

THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

A Survey of 1 Timothy

Study #2

Social Intercession and Gender Roles

(1 Timothy 2:1-15)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. We are examining, survey-style, the book of 1 Timothy. Because we are doing a survey rather than a study, there are several things to bear in mind.
 - 1. Many things that could be said will *not* be said.
 - 2. Many points that could be explained will *not* be explained.
 - 3. We will emphasize chapter divisions more than is, strictly speaking, proper.
- B. It is vital when looking into God's Word together, to remember an important principle: We are trying to *change our minds*. We want to allow God's Word to change our thinking. This means we must not allow our thinking to change God's Word. This is often difficult, and might be in the passage before us tonight.
- C. The key verse of the entire letter is *3:15*. Here we see that Paul's intent in the letter is to explain to Timothy how the body of Christ is to conduct itself, corporately, as the household of God. Therefore, if we are to function properly as a body, we must allow God to teach us how.
- D. Tonight we will examine Chapter 2, from which we will derive two basic principles: The call and motive for social intercession; and gender roles within the church.

I. PRINCIPLE ONE: THE CALL AND MOTIVE FOR SOCIAL INTERCESSION (2:1-8)

A. **Intercession Is to Be Made for All Men**

- 1. *1 Timothy 2:1* = We are told to entreat, pray, petition and give thanks on behalf of *all* men. This means that our ministry of intercession is not limited to our Christian family. But it does not mean that we must necessarily involve ourselves in every social action possible. It means we are to pray, and in that regard we are to have an effect (cf. *James 5:16-18*). What specifically we should pray for depends on the situation, but should always include a prayer for salvation, as we will see in a moment. In fact, we are never explicitly told in Scripture to pray *anything* for unbelievers *except* for their salvation.

B. **Intercession Is to Be Made for Rulers**

- 1. *1 Timothy 2:2* = In addition to praying for *all* men, we are specifically told to pray for kings and all who are in authority. And this is for a purpose: we pray that leaders will make decisions that allow believers to live tranquil and quiet lives, and to live in godliness and dignity without persecution. This would include making prayers for those in other places who don't have the same freedom we do, and especially for their leaders as well.

C. **Intercession Is Pleasing to God**

- 1. *1 Timothy 2:3* = When we imitate Christ by interceding for the world around us, it is **good** and **acceptable** to our God. This is our ultimate motive for doing it. And the fact that it is pleasing to God would really be reason enough...but Paul gives us more. He explains why this is pleasing to God, to help us understand even more fully why we should do it.
 - a. *1 Timothy 2:4* = The root issue is that God desires *all* men (the same *all* men we are to intercede for) to be saved. And it is God who grants the repentance that leads to salvation (*Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25-26*).
 - b. *1 Timothy 2:5-6* = There is only one God, however. Allah and God are *not* the same. The God of the Bible is not identical or comparable to any other god anywhere. Since there is only one God,

and there is only one mediator between God and men (the same *men* God desires to be saved, and the same *men* that we are thus to pray for); and since Christ Jesus, that mediator, gave Himself as a ransom for *all* (the same *all* we are to pray for, the same *all* God desires to be saved), we are therefore to lift up prayers for the salvation of *all* men, to the God who can grant the repentance that leads to that salvation.

This root reality is altogether outside of personal bias or enmity. It is a higher priority than my petty disputes. For example, a godly Donald Trump should be praying for Nancy Pelosi's welfare and salvation. And a godly Nancy Pelosi should be praying for Donald Trump's welfare and salvation. And we are to put aside our differences and disagreements and do the same for all men.

