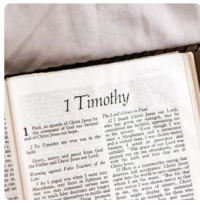


OpenTheo

1 Timothy 2:1 - 2:14



1 Timothy - Steve Gregg

In 1 Timothy 2:1-14, Steve Gregg offers insight on how to conduct oneself in the house of God. He emphasizes the importance of prayer and that it is God's desire for all to be saved. Gregg also provides perspective on the role of women in the church, explaining that while Paul was not opposed to women teaching, they must do so under specific circumstances to avoid teaching false things. Finally, he encourages modesty in clothing and behavior as a reflection of one's priorities as a believer.

Transcript

Okay, let's continue in 1 Timothy. We're at chapter 2, verse 1. The books of Timothy do not follow a real careful outline, as a few of the books do. I mean, Paul, occasionally you can make out a logical outline for what he's doing, but not necessarily in Timothy.

He's, of course, writing a much more personal letter. All the pastoral addresses are fairly personal. And Paul will throw in things that are totally out of place, like a statement, you know, take a little wine for your stomach's sake, in a place where the context doesn't lead up to that or lead away from it afterwards at all.

It's just something he throws in because he's thinking about his friend and he wants to mention it before he forgets it or whatever, you know. So we don't necessarily have a necessarily logical progression. Although, at chapter 2, it may be said that Paul has begun to talk to Timothy about conduct in the church.

He talks about prayer, first of all. Then he talks about women, first of all, how they dress and how they behave in the church. And then he talks about the qualifications for elders and deacons on him in chapter 3. And he closes chapter 3, practically closes it, verse 15, where he says, But if I am delayed, I write, so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

So we could say that chapters 2 and 3 are summarized in chapter 3, verse 15. That is that he's writing to tell about conduct in the house of God or in the church. Yes, Joe? Are these the things that he's commanding in verse 15? I don't know if it's easy to nail down

a particular thing or just say, These things in this book are essentially the charge I'm giving you.

And that would include everything in it. But I'm not positive about that. I have at one time tried to look at the particular places where he's focused, especially where he says, Teach these things, and try to figure out exactly which things he has in mind.

And that's not always easy to do. So my thought is he just means the things that are contained in the epistle. Another place where I feel that way, or where it seems to be the case, is if you turn a page or so earlier, it's 2 Thessalonians.

He says, verse 13, But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary while doing. Verse 14, If anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Now, it could be that our word by this epistle could mean what he was just recently talking about in the previous verses about people not willing to work.

But it seems more likely that he means everything in the whole epistle is what he says they have to keep. And I think probably that's how we're to understand his charges in 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy and Titus also. So the first order of business for the church is prayer.

He says, I exhort, first of all, as a first priority, and perhaps chronologically first in church service, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I also was appointed a preacher and an apostle.

I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. Now, his first exhortation is prayer. He breaks prayer into three parts, supplications, prayers, and intercessions.

It's hard to know exactly what is meant by prayers in contrast with supplications and intercessions. Supplication is different than intercession. Supplication is where you're asking for something that you need.

A supplication is asking for a particular favor. Intercession, by definition, is where you're praying on behalf of somebody else, praying for something somebody else needs, particularly praying for mercy to be shown to them. An intercessor is usually one who stands between the God of wrath and the person who deserves the wrath and seeks to obtain mercy, as Moses interceded for the Israelites, Abraham interceded for the people

of Sodom, Daniel and Nehemiah both interceded for their people, that God would show special mercy upon them.

And intercession usually has to do with pleading for mercy on behalf of somebody who is not on good terms with God, although it can imply other types of mercy, like showing mercy, providing for their needs, or something else like that. He says that these prayers should be made, first of all, for all men. And he gives the reason for it in verse 4, because God desires all men to be saved.

Now, since he stresses that God wants all men to be saved, and that intercessions, and giving a thanks should be made for all men, it may suggest that intercessions refers to pleading mercy on the unbeliever, pleading for their salvation, praying for the lost. There's some question as to whether the Bible teaches that we should pray for the lost, and secondly, if we do, what effect it has. It seems that God certainly has a major role in the conversion of a person, but it also seems that a person has some power to decide whether he will submit to God or not, and I don't know if it's possible to say, God, please make them get saved, because I don't know that God is in a position to be able to do that, to make somebody get saved, since if he could do that, he'd do that to everybody.

Since Paul says that God desires all men to be saved, right here in verse 4. If God desires all men to be saved, and he had the power to just forcibly make everyone get saved, he'd do so. So I'm not real sure exactly how prayer for the lost is to be understood. When Jesus prayed in the garden for the disciples in John 15, he says, I do not pray for everybody.

I don't pray for the world, he said, but only for these that you've given me. So Jesus distinctly did not pray for the unbelieving world, he prayed for his disciples. But that doesn't mean that he would never on another occasion pray for an unbeliever, or that Christians should not.

It's simply a point to make, that we don't have a clear theology of prayer for the lost. And even if we did, we might wonder, in what sense prayer for the lost has an effect over their free will. But I think, since Paul says that intercession should be made for all men, because God wants all men to be saved, there is here at least a hint that intercession would mean praying for lost people to be saved.

And we could suggest, perhaps, that by so doing, we release more of God's efforts to convert that person. I think, ultimately, that person's own decision is still with himself. But that there are certainly people whom God gives greater advantages, that he convicts more strongly, that he intervenes in their circumstances the more, to break down their resistance, and so forth, than others.

We can see two sinners, both of them unsaved, and one of them seems to be cruising along without any problems in his life, and the other one seems to be having all kinds of

disasters. And we can't help but wonder, maybe someone's praying for that one who's having all these disasters, but God is seeking to break that person's resistance down, to bring them to the end of themselves, and that is a very good possibility. We'll never know until we go to heaven exactly how many of the circumstances that led to anyone's conversion were brought about by somebody praying for them.

I certainly have known many people who testified that they were strong rebels against God in their earlier life, but they had a faithful grandmother or mother who prayed for them until of her death, and they got saved, and they certainly attribute their salvation, whether rightly or wrongly, to the prayers of their mother or their grandmother. Now, I couldn't say that it wasn't so. I couldn't say that they weren't saved because of the prayers of their grandmother.

And we can all point to circumstances, whether it was a divine appointment with somebody when our resistance was low, or whether it was a set of circumstances that drove us to our knees, or whatever. Anyone of us who has ever been saved has gotten saved as a result of some set of circumstances, and we might suggest that those circumstances, at least, were brought about by the prayers of somebody. That our response to those circumstances could even have been affected in some way by prayer, because God does harden hearts, and he does open hearts, and I don't know exactly how his actions interface with ours in those same circumstances, but I do think that even God can tend to dispose a person's heart a certain way.

But he obviously can't make the final decision, or else he would, because he doesn't want anyone to be lost. He wants everyone to be saved, and not everyone does. So there must be a final decision made by the individual, but God apparently can exert a great deal of influence.

Yes, sir? How would you put this verse if you were a Calvinist? If what? If you were a Calvinist. If I was a Calvinist, I'd have trouble with this particular section, for one and one reason. One is that verse four tells us that God desires all men to be saved, and comes on to the truth.

Whereas Calvinism teaches that God really only wants the elect to, because he actually has the power to draw irresistibly those that he chooses. Now, if God has the power to irresistibly draw anyone he chooses, which is what Calvinism teaches, then the fact that not all men are so drawn by God indicates that he doesn't choose to draw them all, and therefore he doesn't really desire all men to be saved. He's not really willing that all should come to repentance.

And they would normally, I've heard a Calvinist not treat this passage, but treat a similar passage in 2 Peter 3, is it 3.8, where he says God's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 3.8 or 3.9, 2 Peter? That's 3.9, I believe. And I've heard Calvinists say, well, all there, he's not willing that any should perish, means any of

the elect, but that all should come to repentance means all the elect.

It doesn't mean all people, but that all the elect, God desires that all the elect should get saved. And they would probably do the same thing here, although it's a little difficult because Paul says all men, which certainly doesn't sound like just all the elect. Could that be a hyperbole? Well, I mean, all, sometimes it's used as a hyperbole, but we know that sin and rebellion offends God no matter who does it, and therefore there'd be certainly no reason to make a hyperbole of this, to say that God wishes that everyone would stop sinning and everyone would repent and everyone would get saved.

