

1 Timothy

Chapter 2

The Big Picture

In this chapter Paul turns his attention to two of the issues facing Timothy in the church at Ephesus. Interestingly, both dealt with roles of men and women. The first issue we can call “Evangelistic Praying.” Paul’s desire was that prayers be constantly made to God on behalf of the salvation of men, especially for those in authority. The second issue is that of the role of the women in the congregation. Apparently some women had used their liberty in Christ to overstep the role distinctives given by God to men and women in relation to the family, society, and the church. In both cases, Paul calls the genders back to their God-ordained roles so that God is glorified.

1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

The very first issue raised by Paul is that prayers be made for all men. One of the great difficulties we face in our spiritual lives is that we often do everything but pray. When we face a trial or some issue that needs resolution, we resort to our own wisdom or the wisdom of others. Sometimes the last place we look for help is from God.

In making this statement, Paul uses four distinct terms for prayer. The first, supplication (*deesis*), speaks of need. It has the idea that there is a desperate lack of something in the one making the request that can only be met by the one being asked. We are very needy people and God is the only source that can meet our need, especially in the area of salvation. Until we are driven to a sense of need, we will never be driven to ask for help.

The second word, prayers (*proseucha*), is the general word for prayer in the New Testament. Its emphasis is on the humility of the one asking. When we come to God in prayer, we need to be ever conscious of the fact that it is a privilege to pray, and not a right. God is under no obligation to hear or respond to our prayers. As a result, we need to come humbly before God, realizing that it is His grace alone that grants us access.

The third word, intercessions (*enteuxis*), has the idea of a petition. It is the request of an inferior to a superior. When we come before God with our requests, we need to come with an understanding of our inadequacies and God’s supply. We also need to make sure we do not come demanding action on God’s part. Again, God is under no obligation to hear our prayers. Another aspect of this term for prayer is that of intercession. We intercede when we come to God on the behalf of another. Unfortunately, most of our prayers are consumed with self and not others. Those who seek to pray evangelistically need to pray for others.

As one looks at the various prayers listed in the Bible, it is worthwhile to note that one of the major components of those prayers is intercession. We see this in the prayers of Moses as he interceded for Israel lest God destroy them. Daniel prays for the sins of himself and his people in response to the seventy-year captivity prophecy by Jeremiah. Nehemiah prays for the people of Israel and Jerusalem as it lays in ruins. Job is commanded to pray for his friends lest God judge them for their worthless advice and surmising about his trials. Christ prays for the disciples on multiple occasions, and He prays for us in John 17. Paul constantly prayed for the churches seeking their spiritual growth and development. In fact, most of the prayers in the Bible have as their major component intercession. What about ours?

George Mueller and Prayer

The story is told of that great man of prayer, George Mueller, regarding two friends who were unbelievers. Mueller prayed for the salvation of these two men for over twenty-five years. Finally, just shortly before George Mueller's death one of the men came to Christ. About six months after Mueller died, the other man became a Christian. The power of persistent prayer for the salvation of others is a message all can learn from this story.

The fourth word, giving of thanks (*eucharisto*), has the idea of gratitude to God for what he is going to do, and what he has done. One of the great crimes we commit in prayer is to pray a long time for something only to have God answer and then forget to thank Him for that answer. We need to cultivate thanksgiving to God, not only because he answers prayer, but because he listens to our prayer.

For What Are We to be Thankful?

- We are to be thankful for the Saviour of the world - Luke 2:38, 2 Corinthians 9:15.
- We are to be thankful for victory over death - 1 Corinthians 15:57.
- We are to be thankful for triumph in the difficulties of life - Colossians 2:6-7; 2 Corinthians 2:14.
- We are to be thankful for deliverance from evil - 2 Corinthians 1:10-11.
- We are to be thankful for our eternal inheritance - Colossians 1:12.
- We are to be thankful for the coming righteous rule of God - Revelation 11:16-17.
- We are to be thankful for God's abundant sufficiency for us, in us, and through us - 2 Corinthians 9:8-12.
- We are to be thankful for the Lord's supper, which is a picture of His death on the cross which provided deliverance from sin - Luke 22:15-19.
- We are to be thankful for Christian friends - Romans 16:4; Ephesians 1:16; Colossians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13.
- We are to be thankful in response to preaching and worship - 1 Corinthians 14:16-17.
- We are to be thankful for our leaders - 1 Timothy 2:1-2.
- We are to be thankful for food - Matthew 15:36; Acts 27:35; Romans 14:6; 1 Timothy 4:3-4.
- We are to be thankful for all things - 2 Corinthians 8:16; Ephesians 5:4; Philippians 4:6-7.

For whom are we to pray? All men. This means just what it says, all men, even our enemies. Paul made it his habit to pray daily for the churches that he founded in his missionary journeys. He often asked the churches themselves to pray for him. Finally, he makes it clear later in this text that we are to specifically pray for the salvation of all men so that we may live a quiet and peaceable life.

Can You Pray Like This?

A new preacher had been at this church in the south for only a few weeks. One of the parishoners was asked by someone from another town how he liked the new preacher. "He's fine," said the parishoner, "he is a great preacher and a praying man. In fact, he asks God for things our other preacher didn't even know God had!" (Vance Havner, from a sermon entitled Sanctified Extravagance)

2 *For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

Paul now gives us the object of our prayer, and that is the salvation of all men, especially for those in authority. One of the notable things in the New Testament is that the Church never set itself in opposition to governmental authority unless in doing so they would violate a command of God. Throughout the New Testament believers are called to be model citizens, and this is most important in this area of prayer. There is really no excuse for us to be at war with our society, rather, we should be praying for its salvation.

The Believer and Government

- We are to submit ourselves to those in authority - Romans 13:1.
- We are to remind ourselves that God is the one who ordained our rulers - Romans 13:1
- We are to understand that by resisting civil authority in matters not related to disobedience to God, we are in fact resisting God - Romans 13:2.
- We are to be subject to our rulers for conscience' sake - Romans 13:5.
- We are to pay our taxes - Romans 13:6-7.
- We are to honor our rulers - Romans 13:7.
- We are to honor the king - 1 Peter 2:17.

3 *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;*

4 *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

5 *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

6 *Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

Why is it that we are to do this praying? Paul lists four reasons in these four verses. First of all, evangelistic prayer is good and acceptable in the sight of God. It is God's desire that we have a burden for the salvation of others, and when we express this burden in our prayers for the salvation of men, we please God.

Secondly, it is God's desire that all men be saved and turn to the knowledge of the truth. Many have trouble with this passage as it appears as though God desires men to be saved but is unable to save them because of their unbelief. As one man put it, God votes for you, Satan votes against you, and you cast the deciding vote.

