



## “Women in the Family of God”

by Pastor Tim Dodson  
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### 1 Timothy 2:9-15

*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, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. 11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.*

### 2:9

The passage before us is one of those biblically controversial passages that are decried from the lips of unbelievers and often those who are religious yet still in rebellion. Many women find Paul’s handling of this subject to be an offense to them because they see it as demeaning in its generally accepted interpretation. But let us first make note of the fact that this letter was not written to unbelievers, though it is generally unbelievers that are crying foul.

Directives such as this do not make Christians. They are however presented as models of holy living that comes through the spirit via rebirth. These directives, therefore, are not a real problem or issue for those truly born anew in Christ, for theirs is a life that seeks to please their redeemer at every opportunity.

For the Spirit-filled woman, seldom is there any angst over directives such as these when there is an awareness of their living in the presence of such a grand and awesome God. A sacrificial Savior who...even though He was Deity...God in flesh...had “emptied Himself” of His power and preeminence in order to be the servant...to be the sacrifice for humanity. Many, if not most, Scripture versions renders Philippians 2:6-7 as “(Jesus) *emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.*” The simplest way to explain the self-emptying of Christ is that He set aside His own life and power as an act of total obedience to the will of the Father. Therefore, for those who understand this sacrifice, there is no struggle and no rebellion, when we are asked to do the same.

The Jesus on the cross was not totally reflective of who he innately was, or His powers and abilities, His magnitude and gifts. It was however the servant Jesus...the obedient Jesus...the sacrificial Jesus. One which placed the harmony of the body and the completion of His mission on this earth higher than His street cred and the manifest of His ego. Never do we have record of Jesus muttering under His breath “that’s not fair...”

Whenever a modern pastor/preacher approaches passages such as this one...where the culture has come up against that which scripture instructs, we have to make a choice. Some will simply avoid the whole matter, which is easy to do if you are not teaching through the whole of the scriptures. Those who just focus on “sermonettes” and make “christianettes.” Another approach is to simply acquiesce to the culture and move in some manner to change the Word of God. Our society is ripe with such crimes. Sexuality, men and women’s rolls, Lordship service to the King, priority of Christ, the all-encompassing nature of redemption, etc...to make these things and many more palatable to an ever evolving religious world. They say “God didn’t really mean what He said... faith and Christianity has changed, despite God clearly stating on more than one occasion that He ‘never changes.’” But today we want the world AND eternal life and blessing, so we “fudge” on the directives and compromise on the commandments, and rewrite the objectionable parts to better fit modern societal norms. These same pastors and leaders seem to always feel that have to apologize for Gods...*and the churches*, archaic tendencies. Sort of the approach of “*ya...well...despite these distasteful issues in scripture, God is still a pretty swell guy. Really.*”

Having said that, I won’t be apologizing for God in anyway this morning. I will state for the record that I cannot say I am always pleased in my flesh by the decisions that God makes along the way, but I am also keenly aware that He didn’t ask me for my opinion. I don’t know where we ever got the idea that we needed God to agree with our positions and politics. He’s the God. We’re not. He never asks us to “feel good” about what He is directing us to do. He just says that if you love me and you want to be part of my team then you need to do it. Period. And the fact is we all have different rolls to play in the “family”...different jobs, different callings, and different rolls. We serve at the pleasure of the king, and we all serve in often highly specialized battle units. That’s why were here. To glorify Him, fight for Him, advance His kingdom, worship Him, and most of all, to be obedient. We don’t get to vote, He seldom asks our opinion, and we seldom get what we deserve, which would not be pleasant. Sometimes that is a blessing, and sometimes that just gets us miffed.

This word “adorn” in verse 9 speaks of a woman’s clothing choices and arrangement. But in its original language it goes further than that. The word adorn goes so far as to speak into her behavior and demeanor. The way she carries herself. The way a woman walks, moves, and behaves in public. Clothes is just one aspect of this behavior...this “adornment.”

The word “propriety” in our text means “a sense of honor, a practice of modesty and reverence, a priority regard and respect for others over my own will and wants.” As a redeemed female there is both an understanding of the hearts and minds of mankind, but also a strong desire to bring honor to her God. Such a woman moves in such a manner that attention is not heaped upon her but rather her life causes people instead to see Jesus.

This all sounds quite nice yet there is still the overwhelming tendency in us all...*believers and unbelievers alike*, to let the world dictate just what is ‘normal’ and appropriate in the realm of social dynamic. But believers, such should never be the case with us! We are clearly and overtly called to be different...to “be separate” from them *out there*. (2 Cor 6:17) Ps 1:1-2 NLT “*Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night.*”

Please note what this verse 9 is NOT saying, despite the finger-wagging accusations that you may hear applied to this passage. It is not saying that women should dress in a burlap sack and wear their hair in a bun. Please not the word ‘moderation.’ That word is not a narrow mandate but rather gives a leeway and a latitude to seek the Spirit of God personally, and to reflect upon just how God would have you dress and what make-up you wear, etc.