One could possibly argue for a hyperbole here because there are such hyperboles in the Bible, but I think there's a tremendous stress on the word all here, and notice particularly in chapter 4, verse 10, we're not there yet, but in chapter 4, verse 10, it says, To this end we both labor and suffer in Christ because we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe. Now, notice all men is in contrast to, or is a larger group than, all who believe. We could say those who believe are the elect, but there's a larger category of which those who believe are a special group of a larger category.

And especially the smaller group within all men who are believers. So this sounds like all men, when Paul uses it here, really means all men, or at least some group much larger than just the believing community. And if it's bigger than the believing community, it would seem to mean the unbelieving community.

So whereas we cannot rule out hyperboles in some cases, I would say Paul's usage here would argue for an absolute sense of all in these particular cases. He says he desires all men to be saved, and he also says in verse 6, chapter 2, verse 6, Who gave himself a ransom for all. Now, I know that the Calvinists would say all the elect here, because there's a similar passage.

You know Calvinism also teaches limited atonement. That's part of the whole package, if that's what the Bible's pointing to. That Christ only died a ransom for the elect, not for all people, not for the non-elect.

And when you point out to them, for example, 1 John 2, 2, where it says that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, and not only our sins, but also the sins of the whole world, which sounds like Jesus died for everybody, not just Christians, which seems to contradict the Calvinist doctrine of limited atonement. They say about that, well, the whole world, that doesn't mean the whole world of the non-elect, but the whole world of the elect. But it says, yeah, he says, John is speaking as a Jewish believer, and when he says not for our sins only, he means not only for us Jewish believers, but for the sins of the whole world, that is, including Gentile believers.

In other words, he's making a distinction not between Christians, or elect and non-elect, or Christians and non-Christians, he's making a distinction between Jews and Gentiles.

Now, that to me is simply not realistic. There is no concern in the book of 1 John for the dichotomy between Jew and Gentile.

There are in some books about it, but not John. And his concern is more with the extensive crisis, saving the world. And here, I'm sure that the Calvinists would say the same thing.

When it says in verse 6, he gave himself a ransom for all, they don't believe he gave himself a ransom for all humans, only all the elect, so that's how they would understand this. Nonetheless, when Paul says pray for all men in verse 1, and God desires all men to be saved in verse 4, it argues strongly that the all in verse 6 would also be the same all men. Throughout this passage, Paul's concern is with all men.

And in chapter 4 verse 10, all men is in contrast to the believing community. God desires all men to be saved, especially those who are believers. He is the savior of all men, especially all those.

So it seems to teach against limited atonement, because it says Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, implying all men. As it also says in 4.10, he's the savior of all men, and that can only mean through his atoning work. In chapter 2 verse 4, he desires all men to be saved, and it certainly means that he must have atoned for all of them then, for why would he desire all men to be saved, and yet provide atonement that's not good enough for all of them? So, Calvinism falls on hard times here in this passage, and I don't want to say there aren't some passages that sound like they would support Calvinism.

There are some. I mean, people are Calvinists for good reasons. There are some verses that sound very Calvinistic in the Bible.

Now, the problem here is that Calvinism and Arminianism make such opposite affirmations that persons usually decide, I'm either going to be a Calvinist or Arminian, because, I mean, these are the opposite extremes of theology. I can choose one or the other, and if they are impressed with those verses that look like they teach Calvinism, then they choose Calvinism and tend to ignore or do really weird things with these other verses. If, on the other hand, you incline toward the verses that teach Arminian views, then there's a tendency to kind of ignore those views that seem to teach Calvinism, and this is what I think the moral government doctrine does.

The moral government doctrine is anti-Calvinist, is Arminian, but I feel that it does not give proper weight to the Calvinist passages about predestination and about foreknowledge and about election and so forth. There is such a teaching in the Bible. What we have to do is find the view that accommodates all the verses, or else we are simply picking and choosing, and we're not allowed to pick and choose because all Scripture is given by inspiration.

All is profitable for doctrine. So you can't say, well, I think I'll be a Calvinist because these verses impress me, therefore I have to pay no attention to these verses over here, or I prefer to be an Arminian because these verses, I mean, I'll have to ignore these Calvinist verses. We have to somehow find a theological position that accommodates all the facts, all the biblical material.

I think that is possible to do, although people by nature generate toward extremes, toward poles, and I think that we can say that man does have the final decision in his salvation. Christ did die for all, but of course only the elect will really benefit from his having died, only those who respond to Christ will have done so, and they will do so because they have made a decision freely with their free will, but that free decision was also influenced by factors, including conviction from the Holy Spirit, and God's grace drawing, and His sovereign working in their circumstances. I mean, there's no doubt about it.

I know that I am, I was, I mean, if we were to consider likelihoods, which is probably not the right way to think about it, but if we were to consider likelihoods, I was more likely to be saved than a person born in India is likely to be saved, just because I was born in a Christian home, and most people in India are born in Hindu homes or other religious homes, and so, I mean, I know that my circumstances at least were helpful in becoming a Christian. There are people born in India who are Christians just as much as I am, and therefore chance is not the whole consideration. God's sovereign choices have something to do with things, but we don't know the basis for all those choices, but we certainly cannot ignore the fact that God does make the choice to let you have the final choice, and that is something that, you know the five primal points of Calvinism, almost all of them take a beating in the textual epistles.

The first point, I would have thought I would have familiarized you with the five points of Calvinism before this. If you take the first letters of the five points, they make an acrostic, tulip, T-U-L-I-P, and the first point is total depravity, which teaches something I mentioned earlier, that men are so depraved, so sinful, so spiritually dead, that they are incapable of making any kind of moral response positively to God. They are so disposed toward evil, that they can't do so much of a good work as to say yes when God calls.

God himself has to put the response in them, because men are so corrupt that they cannot even make that decision for themselves. And that's what total depravity teaches. U stands for unconditional election, and the reason for the stress on unconditional is because Arminianism teaches election, but condition.

Arminianism teaches that God foresees that the conditions will be met, namely that the person will have faith, and therefore God elects those who he foresees will believe. But the Calvinists stress the fact that it's not based on anything God foresees that you will do, because you're not capable of doing anything unless God does it for you. Therefore,

election has to be unconditional, because a dead man can't make any response.

And you're dead in trespasses and sins before you're saved. Therefore, if you're going to be elected off, you're going to make any response. God has to put the response in you, and how he decides to put that response in you is not based on anything that you've qualified for or any conditions you've met.

It's unconditional election. That's U. The next is L, limited atonement, which teaches that since only the elect can be saved, there's no sense in Jesus paying a price that would have covered the sins of the non-elect. God knows who the elect are.

He knows who he's going to bring to faith. He knows there's others who he will never bring to faith, and he doesn't care about them. And I may be overstating it when I say he doesn't care about them, but it certainly seems from Calvinist theology that he doesn't.

And therefore, there's no sense in him providing atonement for the non-elect. After all, if he's made an atonement for those who are non-elect, then theoretically they could get saved too. And that throws out the whole idea of selective election.

If Jesus made an atonement for everybody, then conceivably anybody might be saved, but it's part of Calvinism that only the elect can be saved. And therefore, they limit the atoning work of Christ to include only those that God has elected to put a foundation in the world. Only their sins are included in Christ's death.

Amen. Then you've got I. The letter I stands for irresistible grace. And that means that if you're one of the elect, and God has atoned for you through Christ, then he is going to draw you by his grace, and that is irresistible.

Now, that does not mean to them that you may be kicking and screaming, saying, I don't want to be a Christian, but you have to anyway, because God drags you in. It's more that he puts it in your heart to become a Christian. And the conversion of any person is a proof of this document, because they would say the fact that you wanted to be saved was proof that God's irresistible grace threw you to that opinion.

God doesn't win you against your will, it's just that he puts the will in you. By his grace, he inclines you to be saved, and if you are the elect, you can know it by the fact that you got saved. If you were drawn by God, it is proven.

I mean, if you became a Christian, that proves that God drew you to him irresistibly. Did you resist? No, because you couldn't have been saved. And then you've got the last letter, P, perseverance of the saints.

