

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 1 TIMOTHY 2 (PART 2)

LET'S REMEMBER THAT CHAPTER 2 BEGINS PAUL'S HANDBOOK FOR PASTORAL AND CHURCH DIRECTION. WE ARE REMINDED HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO PRAY AND TO SPECIFICALLY PRAY FOR GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES - REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICS OR OURS. THIS WAS PROBABLY A RADICAL IDEA THEN, AND IT POSSIBLY COULD BE NOW. TO PRAY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY RATHER THAN COMPLAIN ABOUT THEM GOES AGAINST WHAT IS "NORMAL" AND WHAT EVIL HUMAN HEARTS TYPICALLY DO. THIS HIGHLIGHTS THE UNIQUE FLAVOR OF THE WAY OF JESUS. WE DON'T TYPICALLY DO THINGS THE WAY THE WORLD DOES IT. WE DON'T LOOK AT THINGS THE WAY THE WORLD DOES. THAT'S TRUE ABOUT POLITICS AND IT'S TRUE ABOUT PAUL'S NEXT FOCUS RELATING TO GENDER AND THE ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CHURCH.

BEFORE WE PROCEED, LET'S FIRST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE SECOND HALF OF 1 TIMOTHY 2 MAY BE SOME OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL VERSES IN THE LETTER. THERE ARE A VARIETY OF UNDERSTANDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THESE VERSES, AS WELL AS NEAR UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT BY COMMENTATORS THAT THEY HAVE NO CLUE WHAT THE LAST VERSE MEANS! SO WE PROCEED WITH HUMILITY, LOVE AND A BEREAN SPIRIT. WE'LL DO OUR BEST TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THESE VERSES ARE SAYING AS WELL AS AFFIRM WHAT THEY ARE CERTAINLY NOT SAYING.

ONE FINAL OPENING POINT REGARDING BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION. I THINK IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO TEND TO TWO EXTREMES COMMONLY SEEN IN MODERN CONTEXTS. THE FIRST IS AN EXTREME VIEW TYPICALLY FROM THE CONSERVATIVE CAMP THAT DOESN'T GIVE PLACE FOR CULTURAL ISSUES OR THINGS THAT SPECIFICALLY RELATE TO A SPECIFIC CHURCH OR PERSON. FOR EXAMPLE, JESUS SAID TO THE RICH YOUNG RULER HE SHOULD SELL ALL HIS POSSESSIONS, SO WE SHOULD TOO. PAUL TOLD TIMOTHY TO DRINK A LITTLE WINE TO DEAL WITH A STOMACH AILMENT SO ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD DRINK WINE BUT NEVER PEPTO BISMOL. WE NEED TO FACTOR IN THAT SOMETIMES THINGS ARE ADDRESSED THAT AREN'T FOR EVERYONE OR THAT RELATE TO THE ANCIENT WORLD. WE JUST COVERED THE FACT THAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR KINGS (THE GREEK WORD FOR EMPEROR), BUT WE UNDERSTOOD THAT WE OUGHT TO PRAY FOR PRESIDENTS AND GOVERNORS TOO.

THE OTHER EXTREME ON THE LIBERAL SIDE IS THAT EVERYTHING WE DON'T UNDERSTAND OR AGREE WITH MUST BE A CULTURAL ISSUE AND CAN BE IGNORED OR ADJUSTED FOR THE MODERN ERA. THIS IS OFTEN USED ON TOPICS OF MARRIAGE, SEXUALITY, AND GENDER. "THOSE SCRIPTURES WERE FOR THE ANCIENT WORLD BUT NOW THINGS ARE DIFFERENT." THE PROBLEM WITH THAT EXTREME VIEW IS IT CAN BE SELECTIVE ON WHICH VERSES SHOULD STILL APPLY OR NOT AND NEGATES THE INSPIRED AND ETERNAL NATURE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

BOTH ARE PROBLEMATIC. TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET AND UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE MORE COMPLEX PARTS OF SCRIPTURE, WE NEED TO PRAY, DIG, STUDY, READ, DISCUSS, AND MORE - AND NEVER LET OUR OWN VIEWS, PERSPECTIVES, EXPERIENCES OR COMFORTS DETERMINE CONCLUSIONS. *EASIER SAID THAN DONE.*

1 TIMOTHY 2:8 - GODLY MEN: WHAT SHOULD WE SEE & HEAR?

MEN (V. 8) - THE WORD USED HERE IS NOT FOR GENERAL HUMANS, BUT FOR MEN SPECIALLY. IT IS ALSO THE WORD USED FOR HUSBANDS. FROM VERSE 8 WE LEARN THAT:

MEN ARE CALLED TO **PRAY**.

