

Please God in Your Worship
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1 Timothy 2:1-12

I normally get us going with an opening question. But we have so much to cover today, let's just dive in!

This letter from Paul to his young "son" in the faith, Timothy, was the correspondence of an elder MENTOR instructing his young PROTEGE. Timothy was the pastor of the church at Ephesus and Paul, late in his earthly life, is conveying God's model for how a church should operate.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (ESV)

2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

- Look at verse 1. According to Paul in verse 1, how important is prayer in our worship?
- Paul uses several words for prayer. Why didn't he just say "Be sure to pray"? Why do you think he was he so specific?
- Let's look at each of these words for prayer. What do they mean?
 - Supplications = Gr word = "need or needs"
 - Prayers = "an act of worship, not just an expression of our wants and needs." (Wiersbe)
 - Intercessions = Petitions "...to draw near to a person and converse confidently with him." (Wiersbe)
 - Thanksgiving = Not just for what God has DONE but for WHO GOD IS. (Ps 103 is a great example. No petitions, just reasons to be thankful for our Heavenly Father)
- To make sure we're clear Paul says we are to pray "for all people" or "for all men." Everyone, saved and unsaved, friends and foes, near and far.
- In Matthew 5:44, Jesus said we are to pray for...(who?)
- What if there's someone at church whom I'm having a problem with?
- How would it affect the spirit of our congregation if we were committed to praying for EVERYONE including those we might be having a problem with?

Chuck Swindoll writes:

"Personally, I find it impossible to criticize or despise someone I am asking the Lord to bless. In fact, I find my perspective gradually change to reflect God's as I pray."

- Here's another example of praying for someone you might disagree with, look at the first part of verse 2. For whom are we to pray?
- You think it's tough to pray for political leaders today?

- Do you know who was in charge in Paul's day? What did he do to Christians...and to Paul?
- Why do you think God (through Paul) instructed us to pray for our governmental leaders, even if they rule in opposition to God's principles? How should we pray for them?
- Verses 1 and 2 are one long sentence. If we pray in all these ways, for all people, including those in "high positions," what does the end of verse 2 say the result will be?
- "Peaceful and quiet" sounds kind of boring, but this basically means at peace with those both in the church and out of the church. Not easily rattled no matter how we're being persecuted...inner peace and outward peace.
- What would it do for the perception of Christians if we were known as BOTH, firm in our convictions, AND YET PEACEFUL with each other and all people?
- What a great description of a Christian and of a church:
- Those people at FBCW stick to their guns, but they live at peace with each other and everyone else...they are "godly and dignified in every way."
- Wouldn't it be great if people could say that about us!
- Verses 3 through 7 tell us WHY prayer is so important in our worship:

1 Timothy 2:3-7 (ESV)

3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

- Don't you love how Paul brought it all back to the Gospel in those verses?
- A quick word about verse 4. God "desires all people to be saved."
- We sure don't have time for a lesson on DIVINE ELECTION. But Chuck Swindoll had a good word on this verse. He writes:
"Please observe Paul's careful use of verb tenses and moods in this declaration of God's desire He does not write, "God ... who desires to save all men," but "God ... who desires all men to be saved." It does not invalidate the Scriptural doctrine of election to say that God desires all people to embrace the truth of the gospel and receive eternal life.4 Paul does not attempt to unravel the mystery of how God's sovereignty and the limited autonomy of humanity impact a person's salvation. He merely affirms the fact that the Lord does not delight to see people perish for their sin."

7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

- Paul often clarified his credentials as an apostle (*cf. Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20*), not because the Ephesians might accuse him of lying, but to stress the importance of his words. [Swindoll]
- And, in case we didn't get the message on the importance of prayer...verse 8

8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

- Where did Paul said we should pray? Why do you think he said that?
- Our study tells us the typical posture for prayer in that culture was looking toward Heaven with hands raised. That was probably the equivalent to bowing our heads now.
- “Holy hands” is not about the posture of the body but the purity of the heart.
- Last part of verse 8: Again, Paul reiterates that consistent, congregational and personal prayer will allow the church to operate “without anger or quarreling.”
- Speaking of anger or quarreling....now we get to the part of the passage that might cause some of that! I hope you are praying for your teacher as we move to verses 9-15.

1 Timothy 2:9–15 (ESV)

9 likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, 10 but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.