Perseverance means that if you are elected, if you were chosen without representing anything you chose, if God chose you unconditionally, he atoned for you in Christ, he paid for you, he bought you, you're his. He has drawn you irresistibly by his grace, that

same irresistible grace makes it impossible for you to draw away. If you've been drawn irresistibly, then you are held irresistibly by the same grace.

And therefore, if you are in fact one of the elect, then you will stay, you will not backslide. This is not the same thing as the modern antinomian teaching of eternal security. The modern antinomian teaching, which is sometimes mistaken for Calvinism, is that you can get safe when you're young, and go and live in sin and still die safe, because you were saved when you were young, once saved, always saved, even if you died a Satanist.

If you became a Christian when you were five years old, you're saved. That's not what Calvinism or Arminianism teaches. Arminianism teaches, if you have a saving experience as a youth, and then fall away and live in sin and die in sin, then you're lost.

You were saved, but now you're lost. You've lost your salvation, you've thrown it off, you've departed from the faith. The Calvinists would say that the same scenario, that is, someone who got saved and then fell away and died in sin, they would say that person never really got saved.

If they'd really been saved, they would have stuck it out. The fact that they didn't stick it out proves that their salvation experience was a counterfeit. And that if they were truly of the elect, they would never fall away.

Now see, Arminianism and Calvinism come out in the same place on the death of a sinner. If a person dies in sin, Calvinists say you're lost, Arminians say you're lost. The difference is the Calvinist says you never were saved, the Arminian may say you were, but you lost it.

It doesn't matter. The person who dies in their sins is lost, according to both Calvinism and Arminianism. That's different than what a lot of modern churches teach, that, well, you die in your sins, but if you were saved when you were five, you're still saved.

No. Calvinists would say, no, you're not. You never were.

Arminians would say, no, you're not. You were, but you're not anymore. But the Calvinist doctrine of perseverance of the saints means if you really are one of the elect, you will prove it by dying faithful and being faithful forever after.

So Calvinism calls people to holiness. It's not some kind of a wishy-washy kind of view. Some people criticize Calvinism as if it gives people grounds to sin or be irresponsible or something, but the Calvinists say if you are irresponsible, you simply show that you're not one of the elect.

So to prove your election, or as Peter says, to make your calling and election sure, you have to add to your faith virtue, and the virtue, knowledge, knowledge, temperance, and

the temperance, patience, and the patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and brotherly kindness, and godly love, and therefore you make your election sure. So, in a sense, Calvinism inspires good behavior, too. I mean, Arminianism does for a different reason, but I just want to say to you, I have no problem with Calvinist people, unless their attitude is obnoxious.

And I know some of them are obnoxious Arminians, by the way. But I don't believe Calvinistic doctrine is taught in the Bible. I don't see anything really dangerous about Calvinism, and that's why I don't make myself some kind of a campaigner against it, though I disagree with it.

I think some of the greatest Christians in history, Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards, and at least in modern times, some of the greatest Christians were Calvinists, and it didn't keep them from being holy men of God. So I, and most good commentaries are written by Calvinists, by the way. It's hard to find Arminian commentaries.

It's even hard to find the works of Arminians in print. So, what I'm saying is, there's a lot of good that has come to us through Calvinist Christians. The question is not whether we're talking about heresy, or about people who strayed from God, or whatever, by wrong doctrine.

We're just asking, is this what the Bible teaches? In my opinion, Calvinistic teaching is not taught in the Bible. There are passages that seem to, you know, if you want to believe it, you can use it as support text, but there's some passages that simply cannot fit the Calvinist scenario. And when we talk about total depravity, or unconditional election, well, we were talking about Paul saying, I mean, there may be some question of unconditional election in chapter 1, verse 12.

He said, because God counted me faithful, he enabled me. Certainly, the question of limited atonement, and irresistible grace, is open to question from these passages we're looking at here, how God wants all men to be saved. He wants everyone to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Jesus gave himself a ransom for all. The question of perseverance of the saints certainly is a question that's raised when we look at the people who departed from the faith in the pastoral prison. So, I would say that pastoral prisons are some of the most non-Calvinistic writings in the New Testament.

Anyway, that's really a diversion I shouldn't spend so much time on, but it is important to know what Calvinism teaches, and whether or not you think it's the right view. Okay, now, he does say in exhorting to prayer that in addition to all men, kings and all who are in authority, verse 2, are to be singled out for special prayer. In fact, one would get the impression that whatever Christians pray, they ought to never neglect to include prayers for those who are in authority.

Why? That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. Notice, a quiet and peaceable life supposes no persecution. The Apostle Paul knew only too well that governing authorities could persecute the Church, and sometimes did.

One of the things we're to pray for is that they won't. We're to pray for the authorities that we will not experience an interruption in our quiet and peaceable existence, and in all godliness and reverence. He wants us to be able to live an uncompromised Christian life without molestation from the government, and for that we should pray.

Now, I'd like to point out a few things about this. We know that persecution can be good for the Church. The main thing that makes persecution good for the Church is that it does tend to weed out the half-hearted, and it does refine those who are sincere, and it purifies the Church.

What Paul is saying here, though, is that God would prefer that the Church be pure without that. What's good and acceptable to God is that the Church not be persecuted, that the Church live in peace and quiet, but also in godliness and reverence. Unfortunately, human nature being what it is, and the Church being what it is, especially an institution as it is now, which many non-Christians are now part of, as well as Christians, persecution sometimes is helpful, or maybe even necessary, to purge out the dross.

But God's preference is that the Church would not have dross, but that the Church could be living in harmony with the government officials. Now, this does not happen naturally, because the kings of this earth and the rulers of this world have set themselves against the Lord and against his Messiah. It says in Psalm chapter 2, and it's quoted in the New Testament, that the kings of this world want to rule the world, and so does Jesus.

Therefore, there's a conflict. And when the disciples went to a place and preached there was another king, one Jesus, it often brought to the attention of the governing authorities, and persecution was sometimes the result. Now, that's why we need to pray.

We need to pray that the governing authorities may let us go our way unharmed. In Paul's own day, Christianity was an illegal religion, but the Romans didn't know it yet. They thought it was part of Judaism.

Paul knew it wasn't. But he exploited the confusion. The Romans had a policy that no new religious system could arise in their empire legally.

Any new religious system or cult that arose in Roman lands would be illegal. But any religion that was already practiced in the region before the Romans took over could continue to be practiced after the Romans took over. Therefore, Judaism, which had been in Palestine long before the Romans came, was legal in the Roman Empire.

The Jews could legally practice Judaism. Christianity, though, was a new faith. And it arose during the Roman Divinity, and therefore was technically illegal, and the Romans later recognized that and persecuted Christians, as Nero and others later did.

But in Paul's early ministry, most people, including the Romans, thought Christianity was just another branch of Judaism, which was a legal religion. And Paul was glad enough for them to think that, because there were times when he was drawn before the Roman authorities, and the Jews themselves were trying to accuse him of preaching a new religion. But the authorities couldn't see the difference between what Paul was teaching and what the Jews were saying.

The Romans didn't have a good grasp of either Judaism or Christianity. They thought that Paul was Jewish. He believed in the resurrection like the Jews did.

He preached one God like the Jews did, and they just couldn't see any difference. So they let Paul go a lot of times. And he said, keep praying.

Keep praying that the authorities won't recognize that what we're doing is subversive. Because we do teach there is another king. We are trying to cause people to change loyalties from the kingdoms of this world to the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.

And if the authorities understand that, they will persecute us, because Christ demands an allegiance which Caesar alone wants. And if Christ gets that allegiance, it will put people more loyal to Christ than to Caesar. And Caesar doesn't like that.

And governments in this world don't like that. Governments in this world don't like it when people are conscientious objectors. When the leading officials of the nation says, we have to go and defend our country.

And people say, but Jesus Christ says I have to love my enemy. And I won't fight. I'll go to jail first.

Some Mennonites have been very brutally treated during World War I and World War II when they refused to fight. I mean, just because the rulers of this world do not like it when you say I have a loyalty to someone higher than you. And therefore, Paul says, you better pray.

Now, the Bible says in Proverbs 21.1, The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. As the rivers of water, he directs it whithersoever he wants to. And as God directs the heart of the king.

