

Week One: 1Tim 1:18—2:15

“Arrogance and Authority”

1Ti 1:18—2:15 (ESV) This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, 20 among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

2:1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. 7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrel; 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.

There is a problem in Ephesus. Paul says there are teachers that he wants Timothy to confront and tell them to stop teaching confusing and divisive ideas. And there is another problem. Timothy is standing alone and the leadership in Ephesus is weak. And so Paul puts Timothy in charge. He is placing him in the command of the Church at Ephesus like a General would place a Colonel in command of his brigades. He is going to tell him to start recruiting good leaders to help fight that fight. He tells Timothy *that by the prophecies made about you, you may fight the good fight, by holding faith and a good conscience.* Then he gives Timothy warning by the example of two men, who defiled the conscience and lost the grip on their faith. Paul talks about conscience four times in this letter and he always relates to our faith. How does Paul deal with Hymenaeus and Alexander, who both defile the conscience and end up shipwrecked? They are now on the outside in the darkness, like two sailors stranded on an island inhabited by a very cruel Satan. This is where Paul wants them. When he says *“I handed them over”* it is like saying *“I washed my hands of them. They did not listen to my teaching, so let the Accuser teach them and maybe they will learn that it is their arrogance and blasphemy that got them there.”* I think it is clear Paul wants them to learn, to come back to the Lord and to the faith, once they have had enough. It is no longer up to Paul. Paul does not want Timothy to suffer the same consequence so he is very serious when he says hold on tight to two things: faith and a good conscience. Faith, of course, comes first and reaches out and grabs hold of the God who gives us new life and is remaking us through Jesus. Our conscience, now being being educated

and informed by the Holy Spirit in sound doctrine, can steer us through the dangerous waters, past the hulls of wrecked ships, and onward in the life of faith.

Paul would have agreed with the Greek moral philosophers on the importance of conscience. But Paul would have added that the reason we have the conscience is because God the creator implanted it in the human heart. We find this early in the book of Genesis:

Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." 6:3 ESV

I especially like the comments of Rabbi Hirsch on this passage. His translation from this verse reads *"My Spirit within man will not remain the judge forever, since he is also flesh..."* The words *will not remain the judge* translate one Hebrew word: *yadon*. This is the only time this word is used in the Bible and here are his comments on it:

"The Spirit I breathed into man was to be the judge, the voice of God that judges man from within man himself. Man's soul is the lamp of God which searches into the innermost secrets of men. But this judge within man is corruptible and permits itself to be lulled to sleep, and this voice can become dull...God intended His Spirit to rule through the spirit of man but it ends up with the flesh burying his Spirit. "1

This is similar to Paul's warning in Ephesians *"do not grieve the Holy Spirit within you."* How do we do that? When we sin against our conscience we find out. We are told in Genesis 6 that *God grieved in His heart* because He had to take action; to destroy man from the face of the earth. The joy and the fellowship that Father-Son-and Spirit had known from all eternity and wanted to share with man was lost. God wants the people, who He created in His image, to enter this fellowship through the spirit of life He breathed into them. But man, on his own, is committed to the flesh, that leads to ultimate ruin. I think the link between faith and conscience is one we want to take very seriously. When we sin, our conscience judges us with a harsh accusatory voice, never in love. This weakens our faith, our trust in God, and we may even blame Him! But He is not accusing us. He is grieving for us. Sin has a weird way of making us bite the hand that feeds us. We walk away from God because now we have a voice inside that condemns us, and we think *"If I can get away from God, the voice will quiet down."* And the tragedy in that? It will quiet down, and go away. Then we are truly doomed!