This is not what is in view here at all. Rather, this verse shows the heart of God in that he does desire the salvation of all men, but does not ordain the salvation of all men. He will not force himself upon the will of one who refuses the offer of salvation. Now admittedly, this is a mystery as the Bible also teaches that God does sovereignly ordain the salvation of the elect before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:1-2, Ephesians 1:6). However, we cannot let what

happened in eternity past in the decree of God confuse us as to what happens in time. In time, God calls men to salvation and desires that they repent. Paul was the consummate "Calvinist" yet he persuaded men to be saved and would have allowed himself to be damned if his fellow Jews would only repent. Unfortunately, because of the blindness of sin, men will not turn to God in order to be saved but will rather perish in their sins.

The Paradox of Prayer

Why should we pray when God is sovereign and is going to do as He pleases anyway? How can our prayers in any way change the decree of God?

- 1. God has chosen the instrument of prayer as one of the means His will is accomplished in the world. A fatalistic view of reality is no where taught in the Bible.**
 - A. Hezekiah was given an additional 15 years when he prayed to God after Isaiah told him that he was to soon die - Isaiah 38.**
 - B. Moses interceded for Israel on many occasions in order to stay the judgment of God - Numbers 11:2; 21:7; Deuteronomy 9:26.**
 - C. Samuel prayed for the people of Israel although he knew the plan of God - 1 Samuel 8:6-16 cf. 1 Samuel 12:19-24.**
 - D. Daniel prayed for the return of Israel although he knew that it had been prophesied by Isaiah that they would return - Daniel 9:19.**
 - E. John prayed for the soon return of the Lord although he had just been given a complete vision of the end times - Revelation 22:20.**
 - F. Christ prayed that Peter would not succumb to temptation although He knew as God that Peter would not succumb - Luke 22:31-32.**
 - G. Elijah prayed that it would not rain although the drought was a judgment from God on the wickedness of Ahab - James 5:17ff.**
- 2. We are to pray for the salvation of others even though God knows whether they are elect or not. Those who are elect will be saved, and those who are not elect will never turn to Christ. The issue to us is not to figure out who is elect and who is not, but to treat all men as elect and pray for their salvation as though they are.**

God's desire for the salvation of men is especially evident because of the third reason we are to pray evangelistically, and that is because there is only one mediator between God and man. There are not many ways to God, but only one way. Jesus states in John 14:6, "*I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" He did not say, "I am a way, a truth, and a life," but rather used "the."

The world would have us believe there are many ways to God and as long as we are sincere we will all get there. However, the Scriptures teach the exact opposite. God has ordained a way whereby man can be delivered from sin, and that way is the way of the cross. It was there that the debt of sin was paid by the sinless Son of God, and it is only his blood that can wash away our sins. If men are to be saved, then the way of salvation is Christ, and Christ alone.

Finally, evangelistic prayer is needed because Christ died for all men, not just a small group. The Christian's view of missions needs to encompass the world as it is for the world that Christ died. It is not possible for someone, however sincere, to make it to heaven apart from Christ. God is the God of the Jew, and all Gentiles. He is the Savior of the world and the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.

Limited Atonement

One of the five points of Calvinism deals with the subject of limited atonement. Some take this to mean that Christ only died for a select few, those being the elect. Because of this, His death was "limited" in that it only effects the salvation of the elect and no others. This point is often rejected as heretical especially in light of the many passages in the Bible that state Christ died for all men, 2 Timothy 2:6 being one.

The answer to this apparent heretical view is to ask the question, "If there were no elect would Christ have died?" In other words, suppose God chose to redeem no men. Would there have been a need for a Savior? I believe the answer to this is no (of course, this is an impossible question as God has chosen to save those he foreknew). Therefore, for whom did Christ ultimately die. If he died efficaciously for the entire world, then the entire world would be saved and we would all be universalists. If, however, he died to effect salvation for those whom God chose to salvation, then he died to redeem them. This viewpoint is more accurately termed "particular redemption."

What those who believe in particular redemption are not saying, and what is NOT taught in the Bible, is that the death of Christ was limited in its value. Christ's death was an infinite sacrifice, so infinite that had God chosen all men to salvation Christ's death would have paid their sins. The issue is not in the value of Christ's atonement, but rather it its extent. Put another way, Christ's death was sufficient to save all men, but only efficient for the elect. In that sense, he is both the Savior of the world, and the Savior of the redeemed.

One final point. Another argument some make against Limited Atonement (Particular Redemption), is to propose the existence of someone who is not elect but who truly desires to be saved. However, because they are not chosen, they are refused salvation and go to hell in spite of their desire for salvation. In answer to this we need to understand that there are two classes of people who do not exist. The first is one who desires salvation but is refused by God. Christ refutes this in John 6 where he says that "he that cometh to me I will in no way cast out." Another non-existent group of people are those who do not want to be saved, but are dragged kicking and screaming into heaven. What we do see in the Bible is that those who God elects in time respond to salvation, and those whom God does not elect in time reject God either directly, or by way of neglect or ignorance.

I believe this question is fully answered by Christ in John 6:37-40. In verses 37-38 Christ states that he came to do not his own will, but the will of the Father. He then tells us what the will of the Father is in verses 39-40. In verse 39 the will of the Father is that all that the Father gave to Christ (the elect) will come to salvation and be resurrected in the last day. In verse 40 the will of the Father is that all who see the Son and believe on him to salvation will be resurrected in the last day. Thus, who are those that were given to Christ (the elect)? It is those who see Him and believe unto salvation. Thus, those who are elected in eternity past will believe on Christ to salvation, and those who are not elect will never believe.

On this side of eternity the question to be asked to all is "will you believe on Jesus Christ as your Savior?" If the answer is "yes", then they are elect. If the ultimate answer is "no", then they are not. It is just that simple.

7 *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

Paul states that his divine commission was to the proclamation of the gospel which is the only means available for the salvation of men. This is not a vocation chosen by Paul, but rather a vocation chosen for Paul by God. The two words Paul uses to describe this activity of proclamation is preaching and apostle. This first has the idea of a town crier, one who loudly proclaims a message. The second is a word used to describe one sent on the behalf of another. In both cases, the source of the message is not that of the proclaimer, but rather the one who did the sending. Even so, our message is not one of human origins, but rather divine origins. The only question we need to ask ourselves is if we are proclaiming in correctly.

Paul further refines his commission by God by stating that it was to the Gentiles that he has been called. In Ephesians 3 he states this as well, saying that God's specific commission to him was to preach the word to the Gentiles in order that they may believe.

8 *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*

Now Paul gets to the command, that being that men everywhere pray. For what are they to pray? Well, everything, but in this particular context it is the salvation of other men. The believer is to have a decidedly other-person focus in regards to salvation.

