

A Study of 1 Timothy 2b and 4

Before we move on to 1 Timothy 4, we will finish up the topic from the past two weeks regarding the roles of men and women in the church. Here are some of the reasons:

- The role of women is an important issue in our society.
- There has been a lot of misinformation about what the Bible teaches.
- This passage has multiple parts that can be interpreted in different ways.
- Most people try to understand this passage from the context of the world rather than the context of the gospel.

The last point is the largest problem within the church. It is understandable when non-Christians or immature Christians think that power and authority are more valuable than humility and servanthood. It is not understandable when Christians who are supposed to be mature spiritually think this.

Here are a few Scriptures that show us what the Bible teaches about humility and servanthood.

- Mark 9:35
- Galatians 5:22
- Ephesians 5:21
- Philippians 2:1-11

In fact, when words like “obedience,” “servant,” “humility,” and “submission” are used in Scripture, the usage is overwhelmingly positive.

If we understand grace properly and the task of speaking for God, who is qualified to do this?

With this frame of mind, let us look again at 2 Timothy 2:12.

¹² *I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.*

¹³ *For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵ Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.*

Key questions to address

What is Paul prohibiting?

- In context, he is saying women should not hold authoritative teaching positions when the church as a whole gathers for worship and study.
- He is not making a general statement about women teaching or having authority over men beyond this.
- It is difficult to make a direct parallel between modern churches and churches of Paul’s day, because churches are more complex organizations today.

Why is Paul prohibiting this?

- Paul reminds the church of God’s creation and Eve’s role in the fall of humanity. Part of the consequences of the fall for women is a desire to rule over their husbands (Genesis 3:16) rather than be the partner they were created to be.

- Paul is connecting the desire from some of the women in Ephesus to be in authority to this consequence – a desire that should have changed when they became Christians.
- The authoritative teaching position was the most visible position in the church and to society at large. As such, lack of a power struggle between genders was another sign of the power of the gospel to transform believers from the way of power to the way of God's love.
- This helps the church live out the gospel by reversing the consequence of humanity's fall and relating within the church based on love and the authority of God's Word.

Does Paul intend his prohibition to be permanent?

- By finding this principle in creation and consequences of the fall, Paul is saying this is how the church should continue to be.

There is a principle upon which this principle is founded – one that Pastor John introduced last week. It centers on the question – did God create men and women to be complementary or equal in every way. Here is a quick review:

	Equality	Inequality	Salvation	Roles	Solution
Egalitarianism	Men and women are created in the image of God and are therefore equal.	The inequalities between men and women are a result of the Fall of humanity.	Salvation restores the equality between genders lost in the fall.	Men and women can fulfill any role interchangeably.	The solution is to open every role to men and women equally.
Complementarianism	Men and women are created in the image of God and are therefore equal.	The inequalities between men and women are a result of the Fall of humanity.	Salvation removes the competition between genders and allows relationship based on God's love.	Men and women can fulfill many roles interchangeably, but certain roles in the church and home are specific to each gender.	The solution is to learn what the Bible teaches about the uniqueness of each gender and specific roles God has designed for them.

Our church affirms that the Bible teaches complementarianism. If you still have questions about this, please contact Pastor John or me and we would love to continue this discussion.

If Christians accept that the gospel affirms humility and servanthood over pride and authority and accept that no one is serving as leaders in a church because they deserve it but only by God's grace, we do need to ask ourselves why Christians find Paul's prohibition so disturbing.

1 Timothy 4

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,² through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,³ who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,⁵ for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.⁶ If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.⁷ Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness;⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.⁹ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.¹⁰ For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

¹¹ Command and teach these things.¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Paul begins by saying that it should not surprise Timothy that false teachers will arise in the church and that people will believe them. (You can later review chapter 1 for other elements of the false teachers.)

While we do not know for sure who these false teachers are, in verses 1-7 Paul gives a description of their motivation and practices. What does he write about the false teachers?

In verse 4, Paul gives Timothy the principle that the church should focus on to understand truth and to reject the false teachings. What is that principle?

Verses 7b-10, Paul tells Timothy how this principle can be put into action and what the ultimate goal is for doing so. What is/are these actions and what is the goal?

Paul is even more specific in verses 11-16. What does Paul tell Timothy he should do (and indirectly what all the Ephesian Christians should do) to combat the false teachings in the church?

v. 11

v. 12

v. 13

v. 14

v. 15

v. 16

In summary, what is Paul telling Timothy he needs to do?