

# Women's Roles in the Church

## WEEKEND #2: September 13-14

### I. Friday, September 13 (7:00-8:30 PM)

#### Thinking Textually: Three Key Texts

1. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16
  - Exploring 1 Corinthians 11:2-16
  - What Paul Might Have Read: The Corinthians' "Letter" to Paul
  - Outline of the Passage
  - Epictetus, *Discourse* 1.16.9-14
  - Juvenal *Satire* 6.444-447
  - Focus of the Passage: Women
  - K. Cukrowski, "The Problem of Uncovered Prophets: Exploring 1 Cor 11:2-16," *Leaven* 9.3 (2001): 138-145

### II. Saturday, September 14 (8:30 AM-12 noon)

2. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35
  - Understanding 1 Corinthians 14:34-35
  - Livy, *History of Rome* 34.2.8-11
  - "Even as the law says" ...
3. 1 Timothy 2:8-15
  - Unraveling 1 Timothy 2:8-15
  - Links Between the Women in 1 Timothy 2:9-15 ...
  - Three Options for the Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15
  - K. Cukrowski, "Women and Wealth in 1 Timothy," *Leaven* 13.1 (2005): 35-39 (Excerpt)

## Exploring 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

- **The Context of the Letter**

1. Paul is responding to a letter from the Corinthians (7:1; see also 7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 14:1; 16:1, 12).
2. Paul may be responding to a specific question from the Corinthians in 11:2-16, even though there is no "now concerning" (*peri de*); note there is no *peri de* preceding 11:17-34, which, nevertheless, appears to be part of Paul's response to specific questions (note v. 34b).
  - It is possible that Paul is responding both to information in their letter and to information from the envoys from Corinth (16:17).

- **The Context of the Passage: Worship in the Congregation**

1. Immediate Context
  - Note the parallel structure in 11:2 "I praise you;" 11:17 "I praise you not." In other words, 11:2-17 and 11:17-34 are connected by contrasting phrases.
2. Structure of the Letter
  - We move from "the relation of Christians to pagan worship" (chapters 8-10) to "the question of Christian worship (chapters 11-14)" (Holladay, 138).
  - Note praying (in tongues) and prophecy are at issue in chapters 12-14 (Black, 194).
3. Nature of Prophecy
  - Note that "Prophecy by definition, presupposes an audience; it is not a private act" (Holladay, 140; see 1 Corinthians 14:3-4; 29-32).
4. Reflection on the Situation
  - "It is difficult to imagine why the problem addressed would exist if a private setting were assumed" (Holladay, 140).
5. Paul's Explicit Statement
  - Note the context of church practice stated in 1 Corinthians 11:16.

- **The Structure of the Passage**

Introductory appeal to tradition	vv. 2-3	"maintain the traditions" [v. 2]
A Appeal to culture	vv. 4-6	"shames; shameful" [vv. 4, 5, 6]
B Appeal to creation	vv. 7-10	"image of God [v.7]; "created" [v. 9]
C Appeal to "new creation"	vv. 11-12	"in the Lord" [v. 11]
A' Appeal to culture	v. 13	"proper/suitable/seemly/fitting"
B' Appeal to creation	vv. 14-15	"nature" [v. 14]
Concluding appeal to tradition	v. 16	"such a custom"

- **Conclusions**

1. There are tensions inherent in the text. Paul both argues for maintaining gender distinctions between males and females and affirms that Christians are part of a new creation "in the Lord."
  - 1 Corinthians 11:11-12 do not overthrow vv. 3-10; rather, they render the situation "more complex" (Hays, 188).
  - Paul affirms both 11:3-10 and 11:11-12, and so should we.
    - a. To act as if gender distinctions determine faith and practice is to elevate gender over our identity in Christ.
    - b. To act as if gender distinctions do not exist is "a sign not of authentic spirituality but of an adolescent impatience with the world in which God has placed us" (Hays, 191).
2. Whatever order is introduced in 11:3-10 functions ...
  - a. To restore gender distinctions by calling for the women to cover their heads;
  - b. To enable the women to continue to pray and prophesy, *not* to restrict the activity of women praying and prophesying.
3. The emphasis is on *how* the women are to pray and prophesy (viz., with a covered head).

- **Further Questions to Consider**

1. If the subordination of females to males is required because of the appeal to creation, then why are head coverings on women not required for the same reason?
2. If women who pray and prophesy in worship are doing something wrong, then why does Paul even discuss *how* they are praying and prophesying (i.e., without a head covering)?
3. If God gifted women to pray and prophesy in the OT and in NT churches, on what basis would the same (or similar) actions be wrong today?

