

## LIVING OUT GOD'S ORDER IN THE CHURCH

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*Since Krister Stendahl's monograph, The Bible and the Role of Women, published in 1966, and the evangelical articulation of his thoughts in Paul Jewett's Man as Male and Female, the traditional interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 has been under increasing attack. The newness of these assaults leaves the burden of proof upon the revisionists. This article demonstrates that the perspicacity of Scripture is still intact, that Scripture means what it says, and that adherence to the creation order graces the church.*

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First Timothy 2:11-15 is a controversial text, upon which an immense amount of scholarship has been focused in recent years. Virtually no one in the liberal theological camp holds to the traditional, historic interpretation of this text. On the other hand, many in the evangelical tradition subscribe to the historic interpretation, though they may have trouble articulating it at times. But there are also increasing numbers of evangelicals who reject the historic interpretation for what is called the "progressive" interpretation — even arguing for the ordination of women.

Here, I must say at the outset that I adhere to the traditional, historic interpretation of this text, which in today's secular culture is viewed as, frankly, shocking. Because the traditional interpretation understands that there is a divinely given order for the home and here in 1 Timothy for the church, it is dismissed by some with the most withering of epitaphs as "sexist." Nothing could be further from the truth biblically or personally.

It is important that you understand my heart as we undertake this study. I was raised by a community of gloriously strong women who had to make their way in a male-dominated, sexist world. Aside from my young brothers, there were no men in my life until I was a junior high student, when I became involved in church. Otherwise, my world was populated with wonderful women.

There was my mother, who was widowed at age twenty-three and sometimes worked two jobs to make ends *almost* meet. There was my maternal grandmother, Laura Anna Melissa McClurkin Bray, also a widow, who gave herself to her "boys." Her death was the most traumatic event in our lives. There were my two adopted, unmarried aunts, Beulah and Helen, who are still alive at the time of this writing "ages 97 and 98.

For awhile we all lived in adjacent homes, and later across town. But we spent most weekends together; and for two long-anticipated weeks every summer all those women and we boys camped together at Big Sur.

My mother had a hard life. I recall men trying to "hit" on my attractive young mother "and her suffering professionally for keeping her virtues.

I say all this to emphasize that there is to my knowledge not an ounce of male superiority or sexism in my soul! I believe in the biblically taught equality of men and women. My life is committed to seeing men and women develop in every area of life.

It is also crucial to understand that the historic interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 has been the majority view of the church-at-large for the last 1,970 years. Robert Yarbrough, professor of New Testament Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, surveyed the scholarly articles in the standard bibliographical reference tool *New Testament Abstracts* and noted that it was only in 1969 that the progressive, revisionist view began to appear in the literature of the academy. Then, in the period from 1969 to 1991, a comparative flood of articles was produced. He concluded that the rise in the progressive interpretation, following the women's movement of the 1960s, is "indebted significantly, and at times probably culpably, to the prevailing social climate rather than to the biblical text."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Harold O. J. Brown observes, "When opinions and convictions suddenly undergo dramatic alteration, although nothing new has been discovered and the only thing that has dramatically changed is the spirit of the age, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that that spirit has had an important role to play in the shift."<sup>2</sup>

Understanding then that the popularity of the progressive interpretation of the last thirty years found its impetus in secular culture and that the interpretation runs contrary to the prevailing interpretation of the preceding 1,970 years (some sixty-plus generations), the burden of proof certainly rests upon the progressive revisionists!

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<sup>1</sup>Robert W. Yarbrough, "The Hermeneutics of 1 Timothy 2:9-15," *Women in the Church*, Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin, eds. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995) 167.

<sup>2</sup>Harold O. J. Brown, "The New Testament Against Itself: 1 Timothy 2:9-15 and the "Breakthrough" of Galatians 3:28," *Women in the Church*, 199.

Here, my concern is this: if we do not invite the biblical text to define church order, the intrusive culture will. The *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the age, is a tyrant to be resisted, not embraced. But of course, we must never determine our theology by polling dead theologians, however orthodox they may have been. Thus, we must now go to the text of 1 Timothy 2:11-15.

### APOSTOLIC PROHIBITION

The text simply states, "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet" (vv. 11, 12). Simple it may sound, but simple it is not! While the verses are perfectly intelligible, they are nuanced by context and a unique arrangement of words — as we shall see.

#### Creative Interpretations

Before delving into the meaning, we must note the ways in which some interpreters attempt to circumvent the text's apparent meaning.

