



First Timothy Bible Study 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Bible Study
by
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Greek NT

8 Βούλομαι οὖν προσεύχεσθαι τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, ἐπαίροντας ὀσίους χεῖρας χωρὶς ὀργῆς καὶ διαλογισμοῦ. 9 ὡσαύτως [καὶ] γυναῖκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ, 10 ἀλλ' ὅπρῳ γυναιξὶν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσεβείαν, δι' ἔργων ἀγαθῶν. 11 γυνὴ ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ· 12 διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω, οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἄνδρός, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ. 13 Ἀδὰμ γὰρ πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη, εἶτα Εὐά· 14 καὶ Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἐξαπατηθεῖσα ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν. 15 σωθήσεται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, ἐὰν μείνωσιν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἀγιασμῷ μετὰ σωφροσύνης

Die Gute Nachricht Bibel

8 Ich will, dass überall in den Gottesdiensten die Männer reine Hände zu Gott erheben, im Herzen frei von Zorn oder Streitsucht.

9 Ebenso will ich, dass die Frauen im Gottesdienst passend angezogen sind. Sie sollen sich mit Anstand und Schamgefühl schmücken anstatt mit auffallenden Frisuren, goldenem Schmuck, Perlen oder teuren Kleidern. 10 Gute Taten sollen ihre Zierde sein. So gehört es sich für Frauen, die zeigen wollen, dass sie Gott ehren.

11 Die Frauen sollen still zuhören und das Gehörte in sich aufnehmen; sie müssen sich völlig unterordnen. 12 Ich lasse nicht zu, dass sie vor der Gemeinde sprechen oder sich über die Männer erheben. Sie sollen sich ruhig und still verhalten. 13 Denn zuerst wurde Adam geschaffen, dann erst Eva. 14 Es war auch nicht Adam, der vom Verführer getäuscht wurde; die Frau ließ sich täuschen und übertrat das Gebot Gottes.

15 Eine Frau soll Kinder zur Welt bringen; dann wird sie gerettet. Sie muss aber auch an Glauben und Liebe festhalten und in aller Besonnenheit ein Leben führen, wie es Gott gefällt.

NRSV

8 I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; 9 also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, 10 but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. 11 Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. 12 I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. 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, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

NLT

8 So wherever you assemble, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy. 9 And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. 10 For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do. 11 Women should listen and learn quietly and submissively. 12 I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Let them listen quietly. 13 For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve. 14 And it was the woman, not Adam, who was deceived by Satan, and sin was the result. 15 But women will be saved through childbearing and by continuing to live in faith, love, holiness, and modesty.



The Study of the Text:¹

As one reads through the pages of scripture, occasionally texts will surface that appear to not make sense. Or, their surface meaning seems clear but the ideas presented suggest ideas that seem contradictory to basic Christian values. The Bible reader is left wondering what to make of such texts. How could they be in the Bible? Critics of Judaism and of Christianity quickly point to such texts as indications of the falseness of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, or at best, to its inferiority to other religious and / or philosophical traditions. In response many Christian leaders choose simply to ignore these texts and never use them in either preaching or teaching. In the more liturgical traditions of Protestantism, 1 Timothy 2:8-15 becomes one of these scripture texts that are omitted from the prescribed scripture readings in the annual religious calendar.

Why? The primary reason is the seemingly derogatory attitude of Paul toward women in verses 11-15. The position taken here seems to reflect an elitist, male chauvinist attitude that women are 'baby machines' and outside the home they should not open their mouths, especially when at church. For those who hold the scripture in high esteem as the revelation of God to sinful humanity, this text -- along with 1 Corinthians 14:34-35² -- poses a significant challenge for clear understanding.³ The popularly assumed ideas about women reflected here unquestionably contradict Paul's teaching in passages like Gal. 3:28,⁴ and the leadership roles of various women in many of the Pauline churches of the first Christian century.⁵

¹With each study we will ask two basic questions. First, what was the most likely meaning that the first readers of this text understood? This is called the 'historical meaning' of the text. That must be determined, because it becomes the foundation for the second question, "What does the text mean to us today?" For any applicational meaning of the text for modern life to be valid it must grow out of the historical meaning of the text. Otherwise, the perceived meaning becomes false and easily leads to wrong belief.

²**1 Cor. 14:31-40 (NRSV):** 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, 33 for God is a God not of disorder but of peace. (As in all the churches of the saints, 34 women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. 36 Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?) 37 Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. 38 Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized. 39 So, my friends, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; 40 but all things should be done decently and in order.

³Even more interesting is the tension between 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and 14:34-35. In chapter eleven a woman who prays and preaches in the church worship service must be veiled, as per first century social custom, while the man doing the same thing must not have his head covered. But in chapter fourteen the woman evidently is not to speak openly in church at all.

1 Cor. 11:1-16 (NRSV): 1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. 2 I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you. 3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ. 4 Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, 5 but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head — it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. 6 For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil. 7 For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. 8 Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. 10 For this reason a woman 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 or man independent of woman. 12 For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? 14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 But if anyone is disposed to be contentious — we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

⁴**Gal. 3:27-29 (NRSV):** 27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 *There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.* 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

⁵Paul never had to defend the right of women to evangelize or to participate in local church activity. Apparently his churches accepted female as well as male leaders (see Rom. 16:1, 3, 6, 12, 15). In Phil. 4:2-3 he singles out two women church leaders, then at odds with each other, and emphasizes that "they have labored side by side with me in the gospel." There is no suggestion that their labor differs from that of their male colleagues. Priscilla appears to have been at least the equal of her husband Aquila in their joint work as teachers (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; 1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:3.) [Robin Scroggs, "Women in the NT," *Interpreter's Dictionary* Page 2 of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Study

How, then, does one make sense of these two scripture texts in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. The history of interpretation of this text in 1 Timothy would fill a large room with the thousands of books and articles that have been produced over just the past three hundred years alone.⁶ Out of this massive probing of the scripture text have emerged some guidelines and some exegetical issues present in the text that demand attention if one expects to come to a solid, defensible interpretation of the passage.⁷ The historical background, especially at Ephesus, should play a critical role in understanding this passage. The impact of the pagan temple to Diana / Artemis with its sacred prostitution was enormous. Religion and sexual immorality were vitally linked, even for married women. The history of the Christian movement at Ephesus through the mid-60s of the first Christian century from the time of its founding at Ephesus in the early 50s plays a role.⁸ The hermeneutical issue of determining what is cultural and thus local, in distinction from what is universal and thus timeless spiritual principle plays a critical role in the interpretive conclusions reached. The plugging of these conclusions into the framework of New Testament (and ultimately Bible) teachings about women in the life of the church present the next challenge.⁹



Thus our work is clearly in front of us. The focus will be on the Exegetical understanding of 1 Timothy 1:8-15, but attention will be given to the Biblical Theology issue of women in the life of the Christian church today also, especially as this scripture passage applies.

Context of our passage:

Historical Setting:

of the Bible, *iPreach* online.]

⁶“This is the most discussed passage in the PE today. Interpretations range from seeing Paul as a liberator and champion of women’s rights to dismissing Paul as wrong and irrelevant in today’s culture. George Bernard Shaw called Paul the “eternal enemy of women” (cited by Pagels, *JAAR* 42 [1974] 538). The literature is voluminous, and within the scope of this commentary it is not possible to enter into the whole of the discussion. The differing interpretations, however, will be reviewed as they relate directly to the historical meaning of this text; to do more than this would place too great an emphasis on this one passage and detract from the PE corpus as a whole. For the best presentations of the complementarian interpretation of the text, see Köstenberger et al., eds., *Women in the Church* (hereafter referred to by the authors of individual articles), and the works by Piper and Grudem, Moo, Fung, Hurley, and Foh. For the egalitarian interpretation, see Gritz, Paul, *Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus*, and the works by Fee, Groothuis, Scholer (especially “1 Timothy 2:9–15 and the *Place of Women in the Church’s Ministry*”), Perriman, and Spencer. The interchange between Moo and Payne is especially helpful.” [William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 106.]

⁷Mounce sees three interpretive issues as central to the text: “Three significant exegetical issues are encountered here that continue to surface throughout this paragraph. (1) What is principle and what is cultural application in this verse? (2) How closely connected to the Ephesian heresy are these verses. (3) Does *γυνή* mean “woman” or “wife”?” [William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 122]

⁸“Ephesus was an important center for Early Christianity from the AD 50s. From AD 52-54, Paul lived in Ephesus, working with the congregation and apparently organizing missionary activity into the hinterlands.[24] He became embroiled in a dispute with artisans, whose livelihood depended on selling the statuettes of Artemis in the Temple of Artemis (Acts 19:23–41). He wrote between 53 and 57 AD the letter 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (possibly from the “Paul tower” close to the harbour, where he was imprisoned for a short time). Later Paul wrote the Epistle to Ephesians while he was in prison in Rome (around 62 AD).

“Roman Asia was associated with John,[25] one of the chief apostles, and the Gospel of John might have been written in Ephesus, ca 90-100.[26] Ephesus was one of the seven cities addressed in Revelation (2:1–7), indicating that the church at Ephesus was strong.

