

Mythbusting - 1 Timothy 2

We've been addressing churchy clichés and urban legends that make their home in the Church. Because some of them tragically don't just make themselves at home. They do harm.

GALATIANS 5:9 (AMP): *“A little leaven [a slight inclination to error] leavens the whole batch [it perverts the concept of faith and misleads the church].”*

The question we've been asking ourselves in light of this verse:

How many of our missteps are the result of being misled by misconceptions?

How much of our headaches and heartaches are the result of half-truths?

2 Corinthians 11:3

I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent.

Why? See verse 4:

You happily put up with whatever anyone tells you...

The issue lies in the fact the modern Church is full of people who read verses but don't read their Bible.

82% of American Christians don't open their Bible outside of Church.

30% of them won't read the Bible through in their lifetime.

What's happening as a result? We miss the greater content and context of scripture that helps us avoid falling into the harm inflicted by half truths.

1 Timothy 2:8-15 (READ)

Many take both **1 Timothy 2** and a similar passage in **1 Corinthians 14** on face value and to them these verses clearly state women should have no semblance of a platform to teach in church.

But so much of these passages- especially this one- feel off.

We should ask questions. As we've addressed in this series, questions aren't bad.

These questions aren't due to **lack of faith**- in God or in his Word. They're due to **love of truth**.

Ps 101 *My daily task will be to ferret out the wicked and free the city of the Lord from their grip.* Sounds like some Batman type stuff. Sounds epic.

Batman had his utility belt. It had his Batarangs, Batcuffs, rebreather, night vision goggles, etc. Ephesians 6 talks about the belt of truth. We should have a tool belt that helps us work through half truths that hurt and into to full truth that sets us free.

So tonight you may be thinking *“this doesn't really apply directly to me personally.”*

For you tonight is also about adding to your belt of truth toolkit.

So you can avoid the half truths that hurt.

So you don't *“happily put up with whatever anyone tells you...”*

So you can dodge misunderstandings that lead to misapplication that lead to missteps.

When we come across a churchy cliché and seeming myth, what do we do?

Hold it up to the totality of scripture, and hold it up to life.

It's especially important with this subject. People who point to passages in Timothy and Corinthians as **normative** for the church would point to anything that contradicts it as **exceptions**. So we have to ask the question carefully considering the content and context of Scripture- what's actually the norm, and what's truly the exception?

We will dial in specifically on the Bible's content in three areas:

CREATION – God's intent.

JESUS – God among us.

PENTECOST – The Holy Spirit among us and the Church's birthday.

Why? In each of these three moments we see the nature of God and His divine intent for His Church and humanity.

Because throughout the rest of the Bible God tolerates many things that are far from His ideal in our fallen world... in order to mold it over time into what He desires.

monogamy, yet we see God working through polygamous cultures where it was the norm.
slavery, God works within systems that had slavery in them in order to eventually overcome it. Their presence in scripture is **descriptive**, not **prescriptive**.

Then we come to women's position in society under men. The history of the world present within the history of the Bible is a male centered one, from culture to religion. Yet unlike polygamy and slavery, which God clearly pulls us from, people debate whether to move on from this male centered norm.

Yet as you work from cover to cover sees that even amidst cultural brokenness, God is in the business of patiently restoring his Creation to his original intent- including gender.

CREATION

God creates both men and women in His image. *Creativity. Intelligence. Imagination. Leadership.*

This should project dignity and honor on BOTH genders.

To reduce, demean or strip dignity from one is to devalue the image of God.

Referencing creation in our passage in 1 Timothy 2 Paul says: "***Adam was created first...***"

This is commonly applied to indicate a call for the practice of hierarchy based on gender.

But animals were created before Adam, but Adam wasn't beneath them.

In fact Adam & Eve were called to take dominion over and rule ALL that came BEFORE them.

Genesis says Eve was created after Adam as a partner "***suitable***" for Adam.

Suitable to us may mean "appropriate" but the word in Hebrew = "*equal and corresponding to.*"

Genesis 1:27-28 ...*male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

Filling the earth took both of them because (duh)
Ruling the earth would be no different.

Adam and Eve were created to co-reign.

Man and woman may be beautifully different, but they are equal in value and worth.
Any gender hierarchy wasn't the God's intent, but sin's result.

Yet Paul tells us in Galatians Jesus *“redeemed us from the curse”*

But many would operate like women should still live under shadows of the curse, diminished in their role, their purpose, and their destiny.

JESUS

His disciples...

We see in Luke 8 that women were among his many disciples. Just two chapters later Jesus sends these same disciples, 70 of them, to share His message- *teach* his message of repentance and salvation.

His message...

Among his teachings, his revelations on divorce and adultery within the Sermon on the Mount were entirely counter cultural and challenged the treatment of women.

Jesus shows remarkable balance, speaking to both men and women in his teachings:

He compared the kingdom of God not just to a seed a man may plant, but to yeast that a woman would mix in dough.

When teaching about those lost to sin, he compares them to a sheep a male shepherd may lose but then also to a coin a woman loses.

To teach about justice he uses both the Pharisee and the tax collector but also the parable of the persistent widow.

His revelation –

The woman at the well was the first person to hear Jesus make a clear statement that He was the Messiah, becoming the first evangelist.

The women at the tomb were the first to find out he was risen and became the first to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

PENTECOST

The new era of the Church, the new era of the Holy Spirit.

