

## God's Household, Part 6: "Men and Women in the Church"

### 1 Timothy 2:8-15

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[SERMON TRANSCRIPT]

### Introduction

Injustice in this world stinks: racial injustice stinks, economic injustice stinks, political injustice stinks, and gender injustice stinks. Women have experienced great injustices throughout history because of this-like unequal wages, unfair hiring practices, sexualization, abuse, and denial of basic human rights.

I'm thankful that recent history has brought these kinds of injustices into the light more. It has helped me- as a man- to be more aware of the injustices that women have faced. I am learning to humbly see this more in our fallen world and to acknowledge how I personally contribute to these injustices. We need to make changes- in our world and especially in our church.

But the solution is not to merely follow the flow of current society, but to look into God's Word because God himself spoke about this. Today's passage of Scripture addresses some of these issues, so before I start I have ask us all to come with open minds before God's Word. We will all have our own biases and feelings about this issue of manhood and womanhood, but we want to submit to God and his words regarding this. God's word should challenge us and even make us uncomfortable as human beings.

So I'm going to do my best to just teach what this Scripture says and we trust in the Holy Spirit's guidance to teach us as a church how to actually live this out in our lives. I hope this produces much discussing, sharing, praying, and listening with love together. I trust God will teach us over time how to be the unified, spiritual family that he wants us to be. Let's patiently disciple one another towards this, Amen?

### Scripture Reading

1 Timothy goes back and forth from 1) instructions to deal with false teachers and 2) instructions to live as God's household, the church. We are in a section of this part of Paul's letter where he teaches believers how to live as God's household- chapters 2-3. Today, we'll see this section that Paul specifically addresses some roles of men and women in the church.

1 Timothy 2:8-15 (ESV): *8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 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. 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. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.*

### Proposition

The "one thing" from 1 Timothy 2:8-15:

***Live out God's priorities and roles together as God's household.***

## Organizational Statement

There are two main parts to this passage:

1. Part 1: God's Priorities for his Household (vv. 8-10)
2. Part 2: God's Roles for his Household (vv. 11-15)

There are going to be six main instructions that Paul gave through these two main parts, so pay attention!

## Prayer

Let's pray together before we go any further: Heavenly Father, we all submit to you. You are perfect in all your ways. You created us and know the best way for us to live, what you designed us for. May we grasp in greater ways Christ's redemption and restoration of our lives as men and women. Give us humble hearts to learn. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

→ **Transition:** So let's first look at...

## Sermon Outline

### **I. Part 1: God's Priorities for His Household (vv. 8-10).**

**A. Paul's overall message in vv. 8-10 is this: We need to focus energy on God's priorities as his household.**

1. Instruction #1: Men, don't fight each other but pray (8).

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

- a) Paul taught that men should not expend sideways energy on fighting but instead should really fight to pray. I need to make a disclaimer here: Stereotypes are hurtful, including stereotypes about men and women. Stereotypes are beliefs about groups of people that are oversimplified and not true. So stereotypes are bad, but there are characteristics that are distinct for men and women. And individuals can and do fall anywhere across the spectrum. For example, as we will talk about right here, men can range from super gentle to super aggressive, but in general, men will engage in fistcuffs more often than women.
- b) This was the case in the first-century churches as well: men related with each other with anger- that is, fury towards others- and quarreling over differences of opinion. There was a lot of energy spent fighting people on this side of them (to the right) and on this side of them (to the left). They were spending all of their energy sideways instead of focusing what they really needed to fight for.
- c) Instead, Paul said that men "in every place" should be "lifting holy hands." This wasn't just for Timothy or the church in Ephesus, but for everywhere. Instead of fighting sideways, they should assume the posture of prayer directed upwards to God. They needed to fight in prayer! Men, don't fight each other but pray!

## 2. Instruction #2: Women, adorn yourselves with good works (9-10).

Verses 9-10: *...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, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness- with good works.*