“Two decades later, the church at Ephesus was still important enough to be addressed by a letter written by Bishop Ignatius of Antioch to the Ephesians in the early 2nd century AD, that begins with, “Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which is at Ephesus, in Asia, deservedly most happy, being blessed in the greatness and fullness of God the Father, and predestinated before the beginning of time, that it should be always for an enduring and unchangeable glory” (Letter to the Ephesians). The church at Ephesus had given their support for Ignatius, who was taken to Rome for execution.

“The house of the Virgin Mary, about 7 km (4 mi) from Selçuk, is believed to have been the last home of Mary, mother of Jesus. It is a popular place of pilgrimage which has been visited by three recent popes.” [“Ephesus: Ephesus and Christianity,” *Wikipedia* online]

⁹Thus not only is New Testament exegesis involved, but the discipline of Biblical Theology also plays a significant role. Exegesis focuses on what the text most likely meant to its first readers, while Biblical Theology seeks to apply not only individual biblical texts to today’s world, but to apply these texts in a coherent, systematic presentation of timeless spiritual principle (s).

The importance of the history, especially the social history, for clear understanding of this text is significant. Several historical aspects play a role here, including the issues of women in the ancient world, the history of the city, and the history of the Christian movement at Ephesus.

Women in ancient society:

The world of Paul in the first Christian century did not value women very highly. To be sure, attitudes varied in different parts of the Roman Empire, but in general women enjoyed little freedom and were largely viewed as 'baby machines' or 'objects of sexual gratification' by most men. Few women found alternatives to this rigid expectation. Prostitution, especially sacred prostitution in many of the temples, provided an option to domestic life. Marrying into extreme wealth, that could provide the necessary funds to assert one's own power and authority as a woman, was an option for some women. Women in Roman high society lived very differently than the rest of the women in the first century world. Jewish women found themselves having to live in the tension between their Jewish culture and society in general. The Torah, i.e., the Law of Moses, defined their life rigidly, and sometimes in tension with Greco-Roman values. In Palestine a Jewish woman could adhere to the Torah more easily than her Jewish counterpart living in the Diaspora, outside Palestine. There in Hellenistic Judaism the two cultures clashed more often, and more intensely. Add to this mixture was the distinctive regional nuances of cultural dynamic. Ephesus, for example, was the home for the temple to the goddess Artemis (= Diana), and exerted considerable influence over the region around the city. Women, primarily as 'sacred' prostitutes, played a central leadership role in the worship of this pagan deity, thus 'legitimizing' leadership roles in religion for women.¹⁰ This historic Greek influence on the city that reached back several centuries impacted attitudes, giving them some distinction from what would be found in Rome.

Greco-Roman women. The Roman Empire was male oriented from top to bottom, and thus women in the empire played a very secondary role in society.¹¹ A domestic role at home was



¹⁰The so-called mystery cults that were extensive in the eastern Mediterranean world in the second half of the first Christian century provided the opportunity for greatest freedom and self-expression for ancient women. Full equality with the men was a foundational pattern in most all of these religions. The 'fertility' basis of these religions opened the door for religious prostitution and sexual activity in their meeting places as an expression of worship to the respective deity or deities. The secretive nature of most of the groups in worship served to free up rampant immorality as a major aspect of worship. Women in the Greco-Roman world were attracted to these groups in large numbers as an outlet for personal expression and liberation from the otherwise depressing grind of daily living.

Some scholars are convinced that developing Gnosticism on the fringe of Christianity, clearly evident in the second century and taking shape during the first century, picked up some of these patterns and brought them into Christianity. This may very well lay in the background of the church member at Corinth living in sexual relations with his birth mother as a sign of spiritual superiority (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-13). Many scholars have also taken note of the large amount of similarities in the issues with women in the church between Corinth and Ephesus (1-2 Corinthians / 1-2 Timothy).

¹¹"Free-born women in ancient Rome were citizens (*cives*),[2] but could not vote or hold political office.[3] Because of their limited public role, women are named less frequently than men by Roman historians. But while Roman women held no direct political power, those from wealthy or powerful families could and did exert influence through private negotiations. Exceptional women who left an undeniable mark on history range from the semi-legendary Lucretia and Claudia Quinta, whose stories took on mythic significance; fierce Republican-era women such as Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, and Fulvia, who commanded an army and issued coins bearing her image; women of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, most prominently Livia, who contributed to the formation of Imperial mores; and the empress Helena, a driving force in establishing Christianity as the official religion of Rome.

"As is the case with male members of society, elite women and their politically significant deeds eclipse those of lower status in the historical record. Inscriptions and especially epitaphs document the names of a wide range of women throughout the Roman Empire, but often tell little else about them. Some vivid snapshots of daily life are preserved in Latin literary genres such as comedy, satire, and poetry, particularly that of Catullus and Ovid, which offer glimpses of women in Roman dining rooms and boudoirs, at sporting and theatrical events, shopping, putting on makeup, practicing magic, worrying about pregnancy — all, however, through male eyes. The published letters of Cicero, for instance, reveal informally how the self-proclaimed great man interacted on the do-

the primary expectation from society upon them. Limits on public life by women, imposed legally in 215 BC by the *Lex Oppia*, were repealed in 195 BC thus opening the door for extravagant display of wealth and seduction¹² by women in public life.¹³ Status in society played a huge role in the success or failure of the man in public life. Consequently a lavishly dressed wife in public is important to him. The public role of the *Vestal Virgins* in Roman society provided opportunity for many women to be free from domestic duties and to concentrate on religious duties for the public good. Thus by the middle of the first Christian century Roman women could move about in public with relative freedom. Lavish display of wealth through extravagant styles of dress etc. were in style and quite popular. In the later periods of the Empire attitudes would shift and women were more restricted in public appearance and the extravagant displays were no longer acceptable as had been true.



Jewish women.¹⁴ In Palestine Jewish women conformed more closely to the traditions that were developed out of scribal interpretation of the Law of Moses. In general this meant severe limitations on women outside the home, and general confinement to domestic roles in society. Dress styles were conservative and focused on modesty in appearance. To be certain, aristocratic Jewish women were influenced by the latest styles coming out of Roman high society. Thus their lifestyles differed dramatically from that of the vast majority of Jewish women.

In Hellenistic Judaism, elsewhere in the Roman Empire, both Jewish traditions and local Gentile customs came together in a mixture of acceptable standards among Jews living in this vast sea of non-Jewish influences. The challenge was always to maintain the religious heritage of one's Jewish background, but at the same time try to live in a world dominated by non-Jewish customs and attitudes. Which of these two sources of influence dominated depended upon the attitudes of individual Jewish communities in the various towns and cities across the empire. To some degree also the approach would be determined by the openness of the husband toward things non-Jewish. Thus variations of lifestyle patterns by Hellenistic Jewish women existed, and often made these women seem quite different from their peers back in Palestine.¹⁵

mestic front with his wife Terentia and daughter Tullia, as his speeches demonstrate through disparagement the various ways Roman women could enjoy a free-spirited sexual and social life.[4]

"The one major public role reserved solely for women was in the sphere of religion: the priestly office of the Vestals. Freed of any obligation to marry or have children, the Vestals devoted themselves to the study and correct observance of rituals which were deemed necessary for the security and survival of Rome but which could not be performed by the male colleges of priests.[5]" ["Women in Ancient Rome," *Wikipedia* online]

¹²"The variations of clothing worn in Rome were similar to the clothing worn in Greece at the same time, with the exception of the traditionally Roman toga. Until the second century B.C., the toga was worn by both genders and bore no distinction of rank - after that, a woman wearing a toga was marked out as a prostitute. The differentiation between rich and poor was made through the quality of the material; the upper-classes wore thin, naturally colored, wool togas while the lower-classes wore coarse material or thin felt. They also differentiated by colours used." ["Clothing in Ancient Rome: Types of Clothing," *Wikipedia* online.]

¹³Unlike in Athens, Roman women were not confined to their house by any means. Though the practice was discouraged, husbands would commonly take their wives on campaigns with them. For example, Caligula's mother Agrippina the Elder often accompanied her husband Germanicus on his campaigns in northern Germania. Many wealthy women also toured the empire, often participating or viewing religious ceremonies and sites around the empire [73]. Rich women travelled to the countryside during the summer when Rome became too hot [74]. Roman women could gather in the streets to meet with friends or go to baths or temples on a daily basis. Wealthier families had baths in their own house, while the less fortunate went to bath houses to clean themselves and socialize. It was not acceptable for men and women to bathe together so women either attended an all female bath house or bathed at separate times from men [75]. Wealthy women traveled around the city in a litter carried by slaves. The curtains were supposed to be closed when travelling but usually women left them open and veiled their faces [76]. For entertainment Roman women could attend debates at the Forum, various games, theatres, and by the late republic, attend dinner parties. Before the late republic women were not allowed to eat dinner with their husbands, and instead ate in private with the other women of the household. At theatres women were not allowed to sit with men. Instead they sat in the rows above, so as not to tempt the men [77]. Prominent men in Roman society, such as Cato considered it improper for women to take a more active role in public life and often complained of it in his speeches, meaning that some women did indeed voice their opinions in the public sphere.[78]" ["Women in Ancient Rome: Venturing into public," *Wikipedia* online]

¹⁴For an interesting survey of women in the Hebrew Bible see "Women in the Hebrew Bible," *Wikipedia* online.

