**Class 9: Biblical Manhood and Womanhood – Roles of Men and Women in the Church (Pt. 2)[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. **Introduction**

Last week we saw this basic principle: *Scripture not just allows, but expects men and women to participate in the majority of the church’s ministry.* We looked at **1 Cor. 12** where God gives gifts to both men and women for the edification of the body, and talked about how women and men serve the church through all sorts of ministries: through reading scripture and praying at services, through speaking words of prophecy or Biblical encouragement, through being deacons and deaconesses, through congregational votes, evangelism, caring for the needy, and discipling one another.

We also looked at the job description that God gives elders throughout the New Testament and saw that it’s no surprise that God reserves the office of elder to men. This is because the things elders do all fall squarely within the lines of biblical masculinity: they provide for the church by teaching, protect the church from false doctrine, lead by example, and bear responsibility before God for how they shepherd the flock.

You see the summary statement there in your handout: *Men and women are called to serve the church in all capacities, except where such service would violate the biblical principle of male leadership* (specifically by teaching or exercising authority over men when the church is gathered). And it’s that principle that we want to explore further today. So let’s go right ahead to the two key passages that spell out how men’s and women’s roles *differ* when it comes to **the local church context**.

1. **1 Timothy 2:8-15**

Please open your Bibles to **1 Timothy 2:8-15:** (pew bibles on pg. 991)

*8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 9 likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, 10 but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. 11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.*

The church at Ephesus, which Timothy was pastoring, had been under attack by false teachers (see **1 Tim. 1:3-7, 1:18-20; 4:1-3; 6:3-5, 20-21**). These false teachers seemed especially to target vulnerable women, particularly young widows (**1 Tim. 5:14-15; 2 Tim. 3:6**).[[2]](#footnote-2) It also *appears* that the false teachers were encouraging women to throw off the long-standing, biblical role of women in favor of a more independent, “liberated” lifestyle. And from the verses we just read in **1 Tim. 2**, it appears these teachers’ were influencing women in the church to live ungodly lives that affected the way they dressed as well as their understanding of their God-given roles in the church.

So to combat this teaching, in **v.9** Paul begins by encouraging women to dress modestly. Apparently, under the pretense of coming to worship God, certain women were flaunting their beauty; and their dress and demeanor portrayed an ungodly motive rather than a heart of worship. To be clear, Paul’s not saying there’s virtue in being unfashionable. BUT, it is a call to purity. [Paul seems to indicate that the way these women were dressing was actually revealing something about the nature of their hearts]. He’s saying women should draw attention to themselves not by how they look, but by how they live. In essence, Paul’s teaching that a seductive appearance or even giving off a reputation of self-aggrandizement are a cheap substitute for a humble and godly character.

Then in **v11** he exhorts them to “learn quietly with all submissiveness.” Let’s consider a few things from this verse:

* *First,* when Paul calls women to learn “quietly,” he’s telling them to demonstrate a *submissive posture to Biblical teaching.*[[3]](#footnote-3) One of the things the false teachers did in Ephesus were spread false doctrine and seek to undermine true, Biblical authority. Whether it was forbidding marriage and requiring abstinence from certain foods (1 Timothy 4:1-3), or promoting a lifestyle that contradict the life of a fruit-bearing Christian, Paul exhorted Timothy, the men in the church, as well as the women in the church, to keep the gospel central to their ministry and everyday lives.
* *Second*, the godly woman’s *attitude* should be one of *humility* and *peacefulness.* The word “quietly” here is used elsewhere in the NT to denote a humble and peaceful disposition. It describes someone who by their prudent speech and godly lives are not wanting to cause unnecessary conflict or be disruptive and argumentative in any way*.*
* *Third,* we shouldn’t be focused *only* on the word “quietly”, but also what Paul says about women learning with all SUBMISSIVENESS. One of the marks of a godly woman is what should be true of ALL Christians [men AND women]: a TEACHABLE spirit – one who WANTS to learn! We know from the book of Proverbs, on the emphasis that *humility* and *learning* *how to fear God* are twin virtues: You can’t have one without the other! We know from texts like **Matthew 28:19-20** on the Great Commission that the very hallmark of living as a Christian is being *discipled [lit. a “learner”],* which implies the willingness to be taught by another believer in the Scriptures! So here in **v.11**, the godly woman’s attitude and posture is one of humility, peacefulness, and willingness to learn God’s Word. But it’s also worthy to note: Paul’s emphasis here for women “*to learn quietly with all* ***submissiveness***”, which implies her willingness to humbly accept (or submit) and gladly embrace her God-given role within the church. In other words, as she submitted to Biblical teaching, she would also be submitting to the Bible’s teaching on leadership in the Church. Which leads us to Paul’s words in **v.12** [**Read 1 Timothy 2:12**]