Proverbs 21.1 Apparently God, though he does not intervene against free will of most people on most occasions, he reserves the right to direct history. And therefore, rulers who are making decisions that will affect history, God has the right and reserves the right to intervene on their official decisions. I don't believe he intervenes on whether

they'll get saved or not, more than anyone else.

I think they have their own free will in those matters. But in terms of the decisions they make that will affect his people and the progress of history, God is sovereign over such things. And therefore, people like Caiaphas and Caesar Augustus and Alexander the Great and Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar and others have all been seen as making decisions which they thought they were making on their own, but which the Bible indicates God was drawing them or making them do what they did.

And so, we can rejoice in the fact that the God we pray to has more power and authority and sovereignty in the way politics happen than the politicians themselves have. And the hand of the Lord controls the heart of the king, but what controls the hand of the Lord? Prayers. God waits to be asked.

God waits to be prayed to. Our prayers influence God's action. As we pray according to his will.

Now, if we pray not according to his will, he's not going to act. Because we're not governing God. He's governing us.

He's not a member of our kingdom. We're citizens of his kingdom. Therefore, prayers that are not in the will of God, he is not obligated to answer.

But he waits for us to pray in his will to do what he wants to do. We see that in the Bible. James says, you have not because you ask not.

There are things that you'd have if you prayed, but you don't have because you don't. There's things God would do if you asked him, but he won't do them if you don't ask him. There are things he would like the kings of this earth to do if he's asked by his people, but he won't intervene in some cases, apparently, without being asked.

Therefore, we're to pray regularly for all who are in authority, for kings and everyone in authority, because God has authority over their decisions, and he will respond to our prayers. Now, it's interesting that Paul does think it's to the advantage of the church to have political freedom and peace and to be un-persecuted and so forth, but he does not suggest for a moment that taking up arms or revolution or a coup against the government is in any sense part of our duty to obtain these objectives. The weapons of our warfare are not physical.

There are people who seek to obtain freedom from persecution and so forth by carnal means. But he says we have a weapon that's mighty through God. It's the pulling down of strongholds and casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 10, 4 and 5. And the weapon we have to change history is prayer and, of course, preaching. As we make disciples, that changes the course of history. As we pray, that too does.

And these are our weapons. And so Paul says pray for kings. Pray for all who are in authority, so that we may continue to have a quiet and peaceful life in God and his remembrance.

That's what God really wants most. That's good and acceptable on the side of our God. Let's go down to verse 8. He starts talking about men and women then.

First, he makes a comment about men, but then he goes into a fairly long consideration, comparatively, of women. Therefore, I desire that men pray everywhere, lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Now, we know that Paul did not object to women praying, although he talks to women separately.

But apparently the public prayers in the church were perhaps dominated largely by men. Though we can't be too sure of that, because Paul indicated in 1 Corinthians 11 that women too could pray and prophesy if their head was covered properly there. So Paul is not forbidding women to pray, but it may suggest that men are the main leaders in public prayer in the church.

And they're praying everywhere. I don't know if that means that you should pray everywhere you go, or if that means in all churches he wants the men to do this. I suppose it doesn't matter.

I mean, both could be fine ways of looking at it. The interesting thing is the part about lifting up holy hands, and without wrath and doubting. Now, lifting up holy hands maybe could be understood as a command from Paul to lift your hands when you pray, but I don't think so.

What I understand him to be saying is, since they did have the custom of lifting their hands when they prayed, make sure that when you pray your hands that you're lifting are holy hands, as opposed to ones that have been involved in misbehavior. Your hands represent your works. The works of your hands.

And when you lift your hands to God in prayer, better make sure that your hands are not covered with blood. As Isaiah said in his generation, in Isaiah chapter 1, he said, you know, when you make many prayers, I will not hear you. Though you lift up your hands, I will not pay attention, because your hands are covered with blood.

That is the blood of misbehavior, of committing murder and so forth. And the idea is that when you lift your hands to God in prayer, and whether people are commanded to lift their hands in prayer or not is a separate issue. I don't think that that's the force of what he's saying, although the fact that they didn't lift their hands in prayer may be a good

reason for us to do so as well.

David lifted his hands in prayer. Solomon lifted his hands in prayer, and no doubt many others did that. Lifting the hands would appear to be an act of worship, perhaps a declaration of dependence, a declaration of helplessness.

You know, when a burglar or a mugger sticks a gun in your instance and puts your hands up, it's because he wants to render you helpless. You can't defend yourself very well when your hands are in the air. Having your hands up is a fairly helpless position.

I've heard other people compare it to a child lifting his hands up for his daddy to pick him up. You know, just a position of dependency and looking for help to the parent. I don't really know.

I mean, the New Testament does not really say what significance lifting hands has. It's interesting that I think the first time an issue is made of the lifting of hands is in Exodus chapter 17, and there, when the Amalekites have attacked the Israelites who had recently escaped from Egypt, Moses and Aaron and Herod go up on a mountain while Joshua leads the armies against the Amalekites, and while on the mountain, Moses puts his hands up in a posture of prayer, and while his hands are up, that is, while he prays, the Israelites prevail. Yet, when his hands come down, when he grows weary of praying, the Amalekites prevail.

Therefore, Aaron and Herod help him hold his hands up until the battle is completely won. And when it's all over, it's interesting. In verses 15 and 16, the last two verses of Exodus 17, it says, And Moses built an altar and called its name Jehovanissi, which is the Lord is my banner.

And it says, For he said, Because the Lord has sworn, the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Now, this apparently is a textual difference here, because the literal, or the strange translation, literally in the Hebrew, verse 16 says, Because a hand is upon the throne of the Lord. There's a marginal reference there.

In the Hebrew, literally, it is said, A hand is upon the throne of the Lord. Now, some think that refers to the hand of the Amalekites coming against Israel, God's throne. But the Bible says Israel is God's footstool, or the earth is God's footstool.

Really, heaven is God's throne, Jesus said. So, whose hand was against the throne? Whose hand was upon the throne of God? Presumably, Moses' hand. When Moses had his hands lifted up for the prayer, it's as if he was making contact with God, and God's sovereign power laid his hand on the throne of God.

And a little bit like Jacob, who wrestled with God and prevailed, there may be some suggestion, it may seem a little esoteric or mystical or something, that when Moses' hands were up, that it's as if he was making contact with the heavens. That his hand was

laid against the very throne of God, and tapping the sovereign power of God in that situation. Maybe the lifting of hands for a rap was to convey that message to the Jews and the early Christians, I don't know.

I do want to say, though, that I don't think that Paul is making a law that Christians, when praying, must raise their hands. But when they do raise their hands, they should be holy hands, as opposed to hands that are not worthy of being lifted up before the Lord, because of works that are not fitting for a Christian. Also, when they pray, not only are they supposed to be holy, and lift up holy hands, but they are to do so without wrath or doubting.

And wrath, of course, speaks of problems in your relationship. The Bible says elsewhere, do not let the sun go down on your wrath, because you give place to the devil. When you allow wrath between you and another person, you're angry and hold a grudge, and you're bitter toward somebody, that's going to affect your prayer life.

Likewise, doubting clearly has no proper place in prayer. The Bible says, when you pray, believe and do not doubt. And so, faith, proper relationships with your brother, and first of all, holiness, are all to be connected with prayer.

Prayer without these is not likely to get you anywhere. If your relationship with your brother is askew when you're praying, there's a good chance God won't even hear your prayer, or won't pay attention to it. As Jesus said, when you come to the altar to offer your sacrifice, prayer is likened to the sacrifice of the Bible.

And you remember your brother has something against you, leave your sacrifice there, go back, make peace with your brother, and then come and offer your sacrifice. The implication is God doesn't want any sacrifices from you, if your relationship with your brother, if you've not done all you can to make it right. And therefore, Paul's saying, get your relationships right, get your personal holiness, act together, have faith without doubting, and pray.

And your prayers will be effective. Verse 9, in like manner also that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but with what is proper for women professing godliness, with good work, a certain principle, a certain attitude, and Paul was shrewd enough to know that a woman's attitude is reflected in her clothing styles, and everybody knows that. The same is true of men nowadays, although in those days I think men were fairly, I don't know if there were as many variations in men's clothing styles as in women's.