So what's the solution, or the first step, to the problems Timothy is facing? Paul says *PRAY!* Pray? Yes. Paul says *"First of all I urge..."* He is serious about this. This is the first step of dependent surrender to the Lord who is the only one who can give us what we need, and is the only one who can do *in* us what he wants to do *through* us. And what does the Lord want most of all? He wants *everybody* to be saved! And look where God wants us to start: At the very top of the heap. Pray for *KINGS* first! Wow! For a former Jewish zealot like Paul this is truly a transformation. Like many devout Jews he would have cried, *"That's compromise! We should be praying against wicked pagan rulers. They should be overthrown!"* He sees it is easy for immature Christians to have the same attitude. Paul might say that sentiment may be right, but the timing is off. It is Jesus who will come in the future and make all the injustice right in the end. But for the present, until He comes, Paul wants it made clear that God is the Savior of the world, not the Judge. *There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men... and it is for this message I was appointed a preacher and an apostle.(2:5-7)* Paul's only purpose is

to teach and proclaim this great redemption and resurrection, not overthrow governments, or to even worry much about changing them. Pray for the men in charge, let Jesus the New King change their hearts, and that will change the world! For Paul, prayer is the priority in God's plan to spread the gospel to everyone in the world. When rulers begin doing the right thing, even if they don't know God in a personal way, they can create the kind of peace and social stability that allows us to worship and to continue to pray for them. Praying focuses our minds on God as Father and Jesus as our mediator so we think clearly about God and the world. Prayer reminds us to be like Jesus. In the Gospels and he confronted all the political factions of the day. He favored none and He aligned with none. But He reached out to all sides because He loved them all. How do we know that? He died for them! Does that mean if we pray for the "other party" God will change them? Or if we pray hard enough God will change society and make it like the 50s again? No. Or probably not. That is our wishful thinking, not His plan. But He will do what He wants to accomplish, and we may not recognize if we are not truly seeking Him. Paul does know for certain that prayer will change us. Start praying daily and watch how our attitudes will change, and how we begin to grow and mature, becoming the men and women God wants us to be. And Paul addresses that next.

There are several passages in the Bible dealing with the roles of men and women. The passage in Ephesians 5:22 is one of the predominate passages and speaks of marriage. The passage here is about authority. Many in modern Western culture have a problem with both marriage and authority, for various reasons. They are the new biblical landmines of the Western Church. One side accuses Paul of being everything from a woman hater to simply patriarchal. What was normal society in the Western world for hundreds of years with men as leaders and women as their home bound subjects has begun to change. Women in the last century began to fight, and some gave their lives, for the right to vote and hold their own bank accounts, to be able to work and join the ranks of the professions. And from 1970 on women made great strides in the fields of medicine and law. And today we have a woman as Vice-president, a first for America. We men have not always viewed this as progress. Paul was confronting this kind of tension in Ephesus and other Roman cities. The cultural foundations seem to be shifting under their feet. Part of the problem was from the changes that this new Messiah that Paul proclaimed had begun with His resurrection. Paul could now proclaim that *"all are equal in Christ Jesus: male and female, slave and free, etc."* and Paul is being true to Jesus as His servant. Paul is right! But now he sees that this can be easily misinterpreted. Do men and women being equal mean there is no longer a difference in role or function? As a Christian slave do I have to obey my Christian owner? Paul could see the seeds of a rebellion being sown in many of the churches. And the things being taught in Ephesus were certainly not helping.

Paul addresses the problem by telling the Ephesians three things he wants to see change. First, I want men to pray, and not just in the church assembly but everywhere. Give up your angry posture, unclench your fists and raise your hands to God. Pray for each other and for the Church! Stop arguing and fighting over what the false teachers are telling you. Surrender to the power of God and do not depend your own manly strength. This is hard for Roman men. They are raised to be aggressive and dominant, to live as they pleased and take what they wanted.

