



## Gender Roles in the Church-Part 2

### 1 Timothy 2:8-15

#### I. Review:

- A. So last week, we jumped into this very difficult text 1 Timothy 2:8-15 & looked at a universal answer to a cultural problem.
  1. In Ephesus, which one commentator called, “a bastion for feminine supremacy”, the Temple of Diana stood in the backdrop & influenced much of the city’s culture. There were temple prostitutes, prophetesses & temple eunuchs that were all a part of this city’s life.
  2. So when the church gets planted in Ephesus, there is much gender confusion that needed to be corrected. And that’s really what Paul is doing from 2:8-3:7. He’s giving a universal answer to a cultural issue & giving us a biblical norm that we must affirm, which is: a woman’s submission to male authority.
  3. This is why Paul makes the statements that he does in vs. 11-12 that a woman should learn quietly with all submission & a woman should not teach or exercise authority over a man. This does not mean that women don’t have the gift of teaching or that they shouldn’t teach. Rather, they shouldn’t teach with the authority of elders, who are leading the church.
  4. And the reason that Paul gives tells us this is because in vs. 13, that this is the way the God set it up. Adam was created first, then Eve. It’s a sign of order, not value. It’s a picture of role, not status.
  5. To help us understand this, I think John Piper defined authority & submission in a very helpful way:
    - a. "Authority" refers to the divine calling of spiritual, gifted men to take primary responsibility as elders for Christ-like servant-leadership and teaching in the church.
    - b. "Submission" refers to the divine calling of the rest of the church, both men and women, to honor and affirm the leadership of the elders and ***to be equipped by it for the hundreds and hundreds of various ministries available to men and women in the service of Christ.***
- B. Now, one thing I said last week & I think it bears repeating is this: with a difficult text like this must not allow emotions, presuppositions or culture be our guides. We must allow God’s word guide us.
- C. So today, we’re going to look at the last few verses here (vs. 13-15) & we’re really looking at the ‘why’ of the gender roles. Why has God made this the biblical norm in the church & family? So here’s what want to look at: 1) God’s created order, 2) Eve’s deception & 3) Eve’s value.

- II. God’s created order. You can see this in vs. 13. We hit on this last week, but the biblical norm, takes us back to created order. God created Adam first then Eve.
  - A. One of the things that we must be aware of is this: when Paul directs us to the order of something, he likes to point us back to the way God set it up at the beginning.
  - B. This is critical because our world will look for any number of ways to define order:
    1. They’ll look to abilities. Who can do what better should determine who has authority.
    2. They’ll look to intellect. Who’s smarter than who should be our determining factor.
    3. They’ll look to socio-economics. Who makes more money determines who leads.
  - C. But that’s not what the Bible does. The Bible goes back to the way that God set it up. And the way God started the human race shows us authority: Adam first, then Eve.
  - D. Now, how do we know that God gave Adam the authority? Well, for that we need to see a few things in the Genesis creation account:
    1. First, you’ll notice in Genesis 2:7 that the Lord made Adam from the dust of the ground. But when he created Eve, he took her from a rib in Adam’s side (Gen. 2:21-22). She is a derivative of man. She comes from man, because man was created first.



