

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

“Our Conduct in the Church”

1 Timothy 2:11-15

We are in 1 Timothy chapter 2, we will be finishing up chapter 2 this morning. We will be looking at verses 11-15. 1 Timothy 2:11-15 says "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."

So we will deal with that this morning. Let me just cut this section right out of here. Now on to chapter 3....

That's the way many people would like to deal with this, we'll just pretend it is not here and move on. But this is Valley Bible so we will spend some time dealing with it this morning.

As we deal with it we start with verse 11. But before we get to that, there is a fellow who over one hundred years ago founded the modern Olympics in 1896 in Athens. Now we are soon heading back to Athens for the Olympics again. But he founded them with a little different intent than what is going on now. He had this to say when he founded the modern Olympics. He said, "The Olympics are the solemn and period exaltation of male athleticism with the applause of women as its reward." His view of women was not very politically correct as these days and that actually wasn't that uncommon back then, in fact it continued on although the women began to participate in the Olympics, it grew slowly.

An interesting story was in 1928 the women were then running up to 800 meters at a time. The 800 meter, which is about a half-mile run, was done in the 1928 Olympics and the press reported that there were several women that collapsed afterward and that caused the Olympic body to do away with the Olympics until 1960 because it was a little too rigorous. Well now these days we know that women can handle it, in fact my fourth grade daughter running cross country runs two miles with nobody collapsing out there, so now we have developed.

But some things are not a matter of opinion whether women can do this or do that. Some things are clearer and God's Word gives us certain direction and so it moves out of the realm of human opinion.

Verse 11 speaks about what women's attitude must be in terms of the scriptures. They should have a proper attitude and that's to be receptive, to be receptive. Verse 11 says, "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness." Now this kind of will go without saying here, but I need to say it just to clarify that instruction here is presumed to be in accordance with apostolic teaching.

It's not that anybody that instructs women should be received with entire submissiveness, no not at all. Some instruction should be rejected. But with apostolic instruction women should quietly receive it with entire submissiveness.

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So this seems to then mean that there is a role for discernment for women to be able to identify what is apostolic teaching.

Quietness, in this case does not mean silence, the word can mean silence, but that would be a very limited understanding here if it only meant silence, all the women must be quite and that's it, no there is something more important going on here. It means tranquility, not disruptiveness, the word here means tranquility, in order to have teaching done and in order for instruction to occur, there must be a setting for this instruction to take place in, quietness, tranquility, and not just silence.

So we must be receptive, learning, that's the second part, responsiveness, not just listening, paying attention, because we should receive instruction with entire submissiveness when we are attentive or paying attention or alert.

But more than that, learning and seeking to apply. When you come you need to come seeking to learn and to apply. Now you have seen me this morning and I also see you. There's a variety of you out here, some of you are prone to dose off, hopefully it's not because of me, I don't want to be conducting the crime of boring you with the Scripture, that would be abhorrent. But when you come you need to be thinking of learning. Alert not dozing, not daydreaming, not thinking of something like the car you want to buy or what you are going to have for lunch, you need to be giving your mind and attention to the scripture and not having a conversation with the person next to you chatting away.

You should be thinking, alert, learning, not distracting one another. Not skeptical, like one who says "I'm listening but I'm not going to buy it unless you roll me over and I can be convinced."

Or some people listen, they hear, which causes them to think of something else which causes them to think of something else and pretty soon they are engaging you but not on the topic of what you are talking about but on some tangent.

Now all of these things are not giving the attention to the Scripture. And I'm saying this to you not just for your benefit, not just for my benefit because everyone likes to be paid attention to, but really this is what God's Word really demands.

When God's Word speaks, people ought to sit up and listen to what it says, and so should you, you should be attentive, you should be responsive, and you should be looking to apply it. Even if I'm boring and even if I'm not doing a very good job of being clear or even if I'm not even right you can still be learning from something that is going on this morning. You could be attentive and looking to learn.

Now we will move to the heavy waters, verse 12, "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet."

