

1 Timothy 2:8-15 (Part 2)

Introduction

1. As we saw last week, in chapter 2 Paul is addressing concerns he had with disruptions in the Ephesian church gatherings:
 - a. One of those disruptions was the anger and disputes between some men
 - b. Another was the extravagant dress and immodest behavior of some of the women
 - c. The third disruption mentioned by Paul had to do with the behavior of some of the women in regard to teaching and exercising authority
2. Paul addresses this third concern in vs. 11-15 and we just touched on it last week due to time
3. However, this is a complicated, and for some a controversial, passage so I wanted to spend today digging into it a little deeper today so we can properly understand what Paul was teaching
4. You may have questions like...
 - a. Do women really have to stay quiet and not speak in church?
 - b. Why can't they teach men or serve as elders?
 - c. What does Paul mean by women will be saved by bearing children?
 - d. What about women who are single or don't have kids?
5. We're going to try to answer those questions today by examining these verses along with a parallel passage that Paul wrote to the Corinthians
6. The structure of our passage today is pretty simple:
 - a. In vs. 11-12, Paul gave a set of two instructions to women
 - b. In vs. 13-15 he gives the Biblical support for these instructions

A. Paul's first instruction is found in v. 11: **"A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness."**

1. The context of this verse is the local church gathering (e.g. worship service) and Paul is addressing how women are to learn ("**receive instruction**") in such a setting
2. Paul lays out two requirements:
 - a. One requirement is that women are to receive the teaching "**quietly**":
 - 1) This word is only used four times in the NT and while it can refer to silence (Acts 22:2), more often it refers to a state of quietness or calm
 - 2) Paul likely has this more common understanding in mind, meaning that women are to learn with a quite and calm demeanor
 - b. The second requirement relates to the first and it's that women are to receive teaching "**with entire submissiveness**":
 - 1) This word refers to submitting oneself to another and can refer to obedience (e.g. children to parents and slaves to masters) or submission (e.g. to authority figures, wives to husbands)
 - 2) Notice that Paul stresses "**entire**" or complete submissiveness here
 - 3) Paul doesn't specifically mention to what or to whom the women are to be in subjection, but there are a few possibilities:

- a) Since the context is teaching, one possibility is that he expected the women to be in subjection to what is taught, and possibly to the one teaching (e.g. pastor, elder, teacher)
 - b) As we'll see in a moment, it's also possible that Paul has submission to their husbands or male authority in the local church
3. This brings up two questions:
 - a. The first is, What prompted Paul to give these instructions?
 - b. The second is, Was this a cultural thing or is it a rule that women should live by today?
4. There's not much in this context to indicate what prompted Paul to give this instruction, except that it's in the broader context of disruptions in the church, but there is another passage where Paul gives almost identical instructions and it might shed some light on this passage (TURN TO 1 Corinthians 14):
 - a. There was confusion during the Corinthians' gatherings, in part because certain gifts like speaking in tongues and prophecy were not being exercised in an orderly fashion
 - 1) One issue was that women in the church were praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered which violated cultural norms:
 - a) Paul covers this in 1 Corinthians 11:16 and describes such behavior as a disgrace to their husbands
 - b) In Greek and Roman culture, it was considered shameful for a woman to uncover her head in public, and Paul likens this to the women who had their heads shaved as a penalty for adultery
 - 2) Another issue was that everyone was trying to speak in tongues, and apparently the prophets were talking all over each other
 - b. So, Paul provided instructions on how to bring order to their gatherings (READ 1 Corinthians 14:26-40):
 - 1) When they came together, there would be those with a psalm (e.g. song), a teaching, a prophetic revelation, some who spoke in tongues, and some who interpreted tongues
 - 2) When it came to tongues, only two or three could speak and it had to be interpreted or they couldn't speak
 - 3) When it came to the prophets, likewise only two or three could speak, they had to stop speaking if another prophet received a revelation, and others had to "**pass judgment**" on what they said (this means to evaluate what was said)
 - 4) The final instruction had to do specifically with the women (14:34-35):
 - a) Women were to "**keep silent in the churches for they are not permitted to speak**"
 - b) Instead of speaking, they were to "**subject themselves, just as the Law also says.**"
 - Paul's reference to the Law here isn't to a specific chapter or verse but the general teaching of the Law as it relates to the proper role and disposition of women
 - Peter referred to this same thing (READ 1 Peter 3:3-7)