2. But we also notice that the reason she was created was because Adam needed a helper. Genesis 2:18 tells us this very clearly. A helper is not the leader. A helper helps the leader & follows the leader.
  3. But let's go one step farther. In Genesis 2:19 the Lord gave Adam the authority to name everything that was made. Adam had naming rights. And this authority is extended to his naming of Eve. Man named her (Gen. 2:23).
  4. These indicators show us God's original design for who is the leader & who's the helper.
  5. The other issue that I want you to see from this is that this is all pre-fall. Authority & submission were as much of the created order as the command that God gave to man/woman to be fruitful & multiply. This is God's created order.
- E. But why did God do this? Why is there a leader & why is there one to help the leader? Well, again, we get see this clearly from God's word. In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote this when talking about gender roles in the family & church: just follow the argument: the head of every man is Christ & the head of the wife is her husband & the head of Christ is God.
1. Do you notice what Paul does here? He says the gender roles of authority & submission point us to the authority & submission found in God's relationship with Jesus. God is the head of Christ & the husband is the head of his wife.
  2. This means that the reason why God made man first, then Eve, was to reveal something about the relationship of the Trinity. Because male & female are made in the image of God, this makes sense.
  3. This is significant because we all would affirm that God & Jesus are 1. They're equal in value, yet different in role & function. Both are worthy of praise, yet with different roles.
- F. So this tells us that that God made man & woman in such a unique way that as they interact with one another in God's created order, it reveals the Godhead & brings us remarkable joy.
- III. But sin has distorted a lot of it, hasn't it? And that's why we have the next statement in vs. 14 that is so significant. Eve was deceived & Adam was not.
- A. Now, at the outset, let me say that this verse is not given to us to say that women are gullible & cannot think for themselves. That's poor theology & poor exegesis.
  - B. Rather this is given to us in the context of leadership in the church to talk to us about the danger of distorting the roles & to show us sin's effect.
  - C. Here's what happened when the human race fell into sin.
    1. Before Eve was created, God gave Adam a command to not eat of the tree that was in the middle of the Garden of Eden. He gave the command to Adam & told him that if he ate, he would die.
    2. Then in Genesis 3, Satan tempts Eve with that very fruit & twists God's words. Eve looks at the fruit & believed it was good: good to eat, good to make her wise & looked good to her eyes. So she took the fruit & she ate it, believing that something that God had commanded her not to do, was good for her. She was deceived.
    3. But Adam was not deceived. In other words, he knew exactly what he was doing. He knew what God had told him, but notice the location of Adam when he eats the fruit (Gen. 3:6): with her.
  - D. Now what happened here was a distortion of the gender roles & who started it? It wasn't Eve, it was Satan. Who did he approach? He approached Eve. The reasons why he approached her are not all known, but we can deduce one of the possible reasons from Genesis 3 & 1 Tim. 2: He approached her because when the roles are confused, deception lies close at hand.
    1. See some will say, well, he approached Eve because a woman can't handle herself when deception comes up. Women naturally can't figure these kinds of things out. But that's a poor generalization of women, because I know that I'm more prone to believing dumb things than my wife is. She's a



bit smarter than me on a lot of subjects & I know that many of guys would say the same things about our wives or other smart women we know.

2. Rather, what we see here is this: this deception of Eve has more to do with role distortion/confusion than anything. When the roles are confused, deception lies close at hand.
  3. Eve was deceived here because she stepped into a role that was not hers. Rather than appealing to her husband, who had received the command from God, she stepped into the role of leading & then making a decision on the basis of what she thought was right, rather than what God or Adam thought.
  4. Since she had not received this command first hand from God, she was an easy picking. But also, since she was not intended to be the leader in this decision, she was an easy target.
  5. This is why it shouldn't come as a surprise that in the midst of a leadership discussion that Paul says that Eve was deceived & not Adam, because Timothy & his church would go back to the fall of man & see that when the roles get reversed & leadership is out of whack, deception lies close by.
  6. And why is this important in the church. Because one of the roles of the church & its leaders is to refute false teaching & to not be deceived by it.
  7. So one of the ways to fight false teaching is to maintain appropriate, God-centered, God-created gender roles in the church & family.
  8. So we see that Eve's deception was a by-product of gender distortion.
- E. But the other reason Paul tells us this is to help us see sin's effect on the gender roles.
1. It's intriguing that the very thing that Eve does, in taking a role that isn't hers, is the very thing that God tells her will be the curse of sin. In Gen. 3:16b God tells the woman that her "desire for her husband". This word 'desire' means to usurp the authority of the man. It's not a good desire; it's a bad desire for mastery or control (see Gen. 4:7). So rather than live in joyful submission, sin will tempt women to come out of from under the authority that God set up.
  2. And it's intriguing the effect that sin had on Adam. Do you see it? We actually see it in 2 places:
    - a. We see it in Adam's passivity. Rather than stepping in to take leadership, men naturally abdicate it to women. Adam did it & we do as well. Rather than leading & protecting, we have a tendency to step back, when we should be stepping it.
    - b. And in Gen. 3:16b: Rather than loving, caring, servant leadership, Adam's sin would cause him to crush her! Wow! Who would want to submit to that?
  3. We actually see this work out throughout Scripture:
    - a. When God told Abram that he would have a son, his wife Sarai laughed. And when the promised son didn't come along soon enough, Sarai told Abram to take her maidservant Hagar. No discussion, no leadership, just off to the tent.
    - b. When King Ahab takes the throne of Israel, he allows his wife Jezebel to lead the entire nation of Israel into idol worship. No leadership, just abdication.
    - c. Sin affects the gender roles by reversing them.
- F. And this is where the Savior's work of restoration is remarkable.
1. Sure it's a woman's natural tendency to usurp or try to control & sure it's the man's natural tendency to be passive & be angry, but that's exactly what Paul is going after in 1 Timothy.
  2. He's showing us the gospel's transforming work in our lives to take what is so natural to us & restore us to the created order.
  3. Isn't this the power of God at work we're seeing? Jesus Christ has come to pay for your usurping, ladies & he's come to pay for your passive anger, fellas. But he doesn't just offer you forgiveness of sin, he gives you power to actually live the way he created you to live: not controlled by sin, under