- a) Context: One of the things we as parents are trying to instill in our daughter is not to buy into conventional ways that society portrays “beauty” for women. In fact, I’m happy that there is a counter-movement that challenges the notion about how women need to dress, look, weigh, or act in order to be desirable or acceptable. But it’s so pervasive and the temptation is great for women to be sidetracked by this. There’s nothing wrong with appreciating beauty and taking care of yourself- but according to Paul this has less with you like that we think!
- b) Looking at verse 9 specifically, “braided hair,” “gold and pearls,” and “costly attire” were all things specifically associated in that day with seduction and trying to attract the attention of other people. Women who followed Jesus in the first century were tempted to follow suit, but Paul instead taught that “women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control.”
- c) Paul then went further and said that women should focus on “good works” that aligned with God’s pleasure and purpose as well. As the Gospel worked within their hearts, not only would it influence how they dressed, but more importantly what they did. Paul taught that women should not expend sideways energy on external appearances but instead on good works. Women, adorn yourselves with good works!
- d) Tying both of these instructions together, in the section before (in vv. 1-7) Paul urged the church to pray for all people and to live out God’s mission to bring the Gospel to all people- because this pleased God. So men and women of the church needed to prioritize this mission in their lives because they loved God and wanted to honor him.
- e) Context: Men, most of us are not constantly brawling each other, but we do fight everyday. We fight to get ahead, to advance our careers or businesses, to make money, to get approval from people, or to win the heart of that one person. That’s all and well, but can we fight for something greater? The apostle James (James 4:1-3) said that the reason why we fight and quarrel is because of our desires that are not satisfied. We think people are hindering us from getting what we want in our hearts. So we fight. We don’t settle down and pray to God. But that “fighting spirit” has to be harnessed towards God’s purposes and pleasures- not our own! When aligned this way, we will prioritize prayer!
- f) Context: Women, please notice that Paul did not mandate any specific fashion standards or rules- I think that can be left to your discretion! He just laid out the principle that what women chose to wear was supposed to reflect their profession of faith in Jesus- clothing that gave women proper respect and value and that was not to attract inappropriate attention. But you must consider this: What is your heart motive when considering your outward appearance? And is your pleasure in God alone so that it forms your priorities and purpose in life? As Jesus taught in the sermon on the mount (Matthew 6:24-33) that God clothes the flowers in splendor that you are far more valuable to him than these. So live in the truth that you are God’s daughters who seek first his kingdom and righteousness.
- g) Context: “God, we repent for the pleasures and purposes we prioritize over your kingdom! Change our hearts- as your sons to fight to pray and your daughters to adorn ourselves with good works- as the priorities of our lives.”

→ **Transition**: So we talked about living out God’s priorities together as his household. Now let’s continue with...

## **Sermon Outline (continued)**

### **II. Part 2: God's Roles for His Household (vv. 11-15)**

#### **A. Paul's overall message in vv. 9-15 is this: We need to function according to God's roles in his household.**

##### 1. Instruction #3: Women, learn quietly with submissiveness (11).

Verse 11: *Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.*

- a) In looking at this verse, we have to think about how the Lord himself viewed and treated women. Jesus transcended social and cultural norms: He ministered to both men and women with great compassion and love. Along with his innermost core of twelve disciples who were given the title of "apostles," there was a larger inner circle of disciples, including many women. In fact, the Gospels record that the first people to witness Jesus' resurrection were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary mother of James- incredible considering that women's testimonies were not trusted in first century Roman courts of law.
- b) The first-century church continued these very progressive practices of breaking cultural and societal barriers between men and women. There were women present when the Holy Spirit birthed the church at the Feast of Pentecost in Acts 2, fulfilling the Scriptures that said that "sons and daughters shall prophesy." There were women in the thick of this movement of churches planted all over the Roman Empire- women like Lydia who financed Paul's ministry and helped start the church in Philippi and like Priscilla who was a key member of Paul's team and disciplined church leaders like Apollos.
- c) With all this said, the church in Ephesus that Paul had entrusted to Timothy was comprised of both men and women. They gathered together (very different than the synagogues of the day) and men and women were called to learn how to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Paul instructed the women of the church to be submitted to God (actually, all disciples of Jesus were expected to submit to him) and also to the leadership of the church (as were all other members of the church).
- d) He specifically said that they were to "learn quietly"- that is, with a "quiet demeanor." In many religious cults in Greek and Roman culture, women were thought to have special spiritual abilities which were tied to their roles as temple prostitutes or instruments of frenzied spiritual expressions. But God's way was different: Any woman could know God by his grace and a woman's value wasn't in some special, mystical power but in their God-given identities as a woman made in God's image, with her own feminine distinctions.
- e) Think about it: Paul instructed God's household to be different- to be wholesome and orderly and with equal access to God. So by women "learning quietly with all submissiveness," they were communicating, "We are not a cult." Instead, they were part of a spiritual family that all sat under the ultimate authority of God's Word, taught under the imparted, partial authority of elders (which we'll talk about next). Women, learn quietly with all submissiveness.

##### 2. Instruction #4: Women, do not exercise authority over men (12).

Verse 12: *I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.*

- a) This is prescriptive: Paul intended this to be something that was supposed to be followed for all churches. But what does it mean exactly? John Frame and Vern

Poythress, two theologians, explain the Reformed idea that there are two types of teaching in the church, according to the New Testament.

- b) First, there is “general” teaching, which was the teaching that was to be done by everyone in the church. So for example, we know what it says in Colossians 3:16.