¹⁵One place where this comes to the surface in the New Testament is the discrimination against Hellenistic Jewish widows that developed in the early Christian community at Jerusalem, which Luke describes in Acts 6:1-8.

Ephesian women. Women living in Ephesus in the middle of the first Christian century were subject to the Roman influences, but also impacted by the long deep history of Ephesus as a Greek speaking colony. Thus both Roman and Greek influences played roles in shaping attitudes in Ephesus. Add to this the significant impact of the worship of the Greek goddess Artemis in the city. In background also stood the Roman tradition of the Vestal Virgins that gave legitimacy to women for public involvement in religion. The fertility foundation of the worship of Artemis gave women options of serving as priestesses in the temple as 'sacred' prostitutes, even married women. With the temple located there as one of the major centers of worship for this deity, the impact on the city was substantial.



Statue of Artemis



Jewish women in the city would come up against these influences constantly. Gentile women, especially those who had grown up in the city, were impacted by these influences all of their lives. The Christian community in Ephesus had both Jewish and Gentile women in its membership. Add to that was the positive attitude exhibited by Jesus toward women as reflected in the gospels. Luke, the gospel writer with the greatest focus on women in Jesus' ministry, was a traveling companion of Paul by this point and was with the apostle on his trips to Ephesus. Even though the four gospel documents would not be written until well after the writing of 1 Timothy in the early to mid 60s, the oral and written traditions about Jesus were in wide circulation by this time and much had been incorporated into the teaching of new believers by church leaders. Thus the tensions between local customs, cultural heritage, and their Christian faith placed the believing women at Ephesus in dilemmas about how to live properly before God.



Ruins of the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus

Ephesus in the first century:

The city of Ephesus has a long history that reaches back at least to 1400 BCE. Later (ca. 1000 to 500 BCE) it was settled by Greek colonists speaking the Ionian dialect of ancient Greek. It became one of the principle Ionian Greek cities in western Turkey along the coast. The temple to the Greek goddess Artemis (called Diana by the Romans from the Latin) was built initially early on in the history of the city. Through later rebuilding and expansion it became the largest Greek temple in antiquity and was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Numerous other temples were erected and dedicated to either Roman emperors or to various Greek and Roman gods and goddesses.¹⁶

While the presence of paganism in Ephesus is well documented, the extent of Jewish presence is less well known. No Jewish synagogue has yet to surface in archaeological work, unlike most of the other cities of Asia Minor. The Jewish historical Josephus (*Antiquities* 16.27-65) is the primary source of information. From Acts, we know of the existence of a Jewish synagogue in the city. From Josephus comes indication of a considerable Jewish population in the city. How influenced the local Jewish community was by the surrounding culture is not clear.



The impact of religion, especially of paganism, on the city was substantial.

Although the city was moved around somewhat in relation to the harbor area where the Cayster River

¹⁶These include a temple to Dea Roma and Divus Julius, to Domitian, and others to the goddess Hestia, to the god Serapis, to the god Zeus, and to the Mother Goddess Cybele. The presence of the Phrygian mystery cult of Cybelle and Attis would certainly have impacted the women of Ephesus with its emphasis upon the equality of men and women in religious service.

emptied into the Aegean Sea and the three small hills located in the area, during the first Christian century Ephesus prospered greatly and served as the capital of the Roman province of Asia. Its population reached an estimated quarter of a million people, making it the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire. Additionally it was an important part of the trans-Anatolian highway system leading eastward into the Fertile Crescent region. Travelers coming from the eastern Mediterranean by land would end up in Ephesus as they traveled to Greece and Rome. Consequently, Ephesus by Paul's day was a cosmopolitan city with Greek, Asiatic, and Roman influences. It was the principle commercial city of the province of Asia with at least two large Agoras, i.e., market places. Numerous other facilities, such as the huge theater seating 25,000 people, the Library of Celsus, and several gymnasiums and baths provided 'atmosphere' and enjoyment to the residents of the city. The people of the city enjoyed wealth and prosperity, and relative peace and stability, during the beginning Christian century. This most likely played a role in Jesus' condemnation of the Christian community at Ephesus as having lost "their first love" (τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην) at the end of the first century (cf. Rev. 2:4).

During the 60s of the first century, Emperor Nero favored the city greatly with the construction of numerous buildings etc. Thus at the time of the writing of 1 Timothy in the early 60s the city was prosperous, stable, and affluent.

Christian community in Ephesus.

The ***history of the Christian community in Ephesus*** most likely reaches back to the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 where Jewish pilgrims from Asia (2:9) were present in Jerusalem and converted to Christianity. Clearly in Acts 18-20 (especially chapter 19 and 20:17-38), the church in Ephesus had its formal beginnings with the missionary work of the Apostle Paul. On the third missionary journey (ca 52-57 AD), Ephesus served as the longest tenure of ministry (cf. 19:10, two years plus) and the base of operations for spreading the gospel throughout the region with the work of his associates. During his Caesarean imprisonment (57-60 AD), he wrote a letter to the Ephesians as a cover letter for Colossians and Philemon. Then in the early to middle 60s he writes two letters to Timothy who is helping the church in Ephesus.

Substantial indication from second century Christian sources suggests that the apostle John spent the latter years of his life and ministry at Ephesus as well toward the end of the first century. Very likely the Johannean writings in the New Testament originated from either Ephesus or the surrounding region. More information about the Christian movement at Ephesus in the second century comes from the Letter to the Ephesians by Ignatius of Antioch¹⁷ and from the writings of the apologist Justin Martyr who is linked to Ephesus.

Because of the cover letter nature of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians we can't learn much about the specific situation of the church in the late 50s. It does seem to have both Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity in its membership, although we don't know the ratio of each group. Perhaps the non-Jewish segment was dominant, as Eph. 2:11-21 and 4:17-24 may suggest. No indication of a major disruption in the fellowship emerges from this letter. A few years later, however, when 1 Timothy is written in the early 60s, the church is experiencing considerable difficulties, largely through the influence of false teachers and teachings floating around in the church; cf. 1 Tim. 1:6-11, 18-20; 4:1-5, 7; 6:3-10, 17-19. When 2 Timothy is written some three to five years later to Timothy still at Ephesus, the situation with false teachers has worsened; cf. 2 Tim. 1:15-18; 2:14-3:17; 4:3-4, 14-15. Their influence upon the believing community has grown. Whether or not this reflects on Timothy's skill in helping the church is not clear, although some interpreters contend it suggests his inability to successfully lead the church to reject the influence of these false teachers.

Women in the believing community at Ephesus receive attention in First and Second Timothy, but not primarily in a positive light. Women in the church seem to need extra instruction from Timothy as is reflected

¹⁷This letter, written by Ignatius to Polycarp the leader at Ephesus around 115 AD, only mentions minor problems with heresy and false teachers at Ephesus by this point. They are clearly present, but Ignatius has complete confidence in Polycarp's ability to rebuke them and neutralize their influence. No mention of the involvement of women in the church is given.

Rev. 2:1-7 suggests the continued presence of false teachers at Ephesus by the close of the first century, but that the church was successfully rejecting their influence, particularly the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Women are not singled out either positively or negatively.

in 1 Tim. 2:9-15¹⁸; 3:11¹⁹; 5:2-16.²⁰ Women were not to receive special instruction from Timothy in the second letter, as in the first one. Timothy's mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois stand as role models (1:5). Women at Ephesus seem to have especially been victimized by the false teachers (cf. 3:6-9). Prisca with her husband Aquila are now at Ephesus, and thus she was a positive influence on the women in the church (cf. 4:19).

What emerges in the available materials is a picture of women in prominent roles in the church at Ephesus in the 50s and 60s of the first century. Unfortunately many of them had come under the influence of the false teachers and teaching, and thus were major vehicles for spreading this poisonous teaching through the church. This seems to have especially been the case with the younger widows in the church who had extra time and little else to do (cf. 2 Tim. 3:6-9; 1 Tim. 5:11-16). Given the surrounding cultural influence of Ephesus that encouraged women, especially single women, to take leadership roles in religious life, one can more readily understand this pattern in the Christian community. Add to that mixture a high level of affluence in the city that freed the women from extensive manual labor that would consume their entire day.

This background picture of the situation of women in the church at Ephesus in the 60s of the first century is critical for understanding our text.

Literary Context:

Literary Type (Genre). The epistolary nature of this New Testament document means that it follows in general the form of ancient Greek letters. This means that the letter begins with the formal introduction, the Praescriptio (1:1-2) and contains a Proem (1:12-17); the letter body is 1:3-6:21a (minus 1:12-17); it concludes with a Benedictio (6:21b) as the single element in the Conclusio. Thus our passage, 2:8-15, comes as a part of the letter body. The verses themselves do not reflect any distinctive genre pattern, outside of general admonitions given to an individual from another person.

