

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday November 30, 2022 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

Honoring 1 TIMOTHY GOD

HONORING GOD
A Controversial Passage – Part 1
“Worship, Women and Wrangling”
1 Timothy 2:9-15

Getting to Know Timothy Facts:

- (1) **The name Timothy means “one who honors God”** – Hence the name of our study “Honoring God.” Timothy received his name, which means “one who honors God,” from his mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois), devout Jews who became believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:5) and taught Timothy the Old Testament Scriptures from his childhood (2 Tim. 3:15). His father was a Greek (Acts 16:1) who may have died before Timothy met Paul
- (2) **Timothy was from the town of Lystra** - Timothy was from Lystra (Acts 16:1-3), a city in the Roman province of Galatia (part of modern day Turkey).



- (3) **Timothy came to know Jesus through Paul during his first missionary journey** - Paul led Timothy to Christ (1 Timothy 1:2; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Timothy 1:2), undoubtedly during his ministry in Lystra on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23).
- (4) **Paul recruited Timothy to join his ministry team during Paul's second missionary journey** - When Paul revisited Lystra on his second missionary journey, Paul chose Timothy to accompany him (Acts 16:1-3).
- (5) **Timothy was likely a teenager when he first joined Paul's ministry team** - Although Timothy was very young (probably in his late teens or early twenties, since about 15 years later Paul referred to him as a young man, 1 Timothy 4:12), he had a reputation for godliness (Acts 16:2).
- (6) **Timothy was with Paul throughout the rest of Paul's life and ministry** - Timothy was to be Paul's disciple, friend, and co-laborer for the rest of the apostle's life, ministering with him in Berea (Acts 17:14), Athens (Acts 17:15), Corinth (Acts 18:5, 2 Corinthians 1:19), and accompanying him on his trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). He was with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment and went to Philippi (Philippians 2:19-23) after Paul's release. In addition, Paul frequently mentions Timothy in his epistle (Romans 16:21; 2 Corinthians 1:1, Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1).
- (7) **Timothy became the pastor of the church at Ephesus** - Paul often sent Timothy to churches as his representative (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Philippians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:2), and 1 Timothy finds him on another assignment, serving as pastor of the church at Ephesus (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

“⁸ I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; ⁹ in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵ Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.” – 1 Timothy 2:8-15 (NKJV)

I like to read it from several translations. Let's look at it from the New International Version...

“⁸ Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. ⁹ I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. ¹¹ A woman should learn

in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.” -1 Timothy 2:8-15 (NIV)

Some Question for Discussion

1. **Why do you think this passage may be the spur or cause of much controversy in our day?**
2. **Does submission imply weakness or inferiority? Why/why not?**
3. **Some say that the submission of women was related to the cultural situation of that time. How do you answer this?**
4. **Many evangelicals argue that Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” erases all distinctions in the church on the basis of gender.**
5. **Don’t answer these... (we have our opinions, but I want to teach you the discipline of coming to scripture without your own presupposition and prejudices and opinions and just letting scripture teach you and imply your view... to do that sometimes you need to know your thoughts and intentionally set them aside) Should women teach men in church? Can a woman serve as a pastor? As a deacon? Should women be allowed to stand in the pulpit and share God’s truth? What’s too little and what is too much in regard to women’s leadership roles in the church? Why would women be treated any different than men in the church? (these are tough questions)**

Being a pastor and trying to accurately teach a passage like this can be difficult, tenuous at times. Many, even like myself, can be tempted to just want to skip over the more controversial passage like this and not deal with it... especially if it is a hot-button issues in our day, or the biblical text seems to go against the tide of the day, can lead to arguments and strong disagreements and even church splits at times.

