



Text: 1 Timothy 2:12-14¹
Series: Living the Gospel
Title: Part 7 – Living the Gospel as Women & Men
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We've been making our way through Paul's First Letter to Timothy and we've been keeping Paul's big purpose in writing this letter within sight as we've zoomed in to study its particular teaching. Paul's "big reason" for the letter, as he told Timothy, was this:

"I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth." 1 Timothy 3:14-15

Please understand that Paul's instruction about Christian behaviour flows from his teaching on what Christians are to believe. Belief always precedes behaviour in God's house. Paul's letters usually follow the pattern of teaching truth that is to be believed and then calling believers to behave in line with what they believe. We could find many examples of that principle in Paul's writings but one that stand out in my own mind is this one, written to the believers in Galatia. Paul wrote...

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

I want you to notice that Paul's life, his behaviour as a Christian, flowed from his belief that Jesus Christ had died for him and now lived in him. That is a pattern that every believer in Jesus is to follow. The lives we live as believers in Jesus flow from our belief in who Jesus is and what he did for us on the cross. C.T. Studd, a missionary to China, once wrote...

"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him." C.T. Studd

This morning, we're going to look at one of God's house rules for those who believe in Jesus and it's one of those behaviour points that has caused a lot of soul searching for believers in Jesus over the years. I think it's fair to say that no other portion of this letter to Timothy has come in for as close an examination as the verses we're about to read. Two weeks ago we dealt with a major portion of

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this passage but I'm going to read those verses again for us just to help us set the context for the verses we're going to focus on this morning. This morning we're going to focus on verses 12 to 14.

I'm reading from Paul's First Letter to Timothy, chapter two, verses eight to fifteen. Paul wrote to Timothy...

⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ⁹ likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, ¹⁰ but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 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. (1 Timothy 2:8-15)

Two weeks ago we looked at Paul's directive that in God's house men are to pray in holiness, women are to dress with godliness and they are to learn in quietness. I pointed out that in verse eleven, Paul commands that women are to learn sound doctrine from God's Word. The command to learn is the only word in this section that is expressed in the form of a command in the Greek language. In other words, Paul is adamant: he wants women to learn sound doctrine.

We looked at some of the reasons why he felt they needed to do so:

- Women have a vital ministry in teaching other women God's truth. (Titus 2:3-5)

I was very encouraged this week to see the insert in the bulletin announcing the beginning of a "Ladies Wednesday Morning Bible Study." And I have to tell you that I was *especially* encouraged to see that the group is going to be using Kay Arthur's "Precept Upon Precept" material. I'm very much encouraged by that because her material teaches sound doctrine but even more than that, it also teaches people how to study God's Word so that they can find sound doctrine for themselves. So I commend the Ladies Wednesday Morning Bible Study to you.

- Women have a fundamental ministry in teaching their children the truth of God's Word. (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15)

Timothy, the preacher to whom this letter was written, was the product of a home in which he had been taught the faith by his mother and grandmother and he had a powerful ministry in the church of Jesus Christ.



And we noted that...

- Women minister God's truth to men outside of the gathered preaching of the church. (Acts 18:26)

We looked at the example of Priscilla and her husband Aquila and their ministry to the young preacher, Apollos. After hearing him preach, they became aware that he had some gaps in his doctrine and so, Luke tells us, "they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately." (Acts 18:26) Priscilla had been a student of the Apostle Paul. She had learned "sound doctrine" from him and so she, together with her husband, conveyed that truth to Apollos. When it says "they took him," it suggests that they took Apollos aside and instructed him outside of the gathered meeting of the church, perhaps in their home. But please notice that it says that "*they* took him and explained" God's truth to him. Both Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos sound doctrine.

So clearly Paul encouraged women to learn and to teach women, children and in certain cases, men, but then we read these words...

"I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet." 1 Timothy 2:12

Paul places a limitation on the teaching ministry of women

What is the limitation that Paul had in mind? To answer that question I want you to notice that Paul links two things together. He links "to teach" with "to exercise authority" and that combination is crucial to our understanding of what Paul had in mind here.