And hair styles, for example. I mean, when we talk about braided hair, we shouldn't think that this means that if a woman puts a braid in her hair, she's violating this. The hair styles he's talking about were, and there are carvings of them that have survived from the Roman period.

The women of the Roman Empire, especially the rich women, put on extremely expensive clothing and jewelry and wore their hair in elaborate fashions that took a great deal of time to maintain, not just a braid to keep the hair out of her face, but braids woven all around them, interlaced with gold and silver and jewels and so forth. And this was how the fashionable ladies wore their hair, and that is almost certainly what Paul means when he talks about the hair styles here and the cost of clothing. I don't know that a person has to be too concerned that they paid more for their pair of jeans than if they bought a generic brand, since it says they shouldn't wear costly clothing.

It does mean you have to wear the poorest clothing you can find, but it does mean that when a person, we know that when a person spends a great deal of time and money on fashion and dressing up and just being concerned about their appearance, it is a reflection of a priority that should not be in the life of the believer. The believer should not make a priority of such things as outward adornment. Now, obviously, I mean, I don't think that we can understand Paul to mean that you shouldn't wear any jewelry.

Although, frankly, I don't know that Christians should or shouldn't. I personally am not attracted to jewelry, but some men are, and I don't know that it's a violation for a woman to wear jewelry, if that pleases her husband. But he is talking about excess.

The word moderation there, actually, in verse 9, I don't know if your version, if you read the different version, says moderation. It says with propriety and moderation here. The word in the Greek is discretion.

I mean, it means discretion. In Proverbs 11.22, we're told something about a beautiful woman without discretion. Proverbs 11.22 says, As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.

Now, a lovely woman, that is, who is not discreet, not modest, not sensible in her clothing and style, though she'd be very lovely, she's lovely like a jewel of gold is lovely in the snout of a swine. If you saw a big old pig come along with a jewel of gold in his nose, you would probably see the jewel of gold, but you'd be far more aware of the pig. The jewel of gold is a very small consolation for having to look on the pig.

And that's the idea. A jewel of gold may be, you know, attractive, but when it's in the nose of a pig, it somehow spoils the whole picture. Because the pig is so dominant, you know, in that picture.

And a pig is an unclean and unattractive thing. Now, what he's saying is, a woman who's beautiful, who has outward beauty, but who lacks the inward beauty of discretion. It's not as if there's no beauty, a jewel of gold is a beautiful thing, but it's almost like it's overwhelmed by the ugliness of her character, the ugliness of her spirit.

In 1 Peter 3, Peter says the same thing Paul does in this, so we have two apostles, not

just one. But in 1 Peter 3, verses 3 and 4, it says, Do not let your beauty, it's talking to women, 1 Peter 3, 3 and 4, Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging of the hair, of wearing gold, or putting on a fine apparel. Or actually just apparel, is what it says in 3. But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

In other words, a woman can be adorned beautifully with a meek and quiet spirit. That's an adornment that God values. God sees that as of high price.

Paul also says a woman can be adorned with good works. In verse 10, 1 Timothy 2.10, but not adorned with these other things, but with what is proper for a woman professing God, adorned with good works. So, the ornamentation that a Christian woman should seek for herself, or the way in which she should seek to make herself attractive, should not be in the outward adorning, but the adorning of her life with good works, and meekness, and gentleness, and quietness.

These are valuable to God, and by the way, attractive to godly men. Unfortunately, Christians often are converted out of a worldly background. Some are raised in the church, but others are converted out of a worldly background, and they bring with them some of their worldly tastes.

And for that reason, there are men in the body of Christ who have, sadly, worldly tastes in women. I heard yesterday of a man who, a Christian man, who required his Christian wife to get breast implants, because he wanted her to have larger breasts than she did. I was aghast, because, of course, we know that those things are, first of all, dangerous, and secondly, it shows a really poor set of priorities on the part of the husband, that he wouldn't, you know, he didn't like his wife as much with her breasts smaller.

My wife knew a girl, a Christian girl, who married a Christian man, who, after they were married, he said, I don't want you to even show up at the breakfast table without your makeup on. I thought, again, man, how insulting to a woman. A man who married her doesn't even want to look at the way she really looks.

He wants to look at the altered version. And, to me, that's a crying shame. I can't even understand, because I was raised in the church, and I don't have those kind of worldly tastes.

I don't like makeup, and I don't like jewelry, and I don't like, who will say I don't like breasts to be large or small? I mean, I don't have a preference. I'm just saying that that's not what I would value in a woman. And I can't imagine any godly man valuing those things in a woman.

Sadly, though, Christian women looking for husbands, or seeking to keep their husbands, have sometimes resorted to adorning themselves the way worldly women do, because

that's what they have perceived to be what attracts the so-called godly man. Let me tell you something. If you do not seek to adorn yourself with physical beauty, but adorn yourself with a meek and quiet spirit with good works, it may be that there are some men in the church who will not be attracted to you, but you don't want them anyway.

Those are not godly men. Men who insist on outward beauty and adornment are simply not worth having for a Christian woman. She's going to have trouble, because if he is a man who is so attracted to outward beauty, then what makes you think you're going to be the most beautiful woman he'll ever see? I mean, if he's so addicted to worldly concepts of attraction, and you do all you can to accommodate those, you may not be able to do enough.

And even if you can for a while, when you get old, you won't be able to do it. There will always be someone younger and more beautiful. If you marry a man or seek a man who is attracted to outward adornment, you're going to have a hard time holding him if that's what his priority is.

But no godly man makes that his priority. I remember a sister that I wanted to marry. She didn't want to marry me, but we were good friends.

She was not the most attractive woman in our circle of friends, but physically she was not. She was not holy. She was just not dazzling, as some women were in the church.

But she was so godly and so meek and quiet that every brother I knew who was, you know, an on-fire guy in the ministry, all hoped that they could marry her, including me. I wanted to. I didn't.

I eventually married someone who was as good in the same ways. But I mean, I just remember being impressed by the fact that here, this woman, there were many women more beautiful in the church in terms of physical appearance. But all the brothers who were really on fire for God wanted this woman.

She was one of a kind. I remember how, as a single brother, living among single brothers who were godly, one of the things that came up for discussion most often, I'll let you in on a little secret, you girls, trade secret of single brothers, most of the time was spent talking about the crying lack of virtuous women. Women who don't care about money and appearance and those things.

Most men who are godly, all men who are godly, are looking for a virtuous woman. If she's good-looking too, all the better. If she's not, that's not that important.

I mean, obviously, men also, I won't deny it, do want to be attractive. I imagine women like a man to be attractive. But a godly person is looking for something else.

A person who has God's desires, values, what God values. And God values the ornament

of a making-quiet spirit. And a woman professing godliness should not seek to spend a lot of money or time or concern in general on outward adornment.

That doesn't mean you have to be from here, that you have to try to look ugly. I mean, obviously, Christian orderliness would call for some basic cleanliness and neatness and so forth. But I'm saying that the world would tell you that if you're going to snag the guy you want, you're going to have to be as beautiful as you can be.

And that may, in the taste of our culture, may include a lot of money and time spent before you go out in public. And Paul says that is not appropriate to women who profess godliness. Now, he uses the word modest here.

Probably the most dominant word in verse 9 is the word modest. Women should adorn themselves in modest apparel. What is modest apparel? We have had women come to this school who walked around in extremely short pants and very tight tops.

And I've had brothers come to me and complain. By the way, I don't know what women would consider immodest on a man. I remember one summer, I was running a summer discipleship program, and we were working outside, and most of the brothers, including myself, had their shirts off because it was hot.

And one of the sisters there came and told me, you know, that it was a stumbler for all the brothers to have their shirts off, so we all put our shirts on. I never would have thought that was considered immodest. But I guess maybe it is.

I mean, maybe I should take a vote. I'm not going to, unlike the women. But if we found that most women felt it was a bit of a distraction or a stumbling block for men to wear muscle shirts or tight pants or whatever, then I think men should observe this rule as well.

