

August 16, 2020 - I Timothy 2:9 -15 - “Women and Modesty”

## Introduction

Dr. Lyn Kidson did her PhD on the book of First Timothy and she suggests that we should be investigating the social significance placed on being a priestess in First Century Ephesus. This investigation would give us a better indication of the place of women in the city of Ephesus. The culture of women in the pagan cults of Artemis, Ephesia, and Diana and of other false fertility gods influenced Christian women. This created a troublesome boldness in the church during the time Timothy pastored in this great city. Paul’s instructions concerning women in First Timothy should be understood against the cultural background. We should remember as students of the Word to incorporate the historical and grammatical interpretation of scripture. Both deal with truth and God intends for us to do justice to scripture by applying truth. So when the literal sense make sense we seek no other sense but when it does not we seek to understand the truth.

This passage where women in the Ephesian church are given corrective instructions is an indication that not all women in Ephesus were the epitome of modesty in the Ephesian society. Thus I title this passage, “Women and Modesty” as it pertains to the church. We continue to look as Paul’s letter to Timothy as he instructs concerning the behavior of men and women in the church. I want you to notice the heart of this letter from chapter 3 verses 14 and 15. “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: **But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**”.

This is a letter to set the church in proper order for worship. This portion of Scripture has to do with the woman’s role in the church. Paul is moving from the general attitude of men in worship and prayer to the general attitude, demeanor and role of women.

### I. Modest dress and Sobriety (v. 9)

1. Now there were many problems in this church. One of them had to do with ladies apparel. Note the cultural background that there were many ladies worshipping at the church who were wealthy and prominence and others who were saved out of temple prostitution. Some women were flaunting themselves with their outward appearance with expensive jewelry and others desecrating that worship by provocative dress and demeanor that betrayed an evil intent rather than a heart of worship.

2. The contrast here is between the artificial glamour of the world and the true beauty of a godly life. Paul didn’t forbid the use of jewelry or lovely clothes, but rather the excessive use of them as substitutes for the true beauty of “a meek and quiet spirit”. The Bible teaches us a woman should seek to look beautiful through her inner character. Paul said women should *adorn themselves*. The word *adorn* in Greek is “*kos / may / o*” from which we get our word “cosmetic”. Both *adorn* and *modest* are similar Greek words conveying that clothing should be decent, orderly, and in good taste. It doesn’t say a woman should not braid her hair, never wear jewelry, and never where nice clothes. It does say, however, that her beauty must **not** be rooted in these external means. This concept we pick up from the sandwiched words “shamefacedness

and sobriety” meaning a sense of honour, modesty, bashfulness, reverence, regard for others, respect and self-control.

3. Last in vv.10 on this point of modesty is that a woman should be known for her godliness and good works. Note page 32 of “Be Faithful”---Dr. Wiersbe

When God created man and women he created them for each other without a hint of any inferiority. Yet, the roles of male and females are uniquely different. Remember if we are to ever be completely happy we must submit to God’s will and His role for us. It is important for us to remember our God is a God of order and design. That leads us to Paul’s admonition...

## II. Quiet learning (v. 11-12 )

1. Some of the women abused their newfound freedom in Christ and created disturbances in the services by interrupting. Again many came from a background that precipitate this behavior but it was not proper in the church to yell out or speak while the service is being conducted. The KJV uses the word “silence” this gives the wrong impression that women were never to open their mouths in the assembly. We learn the content and Greek word conveys for them to learn with a peaceable spirit. This word is translated “peaceable” in 1 Tim. 2:2.

2. The word translated “subjection” in verse 11 is from the Greek word “hupo-ta-gay very similar to hupo-tasso”. The word here literally means, “to be under in rank.” It has to do with respecting an acknowledged order of authority. It certainly does not mean that men are more spiritual than women or those women are inferior to men.

Anyone who has served in the military knows that rank has to do with order and authority, not with value or ability. A colonel is of higher rank than a private, but that does not necessarily mean the person is better. It only means one has more rank and therefore more authority. Submission is not suppression that is to be force to submit to control. God ask your voluntary submission. Folks, if we have a problem with what the Bible says about women in the church the issue are not with Paul, but with God. Paul’s focus here is the public worship of the church.