First, some argue that Paul is wrong. No one claiming to be evangelical ever put this view in print until 1975, when Paul K. Jewett ventured that Paul's teaching here was in error because it allegedly echoed a rabbinical misinterpretation of the second creation account of Genesis chapter two, which, he argued, did not give enough weight to the first creation account of Genesis one.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Jewett understood Paul, yet believed Paul was wrong. Picking and choosing what to accept from Paul is not and has not been an acceptable evangelical custom. Jewett's writings even caused quite a stir in his own institution.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 119 unequivocally concludes:

Both in I Corinthians and in I Timothy appeal is made only to the second creation narrative as the sole text for understanding the meaning of human existence as male and female. Thus this second, supplementary narrative is interpreted in isolation from the first. . . . Furthermore, in reasoning this way, Paul is not only basing his argument exclusively on the second creation narrative, but is assuming the traditional rabbinic understanding of that narrative whereby the order of their creation is made to yield the primacy of the man over the woman. Is this rabbinic understanding of Genesis 2:18f. correct? We do not think that it is, for it is palpably inconsistent with the first creation narrative, with the life style of Jesus, and with the apostle's own clear affirmation that in Christ there is no male and female (Gal. 3:28).

<sup>4</sup>George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 282 reports:

A Special committee of trustees, administration, and faculty was appointed in January 1976 to deal with the Jewett case. Disciplinary action was a real possibility, though dismissal was unlikely. After lengthy discussion, the majority of the committee concluded that Jewett was wrong in claiming that the apostle Paul was mistaken. Nonetheless, they were also convinced that he sincerely subscribed to the statement of

A second way to do away with the traditional understanding of Paul's teaching is to argue that "Ephesus stood as a bastion of feminist supremacy of religion,"<sup>5</sup> and thus Paul's prohibitions against women teaching and exercising authority over men were aimed at the excesses, but not against normal teaching and exercise of authority. The problem here is that a "feminist Ephesus" never existed as S.M. Baugh has shown in his devastating essay "A Foreign World: Ephesus in the First Century."<sup>6</sup> Ephesus was a very conventional Roman provincial city with no women magistrates and with a pagan cult hierarchy controlled by men.<sup>7</sup>

A third attempt at blunting Paul's teaching is to give the Greek word translated "to exercise authority" a negative meaning like "to domineer"<sup>8</sup> or "to control" so that Paul would be prohibiting a patently negative activity "I do not permit a woman to teach or to domineer over a man." This would allow women to teach and exercise authority over men, as long as it was not done in a controlling, domineering way. But, though the word could mean "domineer" in some contexts, it cannot mean this here because the word "or" (οὐδέ; *oude*), which connects "to teach" and "to exercise authority," always requires that both words be either positive or negative. If they were negative, the phrase could read: "I do not permit a woman to teach error nor to domineer over a man." But this cannot be the translation here because "to teach" is always viewed positively in the New Testament, especially in its many uses in 1 and 2 Timothy.<sup>9</sup> Therefore the NIV renders it correctly "to have authority" as do the RSV and NLT.

faith's article affirming that "Scripture is the only infallible rule of faith and practice." Jewett, they pointed out, defended his view by an appeal to the long-standing principle that "Scripture should be interpreted by Scripture." Even though the committee "sharply disagreed" with Jewett's specific application of this rule, they construed his purpose, however mistakenly carried out, to be to defend the overall authority of Scripture, not to undermine it. No disciplinary action was taken.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 54.

<sup>6</sup>S. M. Baugh, "A Foreign World: Ephesus in the First Century," *Women in the Church*, 13-52.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 17, 18, 50.

<sup>8</sup>Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984) 73.

<sup>9</sup>Andreas J. Köstenberger, "A Complex Sentence Structure in 1 Timothy 2:12," *Women in the Church*, 89, 103 concludes:

The meaning of διδάσκειν in 1 Timothy 2:12 is therefore an important preliminary issue in determining the meaning of αὐθεντεῖν. As was argued above, διδάσκειν, when used absolutely, always in the New Testament denotes an activity that is viewed positively by the writer, to be rendered "to teach" (cf. esp. 1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2). If the writer had intended to give the term a negative connotation in 1 Timothy 2:12, he would in all likelihood have used the term ἐπεροδιδασκαλεῖν (as in 1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3) or some other

A fourth attempt to set aside what Paul writes here argues that when Paul says "I do not allow," it is in the present indicative and not the imperative, and that he is therefore speaking personally about a temporary arrangement.<sup>10</sup> But this ignores the fact that Paul often used present indicatives to give universal and authoritative instruction (cf. Rom 12:1 and 1 Tim 2:8).<sup>11</sup> Also, to argue that Paul's instruction is temporary ignores the context, because in the next verse he immediately rests his prohibition against women teaching and exercising authority on the unchanging order of creation. Paul's prohibition here is universal and enduring.

