

## Clarifying Roles in God's Church – Part 4

1 Timothy 2:8-15

**Introduction:** These last few weeks, we have sought to give a framework of this important study of men's and women's roles in God's church. I say "framework" intentionally, since we wanted to be as clear as we could be to explain these misunderstood verses which will help us answer so many questions that come out of the discussion. What we hope in this study is that we are clear about the **Biblical mandate**, which is men will be those who exercise authority and teach in God's church. That is NOT disputed or cannot be argued from the text without taking away from the authority of Scripture itself. What we must do after this understanding is play out **Biblical principles through the exercise of Biblical wisdom**. In other words, questions or how does this mandate play out in our worship services, in leadership structures of our church and school, music ministry, and even work places are answered wisely from the primary mandates. At the conclusion of the message this morning we will try to apply some of these.

As we go into the roles of man and woman in the church, its important to keep **three things in mind:**

- **We believe the Bible is our final authority, and submitting ourselves to obedience to it is not simply right, it is for our good -**
- **We believe the Bible teaches men and women "complement" each other -** Men and women are equally created in God's image yet have distinct, God given roles and responsibilities unique to their God ordained gender

*"Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood...Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order and should find an echo in every human heart."*

Statement on The Danvers Statement<sup>1</sup>

- **We believe the gospel radically re-orientates our thinking -** The solution to both of these is the transformation that occurs in the gospel, as men take the mantle of servant leadership and women willingly follow men out of their desire to submit to their Savior.

### Considering the Context

1. This is connected directly with gospel driven prayer (2:1-7)
2. This is specifically dealing with corporate worship in the church, as an extension of behavior in God's church (3:14-15), along with proper ordering of elders and deacons (3:1-13)

### Calling for Proper Conduct (8-10)

**Strong call for men to pray**

**Strong call for women display modesty and godliness**

### Clarifying the Complementing Functions (11-15)

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.<sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.<sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve;<sup>14</sup> and Adam

<sup>1</sup> <https://cbmw.org/about/danvers-statement/>

was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. <sup>15</sup>Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control

### **Posture and Character of women in corporate gatherings**

#### **The Way of Following**

The crux of verses 11-12 is that in the church, men will exercise authority in the office of pastor/elder (the different words describe the same office/function, making pastor/elder interchangeable), and an expression of that leadership is the formal teaching in the church, primarily through the preaching of God's Word.

#### **Through Quiet Learning Through Submissive Strength**

1. The **word "submit" or "submission"** means to "line up under".
2. **Our greatest source or object of submission is to Christ**
3. **Men and women are both under submission -**
4. **Submission does NOT infer weakness or lack of ability -**
5. **Submission is a gift –**

#### **The Order of Leading**

Now, in order to truly understand submission, we must also understand Biblical authority. One of the key words we must keep in mind is that with authority comes **responsibility**, meaning the onus of loving leadership was given to Adam, to husbands, and to elders in God's church.

#### **Through Exercising Biblical Authority**

1. **In God's church, men are to lead as those responsible to give an account -**
2. **Biblical Authority is marked by humility and mentality of a slave and servant -**
3. **Leadership is exercised by model and example, not domination -**

#### **Through Exercising Biblical Teaching**

The other important expression of leadership is that of teaching. Remember, Adam was given the primary task of passing along God's command in the Garden to Eve (Gen. 2:17), since she was not created yet. Adam was to protect through information, and then protect when that information was confused through the serpent, a task which he failed. Teaching God's Word requires one to **know God's Word**, and living out God's Word by example requires one to **know God's word through wisdom**, living out the realities that are known. What does this mean?

**1. The primary role of pastor/elder is to be a teacher** - Shepherding requires teaching. Part of elder qualification is the ability to teach (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:2; 2:24; 4:2). Timothy was to keep a close eye on his life and his teaching (1 Tim. 4:16), and to devote himself to the task of teaching (4:13). Teaching happens NOT only in the spoken word but in the modeling of example. This DOES not invalidate the opportunity for women to teach in God's church (as we saw a couple of weeks ago), but does mean that an elder cannot lead without teaching.

**2. Men and women teach in the home and church, but a man cannot lovingly lead as a servant without teaching** - A loving leader sets the tone in the church and home, a culture of service, priority of worship, or time spent, and decision making. This means that men must have a growing and robust knowledge of God and His Word to be able to Biblically lead! We want all women in the church to be theologically trained, but not to the exclusion of the men. Men have often been intimidated, overwhelmed, too proud, or too lazy to engage themselves in knowing and living out God's Word. It is no wonder men have a hard time knowing what to do in the home and church, how to lead their kids, and leave the role to their wives to play.