Then [*next page in* handout] in **v12** Paul restates **v.11** in the negative. In the life of the gathered congregation, he says women are not permitted “to teach -- or to exercise authority over a man.”

***So from these verse, we see 2 basic “restrictions”***

**The firstrestriction** is that *women are not permitted to teach men* [formally]

When Paul speaks about teaching here as combined with exercising authority, he’s describing the kind of teaching that someone gifted by the Spirit would do to bring *authoritative instruction in doctrine* to the congregation. This kind of teaching is often done by a person holding a position of leadership in the church, which the Bible delegates to the office of elder/pastor/overseer, which Paul talks more about in **chapter 3** [turn to **1 Timothy 3:1-2**]. According to this passage, only MEN are eligible for the office of authoritative teaching in the church (pastor/elder/overseer), and therefore women are not given that particular type of authority to teach in the church.

Some may ask:***Does this mean then that the Bible prohibits women from teaching anyone in the church?***

But of course this doesn’t mean that a woman should never teach. We’ve seen in previous weeks how Paul encourages women to teach other women and children from **Titus 2**. He commends the instruction Timothy received from the care of his mother and grandmother (**2Tim 1**). Paul encourages all believers to instruct one another as they sing together (**Col 3.16**). Priscilla along with Aquila (a godly married couple) instructed Apollos to help him better understand the gospel in **Acts 18**. I learn things about the Lord all the time from women informally as they encourage me with what they’re studying in scripture or testify to God’s goodness in their lives. And I could keep going. But Paul’s concern here is with that formal kind of teaching and authority exercised in the regular weekly gathering of the saints (to make it more specific – the preaching/teaching from the pulpit on Sunday AM and PM as well as on Wednesday night Bible study and the Core Seminar Hour)

**So it’s natural to ask: Would Paul’s teaching here allow women to teach men in a parachurch setting, like a college ministry?** **Does it mean that men can learn from theology books published by women?** These areas of application are less clear, and Christians may disagree. Clearly the standard Paul is setting is that only men teach the gathered church. In settings that are more optional or casual like a college ministry gathering, it is likely permissible for women to teach, ***but*** I think the Biblical pattern recommends the wisdom of having teaching done by men especially when the teaching involves explaining scripture and exhorting men and women to obey it. Since a book is more removed, a less direct form of communication, I find that less problematic – Paul’s concern is order in the local church.

**The second restriction** is that *a woman is not permitted to have authority over a man*. The word translated “have authority over” means “to govern or rule over” them. In the New Testament, and especially the letters to Timothy and Titus, this ruling or governing function is ascribed most primarily to the office of elders, also called pastors and overseers.[[4]](#footnote-4) [**Read 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17**]

Some Christians have sought to soften this teaching, saying that Paul’s only prohibiting authoritative teaching, as in the teaching that male elders do. So long as a woman is under the auspices of her elders, she’s free to preach to the whole church. But that’s not what he says. His prohibition is very clear. Others have tried to make it say that women are not to usurp the position of teacher; as long as the elders ask them to preach, it’s OK. Or they’re not to teach false things. But these positions are still missing the most obvious point. But neither the grammar nor the vocabulary can support these arguments.[[5]](#footnote-5) Notice how Paul again repeats his earlier point at the end of verse 12: “rather, she is to remain quiet.” In other words, women are to *listen* to the authoritative teaching – they’re to benefit from it, disciple one another in it, encourage their brothers in Christ to believe and obey it, but God has not called them to deliver that teaching to the church.

**\*\*\***You could look at it from this perspective: **Women are called to model an example before all the believers in the church of what it looks like to be a humble yet discerning disciple of Jesus Christ; one who is eager to learn and submit under the God-given authority structure laid down in God’s Word for the church.**

To help us think more clearly about why these 2 restrictions are given, we’ll look at **v13-14** where we find 2 particular reasons.