In it Peter quotes **Joel 2**, where it says that God's sons AND daughters will prophecy, and his servants- men and women alike, would do the same.

Women were present among the 120 who the Spirit fell on and prophesied.

A book later when Paul writes **Romans 16** where we see women operating in the Church:

Phoebe - *I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae.*

Priscilla – listed in equal status with her husband when Paul calls them:

- *my co-workers in Christ Jesus. Vs 5 - Greet also the church that meets in their house.*

Junia – *Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.*

We haven't even close to exhausted the content of the Bible on the matter.

Think of it this way: **40 authors** wrote the Bible over **1500 years** in several countries and cultures, and only **one** man and **one** voice seems to restrict women from leadership – Paul. So again we have to ask – what is the norm? And what is the exception?

So that raises the Q – what is the context of 1 Timothy that creates this exception?

CONTEXT

Paul's epistles are letter written to specific churches in specific situations. Within them we see: **Theological** Statements – the way things ought to be.

Historical Statements – this is the way things are.

Corrective Statements – since things aren't the way they ought to be, here's correction.

We rush to the **here-and-now** meaning of texts and often miss the **then-and-there**.

These texts applied culturally **address confusion**,

but applied universally they more often than not **create confusion**

Timothy is in Ephesus leading the Church there.

How did that Church start?

In Acts 18 we see that Ephesus was founded by Paul as he worked with **Priscilla** and Aquilla. When Paul left, Priscilla and Aquilla stayed behind to pastor and build the church in Ephesus.

In Acts 18 we also see that Priscilla along with her husband take in and teach a man **Apollos**, under the approval of Paul in the same city and Church that Paul is writing Timothy about.

When we look at historical context – this very church knew the role of Priscilla pastoring their congregation – which means they realized this couldn't be a once and for all statement.

How are things in Ephesus?

Artemis the goddess in Ephesus had a temple there that was one of the seven wonders of the world. In Ephesus there were 15 women who served as high priestesses.

These native religions taught that life came from the Great Mother.

Artemis was the goddess of fertility that protected women in childbearing.

The ancient historian Tertullian (160-220) also identified false teaching in the Ephesian church as an early, emerging form of Gnosticism.

Gnostic heresy believes that spiritual things are good but the physical world and material things are evil. To some Gnostics, child bearing itself was frowned upon.

Stepping back and taking in all of this context:

First Ephesus and these cults being a breeding ground for false teaching,
And **secondly** the history of the church with Priscilla...

We realize it's likely that Paul's beef with the teacher in Ephesus isn't that she's a woman, it's that she's teaching false doctrine.

Going from **context** in Ephesus to the Greek **text** supports this in a few ways:

Tense:

Paul is speaking in present and not what's called aorist tense, a tense in the Greek that's unique. It could and some say *should* read "At the present time I am not permitting..." and not "I do not permit [implying never have and never will permit]..."

Translation: *Authentein* – it's where we get the words authentic and author from. Many Biblical scholars and translators have concluded it could be better translated as: "I do not allow women to teach or present themselves as the author of man."

Pronoun: He also uses a singular pronoun repeatedly in these verses, which has led many to conclude he's telling Timothy to correct one specific female false teacher.

It provides context for the learning Paul prescribes. Let the woman learn. And when she is learned- like a Priscilla- let her lead.

Galatians 3:28 - *"There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for all of you are one in Jesus Christ."*

As we said in the colorblind sermon, we aren't called to be blind to the unique beauty of race or gender, but we do away with hierarchies that diminish one under the other.

But in our fallen world, cultures restrict and pigeon holes people again and again according to these three things: race, class, and gender.

Too often the Church gets comfortable in and operates in broken cultural norms. It's how the Church in many ways still operates with a hierarchy that diminishes women.

Hold it up to LIFE

"dress modestly... not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes..."

Few take these as timeless commands to never braid their hair or wear jewelry...

Yet we take the next sentence as such when he says women should learn with full submission.

"Women will be saved through childbearing."

In the NIV and many translations – "Women" (*) The Greek = "SHE".

Who is the "She" in this text that gets saved through childbearing? Eve.

Amidst the curse of Genesis 3 God says to the serpent.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman [Eve], and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” (Genesis 3:15, NIV)
Eve would bear children so that through her offspring the promise of a crushed serpent will be brought to fullness through the work of Jesus Christ.

But we aren't called to just kill time until Heaven, we're called to continue in our callings. God gives us purpose and calling this life- to man and woman.

I listened to many a podcast with women sharing on this subject. One female pastor confessed she never once doubted her calling:
*“I was confident in my calling. I didn't question that.
My question was: **“Where is there a place for me?”**”*

If that's you tonight, due to gender, race, class, or any circumstance... remind you of two invitations Christ gives:

“Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest” - Matthew 11:28
You feel you have to work twice as hard to be recognized or change who you are. Jesus says none of that. He says I've done the work. Come rest and find your identity in me, who I created you to be.

*Jesus says in John 8, **“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples”** We're invited to follow Him. Disciple literally means “a learner, a student, a follower.” It's why Jesus says we have to know the Word for it to set us free. **“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”***

*A requirement of discipleship is that we continue in the Word of God.
Maybe you need to commit yourself again. Don't be a statistic, the 82%, or 30%.*