In making this command, Paul qualifies this praying three ways. First of all, this prayer is to be offered up to God with holy hands. We cannot come into God's presence with a dirty life and expect to have our prayers answered, much less heard. Holiness is a requirement for one who is to be in God's presence, and the first order of business for the praying Christian is confession of sin.

However, I think the notion of holiness here goes beyond that of mere confession before one gets to their "grocery list" in prayer. I think that what Paul has in mind is a life of holiness in which one does not accumulate sin so that their prayers are hindered. He uses the term "holy hands." The hand is a picture of action and activity. In other words, to have holy hands is to have a holy life, and it is a holy life that gives great power to prayer. Men who pray for others when they themselves have a life full of sin do not tap into the great power that prayer provides.

What Is Holiness?

1. It is separation FROM sin

- **We are to separate from sinning brethren - 1 Corinthians 5:9-11.**
- **We are to separate from Christian brothers who disobey the Word - 2 Thessalonians 3:14.**
- **We are to separate from brethren who cause division - Romans 16:17.**
- **We are to separate from other Christians under church discipline - Matthew 18:15-17.**
- **We are to separate from evil men - Proverbs 1:10-16; Psalm 1:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.**

- We are to separate from being unequally yoked with unbelievers - 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.
 - We are to separate from the world - 1 John 2:15-17.
 - We are to separate from false teachers - Titus 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:20-21.
 - We are to separate from sin - 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Peter 1:13-16.
2. It is separation TO God - Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; Ephesians 1:4-5.

The next two characteristics of this prayer commanded by Paul is that prayer is to be offered without wrath and doubting. The idea of wrath is anger. It is easy for the believer to become hostile to a persecuting world and allow that wrath to spill over into their prayer. The opposite of wrath is love. We need to see society, our persecutors, and even our enemies as objects of God's love and God's desire for their salvation. Doubting, of course, refers to that wavering between belief and doubt. We should not approach our prayers for the salvation of others with doubt as it is faith that honors God. A firm and resolute request to God, from a holy man in faith and love, is a tough request for God to turn down.

9 *In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;*

10 *But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.*

Perhaps no passage in the confessing evangelical church is disputed as much as this passage. There are many in the church today that desire to rub out and distinction between men and women thus paving the way for women elders, pastors, missionaries, and seminary professors. Others hold to a very strict view regarding the role of women in the church basically relegating them to the "barefoot, silent, and pregnant" category. Since this is such a debated topic, we will be looking at it from a somewhat polemical viewpoint trying to capture what the Bible has to say both negatively and positively about the role of women in the church. Before we embark on that, however, let us state three very important points.

This Issue IS NOT a Matter of Essential Orthodoxy

By this, we mean that whether one holds to the historical and traditional role of women in the church, or an expanded understanding of the role of women in the church, this should in no way be a requirement of orthodoxy. The definition of orthodoxy we will adhere to in this examination is "*Orthodoxy is that set of beliefs which are crucial to a proper understanding of salvation and without which, one cannot enter heaven.*" I doubt very much if someone would say that if a church allows a woman to teach or pray, then that church is apostate and those who attend will miss heaven. On the other hand, a church that denies the virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, or the bodily resurrection of Christ is not orthodox in the least.

This Issue IS NOT a Matter of Value or Intrinsic Worth

By this we mean that we are in no way implying that women are inferior to men. We are saying that men and women have different roles in society, the family, and the church, but we are not saying that a result of this is that women are spiritually, intellectually, or emotionally inferior to men. In fact, the Bible states very clearly that spiritually men and women are equal in God's eyes. In Galatians 3:28 we read, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*" The terms used in

that verse for male and female, *arsen* and *thala*, refer to men and women in their maleness and femaleness. Paul is saying that in Christ gender distinctions are rubbed out, just like ethnic distinctions (Jew and Gentile), and economic distinctions (bond and free). Under the Mosaic law the death penalty was required for the killing of either men or women equally (Exodus 21:15, Numbers 35:30). Both men and women could take the Nazarite vow (Numbers 6:2ff.), the highest religious vow under Mosaic law. Clearly, the Bible teaches the spiritual equality of man and woman as well as their equal value as human beings in God's eyes.

This IS a Watershed Issue

By this we mean that the issue of women's roles in the church is not a trivial or inconsequential issue, but one of major importance. When we allow ourselves to slide in this issue, it is almost certain that we will allow ourselves to slide in other issues as well. If in fact, the Bible is clear on the role of women in the church, and we allow ourselves to be pressured into altering our views to conform to the world, then we are guilty of pleasing men and not God, and it will be but a short time when we find ourselves compromising in other areas.

Another way to understand this point is to look at the issue of Biblical Inerrancy. Every denomination, church, seminary, or group that has allowed itself to be moved away from the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture has found itself ultimately apostate and denying Scripture altogether. Although this apostasy may not be immediately evident, and in fact may take many years to develop, it nevertheless is the ultimate result of denying the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture.

Although the issue of women's roles in the church is not an issue of the same magnitude as that of the Biblical Inerrancy, it is nevertheless important. Those churches that allow women to pray and teach in corporate services ultimately, someday, will most likely be ordaining women and making allowance for woman pastors. Those churches that do not ordain women will be allowing women to lead Bible studies, Adult Sunday School classes, and other groups where men and women are mixed.

Women Under Old Testament Law

Under the Mosaic Law, worship took on a much more structured form, and as a result the role of men and women were formalized, especially in regard to tabernacle or temple worship.

For example, God chose Aaron and his sons to be the first priests (Exodus 28:1-3, 29:1-9). The male Levites were chosen to be those who maintained the tabernacle and assisted in the public worship of Israel (Numbers 3). Men and women could both make vows, but if a woman's husband or father disallowed the vow, the vow was nullified (Numbers 30:1-16). In all of the Old Testament, there is never an example of a woman offering a sacrifice to God on her own initiative or leading her family in worship to God. Leadership in public worship was a role reserved exclusively for the man.

At this point, some say that we do have examples of prophetesses in the Old Testament. This is most often used to justify the existence of prophetesses in the New Testament, and more specifically female teachers in the church. Is this a valid course of argument? Let's see what the Old Testament says.

Five women were called prophetesses in the Old Testament: Miriam (Exodus 15), Deborah (Judges 4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:16-20, 2 Chronicles 34:22-28), Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14), and Isaiah's wife (Isaiah 6:3). Miriam (Moses' sister), was called a prophetess in response to her Song of Moses, the song of victory sang after God destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea.