Literary Setting. Since the literary context of a passage can significantly impact the boundaries of meaning in a passage, one must give careful consideration to the literary setting of a text. Our passage stands (1) as a part of the body of the letter (1:3-6:21a), and (2) as a part of Paul's call to prayer (2:1-15). The general summons to prayer is found in 2:1-7, and is followed by gender specific calls first to men (2:8) and then to women (2:9-15). The nature of the summons in chapter two is mainly on public praying when the believing community is gathered for worship. One should note that Christian women here are participants in public worship, unlike their Jewish counterparts who attended the Sabbath service in the synagogue as silent listeners cordoned off in a separate room out of sight by the men. The outline below provides understanding of the context.

¹⁸**1 Tim. 2:9-15 RSV:** "8 I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; 9 also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, 10 but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. 11 Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. 12 I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. 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, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty."

¹⁹**1 Tim 3:11 NRSV:** Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.

²⁰**1 Tim. 5:1-16 NRSV:** 1 Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, 2 to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters—with absolute purity. 3 Honor widows who are really widows. 4 If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some repayment to their parents; for this is pleasing in God's sight. 5 The real widow, left alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; 6 but the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. 7 Give these commands as well, so that they may be above reproach. 8 And whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. 9 Let a widow be put on the list if she is not less than sixty years old and has been married only once; 10 she must be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. 11 But refuse to put younger widows on the list; for when their sensual desires alienate them from Christ, they want to marry, 12 and so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge. 13 Besides that, they learn to be idle, gadding about from house to house; and they are not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not say. 14 So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, and manage their households, so as to give the adversary no occasion to revile us. 15 For some have already turned away to follow Satan. 16 If any believing woman has relatives who are really widows, let her assist them; let the church not be burdened, so that it can assist those who are real widows.

STRUCTURAL OUTLINE OF TEXT
of 1 Timothy²¹

- SALUTATION 1:1-2
- I. PERSONAL INSTRUCTIONS TO TIMOTHY 1:3-20
 - A. Preserve the purity of the gospel (vv.3-11)
 - B. Paul's gratitude for the gospel (vv.12-17)
 - C. Fight the good fight (vv. 18-20)
 - II. INSTRUCTIONS ON PUBLIC WORSHIP 2:1-15
 - A. Prayer in public worship (vv.1-7)
 - B. Women in public worship (vv.8-15)**
 - III. INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT CHURCH OFFICERS 3:1-16
 - A. The office of overseer (3:1-7)
 - B. The office of deacon (3:8-13)
 - C. The character of the church (3:14-16)
 - IV. INSTRUCTIONS FOR A GOOD MINISTER 4:1-5:25
 - A. Fortify the church against heresy (4:1-7)
 - B. Give priority to spiritual training (4:7b-10)
 - C. Be an example to the believers (4:11-16)
 - D. Develop the proper relation with various groups in the church (5:1-2)
 - E. Treat with respect the widows (5:3-16)
 - F. Deal properly with the elders (5:17-22)
 - G. Take care of your health (5:23)
 - H. Note the character of good and bad (5:24-25)
 - V. MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUCTIONS 6:1-21a
- BENEDICTION 6:21b

Another literary context issue is the similarity of this passage with 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 where instructions are given regarding the outward appearance of men and women as they pray and preach in the public worship service.

1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. 2 I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you. 3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ. 4 Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, 5 but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head — it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. 6 For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil. 7 For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. 8 Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. 10 For this reason a woman 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 or man independent of woman. 12 For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? 14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 But if anyone is disposed to be contentious—we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

Clearly women were playing significant leadership roles in the church at Corinth. Paul's concern was that their appearance gave proper testimony to Christian reverence for God in their service, as per social customs of propriety and impropriety of that time.

Also as a part of the larger literary context of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is 1 Corinthians 14:32-40.

32 And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, 33 for God is a God not of disorder but of peace. (As in all the churches of the saints, 34 women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. 36 Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?) 37 Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must

²¹Outline taken from Lorin L. Cranford, *Basic New Testament 651-432: Course Syllabus* (Fort Worth: Scripta Publishing Inc., 1980), 29.

acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. 38 Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized. 39 So, my friends, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; 40 but all things should be done decently and in order.

Although the tensions between chapters eleven and fourteen in First Corinthians lay beyond the scope of our study, one does need to acknowledge them. One possible resolution of the tension is that the instructions in chapter fourteen relate especially to the tongues speaking heresy taking place in the church that Paul addresses in 14:1-40. Clearly vv. 33b-36 dealing with women are a part of this larger discussion.

The cultural similarities and differences between Ephesus and Corinth are of importance. Morally and ethnically the two cities were very similar, although the moral degradation of Corinth was greater than that of Ephesus. Ephesus was larger and more affluent, and had greater Asiatic eastern influence. Corinth was mainly a military retirement city notorious throughout the empire for its corruption and debauchery. This played a role in giving a distinctive shape to the issues faced in the two different congregations.

Literary Structure of the passage. The block diagram below of the passage offers helpful insight into the flow of ideas present.

8 Therefore

1 **I desire all men to be praying**
 in every place
 after having raised holy hands
 without wrath and dissension.

9 Likewise
 also

2 **(I desire) women (to be praying)**
 in appropriate dress

 with modesty and prudence
 to dress themselves
 not with braided hair
 and
 gold ornaments
 or
 pearls
 or
 expensive clothing,

10 but

 with what is proper

3 **women should (dress themselves)**
 professing piety
 that is, with good works.

11 In quietness

4 **let a woman learn**
 in full submission;

12 and

5 **I do not order a woman to teach**
 nor

6 **(do I order a woman) give orders to a man,**
 instead

7 **(I do order a woman) to be in quietness.**

13 For

 first

8 **Adam was formed,**
 then

9 **Eve (was formed).**

¹⁴ And
 10 **Adam was not mislead,**
 but
 after having been deceived
 11 **the woman became immersed**
 in transgression;
¹⁵ and
 12 **she will be delivered**
 through child bearing,
 if they remain
 in faith
 and
 love
 and
 holiness
 with moderation.

The text naturally falls into two sections: 1) statement 1 for men and statements 2-12 for women. Both sections are linked together through the common theme of praying, which grow out of the preceding emphasis on prayer in verses one through seven.

The focus on men praying emphasizes the demeanor of praying, rather than the content of praying that was sketched out in vv. 1-7.

The focus on women praying stresses the demeanor also with strong emphasis on modest physical appearance and the inner quality of true piety. Statements 2 and 3 lay out the basic pattern with higher priority on inner qualities. Statements 4-12 stress a demeanor of quietness in worship and praying. The details are stated in statements 4-7 and a twofold rationale for these instructions in statements 8-9 and 10-12. This second sub-section (#s 4-12) on women is what triggers much of the controversy in this passage. And thus it necessitates careful study in order to understand clearly what Timothy was supposed to teach the women at Ephesus.

Exegesis of the Text:

As the normal process for interpreting a scripture passage suggests, once the background matters have been addressed, then the first question is the historical meaning one: what did the writer intend to convey to his initial readers? Once an assessment of this is done, the second question follows concerning what timeless truths are present in the historical meaning that transcend the original setting of the passage and become relevant to us in our world. Answers to both questions are not particularly easy with a passage such as this one. This encourages humility in reaching conclusions, and forbids dogmatic readings of the text.²² Hermeneutically, the reason for this difficulty is the huge distance -- culturally etc. -- between the then and now meanings.

1. What did the text mean to the first readers?

Careful study of these verses requires sensitivity to not only the words of the scripture text but to the historical situation in mid-first century Ephesus, along with awareness of a somewhat similar situation on the other side of the Aegean Sea at Corinth and to Paul's other statements about women in the church. Only then can a proposed interpretation of the text be set forth with confidence in its accuracy, and in adherence to proper hermeneutics.

The foundation for vv. 8-15 is vv. 1-7, as discussed above under **Literary Setting**. The extensive use of terminology for various kinds of prayers in verse one sets forth the basic call for believers to be praying extensively. The terminology employed for praying here clearly suggests that the focus is upon public prayers in Christian worship services. The primary orientation of these prayers is for God to so move in government leaders that they will allow believers to live peacefully in their territories. And that believers will be able to

²²This is where the old preacher illustration become relevant. "The preacher had written in his sermon outline by the side of one of his sermon points: 'Weak point; scream like Hell!'" A lot of 'screaming' over this passage can be found in commentaries and sermons!

spread the gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ, mostly through their godly living and witness.

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For

there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind,

Christ Jesus, himself human,

6 *who gave himself a ransom for all*

—this was attested at the right time. 7 For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

With the focus and content of the prayers thus defined, the apostle now moves to call upon both men and women in their Christian gatherings to pray these prayers. For their prayers to be effective, however, the praying must be done in a certain manner. In short, the level of dedication to Christ by the praying believer is critical to God's willingness to hear and answer these prayers. Our prayers must flow out of a dedicated life of faithful obedience.²³

A. Christian men should pray publicly a certain way, v. 8.

I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument;

Βούλομαι οὖν προσεύχεσθαι τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, ἐπαίροντας ὀσίους χεῖρας χωρὶς ὀργῆς καὶ διαλογισμοῦ.