**Reason 1** in **v13** we read *“For Adam was formed first, then Eve.”* It’s important to see here that Paul’s argument isn’t one from pragmatics or preference or cultural relevance. His argument is one rooted in creation in **Genesis 2**. God made man and woman in a certain order to communicate a universal truth that He intended to guide and guard people in this life. Timothy’s church was struggling with dissension and confusion because they were *ignoring* this created order.

**Reason 2** for these restrictions is **v14:** *“Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”* Paul’s not saying that women are more gullible than men. Both men and women can be deceived. But when Paul says “*Adam was not deceived*,” he is observing that Adam isn’t the one that the serpent targeted first with his temptation. In **Genesis 3**, when Satan went to Eve and lied to her, he aimed to subvert the created order God had established. So, instead of going to Adam, God’s appointed leader, he deliberately defied that order and went to Eve, putting her in the position of spokesperson, leader and defender.

I think it’s important to notice this: Satan wants men to be passive and indifferent toward God’s commands and he wants women to come out from under the protection of men so that they too can be deceived. Twisting gender roles around is his most ancient strategy! **So men, every time you’re passive in your leadership, do you see what you’re doing?** If you’re not careful, you can become a willing partner in Satan’s rebellion. **And women, that means for you to rebel against godly male leadership** (not all male leadership, but godly male leadership) that too plays right into Satan’s hands.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Finally, Paul concludes with **a promise** in **v15.[[7]](#endnote-1)** It’s a famously difficult verse to interpret. But I believe it’s here to give women hope: “*Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”* The last phrase is clear. If any women have been guilty of overstepping their Biblical role in this matter, they shouldn’t despair; they should walk in repentance: They should continue in faith, love, holiness, and self-control.

What about the phrase “saved through childbearing?” We know from Paul’s writing elsewhere that you’re only saved by repentance and faith in Christ. Paul’s not teaching here salvation by works. We also know that some women can’t have children because of the fall’s painful and mysterious effects on our bodies – there are plenty of women in the Bible who are fully feminine in spite of their difficulties in bearing children. Paul’s not saying that! Since we are in the context of women’s roles, the verse conveys that **women can have confidence they are walking in repentance when they stop usurping authority [in the home and the church] and instead embrace their role of resting under male leadership.** That will be seen *often*, for those who are married, in embracing their role of being a wife and a mother. But rest assure, Paul is *not* saying that you must get married or have children to ensure your salvation or be a godly woman.

**QUESTIONS?**

In the remaining time we have, let’s look next briefly at **1 Cor 11:3-16**. (pew Bibles on pg. 958) As you turn there, here is some background:

It appears that in Corinth, the culturally acceptable thing for women to do to honor their husbands was to wear some type of head covering or veil in public. It also appears there was some type of women’s liberation movement going on at this time in Corinth that called women to take their head coverings off, which may have signaled independence from her husband’s leadership. Evidently, some of the women in the Corinthian church had embraced this thinking and were speaking up during services with their heads uncovered, thus disgracing their husbands and the church.

So, in this section Paul is calling the women to see this posture as rebellious and to repent.

*I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, 5 but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. 6 For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. 7 For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; 12 for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.*

1. **1 Corinthians 11:3-16**

We’re not going to deal with every possible question today. Instead, we’re going to focus on 3 major truths/principles from this text:

**A)** **God expects women to serve publicly in the church by praying and prophesying.**

As we see in **verse 5**, Paul expects women to pray and prophesy during the church’s meeting. When we think of New Testament prophecy in a public church meeting, we shouldn’t see it as the giving of inerrant revelation from God, because later in Ch. 14 he says prophecies must be evaluated. We can define it as *speaking about God’s truth to edify God’s people.* There’s more we could say, but however we understand prophecy, it’s clear that women were allowed and even encouraged to participate in certain aspects of the church’s public worship as long as they did so in a way that embraced and respected male leadership.