This is the only occasion in which she was called a prophetess. Deborah was called a prophetess in Judges 4:4. She also served as a judge in Israel, a capacity in which she was the civic leader.¹ Although she did serve as the leader in Israel along with Barak, there is no indication that she gave continuing divine revelation from God nor is there any record of her offering sacrifices to God on behalf of Israel. When the time came for Israel to fight against Sisera and the Syrians, it was Balak who led the armies with Deborah's assistance. Huldah was a prophetess in the college of prophets, and is noted to have issued a prophecy regarding Jerusalem and Judah. This is the only mention of her in the Old Testament. Noadiah was a false prophetess who stood against Nehemiah, and Isaiah's wife was known as a prophetess only in her relationship with Isaiah the prophet. From these five women what can we say about the role of a prophetess under Old Testament law?

- There was no continuing office of a prophetess. Although Deborah functioned as a civic leader, there is no indication that she gave continuing direct revelation from God or that she led in worship. The same goes for Huldah. That is not to say that there was never an occasion in which Deborah or Huldah did not speak some revelation from God, it is just that this was not a permanent and continuing office.
- At times, God did speak through women. The three recorded instances of this are Miriam, Huldah, and Deborah. However, in all of the thousands of years of Old Testament history, these are the only recorded examples of women prophesying whereas we have hundreds of examples of men prophesying and speaking. The best conclusion we can draw is that the instances of women speaking or prophesying is the rare exception, not the general rule.
- No woman led in public, corporate worship in Israel. There is no mention of this at all in the pages of the Old Testament.
- Although there is no continuing office of a prophetess, there is a continuing office of prophet. The Old Testament is full of prophets.
- In the case of civic government, the normal pattern has always been that of male leadership. Only in the case of Deborah, and in the case of Athaliah, do we have examples of women leading. In fact, in nearly 2,000 years of recorded Old Testament history, there only has been two examples of women leading in government (excluding pagan nations), and no example of a woman leading Israel as a priest.²

¹ Some have problems with the fact that Deborah was a judge, because the Bible clearly says that she judged Israel. However, in response to those who want to take the account of Deborah and make it normative we offer the following two points. One, when the time came for Israel to be delivered from Sisera, Deborah called upon Barak to lead the armies of Israel, which he did with her at his side. Secondly, the book of Judges is historical narrative. We must be careful not to take an account of *what* happened in history, and make it a pattern for *what should* happen today. A good example of this is polygamy in the Old Testament. David, Solomon, Abraham, Jacob, and many other prominent men in the Old Testament had multiple wives, but that does not mean that it is normative for men today to have multiple wives. In the Old Testament we read of the avenger of blood (Numbers 35:12), who was allowed to kill with impunity, but that does not mean that we are free to become vigilantes today.

² Some go to Micah 6:4 in which it appears as though God is saying that he led Israel through Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. However, even a cursory examination of the Pentateuch clearly shows that it is Moses who is the leader of Israel. In fact, when Miriam spoke against Moses she was struck with leprosy. What appears to be a clear interpretation is that Moses was the civic leader, Aaron the religious leader, and Miriam an example for the women of Israel. See JFB, *Commentary II*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), pp. 603-04.

Women in the New Testament

When we come to the New Testament, we find that nothing had changed regarding the role of women in public worship. We read of one prophetess, Anna, in Luke 1. She was called a prophetess because she served in the temple day and night and awaited the Messiah. Some say that the daughters of Philip were prophetesses (Acts 21:9), but all we can say about them is that they spoke the Word of the Lord. In fact, Acts 21:9 says only, "which did prophesy." We cannot make the case that they served as official teachers or leaders in the church, only that at some occasion to some unspecified listeners they spoke the word of the Lord. If it was to other women, then they conform to the teaching of Paul in Titus 2. As a result, all we can say empirically about the role of women in the New Testament is:

- There is no example of a woman elder, pastor, or teacher. Priscilla taught Apollos along with her husband Aquila, but there is no record that she took that task on herself or that she taught publicly in the Church.
- There is no example of any woman delivering a message or sermon in the New Testament.
- There is no example of a woman apostle or evangelist in the New Testament. All of the Lord's disciples were men although he was also followed by a great company of women who ministered to him during his earthly life.
- There is evidence that women spoke in the Church in 1 Corinthians 11:5, but this cannot be construed as evidence that they were the official teachers or pastors of the church. All we can infer is that they did speak at times.

Having examined the above background and related issues, we now turn to the text itself. Paul begins his discussion by stating that in the same manner men are to pray so women are to adorn themselves. The word translated "in like manner" refers to the apostolic authority with which Paul commands the men. He is not making a suggestion, but a command. Women are to adorn themselves in modest apparel.

This was something that was very definitely needed in those days. The gap between the wealthy and poor was extremely wide, and it was possible for the wealthy women to wear clothing that would never have been possible for the poor. The last thing the church needed was to have women dressed to kill show up in the congregation next to those barely able to put clothes on their back. To do so would cause distractions in the service, not to mention the stares of the men married to the poor women.

Within the church, the woman is to be more preoccupied with her character than with her looks. Paul does not prohibit the wearing of clothes or the doing of one's hair, but rather the excesses to which women went in order to draw attention to themselves. It was not uncommon for the wealthy women to wear gold, expensive jewels, and pearls in her hair to show off her wealth. Bring such a hair-do into the church was inappropriate. Rather, she was to adorn herself with modesty, propriety, and self-control. She should fear becoming a distraction by the clothing and jewels she wore.

Some use this passage, along with the passage in 1 Peter 3:1-6, to prohibit women wearing any jewelry, makeup, or to do anything in order to make themselves look good. This is not a valid interpretation of the passage. To infer, for example, that 1 Peter 3 prohibits women from wearing jewelry, one would also be forced to conclude it prohibits women from wearing clothes! Both Peter and Paul are not focusing on the clothing, jewelry, or makeup, but rather on the heart

and the attitude of the woman herself. Society is impressed with the external, God is impressed with the internal.

11 *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.*

12 *But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*

13 *For Adam was first formed, then Eve.*

14 *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*

15 *Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*

Probably no passage in the New Testament is more hotly debated than this one in regard to the issue of the role of women in the church. Both sides expend a great deal of effort in dealing with this passage. Although a first reading of the passage would lead us to adopt the understanding that women are not to teach men in the local church, many explanations have been offered to the contrary. These range from the more reasoned explanations of those like the Briscos and Kay Arthur to the more far out like those offered by the Passantinos (who say that *authentain* “usurp authority” in verse 12 means murder.) In analyzing this passage, I have chosed to approach it in a question and answer format. I have listed the major arguments for interpreting this passage to point to an expanded role for women with a response to each.

Does “In Like Manner” Mean That Women Should Pray Like Men?