The point here is any hair style, makeup, jewelry, dress and fashion that would call overt attention to yourself, especially sexual attention. Certainly one can braid their hair and not look like she is prepping for a dating sight. However, a lot of women...women that call themselves children of God...do indeed dress, look, and act as if they are for sale on the auction block! Their living says God is not in control and has no real and practical effect upon their lives. They are desperate to get a man and they will push that envelope just as far as they can to “get ‘er done’. Finally, it is also important to remember also that **you** are not the standard for the spiritual dress code... the ‘bar’ for which all holiness is set. So we need to be careful to not play the heavy when correcting in this area. Better to be an example than to be a fashion policeman for Jesus.

## 2:10

This sentence is the ‘qualifier’ in this matter of verse 9. This passage is to be the ‘standard’ that is to be prayerfully established in every life before God...male or female. This passage does not prohibit makeup, simple jewelry and pretty clothes. It also does not establish a Christian “dress-code.” It simply seeks a simplicity and Godliness in our outward dress. It is an area where our beliefs and our spirits are to meet a practical manifest. Where our faith is not a ‘theory,’ but is actually lived out.

You see, our beliefs are not just to be reflected in what we **don’t** do, but also in what **we do**.

*“Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.”* (1Pet 2:12)

*“...let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that every-one will praise your heavenly Father.”* (Matt 5:16)

## 2:11-12

When we approach this passage of scripture, we must ask ourselves if we are coming into it with preconceived ideas. Because the fact is, we all as believers tend to receive scripture as God’s directives until it steps into our personal space and desires, and then we tend to explain it away. If we fail in that effort, we generally just reject it out of hand and often condemn the values, if not the very person of the writer.

This passage in 1 Timothy is dealing with the issue of order and unity in a church and community. Such cannot be simply made-up or redesigned for our changing mores and fluid culture and expect that community to not only roll with such but **thrive**. We know that women held important roles in the early church...in the furthering of the gospel and they still do. This is not a condemnation on such in any way.

Please note that this passage also does not speak of a women’s position in the secular work place, community service and relationships or in any other venue really...just the church community. Again, it is a matter of order, and one which presents a picture of God’s purposeful design and function. Therefore, any attempt to say that because of this passage, Paul and perhaps Christianity as a whole, denigrates women, is a foolish statement and one that is grossly in error.

Moreover, this passage does not present the full picture of women’s roll in the Christian faith and world. Women **have** and **do** play a huge roll in the furthering of the gospel around the world, and Christianity historically lifted women out of a secondary role in society and made them equals, with rights and position, long before the secular world followed suite. Remember, this passage today follows one last week wherein directed toward men, and it’s strange that no one cries foul concerning those directives!

The fact remains that often our modern knee-jerk over Paul’s directions for women are an issue with us because we are allowing culture to ride rough-shod over scripture. The buck stops with the world. The Bible is expected

to 'fit into society' instead of the other way around! We then are guilty of seeking God to "fit into our lives" instead of us fitting into His. We struggle and strive to find the God we want instead of accepting the God that is.

The word "silence" here is an unfortunate interpretation, for it has taken on a lot of baggage in our modern vernacular. Often it is read with an exclamation point following it, though none is actually found here! We often read it ...or *hear* it read with a "women should shut up" connotation, but no such emphasis is found in the original text!

The word here in its original has in it the ideas of "calmness, peacefulness, and quietness." Such may or may not be a comfort for some of you, but the picture must be painted just the same. Found elsewhere in scripture this word refers to a process of "ceasing to make objections" or "ceasing to be contentious." Sort of the idea of paying attention to one's own affairs and not meddling in things outside of your responsibility. Thus the reading of this passage in its original finds that it is not a prohibition against woman speaking within the walls of the church building, but rather speaking within the realm of authority, especially that of pastoral authority.

When WE use the word "teach" today, we think of the passing of information in the realm of educational instruction. A teaching of students that are free to reject or ignore the lesson if they so choose. But "teaching" in Paul's day...in the early church had a much stronger meaning. It carried with it an idea of authority and direction. It was a teaching that the student was expected to accept!

There was relational aspects to the word also. The "teacher" had authority over the student. A 'way of life' encompassing the elements of the 'lesson' was implied, not just a factual rendition, like 1 plus 1 is 2. There was correction and a discipline involved via the 'teacher.' It is through this understanding that the prohibition of women pastors was established, one which we adhere to in this church.

We stand firm in fact that woman can and should serve in every capacity other than pastor. Anyone who knows me would never accuse me of marginalizing women. I have always encouraged and gave opportunity for woman to lead in every capacity short of ordained pastor. That means they can teach and even be 'ministers' in the strictest interpretation of that word. Teaching the Bible to a group of people on an occasion is not in itself an act of authority over the listeners.