A fifth way to deflect Paul's prohibition is to hold that references to "woman" and "women" in this passage refer to wives because of the way this passage parallels 1 Peter 3:1-7. Thus, the teaching is domestic, i.e. for the home. But the differences in the passages are too distinct to import the "wives" designation from 1 Peter to 1 Timothy.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, very few feminist interpreters seriously use this argument to deflect Paul's prohibition because the argument is so patently weak.<sup>13</sup>

Lastly, a widely used way to discount Paul's prohibition is to misinterpret Galatians 3:28, and then use it to erase what Paul says here.

contextual qualifier specifying the (inappropriate or heretical) content of the teaching (as in Titus 1:11).

Since then the first part of 1 Timothy 2:12 reads "But I do not permit a woman to teach" and the coordinating conjunction οὐδέ requires the second activity to be viewed correspondingly by the writer, αὐθεντεῖν should be regarded as viewed positively as well and be rendered "to have (or exercise) authority," and not "to flout the authority of" or "to domineer."

<sup>10</sup>Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 72.

<sup>11</sup>George W. Knight, III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 140 explains:

It has also been suggested that the present indicative form of ἐπιτρέπω indicates a temporal limitation and thus limits Paul's statement to the then and there of Ephesus. An examination of other occurrences of Paul's use of first person singular present indicative (Rom. 12:1, 3; 1 Cor. 4:16; 2 Cor. 5:20; Gal. 5:2, 3; Eph. 4:1; 1 Thes. 4:1; 5:14; 2 Thes. 3:6; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8) demonstrates that he uses it to give universal and authoritative instruction or exhortation (cf. especially Rom. 12:1; 1 Tim. 2:8).

<sup>12</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, "An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship," *Women in the Church*, 115 answers:

The 1 Peter text refers to *nonbelieving* husbands (3:1). And in 3:7 husbands are addressed in terms of their specific responsibilities to their wives (cf. Eph. 5:25-30, 33; Col. 3:19). No admonition for husbands regarding their relationship with their wives is present in 1 Timothy 2. Finally, it is obvious that Peter has husbands and wives in view in 1 Peter 3 since he says "wives should be subject to *their own* (ἰδίοις) husbands" (v. 1; cf. v. 5). It is precisely this kind of clarifying evidence that 1 Timothy 2:8-15 lacks, with the result that most scholars detect a reference to men and women in general.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 117.

Galatians 3:28 reads, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." It is a massive statement of our spiritual status in Christ. Every believer, male and female "in Christ," fully inherits the Abrahamic promises by grace apart from works. It is a statement of our radical, spiritual equality *coram Deo* (before God), whatever our status in life may be. It does not do away with gender distinctions, however. None of the major teachers of church history thought it, much less taught it.

But that is precisely what feminist hermeneutics does — and then goes on to argue that it is a "breakthrough" text to which all others must bow. Those who think this way are following the very liberal lead of Krister Stendahl, one-time dean of Harvard Divinity School.<sup>14</sup> It was Stendahl's liberal thinking that Paul Jewett followed when he declared that the Apostle Paul was in error in 1 Timothy.<sup>15</sup>

### **Correct Interpretation**

So we see that many and creative are the ways employed to muzzle Paul. But the question still remains — What did Paul mean in verses 11-12? In verses 1-10, Paul's desire was that when the Ephesian churches met, their prayer and deportment would promote God's desire for "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (v. 4).

This section began in verses 1, 2 with Paul urging such prayer and spiritual deportment, and then peaks in verses 8-10 with an inclusion-like admonishment regarding prayer and conduct, "Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness." The way we pray and conduct ourselves has everything to do with the cause of the gospel. Evidently, some men were contentious while offering public prayers, and some women were imitating the coiffures and lavish clothing of the Roman court, known for its licentiousness.

Having mentioned women's deportment, Paul now expands in verses 11-15 with respect to teaching and authority in the church. Here, it must be noted that these instructions have nothing directly to say about teaching and authority in the marketplace or the academy or the public square. They are about order in the church. Neither do these directives allow any man within the church, by

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<sup>14</sup>Krister Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1966) 32-37.

<sup>15</sup>S. Lewis Johnson, Sr., "Role Distinctions in Galatians 3:28," *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991) 160.

virtue of his gender, to generally exercise authority over women in the church. Such explicit authority only exists within the sacred covenant of marriage and family, and then is only to be exercised with the self-giving spirit of Christ (cf. Eph 5:22-23).