What does all this help clarify? There is beauty in the roles God has created, as men and women strive to honor Christ, submitting to Him, and seeking to help the other grow into Christ likeness in all areas of life. Men seek to lead by example and word, out of an active knowledge of Scripture, by being the greatest servant and giver in the home and church, and women who seek to follow that leadership, exercising their gifts and talents to the building up, rather than tearing down of leadership. All this done out of a desire to please God, make Him known, and show the world the freedom and order of life in Christ.

#### **Biblical Consistency for the command (2:13-15)**

*For Adam was formed **first, then Eve**; and Adam was not deceived, **but the woman was deceived** and became a transgressor. **Yet she will be saved through childbearing** --- if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.*

- **Roles established in the Order of Creation**

As we finish this most important section, Paul we note that Paul grounds the whole discussion in the Creation of mankind. This sheds light on the timelessness of the principles, as well as its importance. This was not something just for the church of Ephesus, but the thread of femininity and masculinity playing out in the world, and in particular the church and home, has been woven in all of life throughout all time. It also means that this is not a **secondary or tertiary** issue for our lives. In order to truly thrive, grow, mature and experience joy in relationships demands that we rest and trust in how God has created us and these roles. There is a sequence of logic that Paul follows here and ties the rest of these verses together. ***What do we learn about playing out roles in the church from creation?***

***Adam was created first, then Eve.*** That is what Paul cites foundationally as a reason for the previous command of teaching and exercising authority. This seemingly simple and easily brushed over truth is packed with relevancy to the whole discussion. Adam was to exercise certain leadership over Creation **before** Eve was created, and was given certain responsibilities that were NOT given to Eve. This was all for the good of mankind, the loving protection of Eve, and the goal of Adam being the leader God made him to be.

#### **He had responsibility before and after Eve was created:**

1. He was given charge to work and keep the Garden in fulfillment of having dominion over the earth itself (Genesis 1:26; 28; 2:15).
2. He was given a command to eat from all the trees of the Garden, but NOT to eat of the particular tree, called *the tree of knowledge of good and evil* (2:17), the consequence of disobedience being death.

3. He was given the task of naming all the animals, and he even lovingly gave the name of woman to his new bride (2:23; 3:20), which was an exercise of leadership over those he named.

In this leadership, he was to fulfill his purpose in what God commanded, to protect his wife through teaching, and lovingly lead her as a partaker of the covenant relationship of marriage. But one glaring reality was present: **Adam COULD NOT FULFILL HIS PURPOSE WITHOUT A COMPLEMENT, WITHOUT A BRIDE.** He could not "*be fruitful and multiply to fill the earth* (1:28) without Eve. He could work the ground keep it, but it would have been in isolation and loneliness. He could NOT thrive alone, and needed a helper suitable, one who complemented him with care, nurturing, thoughtfulness, and was literally "soft", as he saw her as precious, delicate, and priceless (1 Pet. 3:17). Again, there was no fighting against these roles and instead it was the perfect, harmonious, and intended way God created mankind to thrive and fulfill all that He commanded. But these roles came crashing down in the Fall, creating a reversal that was felt then and still expresses itself today.

- **Roles Broken in Chaos of Sinful Consequences**

Satan targeted Eve. That is clear. He set out to deceive her, causing her to confuse the command she had been taught by her husband and question the goodness of God. He deceived her with the same tools he uses today, the lust of the eyes, flesh, and boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16). We remember that by the time Eve reached out for the fruit of the forbidden tree, Adam was there next to her (Gen. 3:6), and he failed to **lead her in the truth and protect her from danger and threat.** As much as men should be a physical protector, we primarily protect our families in the truth.

Instead, Eve was deceived and in eating, she not only sinned against the command of God but also **against the leadership of her husband, usurping his authority and becoming the leader.** Her sin caused her to become a transgressor, a sinner, one who now was under judgment by a holy God. But Adam not only was a transgressor, but became mankind's representative, bearing the **responsibility for sin effecting all of humanity** (Rom. 5:12). This sinful act in the Garden led to vast consequences in the world that we still feel today:

1. **Men and women experience death** (Gen. 3:19)

2. **Men and women experience pain, in childbearing and work** (Gen. 3:16-18).

3. **Men and women will not only refuse their roles, but will fight for the other** (Gen. 3:16), **and fail to play them out properly** - This cannot be emphasized enough. Men will run away from the weight of responsibility of leadership, or will try to lead through physical domineering. Adam's problem was abdication of responsibility, refusing to say and do the hard things with his wife, and ultimately NOT PROTECTING HER, not caring for her, and loving himself more than her. What Eve passed down to her offspring is that women will struggle with following their husbands, and instead will desire to **be the leader**, taking his role for all the reasons we can justify today ("I'm just as good, qualified, strong, gifted etc..."). This is the REASON behind the push for **equality** in every area of life among men and women today. Instead of seeing the distinctiveness of gender as a beautiful expression of complementing virtues, mankind in sinful mindset has seen this as suppressive or oppressive.