Those who support an expanded role of women in the church say that the phrase “in like manner” in verse 9 refers back to the issue of men praying in the church (1 Timothy 2:1-8). As a result, the assertion is made that Paul is not only allowing, but even commanding, women to pray during the course of public worship as a worship leader. The following points are offered in response to this assertion:

1. **The passage makes no grammatical sense if this phrase refers back to 1 Timothy 1:8.** Even the most superficial reading of 1 Timothy 2:1-15 bears this out. The phrase does not look back, but looks forward to what Paul tells the women about their dress and adornment.³
2. **To say that women should pray like men in verses 8-9, and then order them to silence in verses 11-12 is contradictory.** There are so many ways for the Holy Spirit to have communicated to us the allowance for women to pray that it is very unlikely that he would have done so in such an obtuse way as we see here. We need to see that the context of this passage is the corporate assembly. What Paul is really saying is not the women should not pray, but that women should not pray as the worship leader in the corporate assembly of the church, and furthermore women should not teach in the corporate assembly of the church.
3. **The word for “men” in verse 8 is *andras* and means the male gender, not *anthropos* which is mankind in general (which is used in verse 4 of 1 Timothy 2).** The Holy Spirit is very particular in the words used in this passage, and makes sure to use the word for male gender, not mankind. If there was allowance for women to pray publicly, then the alternate word for mankind in general would have been used. Furthermore, the *andras*

³ Douglass Moo, “What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men?” *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), p. 182.

(men) of verse 8 is to be seen contrasted with *guna* (women) in verse 9. Men are to pray, women are to adorn themselves with modest apparel.

4. ***Hosautos* the word translated “in like manner,” does not mean “in the same way as the men, I want women to pray” but “in the same manner as I have commanded the men to pray, I now command the women.”** In other words, *hosautos* is used to indicate the manner in which Paul was commanding Timothy, not the manner in which each group in the text of 1 Timothy 2 relate to one another.⁴ This is borne out grammatically as there are two infinitives in verses 8-9, “to pray” and “to adorn.” Instead of seeing the “want to pray” as being carried from verse 8 to 9, it is better to see the verb “want” as that part of verse 8 which is to be carried over into verse 9. This would render the passage, “I want men to pray... similarly, I want women to adorn....”
5. ***Hosautos* is used in 1 Timothy 3:8 and 3:11 to distinguish the offices of Deacon and Deaconess.** If *hosautos* means “in addition to” or “in exactly the same manner”, then we must of necessity allow for women elders since the *hosautos* are cumulative, e.g. elders have these x qualifications and in the same way deacons have these $x+y$ qualifications and in the same manner deaconesses have these $x+y+z$ qualifications. Since not many would say this, we are led to understand that Paul’s use of *hosautos* is not meant to mean “in the same way” but “in the same manner as I have been commanding.”

Does Not The Phrase, “Teach and Usurp Authority,” Refer to Abusive Authority Only and Is Not a General Prohibition Against Women Teaching?

Those who support an expanded role for women often interpret this verse in such a way as to destroy what appears to be a very clear injunction against women teaching in the church. Their view is to say that this injunction is not against women teaching men, but is against women usurping authority, that is, of seizing the authority on their own initiative. As long as a woman is given that authority by another man, or operates under the authority of an elder or other man, it is all right. How are we to answer this?

1. **The word for “usurp authority” is *authentain* and literally means “to take authority over.”** It does not refer to the case of taking authority over on one’s own volition, rather it means authority in general.⁵ One cannot make the somewhat obtuse interpretation that it is acceptable for a woman to be given authority, she just cannot usurp authority. If this is really what Paul meant, he would have said so. Additionally, he would not have immediately ordered the woman to silence.
2. **Usurping authority is wrong for a man as well as a woman.** That is, it does not make sense for Paul to target women only here unless he has some special purpose in mind. The injunction is against women usurping authority over men, not unskilled teachers usurping authority or teachers in general usurping authority.
3. **Paul qualifies this injunction with the phrase, “but to be in silence” which refers to the woman’s responsibility to be the learner, not the teacher.** This is also borne out by verse 11. How is the woman to learn? In silence. It is contradictory for Paul to say that a

⁴ Another possible understanding is to translate *hosautos* as “similarly.” This would then put the emphasis on the attitude of the men and women. This is the view of William Hendricksen (William Hendricksen, *NTC, Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), pp. 105-106.) See also the article by Douglass Moo, “What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men?” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*.

⁵ George Knight, “*Authenteo* in Reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2:12.” *New Testament Studies*, vol. 30 [1984]: 143-57.

woman can teach as long as she does not usurp abusive authority and then turn right around and tell a woman to be in silence.⁶ This silence is a silence of submission to the teacher and authority which is the man.

4. **To say that a woman must not take authority is different than saying a woman may not be delegated authority by another man who is the authority.** This is a forced interpretation, and one that again contradicts Paul's injunction to silence and submission. If it is all right for a woman to teach as long as she is granted that authority by the man, then Paul would not have further qualified this injunction with the phrases "with all submission," "learn in silence," and "be in silence."

Does Not 1 Timothy 2:9-15 Refer to a Problem Specific In the Ephesian Church and Hence Is Not Applicable Generally Today

Some who argue for an expanded role for women in churches today would say that Paul is dealing with a strictly cultural problem in the Ephesian church, and as a result what is said in 1 Timothy 2:9-15 about women is not applicable today. On the surface this appears to be a possible interpretation, but does it really hold up under examination? Consider the following:

1. **If the truth is known, most all of Paul's epistles were polemical in nature, that is, they dealt with specific problems in specific churches.**⁷ For example, 1 Corinthians is written to deal with the number one problem church in the first century. 2 Corinthians was written by Paul to defend his apostleship. Galatians was written to deal with Judaizers who had infiltrated the Galatian churches mixing law and grace. Colossians was written to deal with an embryonic form of gnosticism. Philippians was written to deal with division in the Philippian church. Ephesians was a circular letter written to instruct the churches around Ephesus. 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written to help straighten out the Thessalonian church. Similarly most all of the other New Testament books were written to deal with problems specific to various congregations or groups of people. Therefore, one cannot merely write off entire passages or books as belonging to another cultural or historical setting. It may be the case that some of the things said do belong to another historical or cultural setting, but this the rare exception and not the general rule.⁸ It is the task of the Bible expositor to analyze each passage and determine its applicability to today. One cannot merely write of the passage because it teaches something that we may disagree with today.
2. **The purpose Paul wrote 1 Timothy was to encourage Timothy in the task of dealing with doctrinal defection in the Ephesian church (1 Timothy 1:3), and to instruct Timothy regarding proper conduct in the church (1 Timothy 3:14-15).** To merely say that everything Paul is saying about women is purely cultural is to ignore the very reason 1

⁶ The word "silence" is *hupotago*. It means "submission" or "acquiescence," a "voluntary renunciation of initiative." (TDNT VIII:46). It occurs elsewhere in Paul's writing in 2 Corinthians 9:13 to refer submission to the gospel, in Galatians 2:5 to refer to Paul's refusal to submit to the Judaizers, in 1 Timothy 3:4 to refer to the children of the elders being in subjection to their fathers, and in this passage. In all of these passages it refers to submission to authority.