Later in this letter, Paul wrote to Timothy about the ministry of the elders of the church and he links those same two categories of leadership together. He said...

"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching." 1 Timothy 5:17

In the New Testament church, the leaders of the church were called "elders" or "overseers." The two terms are, in fact, synonyms: an elder is an overseer; an overseer is an elder. In chapter three, Paul uses the "overseer" (1 Timothy 3:1ff) term to refer to those he calls "elders" in chapter five. If you want to see these two terms used together in the same context, read Titus chapter one, verses five and seven. I'm going to use the term "elder" to avoid confusion but if it's not too confusing, think "elder/overseer" when I say "elder."

Elders "over saw" the life of the church. As Paul outlines their ministry in chapter 5, they were primarily responsible to give leadership to the church in two ways: in "ruling," and in "preaching and teaching."



In God's house, the elders "rule" the life of the church. Don't take the word "rule" to mean dictate or dominate. The Apostle Peter speaks very directly to that and forbids elders from "lording it over" those who were under their care. (c.f. 1 Peter 5:1-3) "Ruling" simply means that they made the leadership decisions about the direction and ministry of the church that needed to be made to keep the church on track with God's priorities.

In chapter three, Paul refers to the elder's ministry of ruling in terms that reflect family dynamics he uses the term "manage" rather than "rule" but means much the same thing. He said that an elder...

"must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" 1 Timothy 3:4-5

And secondly, in God's house the elders were responsible for "preaching and teaching" God's truth. They made sure that the doctrine of the church kept on track. When Paul outlines the qualifications for being an elder in chapter three, the only spiritual gift he mentions is the gift of teaching. (1 Timothy 3:2) When he wrote to Titus about the ministry of the elder he expounded on the importance of the elder's ability to teach. An elder, he wrote,

"must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." Titus 1:9

In chapter three in 1 Timothy, Paul discusses in some detail the qualifications for those who were to serve as elders, and as you read his instructions you will find the masculine pronoun again and again. In fact, Paul says...

"an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife..." (1 Timothy 3:2)

His words are very gender specific. When you put these pieces together, it seems to me that the limitation that Paul placed on the teaching ministry of women was that...

Women were not to serve as elders in God's house

In our context in Olds, who are the "elders"? We don't use the terms "elder" or "overseer" anywhere in our church government – a situation, by the way, which I believe we need to correct -- but that doesn't mean that we don't have people who fulfill those functions. I serve as an elder. In fact, 1 Timothy 5:17 defines my identity within the ministry of the church. My primary responsibility is "preaching and teaching." Pastors Norm, Andy and Paris also serve as elders



who give oversight in teaching and leadership. And in many ways, our Board of Deacons serves as elders although we don't use that term to describe them. The Deacons and pastors working together give oversight to the church in "ruling" and "teaching." That's why only men serve on our Board of Deacons and on our pastoral staff. Because this church has historically stood with what Paul teaches here.

In our church I believe that because we're following Paul's instruction all kinds of ministry opportunities are open for women who serve the Lord under the oversight of our "elders." Women are invited to teach adult Sunday school classes; to lead us in worship; to chair committees and participate in all kinds of work in the church without violating Paul's limitation on their ministry because the eldership of the church is filled by godly men who give oversight to the church's life and teaching.

But the question that hangs over Paul's instruction is simply this: does this limitation still apply today? Over the years there have been many attempts to limit Paul's limitation. Let me summarize seven of them.¹ I warn you: it's going to get a little heady and I'll try to be as brief as I can. But bear with me. If you want to follow up on any of these lines of thought, the sermon will be on the website and you can check out the footnotes that are attached to it.

Seven common attempts to "limit" Paul's limitation on the teaching ministry of women

First, some argue that Paul is wrong. No one claiming to be a Bible-believing Christian ever put this view in print until 1975, when Paul K. Jewett suggested that Paul's teaching here was in error because it echoed a rabbinical misinterpretation of Genesis 2.³ Dr. Jewett understood what Paul was saying but believed that Paul was wrong.