MEN ARE CALLED TO **LIFT THEIR HANDS** (A SIGN OF WORSHIP)

MEN ARE CALLED TO BE **MORALLY RIGHTEOUS** (NOTE: "HOLY" HANDS ARE TO BE LIFTED).

MEN ARE CALLED TO KEEP THEMSELVES **SEPARATE FROM ANGER AND QUARRELING**.

WE HAVE A PICTURE OF MEN USING THEIR WORDS AND BODIES TO PRAY AND WORSHIP RATHER THAN HAVE ANGER, FIGHTING AND SIN. THE LIFTING OF HANDS IS SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED, BUT ELSEWHERE WE SEE VARIOUS POSTURES OF PRAYER/WORSHIP (KNEELING, HEADS/EYES LIFTED, ETC). WE WANT TO AVOID OUTWARD EXPRESSIONS THAT ARE INSPIRED FROM THE HEART (OTHERWISE WE ARE HYPOCRITES, CP. JESUS TEACHING AGAINST THE PHARISEES) BUT ALSO NOT NEGLECT THE PHYSICAL/OUTWARD WAYS THAT WE CAN HONOR AND EXPRESS OUR DEVOTION TO THE LORD.

WHEN YOU LOOK AT A CHRISTIAN MAN, WHAT SHOULD YOU SEE? DEVOTION TO PRAYER, INVOLVEMENT IN WORSHIP, AND SPEAKING WORDS AND MODELING BEHAVIOR IN LINE WITH THESE THINGS AS OPPOSED TO ANGER, OUTBURSTS, COMPLAINING, QUARRELING, AND CONTENTION.

THIS CALLING IS CONSISTENT WITH OTHER PLACES PAUL SPEAKS TO MEN AND FATHERS IN GENERAL (EPHESIANS 6:4, COLOSSIANS 3:21) AND TO CHURCH LEADERS SPECIFICALLY (1 TIMOTHY 3:2-13).

Q - WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT HINDER OR LIMIT THIS BEING TRUE OF MEN TODAY?

1 TIMOTHY 2:9-10 - GODLY WOMEN: WHAT SHOULD WE SEE?

Q - WHAT IS THE EMPHASIS OR FOCUS OF PAUL'S TEACHING HERE? WHAT DOES HE WANT TO BE PROMINENT RELATING TO A GODLY WOMAN'S APPEARANCE?

THE MARK OF A GODLY WOMAN IS GOING TO BE THEIR CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOR, NOT THEIR APPEARANCE. WHAT IS NOTABLE ABOUT A GODLY WOMAN IS NOT HOW THEY HAVE THEIR HAIR OR THE CLOTHES THEY WEAR, BUT THE DEEDS THEY DO. IN LIGHT OF THIS, PAUL INSTRUCTS THAT INTENTIONAL ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN BY CHRISTIAN WOMEN TO NOT DRAW ATTENTION TO THEIR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE.

IT WOULD BE EXTREME TO CONCLUDE WOMEN SHOULD NEVER WEAR JEWELRY OR MAKEUP OR THAT PAUL IS SPECIFICALLY FORBIDDING THE FRENCH BRAID. INSTEAD, THE HEART OF THE MATTER IS ADDRESSING WHETHER OR NOT CLOTHING, MAKEUP, JEWELRY ETC. ARE NOT IN LINE WITH MODESTY AND DISCRETION. AS A WOMAN, DOES YOUR CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES ACCENTUATE YOUR GODLINESS? ARE YOU DRESSING IN A PROVOCATIVE WAY THAT BRINGS ATTENTION TO YOURSELF (AND THUS AWAY FROM GOD?). ARE YOU PREOCCUPIED WITH PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND NEGLECTING THE INNER MATTERS OF THE HEART? ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR RESOURCES TO HAVE LUXURIES AND NEGLECTING CARING FOR OTHERS?

SPECIFICALLY IN EPHEBUS, WHERE ARTEMIS/DIANA WAS THE PREDOMINANT DEITY, THERE WERE MANY TEMPLE PROSTITUTES THAT WOULD DRESS IN ELABORATE AND PROVOCATIVE WAYS TO ATTRACT PEOPLE TO "WORSHIP" THE GODDESS (WHOSE RITUALS WERE OFTEN VERY EROTIC). PAUL IS SAYING: DON'T BE LIKE THEM. LET PEOPLE BE DRAWN TO WORSHIP THE TRUE GOD BY YOUR GOOD WORKS!