Remember, when the necessity arose, Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 19 pulled the evangelist Apollos aside and instructed him when it became evident that he had some doctrinal understanding problems. Thus this is not a prohibition against woman to be active in the day to day operational aspects of the church structure or business operations, for it was Lydia who had a home church at her house. This passage is dealing with scriptural authority, and the directional living out of the Christian faith in practice, especially within the Christian community. A leading in the roll of "under shepherd of a church" and doing so with authority.

It is not about talking, or teaching the Bible, or serving in the church, or being the head of a particular ministry. It IS however an avoidance of the behavior of Miriam...Moses' sister, and her attempts to usurp the pastoral authority of Moses. An attempt that had dire consequences when God moved against her because of it. (Note 1 Corinthians 14:34)

## **2:13-14**

Paul goes on here to explain his reasoning on the whole of the matter. Just why, *if you will*, this matter is dealt with as it is. We might see his words as an attempt to lay the blame for the fall of man upon Eve, but Paul actually, elsewhere, places that upon **Adam**, not **Eve**! "*As sin came into the world through one man, and death*

*through sin....For if many died through one man's trespass...If, because of one's man's trespass, death reigned through that one man...Then, as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men...For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..." (Rom 5:12, 15, 17, 18, 19)*

So Paul is not placing the blame upon EVE for the fall of mankind. His point is that the reasoning behind the order of the church is that man was created first. Bottom line, *He was made to lead*. So the first aspect of this passage is not to 'dis' Eve, but rather to point out that Adam was created to lead and thus he should. However, we do have to acknowledge that Eve *was* deceived! She was created the way God wanted her to be, and she was deceived!

Adam was eventually lured by that illicit act, when Eve appeared to fall in an attempt to be more than she was made to be. Eve was led away by Satan's trickery. She took charge and power when she should not of. Personally, I find women are far more apt to be controlled by their emotions, and more apt to be deceived just as Eve was deceived, and to fight against authority and to dominate if given opportunity.

Women seem to have a natural seeking desire to have an intimate spiritual relationship, but such then adversely makes her at the same time venerable to deception by Satan, for she is less cautious. Again, Eve was deceived by Satan. Adam fell by way of Eve and his own rebellion. I find that some women function alone in the body of Christ very well, but many do not. Without authority over any of us, we all tend to rebellion, self-centeredness, and division, and that includes men.

Let me tell you of my experience in this: When the husband is not leading, and not submitting to the authority and commands of God as to leadership in his family and marriage, inevitably I as a pastor will eventually have problems with that woman, and ultimately with the family as a whole. I have long ago lost count of the losses due to this issue.

However, please remember ladies, it was a woman that was bestowed the greatest honor ever given a human. It was a woman...*and a common one at that*, that gave birth to the living messiah. Man had no part in this event. And scripture is full of examples of women being greatly used by God to further the kingdom and plan of God. Tabatha, Lydia, Philip's four daughters, Mary and Martha, Joanna, Susanna, Mary Magdalene, Phoebe.

## **2:15**

Many folks will read this section of scripture and see Paul relegating the destiny of women to staying home and having a lot of babies. And further, that Paul is saying that having those babies plays into her very salvation, which, if such was true in his meaning, would be heretical!

This verse cannot be misconstrued to say that salvation (life eternal, abundant, and forgiveness of sin) for a woman will come by having children. For that would definitely be contrary to the rest of scripture that tells us that salvation will not come through works. (Eph 2:8-9)

Also, if such an interpretation were true, then all women who cannot have children because of medical reasons, or lack of husband, would be damned. Please note that there is no scriptural backing for the idea that women must have children! We know that Paul instructs elsewhere, that we would in many ways be better off in the context of spiritual service to not be married at all! Paul would then ultimately be sending women to hell through such advice!

In the context of the passage, we could see this verse as giving a place to women that would keep the aforementioned issues and potential problems from occurring. Thus, the idea is they are saved from the problems that Paul just mentions, by being busy with positive pursuits...one way which is having and raising children. This seems to be the **context** of Paul's writing; which I believe is the fundamental place in deciding difficult interpretations. Some also take the position that the teaching and leading that is desired in the woman, is given an outlet through the Godly raising of children. This too, fits into my interpretation of this verse.

Yet again, this is not a mandate for childrearing. Rather, it is a mandate to women to find a place in the body of Christ, and the world at large, where they will find an outlet to spiritually guide and even teach without ruling over their husband, or taking authority away from leaders and pastors in the church. The **result** of having children would then be the goal here, along with the personal manifests of faith, love, holiness and self-control.

In the 1960's, a cigarette brand marketed themselves to the new up and coming professional woman, with the slogan "You've come a long way baby." The idea was painted that the new woman was just like men now. Ladies, I hope you find more peace and success than the men historically have! Because frankly, I really don't see the appeal...

(NOTE: *Some material for notes on verse 9–15 taken from article "The Community: Key Texts" by Stephen Clark*)