But picking and choosing what to accept from Paul is not a tolerable way to handle God's Word for Bible Christians. Paul is writing as "an apostle of Jesus Christ by command of God." (1 Timothy 1:1) What he writes isn't merely his opinion; it's God's Word. I mention this because I've had this conversation with

¹ For this survey I'm borrowing from the summary provided by R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus : To Guard the Deposit.*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2000), 67.

³ Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 119 unequivocally concludes: Both in I Corinthians and in I Timothy appeal is made only to the second creation narrative as the sole text for understanding the meaning of human existence as male and female. Thus this second, supplementary narrative is interpreted in isolation from the first.... Furthermore, in reasoning this way, Paul is not only basing his argument exclusively on the second creation narrative, but is assuming the traditional rabbinic understanding of that narrative whereby the order of their creation is made to yield the primacy of the man over the woman. Is this rabbinic understanding of Genesis 2:18f. correct? We do not think that it is, for it is palpably inconsistent with the first creation narrative, with the life style of Jesus, and with the apostle's own clear affirmation that in Christ there is no male and female (Gal. 3:28).



someone in this church. But let me ask: If we determine that Paul is wrong here, tell me how we will know when he's right about anything?

A second way to limit Paul's teaching is to argue that there was something unique about Ephesus that would limit the application of Paul's words to any other situation. One argument suggests that "Ephesus stood as a bastion of feminist ... religion,"⁵ and so Paul's prohibitions against women teaching and exercising authority over men were aimed at the excesses, not against normal teaching and exercise of authority.

The problem here is that the "feminist Ephesus" never existed.⁶ Ephesus was a very conventional Roman provincial city, little different from Philippi or Antioch or any of the other cities in which Paul ministered, with no women magistrates and with a pagan cult hierarchy controlled by men, not women.⁷

A third attempt at blunting Paul's teaching is to give the Greek word translated here "to exercise authority" a negative meaning such as "to domineer"⁸ or "to control." If that were true Paul would be prohibiting a negative exercise of authority — "I do not permit a woman to teach or to domineer a man." This would allow women to teach and exercise authority over men as long as it is not done in a controlling, domineering way.

Though the word could mean domineer in some contexts, it cannot mean this here. The reason is that the word "or" (*oude*), which connects "to teach" and "to exercise authority," always requires that both words be either positive or negative. If they were negative, the phrase could read, "I do not permit a woman to teach error or to domineer over a man." But this cannot be the translation here because "to teach" is always viewed positively in the New Testament and in its many uses in 1 and 2 Timothy.⁹ The *New International Version* renders the

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

⁶ S. M. Baugh, "A Foreign World: Ephesus in the First Century," Köstenberger, Schreiner, and Baldwin, eds., *Women in the Church*, pp. 13–52.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18, 50.

⁸ Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), p. 73.

⁹ Andreas J. Köstenberger, "A Complex Sentence Structure in 1 Timothy 2:12," Köstenberger, Schreiner, and Baldwin, eds., *Women in the Church*, pp. 89, 103 where the author concludes:

The meaning of $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\epsilon\chi\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ in 1 Timothy 2:12 is therefore an important preliminary issue in determining the meaning of $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\epsilon\chi\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$. As was argued above, $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\epsilon\chi\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$, when used absolutely, always in the New Testament denotes an activity that is viewed positively by the writer, to be rendered "to teach" (cf. esp. 1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2). If the writer had intended to give the term a negative connotation in 1 Timothy 2:12, he would in all likelihood have used the term $\mu\eta\ \epsilon\upsilon\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\epsilon\chi\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ (as in 1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3) or some other contextual qualified specifying the (inappropriate or heretical) content of the teaching (as in Titus 1:11).

Since then the first part of 1 Timothy 2:12 reads "But I do not permit a woman to teach" and the coordinating conjunction $\kappa\alpha\iota$ requires the second activity to be viewed correspondingly by the writer,



Greek phrase in question correctly, “to have authority,” as do the *Revised Standard Version* and the *New Living Translation*. And the *New American Standard Bible* and *English Standard Version* are similar—“to exercise authority.”