Q - WHO OR WHAT DETERMINES WHAT IS MODEST?

1 TIMOTHY 2:11-15 - GODLY WOMEN: WHAT SHOULD WE HEAR?

I THINK IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO REVISIT A WORD THAT PAUL HAS USED EARLIER IN THIS CHAPTER. IN 2:2 WE WERE TOLD TO PRAY FOR THE GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS SO WE COULD LEAD A "QUIET LIFE". IF YOU REMEMBER THE IDEA WASN'T QUIET AS IN NO NOISE, BUT PEACE AND TRANQUILITY. THE WORD USED FOR QUIET IN VERSE 2 IS THE SAME WORD USED HERE WHEN PAUL SPEAKS OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH.

I BELIEVE THAT THE ISSUE HERE SEEMS TO BE ONE OF AUTHORITY MORE THAN WHO IS PERMITTED TO SPEAK RELATING TO BIBLICAL/GOSPEL MATTERS IN THE CHURCH. PAUL USES TWO "AUTHORITY" RELATED PHRASES: SUBMISSIVENESS (V. 11) AND EXERCISE AUTHORITY (V. 12). GOD'S VIEW OF THE NATURAL FAMILY IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS VIEW OF THE SPIRITUAL FAMILY, AKA THE CHURCH. GOD'S DESIGN AND PLAN WAS FOR HUSBANDS TO LEAD, SHEPHERD AND PROTECT THE FAMILY. IN THE SAME WAY GOD HAS CALLED MEN TO LEAD, SHEPHERD AND PROTECT THE CHURCH. THIS IS HIS PRIMARY WILL AND AUTHORITY STRUCTURE FROM THE BEGINNING. MOTHERS PLAY A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ROLE AND ARE NOT SUBJUGATED TO SECOND CLASS CITIZENS IN THE NATURAL FAMILY - THAT'S ALSO TRUE OF THE SPIRITUAL FAMILY. PAUL IS NOT DEALING WITH HYPOTHETICALS OR DEALING WITH EVERY POSSIBLE SCENARIO, HE IS OUTLINING THE STANDARD AND USUAL WITHIN THE CHURCH.

SIMILAR TO THE NATURAL FAMILY, WITHIN THE CHURCH FAMILY CONTEXT, PAUL WRITES THAT THE PRIMARY LEADERSHIP AUTHORITY (SPECIFICALLY IN THE ROLE OF TEACHING/INSTRUCTION) SHOULD BE DONE BY GODLY MEN. THIS DOESN'T FORBID WOMEN TEACHING OR SPEAKING BUT WOMEN ARE NOT CALLED TO BE THE PRIMARY AUTHORITY OVER THE FAMILY OF GOD. IN HEALTHY FAMILIES DAD AND MOM ARE CALLED TO LEAD AND INSTRUCT AND CORRECT - BUT GOD HAS CALLED THE FATHER TO BE THE "HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD". OF COURSE, AS IN HUMAN FAMILIES THERE ARE INSTANCES WHERE MEN DO NOT FULFILL THEIR ROLE AND AMAZING WOMEN/MOTHERS STEP IN, BUT THIS IS NOT THE PRIMARY SETUP. IN THE CHURCH, TEACHING IS ONE OF THE PRIMARY WAYS THAT AUTHORITY IS FLESHED OUT.

PAUL REFERENCES THE HUMAN ORIGIN STORY FROM GENESIS TO SUPPORT THIS VIEW. ADAM WAS CREATED FIRST, THEN EVE AND IT WAS EVE WHO WAS FIRST DECEIVED BY THE SERPENT. BUT EVEN CONSIDERING THESE BIBLICAL FACTS, THE FUTURE DESCENDANTS OF EVE ARE NOT EXPELLED OR EXTINGUISHED FOR BOTH MALE AND FEMALE CONTINUE TO LIVE ON WITH EACH SUCCESSIVE GENERATION OF HUMANS. PART OF EVE'S SIN WAS THAT SHE TOOK AUTHORITY OVER HER HUSBAND - SHE GOT DECEIVED BY THE SERPENT AND THEN GAVE HER HUSBAND THE FRUIT TO EAT. PART OF ADAM'S SIN WAS NOT LEADING WITH GODLY AUTHORITY. HE WASN'T PROTECTING HIS WIFE AND DIDN'T THINK TWICE ABOUT EATING THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT. THESE ACTIONS WERE AGAINST WHAT GOD HAD ORIGINALLY INTENDED.