This is where the hope of salvation was seen in the Garden (from the seed of the women - Gen. 3:15) and 1 Timothy 2:15 is so vivid. Salvation through the gospel is the antidote, the way of transformation. This is why Paul concluded this section with the hope of salvation.

- **Roles are Re-Established in Comprehensive Salvation**

"Yet she will be saved through childbearing". This statement has been oft misunderstood or simply glossed over, and truth be told, is confusing even to pastors and Bible teachers. Yet as is true with all of Scripture, when we understand the difficult things of Scripture they round out our understanding and help us mature. This is no different.

There are many legitimate interpretations by wise, conservative scholars that have merit. Some have seen this as referring to the same "seed" as in Genesis 3:15, which would then mean that women are saved through childbearing the way Eve and Mary were, by ultimately being the vessels through which the Messiah would come. Though this preaches really well, this is MOST LIKELY NOT what the verse refers to. Paul IS talking salvation from sin here, but it is too big of a leap to see Eve and even Mary here. Others have seen this as the domestic responsibility of raising godly children, and though this is important and to be celebrated, the language of the verse does not bear it out. The word "*teknoqonia*" used for childbearing refers to the actual giving birth to a child, not the result or the effect of birth.

**So what does this mean?** The word for "salvation" means salvation from sin, the type of salvation Paul used every time to refer to eternal salvation. We know that we are not saved by works but by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and that salvation radically transforms us. We are called to committed obedience, love of God and others, and newfound worship in all areas of life. A believer will persevere until the end, growing consistently in areas of faith, love, and holiness. Here we have believing women in Ephesus who will embrace their God given role as a woman. The most distinctive area given to women in distinction from men, for all time, in every geographic area, in every culture is the role of having children. This is one of the primary roles Eve had with Adam. This is a high calling that mature women in the church help younger women see as a gift and Christ glorifying pursuit (Titus 2:2-5 - including loving husbands and children, working at home and being submissive to husbands so the Word of God will not be reviled).

This does NOT mean women will **exclusively do this**, meaning it does not prohibit a woman working outside the home or that every woman has to have children. In fact Paul elevated the role of single men and women in 1 Corinthians 7, encouraging everyone to remain as they are, to be freed from the worldly anxieties of marriage, and to secure undivided devotion to Christ (7:25-35). But it DOES mean that a Biblical view of femininity and roles has the home and raising kids as the primary expression. In our world today, that is a statement fraught with problems, but Scripture always calls us back to our intended purpose and is by nature **counter-cultural**. Remember that in the church of Ephesus, the false teachers were teaching negatively about marriage (1 Tim. 4:2), and by extension, the having and raising of children. This means that this is the primary, not exclusive, calling for godly women.

#### Some Practical Implications for our church:

- **Biblical leadership in every expression is NOT about power but about dying**
- **This entire discussion is about Biblical fidelity** - will we take God's Word at face value and yield our desires to it or will we try to fit IT into our views and desires. This is true of every aspect of life and godliness, and its why compromise at one level will invariably lead to compromise at another.
- **We want to affirm and promote Biblical male leadership** - A family is at its healthiest when a husband and father is expressing leadership Biblically, and so it is for the church, since its much easier to follow loving, selfless, servant leadership than domineering, power, and lording it over type leadership. That means that we want to give room to develop male leadership throughout the church, both in exercise of authority and teaching. This means that some functions in the church will be played out by men as a means of raising up leaders.
- **We want to affirm and promote the primary and secondary nature of roles** - One of the primary roles for women is to manage the household, work at home and raise children. There is

a slew of secondary functions that are only limited by opportunity and gifting, which should be played out with wisdom, for the serving and building up of the home and church.

- **This is a about the gospel and our mission** - Is this a secondary issue? The answer is no. Here is why. There is a reason why we have made a big deal about a partnering church moving to female elders, calling them to reconsider and even asking them to leave our fellowship if they do not. The playing out of fem/mas roles has everything to do with the gospel. It is the gospel that allows us to redeem the created order of God, and when we show the world that the gospel cannot do that, and instead capitulate to culture, we give the world a misshapen view of Christ's work on the cross.

Men, when we lead out of loving service we declare to the world that at the cross we died to our self for the joy of serving Christ. Ladies, when we willingly follow the leadership God has given and by self-control, which is the bookend of this discussion, refuse to try to TAKE improper leadership roles, we declare to the world that Jesus is enough, He is our Lord, and He satisfies us. Christ is our true leader, and we willingly yield to Him in joy, knowing that what the world around us needs is NOT more of what the culture thinks, but visible expressions of truth and joy, and we show that in playing out Biblical masculinity and femininity in our God ordained roles.