- Now, as we begin to interpret this passage, let me start by asking YOU some questions.
- Was Paul saying women should only come to church “plain jane” in a “flour sack?”
- What do you believe he WAS teaching about how women were to dress in church?
- Paul was likely addressing something else. When you see a woman who is “over the top” in make-up; jewelry; and displaying skin; what comes to mind?
- *“The city of Ephesus was home to the temple of Aphrodite (the Greek goddess of love). Every evening hundreds of prostitutes emerged from the temple.” [Utley]*
- It could be that the women in the church had begun to copy the fashion statements of the temple prostitutes.
- Why do you think Paul shifted from clothing and cosmetics to “good works?”
- The NIV version of verse 9 and 10 give a good summary of Paul’s teaching on how Christian women should dress: Women should “dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves...with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.” It’s okay to look pretty...we men appreciate that! But lean more heavily on the INNER BEAUTY that comes from the life of “good works” you live.
- As if Paul hasn’t gotten me deep enough, verses 11 and 12:

11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

- These verses are a “hot button” to say the least. Should a woman teach a man?
- Let’s study our Bible responsibly.
- First point, every commentator I read agreed that Paul is talking about church.
- This is not to be misused to say a woman shouldn’t hold a position of authority over a man in business or in government, this whole letter is about CHURCH.
- Now, it’s logical to believe that EVERYONE in a church service, man or woman, should “learn quietly” and in “submissiveness” to the pastor. So, why would Paul single out women?
- Consider the context of that time. In the Jewish synagogues women were not allowed to worship with men...they sat on the periphery. NOW in the first century Christian church scripture would indicate that men and women worshiped TOGETHER.

- This was a BIG CHANGE for women of that day. In the ENTHUSIASM of that change, is it possible that some of the women in Ephesus got carried away?

One commentator speculates:

“To learn in quietness and full submission does not mean women should never talk. Quietness here means peaceableness. It could be that as women experienced new freedoms within the Christian community, they began to throw off restraint. Their disagreements, questions, and assertions then became not a learning experience but a disruption that worked against true worship. Paul did not want the women to be contentious. His main concern was the establishment of orderly worship.” [Larson]

- As for a woman not having authority over a man in the church, it’s clear Paul taught that the man was to be the Spiritual leader and head of the home (Eph. 5).
- Paul is also applying this to the order of leadership in the church.
- The word “submit” literally mean to “rank under.” Think of the military. Someone has to be in charge. Because a General has authority over a private, it doesn’t mean the General is better than the private...just that the General has been given more authority.
- What about the issue of women teaching men in church? We need to look at ALL of Paul’s writing.
- In 1 Cor. 11:5 Paul indicates that women publicly prayed and prophesied.
- *“In Acts 18:26 Paul tells us that Priscilla teamed up with her husband Aquila to help Apollos understand the good news more accurately. So Paul cannot be saying that every kind of teaching is forbidden to women.” [Utley]*
- Warren Wiersbe commented on that passage about Priscilla:
“There is nothing wrong with a godly woman instructing a man in private (Acts 18:24–28); but she must not assume authority in the church and try to take the place of a man. She should exercise "quietness" and help keep order in the church.” [Wiersbe]
- What does FBCW think about this? I asked Paul Hahn. He wrote me back:
“Our position is that Paul is referring to the authoritarian role of the teacher and not the instructional role. We do allow women to "participate" in the teaching of co-ed groups under the authority of their husband as long as it is instructional in nature. We also allow women to teach co-ed topical classes because they are short term with no leadership positions or strategies involved. We do not allow women to hold positions of authority over men.”
- Then, Allan Taylor who was copied on the email added this word:
“It has always been my position that it is better to take the Scripture a little too literally as not. So, if in doubt, go with the black ink on the white paper.”
- That’s what FBCW believes, what do you think?
- The teaching and leadership role of women in the church will be discussed and debated until Jesus comes back.
- Scripture is clear that men are to be the head of the home and to take positions of authority in the church.
- It’s also obvious that God has gifted women to be very effective teachers.
- I believe we can benefit from women using their gifts of teaching in ways that allow us to still be true to scripture.

So, how do I get us back to the Takeaway? This lesson is much more than that last verse! Chapter 2 of 1 Timothy, while controversial in some parts, really boils down to this:

- Worship in the church of Jesus Christ is to be done “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40)
- The FOUNDATION of a church that worships God well, is PRAYER.
- Prayer IN ALL PLACES...FOR ALL PEOPLE...ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY.
- Prayer that erases discord. It’s hard for me to despise you and pray for God to bless you at the same time.
- Whether in dress, conduct, or role, worship is not about us putting the spotlight on US but putting it on doing what is “... *pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all,...*”