**3. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.** Paul’s wording here makes it challenging; it is not palatable in today’s society. Since the 1970’s, our culture has rejected the idea that there may be different roles for men and women in the home, in the professional world, or in the church. In this passage and others, the Holy Spirit teaches us that with God there *is* a difference. This has become a struggle with the issue of authority and it has been this way for over 50 years. There has been a substantial change in the way we view and accept authority. I am sure most here would agree we have seen the erosion of respect for God’s order and design and Satan is having a hay day as he usurps God’s authority.

Women do not have the same respect for men’s God given authority. Children do not have the same respect for parental authority. Citizens do not have the same respect for government’s authority. Students do not have the same respect for teacher’s authority. Employees do not have the same respect for their employer’s authority. Christians no longer have the same respect for church authority. People do not have the same respect for the police’s or civil authority.

Our society is presently in, and rushing towards, complete anarchy that is the state where no authority is accepted. These words were pen by Dr. Warren Wiersbe in his book “Be Faithful” in 1988 and they have become very alarming. “It is fair to describe the future moral state as one of anarchy. There is no moral authority in our culture. When it comes to morality, the only thing that matters is what one wants to do. And in a civil sense, many neighborhoods in our nation are given over to anarchy. The government’s authority is not accepted in gang-infested portions of our cities. The only thing that matters is what one *wants* to do.”

Left off...

4. Paul’s focus here is the public worship of the church. God has established a clear chain of authority in both the home and in the church; this God has ordained. Women are permitted to teach just not in worship. Older women should teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-4) Timothy was taught at home by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5; 3:5) But in their teaching ministry they are not allowed to “lord it over men” There is nothing wrong with a godly woman instructing a man in private (Acts 18:24-28) But she should not assume authority in the church and try to take the place of a man. This is in the Church this is not talking about a school or a man sitting in a class.

5. In 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verses 34 and 35 we find here that Paul prohibits women in the assembly of the church from speaking in languages and interpretation and also from expressing the gift of prophecy. He says, “Let the women keep silence in the churches.” So, we learn then from 1 Corinthians 14 when the church comes together women were not to speak in tongues when tongues were a valid gift, they were not to engage in the public interpretation, and they were not to be involved in the prophesying.

Here we add to that that they were not to be ruling in the church and they were not to be the preacher-teacher. Furthermore, we learned from verse 8 that women were not to lead the congregation in prayer, but the congregation was to be led in prayer by men. Paul’s focus here is the public worship of the church. So, when it comes to the worship of the church, the praying, the teaching, the speaking for God and the preaching is to be done by the men.

6. That is why, beloved, there are no women apostles in the New Testament. There are no women prophets in the church. One prophetess is mentioned; she was prior to the church and functioned in a unique way speaking to individual people about the coming Messiah. But there was no prophet in the New Testament church that was a woman and there were no woman pastors. There is no woman evangelist, and no woman has written any book of the Bible. Now, that is an affirming thing to indicate God’s divine order. And this is an issue of role, not spiritual inequality. But both men and women have abrogated their roles and look at the mess we are in!

III. The Divine Order vv. 13-15

1. Paul gave several arguments to back up his admonition that the men in the church should be spiritual leaders. First, there is the argument from Creation that Adam was formed first, then Eve. Keep in mind that priority doesn't mean superiority. Men and women were both created in God's image. The issue is one of "headship" man was created first. Eph. 5:22-24  
The second argument emanates from the fall of man into sin (v. 14).

2. This last verse is complicated but the grammar in the original Greek language gives it some illumination. Women led in the Fall but by the wonderful grace of God they are released from the stigma of that through childbearing. God has given them the privilege of leading the race out of sin to godliness. In the original, it says *she will be saved in the childbirth*. This has the sense, "Even though women were deceived, and fell into transgression starting with Eve, women can be saved by the Messiah – whom a woman brought into the world." The idea here is that even though the "woman race" did something bad in the garden by being deceived and falling into transgression, the "woman race" also did something far greater, in being used by God to bring the saving Messiah into the world and having the blessing of childrearing.

### Conclusion:

Some say Galatians 3:28 did away with all this submission stuff. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This does not do away with God's order of things. This verse is talking about salvation. Not service. Submission is God's way of doing things in the church and the home!