Lastly, Paul's instructions have nothing to say about male and female equality. Such equality has been established from the beginning in Genesis 1:27 by virtue of man and woman being created in the *Imago Dei* (Image of God). And the mutual, spiritual equality and status of men and women "in Christ" were given spectacular expression by Paul himself *earlier* in Galatians 3:28.

So, how is Paul's prohibition of women teaching and exercising authority over a man to be understood, especially since the words "to teach" and "to exercise authority" contain no negative connotation like "dominate" or "domineer"? The answer is that the word "to teach" (διδάσκειν; *didaskein*) and its noun forms "teaching" (διδασκαλία; *didaskalia*) and "teacher" (διδάσκαλος; *didaskalos*) are used in the New Testament to describe the careful and authoritative transmission of Biblical truth. In the pastoral epistles, "teaching" always has the sense of *authoritative* public, doctrinal instruction (cf. 1 Tim 4:11-16; 2 Tim 3:16; 4:2).<sup>16</sup>

What then is prohibited is *preaching*, such as is enjoined in Paul's charge to Timothy, "Preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim 4:2). Also prohibited is the *teaching-elder* role of authoritatively defining and expounding the apostolic deposit. This is the realm of male elders who are "able to teach" (1 Tim 3:2). The text is also very clear that attitude is of paramount importance "submissiveness to leadership" "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness" (v. 11). Thus, a hectoring, argumentative attitude is excluded.

This, however, doesn't forbid men and women from instructing one another in regular discourse. Indeed, it is expected just as Paul directed the Colossians, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you; with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col 3:16). To the Corinthians, he likewise observed of the whole congregation, "When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification" (1 Cor 14:26). We ought to be teaching one another. Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos in their home. Apollos learned his theology from both of them (Acts 18:26).

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<sup>16</sup>Douglas Moo, "What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men? 1 Timothy 2:11-15," *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 185.

Within the divinely-given order of the church, women are expected to develop into teachers of their children and other women, for example. The writer of Hebrews chided his congregation in this respect, saying "by this time you ought to be teachers" (Heb 5:12). Our task, as a church, is to equip men and women for the ministry.

### APOSTOLIC REASONING

The apostle goes straight to it in the following words, "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression" (vv. 13, 14). Notice first that he has grounded the ordering of authority in the church upon the order of creation before the fall — Adam came before Eve. John Stott says of this appeal to creation order:

All attempts to get rid of Paul's teaching on headship (on grounds that it is mistaken, confusing, culture-bound or culture-specific) must be pronounced unsuccessful. It remains stubbornly there. It is rooted in divine revelation, not human opinion, and in divine creation, not human culture. In essence, therefore, it must be preserved as having permanent and universal authority.<sup>17</sup>

But then I can't dismiss masculine headship in the cavalier way in which some evangelical feminists do. There is something in the Pauline teaching about headship that cannot be ignored as a purely cultural phenomenon, because he roots it in Creation. We may for men — but he does root his argument in Creation. I have a very high view of apostolic authority. I don't feel able to reject Paul's exegesis.<sup>18</sup>

The creation order, which gave men headship and authority over women, consistently undergirded Paul's teaching on church order. In the famous passage in 1 Corinthians 11 where Paul argued that a woman should cover her head while praying, and a man should not (in effect prohibiting cross-dressing while praying) — Paul referenced the creation order as his authority, "For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake" (vv. 8, 9). Again,

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<sup>17</sup>John R. W. Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1990) 269-70.

<sup>18</sup>Michael G. Maudlin, "John Stott Speaks Out," *Christianity Today* 37 (February 8, 1993):38.



in 1 Corinthians 14, where he argues that the interpretation of prophecy must be done by men, he roots it in the Creation order, [as the Law also says] (v. 34).<sup>19</sup>

Firstness connotes authority throughout the Scriptures. Being the firstborn conveys the privilege of an heir or ruler (cf. Col 1:15ff.). God could have created Adam and Eve at the same time, but He didn't. He created Eve *for* Adam. She was created to be his [helper]. The unchanging fact is that God desires that the order of creation be reflected in His church, the body of Christ.

The point of verse 14 is missed entirely if one thinks that Eve was more gullible than Adam, and that is why she [was deceived and became a sinner]. Eve did not sin naively, but by a willful attempt to overthrow the creation order. She hoped, in eating from the tree, that her eyes would be opened and that she would be like God! (cf. Gen 3:5).

Here's the irony—God had given Adam and Eve awesome authority. The Creation order issued like this—God made Adam, then God made Eve to be his helper, and both of them were to rule over all of creation. But due to her rebellion, a creature, the snake, came to rule her because she obeyed it; then Eve exercised woeful authority over her husband by leading him to do the same!