Ah, what to do with this. Note that the context here speaks to the function of women in the church, this is dealing with the function of women in the church. Paul gives this, to Timothy who is leading people in church.

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Now you may believe this is true for all people for all time in all places but this is in the context of the church. So if you want to hold an opinion that is more than that, that's your opinion, but that's not what this verse says. This verse is limiting the teaching of women over men, of the exercising authority over men in the context of the church.

When Paul writes, "I do not allow woman to teach or exercise authority over a man," don't suppose this is Paul interjecting himself, that this is only what he thinks. He says "I don't want this" or "I want that" or "I urge this," often, he does this all the time. This is part of the Scripture, an apostolic authority teaching the church how to function. This just isn't some words that are Paul's opinion and other words that are the Scripture. Paul is embodying the Scripture, he is the author of this and as the Scripture we should be adhering to it. It's not just the words of Paul it's the word of God through Paul.

Now when we read this we must remember that men and women have an equal standing before God though they have different roles within the church. Galatians 3:28 says it all, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

This then is not an issue of our standing before God, but our function in the church. Let me put it another way, women do not have a different significance in ministry, only a different sphere of ministry. We all should have a sphere of ministry, every Christian should be serving others. But some have a larger sphere of ministry, some have a smaller sphere of ministry, some people have a sphere of ministry that's to younger people or older people or to certain types of people.

So just having a different sphere of ministry has nothing to do with the significance of that ministry, in fact we would not have a significant ministry in the church if we did not have people taking responsibility for the parts of it, the parts make up the whole. So don't consider this to be of less significance, this in direction to women, making women's role as less important, not at all.

Now as people read this, there is an axiom that says "*that the plain sense makes good sense seek no other sense*" it seems straight forward but there are objections that people will bring, what are the objections?

Well here are some, first the biblical objection, the biblical objection is just people that object to the Bible, flat out. They do not consider it to be authoritative in whole and they will toss some of it aside saying well that's what it says, I don't agree with it, its wrong, end of story. Well at least people who are saying this about the scripture as a whole are consistent. The people that are picking and choosing things are inconsistent and I think this is quite difficult to do with any kind of integrity to say this is what God says I accept this but this part over here I don't agree with and we'll ignore that. I think you have to take it all as what it stands because once you start picking and choosing you might as well just write it yourself because you have now taken the place of the person in authority over God and His Word.

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Then there is the cultural objection. Now the rest of these are people that actually are professing some belief in the authority and integrity of the Scripture. One objection is the cultural objection saying this is culturally limited to the people of Paul's day. So, is it? If you recall a few weeks ago as we dealt with a few verses before this about women adorning themselves with proper clothing and modest and I shared that modesty varies from culture to culture. There is a cultural element in terms of what is modest, what is modest in our culture might be immodest in another culture and vice a versa. And that's true over time.

So why isn't this cultural? Well it is not culturally limited for this specific reason and that is verses 13-14 takes the reason for Paul saying this out of his culture and puts it into the time of the creation. The creation is no more connected to the culture that Paul was speaking in as it is to our culture today. That is God's design from the beginning. *"For Adam was first created then Eve."* This relation to Adam and Eve takes this injunction out of the role of culture and moves it to the creative order. So this is what God intended for all people starting with the first people, Adam and Eve and this is true for Paul's culture and its true for our culture. It's true for all cultures, this is not how women should function in the church.

Then there is the educational objection. Verse 11 says, "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness." verse 12 says, "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." Some people want to tie these together and say, once women receive instruction then they are able to teach men. However, there is no cause and effect relationship between verse 11 and verse 12. There's not if women receive instruction then they can teach, it is two statements about women that stand together, one does not eliminate the other.

Then there is the functional objection. This is a very common one as well. In fact, this is the one I first encountered when I engaged people in this verse. Many years ago, I was in college, I went to a conference, a student conference, it was actually a college age conference for people throughout the western United States, from Alaska to Texas. I went with the Baptist Student Union at Eastern New Mexico University. I had some friends that were going, and I had a free weekend and said I would like to go.