Next, I want women to stop flaunting their wealth to impress others. It is an arrogant display of money, which probably came from husband or father. This created a different

kind of conflict among the Christian women in the church, a conflict of jealousy and envy. It is not godly. It does nothing to promote the *aim of our charge, which is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.* (1:5) It is here Paul uses the word *godliness* for the first time. It becomes a major theme in his letter. He will say that godliness is one of the *mysteries* of our faith. (3:16) The other major theme is *teaching* or *doctrine*. Teaching and Godliness. The two go together. One informs the other. So he tells the women to dress modestly and to use their wealth for good works and to do it with humility! Paul is not telling a woman to stay home in a colorless dress. Paul is not concerned about clothing because he says *put on modesty and self-control*. Those are metaphors for character. Character that is godly. Godliness is behavior that flows from a *pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith*. Put your riches toward good works. This is the same thing Paul wants Timothy to tell the rich men at the end of this letter: *They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share...* (6:18) Good works. It is a generosity that “disadvantages yourself in order to advantage another” John Calvin said long ago. It is the *practice* of grace. It is the motivating power in the Gospel. Jesus disadvantaged Himself for us on the Cross. He lost everything so we could gain everything. He calls us to go out into the world and do the same for others. Use our wealth and our power to help the less fortunate and the poor. Christians do have a social obligation to give to our communities through public works like schools and libraries. We do this not just for Christians but for everybody. We can find creative ways to use the same media that often sinks us into corruption to promote the grace of the Gospel. Max McClean, playwright and producer, has been presenting the works of C.S. Lewis on stage and in movies to sold out crowds. Many of these people, who may never go to a church, are hearing the gospel through this excellent work by Max and his Fellowship of Performing Artists.² Then there is Dallas Jenkins, director of The Chosen. This fine series has been seen by millions of souls who may never been exposed in this way to the life of Jesus. And it is funded by donations of Christians and churches from around the world.³ There are many other examples, but the point is that God calls us to be socially engaged in our local culture with modesty and humility. Tim Keller says people in our towns and cities should be able to look at our churches and say “I may not believe in their religion but I am glad they are here.” That was often the spirit of the early Church.

Finally, I want the women to learn in peace. Paul wants women to be informed intelligent disciples of Jesus. This is a huge problem for Jewish men. There are no female disciples in the Judaism of Paul’s day. And this is similar to the view of most of Western society up until the 1900s; there was no rational reason for women to get an education. But Paul can look to Jesus as justification for saying he wants women to learn. He may be thinking of Jesus in the home of Martha and her sister Mary:

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:38-42

Mary was not helping Martha in the kitchen. But that is not the only offense that is making Martha anxious. Mary is sitting with the men as a disciple. *“This just isn’t done in a good Jewish home!”* So why does Jesus tell Martha that Mary has *chosen the good portion*; the better thing? He means that of the two choices, working or learning, learning comes first, *then* the working. Sound teaching leads to godly behavior. This is why Paul is so urgently writing Timothy in Ephesus. He has to get back to the gospel as Jesus taught it. Paul can tell this is not the case because of the way men and women are behaving. They are becoming arrogant and argumentative. Is that any different than Martha’s anxiety? So that may address the problem for the Jews, perhaps, but what about Gentile women? In Ephesus there was a different problem. It is the Temple of Artemis. This Temple defines Ephesus as the home of one of the *Seven Wonders of the World*. The priests of Artemis were all women. Some women who had held a position authority in the Temple of Artemis were now Christians. These were often women of great wealth. See the connection? Why shouldn’t they, these well dressed and elegant women, hold the same kind of authority in this new thing called the Church? Paul contends they should learn as much as possible about Christ, to *“sit at His feet in all humility,”* but to be in authority—that is another issue.

