

God's Design for Men and Women

I promised last Lord's Day that I would pick up today where we left off and tackle 1 Timothy 2:13 to 15. First let me remind us of what Paul wrote in verses 11 and 12, "Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet." After studying the words "quietness" and "teach" and "authority" we came to the conclusion that the kind of teaching which is inappropriate for women is the teaching that is part of expressing the authority spoken of here in verse 12.

What authority is being spoken of here? The clue was found in the two things that are mentioned here as inappropriate for women the teaching and exercising authority over men, which are the very two things that define the job of an elder in the church who is to govern and to teach. This is most easily seen in 1 Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching." Elders, pastors or overseers, three words that define the same position, are charged with preaching and teaching as guardians of the doctrine taught in the scriptures.

Therefore, the authority of 1 Timothy 2:12 is the governing authority of eldership in the local church. Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit wrote that the authority of the church was to be reserved for qualified men. Therefore, women were not to exercise the authority of eldership.

We summed this position up with two definitions; of authority found in verse 12 and submission found in verse 11. "**Authority**" refers to the divine calling of spiritually,

gifted men to take primary responsibility as elders for Christ-like servant leadership and teaching in the church. “*Submission*” refers to the divine calling of the rest of the church, both men and women, to honor and affirm the leadership and teaching of the elders and to be equipped by these elders for the myriad of various ministries available to men and women in the service of Christ.

These definitions are intentionally parallel to the definitions of “Headship” and “Submission” in marriage, which we found in Ephesians chapter 5. “*Headship*” is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home. “*Submission*” is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts.

The reason this is important to see is that both in the case of church order and family order Paul is basing his teaching on God's original order in creation. Paul is not arbitrarily choosing roles for men and women nor is he simply adapting to the cultural expectations of the day. Paul is saying that there is something about the way God set things up in the beginning that makes this kind of order right and good. In other words true manhood and true womanhood mesh more effectively in God’s call to ministry and they are better preserved and better nurtured and more fulfilled and more fruitful in this pattern of home and church than in any other pattern because God made it to be this way. It is part of His gracious design for the good of men and women.

God’s Design Affirmed

Now this brings us to verses 13 and 14 of 1st Timothy 2. In these verses Paul gives two reasons for saying that men and not women should bear the primary responsibility for leading and teaching the church. Reading beginning at verse 13,

“For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.” Let me take these verses one at a time for this is not the easiest task considering our society’s view of men and women and how society’s view has seeped into the church.

First in verse 13, “For Adam was formed first, then Eve.” The point here is very simple and it is first dealt with in Genesis chapters 2 and 3. Paul sees in God's order of creation a teaching concerning the responsibility of man as a leader in relationship to woman. God created man first, put him in the garden, gave him the responsibility over the garden. The moral pattern for life in the garden was established and then God created woman as mans partner to help him carry that responsibility into action.

In other words when Paul teaches that men should bear the primary responsibility for governance and teaching in the church, he is basing it not on any culturally temporary situation at Ephesus but on something woven into the fabric of manhood and womanhood by virtue of our creation. Not on the basis of sin, but on the basis of how God wanted it to be before there was any sin. God’s design is for the good of His people, both women and men for they are both created in His image.

The second point from verse 14 is this, “Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.” Now most commentators in the history of the church have taken this very simply to mean that women are more vulnerable to deception and therefore should not be given the responsibility of leading and teaching the church. From what I have read and experienced in life women are more vulnerable to deception in some kinds of situations and men are more vulnerable to deception in other kinds of situations. This is important to understand.

God's Design Affected by Sin

Let me insert here what I think will help us in talking about the differences of manhood and womanhood. Whenever anyone asks me if I think women are weaker than men or smarter than men or more easily frightened than men? I almost always answer saying something like, I think women are weaker in some ways and men are weaker in some ways and women are smarter in some ways and men are smarter in some ways and women are more easily frightened in some kinds of circumstances and men are more easily frightened in other kinds of circumstances.

It is dangerous to put negative values on the "so-called" weaknesses that each gender has. God intends for all the weaknesses that characteristically belong to men to be called forth and highlight women's strengths. God also intends for all the weaknesses that characteristically belong to women to be called forth and highlight men's strengths. There is balance in our differences; our strengths and weakness. We need each other. I simply could not be the man I am without Joyce for she has enriched my life and I hers.

So, you see even if this verse means that in some situations women are characteristically more vulnerable to deception, that would not settle anything about the quality or worth of manhood and womanhood.