⁷ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), pp. 188-89.

⁸ This is especially true in that type of literary genre called the Didactic. Generally, didactic portions of the Bible, which include all of Paul's Epistles, were written to instruct believers on how to live and act. On the other hand, historical narrative is written to tell us *what* happened, not *what should* happen. Unless there is good reason, one should not relegate the didactic portions of the New Testament to the cultural or historical scrap-heap without significant thought.

Timothy was written in the first place. This is a book about how one is to conduct themselves in corporate worship, and as a result the injunction against women teaching or leading in the church is timeless in nature.

3. **In any case, the injunction against women teaching men is based on the creation ordinance which transcends culture and history.** Note that in verses 13-14 Paul says that Adam was formed first, then the woman. In 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 Paul states this same concept as “man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man.” Inherent in God’s creative order is the headship of man in the institutions of marriage and corporate worship. God created man first (*protos*), then (*eita*), the woman.⁹ Additionally, Paul further qualifies this in the fact that it was the woman who was deceived. The word for deceived, *exapatatheisa*, is intensive in nature and means “thoroughly and completely deceived.” When Eve removed herself from the headship of Adam, she opened herself up to deception. In other words, when she disobeyed the creation ordinance which gives man headship over the woman, she opened herself up to Satanic deception, and it is this deception that has plunged the human race into sin.
4. **Taken to its logical extreme, this viewpoint would invalidate the rest of 1 Timothy as being applicable to the church.** Hence, all of the instructions regarding elders, deacons, false teachings, and everything else would be relegated to the cultural critic’s scrapheap.
5. **The view which says that this passage refers to all time finds support elsewhere.** Most notably, Titus 2:1-4, 1 Corinthians 11, and 1 Corinthians 14 all lend support to the understanding that the woman is to learn in silence in the church. This injunction is not culturally based, but divinely ordained in the very act of creation as well as God’s design for family and worship.

Does Not 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Refer To Untaught Women Teaching Men and Is Not A General Prohibition Against Qualified Women Teaching Men

This view basically states that this entire passage is to be interpreted in light of a specific Ephesian situation where untaught and unlearned women were taking the role of teacher and teaching error. Use is made of verses 13-14 to show that Eve’s deception was because of her ignorance of God’s commandment because Adam had not properly taught her. As a result, as long as a woman is properly skilled in the Word, she may teach.¹⁰

1. **Again, this is a forced interpretation.** Those who want to follow this line of thinking are grasping at straws to make their point that women may teach men. There is little clear exegetical basis for this interpretation. The real problem in the Ephesian church was not that unskilled women were teaching men, but that false teachers were teaching period (1 Timothy 1:3-7).

⁹ Some explain away the headship of the man in the home, church, and society as something that was caused by the fall. They would tell us that before the fall, both Adam and Eve were equal. From this they say that in the church, which is a restoration of man and woman to God, the original equality is again attained. Unfortunately, in both of these passages (1 Timothy 2:12-14 and 1 Corinthians 11:8-9), the headship of the man is attributed to God’s creative order, which preceded the fall. In other words, Adam was the head of the first family *before* it fell, not *after* it fell. Of course, we would agree that the headship of the man and the subordinate role of the woman has been greatly exaggerated by the fall, and it is this exaggeration that is the source of many of the abuses women receive at the hands of men.

¹⁰ For a more refined definition of this position see *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, pp. 189-90.

2. **If this is the case, then the injunction against unskilled teachers applies not only to women, but to men also.** Put another way, why does Paul merely state this injunction as pertaining to women. Whether one is an unqualified man or woman is irrelevant, in both cases the right to teach is forfeited.

Does Not 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Refer To Women In the Context Of The Home, And Not the Context of the Church

There are those who say that 1 Timothy 2:8-15 does not refer to a church context, but to a home context. They point out that the words for man and woman, *aner* and *gyna*, are often used within a marital context. As a result, the prohibition against women teaching or usurping authority is within the context of domestic life.

1. **This is a far-fetched interpretation as again, Paul is writing 1 Timothy to help Timothy set in order the church, not the home.** This is born out in 1 Timothy 1:3 and 3:15.
2. **Taken to its logical conclusion, this verse would then prohibit a woman from giving her husband any kind of Biblical instruction.** As a result, Priscilla and Aquilla were wrong when they disciples Apollos.
3. **This view is a forced interpretation, and one that is not clearly derived from the text.** To assert that this passage refers to the home is something that is pulled out of the hat, and is pulled out by those who would like to relegate the entire passage to domestic life so that allowance is made for women to teach in public worship.

Women At Corinth - 1 Corinthians 11 and 14

1 Corinthians 11:3-12 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

1 Corinthians 14:33-36 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

The second two most hotly debated passages in the New Testament regarding the role of women in the church is that of 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and 1 Corinthians 14:33-36. Both of these passages are treated in great detail in *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*,¹¹ so

¹¹ See the articles by Thomas R. Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity," and D. A. Carson, "Silent in the Churches," in *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, pp. 124-153.

an exhaustive treatment will be avoided here. The reader is encouraged to examine both of these passages for himself using the above source. Nevertheless, several issues are raised in these passages that relate directly to the issue of women's roles in the church. It is to these issues that we now turn in order to examine them briefly.

The Meaning of Kephala, Head, In 1 Corinthians 11:3

Two popular viewpoints are offered in understanding the meaning of the word "head" in 1 Corinthians 11:3, that being *source* and *authority*.¹² Many who would support an expanded role for women in the church insist that the word *kephala*, head, means source and not headship. Thus, they would say that 1 Corinthians 11:3 cannot be used to prove the headship of the man over the woman. This argument appears to be further bolstered by the implication in verses 4-7 that it was common for women to pray and prophesy in the Corinthian church. Can *kephala* be construed to mean *source*? Consider the following:

1. Although both renderings are possible, the translation of headship is the most predominant in the New Testament.
2. Paul's use of *kephala* in Ephesians 5:22ff is clearly that of headship, not source.¹³
3. If the "source" of the woman is man, then the "source" of Christ is God. This creates some theological problems in light of the eternality of the second person of the Trinity. Christ is co-eternal and co-equal with God. Only in the plan of redemption does Christ take a subservient role to the Father. To deny otherwise is to fall into the heresy of Subordinationism, in which Christ is seen as eternally subordinate to the Father.