BUT THE SALVATION STORY DOESN'T END WITH WOMEN BEING CURSED OR CONDEMNED, IN FACT IT IS THROUGH A WOMAN THAT THAT SAVIOR HIMSELF IS BORN! SOME COMMENTATORS SUGGEST THIS MIGHT BE WHAT 2:15 IS SPEAKING ABOUT:

"IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS MAY BE SPEAKING OF WOMEN SAVED THROUGH *THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD (NEB)*, REFERRING TO CHRIST...SO THEN, EVEN IF CERTAIN ROLES ARE NOT OPEN TO WOMEN, AND EVEN IF THEY ARE TEMPTED TO RESENT THEIR POSITION, THEY AND WE MUST NEVER FORGET WHAT WE OWE TO A WOMAN. IF ARY HAD NOT GIVEN BIRTH TO THE CHRIST-CHILD, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO SALVATION FOR ANYBODY. NO GREATER HONOR HAS BEEN GIVEN TO A WOMAN THAN IN THE CALLING OF MARY TO BE THE MOTHER OF THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD" (STOTT, PAGE 73)

AND IN LIGHT OF THIS SALVATION, WOMEN SPECIFICALLY IN THIS SECTION ARE CALLED TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH AND LOVE AND HOLINESS AND SELF CONTROL (V. 15). SOMETHING WE ALL WANT TO SEE REALIZED IN OUR LIVES.

CHRISTIAN VIEW OF WOMEN:

CHRISTIANITY WAS REVOLUTIONARY IN ITS CARE FOR AND VIEW OF WOMEN IN THE FIRST CENTURY. HISTORICALLY AT THE TIME OF THE WRITING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, WOMEN WERE UNDENIABLY SECOND CLASS CITIZENS. A WOMAN'S TESTIMONY WAS NOT VIEWED AS CREDIBLE IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS. A COMMON JEWISH VIEW WAS THAT IT WAS BETTER FOR "THE WORDS OF THE TORAH TO BE BURNED THAN THEY SHOULD BE ENTRUSTED TO A WOMAN (JOHN STOTT, "THE MESSAGE OF TIMOTHY", PG 71)." THE EARLY CHURCH AND JESUS SPECIFICALLY VALUED AND INTERACTED WITH WOMEN IN A COUNTER-CULTURAL WAY. HIS FOLLOWERS TODAY SHOULD MODEL THE SAME LOVE, CARE AND HONOR OF WOMEN, ESPECIALLY THE VULNERABLE. THAT'S AN IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IN THIS CONVERSATION.

WHAT THIS SECTION IS *NOT* SAYING

- 1 - WOMEN SHOULDN'T TALK.
- 2 - WOMEN DON'T HAVE A CHURCH MINISTRY ROLE.
- 3 - THERE AREN'T CASES OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP
- 4 - JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A MAN MEANS YOU ARE QUALIFIED TO TEACH/LEAD
- 5 - WE SHOULD BLAME WOMEN FOR THE FALL OF HUMANITY

WHAT WE CAN REMEMBER:

- 1 - MEN AND WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT. (HUSBANDS/WIVES, MOTHERS/FATHERS ARE DIFFERENT). THIS IS GOOD.
- 2 - DIFFERENT ROLES FOR MEN AND WOMEN DOESN'T MEAN DIFFERENT IMPORTANCE OF MEN AND WOMEN.
- 3 - THERE ARE TIMES WHEN A WOMAN IS CALLED TO LEAD THE FAMILY. GOD WORKS IN THESE INSTANCES.
- 4 - THERE IS GOODNESS AND BLESSING WHEN WE ALIGN WITH GOD'S ORDER AND PLAN AND DISORDER WHEN THIS ISN'T FOLLOWED.
- 5 - THERE IS MORE TO READ, DISCUSS AND UNDERSTAND.

IN CONCLUSION, THIS SECTION IS ULTIMATELY CALLING GOD'S PEOPLE TO REPRESENT HIM WELL IN THE FALLEN WORLD. PRAY, LIVE HOLY, PURSUE GODLINESS AND OBEY JESUS. WE ARE NOT LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, WE ARE NO LONGER FOLLOWING THE PATTERNS AND WAYS OF THIS WORLD. EVEN IN TIMES WHEN THE CULTURE IS PRESSING US AND WE SEEM STRANGE, REMEMBER THAT THIS WORLD IS NOT OUR HOME AND WE ARE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH. LET'S MAKE THE MOST OF THE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE FOR GOD'S GLORY.