- c. The key to understanding Paul's instructions to women here is found in understanding the culture, what Paul described back in chapter 11, and his use of the word **"improper"**:
 - 1) To call their behavior **"improper"** meant that it was shameful and disgraceful, and Paul already used this word back in 1 Corinthians 11:6 when he compared the women who were praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered to women who had their hair cut off (one of the penalties for adultery in Greco-Roman culture)
 - 2) It was not only considered disrespectful for a woman to uncover her head, but to engage in public discourse with men; this may have been in part because most 1st century most women were not as educated as men and were taught at home with a concentration on domestic duties (e.g. managing the home, raising the children, cooking, cleaning, etc.)
 - 3) Both of these appear to have been an issue at Corinth:
 - a) Some of the women were uncovering their heads and praying and prophesying openly and publicly during their gatherings
 - b) This was considered shameful and disrespectful to their husbands

- 5. So, Paul's prohibition against women speaking at Corinth appears to have been based upon cultural norms, it was probably the same back in Ephesus which led to Paul's first instruction to the women there (REREAD 1 Timothy 2:11)

B. The second instruction Paul gave is found in v. 12: **"But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet."**

- 1. Notice that this verse begins with **"but"** which means that it's connected to the instructions Paul just gave
- 2. Women were not typically encouraged to learn outside the home, but Paul encouraged their learning in church as long as it was done in quietness and submissiveness
- 3. **"but"** Paul said that a woman is not to **"teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quite."**
 - a. To be clear, the Bible doesn't prohibit women from teaching:
 - 1) The Old Testament charges parents, which includes mothers, to teach their children (Deuteronomy 6; Proverbs, esp. 31 which is a recounting of what King Lemuel was taught by his mother; Paul attributed Timothy's understanding of the Word to his mother and grandmother in 2 Timothy 1:5 & 3:15-16)
 - 2) According to Titus 2:3-5 older women are also supposed to teach the younger women
 - b. What the Bible does prohibit, however, is women serving as teachers over men and exercising authority over them:
 - 1) In this verse, both **"teach"** and **"exercise authority"** are modified by **"over a man"**
 - 2) Both of these infinitives are in the present tense which implies ongoing teaching and authority, rather than periodic or occasional (e.g. not just teaching but serving in the role of teacher or authority figure over men)
 - 3) What Paul describes here are essentially the roles of pastor, elders and pastors; they are the ones who are to serve as the primary authority figures and teachers within the local church
 - 4) According to chapter 3 and Titus 1, these roles are clearly reserved for men:
 - a) This is reflected in Jesus' ministry as well as he only chose men to serve as His Apostles

- b) It's also reflected by Paul and Silas as they only appointed men to serve as elders in the churches they planted
- c. This brings up the question of whether it is ever appropriate for a woman to teach a man:
 - 1) We have the example in Acts 18 where Priscilla and her husband Aquila together taught Apollos the way of God more accurately
 - 2) But, Priscilla didn't do this independently, it wasn't an ongoing thing, it was limited to the Gospel, and Priscilla wasn't exercising any form of authority over Apollos

The difference between my seminary professors and guest speaker and Hebrew specialist Susan Foh

C. Paul provides Biblical support for the prohibition against women teaching or exercising authority over men (2:13-15)

- 1. Paul made three statements to support the prohibition and they go back to Creation and the Fall
 - a. The first statement was that God created Adam before Eve (READ 2:13): **“For it was Adam who was first formed, and then Eve.”**
 - 1) There's more to this statement than just the order in which they were created
 - 2) If you remember the Genesis 2 account, God created Adam from the ground, placed him into the garden, gave him instructions on which trees in the garden he could eat from, then had him name all the animals—this was all before God created Eve
 - 3) It wasn't until after all these things that God created Eve, and rather than make her from the ground as He did Adam, he took from Adam's side, formed Eve and then brought her to Adam to be his helpmate
 - 4) This process did two things:
 - a) It established their roles in the marriage and family relationship: Adam as head and Eve as helper (there's some great imagery here):
 - Adam was taken from the ground, named after the ground, and placed into the garden to till the ground
 - Eve was taken from Adam, named after Adam (adamah), and placed alongside Adam to help him
 - b) It also established Adam as the primary authority figure and responsible party in caring for God's creation (e.g. giving him the command before Eve was created and naming of the animals)
 - 5) This is why we see male headship and leadership supported and taught throughout the Bible:
 - a) Husbands are referred to as the head of their wives (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23) and wives as helpers to their husbands (Genesis 2:18, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:9)
 - b) Likewise, men are called to manage their households (1 Timothy 3:4), provide for their family (1 Timothy 5:8), sacrificially love their wives like Christ (Ephesians 5:25), and take responsibility for raising their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4)
 - c) In the Old Testament, God selected men almost exclusively to serve as patriarchs, judges, prophets, and kings to lead Israel (there are rare exceptions)