So I went, there was a large audience and the main speaker, the plenary speaker was a women explaining the Scripture even more forcefully then I am doing right now. And I thought, "well this is interesting, I wonder what people think of 1 Timothy 2:12." So I asked my friends and they thought about it and discussed it and they came to the conclusion the functional objection, in other words as long as she functions under the authority of a man, she is fine. So they just looked at the exercising authority and said she's not exercising authority completely, there are men over her, there are men leading the Southern Baptist Convention, therefore she is okay.

Then they made the application over to churches, so a women teaching an adult Bible school or Bible study and men are there is fine because as long as the pastor is a man, then she is under the authority of a man. Well, the problem is that this verse says more then just exercising authority, it says teaching and it also goes beyond just the function. You cannot as an authority figure say "well, I will say that's okay because I'm an authority if the women herself is teaching or exercising authority." The verse stands for each person, no one person can say, "well I will overturn that verse."

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The question is whether she was doing what was forbidden. So the functional objection is as long as there is someone in charge then she can function under authority and that's not what the verse says.

Then there's the pragmatic objection. This is how there ends up being women missionaries, leading churches, and planting churches. Because, where are the men, they're just not going therefore somebody has got to do this.

You know I will admit that if we were only going to look at what's pragmatic, in other words what works well, then we could find women that can teach the Bible better than me. We can find women that can interpret and study the Bible better than me and they can explain things more clearly than I, maybe we should have them doing this. Well, just because it works better doesn't mean that we should do it.

We should look beyond what is pragmatic and look to the principles of the Scripture. If there are principles that may not seem like they work well to you, it doesn't mean that we should then throw the principles aside and do what's pragmatic. We cannot live this way. So just because some women could do a great job at something doesn't mean if the Scripture forbids that that they should. I believe that there are women who can teach very effectively but they should not teach men in the context of the church. That's what the Scripture says.

The Bible specifically limits the ministry of women in the church. It limits the ministry of women in the church in two specific ways, they should not exercise authority and they should not teach. There's a word or separating, so they cannot exercise authority, bring leadership, that's different than just facilitating, getting things done, but actually bringing leadership, exercising authority, directing, women should not teach.

And there are reasons for this. Two reasons given by Paul are this, the first reason is God's design, verse 13 says this, "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve." God had a design, He had a plan and that was for man to be created and then women. That was the way he did it and that was Paul's reason and the second reason Paul gives is that it was not Adam who was deceived but the women being quite deceived fell into transgression. So based on these two reasons women should not teach or exercise authority over a man, over a man in the context of the church, because of God's design and God's plan and woman's deception, the woman was deceived.

You may not think these are really compelling reasons but I think they are great reasons simply because they are Paul's reasons given in the Scripture and therefore they are great reasons. I have accepted these reasons as being valid and supporting the argument.

I need to say a word about teaching before we move on. Teaching is not just simply a transferring of information, it is more than that. So much of teaching today is, "I'll share my opinion about something and you take it or leave it and we will call that teaching." That's teaching but it's not biblical teaching.

When teaching is spoken of in the Scripture it's referring to something beyond just a transfer of information. It includes the expectation of acceptance in a change of life.

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So teaching means that you are being moved or being attempted to being moved and compelled to apply what the Word says, that is biblical teaching. It is not just an exchange of ideas.

So, women can share information, can in the context of a Bible study throw out an idea but cannot to men move to an exposition of the Scripture with the expectation of changing the beliefs of another. That would be biblical teaching.

Now in the context of the Bible we can see this passage fitting. When you look at how Jesus chose apostles, He was with men and women. Some of the women conducted themselves more exemplary than the men did and were a finer example of faith and conduct than some of the men were. However, Jesus chose the men as the disciples and therefore the apostles. As we look at the Scripture it's the men that are doing the teaching and it appears that it is God's plan.

Now that doesn't mean women can't teach in other fashions, in fact, we see women being able to teach women in Titus 2:4, "that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children." We find women teaching unsaved men in Acts 18:28. Evangelism is outside the church, obviously, but within the context of the church, women are not to teach or exercise authority over men. It is plainly stated they are to remain quite, same word, tranquility, they are to be receiving the Word.