A Personal Word: Let me say this... “I didn’t write the Bible. God didn’t even consult me in the process. I just try to report, teach it share the truth of what it says as best I can under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and with the best tool we have to correctly interpret scripture (I do think that an underlying faith presupposition must always be that God loves us and wants our best and that even controversial and hard to take Scriptures should be viewed in this light... God’s not trying to harm us, but help us). So again, I just try to report, teach it share the truth of what it says as best I can under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and with the best tool we have to correctly interpret scripture, but sometimes people may get upset with me because they don’t like the forecast... they don’t like what

it says. Don't shoot the messenger! My aim, and our aim should always be to "rightly handle the word of God" even if we don't necessarily agree with it... to teach it's truth even if it offends or goes against what we think. But being a Christian means obeying and following the Word of God, not changing the message to be more compatible with our times. So my task today is to tell you what God's Word says about this sensitive but significant topic."

All of that to stress the very (possibly) controversial and divisive nature of talking about women and women's roles in the church and in ministry. It get's touchy! I just want us to agree to maybe even disagree on some things, and yet let's just try to be teachable and open to what (not what Buddy thinks) the Bible actually teaches and says... to understand scripture. I'm going to tell you that we should always... always come down on the side of scripture even if it goes against the grain and popular thinking and make us uncomfortable and even if we don't have all the answers and can't get our head around the whole subject.

I have read the arguments of the "evangelical feminists." I wish I could be convinced, because their views are not as culturally offensive as the traditional view. Besides, I like women, I'm not threatened by women, and I don't have a problem with the idea of women in church leadership--except that I can't escape what to me is the plain teaching of Scripture that has some apparent prohibits on some roles of women in exercising authority over men especially in the role of elder/pastor.

This is one of the most controversial subjects in Christian doctrine... it hard, and it is hard to get your head around and at times it almost doesn't make sense (especially in our more modern minds). Here are the two prominent view of this controversial subject of the women in the church...

2 important terms that you need to be acquainted with: *These two terms and some understanding of them is important, especially given the climate of our day and the controversy surrounding the issue of women's roles in the church today. These two terms represent are two views used to describe the role of women in the church.*

1. **Complementarianism** – *A simple definition: Complementarianism is the view that women are limited regarding leadership roles in the church (such as elder/pastor or deacon). The complementarian view agrees that men and women are equal in Christ, yet that God has specified different roles for men and women regarding church leadership. This view is based on several details found in 1 Timothy 2, 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. These include the use of exclusively male pronouns related to elders, that elders are to be the husband of one wife (something only a man could do), and that no examples exist of a female elder/pastor in the New Testament. The complementarian view finds the most biblical support, as the case for a female elder/pastor is one that must be made from*

silence. The Bible just doesn't ever give or cite an example of a female elder or pastor (there is not biblical precedent).

2. **Egalitarianism** – *A simple definition: Egalitarianism is the view that women can serve in all forms of church leadership, including ordination as pastors.* The egalitarian view is based on the biblical view that men and women are both one in Christ... which is true. For example, Galatians 3:28 states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The weakness of this view, however, is in dealing with the New Testament passages that define the requirements of elders and seemingly specific roles of women in 1 Timothy 2:9-15, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The egalitarian view often refers to and cites examples such as Junia in Romans 16:7, who is sometimes viewed as being called an apostle (though not all agree to this interpretation), Phoebe as a deacon in Romans 16:1 (though the general title of servant is more likely), and to the four daughters of Philip in Acts 21:9 who prophesied. If there were female apostles, deacons, and prophets, it is argued, then why could there not be female elders/pastors? Again, this argument is an argument from silence. Even the parallel examples of female deacons and apostles are disputed, though 1 Timothy 3:11 may possibly speak of female deacons (literally "women" or likely the wives of the deacons). As a result, the most likely interpretation is that women were not elders/pastors in the New Testament and that this teaching was one that extends to today.

While there are Christians who hold to both views, a look at the biblical evidence shows a stronger/higher likelihood that the complementarian view is more accurate. The focus of this argument is ultimately not the value of men versus women, but to God's roles for church leadership under the ultimate leadership of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3). Jesus is the head of the church and the elders of the church serve under Him to lovingly shepherd the flock of God.