And Adam? It appears from Genesis 3:6 that Adam was with Eve when she partook, but he did nothing, and then [listened to, [his] wife and ate from the tree] (cf. Gen 3:17). As Phillip Jensen explains, [Eve's sin involved overturning the order of creation and teaching her husband. Similarly, Adam's sin came from [listening] to his wife, in the sense of heeding and following her instruction. He was taught by her, thereby putting himself under her authority and reversing God's good ordering of creation.]<sup>20</sup>

When God pronounced judgment, the capsizing of creation order was significantly emphasized in the way he first cursed the serpent, then the woman, and then the man. The essence, then, of Adam and Eve's sin was the overturning of the creation order. Yet, despite Adam's sinful abdication, his headship was still recognized by God, in that their eyes were opened after he ate (cf. Gen 3:7), and then Adam alone was told that he would die (cf. Gen 3:19) [as goes the head so go the members.

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<sup>19</sup>D. A. Carson, [Silent in the Churches]: On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36, [Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood], 152 writes :

By this clause, Paul is probably not referring to Genesis 3:16, as many suggest, but to the creation order in Genesis 2:20b-24, for it is to that Scripture that Paul explicitly turns on two other occasions when he discusses female roles (1 Corinthians 11:8, 9:2; Timothy 2:13).

<sup>20</sup>Phillip Jensen, *To the Householder* (Sydney, Australia: Matthias Press, 1996) 47.

### APOSTOLIC ADVICE

Paul closes 1 Timothy 2:11-15 with some advice to women, which, on the surface, is not so clear, "But she shall be preserved through the bearing of children if the women continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint" (v. 15). We know that he cannot mean that women will be saved if they have children. Countless godly Christian mothers have died at childbirth. Others have detected a reference to the incarnation "that being "saved through child-bearing" refers to the birth of Christ, and his ultimate atoning work. But this is such an obscure, unlikely way to make such a point.

Most likely Paul references childbearing because it is a universal example of the God-given difference in the role of men and women (men don't have children!), and most women in every culture have children.<sup>21</sup> So when Paul says that "women will be saved through child-bearing," he means that by not seeking a man's role they will more likely remain in the heart attitude which invites salvation and its attendant blessings. Moreover, as Duane Litfin has pointed out, "Whatever one understands the first part of the verse to be affirming, it is contingent on a woman's willingness to abide in these four virtues."<sup>22</sup>

### CONCLUSIONS

First Timothy 2:11-15 is not about male or female superiority. Any honest male knows that the grading curve was always "messed up" by girls in his class. What man has not been out-thought, out-talked, and out-done by his female counterparts? Your experiences need be no larger than your own family to know women who are superior to their fathers, brothers, and husbands. It's a fact—my daughters are all superior to their husbands!

This is not about suitability for leadership. It is a statistical fact that American women read more Christian books than men and attend church in greater numbers.<sup>23</sup> Women are more relationally oriented and more naturally empathetic. They are more intuitive about knowing where people are. They are more verbal, natural communicators.

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<sup>21</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, "An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship," *Women in the Church*, 151.

<sup>22</sup>A. Duane Litfin, "1 Timothy," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary-NT*, John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds. (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1983) 736.

<sup>23</sup>*Emerging Trends* 12:6 (June 1990):5, a publication of Princeton Religion Research Center, reports from a June 1990 Gallup poll that 71 percent of women surveyed believed that religion can answer today's problems, while only 55 percent of men agreed. *Leadership* 12 (Winter 1991):17 reports that the typical church service has 59 percent females versus 41 percent male attenders.

This is not about power. Church leadership is not about strength; it's about dying. That's how Paul defined the New Covenant ministry as "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you" (2 Cor 4:10-12).

This is about fidelity to God's Word. This is about inviting God's Word to shape the life of the church, rather than the intrusive winds of culture. And make no mistake about this—if the Bible does not direct the church, culture will!

This text is about living out the creation order which comes from the character of God's goodness. We must exult with Paul, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who *is* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom 8:31, 32). When we live out our salvation, we can expect everything we need spiritually. When we live out His creation order it is a joyous venture. Paul lived it out! And, for him, his colleagues were a great treasure. Romans 16 is filled with names of men and women who served with and suffered with Paul in ministry.

This is about gospel and mission. The burden that "all men... be saved and... come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4) which so fired Paul's concern that the church pray and deport itself properly, is the same burden that drove Paul's concern that godly men, not women, exercise authority in the church. Paul believed that if the church joyfully lived out the creation order in God's household, then the gospel would continue to go out with power.

After all, Paul's stated purpose in writing was that the church will "know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15).