*Colossians 3:16 (ESV): Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom...*

Everyone in the church was to be saturated with God’s Word and they were to “teach and admonish one another.” Men and women were to explain, discuss, clarify, and hold each other accountable to God’s Word. As we use Scripture to interpret Scripture, we have to conclude that it can’t just be all “teaching” that Paul was prohibiting women from doing in the church.

- c) The second type of teaching in the church according to the New Testament is the “special” teaching mentioned in Hebrews 13:7 and 17.

*Hebrews 13:7, 17 (NLT): 7 Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith. ...17 Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God.*

- d) The church elders were called to teach, model, and shepherd God’s people in sound doctrine and life. These two verbs in v. 12- “to teach” and “to exercise authority”- are two ideas that are tied together and refers to this “special” teaching role that elders are called to have in the church. When Paul wrote here that he does “not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man” it means that women were not permitted to be elders, doing this “special” teaching in the church.
- e) Context: Before we go into Paul’s biblical reasoning for this rule, let’s pause and connect this to us more. First, both godly women and men are needed in God’s household! The relationships between men and women- as brothers and sisters in Christ- are meant to be interdependent and complementary, just as in a biological family. In human households, families work best when husband and wife, father and mother function as partners. Sisters in Christ, you add invaluable to our spiritual family! To share more personally, I see that the way that women are more generally caring, nurturing, and empathetic is a great gift to the church. And especially for me, you have helped me to be a pastor who also has this kind of character.

- f) Context: As well, God reserving the role of eldership in the church only to men does not mean that women are inferior to men or less useful to the church. I want to share this account from Kathy Keller, a prominent writer and speaker, of her experience learning from Elisabeth Elliot, a famous missionary and then professor:

“In one unforgettable lecture, Elisabeth Elliot, one of my professors at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, taught me to distinguish between gifts and the roles in which those gifts might be used. She announced to her class of both men and women that she had better gifts for being a pastor than most of the men in the class, possibly the entire seminary. She knew the Bible in multiple languages, had vast experience in expositing it, had the maturity bought through suffering to speak with compassion to others, and on and on. ‘However,’ she said, ‘God has not called me, as a woman, to exercise those gifts in a pastoral role. I am called to use them, but why should they only be valuable if used in one particular role, the ordained ministry?’”

- g) Context: So to be clear, both men and women have a range of intelligence, moral character, and abilities. I believe that v. 12 plainly says God also does give men authority over the church- and we’ll get to the man’s authority in the home in the next point. It has

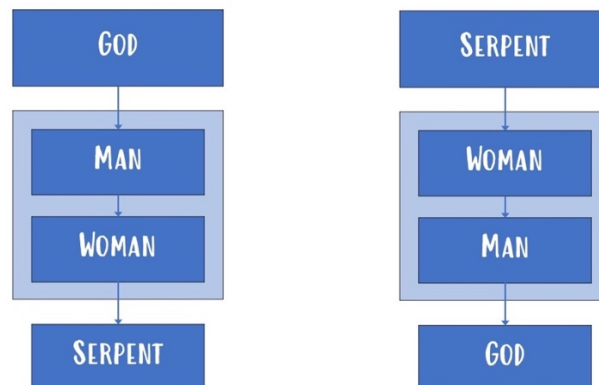
nothing to do with value or skill, but God's design in creation, as Paul explains next. Women, do not exercise authority over men.

3. Instruction #5: Men, lead responsibly (13-14).

Verses 13-14: *For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.*

- a) Starting in v. 13, Paul explains Genesis 1-3 for the reason he said what he did in v. 12. When he said that "Adam was formed first, then Eve," Paul was referencing Genesis 1-2. God created men and women- both were made in God's image, both with the ability to "work" (that is to create and add value), and both given the calling to have dominion over the earth- this was the first "big picture" account of creation in Genesis 1.
- b) But God also created men and women differently as well. Adam was created first out of the dust; Eve was then created from Adam's rib. Adam and Eve had different physiological roles in reproduction and having children. The two were to be "one flesh": marriage is God's institution and a husband and wife's "oneness" reflected the "oneness" of the Triune God and together in complementary roles they were to rule over the earth. This is the more detailed account of the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2.
- c) Look at this diagram that portrays the "lines of authority at creation": God is the supreme authority over all creation. God gave Adam and Eve authority over creation (including the serpent)- but still under God. Men and women are equal in value but with distinct roles. Adam was given authority- as Paul points out that he was formed first, then Eve. In his authority, God told Adam that he could eat from every tree of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**LINES OF AUTHORITY AT CREATION      LINES OF AUTHORITY AT THE FALL**