But the problem is mainly a problem with women in Ephesus, because the men, I think men mostly wore togas in Roman society, and those were not very revealing, and I think all men wore about the same thing, and therefore modesty of dress was a problem more with the women. Now, when we think of immodest clothing on a woman, perhaps the first thing we think of is, you know, small bikinis and very short dresses and tight clothes or extremely low-cut tops or whatever that reveals a lot of skin. I think a lot of times we define modesty in terms of how much skin is showing.

And, of course, that is one factor to consider in terms of modesty. I would make the term more far-reaching than that. The purpose of clothing, according to its first appearance in the Bible, back in the Garden of Eden, was to cover nakedness, to cover the nakedness of the body.

There is clothing that covers nakedness, and there is clothing that draws attention to nakedness. Now, by nakedness I would actually, we're talking about those parts of the

body which are not seemingly to be shown in public. We're talking largely about those parts of the body that are distinctive of the genders.

Because things that men and women have in common, like elbows and wrists and fingers and stuff, no one really gets too excited about those. It's those things that they have that are distinctive to their gender that cause problems for the opposite sex. And I think the reason Adam and Eve put on clothes, although there was nothing wrong with them being naked in each other's presence, it is clearly to cover up the shame of nakedness, and that is what clothing is for.

If clothing covers nakedness and seeks to hide those parts of the body that are the distinctives of the sex, then it is modest clothing. On the other hand, clothing, whether it shows a lot of skin or not, any clothing that is designed to draw attention to the body, and especially to its sexual distinctives, whether it's tight pants, tight top, or whatever, or simply designs on the... I've seen designs on the clothing. The clothing was not particularly modest in terms of how tight it was, but just the placement of the design on the shirt or something was definitely to draw attention to the breasts of the woman or something like that.

And what we have to ask ourselves now is how short is too short? Or how tight is too tight? The standard for modesty should be, are my clothing tending to draw attention to my gender, that is, the parts of my body that are distinctive of my gender, or are they tending to hide those things? Because, of course, the purpose is to be loving toward the opposite sex. It is unloving to be immodest when you're among Christians who are seeking to maintain pure thoughts. And anything that is not done in love is sin.

Love is the whole objective. The basis and the purpose of our commandment is love. And the loving thing to do is not to stumble people who are trying not to be stumbled.

And you and I all, every one of us, knows and can testify to the fact that we have been in some place or another where we've been trying to keep our thoughts holy, and the way somebody was dressed was simply too distracting and not pure. Thoughts were aroused or elicited by the way they were dressed. So, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, you should do all to the glory of God, and that would also be whatever you wear.

And you don't have to feel compelled to wear what the world is wearing. Now, I'm not saying you have to go back and dress like the Amish, though frankly I wouldn't mind if people did, if Christians did. I really probably would be attracted to that, those older styles and more modest styles, myself, if everybody was doing it.

I don't want to be the first or only one to do it, but I wouldn't object at all if when I joined the church, I joined a society where people wore distinctively more modest clothing, even if it was something along the lines of a uniform, though I'm not into legalism and uniformist things like that. I would still rather see something that looked like a uniform

and was modest than everyone doing what's right in their own eyes and subjecting my eyes to it. Because what's right in your own eyes might not be right in my eyes.

And I'd rather... But the main thing is, of course, to look at your wardrobe and say, you know, what is this wardrobe for? Did I get this clothing so that other people of the opposite sex would be attracted to me more, physically, because of it? If so, you bought your clothing for the wrong reason. And you've probably seen the culling of your wardrobe. Okay? Now, this is directly what I said to women, principally because in emphasis, because of the styles and so forth, women were the ones who were most endangered of being in modesty.

The same would apply, of course, to men in a society like our own, where certain male styles may be a distraction or may arouse the wrong kind of interest. Now we turn to women's behavior in the Church. Verse 12, verse 11.

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression.

Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing, if she continue in faith, love, and holiness with self-control. There are approximately five terribly difficult things about this passage. I said approximately five because I didn't count them officially, but I got a comment on that, and that, and that, and that, because they're all difficult.

But there's four or five things in this brief passage that definitely need some clarification. First of all, what does the word silence mean? It appears in verses 11 and 12. Well, if it will help me understand what silence means, it is the same word used in chapter 2, verse 2, when it says that we may lead a quiet, same word in Greek, quiet and peaceable life.

Obviously, Christians are not to be absolutely silent and never say a word. They are to live a quiet life, that is, not going about as gossips and not, you know, being, you know, trying to draw their attention by raising their voice. By the way, one of the things that is said about the foolish woman in Proverbs twice is that she is clamorous and noisy.

Noisiness, along with the way one dresses, can be a means of trying to get attention to oneself. Some people just talk with a louder voice in a crowd just so they can make sure that, in spite of all the hubbub of all the different conversations, everyone will pay attention to what they're saying. Now, of Jesus, it is said, he will not strive or lift up his voice in the street.

A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoking flax he will not quench. Jesus was not known necessarily for lifting up his voice, except when there was a crowd gathered wanting to hear him, in which case, he spoke loudly enough to be heard, and that must

have been fairly loudly for the size of some of the crowds. But he didn't go about trying to... He wasn't a boisterous person.

Being boisterous is not treated in the Bible as an attractive or godly characteristic. As I said twice in Proverbs, the foolish woman is described as clamorous and boisterous. The godly woman is compared as having a meek and a quiet spirit.

And by the way, 1 Timothy 2.2 suggests that even Christian men should strive to be quiet and peaceful. I do believe there are times when in order to be heard, one must project their voice. But in ordinary life, I think that when a person speaks more loudly than necessary, it is a prideful thing to draw attention to oneself, just like a certain kind of flamboyant clothing is a prideful thing to get attention to.

You know, we just want to be noticed in the crowd. We just don't want to be another face in the crowd. We want to stand out.

We want people to notice us. And loudness can sometimes do that. Now, here, I would say the quietness of a woman, King James and New King James is silence, but quiet is better, is no doubt an aspect of her modesty.

Her clothing and her demeanor should be such as would not unnecessarily draw attention to herself. And she should seek to be a quiet person. Now, by the way, the Anabaptists, who arose shortly after the Reformation in about 1525, were so meek and so gentle in their behavior that they earned the unflattering, at the time it was considered unflattering, designation of the quiet of the land.

They were called the quiet of the land, because they just went about diligently doing their work, not gossiping, not minding anyone else's business but their own. And maybe they were too quiet in some respects, because eventually the communities, like the Amish, became not even outreach-oriented. But nonetheless, it is, I think, to their credit that the Mennonites and the Amish and whatever other Anabaptist groups there are earned a reputation of not being voices.

They were quiet people. Paul said over in 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians that people ought to learn to be quiet and mind their own business. He says that, of course, in 1 Thessalonians 4.11, that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your own hands as we commanded you.

I think it was this verse that inclined the Anabaptists to adopt their manner. They wanted to be quiet, mind their own business and work with their hands, just to do honest labor and not spend their time gadding about as tailbears and so forth. He also says this in 2 Thessalonians 3. He said that, in verse 12, those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

So, a quiet spirit is a desirable thing for a Christian man or woman. The Luminaries said

to be required to be quiet in church. And perhaps they are singled out instead of the men because they were being in Ephesus perhaps more noisy than they should have been or more noisy than the men.

Or it may be that the men who were the main speakers in the church could not be required to be overly quiet since they had to speak and they had to communicate and they had to lead. But women were not required to do that in the church and therefore were to maintain a quietness. Now, since the word silence is an overstatement, this does not necessarily forbid women to teach or I should say to speak up at all in the church.

There are occasions we know that Paul allowed women to speak. In Corinthians he said they could pray or prophesy with their head properly covered. And no doubt there were other functions that women could do in the church that were not keeping strict silence.

But their general demeanor in the church should be that of quietness and I suppose, you know, they wouldn't be dominant in the church service in the sense of, you know, having a high profile but that doesn't mean they would never speak. Or whatever. Paul is asking the women basically to learn in quietness.

And he says I don't permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man but to be quiet. Now, she's supposed to learn, verse 11 says, she's not supposed to teach. Likewise, in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, Paul is talking about women's demeanor in the church.

Same subject in a different church, different culture. Ephesians was a Roman culture, this is a Greek culture but you can see that in both cultures the same instructions seem to apply. In 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 34, Paul says, let your women keep silent in the churches for they're not permitted to speak.