- d) In the New Testament, Jesus chose only men to be His Apostles, and the Bible restricts the roles of elders and pastors to men
- b. The second statement is that the Ephesian women's desire to teach and have authority over men was the result of deception and sin (READ 2:14): **"And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."**
- 1) Some interpret this verse to mean that women shouldn't teach or have authority over men because they are more easily deceived than men; some even suggest this is because women are intellectually inferior to men:
 - a) However, Paul doesn't say that here, and if it were the case why would he only prohibit women from teaching men, and why would he encourage the older women to teach the younger women (Titus 2)? If they were more easily deceived why wouldn't he ban them from teaching altogether?
 - b) Paul also warned the Corinthians (not just the women) that he feared Satan might deceive them in the same way he did Eve (2 Corinthians 11:3), which suggests that he was concerned about men being deceived as well
 - c) It might be easier to make the case that women are more easily deceived if Satan had tried to deceive both Adam and Eve and only Eve succumbed, but there's no evidence he even tried to deceive Adam (Adam was there in the Garden with her but Satan didn't talk to him)
 - 2) I think Paul has something else in mind here; women shouldn't teach or have authority over men because the desire to do so is the result of deception and the sin nature:
 - a) If you have footnotes in your Bible you might have one that indicates that a more literal translation of **"fell into transgression"** is **"has come into transgression"** or **"has become a transgressor"**
 - b) This is because Paul uses the perfect tense which describes a past completed action that still affects the present
 - c) Now we know that both men and women inherit a sin nature and are prone to sin, but here Paul is only emphasizing the sin nature of the woman; why does he do that?
 - d) We find the answer in Genesis 3:16 (READ):
 - Most interpret this verse as women will still sexually desire their husbands in spite of the trouble having pain in childbearing (and most English translations use the word "desire")
 - However, the word for **"desire"** here is only used three times in the OT and in both of the other instances it refers to wanting to exercise control over someone (sin's desire to control Cain in Genesis 4:7 and Song of Solomon 7:11)
 - The NET translates the phrase as **"You will want to control your husband"** and the ESV as **"Your desire shall be contrary to your husband"**
 - In other words, because of the Fall, Eve's tendency (and therefore women in general) would be to no longer be content in her role as helper but desire the role of head; in other words, to control her husband
 - This is precisely what was happening at Ephesus; like Eve some of the women were deceived and wishing to be in authority over the men

- c. Paul's third statement is a counter to this desire (1 Timothy 2:15): **"But women (lit. she) will be saved through the bearing of children (lit. through childbearing), if they (women) continue in faith and love and sanctification with self-restraint."**
- 1) When Paul addressed the men over their arguing and disputes, his solution was that they pray
 - 2) When he addressed the extravagant dress and immodest behavior of the women, his solution was that they focus on adorning themselves properly with modesty and restraint, and focus on good works
 - 3) Here, when it came to women desiring to teach men and exercise authority over them, his solution was to have them focus on the role for which God created them:
 - a) Women, he said, will be "saved through the bearing of children":
 - Paul is not saying that women are saved spiritually by having babies, nor is he saying that every woman must have babies
 - Saved here refers to being saved from the transgression he just discussed, wanting to teach and be in authority over men
 - He is making a general statement that women should focus on the role for which God created the woman, that of being a helper rather than head, and do so by continuing in **"faith, love and sanctification with self-restraint"**

D. Conclusion

1. So, we have two things going on here
2. In one case, Paul instructed women to remain quiet in the church gathering because it violated cultural norms:
 - a. First, women were not as educated as men, and speaking publicly was therefore considered improper
 - b. Second, it was considered a sign of disrespect towards her husband for a woman to engage in public discussions or debates
 - c. I would argue that neither of these apply to our culture today here in the U.S.
3. In the second case, Paul instructed the church that women are not to teach men or have authority over them:
 - a. He based this not on cultural norms but Creation and the Fall which means that it still applies today
 - b. God warned Eve that as a result of the Fall, she would desire to be over her husband, rather than come along side him as his helper; she would rather lead than be led
 - c. When women desire the same today, it is no different and the result of deception and the sin nature
 - d. Therefore, the church should encourage women to seek satisfaction in the role for which God created them