Paul’s final word on correcting these attitudes and behaviors in Ephesus is something he does not want. He says *I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.*(2:12) This verse is a landmine of controversy. It is hard to translate, as the best Greek scholars I have read admit. The Greek word translated *authority* is used only here in the NT and it has a whole range of Greek secular uses, many times meaning *violent domination*. But I will leave the defusing of these old unexploded bombs and mines to the experts. One thing is clear. Paul is forbidding something and he is commanding something. First, he forbids a woman to teach or have authority over a man. Is that two things, or one? Is it teaching *AND* authority or is it teaching *WITH* authority. When I look at the Greek sentence I can see both are possible. Second, and really the bigger problem, is what Paul commands by using a present tense infinitive (meaning ongoing, continuous action)—*she is to remain quiet*. The infinitive translated *remain* is the verb *to be*. That is a verb of being, existence. She is to *BE quiet*. *ALWAYS*. Really? Never talk? Never give sound advice and wisdom from sound teaching to her husband or her grown son? Another problem. *Quiet* also has a range of meanings. One of them is *peace*. The Greek here could be *to be in peace*. It is possible to interpret that to mean peace in the heart, not the mouth. That could also apply above when Paul says *Let a woman learn in peace* as well as *learn quietly*. When I see a woman who excels in learning at the feet of Jesus I don’t want to be a Martha. I should want to ask *“What have you learned of our King?”* But the bottom line? Paul’s whole command is about authority. Who does God want in charge, other than Jesus? I am going to extricate myself from this controversy and turn to Kathy Keller:

So what is being forbidden to women is authoritative teaching—some kind of teaching that carried with it an authority not found in other, allowable forms of oral discourse. That is the difference between public communication of information, exhortation, or explanation (all permitted to both unordained men and women), and teaching with authority, which is the province of ordained elders. Stated the way we do at Redeemer (Presbyterian):

“anything that an unordained man is allowed to do, a woman is also allowed to do.”⁴

Kathy is a woman who has struggled with this issue on a personal level. She started her education intending to become an ordained minister, but dropped out because of a transformation brought about by obedience to the Scriptures. And it is joyful obedience because, she says:

This is where Jesus comes in. Jesus is the reason you can trust that God’s justice is behind your assigned gender role, whether you are a man who would rather not take leadership or assume risk, or a woman who wishes she could. Both get to play the Jesus role. It takes both men and women, living out their gender roles in the safety of home and church, to reveal to the world the fullness of the person of Jesus.⁵

I think the best place to end is with Paul’s last line, which I think points back to all of his instructions about prayer and godliness and good works; *...if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control*. Paul says *they*; the man and the woman. Eve is *The Mother of all the Living*, as Adam named her. A woman bore the Savior. Now God promises to protect and save the godly woman through the burdens of childbirth. It is not Artemis the goddess of the Ephesians. And the man must take his role as her defender and protector, and be willing to die for her as Jesus died for him. The original Adam and Eve failed. That does not mean we have to fail. We can strive to *continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control*.

Father, the most dangerous thing for us is to believe what we think. We are by nature wise in our own eyes. We do not know what you know, but as we pray to you, and surrender to you, you reveal to us your love and your will. Give us the desire to know your purpose for us as we come to understand more about Jesus. That we see Him as beautiful, so much so He becomes the pursuit of our lives. Thank you Father for caring for us, for loving us, for giving your Son for us. Amen.

¹ Hirsch, Rabbi Samson. *The Chumash. The Torah with Commentary*. Judaica Press, Inc. 1986 p.30

² Fellowship for Performing Arts: <https://fpatheatre.com>

³ You can access The Chosen series here: <https://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen>

⁴ Keller, Kathy. *Jesus, Justice, and Gender Roles: Fresh Perspectives on Women in Ministry*. Zondervan. Kindle Edition. p.11

⁵ Ibid., p.13

There are three positions on women in ministry: the historical Authoritarian position, which is the tradition of the Roman Catholic and Reformation Church and many modern Bible churches; the Complementarian position, which is the tradition of the Presbyterian and many mainline Protestant churches, though there may be disagreement within denominations (as in the Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican denominations); the Egalitarian view which sees men and women as equal in role and function and is the position of churches and denominations that ordain women as pastors and bishops. Cynthia Long Westfall is a British Greek scholar who argues the case for the Egalitarian position in her book *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ* Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

Kathy Keller, as a Presbyterian in the PCA, is a Complementarian. I recommend her book without reservation if you are interested in digging more deeply into this topic:

[Amazon Jesus, Justice & Gender Roles](#)