Men praying everywhere. The apostle's desire is expressed as Βούλομαι. That is, he seriously desires that such praying be done. For him, the importance of this task is enormous; it's not way down on the list of responsibilities. Rather, this responsibility stands high on the list of priorities for believers to be doing. The importance of this task is further stressed by the connector of vv. 8-15 to vv. 1-7, the Greek conjunction οὖν. The responsibility for praying comes out of the nature of the task: to ask God to move powerfully in the lives of pagan government leaders to adopt a positive stance toward believers living in their territory. Given that this was written in the early 60s while Nero was the Roman emperor, one can sense the urgency of the request. Add to that also the tendency of the provincial leaders in Asia to persecute religious groups perceived as 'out of step' with Roman tradition.²⁴

The term for prayer used here, προσεύχομαι, is the general, inclusive word for prayer in ancient Greek. It is one of four terms employed in verse one: "supplications (δεήσεις), prayers (προσευχάς), intercessions (ἐντεύξεις), and thanksgivings (εὐχαριστίας)." The present tense form of the Greek infinitive προσεύχεσθαι asserts an ongoing praying that is to be done, not a random occasional praying. The point is that prayer should be an essential aspect of our daily walk with God. And given the public worship setting of the passage, prayer should be a primary activity of God's people every time when they gather for worship. The ongoing responsibility here corresponds to the present tense infinitive ποιῆσθαι in verse one specifying that these four types of prayers should be 'made' constantly.

Christian men everywhere should be praying: τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ.²⁵ Although it is possible that Paul means 'every city where Christians live,' the more likely meaning via contextual limitations is 'in every house church' in Ephesus. Timothy is to encourage all the various groups of believers who primarily met at individual homes in the city to include prayer as a major aspect of their meeting. Thus the city of Ephesus was to be saturated with the prayers of believers going up to God all over the city.

One should note that to interpret verse eight as excluding women from public praying would be wrong.

²³James 5:16b NRSV: *The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.*

²⁴For more details on this pattern see the theme of persecution that is woven throughout First Peter which was written to believers in this same general region of the Roman empire during basically the same time frame.

²⁵“ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ,” “in every place,” may simply indicate that Paul wants prayer to be as universal as its objects; but it is more likely that he is referring to the various meeting places of the church in, perhaps, house churches or other groups (cf. Rom. 16:3–5; 1 Cor. 16:19 [Ephesus]; Col. 4:15). The phrase has this significance in most of the other Pauline occurrences (cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; [2 Cor. 2:14]; 1 Thes. 1:8) and is perhaps also influenced by OT usage (e.g., Ex. 20:24; especially Mal. 1:11).“ [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 127]

Verses 9-15 affirm women's right to participate in public worship. Unquestionably, Paul assumes women's right to both pray and preach in public worship in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. With Prisca²⁶ in the believing community at Ephesus by this point and leading one of the house churches, or at least by the writing of 2 Timothy, Paul would not have squashed the invaluable contributions of such women to the work of the Gospel with such restrictions.

Men praying in obedience. The manner of praying first is ἐπαίροντας ὁσίους χεῖρας, i.e., 'after having raised holy hands.' The lifting of hands during prayer is known especially in the OT, but this is the only instance in the NT.²⁷ The phrase 'holy hands,' ὁσίους χεῖρας, has Jewish symbolic significance²⁸ with the hands reflecting religious actions.²⁹ Paul is not here mandating that hands are to be lifted every time someone prays in public worship. More importantly, we must come to prayer out of a holy life and service, if we expect God to acknowledge our requests.

Men praying in harmony. The manner of praying secondly is χωρὶς ὀργῆς καὶ διαλογισμοῦ, i.e., 'without wrath and dissension.' To lift up 'holy hands' while possessing disunity and anger toward fellow believers is a contradiction of terms! Prayers uttered out of such posture are blasphemy against God and make mockery of the act of prayer. Paul assumes that such disharmony was present at Ephesus, and that Timothy needed to find a way to correct it. What was causing the disunity at Ephesus? Perhaps it was the quarreling over belief caused by the false teachers at Ephesus.³⁰ Considerable scholarly opinion is convinced that the tension was between men and women with several of the men angry at women in the church,

²⁶Prisca (Πρίσκα; cf. 1 Cor. 16:19, Rom. 16:3-5, 2 Tim. 4:19) is the formal name used by Paul, while Priscilla (Πρίσκιλλα; cf. Acts 18:2-3, 18, 26) is a diminutive name used by Luke in Acts. Both names refer to the same person, who was married to Aquilla. The couple served as missionaries in Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus in the mid-first century. Because Prisca's name is usually mentioned for her husband's, most consider her to be the more vocal one of the partnership. The couple first came in contact with Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:2-3; early 50s) after being forced to leave Rome (late 40s) by the emperor, but were in Ephesus (mid 50s) with Paul by the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians (16:19), where they led a house-church group. She instructed Apollos at Ephesus (Acts 18:26). By the time of the writing of Romans from Corinth (mid 50s) a bit later, the couple was back in Rome (Rom. 16:3-5). But by the time of the writing of 2 Timothy some years later, she and her husband were back in Ephesus (early 60s). Paul highly valued their contributions to the Gospel. It's hardly imaginable that she would not be able to continue contributing through teaching and preaching the Gospel in the house church which she and Aquilla sponsored in their home in each of these three cities where they lived.

²⁷Raising of hands in prayer is known in the OT (Ex. 9:29; 17:11, 12; 1 Ki. 8:22, 54; Neh. 8:6; Pss. 28:2; 63:4; 141:2; 143:6; Is. 1:15; La. 2:19; 3:41; Hab. 3:10) and in Jewish (e.g., 2 Maccabees 3:20; 14:34; cf. Spicq; Str-B II, 26) and Gentile literature (cf. Wetstein; Wohlenberg; Deissmann, Light, 414ff.; Spicq), as well as among Christians (in catacomb illustrations and in 1 Clement 29; Clement of Alexandria, Strom. 7.7; Tertullian, Apol. 30)." [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 128]

²⁸"The expression holy hands is misleading and most probably unnatural in many languages. Here hands stands for the whole person; it is the person and not his hands that is holy. The word holy itself is often difficult to translate because it is used in a variety of ways, and traditional translations in many receptor languages have tended to stress the component of 'forbidden' or 'taboo.'" [Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 54.]

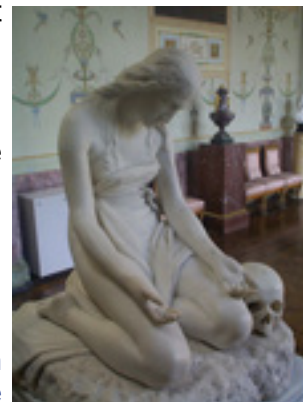
²⁹"The imagery of ὁσίους χεῖρας, 'holy hands,' comes from the OT (Exod 30:19-21; Ps 24:4; Isa 1:15; 59:3), which requires that hands be ritually clean before approaching God; the cleansing later became moral (cf. Jas 4:8; 1 Pet 3:7). Jesus himself insisted that 'reconciliation must precede worship' (Stott, 82; cf. Matt 5:23-24; 6:12, 14-15; Mark 11:25)." [William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles, Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 109.]

³⁰Note **1 Timothy 1:6-7 NRSV**: 6 Some people have deviated from these and turned to meaningless talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions. (6 ὄντινες ἀστοχίσαντες ἐξετράπησαν εἰς ματαιολογίαν, 7 θέλοντες εἶναι νομοδιδάσκαλοι, μὴ νοοῦντες μήτε ἃ λέγουσιν μήτε περὶ τίνων διαβεβαίουσιν.) In 1:20, Paul names an Alexander and a Hymenaeus as a part of this group. 4:1-5 allude to possible dissension over doctrine as well. Then see 6:3-5 with its strong allusion to dissensious folks in the church: (NRSV), 3 Whoever teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, 4 is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words. From these come envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, 5 and wrangling among those who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. (3 εἴ τις ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖ καὶ μὴ προσέρχεται ὑγιαίνουσι λόγοις, τοῖς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ τῇ κατ' εὐσέβειαν διδασκαλίᾳ, 4 τετύφωται, μηδὲν ἐπιστάμενος, ἀλλὰ νοσῶν περὶ ζητήσεων καὶ λογομαχίας, ἐξ ὧν γίνεται φθόνος, ἔρις, βλασφημίας, ὑπόνοιαι πονηραί, 5 διαπαραιτρίβει διεφθαρμένων ἀνθρώπων τὸν νοῦν καὶ ἀπεστερημένων τῆς ἀληθείας, νομιζόντων πορισμὸν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν.)

especially those having come under the influence of the false teachers. Perhaps it was due to their wrong doctrine or their immodest dress. Or, a combination of both. In the pagan temples the women leaders would dress very seductively as a part of their ‘work’ as sacred prostitutes. The men didn’t want these women praying in the worship services. It is not clear what the source of tension was in the church. But Paul clearly understood that the resulting anger and wrangling over different views could not continue when the church went to prayer.

B. Christian women should also pray publicly a certain way, vv. 9-15.

The second segment of this passage shifts emphasis to the women in the church at Ephesus. The two connectors ὡσαύτως³¹ καὶ play an important role in linking vv. 9-15 to v. 8. Used 17 times in the New Testament and 5 times³² with καὶ, ὡσαύτως signals that what the men are to be doing the women are also to do.



Ancient ‘Sacred’ Prostitute

1) Their appearance to others is important, vv. 9-10.

