

Women - Paul on Teaching and Childbearing

1 Tim 2:11-15 NASB

11 A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. 12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. 13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. 14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

11 A woman must...receive instruction. Women must not to be the public teachers when the church assembles, but neither are they to be shut out of the learning process. The form of the verb translated “receive instruction” is an imperative: Paul is commanding that women be taught in the church. That was a novel concept since neither first century Judaism nor Greek culture held women in high esteem. Some of the women in Ephesus probably overreacted to the cultural denigration they had typically suffered and took advantage of their opportunity in the church by seeking a dominant role in leadership. **quietly...submissiveness.** “Quietly” and “submissiveness” (“to line up under”) were to characterize the role of a woman as a learner in the context of the church assembly. Paul explains his meaning in v. 12: Women are to be silent by not teaching and they are to demonstrate submission by not usurping the authority of the pastors or elders.

2:12 I do not allow. The Gr. Word for “allow” is used in the NT to refer to allowing someone to do what he desires. Paul may have been addressing a real situation in which several women in Ephesus desired to be public preachers. **to teach.** Paul used a verbal form of this Gr. Word that indicates a condition or process and is better translated “to be a teacher.” This was an important, official function in the church (see Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph 4:11). Thus, Paul is forbidding women from filling the office and role of the pastor or teacher. He is not prohibiting them from teaching in other appropriate conditions and circumstances (cf. Acts 18:26; Tit 2:3,4). **exercise authority over.** Paul forbids women from exercising any type of authority over men in the church assembly, since the elders are those who rule (5:17). They are all to be men (as is clear from the requirements in 3:2,5). **remain quiet.** See note on v.11.

2:13,14 A woman’s subordinate role did not result after the Fall as a cultural, chauvinistic corruption of God’s perfect design; rather, God established her role as part of His original creation (v.13). God made woman after man to be his suitable helper (see note on Gen 2:18; cf. 1 Cor 11:8,9). The Fall actually corroborates God’s divine plan of creation (see notes on Ge3:1-7). By nature Eve was not suited to assume the position of ultimate responsibility. By leaving Adam’s protection and usurping his headship, she was vulnerable and fell, thus confirming how important it was for her to stay under the protection and leadership of her husband (see notes on 5:11,12; 2 Tim 3:6,7). Adam then violated his leadership role, followed Eve in her sin, and plunged the human race into sinfulness—all connected with violating God’s planned roles for the sexes. Ultimately, the responsibility for the Fall still rests with Adam, since he chose to disobey God apart from being deceived (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15: 21,22).

2:15 women. That Paul does not have Eve in mind here is clear because the verb translated “will be preserved” is future, and he also uses the plural pronoun “they.” He is talking about women after Eve. **will be preserved.** The Gr. *work* can also mean “to rescue,” “to preserve safe and unharmed,” “to heal,” or “to deliver from.” It appears several times in the NT without reference to spiritual salvation (cf. MT 8:25; 9:21,22; 24:22; 27:40,42,49; 2 Tim 4:18). Paul is not advocating that women are eternally saved from sin through childbearing or that they maintain their salvation by having babies, both of which would be clear contradictions of the NT teaching of salvation by grace alone through faith alone (Ro 3:19,20) sustained forever (Rom 8:31-39). Paul is teaching that even though a woman bears the stigma of being the initial instrument who led the race into sin, it is women through childbearing who may be preserved or freed from that stigma by raising a generation of godly children (cf 5:10). **through the bearing of children.** Because mothers have a unique bond and intimacy with their children, and spend far more time with them than do fathers, they have far greater influence in their lives and thus a unique responsibility and opportunity for rearing godly children. While a woman may have led the human race into sin, women have the privilege of leading many out of sin to godliness. Paul is speaking in general terms; God does not want all woman to be married (1 Cor. 7:25-40), let alone bear children. **if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.** The godly appearance, demeanor, and behavior commanded of believing women in the church (vv. 9-12) is motivated by the promise of deliverance from any inferior status and the joy of raising godly children.

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