I. PRINCIPLE TWO: GENDER ROLES WITHIN THE CHURCH (2:8-15)

A. Preface Points

1. **Word Usage.** The word *men* was used several times in the preceding paragraph. There, the word was the Greek *anthropos*, which can mean *mankind* (male and female). In this paragraph, however, the word *men* changes to the Greek *andros*, meaning specifically *man*, as opposed to *woman*, which is the Greek *gune*, which will be used in this paragraph as well.
2. **Authority (Scripture vs. Culture; Objective Truth vs. Subjective Truth).** The point that Paul is about to elaborate runs absolutely against the grain of modern culture and societal norms. Here and now, before examining Paul's words, we must decide which has authority for us: man or God; society or Scripture. Is the authority for our lives the subjective, trending truth of modern man, which can be adjusted to fit the needs of our whims, sensitivities, or sense of justice? Or is it the objective, unchanging truth of God's Word?
3. **Submission Is Order, Not Inferiority.** What in this universe is eternal and unchanging? Only God, who exists eternally in three *persons*: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Is there a hierarchy within the Godhead? Essentially the answer is *yes*. Of course under normal circumstances, there is no disagreement within the Godhead. However, during the events surrounding the Son's crucifixion, Christ said, "Not *My* will, but *Yours* be done," (cf. *Luke 22:42*). Clearly in that moment, the Son willed something different than the Father, but submitted anyway. He was speaking His Father's words, doing His Father's work, submitting Himself entirely to His Father's will. The Son was submissive to the Father. There was clear order established. So, who is better, or superior? The Father or the Son? The question is nonsense. All three persons of the Godhead are equal in all ways; yet there is order and submission. God is a God of order, not of chaos, and gender roles derive from this principle, and not from any sense of inferiority or inequality (cf. *1 Corinthians 14:33-38*).
4. **God's Planned Order, or a Societal Prevention Plan?** Some would affirm the authority of Scripture's objective truth over the subjective truth of society. And yet in a passage such as the one we are about to examine, they would argue that Paul's proscription of women teaching in the church was a result of the society of Paul's day where women were not allowed to participate in formal education, and were therefore unfit to instruct. On serious reflection, this reasoning cannot stand. The Pharisees, for example, were highly educated...and yet Jesus pronounced *them unfit* to teach. By contrast, the twelve apostles, though they were men, were untrained and uneducated (cf. *Acts 4:13*). If the prohibition against female teachers were a result of lack of education, these twelve were also unqualified...and yet Christ Himself appointed them. Ultimately, however, the decisive factor must come from Paul's argument itself, and, as we will see, Paul relates this command to God's created order, rather than to anything he saw or observed in the society in which he lived. With these thoughts as preface, let's look at the principles in play here.

B. The Role of Men

1. Men Are Not to Be Two-Faced

- a. *1 Timothy 2:8a* = Men are to be holy, gentle and agreeable, and prayerful, no matter where they are, no matter what they are doing, no matter by whom they are surrounded. Paul says that a man is to pray, to lift up holy hands, and to be without wrath or dissension, *in every place*. This

means at church, of course. But also at home, at work, at leisure, and anywhere else he might be. The first principle here is *unhypocritical* and *consistent* faith. The second principle here is that gruffness, crudeness and abrasiveness are *not* the measure of a man's *machismo*. A real man is holy through and through, agreeable and not unnecessarily abrasive.

2. Men Are To Lead

- a. *1 Timothy 2:8b* = When in a group, whenever someone must take the initiative to accomplish anything, men should be the first to step forward. Men are to be proactive in stepping out to initiate and lead the work to be done. Men should not be slow to volunteer, or hesitant to get involved. This kind of weakness was Adam's sin, when he capitulated the leadership to his wife. Totally unacceptable.

C. The Role of Women

1. Women Are to Be Modest

- a. *1 Timothy 2:9* = Women are not to be excessively concerned about outward appearance (although, to be fair, men sometimes obsess over this as well). This does **not** mean a woman must dress in long-sleeved, floor-length frocks at all times. It does **not** mean she must dress in rags. It does **not** mean she must intentionally appear drab and completely unconcerned over her appearance. It does **not** mean she must go out of her way to appear unattractive, or to adorn herself in such a way as to make sure no one would ever accuse her of, nor mistake her for, being attractive. It **does** mean that outward appearance is fleeting and not of great substance; and she should not forget that (cf. *1 Peter 3:3*). It **does** mean that she should be aware of her features, and be intentional about *not* flaunting them.

2. Women Are to Be Active

- a. *1 Timothy 2:10* = Women who claim to be godly ought to back up that claim by being *active* in good works and exhibiting godly character. *This* is true adornment, and is the very definition of lasting, permanent beauty (cf. *1 Peter 3:4-5*). Just because men are to take the lead does not mean that women are to sit back and enjoy the ride.