THE CONDUCT OF WOMEN IN WORSHIP

⁹ In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵ Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. " – 1 Timothy 2:9-15 (NKJV)

Again, this is one of the most controversial subjects in Christian doctrine. People have looked at this text and called Paul a chauvinist. Others declare that this text is cultural or specific to the church in Ephesus and therefore has no bearing on church worship today.

However, if we believe Scripture is inspired, then we must accept that this is not Paul's opinion (cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17). It is Divine. And as for saying this text only applies to the church of Ephesus, the problem with that is Paul says similar things to Corinth (1 Cor 14:34) and the church at Crete (Titus 1:5-9). What Paul teaches cannot be easily dismissed.

Though there is room to agree to disagree on this topic, we must all agree that understanding it and its ramifications are important. The context of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 is public worship (cf. 1 Tim 3:15). If one studies worship throughout Scripture, one can clearly see how meticulous God is about worship offered to him.

Some Biblical Examples of How Important Proper Worship is to God:

1. God gave **detailed instructions** to the priests and the Levites about how to offer acceptable sacrifices and festivals to him
2. We see several people **killed** or **disciplined** in the Old Testament and New because they did not follow God's instructions for worship
3. In John 4:23, Jesus said to the woman at the well that God desires worshipers who worship in **spirit and truth** - Spirit refers to the heart of the worship and truth refers to alignment with scriptural truths. God doesn't accept all worship.
4. God rejected Cain's offering because it didn't come with a **right heart** (Genesis 4)
5. God rejected King Uzziah's offering as he **usurped** the **role** of the priest—his worship didn't align with truth (2 Chronicles 26).

Again, though we can agree to disagree about the role of women in worship, we must all agree that it is important. God desires worshipers who worship in spirit and truth. To have a right heart in worship is not enough; our worship must align with scriptural regulations.

Therefore, as we study this text, we learn more about how to offer worship that is pleasing to the Lord. The instructions in this text, though written about women, **are relevant for all worshipers**: How should women conduct themselves in public worship? How can we worship God in spirit and in truth?

Big Question: What does 1 Timothy 2:9-15 teach about the women's role in public worship?

2 Things Paul is Telling Timothy About Proper Public Worship: (*especially as it regard women and what was happening at Ephesus*)

(1) In worship, women must dress modestly (1 Timothy 2:9)

⁹ *In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing*

Observation Question: How does Paul describe the appropriate dress of women in worship?

Paul says that women must dress in “suitable apparel.”

- “Suitable apparel” can also be translated “respectable apparel” (ESV)
- To “dress modestly” (NIV)

Modesty has to do with avoidance of extremes. There is a suitable, respectable, and modest way for a woman to dress in worship. He then describes this dress with two adjectives: “modesty” and “self-control. “Modesty” is translated “shamefacedness” in the KJV. It means to be free of shame. John MacArthur said this about the application of the word, “A godly woman would be ashamed and feel guilt if she distracted someone from worshipping God, or contributed to someone’s lustful thought. A woman characterized by this attitude will dress so as not to be the source of any temptation. The word also has the connotation of rejecting anything dishonorable to God. Some would even suggest the meaning of the term as grief over a sense of sin. A godly woman hates sin so much that she would avoid anything that would engender sin in anyone.”

“Self-control” refers to “self–control, especially over sexual passions.”¹ “Women are to exercise control so that neither their passions nor anyone else’s are excited.”²

Paul then leaves the general principle of suitable or modest apparel to describe the specifics.

- He says *women* should avoid elaborate hairstyles such as “braided hair.”
- In addition, they should avoid expensive apparel such as gold and pearls.
- Why does he say this?

Interpretation Question: What was happening in the Ephesian church that led Paul to give these regulations?

It seems that two things were happening in the Ephesian worship...

2 Things Happening in Ephesian Worship:

- 1. In worship, wealthy women were displaying their wealth through extravagant gowns and hairstyles** – It was common for wealthy women to place beads of pearls or gold throughout their hair. It was a way of flaunting one’s wealth. Instead of provoking worship to God, the women’s dress drew attention

¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (pp. 80–81). Chicago: Moody Press.

² MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (pp. 80–81). Chicago: Moody Press.

to themselves and even fostered jealousy in those who could not afford such attire. Our worship must never be about drawing attention to ourselves... not in how we dress or present ourselves, or in any other way we might draw attention to ourselves.

In what other ways might this apply? In what other way might our worship be done for “show” or to draw attention to ourselves rather than to do? (hand raising, jumping up and down, standing when other area sitting, singing extra loud, etc) NOTE: this instruction to women may be much more than a nice adage about how you dress.

John MacArthur shares about the extreme cost of some dresses in that day... “The expensive dresses worn by wealthy women could cost up to 7,000 denarii. Pliny the Elder, a first-century Roman historian, described a dress of Lollia Paulina, wife of the Emperor Caligula, which was worth several hundred thousand dollars by today’s standards (Natural History 9.58). Dresses of the common women could cost as much as 500–800 denarii. To put that into perspective, the average daily wage of a common laborer was one denarius. Because of the extreme expense, most women probably owned only two or three nice dresses in their lives. For a wealthy woman to enter the worship service wearing an expensive dress would shift the focus of attention to her. It could also stir up envy on the part of the poorer women (Or their husbands).”³

Observation: If you are coming to church in order to be seen, get counted, set a star by your name, be noticed, because it’s good for business, to get attention, it’s the popular thing to do, out of duty, etc. – if you are coming to church in order to be seen, but not in order to make Him seen and to worship him your motives are wrong and your worship is improper.

2. **In addition, this was probably not just a flaunting of wealth that was happening in Ephesus, but also a flaunting of one’s figure—causing others to lust - Ephesus was the city of the goddess, Diana. She was a multi-breasted idol with hundreds of temple prostitutes. By conducting all types of vulgar sexual acts, people believed it would bring prosperity and blessing. In that culture, temple prostitutes were known for their extravagant attire and beaded hair.⁴ Dr. Hurley said this about the ancient prostitutes, “The courtesans wore their hair in numerous small pendant braids with gold droplets or pearls or gems every inch**

³ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (p. 79). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁴ Stott, J. R. W. (1996). *Guard the truth: the message of 1 Timothy & Titus* (p. 84). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

or so, making a shimmering screen of their locks.”⁵ By dressing lavishly and promiscuously, they would attract suitors. Since this was popular in the culture, women throughout society modeled this type of dress.

In teaching about this, church father, John Chrysostom, said, “Imitate not therefore the courtesans...for by such a dress they allure their many lovers.”⁶

John Stott summarized Paul’s exhortations this way, “What Paul is emphasizing is that Christian women should adorn themselves with clothing, hairstyles and jewellery which in their culture are inexpensive not extravagant, modest not vain, and chaste not suggestive.”⁷

Our culture is not much different today. Women are tempted to emphasize the external more than the internal. The woman’s dress is meant to draw attention to her body and cause others to desire her. However, this is not appropriate for godly women. Peter also warned Christian women against this type of vanity in 1 Peter 3:3, “Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.”

Now it must be heard that this not only happens with women but also men. Men also have a temptation to seek to be the center of attention by their fine clothes and attire. Instead of offering worship to God, people come to church to seek attention for themselves. This is a temptation for both sexes, though it tends to be a bigger temptation for women.

Therefore, if we are going to worship God, we must each wear modest clothes (in our cultural setting) that don’t distract others from God. We must avoid extravagance, sloppiness, and anything suggestive that could potentially hinder our worship or that of others.

Application Question: How can one discern the line between proper dress and clothing that could cause others to stumble or shift their focus from God?

If we are going to offer worship to God, instead of drawing attention to ourselves, we must ask ourselves several questions.