9 also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, 10 but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God.

9 ὡσαύτως καὶ γυναῖκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ, 10 ἀλλ’ ὃ πρέπει γυναῖξιν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν, δι’ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν.



Women are to pray while properly dressed. Most contemporary English translations overlook or reject what appears to be rather clear from the original Greek text, as is reflected in the Block Diagram above. The implied core verb expression goes back to the core expression in verse eight: (Βούλομαι προσεύχεσθαι) γυναῖκας...., “In the same way also I wish women to be praying....”³³

This understanding is consistent with Paul’s instruction in 1 Corinthians 11 and also better explains the qualifier ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ in relation to μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς that follows. The noun, only used here in the entire New Testament, καταστολή signifies outward covering and can refer either to one’s dress and/or one’s deportment.³⁴ When qualified by the adjective κοσμίῳ the

³¹“ὡσαύτως: a marker of similarity which approximates identity — ‘just as, in the same way, in like manner.’ πάλιν δὲ ἐξελθὼν περὶ ἕκτην καὶ ἐνάτην ὥραν ἐποίησεν ὡσαύτως ‘and again going out at the sixth and the ninth hour, he did the same thing’ Mt 20:5; ὁ δεῦτερος ἔλαβεν αὐτήν, καὶ ἀπέθανεν μὴ καταλιπὼν σπέρμα· καὶ ὁ τρίτος ὡσαύτως ‘the second one took her (as wife), but died without having an offspring, and the third likewise’ or ‘... and the third experienced the same’ Mk 12:21; ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνῆσαι ‘and similarly after the meal (he took) the cup’ 1 Cor 11:25.” [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 618.]

³²See also Mk14:31; Lk. 20:31; Rom. 8:26; 1 Tim. 5:25. The addition of καὶ intensifies the connection.

³³“Likewise the women’ (ὡσαύτως) should be supplemented with ‘I wish them to pray’ (προσεύχεσθαι βούλομαι), unless one combines it with “in modest deportment they should decorate themselves” (ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ ... κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς)” [Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles a Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 47.]

Also note: “Here the understood verb is βούλομαι from v. 8. But is βούλομαι to be understood as followed (1) directly by the infinitive κοσμεῖν or (2) by the infinitive προσεύχεσθαι, also supplied from v. 8, which would in that case be itself followed by κοσμεῖν? In the first case the similarity indicated by ὡσαύτως would be that Paul has moral instructions for both men and women. But if βούλομαι προσεύχεσθαι is to be supplied, then the similarity is that both groups are to engage in the same activity, i.e., prayer.

“In favor of the latter is that this gives unity to the passage. Men are to pray, mindful of their besetting sins, and women are to do likewise. It is sometimes argued that unless this approach is taken the passage must be read as if only men are to pray, which would be contrary to Paul’s teaching elsewhere (1 Cor. 11:5ff.). The awkward construction that results from including προσεύχεσθαι with the understood verb is explained on the grounds that κοσμεῖν is added by asyndeton, that it has an explanatory or exegetical force (e.g., Weiss), or that it is to be restricted to μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης, with ἐν καταστολῇ being governed by προσεύχεσθαι.” [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles : A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 132.]

³⁴“It is hard to say whether καταστολή here means “demeanour” as in Epict. (→ 595, 22 f.)6 or “clothing” as in Is. 61:3 (→ 595, 24 ff.).7, 8 Yet if one takes into account a certain parallelism between v. 9 and v. 8 there is more to be said for the first view (→

issue remains ambiguous since κοσμίω simply signifies outward modesty that generates admiration and respect from others.³⁵ See the other NT use of κόσμιος in 3:2 where the overseer is to manifest the identical quality. The best understanding of the text is to see (Βούλομαι προσεύχεσθαι) γυναίκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίω as the general introduction laying down the foundational principle. While the men are to pray in a manner that reflects holy and harmonious living, the women are to pray in a manner that reflects a winsome outward appearance commanding respect and esteem from everyone.

Now how is that realized? The subsequent infinitival phrase spells it out in detail: μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῶ πολυτελεῖ, ἀλλ' ὁ πρέπει γυναιξὶν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν, δι' ἔργων ἀγαθῶν. (“with modesty and dignity to dress themselves, not with braided hair, gold, pearls, or expensive clothes; rather with what is consistent with women professing piety, i.e., by good works.”). Paul here specifies two aspects of the appearance of believing women: 1) what is important; 2) what is not important.

1) What is important. Two emphases are found on the plus side of the column: **a)** μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης and **b)** ὁ πρέπει γυναιξὶν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν, δι' ἔργων ἀγαθῶν.

a) μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης (“with modesty and dignity”). Again Paul employs two terms hardly used elsewhere in the New Testament. The preposition μετὰ highlights mental attitude. The noun αἰδοῦς is only found here in the NT, but has the derived meaning of modesty, in the sense of an inner attitude of respect for oneself and for others.³⁶ The woman must respect herself and also respect others, including God. She is to ‘clothe’ herself with this trait, and her physical appearance should reflect this. The second quality is σωφροσύνη which is used twice here in reference to the believing woman (vv. 9, 15), out the three NT uses (cf. Acts 26:25 for the other NT use). In classical Greek use, σωφροσύνη is sometimes used with αἰδοῦς, as here. This impacts this almost untranslatable word³⁷ with the sense of ‘rationality’ combined with respect. Together the two qualities define a self-confident person who has a clear sense of propriety in knowing how to present herself positively and respectfully to others, especially to her God. In the usage here with κοσμεῖν the emphasis is upon her outward appearance communicating this clearly to those in her presence.

b) ὁ πρέπει γυναιξὶν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν, δι' ἔργων ἀγαθῶν (“with what is consistent with women professing piety, i.e., by good works.”). The second set of positive traits stress the strictly religious aspect. The believing woman is the clothe herself with that which is consistent (πρέπει) to her religious profession of θεοσέβεια. And how does she do that? δι' ἔργων ἀγαθῶν.

πρέπει defines something consistent with or appropriate to something else in both external circumstance and moral principles. In this usage, the profession of piety by the woman implies a set of moral / religious behaviors that naturally flow out of the profession. The neuter pronoun ὁ specifies a general designation inclusive of outward appearance as defined in the infinitive phrase above. The positive trait μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης sets the standard of acceptable behavior and attitude, while the negative traits of extravagant physical appearance are not consistent with a profession of piety.

595, 19 ff.). Another point in favour of this is that the rules given here for men and women probably apply to divine service.⁹

“The post-apost. fathers have neither verb nor noun, so that they cannot help us to decide. The same applies to the Apologists. Here the simple στολή is used for “garment,” though largely in quotations. This has to be taken into account at least in relation to 1 Tm. 2:9.” [Karl H. Rengstorf, καταπέλλω, καταστολή, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:595-96.]

³⁵“κόσμιος, (ἰα), ον (s. κόσμος; Aristoph., Pla. et al.; ins, pap; Eccl 12:9, Just., 12, 5) **(1) pert. to having characteristics or qualities that evoke admiration or delight, an expression of high regard for pers., respectable, honorable pers.** (Nicophon Com. [V/IV b.c.] 16; OGI 485, 3 ἄνδρα κόσμιον; Philo, Spec. Leg. 3, 89; Just.) w. σώφρων (IG IV2/1, 82, 27 [40/42 a.d.] honorary ins for a man) 1 Ti 3:2. **(2) pert. to being appropriate for winning approval, appropriate, used w. an impers. noun, yet w. ref. to a pers., whose special status is prob. signalled thereby** (cp. IMagnMai 165, 6 κ. ἀναστροφή; 179, 4) ἐν καταστολῇ κ. in modest apparel (of women, as Epict., Ench. 40; Dio Chrys. 5, 14; PSI 97, 1) 1 Ti 2:9.—Subst. pl. τὰ κόσμια adornment AcPl Ha 2, 21: κοσμί[ων]; s. ed. CSchmidt’s remarks p. 125.—DELG s.v. κόσμος. M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 561. S.V., “κόσμιος, (ἰα), ον.”]

³⁶“The quality of modesty, with the implication of resulting respect—‘modesty.’” [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 747.]

³⁷It is a part of a Greek word group consisting of sóphrōn [of sound mind], sóphronéō [to be of sound mind], sóphronizō [to bring someone to his senses], sóphronismós [moderate, self-disciplined], sóphrosynē [moderation, self-control].

The benchmark of the comparison is γυναίξιν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν, i.e., women professing piety. θεοσέβειαν is used only here in the NT, but the adjective is used in John 9:31 and helps define the meaning of the word group from an early Christian view.³⁸ The core meaning of θεοσέβεια is ‘true religion’ as manifested in outward devotion to God. Thus when a woman claims that she is committed to genuine religion in devotion to God, then she assumes an obligation to make her outward appearance consistent with this commitment.

Accomplishing consistency between her religious profession and her outward appearance is achieved δι’ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν (‘by good works’) according to Paul. Thus Paul insists that piety may only be achieved through obedience to God’s will. Any form of religion making a claim to be true must stand the test of genuinely doing the will of God. Its veracity then will find confirmation by adorning itself in ‘good works.’³⁹ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν is a major theme in the Pastoral Epistles.⁴⁰ Every believer is expected to produce good works as the outward expression of the inward transformation of life in conversion to Christ. For Christian women, using their physical appearance to reflect this transformation is one of the needed actions, but, even more, the qualities of kind actions in ministry to others will reflect this transformation even more so.

