

Godly Womanhood: 1 Timothy 2:9-15

- Did God create men and women to be equal in the sense of “interchangeable?”
- Are male/female differences something to be enjoyed or downplayed as being irrelevant?
- If they are both equal before God, does this mean their responsibilities in the home or in the church are identical in His sight?
- Today’s passage may provide us with some answers.

True Beauty 2:9-10

- 2:9 This is a continuation of v.8. Paul is expressing to Timothy what he wants to see.
- In v.8 he points out that the men need to pray.
- Here in v.9 he points out that the women need to be modest in their appearance.
- As in our culture, some women in Ephesus were prone to dressing so as to attract attention. Their goal was not beauty but getting noticed.
- **Adorn** Greek *kosmeo* set in order, decorate
- **Modest** Greek *kosmios* (both are related to our words *cosmetics* or *cosmetology*).
- Modest means “orderly, well arranged, seemly, respectable.”
- **moderation** soundness of mind, self control, exercising self-restraint
- Paul’s goal is not that the women be shabby, but that they be sensible.
- 2:10 Good works are also a form of adornment.
- We often forget this, but a reputation for good deeds makes a person attractive.
- This is equally true for godly women and godly men.
- Is Paul prohibiting nice hairstyles, jewelry or expensive clothes?
- Notice that 2:8-10 are one continuous statement. Paul is telling us what he desires.
- In v.8 He says he desire the men to pray “everywhere,” lifting their hands.
- This would be an absurd absolute command, but as advice it is very wise – and it comes from Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- If Paul noticed a tendency in Christian men to not pray, and counseled them accordingly, he also noticed a tendency in Christian women.
- In this case it was to follow the more extreme tendencies in the world in the area of appearance.
- The quick lesson Paul gives might be paraphrased as follows:
- The church will benefit greatly from:
  - **Men** who will learn to pray as much as they possibly can and who would cultivate right hearts as they do so.
  - **Women** who are sensible and respectable in their appearance – and besides that, prone to good works.

## Learning and Teaching 2:11-15

- In Paul's world women, whether from Jewish or Gentile background, normally played a very subservient role.
- Men and women did not normally mix in public in either culture.
- The Jewish culture was the stricter of the two and women were not even allowed to teach boys past the age of five.
  
- By any measure, the Christian faith brought additional respect to women.
- It is simply historical record that many women, even among the elite of that day, found that it gave them a newfound respectability.
- Yet in our day, when a single androgynous unigender is often held up as the ideal, it can seem confining to make any distinction at all.
  
- 2:11-12 The fact that women were allowed to learn with men was unusual in that setting.
- **silence** stillness, quietness, quietly, in a quiet fashion.
- The translation "silence" is actually a little too strong.
- A closely related word is translated "peaceable" in 2:2. The sense should not be very different here.
  
- **Submission** to "rank under" or "order under"
- Paul is not saying women are inferior to men.
- Neither does he expect men to oppress women or beat them down into a lowly state.
- We should think in terms of "rank" in the military, submission to government, or the authority of the boss.
  
- The one in submission may actually be a far better person than the one in authority.
  - Still, that doesn't give us the right to tell the policeman what to do.
  - Military orders still have to follow the appropriate chain of command.
  - Dilbert is much smarter than his pointy-haired boss, but the boss is still in charge.
- Jesus is just as much God as His Father, but still, see **John 5:30** and **8:29**.
  
- Paul's reasons:
  - 2:13 The order of creation.
  - This is more than chronological order.
  - It includes the fact that the woman was created specifically to address the man's need – to make up for what he was lacking.
  
- 2:14 Eve was fooled by Satan. Adam was not fooled but persuaded by Eve. Both fell into sin, but Adam goes down as the one more responsible for the fall of the human race.
- The responsibility or headship visible at that initial stage continues until the very end.
- The picture of the church as the Bride of Christ only confirms that relationship.
  
- 2:15 A difficult verse to interpret.
- It is not teaching that women are saved by means of having children – because that would just be dumb.
- It may be pointing to the birth of Christ or simply upholding a traditional motherly role.
- At any rate, faith, love, holiness and self-control (same as "propriety" in v.9) are recommended. These things are all good!

- 2:12 As to teaching and authority, Paul seems to be focusing on the office of elder or pastor-teacher. Here's why:
  - Paul specifically instructs Titus to have the older women teach the younger women on how to be godly women. So women have to teach in that case. (Titus 2:3-5)
  - Priscilla and Aquila were Paul's coworkers. When they first heard Apollos preach, they *together* took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. Strictly speaking, this was a sort of teaching, and Priscilla was involved. (Acts 18:26)
  - Timothy's father was a Greek and apparently not a Christian. He seems to have learned the Scriptures from his own Jewish mother and grandmother. Paul is extremely pleased with that. (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim 1:5, 3:14-15)
  - Finally, Paul is clear enough on female subordination within the context of marriage. Peter teaches the same thing. If a woman had to take responsibility for decision-making in the church, it would automatically open her up to a huge source of conflict in her home.
  
- Personal Example: My wife Ginger is a very capable teacher.
  - She teaches in the Sunday School.
  - She oversees AWANA.
  - She teaches and essentially oversees the homeschool co-op, doing most of the work to bring our own kids through high school.
  - She teaches English to foreign students, and has re-started a Master's program in that.
  - She often teaches at women's events.
  
- She has never once told me she finds it confining or demeaning that she doesn't teach in church on Sundays and Wednesdays and that I always do.
- The same goes for the Bible College.
- The same goes for men's events.
- Nor has she ever complained about not having a bigger say in how we run the church.

## Conclusions

- The lessons we saw earlier told us that the church will benefit greatly from:
  - **Men** who will learn to pray as much as they possibly can and who would cultivate right hearts as they do so.
  - **Women** who are sensible and respectable in their appearance – and besides that, prone to good works.
  
- From author Susan Foh:
- In summary, both the Old and New Testaments teach the same three principles:
  1. Men and women are equally in the image of God and have the same relationship to God through Christ (Gen 1:26-27; Gal 3:26-29; 1 Pet 3:7).
  2. Women have a subordinate role in the church and in marriage (1 Cor 11:3, 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11; Eph 5:22-24)
  3. In church and marriage, God has established a unity which harmonizes and balances the first two principles. The oneness of believers in Christ and of husband and wife are based on love (1 Cor 12 – 14; Eph 5:25-31)
  
- The differences between men and women are intentional from God's perspective and ought to be highlighted and enjoyed.
- Their relationship should never be thought of as competitive but rather as complementary.
- The two should not clash but harmonize in the functioning of the family and the church.