Now where does this leave women? Does this leave women sort of second rate, kind of limited to some thing that's really not very significant? Well hardly. There are things that all people are best suited for.

You might know this person, this is Michael Jordan, who according to a recent ESPN poll, was voted the greatest athlete of the 20th century (somewhat debatable perhaps since he really only excelled at one sport). He did try another sport, he took up baseball in 1994, he became a professional baseball player and quit basketball. He played for the Birmingham Barons, a AA team, and he batted .202 in AA baseball. He is a substantial fellow, 6'5" and muscular, and yet it took him 345 at bats before he hit his first homerun in AA baseball.

The greatest athlete of the 20th century was a rather mediocre minor league baseball player and moved back to basketball where I'd suggest he belonged, playing basketball where he was very successful.

Now I suspect if we brought Michael Jordan out to the softball field tonight he would do phenomenal. He might be the best softball player we ever had out there and we would all say, "wow, isn't he great." And he would be, but what would he be best doing? Perhaps playing Valley Bible basketball, he would be better at that.

So there's things that people can do well, but then there's things that people can do even better and I think that when we look at women there's this teaching that kind of is directing women to a certain function in the church and that's this next passage, verse 15, "But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."

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Some people consider this to be the most difficult passage to interpret in the entire Scripture. So we have got to figure out what this means. And how do you go about figuring out what something means, you look at the context, that will help us greatly.

And the context before is about women not teaching, their role in the church and then we look at the context afterward and what's the context afterward, the beginning of the next chapter says, "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach," so it has to do with church leadership and with the function of whose going to lead the church and what the qualifications are. So this is in the context of the church and the women's role in the church.

So when we look at verse 15, it is not just this statement thrown in there, but it is basically building out of a thought, that will help us. But before we get to that thought which is the praise worthy achievement of women, we have to look at some other peoples ideas which are the flawed views of 1 Timothy 2:15.

One flawed view of 1 Timothy 2:15, is that this means eternal salvation comes through the barring of children. If you have the NIV I think it says "saved" and that's really what the word means. My version, the New American Standard says "preserved" and other translations will say saved or delivered. The word means "saved," that's what it normally means in the Scripture is eternal salvation but that's not the only usage for it. Another usage for this word means "delivered" or "preserve." So don't suppose this means that women will be eternally saved in the barring of children, that is ludicrous. Women are not saved by having children; they are saved by faith in Christ.

Next, here's an ingenious view that salvation here is through the birth of the Savior. The child bearing is referring to the birth of Jesus and through the birth of Jesus we have a Savior and that is what is saving us. Well it's clever, unfortunately it ignores some plurals here like children rather than child or the word "they." This is not just dealing with one person, it's dealing with people and these people are preserved.

Another option is physical deliverance in childbirth. Does this mean women will be physically delivered when they bear children if they continue in faith with love? Is that what this means? Now this may not be so objectionable today when not very many women pass away in childbirth thanks to advances in medical technology, but it was more objectionable when many people were dying in childbirth many years ago which was a much more common thing.

This is almost like the health and wealth gospel, if we have faith then God will bless us we will not suffer death or whatever. Well that's not what this means because there are many godly people in history that have died bearing children and this has no application to them, they didn't die in childbirth because they didn't have faith, they died in childbirth because of physical complications that occur and the inability for people to help them.

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Lastly, is the view spiritual deliverance from seizing men's roles in the church? They will be delivered from taking the place of men. Well, it's not that either, it's more than that; it's more significant than that.

The best view of 1 Timothy 2:15 speaks of spiritual deliverance to a fulfilled life in serving children. And remember this is in the context of the church so we are serving ministry to children, that's the way women are preserved. I'll have to explain this a bit.

Child bearing is a figure of speech; it is not an uncommon figure of speech in the scripture at all. It's actually a synecdoche, that's what that is, a figure of speech that uses part of something to refer to its whole. So we refer to a part that by referring to the part it's a figure of speech meaning the whole.