Thus, it should be apparent that the rendering of *kephala* as "source" is a forced interpretation and not one that flows naturally and clearly from the text. Paul is saying that there is a divine order within creation and the redemptive plan, that being the woman under the man, who is under Christ, who is under God.

The Implied Statement that Women Prophesied and Prayed in Corinth

Many point to verse 5 in order to prove that it was and is permissible for women to pray and prophesy in the church. They would argue that since Paul did not speak against women praying and prophesying, and in fact appears to support such activity provided her head is covered, then by implication he must also approve of women praying and prophesying in the assembly of believers. However, note the following points:

1. There is nothing in the context that specifically says that women were praying and prophesying in the local assembly or that they were praying and prophesying in the presence of other men.¹⁴ If the women in this verse were praying and prophesying outside the church, to other women, or in their instruction of children, then this passage does not contradict 1 Timothy 2:8-15.
2. In order to use this passage to prove the validity of women praying and prophesying in public, one must deal with the clear injunction of 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Scripture does not

¹² See *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, Appendix 1* for an exhaustive treatment of this issue.

¹³ See also Ephesians 1:22, Colossians 2:10, and Colossians 1:18.

¹⁴ John MacArthur, *Corinthians*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), pp. 255-256.

contradict Scripture, and to make an obscure interpretation of this passage contradict 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 is bad hermeneutics.

What's The Deal About Head Coverings?

Much has been written about head coverings and their applicability to today. One thing is certain, the exact cultural setting of this passage is very difficult to reconstruct today and as a result any interpretation is difficult.¹⁵ However, we can make the following points with some certainty:

1. The head covering was a symbol of submission to male leadership and authority. Some have suggested that the absence of the head covering was an indicator that the woman was asserting her independence from male leadership. For her to do so would be a violation of God's divine order within the home and church.
2. In order for the woman to communicate her proper place under male leadership, she was to pray and prophesy with her head covered. This was indicative of her submission to men, just as a man praying and prophesying without a head covering showed his submission to God.
3. In any case, the use of the head covering was a custom common in Corinth. Paul merely uses the issue of the head covering to illustrate the divine order of male headship and female submission within the church.

What Does "Prophecy" Mean?

Many who study the New Testament assert that the word "prophecy" always refers to the giving of divine revelation from God. They would say that it is a miraculous gift in the sense that the one who possesses it is capable of receiving direct messages from God. As a result, the one who prophesies is one who speaks for God. As a result, they would use 1 Corinthians 11 as a proof-text for the assertion that women had the gift of prophecy, and as a result participated in the corporate assembly as prophetesses and teachers. Note the following points in response:

1. Although the word "prophecy" has a predictive and miraculous element, it also has an oratory and exhortational element as well.¹⁶ In other words, one who was a prophet basically communicated divine truth, both written and revealed.¹⁷ One could be a prophet without having the miraculous or predictive components of the gift.
2. This assertion is born out by the account of Anna the Prophetess in Luke 2:36-38. She was a prophetess in the sense that she recognized the Messiah and told everyone she knew about Christ. There is no mention of any predictive aspect to her prophecy, only proclamation.
3. 1 Corinthians 14:3 gives us the Biblical definition of prophecy. One who prophesies speaks unto edification (building up other believers), exhortation (encouraging believers to obey the Word of God and walk godly lives), and comfort (encouraging believers who

¹⁵ See *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, pp. 124ff. for an exhaustive treatment of head coverings. See also MacArthur, *Corinthians*, pp. 251-263.

¹⁶ John MacArthur, *Spiritual Gifts*, (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1985), pp. 104-11.

¹⁷ TDNT, VI:829-830.

are going through trials and testings).¹⁸ No predictive element is mentioned in this verse.

Thus, the conclusion we draw is that the act of prophesying was merely to proclaim the truth of God. It may have a predictive aspect, but then again it may not. Therefore, a woman could prophesy in the sense of giving spiritual truth to other women, or in the act of evangelization and still be within her role as defined by 1 Timothy 2 and Titus 2.

What Does It Mean For A Woman To Keep Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33-36?

Those who would allow for women teachers and leaders often go to 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and relegate it to a specific cultural problem in Corinth.¹⁹ Specifically, they would say that this passage refers to women in Corinth who were disrupting the service by speaking in tongues. Therefore, the injunction is against women interrupting the service or speaking up within the service to question the one leading the service. Note the following points in response:

1. Although the context of 1 Corinthians 14 is that of tongues, the injunction for women to keep silence is founded on the law. They are to remain silent since that is God's revealed plan for them.
2. The injunction is against women speaking in the church. It is apparent that many women were using their "gift" of tongues to disrupt and speak out in the service. After all, if the Holy Spirit is giving them this revelation, then they should proclaim it. Paul shuts this practice down cold by commanding them to remain silent.
3. If a woman did have a question regarding what was being said, then she was to ask her own husband at home, and not disrupt the service by asking the prophet or teacher. In fact, Paul states in verse 35 that it is shameful for a woman to speak out in the corporate assembly.

In conclusion then, 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 fits in very well with 1 Timothy 2:8-15 in its injunction against women speaking out in the church, and by extension, leading the church. This injunction is based on the law of God, and as a result transcends time and culture.

What About Phoebe?

Romans 16:1-2 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cencrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

In Romans 16:1, we read of a woman named Phoebe whom Paul calls a servant, *diakonia*, in the Lord. Those who support an expanded role for women in the church would then say that since Phoebe is known as a deacon (the word "deacon" in the New Testament is *diakonia*), and she is commended by Paul to the Roman church, and she apparently is the bearer of the book of Romans to the Roman church, then she must have been a prominent leader in the Corinthian church. Note the following points in response to this assertion:

¹⁸ MacArthur, *Corinthians*, p. 322-324.

¹⁹ See MacArthur, *Corinthians*, pp. 392-394 for an extended discussion of this.

1. There is no feminine form for *diakonia* in the Greek language. Hence, one cannot make the logical leap that Phoebe is a deacon and from there that she is a leader.²⁰ In 1 Timothy 3 Paul does seem to allow for women deacons, but never women elders. Whether Phoebe happens to be a deacon or not is not relevant to the argument for women teachers either way.
2. Just because Phoebe happens to be the bearer of Romans does not by implication make her a leader in the Corinthian church.
3. Some say that since Phoebe is called a great help (*prostatis pollon*), she must also have been a leader since the word *prostatis* often refers to those who are leaders. However, the word also refers to those who are wealthy patrons and who used their wealth in noble causes.²¹ The mere fact that Phoebe travelled is indicative of the fact that she must have been a wealthy woman, and one who used her wealth in the furtherance of God's kingdom. One cannot make the bold assertion that she is a leader, and from that a teacher, by resorting to Paul's use of this word.