But they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home. That is, if they want to learn something more than they're able to grasp from just listening, then they should ask their husbands at home for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

Now, when Paul says shameful for a woman to speak in church, remember this is the same epistle that he said they could prophesy and pray, which involves speaking. He means speaking in some kind of form. There's some kind of situation, some speaking function in the church that women should not seek to intrude into.

He does not specify what it is, although he may have assumed that the readers knew what he meant. In Ephesians, he seems to specify it more clearly. He says, I do not permit a woman to teach or to usurp or have authority over a man.

Now, this command has been very troublesome, not just because people rebel against it, but because it's a little hard to know exactly what were the limits of what Paul had in

mind here. After all, we know that Paul would not permit a woman to teach her own children, or conceivably other people's children. And we know that in Titus chapter 2, he said the older women should teach the younger women.

So, we can gather that Paul did not restrict women to teach in every circumstance. In fact, the only circumstance which they're forbidden to teach is to teach and have authority over men. Since they're not forbidden to teach in any other situation than that, it seems like for women to teach all women or all children, which is about three-fourths of the human population.

That is within the domain of women to teach. Therefore, Paul is not saying women are incapable of teaching, that they're not gifted to teach and so forth. When I tell people I don't believe that women should be pastors, some people say, well, what about a woman who's got a gift of teaching? Well, I hope she would.

Because the Bible indicates that women should teach in some circumstances, but just not in the congregation. There are some places where women should teach, and if they're supposed to teach, they should have a gift of teaching. And I should not be surprised to find women who are very gifted teachers.

Now, the question is, does he forbid them to teach in every situation even where men are present? And that's not altogether clear. Because Paul, most would believe, is talking about behavior in the church meeting. Okay? Now, he may not be talking about it in the church meeting, but it seems likely, since it talks about her learning quietly, most learning was being done under the teaching in the church gathering, where the teacher was speaking.

And therefore, it seems that the scenario of a gathering of the church is in mind. And in this situation, he says he doesn't let a woman teach and have authority over a man. Now, does that mean he would let a woman teach in another situation over a man? Of course, we don't know for sure.

We do know that on another occasion, in Acts chapter 18, at the end of that chapter, Priscilla and Aquila, a married couple, took a man, Apollos aside, and instructed him or taught him. It would seem Priscilla was involved in the teaching in that situation, because it says Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and instructed him. So, they were disciples of Paul.

They certainly knew Paul's feelings. And I suppose that their actions would be agreeable with Paul. And they knew that if they weren't doing anything, Paul would disagree with them.

It seems to me that women who are not in the church meeting may, in certain circumstances, and it may be because Priscilla was with her husband that this was

possible. I don't know if that changed anything. We can see that Paul would not forbid a woman, under every circumstance, to teach where a man was there to learn.

Likewise, when I read a Christian book written by a woman, I don't consider it to be a violation. I don't think a woman is in violation of this by writing a book. She might have even been recommended for women, but I happen to be a man.

I picked it up and I benefit from it. Should I feel guilty about benefiting from something a woman said? I think not. I don't believe that Paul is opposed to women teaching in every situation.

I think there is one thing Paul is mainly concerned about, and that is the leadership of the church. Which, as we can tell from the pastoral epistles, is largely a matter of teaching. Because I pointed out yesterday how often teaching and doctrine prevail as highly visible activities for those who are leading the church in these epistles.

He's always talking about teaching, teaching, teaching. And later, when he talks about elders, immediately following this in the context, chapter 3, verse 2, he says an elder, who was clearly one of the leaders of the church, should be able to teach. The elder should do the teaching.

Or possibly some other men should do the teaching of the church. But since teaching was so much a part of the church meeting, taking the leadership of the church meeting, Paul did not want women in that place. And I think it's not because he didn't trust them as teachers.

Some people think he didn't trust them as teachers. They think that he was teaching by his reference to Eve, that women are more easily deceived than men, and therefore that women should not be trusted as teachers, because they might teach some false doctrine. But if Paul felt that women were more easily deceived by men, that is, as a class, women are more deceptible, deceivable, than men are, then he shouldn't let them teach anybody.

Women are children, especially, who are more susceptible. He should just tell women to keep their mouth shut in all circumstances, if they're likely to teach false things. I don't think Paul's concerned that women are teaching the wrong things.

There's some other concern on his mind. And I believe his concern is the propriety of expressing the proper order of the genders in God's economy. When Paul talks about the church, he thinks of the church as being analogous to the family.

Everybody in the church are brothers. The church is our mother. God is our father.

And what the family is in micro, the church is in macro. It's interesting that in the family, the husband has the headship, and the woman is in the submissive role, because why?

Because that's a picture of Christ in the church. Any other arrangement would pervert the message.

The church certainly must submit to Christ, and Christ is forever and ultimately the head of the church. And therefore, the wife and husband who are to depict this reality are to fulfill the roles appropriate to their gender, so that they might show that God is like a father and like a husband, and his people are like a wife, submissive. Now, the larger family, the church, also apparently functions on the same principles.

It is not considered desirable for the church to become a matriarchal organization. Let me tell you something. It would, despite the fact that many women say, I don't want to take over the church, but I object to what Paul said here.

If Paul hadn't said these things, the church would have been a matriarchal organization a long time ago. You know why? Because men shirk leadership, and women are commonly drawn to it. Now, that's not a racist thing.

That's my observation. My observation is that men shirk leadership of their families, and they shirk leadership in the church. You can go to a church that has 300 members on Sunday morning, a pretty good mix of men and women, go on Wednesday nights with prayer meeting, who's there? Mostly women.

Go on the mission field, who's there? Mostly women. Women seem more willing to take responsibility. They seem, in many cases, in larger numbers, more zealous to do the work of God.

And if God didn't put some restraint on women, it would be a matter of very little time, and women would be in all the offices of the church. Men would say, sure, have at it, because most men don't care. Most men would rather have someone else take the responsibility.

Now, I realize there's some power-hungry men who want the power, but most men I've known don't. And an awful lot of women, a surprising number, have been eager to be in those positions. In fact, the whole feminist movement, the whole woman's movement within the church testifies to this.

I have not seen a great number of women, of men, women. I've not seen a great number of men competing with each other for the positions of elders in the church. I don't want the position.

I've been offered positions. I've on a few occasions been forced into the position, and I didn't enjoy it. And I wouldn't be an elder if they gave me the chance right now, and I probably don't qualify anyway.

But men, in general, are not eager to be elders, it would seem to me. Some are, but very

few. Most of them would just assume none.

But it's amazing how many women are out there trying to fight for the rights of women to be elders and pastors. I mean, there's whole organizations in Christendom. There are whole magazines devoted to it, Christian magazines, devoted to trying to give women the right to be ordained.

Well, who in the world wants it? Apparently women do. Most men don't. And if Paul didn't put any restriction on this, the church would soon be an organization that was largely run and dominated by women.

Now, that is not to say that women wouldn't do a good job. I'm sure, and Paul knew this very well because he commended many of his female associates for their competence and for their godliness and so forth. I'm sure that Paul knew that a church run by women could perhaps be as efficiently run as a church run by men.

It could be as doctrinally pure. It could be as, you know, in many respects as good as a church run by men. But one thing it could not be.

It could not be a good testimony to God's word. Because, Paul says, when God first created things, he created things the way he wanted them. And man was first created, then the woman.

That's his first argument here. He does not argue from culture, by the way. Some people say, well, the only reason Paul made these instructions is because in that time and that culture, it would not be acceptable for a woman to be a head over a man.

People would object to that. Well, maybe they would, maybe they wouldn't. I don't know.

But that's not Paul's reason. Paul doesn't say, I don't allow a woman to teach and have authority over men, because after all, that would be a scandal in the community. He doesn't say anything of such a thing.

And likewise, when Jesus picked his twelve apostles, he picked all men. Listen, if Jesus did not discriminate between the sexes in choosing leaders, then you'd expect just by the law of averages that half a dozen of the apostles would be women, or at least a few, or at least one. But in choosing twelve leaders, Jesus very carefully chose all men, even though there are some very good women that he highly respected in his ranks.