Let me give you two examples. We speak of the blood of Christ. The Scriptures speak of the blood of Christ taking away the sins of the world. The blood is a part of a whole and the whole being the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The blood typifies the death of Christ; it is a part of a whole.

Let me give you another example, the cross of Christ, people are many times referred to as the enemies of the cross of Christ in the scripture. Does that mean literally the cross; they are enemies of the cross? No, the cross is a part of a greater whole and the greater whole is they are an enemy of Christ and the cross is a figure of speech typifying or illustrating the death of Christ for the sins of man. So they are enemies of that and they are enemies of the most notable thing about Christ and that is His death for our sins. So it's a common figure of speech, it uses a part of something to refer to a whole.

Bearing of children is the most notable thing when it comes to women and children, the most eventful thing but it is not the only thing. It is the being of more and more. So they're preserved through the bearing and the rearing and the ministry to children. They're delivered to this important ministry.

Women are not only irreplaceable in childbirth but also in ministry to children, they are irreplaceable. We would not, as a church, have a children's ministry if it were not for women. Women are doing the lion's share of the work. If we just had the men it would collapse, if we didn't have the men and we still had the women it would still function.

The men are helping and they are a wonderful help but the women are carrying the banner and that's because men have other responsibilities as a whole and cannot do what the women can do in terms of children. So when this verse says women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restrain, in other words if they can conduct themselves faithfully and lovingly with sanctified self restrain then their ministry, their caring for raising the children is going to be effective.

This is true even if women cannot have children. Now these days it's more common for women to be able to have children than it used to be because of advances in medical technology but even so there are some women that just cannot have children.

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Where does this relegate them, they can still be actively involved in ministry to children not only through adoption or foster care or other ways or just in caring for children, other people's children in helping in children's ministry as a whole. There is a lot to be done here.

Now don't think that well now you have allocated us to some minor thing, some secondary role in the church, don't think that. Even other passages that talk about women teaching, meaning older women teach the younger women, you're probably familiar with that in Titus 2:4 doesn't stop there but it says to teach them to love their husbands, to love their children. So even in the context of older women teaching the younger children they're still involved in this, children and serving children involved in this.

This is an important element and the reason this is an important element is because children are the future and in the words of Whitney Houston, "I believe the children are the future teach them well and let them lead the way." Now in that song, "The Greatest Love of All," is an abomination to the teaching of the Word of God, it has nothing to do with biblical teaching, it says the greatest love of all is to love yourself which is a black hole leading to nowhere. What the greatest love is according to Jesus in John 15 is to give your life for your friend in speaking of himself there, Jesus giving his life for us is the greatest love of all. But never the less that initial phrase from this song is true, children are the future and if we are not going to teach them well who is.

Other people are going to be teaching them so we need to be in the business of teaching them and leading them so that Valley Bible Church and other churches thirty years from now will be stronger rather than weaker. So do you think we have relegated women to an insignificant ministry? I don't think so.

I think that the children's ministry, to build up the children of our church is critical to the future of our church, its also critical to the outreach of our church because who are the people that are more likely to flock to activities of our church. Is it the fifty year olds or is it the ten year olds? I think it's the younger people not the older people and if we are in the business of children's ministry, effective children's ministry we will find that we will reach more people than adult ministry's will and in fact children's ministry has a greater potential of reaching adults than adult ministry does because adults tend to be very concerned about their children and then get in contact with Christ and Christianity through their children, it happens all the time.

So I hope you are coming away with this realizing there is no greater ministry that women can do than to carry the banner of children in youth ministry in this church. It is of critical importance.

Let's pray together shall we. Lord, we thank You for Your word. We thank You for it's integrity, it's authority and that we can trust it as having a plan for us that's right. Even when our culture may say it's wrong we can know that Your Word is right and in time all will see that. We pray that you would help us to apply Your Scripture well, individually and in fellowship, and be careful with it and to be able to see You better. In Jesus name, amen.