I point this out to show that boasting in either sex as superior to the other is folly. Men and women, as God created them, are different in hundreds of ways. I believe being created equally in the image of God means that when the so-called weakness and strength columns for manhood and for womanhood are added up, the value at the bottom is going to be the same for each. When you take those two columns from each side and lay them on top of each other, God intends them to be the perfect complement to each other. So, when life together is considered and I am not just

referring to married life, the so-called weaknesses of manhood and the so-called weaknesses of womanhood do not make the whole weaker, but in truth, they come together and are stronger.

Let me ask; is the eye of a needle really nothing but empty air? Or is it the indispensable “nothing” that makes the needle able to work? If you believe that manhood and womanhood are to complement rather than duplicate each other and if you believe that the way God made us is good, then you will be very slow to gather a list of typical male weaknesses or a list of typical female weaknesses and draw a conclusion that either is of less value than the other.

God’s Design – Four Things to Notice

Now having said all of that, let me take us back to Genesis 3 to show you what I think 1 Timothy 2:14 means when it says, “[Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.](#)”

The first thing to notice is found in Genesis 3:1, “[Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’](#)” Paul had been taught the scriptures as a Pharisee and believed Genesis 3 to be of God and that it had significance. Satan approaches Eve with half-truths, which are deceptive lies.

Notice secondly, Adam is evidently with Eve at this time when Satan approaches Eve. When we come to verse 6 it says, “[So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.](#)” It does not say that she ate and then went to get Adam. It does not say that he arrived on the scene after the serpent was gone. It

moves directly from the words of temptation to the act of eating and says that her husband was with her.

The third thing to notice is that God disapproves not only of the eating of the fruit but of the way the man and woman related to each other here. In Genesis 3:17 God rebukes Adam, saying, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life.” It is because of Adam, I have to fight weeds and use weed killer in my yard. However, far more important are the words, “you have listened to the voice of your wife.” Now what is interesting is there is no record chapter 3 of Genesis that Eve spoke to Adam. So, it appears that Adam was there listening to the exchange between Satan and his wife, Eve and Adam fell right into step with Eve and it was their temptation and their deception, not just Eve’s.

So what we see is that God's reprimand is not merely a reprimand that Adam ate the forbidden fruit but also that he forsook his responsibility to be the leader and the moral guardian of Eve. It was Adam’s job to protect Eve. Satan's elusiveness is that he knew the created order God had ordained for the good of the family and he deliberately defied it by ignoring the man and taking up his dealings with the woman. Satan put Eve in the position of spokesman and leader and defender. At that moment both the man and the woman slipped from their innocence and let themselves be drawn into a pattern of relating to each other that to this day is destructive.

The fourth thing comes from Genesis 3:16 where God tells Eve, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” This, in part, is repeated in 1 Timothy 2:15, “Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith

and love and holiness, with self-control.” Paul teaches here that although a woman precipitated the fall and women collectively bear this responsibility, they are preserved through childbearing. Women spend far more time with children from pregnancy through childhood than fathers. Thus, they have far greater influence in their children’s lives. Paul’s point is that though a woman led our race into sin, women have the privilege of leading our race out of sin to godliness. This does not mean God ordains all women to have children and if they do not they fail. Some women marry and some do not, some have children and some do not. God is giving a principal that the pain associated with childbirth was the punishment for sin. However, from the seed of a woman came the Messiah. So too, the women have the privilege to raise a child born into the world as a sinner and raise them unto the righteousness of the Lord. The nurturing of women builds the future of the church as boys and girls grow into maturity with their mother’s writing the Word of God on their hearts. What a privilege and responsibility and this also shows the need for the father to be the spiritual leader washing his wife in the Word of God, for she spends for more time with the children and instructs them. When this God ordained order is violated the church is then in peril! The family is in peril! This is related to the meaning found in 1 Timothy 2:14.

Let me try to paraphrase 1 Timothy 2:14 to bring out my thought. “Adam was not deceived, that is, Adam was not approached by the deceiver and did not carry on direct dealings with Satan the deceiver but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor, that is, she was the one who took up dealings with the Satan and was led through her direct interaction with him into deception and transgression.”

If this is right, then the main point is not that the man is un-deceivable or that the woman is more deceivable. The point is that when God's order of leadership is denied it brings damage and ruin. Men and women are both more vulnerable to error

and sin when they forsake the order that God has intended from creation.