A fourth attempt to set aside what Paul says here is to argue that when Paul says, “I do not permit,” he is only speaking about the present situation in Ephesus and is not giving a directive that is to be followed for all time. The phrase “I do not permit” in Greek is in what is called “the present indicative” tense and not “the imperative” tense, as is his command that women are to learn. The argument suggests that since he only uses the present indicative that he is therefore speaking personally about a temporary arrangement.¹⁰

But this ignores the fact that Paul often used present indicatives to give universal and authoritative instruction.¹¹ For example...

“I appeal [present indicative] to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice...” Romans 12:1

And

**“I desire [present indicative] then that in every place the men should pray...”
1 Timothy 2:8**

A fifth way to deflect Paul’s prohibition is to hold that references to “woman” and “women” in this passage refer to wives because of the way this passage parallels 1 Peter 3:1–7. The argument is that the teaching is domestic, applying only to the home. But the differences in the passages are too great to import the “wives” designation from 1 Peter to 1 Timothy.¹²

□□□□□□□□ should be regarded as viewed positively as well and be rendered “to have (or exercise) authority,” and not “to flout the authority of” or “to domineer.”

¹⁰ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, p. 72.

¹¹ George W. Knight, III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), p.140 explains:

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

¹² Thomas R. Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,”

Köstenberger, Schreiner, and Baldwin, eds., *Women in the Church*, p. 115 answers: The 1 Peter text refers to *nonbelieving* husbands (3:1). And in 3:7 husbands are addressed in terms of their specific responsibilities to their wives (cf. Eph. 5:25–30, 33; Col. 3:19). No admonition for husbands regarding their relationship with their wives is present in 1 Timothy 2. Finally, it is obvious that Peter has husbands and wives in view in 1 Peter 3 since he says “wives should be subject to *their own* (□□□□□□) husbands” (v. 1; cf. v. 5). It is precisely this kind of clarifying evidence that 1 Timothy 2:8–15 lacks, with the result that most scholars detect a reference to men and women in general.



And there's the problem that Paul's command that women were to learn would then only apply to wives and not to all women. And to be consistent, his instruction about how women were to dress would then only apply to wives and not to all women. And his call for men to pray would then only apply to husbands and not to all men.

Sixthly, a widely used way to discount Paul's prohibition is to claim that Galatians 3:28 supersedes what Paul says here. Galatians 3:28 reads...

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28

This is a statement of our radical spiritual equality before God whatever our status in life. There is no “male” way of salvation nor a “female” way of salvation; there is no “Jewish” salvation that is different from “Greek” salvation. Paul is saying that all of us, men and women, Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, we all come to God through faith in Jesus Christ. There is no other salvation but through faith in Jesus Christ. But Paul is not denying the gender distinctions that God built into us in creation.

Yet, that is precisely what some people claim he is doing. The argument then goes on to allege that the Galatians passage is a breakthrough text to which all others must bow. The argument essentially claims that Paul was inconsistent with his own doctrine, teaching radical equality to the Galatians, but then denying it to the Ephesians. Paul Jewett followed this line of thinking when he claimed that Paul was wrong in 1 Timothy.¹⁵ And as I said before, if Paul was incorrect in his word in 1 Timothy, on what basis, then, do we claim that he was correct in what he wrote to the Galatians?

But here's the thing: Paul is correct in both Galatians and 1 Timothy and he isn't inconsistent with himself because the Bible teaches both equality and distinction in God's plan for men and women. Two weeks ago we looked briefly at the foundational Scripture for the Bible's teaching on the nature of what it means to be male and female. In the creation account in Genesis we read ...

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27

There is unity in the human race because we all created “in the image of God” and there is distinction in that we bear that image as “male and female.”