3. Women Are to Listen Quietly, Attentively and Submissively to the Word

- a. *1 Timothy 2:11* = Three things are in view in this verse: first, they are to receive instruction *quietly*; second, they are to quietly *receive* it; and thirdly, they are to do so with *entire submissiveness*. This means that as men take the lead, women are to be defined by teachability and receptiveness.
 - i. *Quietly*. This does not just mean *in silence of mouth*. It also means in *calmness of spirit*. Women are to put aside the cares of the day long enough to quiet their souls and receive instruction. The contrast between Martha and Mary demonstrates this perfectly (cf. *Luke 10:38-42*). This is one reason why many churches have programs for children, so that women don't have to be distracted during that time. They cease to be mothers, wives, aunts or caregivers in that precious moment, but are simply disciples just like everyone else (cf. *Galatians 3:28*). They are equal in every way before Christ, and this is *their* time to learn as such, without having to be distracted by the natural cares of a woman. This also means that care must be made during the preparation of love feasts or other church activities, to avoid letting those preparations distract during the instruction. Of course this is true of men as well, although that is not the focus here.
 - ii. *Receive*. This means they are to be receptive. The ears, mind and heart should be *open* and *eager* to intake. The picture is of attentiveness. In preparing the physical body, care is taken when looking in the mirror. Even greater care should be taken when preparing the spirit for intaking the Word. This, again, is also true of men...but again, not Paul's focus here.
 - iii. *Entire Submissiveness*. This means that any woman who is naturally argumentative must tame that instinct in this setting. A woman is not to buckle under the pressure of the word, nor take offense to it. Her spirit is to be meek within her, and willing to learn. Of course, we've already established that she is listening attentively. So what happens if she hears false teaching, or other error? It does not mean she is oblivious. But she is not in a position of authority, and so she must address the matter with her husband (see again *1 Corinthians 14:34-*

38)...and if *he* is listening attentively also, he will know what she is about to say before she has to say it, and he can then correct the error with his wife in a spirit of gentle leadership and kindness, and address the error to the elders.

4. A Woman Is Not to Teach Men

- a. *1 Timothy 2:12* = Paul is very explicit in his instruction here that the proscription against women teaching involves *role* reversal. This means that in right circumstances, when there are no men being taught, she can potentially teach other women. There is no specific prohibition against women teaching children, either...although it is good that children learn early to receive *Bible teaching* from men. And if the men are doing what they are called to do, they will be stepping forward eagerly to assume that role proactively anyway.

At any rate, the specific prohibition here is against a woman teaching biblical truth to men. And Paul does not leave us with merely the command here. He also gives us the reason for it.

- b. *1 Timothy 2:13* = In the first place, Eve was created to be Adam's helper, not his leader or teacher. This indicates clearly, from the beginning, what God's intent was for appropriate and fitting gender roles. Again, the concept is *order*, rather than *inferiority* or *inequality*. They were *both* created by God specially, and both created in His image. They are both included in the concept of *mankind*, and in fact there can be no *mankind* without them both (see *1 Corinthians 11:11-12*). They are, in short, absolutely equal in the sight of their Creator. But there is order established.
- c. *1 Timothy 2:14* = Building on that truth, the Fall of Man described in Genesis 3 is the first, and the perfect, example of what happens when roles are reversed. Paul is very clear that Eve was deceived...but that Adam was *not*. Eve's emotional nature, and her natural inclination to be *led*, made it easy for the serpent to manipulate her thinking. The very thing that made her perfect as Adam's ideal partner, also made it extremely dangerous...fatal, even...for her to assume a role other than the one she was built for. And the account in Genesis 3 is also very clear that Adam's sin was not the sin of being deceived or undiscerning. He knew what he was doing was wrong...but did it anyway, because he made a choice to listen to his wife (who should have been under *his* authority), rather than to God (under whose authority *he himself* should have been) (cf. *Genesis 3:17*). He abdicated his leadership role, and allowed Eve to lead...with disastrous consequences. It is no *insult* to a woman that she is by nature more in tune with reality, emotionally speaking. She is what she is because God *built* her that way. She can be *pleased* and *satisfied* in the way that God built her, because He built her that way to function in her role perfectly. Without that nature, there would have simply been two Adams in different bodies, who would not have complemented or corresponded to one another's needs.
- d. *1 Timothy 2:15* = The Greek text here literally says, "...the woman, being deceived, has come into transgression, but will be saved through the bearing of children, if..." The point is not that barren or unmarried women cannot be saved. The point is two-fold, actually.
- i. First, just as it was a woman's role-reversal that precipitated the entry of sin into the world, so it will be the returning to her proper role that will lead a woman into salvation. All these others (faith, love, sanctity with self-restraint) are unproductive until she has mentally subjected herself to the role for which God built her. Like every sinner, man or woman, she must turn her face away from her own way, and back to God's. Outward expressions of "godliness" means nothing if they are not accompanied by genuine repentance.
 - ii. Second, the return to proper gender roles, like the cessation of *any* sin, means nothing unless it comes from a tender and repentant heart that has turned in faith to Christ. Put it this way: faith without repentance is worthless; and repentance without faith is equally worthless. Together, though, they accomplish salvation. This is true for *women* as well as for *men*. That is Paul's point.