2) What is not important: μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ (“not with braided hair, gold, pearls, or expensive clothes”). Tucked between the two positive emphases is a depiction from a negative view. It describes an extravagant physical appearance, and is reflected in the graphics to the right showing pictures of ancient Roman women from frescoes and statues.

The depiction refers to hair style, jewelry and clothes, and corresponds very closely to the depiction in 1 Peter 3:3, “Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing,” although different wording is used in the Greek texts.⁴¹ The depiction disallows braided hair with either gold ornaments or pearls woven in as decoration, along with expensive clothes.⁴²

Is Paul criticizing the preparation of the hair and concern with one’s clothes? Careful consideration of the history and customs of that era suggest not. Instead, Paul is joining a large chorus of ancient critics of women who went to elaborate extremes in their appearance.⁴³ To some extent the seductive orientation of

³⁸John 9:31 NRSV: We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. (οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἀκούει, ἀλλ’ ἐάν τις θεοσεβῆς ἢ καὶ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιῇ τούτου ἀκούει.)

³⁹This is consistent with Peter’s admonition to Christian wives in their efforts to win over their unchristian husbands in 1 Peter 3:3-4, (NRSV): “3 Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; 4 rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God’s sight.” (3 ὧν ἔστω οὐχ ὁ ἔξωθεν ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος, 4 ἀλλ’ ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ἀφάρτῳ τοῦ πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, ὁ ἐστὶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής.)

⁴⁰The plural form of the phrase, ἔργα καλὰ/ἀγαθὰ, is found almost exclusively in the PE (Eph. 2:10; here; 1 Tim. 5:10, 25; 6:18; Tit. 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14), alongside a nearly equal number of instances of singular ἔργον καλόν/ἀγαθόν (Rom. 13:3; 2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 1:6; Col. 1:10; 2 Thes. 2:17; 1 Tim. 3:1; 5:10; Tit. 1:16; 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3:17), though plural ἔργα is used elsewhere in Paul without καλὰ or ἀγαθὰ (e.g., Rom. 2:6, 7). Perhaps Paul’s use of the singular in the earlier Epistles had already begun to give way to the plural by the addition of πᾶν to refer to good works in general (cf. 2 Cor. 9:8; Col. 1:10; 2 Thes. 2:17). Then in the PE the interchange between the singular and plural (cf. again Rom. 2:6, 7) came to its logical outworking in the plural phrase ἔργα καλὰ/ἀγαθὰ, without πᾶν (cf. plural τὰ καλὰ ἔργα in Mt. 5:16, the teaching of which may have been in Paul’s mind). This interchange between the singular with πᾶν and the plural without πᾶν occurs within the PE (e.g., 1 Tim. 5:10: ἐν ἔργοις καλοῖς ... εἰ παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ; Tit. 3:1, 8, 14: πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν ... καλῶν ἔργων). [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 138.]

⁴¹1 Peter 3:3, ὧν ἔστω οὐχ ὁ ἔξωθεν ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος.

1 Timothy 2:9b, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ.

⁴²Copyists of this text use a variety of connectors and spellings in an effort to update the language to what was current at the time of the making of the individual copy. The above represents the best reading of the original wording of the text. The NRSV misses the details. The translation should read: “not with braided hair and gold or pearls, or with expensive clothes” Although not a major point, it is none the less an important detail. Thus two main items of dress are the point: the way the woman’s hair is presented and the kind of clothes she is wearing.

⁴³“It is the excess and sensuality that the items connote that Paul forbids (cf. Jas. 5:1–6), not braids, gold, pearls, or even costly garments in and of themselves. This is borne out by the fact that the Christian community of the NT is quite willing to use these terms with positive connotations (gold: Mt. 2:11; 1 Cor. 3:12; Rev. 3:18; 21:18ff.; pearls: Mt. 7:6; 13:45, 46; Rev. 21:21; a bride adorned [κεκοσμημένην]: Rev. 21:2), as is the OT (e.g., the Song of Solomon).

“Has Paul, however, merely taken up the criticism of women and their dress found in Greco-Roman and Jewish writers? That he might utilize their forms is not out of the question, since he believed that all people have a basic ethical understanding given them by God (Rom. 2:14, 15), sometimes even more admirable than what can be found among believers (1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Cor. 5:1); but his

this kind of dress resembled that of first century prostitutes 'advertising' their services. Given the tradition of prostitution being connected to religion in Ephesus, Christian women certainly should not convey a wrong impression about Christianity by dressing seductively, particularly as they went to church. But even more so, for women to focus on



physical beauty to such an extreme degree represented misplaced priorities.⁴⁴ Their first priority should be on developing moral character, not on physical beauty.⁴⁵ Thus one should conclude that basic concern for one's physical appearance is appropriate for believers. What is not acceptable Christian behavior is a preoccupation with beauty to the neglect of moral and spiritual development. The development of 'inner beauty' must take priority over 'external beauty.' And the key way to develop the

'inner beauty' is, ironically, through 'good works.'



2) **Their attitudes toward men is important, vv. 11-15.**

11 Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. 12 I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. 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, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty

11 γυνὴ ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ· 12 διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω, οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ. 13 Ἀδὰμ γὰρ πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη, εἶτα Εὐα· 14 καὶ Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἐξαπατηθεῖσα ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν. 15 σωθήσεται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, ἐὰν μείνωσιν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἀγιασμῷ μετὰ σωφροσύνης.

The second main emphasis by Paul to the women stresses attitudes toward men in the believing community. The instruction has two parts: a) the admonitions in vv. 11-12, and b) the basis for the admonitions in vv. 13-15. Both segments are controversial and have occasioned considerable debate among scholars.

words are much more restrained than theirs (cf. especially Juvenal, *Satires* 6.502–3). It may be that Paul is applying to women Jesus' words in Mt. 5:28ff. and drawing on such OT passages as Is. 3:16ff. (cf. Judith 10:3ff., where the heroine sets out to seduce specifically by means of dress, hair, and jewelry). Whatever the origin of Paul's words, his concern is shared by the leaders of the Christian community (here and 1 Pet. 3:3). Just as Christian men needed to be warned that their interest in vigor and discussion should not produce strife and dissension (v. 8), so Christian women needed to be warned that their interest in beauty and adornment should not produce immodesty and indiscretion." [George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 136.]

⁴⁴Ancient critics of these extremes of physical appearance often speak of the excessive amount of time required to fix one's hair in this manner, and the extremes of money that some spent on their clothes. Cf., Pliny, *Natural History* 9.33.12; Juvenal, *Satires* 6.502–3; Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.136ff.; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.185; Rev. 17:4; 18:12, 16, among many others.

⁴⁵Not clear in the depiction is how many women in the Ephesian believing community these words would have had relevance to. What is described would have required substantial sums of wealth in order to be sought after. Peasant women and slave women who were a considerable part of the community would have had little ability to have sought after this kind of extreme in dress. This has led some to the conclusion that the words were targeting the wealthy women in the believing community, and thus to the postulation that these women had especially been targets of false teachers encouraging them to 'follow their cravings' as a means of bringing them under the influence of the false teaching.

See: "Padgett points out that the mention of expensive dress and jewelry suggests that these women were very wealthy and concludes, "the wealthy women were prime targets for the 'greedy' false teachers (II Tim. 3:1–7), and we should probably identify these particular women as followers of the false teachers. What is more, as rich women they would likely have churches meet in their homes. Such women would naturally aspire to leadership in the churches at Ephesus and thus they would need training in the Christian faith and the interpretation of Scripture" (*Int* 41 [1987] 23)." [William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 125.]

One should also note the significant shift in theme between verses 10 and 11. “While Paul is still dealing with the Ephesian women, he is addressing not the topic of disruption but the topic of leadership, albeit the two are related. The women’s attempts to gain positions of leadership are causing disruption; hence the connection with the preceding verses. But now the disruption is not caused by seductive and extravagant dress but rather by the issue of gender roles. Vv 11–15 also have strong connections with chap. 3, which goes into detail describing the leadership qualities expected of overseers and deacons, specifically the ability to teach.”⁴⁶

a) The admonition, vv. 11-12. Paul issues two declarations, closely inner connected. First, “**Let a woman learn in silence with full submission... she is to keep silent.**” (γυνὴ ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ... εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ.). The Greek term ἡσυχία can mean either ‘silence’ or ‘quietness’ in the four times (2 of which are in vv. 11-12) that it surfaces in the pages of the New Testament.⁴⁷ The NRSV opts for ‘silence’ but the better alternative is ‘quietness.’ Note that the adjective form is used in 2:2 to express one of the goals of praying for government leaders to allow believers to live in quietness.⁴⁸ In contrast to the Judaism of that day, Christianity placed value on women receiving religious instruction.⁴⁹ Given the tendency of at least some of the women at Ephesus to be very argumentative and teachers of heresy,⁵⁰ one can more readily understand these words that the women were to be respectful of the teachers while receiving instruction about the Christian faith. Their spiritual immaturity, as reflected in the seductive way they dressed, disqualified them from having anything of value to contribute to the congregation. They needed to learn, not spout off their nonsense.