Now, what about *1 Corinthians 14:34-35*? Doesn’t that go directly against this idea? Flip over there and follow along…

*1 Corinthians 14:34-35 “As in all the churches of the saints, 34 the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.*

Is this some kind of contradiction with what we’ve just heard? I don’t think so. In ch. 11 Paul is addressing the heart of the women in Corinth calling them to publically honor their husbands and the church as they participate. In ch. 14 he is doing the same, but the context from verse 29 is “weighing what has been said.” Verse 29 says when people in the congregation give prophecies, those prophecies must be weighed and judged as either being from the Lord or not from the Lord. So, the “speaking” he’s talking about here *seems to* refer to the authoritative evaluation of prophesies that have been given.

In other words, Paul teaches us that women are allowed to pray and prophesy, but it’s not appropriate for them “speak” when it comes to the public judging and evaluating of those prophecies against Scripture, because that would fall into the category of exercising authoritative teaching to the church.

So for us here at CHBC, you’ll frequently hear women share testimonies of salvation when they get baptized or testimonies of grace on Sunday nights, or when they speak up at Wednesday night Bible study. But when they do, Mark or another pastor is standing there on behalf of the all the elders to “weigh” what has been said and speak up if any correction needs to be made.

Back to chapter 11 and principle B:

**B) God wants women to serve in the church in a way that clearly embraces their feminine identity.**

This is the whole point of the head-coverings, and really the whole section of verses 3-16. Paul is calling women to present themselves in a way that makes it clear that they are embracing their femininity, which includes submission to God’s design of honoring male leadership. When Paul says in verses 14-15 that “nature” teaches the Corinthians that long hair is a disgrace for a man but glory for a woman, he’s *not* claiming that certain hair lengths or styles are essential to being masculine or feminine. He’s saying that nature teaches you that men and women are different. We naturally have a conscience that should direct us to live consistently with masculinity or femininity, whatever that may look like in a particular culture. Norms and fashions change over time, but what hasn’t changed is the fact that we’re created to express our manhood or womanhood. Of course, that “natural” instinct has been marred and distorted by the fall, but it still exists and should be honored.

In that culture, the way married women showed submission was to wear a covering on their head in public and also to not cut their hair short, which was evidently something that the temple prostitutes would do. So, should Christian women wear head coverings today? Some people think so. But in our culture, women don’t wear head coverings, so to wear one wouldn’t necessarily communicate submission - which is the point of what Paul’s saying here. The challenge is that in our culture, we don’t have a garment that says, “I’m happy to be a woman who accepts the authority of my husband and of the elders according to God’s design.” If a woman refused to take her husband’s last name (at least traditionally), or maybe refuse to wear a wedding ring, that might amount to a public “dishonoring” of her husband in our culture. For us, a woman might show respect to her husband and to the other men of the church by 1) intentionally building up her husband with her speech if she does testify publicly; 2) if she has concerns about the teaching she’s hearing, bringing those concerns to her husband first if she’s married (1 Cor 14:35), and if she’s single, bringing those privately to an elder.

**C.) Male teaching authority in the church doesn’t invalidate the equality of interdependence.**

This is really our summary point. Like we saw in 1 Tim 2, male teaching authority in the church is an implication of God’s created order. In **verses 8-10**, Paul writes: “*Man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.”* A wife’s submission in church is directly related to how God created Adam to lead and Eve to help. Some have suggested that phrase about the angels simply means that as the heavenly beings look at the church following God’s created order, they are filled with joy and give praise to God. Others suggest it could be believers from another church (“messengers”) checking in on the health of the congregation. Beyond that, I have no idea!

But Paul goes on, verses 11-12: *Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.* The point? **We need each other!** We have different roles, but neither sex is superior or inferior. Men and women are interdependent, and both are utterly dependent on God.

**Conclusion**

We should conclude. Why does this all matter? Because God has spoken clearly in his word about the key principles of how gender roles function in the life of the local church. We have no authority to add or subtract from scripture, to revisit it and manipulate it to conform to our times. God is good, all he says and does is good. When his commands conflict with our modern sensibilities, our job isn’t to conform the Bible to our understanding, but to conform our understanding to the Bible. This is how we honor God.

But at the end of the day, this matters because it gets to the heart of how we as a church organize ourselves together. And God has designed the church to be a display of his glory and the gospel. To reject this design, could sadly work to *undermine* the gospel. May we be faithful to believe God’s Word, and by His grace live out what it teaches!

