

Series: Body Essentials: Imperatives for Church and Leaders**Today's Message: Maintain God's Plan for Women in the Church; 1 Timothy 2:9-15, pt 1 and 2**

Today's imperative for church and leaders is given by the Holy Spirit through Paul to Timothy to maintain God's plan for women in the Church. The Church in Ephesus was teetering on the edge of succumbing to both religious and cultural pressures regarding God's plan for women in the Church. In some sense religion and culture were on the same page. Neither first century Judaism nor Greek society held women in high esteem.ⁱ The former did not encourage women to learn, and the latter women were treated as inferiors to men.

But along comes the message of Christ. The gospel provided that women were recognized as equal sharers in the grace of God, and of salvation and of the Spirit.ⁱⁱ Women were recognized as valuable members of the Church. But apparently there was a problem developing within the church in Ephesus that saw some women expressing their strong resentment of their former life of suppression and denigration, now overreacting by seeking a dominant position of authority in the church. In our text today Paul confronts the overreaction and impresses on Timothy God's plan for women in the Church.

I) (2:9-10) God's Plan for Women in the Church is "more precious than rubies."ⁱⁱⁱ

- A) (2:9) A godly woman's value is not anchored to her appearance.
 - 1) *In the same way* "I want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided..."
 - (a) *In the same way.* This phrase is expressed in most translations. The NIV excludes it. But the force of the phrase connects this verse to 2:8 where Paul expresses a valuable function of the men in the church. They should be known for prayerfulness, godliness, and being peaceable men.
 - 2) Clothing/adornment: Concerning dressing modestly. Modesty is neither overly *eye catching* or overly *underwhelming*. Dressing to *catch the eye* or to *repulse the eye*, both can serve as distractions.
 - (a) Modest dress/clothing/ adornment means to "put oneself in order" or "to make ready," "arranging herself appropriately to join God's people for worship.
 - 3) Decency and propriety: These two words couple well with modesty. They have more to do with the attitude of a woman. Her attitude drives a godly impulse to be humble in her approach to *making herself ready* for worship with motive of pleasing God and not distracting others with her adornment.
- B) (2:10) A godly woman's value is anchored in her expressions of godliness revealed through good works.
 - 1) A woman who is adorned with propriety and modesty, and good works is "more precious than rubies."

II) (2:11-12) God's Role for Women in the Church is not suggestive of inferiority or inequality.

- A) (2:11) She is to learn in quietness and full submission.^{iv}
 - 1) About learning: Did you know that in first century Judaism as well as in Greek culture women were not encouraged to learn? Most rabbis refused to teach women. And as noted in *endnote iii* the Greek woman was essentially cut off from learning opportunities.
 - (a) What a change in practice for Christian men and women. Women were not to be banned from learning Scripture and doctrine.
 - 2) In quietness: With women encouraged to learn it was not uncommon for the woman to ask her husband questions for clarification during the Church gathering. She was to "learn in *quietness*."
 - 3) Full submission: The word submission means, "to line up under." The woman is to be content in the role of a learner **in the context of the public gathering for worship.**
 - (a) The context is public worship. But we know that some women are noted in the New Testament as having spoken Truth. Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:46ff), Anna (Luke 2:36-39). Priscilla, along with her husband, instructed Apollos in the Truth (Acts 18:26). Paul commands women to teach other women in Titus 2:3-4. Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him the Scriptures (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-17). Women were allowed to pray and speak the Word among the believers, but Paul makes it clear in 1 Timothy 2:12 that women were not allowed to do this in the gathered assembly of the Church.
- B) (2:12) Paul interprets the meaning of 2:11 explaining what he means by learning in quiet submissiveness.

- 1) "I do not permit...": Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ, who speaks to the Church through him.
 - 2) "...a woman to teach or have/exercise authority over a man; she must be silent."
 - (a) In the context of the gathered assembly of the Church.
 - (b) She is not to teach in that assembly.
 - (c) They are to demonstrate quiet subjection by not exercising authority over the teaching pastor or elders.
 - (i) The principle should be acceptable as we underscore the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. As was stated in *endnote iv*, there is perfect equality between Father and Son, but differing roles. The Son is subordinate to the Father, but not inferior. 1 Corinthians 11:3 makes this clear: "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."
 - (d) It is clear that God's plan for women in the Church is that she does not take any type of authority over the teaching pastor or elders in the church for any reason.
 - (e) It is the elders (clearly men, 1 Tim. 3:2) who are charged with responsibility to "rule (see 1 Tim. 5:17)" the church.
 - (f) Leadership in the Church is a heavy burden and responsibility. The women willing to "line up under" the leadership of the Church will most likely enjoy greater peace and happiness.
 - (i) "Subordination is not a punishment, but a privilege." (MacArthur)
- III) **(2:13-14) God's plan for women in the Church is exemplified by the created order of men and women.**
A)
- IV) **(2:15) God's plan for women in the Church includes the pivotal role in raising godly generations.**
A)

ⁱ William Barclay: "The respectable Greek woman led a very confined life. She lived in her own quarters into which no one but her husband came. She did not even appear at meals. She never at any time appeared on the street alone; she never went to any public assembly." (Barclay as quoted by John MacArthur.)

ⁱⁱ The prevailing low view of women in Judaism at the time, did not originate in the OT. The OT affirmed that women had an equal spiritual status with men. For examples: The Law was given to all Israel, women and men (Dt. 1:1). Both were to teach their children (Dt. 6:4-7; Pr. 6:20). God's law provided protection for women and men (Ex. 21:28-32). Women had rights to an inheritance (Num. 36:1-12). Both men and women participated in Jewish feasts (Ex. 12:3; Dt. 16:9ff). Women were able to serve at the Tent of Meeting (Ex. 36:8) and the Temple (Neh. 7:67). (**MacArthur**)

ⁱⁱⁱ The only way I could succinctly communicate the value of modesty and of good deeds was to make a reference to Proverbs 3:15 where wisdom is personified as a beautiful woman. A godly woman is a wise woman. And the wisdom she possesses is certainly more precious than gold, silver, and rubies. This supports the point that Paul is driving home that the greatest value a woman brings to the church is her goodness expressed in good deeds.

^{iv} It is important to retain the knowledge that this command is not suggestive of spiritual inequality. We know from Galatians 3:28 that spiritually "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." But as we will see in 1 Tim. 2:12 there are different roles. The perfect example of this principle is best seen in God the Father and God the Son. The Father and Son are co-equal and of one substance. But, if you pay close attention, you learn that while on earth, the Son is fully submitted to the Father. He willingly took a subordinate role, but is in no way inferior to the Father. 1 Corinthians 11:3 explains how this subordination is ordered. "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."