Second, the other admonition in v. 12 follows the first in v. 11: “**I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent.**” (διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω, οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἄνδρος, ἀλλ’ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ.).⁵¹ The second (**have authority**) and third (**keep silent**) segments here serve to explain the first

⁴⁶William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 127. Not everyone sees as sharp a break in theme as does Mounce. Thus the two emphases on seductive appearance toward men (vv. 9-10), and lack of respect for them (vv. 11-15) may be more complementary than any thing else.

⁴⁷“The noun ἡσυχία occurs only four times in the NT. The cognate adjective ἡσυχίος, “quiet,” occurs twice and the verb ἡσυχάζειν, “to be quiet,” four times. It appears that the ἡσυχ- word group maintained the same basic meaning among the cognates. Four times in the NT the word group means “silence”: the Pharisees are silent when Jesus asks them if he can heal on the Sabbath (Luke 14:4); the Judaizers are silenced when Peter tells them that the Spirit has come upon the Gentiles (Acts 11:18); the Ephesians cease arguing when they realize Paul is determined to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:14); and the temple rioters become silent when they hear Paul speaking in Aramaic (Acts 22:2). Four times the word group means a “quiet demeanor”: Paul tells the Thessalonians to live quietly (ἡσυχάζειν), mind their own affairs, and work with their hands (1 Thess 4:11); he later tells them to do their own work in quietness (μετὰ ἡσυχίας) and to earn their own living (2 Thess 3:12); Peter says that women should have a quiet spirit (1 Pet 3:4).” [William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 125.]

⁴⁸NRSV: “so that we may lead **a quiet** and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.” (ἵνα ἡρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι)

⁴⁹See *y. Sot.* 3.19a, 3: “Better to burn the Torah than to teach it to a woman”; cf. *m. Sot.* 3.4; *b. Qid.* 29b, 34a; *b. Sanh.* 94b.

⁵⁰See 1 Timothy 5:13, NRSV: “Besides that, they [younger widows] learn to be idle, gadding about from house to house, and that they are not mere idle, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not say.”

Even more interesting is the subsequent prediction of Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1-7, NRSV: “1 You must understand this, that in the last days distressing times will come. 2 For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them! 6 **For among them are those who make their way into households and captivate silly women, overwhelmed by their sins and swayed by all kinds of desires, 7 who are always being instructed and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth.**”

⁵¹Note the somewhat similar emphasis in 1 Cor. 14:32-40: “32 And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, 33 **for God is a God not of disorder but of peace.** (As in all the churches of the saints, 34 women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. 36 Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?) 37 Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. 38 Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized. 39 So, my friends, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; 40 **but all things should be done decently and in order.**” (34 Αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν, οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν· ἀλλὰ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει. 35 εἰ δὲ τι μαθεῖν

(teach). The generic designation of women and men here make it clear that γυναῖκι and ἀνδρός refer to women and men in the church, rather than just to wives and husbands. αὐθεντεῖν, only used here in the NT, means “to control or dictate to” somewhat in the modern expression ‘boss around.’⁵² These women at Ephesus, who wanted to control things, were not permitted by Paul to do so. How Timothy would implement this would be interesting to know. The additional references in 1 Timothy 5 and 2 Timothy 3 provide understanding of why the apostle comes down hard here. The subsequent listing of leadership qualities in 3:1-13 for overseers and deacons make it clear that only spiritually qualified leaders must be guiding the church.

b) The basis for the admonitions, vv. 13-15. The connector γάρ (‘for’) in verse 13 introduces a twofold reason for the admonitions in vv. 11-12. First is the order of creation (v. 13) and second the order of temptation (vv. 14-15). The use of Genesis 2-3 both here and elsewhere in the New Testament reflects a rather common Jewish scribal tendency found in the contemporary Jewish literature to this period. The strength of the argument may not seem very strong to modern readers, but Paul was addressing first century readers here, for whom the connection was appealing.

i) The order of creation (v. 13).⁵³ One should note that Paul’s reference here to Genesis 2 makes use of the distinctive terminology of the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew, and, as Knight observes (*NIGTC*, 143), assumes the details of the creation narrative⁵⁴; his use of the same text in 1 Cor. 11:8-9 makes this very clear. Eve was created by God as a helper to Adam, not as his boss. They were to work together in the Garden of Eden in order to achieve God’s intention. The language here doesn’t imply superiority or inferiority; rather, it implies close relationship and cooperation for shared goals. Thus as men and women work together in shared goals for the church it can move forward in harmony and effectiveness.

ii) The order of temptation (vv. 14-15). Secondly, the narrative in Genesis 3 becomes the basis for this reason. Paul’s use of ἐπλάσθη (‘was deceived’) is again dependent on the unique Septuagint translation of Genesis 3:13. Eve was misled by the serpent in the garden, while Adam sinned willfully and deliberately (cf. Rom. 5:12ff.; 1 Cor. 15:21-22). Through deception Eve fell into transgression (v. 14b). Here Paul uses language with strong echoes of the deception of many of the women in the Ephesian believing community by the false teachers. Through being led into heresy by these false teachers, they were following Eve’s pattern in the garden. This failure then stood as a major reason why they needed desperately to learn correct doctrine from the genuine leaders in the church.

Eve’s ‘deliverance’ (σωθήσεται⁵⁵) from her failure was through διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας (through child-birth) in

θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοῦς ἰδίους ἀνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν, αἰσχροὺν γάρ ἐστιν γυναῖκι λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ. 36 ἡ ἀφ’ ὑμῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθεν, ἡ εἰς ὑμᾶς μόνους κατήνησεν.) Here the issue is the tongues-speaking desire of women. Women are not to speak in tongues in church. Note the inclusio brackets of vv. 33 and 40 demanding orderliness and peacefulness in the worship service. Tongues speaking, especially by the women, destroyed what God required. But 1 Cor. 11:1-16 provides for both men and women to preach in the worship service when properly dressed.

⁵²37.21 αὐθεντέω: to control in a domineering manner—‘to control, to domineer.’ γυναῖκι οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω ... αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός ‘I do not allow women ... to dominate men’ 1 Tm 2:12. ‘To control in a domineering manner’ is often expressed idiomatically, for example, ‘to shout orders at,’ ‘to act like a chief toward,’ or ‘to bark at.’” [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 473.]

⁵³See Paul’s rather interesting use of the order of creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 as the basis for the woman having her head covered when she prays and preaches at church in 1 Cor. 11:7-12 (NRSV): “7 For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. 8 **Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man.** 9 Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. 10 For this reason a woman 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 or man independent of woman.”

⁵⁴“With this brief statement on the order of creation Paul appeals to the whole of the creation narrative, as is indicated by his fuller treatment in 1 Cor. 11:8-9 (cf. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*). This whole account would include “a helper suitable for him [i.e., for man, Adam]”; (Gn. 2:18) and the significance of the naming of the woman: “She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (2:23). Paul explicitly specifies that the woman was “taken out of” (ἐκ) the man and created to help, or to be “for” (διὰ), the man in his fuller statement in 1 Corinthians. So it is not mere chronology (“first ... then ...”) that Paul appeals to here but what is entailed in this chronology.” [William D. Mounce, vol. 46, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 143.]

⁵⁵To see σωθήσεται as ‘spiritual salvation’ would be a grave mistake that is contradicted uniformly in the Pastoral Epistles; cf. 1 Tim. 2:3-6; Tit. 3:3-7; 2 Tim. 1:8-10. One never achieves salvation by his own action.

v. 15. Note the way the apostle goes from 'Eve' (Εύα; v. 13b) to 'the woman' (ἡ γυνή; v. 14b) to 'the women' (μείνωσιν; v. 15b), signaling a shift from the biblical narrative to the women in Ephesus. The note is positive as he sees Eve's role in motherhood as key to her mission in life (cf. Gen. 3:16, 20). The task of the women at Ephesus becomes their partnership with their husband (and / or cooperation with the men in the church) and is predicated on the women continuing consistently ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἀγιασμῷ μετὰ σωφροσύνης ("in faith and love and holiness, with modesty"). These spiritual qualities being consistently exemplified in their lives validate their relationship with Christ and also reflect their adoption of a partnership with their husband the way God intended Adam and Eve to have before the fall. For the widows and virgins in the church the model remains an example to be implemented in cooperative efforts with the men in the church for the spread of the Gospel.

2. What does the text mean to us today?

Wow! This text is loaded with invaluable insights into the life of a believing community. The controversy over the text unfortunately detracts from what it has to offer to us in our world. The priority of prayer in the worship of the Christian community is the first lesson. God's people must be a genuinely praying people. But this praying must be done with proper deportment and attitude. Men can't lead in prayer with broken fellowship with one another. Women dare not lead in prayer looking like prostitutes and with misplaced priorities on physical beauty over godly qualities of living. They dare not become disruptive either by appearance or by lack of proper respect for the leaders of the church in a false arrogance of trying to teach everyone else their wrong headed understanding of the Christian faith. Men and women in the church must work together!