**Questions? Comments?**

1. This morning in Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, we’ll be looking at the beauty of God’s plan for gender roles in the local church. We’ll try to tackle some tricky questions: head coverings, that verse in 1 Timothy about women being “saved through childbearing,” but the overall goal is to see that men and women both have essential roles to play in building up the body of Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In 1 Tim 5:15 we see that some young widows “have already strayed after Satan.” (1 Tim 5:14-15; 2 Tim 3:6). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. the word used for learning “quietly” is used in several places in the NT to describe a crowd that is silenced in preparation for someone’s speech: Acts 11:18 (Judaizers silenced), 21:14 (Epheisans cease arguing); 22:2 (rioters being silenced); 1 Thess 4:11 (mind own business); 2 Thess 3:12 (work in quietness and earn their own living); 1 Peter 3:4 (woman should have a quiet spirit). In particular, Paul is telling the women among them who were characterized by (in the words of 1 Tim 5:13) “going house to house, [being] gossips and busybodies” to be quiet and stop stirring up trouble. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For instance, 1 Timothy 3:5 speaks of an elder “caring for” the church in the same way that he “manages” his own home. Then in 1 Timothy 5:17 specifically speaks of elders who “rule well.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See the chapters by Wolters, Köstenberger, and Schreiner in *Women in the Church.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Optional Section:

Some will ask, *does this mean a woman can never teach a man anything?* Many who would argue that women can indeed instruct men would quickly turn to the scene where Priscilla and Aquila instructed Apollos in **Acts 18:24-26:**

*24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*

*What does this scene teach us?* It teaches us that God used a husband and a wife in an immature, but wildly gifted believer’s life. There’s simply not enough information for us to contradict the clear meaning of 1 Tim 2 from this passage. There is no evidence that Priscilla was the main one teaching Apollos; we should assume that she supported her husband in a private setting in testifying about the Christian realities that Apollos was ignorant about. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Here’s a longer version of the section on 1 Tim 2:15 from a previous manuscript if it would be useful for you (footnote may run to next page):

Imagine that you are one of the women who has been guilty of undermining Timothy’s pastoral leadership. You were trying to teach men some of the things you heard from false teachers. But now you’ve been confronted, maybe by Timothy, and you’re convicted of your sin. You want to repent. But you fear that the deception that you’ve been involved in was so terrible, you wonder if there’s any hope for you. Paul says, don’t despair: such a woman can be saved!

She will be saved “through childbearing.” What does this mean?! I’m going to introduce a very long word, but it’s a helpful concept: Paul’s using a *synecdoche* (sin-EK-duh-key)here. That’s a figure of speech where a part of something stands for the whole. Like “all *hands* on deck” – you don’t really want a pile of hands on the deck, you want workers, people. Or, you buy a new car, and tell your friend “Check out these *wheels*.” You don’t want him to just stare at the tires; the word “wheels” stands for the whole thing. It’s similar here. “Childbearing” is a particularly illustrative and memorable part of what it means to embrace a woman’s God-given role of being a helper. After all, it’s a uniquely feminine duty.

Now, we know from Paul’s writing elsewhere that you are only saved by repentance and faith in Christ. Paul’s not teaching here salvation by works. Rather, I think he’s using a symbolic image to describe what repentance often looks like. Since we are in the context of women’s roles, the verse conveys that **women can have confidence they are truly repentant when they stop usurping authority and instead embrace their role of resting under male leadership.** That will be seen most often in embracing their role of being a wife and a mother. Thus, “through childbearing.” But Paul is *not* saying that you must get married or have children to ensure your salvation or be a godly woman. He knew his Bible well, and there are many women in the Old Testament who are commended as fully feminine even while struggling with infertility for years. Paul’s saying that to walk in repentance, you need to embrace biblical femininity. Childbearing is often a part of that – not always – but since it seems the false teachers were undermining the value of the family, childbearing is the specific aspect of a woman’s role that Paul uses as a figure of speech to call women to femininity in general.

And that’s why he includes those virtues at the end – he’s explaining more of what it looks like to continue walking in repentance: faith, love, holiness, self-control. To apply this verse, pray that God would grow you in those four virtues and that he would give you grace to enjoy and benefit from the men who teach God’s Word in our church. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)