So, Paul's position in 1 Timothy chapter 2, verses 11 to 15 is that men ought to bear primary responsibility for leadership and teaching in the church. That qualified men are to lead the church as elders, pastors and overseers, which all mean the same thing. You see, because in creating man first, God taught that men should take responsibility for servant-leadership in relation to women and because the fall of Adam and Eve shows that the neglect of this divine pattern puts men and women in a more vulnerable position and leads to transgression.

God's Ordained Relationship Between Men and Women

Let me say a few words about the relationships between men and women in general apart from marriage and church order. The fact that the meaning of manhood and womanhood is rooted in creation shows that it is relevant in all of life, not just marriage and church. This has implications for all of life. Bear with me, I am going to take some risk in our few minutes remaining with applications from our study concerning life today.

Single Men Relating to Single Women

I want to take a moment to speak concerning single men and their personal relationships with single women. First, men let us not pity ourselves too much over the fact that many young men grew up in homes where dad was not a great model for how to be a strong spiritual servant-leader. This was certainly true in my case. Let's grow up and stop shifting responsibility. Here we are with all our male weaknesses and insecurities and we have some things to learn and they can be learned from Scripture, the source of eternal truth. We can do what God expects of us, if we trust him and we learn to obey God.

Namely, God expects that single men in relationship to single women will bear primary responsibility for a pattern of scriptural directive. I can say with complete confidence that almost no woman wants to be responsible to lead men spiritually. Even the most liberal woman is drawn to the protecting and caring hero of the movie rather than the easily manipulated guy. The pattern in Scripture is also clear that God does not want women to have spiritual authority over men, but to trust God that He can bring a man to be her servant-leader. A man very different from what the world says is a man.

I think the reason many guys do not take this kind of initiative is that they are afraid of rejection. That certainly was true for me. I think the only reason I am married today is because of God ordained it to happen. Joyce and I met in college and even though our backgrounds were very different in a few short days I was hooked, madly in love and I also admit it took longer for Joyce. I can look back over our marriage and I can see how God was directing and moving, even if there were times, like Adam, I was not obedient. I was awkward with Joyce when we first met, but it worked out and we will celebrate our 43rd anniversary this year. From her side, she did not know that she would be following me all over the world serving God. As she says, life with me has been many things, but never boring.

Men trust God, step up to the plate and be the strong servant-leader He has called you to be. Know that as you move towards marriage that you are to love your wife as Christ loves the Church.

Men and Women in the Workplace

In addition, I would like to take a brief moment to say some things about women in the workplace. The dynamics of the workplace have radically changed since World War II. What about leadership of men there? My answer is probably going to be

dissatisfying for it will be general rather than specific. That is because the Bible does not address this as clearly as marriage and the church and because the nature of leadership in many jobs is so very fuzzy.

I give my answer in the form of a principle. Leadership can be measured on two scales or continuums. The first scale is personal to impersonal and the second scale is directive to non-directive. Let me illustrate.

Personal and Impersonal

A woman who designs the traffic patterns of city streets exerts remarkable leadership over all the drivers of that city in that she determines how they drive. But this leadership is very impersonal. On the other hand the relationship between a husband and a wife is very personal. All leadership falls somewhere on the scale between very impersonal with little personal contact and very personal with a lot of personal contact.

Directive and Nondirective

A drill sergeant is the essence of directive leadership. On the other hand non-directive leadership is much closer to that of entreaty and suggestion. A good example of non-directive leadership is when Abigail guided David to not Nabal in 1 Samuel 25:23-25. She was totally successful in guiding David's behavior but did it in a very non-directive way.

My principle, then, is this, to the degree that a woman's leadership of men is personal it needs to be non-directive and to the degree that it is directive it needs to be impersonal. To the degree that a woman consistently offers directive, personal leadership to a man, to that degree, will his God-given manhood and his sense of responsibility in the relationship be compromised. What is at stake every time a man

and a woman relate to each other is not merely competence, for that would be very naïve, but more importantly whether God-given manhood and womanhood are affirmed in the dynamics of the relationship.

Closing

I feel like what I have done in my teaching this morning from chapter 2 of 1 Timothy is simply to show you that there is a beautiful dance to learn and an exciting drama to be a part of, both as men and women, together. It is more beautiful and more exciting because we are so different as male and female. My challenge to you is for you now take up the script of God's Word and ask Him to help you learn your personal part. The world is in desperate need to see what the true living out of life of God ordained manhood and womanhood really looks like and how God has made it for our good and joy.