Lastly, many people today overturn Paul's teaching by claiming that what he said was limited to the culture of his day. This argument is really just another version

¹⁵ S. Lewis Johnson, Sr., “Role Distinctions in Galatians 3:28,” John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), p. 160.



of the last one. The argument is made that Paul wanted to break free from the limitations of his culture and live out the radical freedom he taught in Galatians, but he chose not to do so because the people of his day were not socially ready to accept such radical ideas. So for the sake of the unity of the church, it's argued, he pulled back from pushing women forward into the eldership of the church. I've heard something very similar argued here. I've heard people say that the reason we don't have women serving as pastors or as members of our Board of Deacons is because this church is not "ready" to accept such a radical change.

The problem with that way of looking at church life is that it assumes that what Paul wrote in 1 Timothy was rooted in the culture of Ephesus. You see, culture changes, but doctrine doesn't change. Culture is how we live out what we believe but culture isn't something we "believe." You can express unchanging Christian truth in a variety of different cultural ways and we've done that around the world and through time.

For example, our music is a cultural expression of how we communicate our worship of the one true and living God. The music we sing today isn't the music that the Apostle Paul would have sung, nor is it similar to that used by John Newton or Isaac Watts, even though our songs declare the same truth about God that they did. Some are "troubled" by drums and guitars being used in worship because, I would suggest, it's not part of their "music culture." On the other hand, others can't envision worshipping without them because their musical culture has been so shaped by that kind of instrumentation. Those two groups of Christians are separated by a cultural difference over how to express the unchanging truth of the Gospel that they share.

But does Paul root his limitation of the teaching ministry of women in the changeable culture of his day or does he base it in God's unchanging truth? Is Paul saying, "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man because it wouldn't be accepted in our culture?" Well, you be the judge, because this is what he said, this is his argument...

"For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor." 1 Timothy 2:13-14

Paul roots his limitation on the teaching ministry of women, not in culture, but in Creation

Paul takes us back to Genesis and the foundational teaching on the creation of man and woman that we find there. Paul said...

"For Adam was formed first, then Eve" 1 Timothy 2:13



Paul takes us to Genesis chapter two. On the first day of the human race there was only one human present and it was Adam. Paul sees a theological statement in that fact, not just an anecdote of history. God could easily have made both Adam and Eve at the same time, but he didn't – why? Paul's conclusion is that God was making a statement about the spiritual leadership of Adam.

God formed Adam from the dust of the ground, breathed life into him and set him in the Garden of Eden “to work it and keep it.” (Genesis 2:15) He spoke to Adam and gave him instruction on the “ground rules” for life in this new world.

**“And the LORD God commanded the man saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”
Genesis 2:16-17**

God then formed Eve from a rib that he took from Adam. God referred to her as “a helper fit for him” not as “a helper like him.”¹ She brought something into the world that is both different from Adam but also complementary to him. She provides something he lacks and vice versa. And chapter two ends with these words...

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.” Genesis 2:24-25

So far, so good. No sin; no shame. In fact, God says it was “very good.” (Gen 1:31) But sadly, as Paul reminds us, things didn't stay that way for very long.

“and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.” 1 Timothy 2:14

Paul moves us from the “very good” of Genesis chapter two to the very bad of Genesis chapter three. God had spoken to Adam and given him the ground rules for life in His world. He told him he could eat from every tree in the garden, except one. And he'd told him “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Gen 2:17)

In chapter three Satan comes in the disguise of a serpent. He doesn't speak to Adam, he speaks to Eve. Notice that: in chapter two, God spoke to Adam. Here,

¹ The compound prepositional phrase “matching him,” רדגנכ, literally, “like opposite him” is found only here. It seems to express the notion of complementarity rather than identity. As Delitzsch (1:140) observes, if identity were meant, the more natural phrase would be “like him,” רדגמכ. Gordon J. Wenham, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary : Genesis 1-15, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 68.



the order is reversed. Satan asks Eve about God's ground rules and Eve answers in a partially correct manner, with some bits and pieces askew. But she knows that death lurks in the fruit of the one tree that God had forbidden to them.

Now follow me as walk through this story. I'm beginning in Genesis 3, verse 4...