- d) Unfortunately, in Genesis 3, we see the tragic fall of humankind. The lines of authority were turned upside down, as you can see from the diagram that portrays the "lines of authority at the fall": The serpent tried to overthrow God's authority in creation by tempting Eve to doubt God's words. In Genesis 3:4-5 it said this to Eve: "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it...you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Eve's sin was taking the initiative against God's authority and eating it. Adam's sin was silently and passively following along, eating it also, and rebelling against God's authority.
- e) The fall not only ruined everything, but it also confused the different, complementary roles for men and women. In Genesis 3:16, God told Eve that from now on, she would experience a dramatic increase of pain in childbirth and a dramatic decrease in her peaceful relationship with her husband. This would be the pattern of struggle for power between men and women that still affects us today.

f) Context: “Authority” is defined as the right to exercise power. I think most of us have experienced the two extremes of bad authority: the one extreme is overly domineering authority and the other extreme is avoiding or absent authority. In our biological families, we might have experienced husbands and fathers that fall somewhere between overly domineering authority and avoiding or absent authority- and we’ve suffered because of it. But when men take initiative, discipline properly, and are responsible for themselves and others in the family, homes are usually peaceful. Men, lead responsibly. But if you’re like me, we often fall short of God’s expectations for us. I will be the first to admit that this is the case for me. This is the same in our spiritual families as well- in churches.

4. Instruction #6: Women, continue in faith, love, and holiness (15).

Verse 15: *Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.*

- a) What does this verse mean? This is a very hard passage to understand, but I believe this is what it says. The word “childbearing” is a very rare word and this one word us being used to describe a whole concept: “childbearing” is one key distinction between men and women and is shorthand for a woman’s involvement or role in the household. So Paul is not saying that salvation can be achieved through having children- that would also go against the fundamental biblical truth that our salvation is not by any works but by the grace of God.
- b) Rather, the word “saved” can also mean “sanctified” which means that as women grow spiritually in Christ, they also grow through the journey of restoring God’s purpose, design, and identity for them as women in true femininity in its variety of expressions in Christ. They were to “continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control,” which are also the products (this is for men and women both) of the saving and sanctifying work of God by his grace. This idea of biblical womanhood is part of the “sound doctrine” that Timothy was supposed to be instilling into God’s household.
- c) Let me explain this with the “big picture of the Gospel” in mind: God created men and women equal in value and with distinct roles in creation, with the line of authority being God > Humans (Men over Women) > Creation. But with the fall, sin entered the world and specifically the lines of authority were turned upside-down: Creation > Humans (Women over Men) > God. But as Paul said a few verses before, God desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, so he sent the one mediator between God and humans, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:4-6). This is a gift that God gives by his grace, and it is received by faith by both men and women.



- d) The work of restoration for men and women begins when God saves them. In our lives on earth, we will still struggle with sin, but that change will certainly happen in believers’ lives! The message of Jesus includes the certainty of a change of heart for God and the necessity to depend on his restoring work in our biological families and spiritual families. It will be complete when Christ returns- so believers continue in faith, love, holiness, and self-control.

- e) Context: Titus 2 describes how men and women can disciple each other towards this “sound doctrine” of biblical manhood and womanhood. Women, disciple each other towards faith in Christ, love for God and others, and holiness towards what pleases God. This is what it looks like to be a godly woman. Men, disciple each other as well, specifically to take up their God-given roles of authority as godly men- men who reject passivity, expect God’s reward, accept responsibility, and lead courageously.
- f) Context: Church, let’s keep our priorities straight: Being the church- God’s household- that is not expending energy sideways but focusing all of ourselves to God’s pleasure and purposes. Remember, Paul’s reason for giving these instructions regarding God’s household was so that we would be a “pillar and bulwark of the truth” in our world! We are supposed to declare and demonstrate the Gospel in our homes and churches. It’s not by trying to project ourselves as a perfect family, but by putting ourselves in this restoration process by faith and then opening the doors and windows of our households so that the world can see the failures and Christ’s work of redemption. That would be awesome! Women, continue in faith, love, and holiness.
- g) Context: “God, restore this kind of brotherhood and sisterhood in our church, where people are pointed to the beauty of Christ through the way we relate to each other and live for something greater.”

→ **Transition**: So what are the next steps that we can take in order to live out God’s priorities and roles together as God’s household?

## Conclusion

### III. Life Application

#### A. Here’s the “life application” for today’s sermon from 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

1. Men and women, disciple one another in God’s Word to live out God’s priorities and roles.
  - a) Help each other to prioritize God’s pleasure and purpose first- to look into our hearts at what we truly pursue and desire (what pleases God or what pleases you?) and focus our energy on praying and good works as expressions of our faith in Christ!
  - b) In our LG’s and among families and friends, please discuss this. Study and submit to God’s Word together, listen and learn about the struggles of men and women, pray and discern how to disciple each other in God’s household together!
  - c) Have confidence that the same grace of God that saves us is the grace of God that sanctifies us. He certainly will bring restoration of God’s design and purpose in our lives. Amen?

→ **Transition**: Let’s go back to our live online gathering now to respond to God’s Word and prepare for communion.

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