Why didn't he choose any women? Again, some people use the same excuse. Well, Jesus knew it would be socially unacceptable. Do you think Jesus gave a hoot about what was socially acceptable? If he cared about place in society, he wouldn't have picked a publican to be one of the apostles, and a zealot to be one of the apostles.

He didn't choose men because society would approve of them. He chose them because

God wanted him in those positions. He didn't care what anyone thought.

And if God wanted women in the apostles, he would have chosen some. He wouldn't have cared what society thought, and Paul wouldn't either. After all, Jesus did scandalize even his own disciples once.

At the well, he was talking to a woman. Men didn't talk to women in public, and the disciples marveled that he even spoke to a woman. Jesus didn't care what anyone thought.

He did what he knew was right. So, we have to ask, why did Paul forbid women to be in those positions of authority? Why did Jesus not select any women for those twelve offices that were available? Why is there a studied resistance to putting women in the highest positions of authority in the church? It is not because of social concerns. It is because of God's divine revealed order, and that's all that Paul ever appeals to.

In 1 Corinthians 11, in 1 Corinthians 14, and in this passage, 1 Timothy 2, three places where Paul puts a certain amount of restriction on the behavior of women in church. In every passage, he goes back to the Garden of Eden and says, this is why. The Garden of Eden is history.

It's not a social pressure of the present time. Paul was not culture-bound. We are.

Feminism is culture-bound. The women's movement in the church is a cultural movement borrowed from our worldly culture. Paul was not the slave of his culture.

We are. Paul was a slave of obedience to Jesus Christ, and he knew that what God made in the first place is what God wanted to be before the fall. When Jesus was asked about divorce, he said, what God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

And they said, well, didn't Moses say to give a writing of divorce? He said, yeah, Moses permitted it, but from the beginning it was not so. The way God made it at first was how God wanted it, and it's the idea that we should aim for. Because before the fall, everything God made was very good, and we should seek as much as possible in all of our relations to approximate that as it was before the fall.

It's interesting, in talking about the issue of women's roles, Paul never talks about the expectations of the culture around him. He talks about the way it was before the fall, what God did and what God demonstrated to be his will in creation. And he says, in verse 13, for Adam was first formed, that's the first reason he doesn't let a woman in for him.

Now, that's never going to change, by the way. No matter what culture the church goes to, no matter what century it is, it's never going to change that God made Adam first. It's not going to change.

Therefore, the reason that Paul had for saying no to women in leadership in Ephesus is as good a reason in all places and all times, because the fact is, Adam is always going to be the one that God made first, and not Eve. And what's he saying? Going back to the Genesis account, God made man, and then he made woman to be a helper to him. The woman was made to be an assistant.

Not a slave, not an oppressed person, but an assistant, a partner, but a partner that followed his lead. And Paul says, in making man first and then woman, which God could have made them both simultaneously if he wanted to, but he made man first, and he made the woman from the man after saying, I want this man down to help her. God was demonstrating that the woman's place in creation is to help and to assist man, and man's place is to lead.

Now, you can try to make something else in the passage. I can't see anything else in this passage. Paul says, I don't let women take authority over men, because God made man first, and then he made woman.

He's not putting women down, he's just putting them in their proper place, which is a good place. It's a place that God made, and when he saw it, he said, it's good. And if anyone thinks it's not good, they don't agree with God.

If you don't agree with God, guess who's wrong? Guess who needs to change their mind? Now, there's another thing he brings up here. What I'm saying is, the reason Paul didn't want the church to be governed by women is not because he didn't think women could do a good job, but because it was improper, it did not properly demonstrate God's order and his proper roles that God had ordained by creation for man and woman. To give the impression that women were the leaders of this movement was to go in a totally different direction than Jesus himself went when he chose the leaders for his movement.

And different than Paul did. And anyone who tries to say, well, our culture's different than that, and therefore it doesn't apply, and so forth, I think they're culture-bound. I think they're slaves of our culture.

They're following slavishly the world's ideas about the obliteration of roles between men and women. There are proper roles. And I can't imagine why anyone in the right mind would want to be a leader of the church.

I think we just tend to grasp what's forbidden, like Eve did. In fact, it's interesting that that very tendency of Eve is mentioned here. He says, verse 13 and 14, For Adam was first formed at Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into the transgression.

Now, sorry to run out of time again, but this is, I can't stop here. How is this to be understood? Does this mean that woman is more guilty than man, so she should be

punished? No, I don't believe that means that. Because, after all, a person who sins because they're deceived is actually less culpable than someone who sins who isn't deceived.

After all, Paul said himself, he obtained mercy because he did it in ignorance. Presumably, if he had done it without ignorance, he would have been more guilty. Now, the woman apparently was not more guilty than man, or less so.

It's not really good to sin, whether you're deceived or not. But he is not saying that the woman is more guilty of anything. It would sound like the man is, because he wasn't deceived.

He did the wrong thing knowing what he was doing. She was at least deceived. But she was deceived by greed and lust and pride and so forth, which are bad things.

So she was guilty, too, even to allow herself to be deceived in that way. She didn't have to be deceived. God told her what the truth was.

She just chose not to believe it. She's as guilty as Adam. They're both guilty.

But what Paul is not arguing, that woman, because she was deceived, was worse than man, who was not. That's not what he's arguing here. Secondly, he is not, in my opinion, saying that women, as a class, are more prone to deception than men.

Some people understand Paul's words that way. He says, the woman was deceived, therefore I don't let her teach. And therefore, Paul is saying that women are more likely to get deceived than men, because they have false doctrine and they're not very discerning, and therefore they shouldn't teach.

I actually know of some evangelical scholars who treat this passage this way. They say, Eve was not around as long as Adam was. She is newer.

Adam was first formed than Eve. Therefore, she was not as savage. She was not as streetwise as Adam was.

She didn't know what it was all about so much, and therefore she was a little more ignorant. And women in Paul's day were more ignorant, too, because they were not permitted to be taught in seminaries like men were. And therefore, they couldn't teach because they were not as educated.

They weren't as knowledgeable as men, like Eve wasn't as knowledgeable then. But today, our seminaries do have women, and there are women who get an education equal to that of men, and therefore these instructions of Paul should not be held in our society, because Paul is talking about a situation where women were less educated and more naive. So nowadays, of course, women are not going to be deceived as much because

they get the same education in seminary as the men do.

Well, that's missing Paul's point entirely. He's not talking about a woman's competence here. He's not concerned about competence.

He's concerned about God's revealed order of things and our willingness to submit to it instead of trying to change it to our own satisfaction. Now, I don't believe Paul's saying that women as a class are more prone to deception, and I don't believe he's saying that Eve, who was deceived, was more guilty than Adam, who was not. I don't believe that that's what's being discussed here.

What I think he's saying is this. It's simply a matter of fact that Eve herself attested to, that the serpent deceived her, and that led her into sin. We're not stressing the fact that deception is different than non-deception.

It's just a fact of history. He's just quoting practically. Eve herself said it.

In Genesis 3.13, she says, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. So Paul says, She was deceived and she ate. She was deceived and she sinned.

Fine. The problem is, her husband, who was not deceived, could have kept her from doing that if only she had been under his leadership. The problem was not that she was, I mean, her guilt is not in the fact that she was deceived, whereas a man is less guilty because he wasn't deceived.

That doesn't make sense. The idea is that the man wasn't deceived. She could have spared herself the mistake if she had allowed her husband to lead her in this decision instead of taking the initiative herself.

She took the leadership of the family. She certainly did. She fell into sin and led her husband into sin.

She gave to him also, and he ate. The Bible says. Now, the point here is not to stress that the woman is more guilty than the man or not.

Simply that when the woman took the initiative, she was out of her proper place. If she had remained in her proper place, she wouldn't have made that mistake because her husband, who should have been providing the leadership, was not deceived and therefore probably would not have fallen if she hadn't been at first. He could have kept her from being deceived.

But apparently she was acting independently and taking the lead of the family. Now, this is not to say she's more guilty than the man. You should not think that Paul is saying, I don't let women teach because we have to punish them for what Eve did in the Garden of Eden.

He's not seeing this as punishment. Believe me, putting someone in authority is a punishment. Anyone who knows anything knows that the person in authority is the one who is not enviable.

The person who is under righteous authority is the one who is not enviable.