct other powers, including His children Israel, and then had the corrupt power itself destroyed. We need to pray for our governments so that “...*we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence...*”.

If praying for the corrupt leaders seems wrong to us, Paul tells us that “...*this is good and acceptable in the sight of God...*” (1:2:3 NKJV). We should not think that it is bad to pray for them because they are bad, but rather we should pray so that we can have peace.

The Plan of Salvation

God’s plan to save man is the core of the whole of the Bible. God’s desire is not that just some people should be saved (this could have special reference to the Judaisers who were asserting that the gospel should only be for the Jews, and therefore if the Gentiles wanted to be saved, then they must first become Jews). He “...*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth...*” (1:2:4 NKJV). Notice the order of these statements.

1. God wants them to be saved
 2. He (then) wants them to come to the knowledge of the truth.
- It is the same example of the Great Commission “...*make disciples of all men...*” and “...*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...*” (Mt 28:19-20). Timothy had the responsibility of converting people, but also the responsibility of teaching them (taking them on to maturity) after they had been converted.

1 Timothy 2:5 is one of the most significant verses of the NT. It declares first of all that "there is one God." This is a primary affirmation in the OT, in opposition to the polytheism of Paul's day. The fact that there is only one God (monotheism) is the basic premise of both Judaism and Christianity.

But then comes a difference, for Christianity goes on to assert that "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." "Mediator" (GK G3542) occurs only once in LXX (Greek translation of the OT). Job was frustrated by the fact that God was not a

man with whom he could converse. In despair he wished that there might be someone to arbitrate between himself and God (Job 9:33). Christ is the answer to this ancient cry for help. A "mediator" is someone who intervenes between two parties, either to make peace and restore friendship, or to form a covenant. In keeping with this, Christ by his death restored the harmony between God and human beings which sin had broken.

To be of any use, a bridge across a chasm or river must be anchored on both sides. Christ has closed the gap between deity and humanity. He has crossed the grand canyon, so deep and wide, between heaven and earth. He has bridged that which separated us from God. With one foot planted in eternity, he planted the other in time. He who was the eternal Son of God became the Son of Man. And across this bridge, we can come into the very presence of God, knowing that we are accepted because we have him as a Mediator. (NIVBC)

However, it doesn't end there, for Jesus "...gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time..." (1:2:6 NKJV). Ransom (in this context) means to give one's life for, or instead of, someone else. So, Jesus gave His life "instead of" and "on behalf of" all men. This didn't happen when man might have thought it might be needed, but at the proper time in the unfolding of God's revelation.

Paul has a major part in this process, having been "...appointed a preacher and an apostle...(and) a teacher of the Gentiles..." (1:2:7 NKJV). The word translated preacher is also translated "herald" in NIV, and has the context of a person officially appointed to sound out messages of public officials, or to make a proclamation, or to give a public summons. Consequently, as a preacher, Paul is not here to sound out his own ideas, but to *herald* the message from the King of Kings! The Gentiles were the people to whom Paul had especially been sent (Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:17-18).

Further instructions for prayers

In his typical style, Paul starts off taking about prayer, then comes back to it again, as he does here. The instruction is that "...men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing..." (1:2:8 NIV). The use of "men" is emphatic in contrast to women (he is about to give some specific instructions to the women), and he is directing this towards the public worship "...everywhere...". The idea of lifting hands in prayer comes from the Old Testament (1 Ki 8:22; Ps 141:2; Ps 143:6), and is a gesture of a child dependent upon the parent for support. Our prayers must be sincere "...without anger or disputing...", and *holy hands* indicates a morally pure life.

Instructions for women

Just as the men were to come to God in sincerity, so too are the women. Paul emphasis this with the expression "...in like manner..." (1:2:9), and he has in mind the moral character of the women, and not just the physical way that they are dressed.

In modern usage, immodest apparel suggests clothing that is designed to expose the body to the view of others. Such an exposure would have been considered disgraceful and disrespectful, and the word apparel suggests a garment that covers the nakedness of the body. But it should be noted that Paul's use of modest in this passage is in reference to clothing that is expensive and extravagant ¹.

This thought continues through the verse, as Paul discusses the jewellery and decorations, including the braiding of the hair. A "literal" reading of the verse would suggest that it is wrong for a woman to have braided hair, however the context suggests that it is wrong *if and because* it is done to show off a class distinction. In contrast, the women are to show their true adornment by "...professing godliness, with good works..." (1:2:10).

¹ Spain, Carl. "The letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus" The Living Word Commentary, ISBN 0-8344-0006-5 p.47

Women speaking in the assembly

The role of women in the church is further given by Paul's instruction "...*A woman should learn in quietness and full submission...*" (1:2:11 NIV). Many "modernist" theologians regard this simply as Paul's cultural slant on the role of women, which is not applicable in today's society. However, Paul has already reminded us that what he is teaching is with God's authority (1:1:1), he is speaking as God's herald, and as an apostle (1:2:7). We need to note that Paul says that the women *should learn*, so it is not a case of being quiet and learning nothing. Nor is it a case of being totally silent under every circumstance, but rather that she *learns in full submission*.

In being submissive, Paul says "...*I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent...*" (1:2:12 NIV). There is a very strong place for the role of women in the church, but God has decreed (whether we like it or not is totally beside the point) that it is not in the leadership roles. Paul gives two reasons why this is the case, and neither of them have anything to do with the culture of the first century:

- "...*For Adam was first formed, then Eve,*
- *And, Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression...*" (1:2:13-14 NKJV)

Whilst Adam was responsible for his sin, it was Eve who sinned first, and both of them suffered the consequences of that sin in being banished from the garden and losing their relationship with God.

The last verse in the chapter (1:2:15) is one of the more perplexing verses in the New Testament. A simple reading would suggest that a woman who gives birth will be saved because of it. If that were the case, then we would only need to teach the gospel to men, and to any woman who was not a mother. That is an absurd situation, since we are saved by our faith in Christ, and "...*there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, bond nor free...*" under Christ (Gal 3:28).

The context of the whole discussion of the chapter indicates that some of the women in Ephesus were going out of their way to show their superior position. They were using their dress standards to show it, and usurping their roles by taking leadership positions. In contrast, they ought to have taken a submissive role, and demonstrated their holiness through the good works that they were doing. By staying at home and raising their children they would be completing one of the noblest tasks that God has given. Hence, Paul says, "...*she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control...*" (1:2:15 NKJV). The role of a woman in providing the nurture, guidance, and training for a child as God would have them to grow must not be underestimated.