⁵ Stott, J. R. W. (1996). *Guard the truth: the message of 1 Timothy & Titus* (p. 84). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

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1. **What is my purpose in wearing this attire?** Do I desire to be seen and complimented? Do I desire to be noticed by the opposite sex? God knows our hearts when worshiping. We must consider this when attending worship, and ultimately every time we dress up. May the meditation of our hearts always be pleasing to God (Ps 19:14).
2. **Could my clothing distract or cause others to envy or lust?** No doubt, many come to worship with clothes that negatively affect the worship of others without necessarily desiring to be a stumbling block. However, whether intentional or not, inappropriate clothes still distract others. We must ask ourselves, “Could these clothes negatively affect the worship of others?”

In Ephesus, the ladies were drawing attention to themselves by their extravagant and alluring dress, and therefore, it was drawing people away from worshiping God. Paul calls the ladies to wear proper clothing, but his instructions apply to both sexes.

When you come to worship, do you give attention to your clothing? Are you properly adorned so not to distract others from God—the real focus of worship?

Application Question: In what ways have you noticed a tendency for men and women to be distractions in worship because of dress? How is God calling you to better guard your brothers and sisters through your clothing, not only for worship, but daily?

(2) In worship, women must be identified by good deeds (1 Timothy 2:10)

⁹ In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

In talking about women’s clothing, Paul not only calls for them to dress with modesty but also with good deeds. William MacDonald said, “Such “clothing” does not distract others from communion with God, but rather provokes such fellowship. Neither does it cause envy or jealousy in a wrong sense, but only encourages others to follow the example.⁸”

When a woman clothes herself for worship, she must seek the most flattering clothing—that of good works. Again, 1 Peter 3:3-6 says something similar, “*Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—but the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God’s sight. For in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands, like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling*

⁸ MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (pp. 2083–2084). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

him lord. You become her children when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.”

Peter calls for godly women to cloth themselves with gentleness. “Gentle” can also be translated “meek.” It was used of a wild horse that had been tamed. It means “power under control.” The godly woman, instead of being angry or attacking, controls her emotions. She is gentle. She has a quiet spirit, which Paul will emphasize twice in the following verses (1 Tim 2:11-12). She also clothes herself with submission. She is not in rebellion towards her husband or others. When God sees these clothes—modest outer clothes and virtuous inner clothes—he welcomes her into worship, he welcomes her into his presence.

Throughout biblical history, many women have been known for their godliness...

- Ruth is known for her sacrifice, leaving her family and her gods to follow Yahweh.
- Hannah is known for her prayer.
- Mary, the mother of Christ, is known for her purity.
- Dorcas is known for helping the poor.
- Priscilla is known for her faithful ministry alongside her husband.

These women didn’t distract others from worship—they enhanced the worship of all. Their example drew others, women and men, to clothe themselves with godliness. As we consider proper clothing for women (and men), we must ask ourselves: “Is my outward clothing appropriate? Am I dressed modestly?” But also, “Am I dressed with godliness? Are people being drawn into God’s presence because of me or being pushed away?”

Not only can we distract people from worship by our outer clothing but also by our inner clothing. If we worship and yet have a divisive, prideful, critical spirit, it can hinder the worship of others. God desires us to worship him with clean hands, without disputing, and without doubt (2:8). In worship, let us clothe ourselves with good works which please God

Application Question: What woman or women have had the greatest spiritual impact on your life and why? In what ways is God challenging you to daily clothe yourself with good works?

Paul writes in Romans 13:14, *“Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Some concluding thoughts might be these.

3 Concluding Thoughts:

- 1. While these instruction are directed toward women, they also apply to men** – Its seems to be in Paul's letter to Timothy this was particular problem that Paul was addressing in the church at Ephesus, and the problem was women coming into worship for the wrong purpose and with wrong motive. It was a teachable moment on worship for all.
- 2. Men and women alike to are to worship with proper conduct and motive** – It's not for personal gain or show, it is to honor Christ and worship (point to, lift up, draw attention to Him).
- 3. Women were permitted and invited to worship just like men were** – Rather than viewing passages like this from the negative, remember that day and context in which this was written. Women were often treated as property and were considered a lesser class than men. Even in Greek and Roman culture women were subjected to men, often were not allowed to learn or worship. Note that here Paul is saying to Timothy let them worship and teach them how to worship properly.