the power of the Holy Spirit & men being loving leaders & ladies being respectful helpers. It's simply amazing to see that this is the power of God being seen in Paul's instructions about leadership in the church.

- G. What we see here is that while God created gender roles to reveal something about the inner workings of the Trinity, when we live in the biblical norm of gender roles, we're showing the power of the gospel at work! Pretty cool.
- IV. So let's finish with vs. 15. It's almost like Paul was feeling the possible cultural heat on Timothy's hands here. Paul shows us in vs. 15, Eve's honorable role. This is a very weird verse & it's phrased weird & I don't think I've got all the answers to the complexity of this verse yet, but let's just recognize a few things about this:
- A. First, Paul is not telling us that women are saved for eternal life by having kids. We know from Paul's letter that salvation comes by faith in Jesus Christ as the savior for sinners & as the one mediator between God & man, not by anything that we do.
  - B. Second, Paul is not saying that a woman's role is simply to stay home & having kids, in that barefoot & pregnant-type of attitude that demeans women.
  - C. Rather what Paul is saying is this: while men have a unique role, women also have a unique role that one part of that is child-bearing. The propagation of the human race is dependent on women. This is a unique role that women have & it's remarkably valuable. And a woman who embraces her God-given role will joyfully submit & will joyfully embrace children. But that's only one part of her role & it's the one part that Paul uses to show her valuable place.
  - D. This statement by Scott Lindsay was really helpful: "Paul, by talking about women and child-bearing, is using that one aspect of womanhood to refer to one of the central *roles* associated with womanhood - saying that women will be saved, not through a *rejection* of their unique role as women - and thus God's authority in so ordering that situation - but rather by *embracing* that role - as symbolized by the function of bearing children. In other words, by embracing and submitting to God's authority in this area. To put it another way - it is not by SCORNING or DENYING divinely established role distinctions but by ACCEPTING them that women will demonstrate deeds appropriate for those who worship God."
  - E. In other words, Paul is placing remarkable value on women, not devaluing them. He's again reaffirming the created order by this statement simply saying that a woman should embrace their unique role in God's created order. This is a statement of honor because we cannot mistake roles for value.
- V. Recap the last two weeks:
- A. The biblical norm is a woman's submission to male authority bc God created Adam first, then Eve.
  - B. Women can be gifted teachers & are instructed to teach. But they are not permitted to teach in the office of elders in the church.
  - C. Gender roles were created by God to reveal the relationship in the Godhead.
  - D. When gender roles are reversed, deception lies close at hand.
  - E. When we live out biblical gender roles reveals the gospel & brings great joy. I think it's at this point that we see our great need for Jesus, don't we? There should be no misunderstanding here.
    1. We're not made right with God through our leadership or submission.
    2. We don't make God eternally satisfied with us by making good decisions.
    3. We're made right with God, through faith in Jesus & his grace extended to us. Jesus eternally satisfied God by his life, death & resurrection. Nothing else.
    4. And I don't know about you, but I see where I'm more passive & angry at times than I do loving leadership. And I think we all feel this way. Oh, how we need Christ! So let's pray to that end!