“But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate,...” Genesis 3:4-6

Just stop there for a moment with me. In Genesis chapter one it tells us repeatedly that as God created every element of his world, he looked on it and “saw” that it was “good.” (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) Notice what Eve does. She ignores God's command and does what, up to this point in Genesis, had only been ascribed to God. She decides that what looks good to her eyes is what is good. That is the essence of sin. That is the essence of rebellion against God. The Book of Proverbs warns us: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” (Proverbs 14:12) When we set aside what God has said and decide that our way looks better, we are on the road to death. There has never been a day in human history when that was truer than on this first day of sin.

“...and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.”

Adam was right there listening to it all! Please understand that the Bible does not teach that women are more gullible than men when it comes to sin. Adam was right there and he said and did nothing to stop what was happening. They were together in rebellion against God.

**“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.”
Genesis 3:7**

All of a sudden there's shame because there's sin. Who ate first? Eve did. But when did sin and shame enter the world? It was when Adam ate. Notice: “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” (Gen 3:7)

Not until Adam ate did God's curse fall on the human race. God said to Adam...

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you;” Genesis 3:17



In fact, although Paul reminds us that Eve was deceived by the serpent, it's Adam who bears the responsibility for the entrance of sin into human life. In his Letter to the Romans, Paul calls this moment in human history...

“the transgression of Adam” Romans 5:14

...not the transgression of Eve. Yes, she became “a transgressor,” like the rest of us, but Adam is the one who brought the curse of sin down upon us all so that we all are transgressors!

What Paul is pointing to here in Genesis is the principle of male leadership in spiritual matters. That's what he bases his limitation of the teaching ministry of women upon. I don't have time this morning to develop it but it is a theme that runs from Genesis right through the Bible. For example, did you ever notice that God commanded that the only men were to serve as priests in the temple? Or that Jesus chose twelve men to serve him as apostles? Or that if you search the New Testament, you will not find a woman elder in any church. And the principle of male leadership in spiritual matters doesn't only apply to the organized church. It also applies to leadership in our homes. Paul wrote...

“For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church....” Ephesians 5:23

And you'd be right if you guessed that Paul rooted his teaching about spiritual leadership in the home in Genesis chapter two. (Eph 5:31-32; 1 Cor 11:8,9)

I know we've covered a lot of ground this morning but let me bring it all to a simple point. Much of what I've said today might make you feel uncomfortable, perhaps a bit unsettled, and possibly even angry. On the other hand, maybe you rejoice in it because you recognize it to be God's Word. What you need to know is that not too many years ago, I saw things quite differently. What I've just outlined for you was not the way I understood Christian life and ministry. I was an egalitarian. I believed that Galatians 3:28 trumped everything and that modern Christian life was to be lived with men and women working in interchangeable equality with one another.

But a godly Christian friend challenged me one day. I thought that my role in my family was to share leadership equally with my wife. I thought that men and women were to share ministry equally in the church. It looked good to my eyes. It was delightful to me. It seemed wise to me. But he simply asked, “Do you think your argument is going to wash with God when you stand before him and he asks you why you didn't lead your home and church in the way that he ordained? How good do you think your good idea is going to look to you then?”

It was a tough question and he got me thinking. And my thinking went from what God has said about how he wants me to lead my home to what he's said about



how he wants me to lead His Church. I asked myself: Am I really a Bible Christian or am I just doing what seems right to my own eyes? Am I merely following in the sin that Adam and Eve trail blazed for me, or am I choosing obedience to the Word of God? Am I behaving in God's House according to God's Word, or am I rearranging His furniture to suit my own desires? I started to study God's Word and instead of trying to find ways around what I found difficult, I asked God for courage to believe and live His Word as a Bible Christian.

How about you? God's Word has so much more to say about how he wants us to "behave" in His house, but let me ask you a simple question about the orientation and direction of your life: Are you living by what seems right to you or according to His truth? Are you willing to follow His Word, even when it challenges some of your most beloved assumptions about yourself and about the faith you've constructed? Will you be a Bible Christian for His glory and honour?

"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him." C.T. Studd

- **Invitation to Prayer Ministry**
- **Final Song:** Thy Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet
- **Benediction**