What About Galatians 3:28?

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

A cursory reading of Galatians 3:28 could tend to make someone think that in the Church all class and gender distinctions have been rubbed out, and as a result there is total equality between men and women. As a result women may be elders, teachers, or hold any other office that can be held by a man. Note the following points in response:

1. Paul is not teaching the equality of man and woman, slave and free, Jew or Greek, in terms of role but in terms of worth before God.²² Spiritually, all are equal.
2. In any case, the spiritual equality of men and women does not of necessity imply equality of roles within the home or the church.²³

In conclusion, the use of this verse to prove the equality of men and women in terms of their roles within a church is a tenuous exercise and a stretched interpretation.

What About Women Elders or Pastors?

This question has been reserved until last since if it is shown that a woman is not to teach or exercise authority in the Church, then by implication she cannot hold the office of an elder. Since it should be clear by now that women are not to teach, we will not take much time on this, but we will note the following couple of relevant points:

1. In 1 Timothy 3 it is very clear that elders are men. The word *tis* (anyone) is in the masculine form and denotes a male. Furthermore, the elder must be a "one-woman man." This is not an option for a woman. Also, an elder must "rule well his own house." All of these terms denote that the elder is a man and not a woman.

²⁰ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans, NICNT* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 226-27.

²¹ John MacArthur, *Romans 9-16*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), pp. 359-362.

²² John MacArthur, *Galatians*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), pp. 97-98.

²³ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *Galatians, NICNT*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), p. 175-76.

2. There is no example, either Biblical or historical, of women elders in the early church.
3. In the qualifications for elders listed in Titus 1:6-9 we again find masculine pronouns used.

The Positive Role Of Women According to Titus 2:1-8

Titus 2:1-8 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Titus, like Timothy, was one of Paul's "true sons in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4). Like Timothy, Titus was instructed by Paul to set in order the things lacking in the church, specifically the churches of Crete (Titus 1:5). This is the purpose of the book of Titus.

In Titus 2, we have Paul's instructions to Titus regarding the role of various groups in the church. We see the role of older men, older women, younger women, and younger men.²⁴ Each of these groups are to receive specific instructions regarding their conduct and character, as well as their relationship to the local assembly of believers. These characteristics are those of a healthy congregation. When these characteristics are lived out, the Word of God is not blasphemed (Titus 2:5, 10). Let us briefly look at each of these groups in the order in which we find them in our text. and then draw some conclusions.

Older Men - Titus 1:2

The older men are to be instructed to be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, sound in charity, and sound in patience. A little comparison with 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1:6-9 will show that these qualities are the same as those qualities to be found in the elders of the church. In other words, their character is to conform to that of the elder, although they may or may not hold the office of an elder.²⁵

Older Women - Titus 2:3

The next group to be addressed by Titus is the older women. These most likely were women who had passed their childbearing years and entered the realm of grandparenting. Titus is commanded to tell the older women that they were to be reverent in their behaviour, refrain from gossip, be sober, and teachers of good things.²⁶ The word "teacher" is interesting. It is the word, *sophronizo*, which means "to train to self control." Just like the older men are to be sensible, so are the older women, and furthermore, the older women are to pass that on to the younger women. It is here that we are given the Scriptural outlet for a woman's gift of teaching.

²⁴ A more in-depth look at these four groups may be found in William Hendricksen, *NTC Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus*, pp. 361-68.

²⁵ A more thorough discussion of these characteristics can be found in John MacArthur, *Different by Design*, (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1994), pp. 156-158.

²⁶ *Different by Design*, pp. 158-160.

Younger Women - Titus 2:4-5

The younger women, instead of being instructed by Titus, are to be instructed by the older women. It is here that we see the appropriate exercise of the gift of teaching for women. Instead of teaching men, or the corporate assembly, they are to teach the younger women.²⁷ What is it that they are to teach? They are to teach the younger women to be in submission to their own husbands and keepers at home.²⁸ They are to train the younger women to be godly wives and mothers so that the word of God is not blasphemed among unbelievers. There is no mention made here that the older women are to teach men, but they are to teach younger women.

Younger Men - Titus 2:6-8

Timothy is instructed to teach the younger men to be models of godly character and virtue.²⁹ Just as it is today, in those days younger men were often seen as brash and uncontrolled. Instead of carousing around and being undisciplined, younger men are commanded to be soberminded, just like the older men. In fact, they are to become models of godly character to such an extent that no one can accuse them of being uncontrolled.

Conclusions

What conclusions can we draw from Titus 2:1-8 regarding the role of women in the church?

1. God has designed various roles for men and women in the church. Each of these roles has differing responsibilities.
2. When each group within the church (older men, older women, younger men, and younger women) fulfill their role, then the Word of God is not blasphemed and the testimony of the church is untarnished.
3. Older women have been given the responsibility to teach younger women regarding their role within marriage and society. Instead of being commanded to keep silence, older women are not only allowed, but even commanded, to teach younger women. They are not given the role of teaching older men or younger men.
4. Younger women find their role as being that of a godly wife and mother. Instead of seeking prominence outside of the home, they find their number one calling as that of being the home.

Conclusion - What Does 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Teach?

In conclusion, we offer the following summarization of what this passage is teaching.

²⁷ Many use the argument that it is unthinkable for the church to deny half of its members the opportunity to use their spiritual gift of teaching. Assumed in such a statement is one, God has given women the gift to teach men but then does not allow them to use it, and two, that there is no valid outlet for a woman with the gift of teaching to use her spiritual gift. Far from that being the case, we read here in Titus 2 that such a woman does have a valid outlet, that being the instruction of younger women.

²⁸ *Different by Design*, pp. 160-162.

²⁹ *Different by Design*, pp. 162-165.

1. Within the corporate assembly of the church, it is the man who is given the place and authority of teaching. The woman is to learn in silence in all subjection to that teaching. This not only includes her demeanor, which is to be one of quiet submission, but also her role, that of being the listener and not the teacher.
2. This place and authority of teaching is derived from God's creative order which transcends time and culture. The difference between men and women in the church is not one of value or spiritual privilege, but one of role only.
3. Far from being a lowly calling, a woman has a high calling in her role of raising up a godly heritage through motherhood and the training of young lives. She is saved from the stigma of the fall by passing on a godly heritage to the next generation.³⁰

³⁰ See Piper and Grudem, p. 192. See also, John MacArthur, *God's High Calling for Women*, (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1987), pp. 49-50.