- **Paul, Time, and Gender:** 1 Corinthians 10:11; Gal 3:28; 2 Cor 6:18a

- **The Debate over "Head" (*kephalē*)**

1. Literal: "Physical head"
2. Metaphorical
  - "Leader, authority over"  
Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 2:10
  - "Source, origin"  
Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 2:18-19; 1 Corinthians 11:8, 12

## What Paul Might Have Read

Paul,

Some of us are shocked about the behavior of *women* while they are *praying and prophesying* in our assemblies. The *women's uncovered heads* are not *proper* in public, where a number of *men* are present. The *women* claim the authority to *pray and prophesy* with their *heads uncovered* because gender distinctions do not matter *in the Lord*. They base this claim on the *tradition* said at their baptism, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female." We want to *maintain* the *traditions* you *delivered* to us, but this *tradition* certainly does not permit *women* to act in this way, does it? Paul, we need your advice, since the discussions about this *custom* are becoming *contentious*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The italicized words reflect words from 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Compare the "letter" by Richard Hays in *First Corinthians* (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching; Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1997), 182-183.

## Outline of the Passage

Following the contours of Paul's thought in 11:2-16 is notoriously difficult. The following outline, however, shows that Paul, in a recognizable pattern of repeating appeals, argues for women having headcoverings based on tradition, culture, and creation:

Introductory appeal to tradition	v. 2	"maintain the traditions" (v. 2)
A Appeal to culture	vv. 3-6	"shames; shameful" (vv. 4, 5, 6)
B Appeal to creation	vv. 7-10	"image of God (v. 7); "created" (v. 9)
C Appeal to "new creation"	vv. 11-12	"in the Lord" (v. 11)
A' Appeal to culture	v. 13	"proper"
B' Appeal to creation	vv. 14-15	"nature" (v. 14)
Concluding appeal to tradition	v. 16	"such a custom"

Although the argumentation may not match our expectations, it accords surprisingly strongly with other ancient arguments for maintaining gender differences.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Epictetus *Discourse* 1.16.9-14.

then proceed to complain against God on our own account! Yet, by Zeus and the gods, one single gift of nature would suffice to make a man who is reverent and grateful perceive the providence of God. Do not talk to me now of great matters: take the mere fact that milk is produced from grass, and cheese from milk, and that wool grows from skin—who is it that has created or devised these things? “No one,” somebody says. Oh, the depth of man’s stupidity and shamelessness!

Come, let us leave the chief works of nature, and consider merely what she does in passing. Can anything be more useless than the hairs on a chin? Well, what then? Has not nature used even these in the most suitable way possible? Has she not by these means distinguished between the male and the female? Does not the nature of each one among us cry aloud forthwith from afar, “I am a man; on this understanding approach me, on this understanding talk with me; ask for nothing further; behold the signs”? Again, in the case of women, just as nature has mingled in their voice a certain softer note, so likewise she has taken the hair from their chins. Not so, you say; on the contrary the human animal ought to have been left without distinguishing features, and each of us ought to proclaim by word of mouth, “I am a man.” Nay, but how fair and becoming and dignified the sign is! How much more fair than the cock’s comb, how much more magnificent than the lion’s mane! Wherefore, we ought to preserve the signs which God has given; we ought not to throw them away; we ought not, so far as in us lies, to confuse the sexes which have been distinguished in this fashion.

balnea nocte subit, conchas et castra moveri  
 nocte iubet, magno gaudet sudare tumultu, 420  
 cum lassata gravi ceciderunt braccia massa,  
 callidus et cristae digitos inpressit aliptes  
 ac summum dominae femur exclamare coegit.  
 convivae miseri interea somnoque fameque  
 urgentur. taudem illa venit rubicundula, totum 425  
 oenophorum sitiens, plena quod tenditur urna  
 admotum pedibus, de quo sextarius alter  
 ducitur ante cibum rabidam facturus orexim,  
 dum redit et loto terram ferit intestino.  
 marmoribus rivi properant, aurata Falernum 430  
 pelvis olet; nam sic tamquam alta in dolia longus  
 deciderit serpens, bibit et vomit. ergo maritus  
 nauseat atque oculis bilem substringit operis.  
 Illa tamen gravior, quae cum discumbere coepit,  
 laudat Vergilium, periturae ignoscit Elissae, 435  
 committit vates et comparat, inde Maronem  
 atque alia parte in trutina suspendit Homerum.  
 cedunt grammatici, vincuntur rhetores, omnis  
 turba tacet, nec caudicus nec praeco loquetur,  
 altera nec mulier; verborum tanta cadit vis, 440  
 tot pariter pelves ac tintinnabula dicas  
 pulsari. iam nemo tubas, nemo aera fatiget:  
 una laboranti poterit succurrere Lunae.  
 inponit finem sapiens et rebus honestis, 445  
 nam quae docta nimis cupit et facunda videri,  
 crure tenus medio tunicas succingere debet,

<sup>1</sup> Eclipses of the moon were supposed by the ignorant to be due to the incantations of witches. To prevent these from being heard, and so ward off the evil events portended by the eclipse, it was the custom to create a din by the clashing of bells, horns and trumpets, etc.

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### IVVENALIS SATIRA VI

caedere Silvano porcum, quadrante lavari.  
 non habeat matrona, tibi quae iuncta recumbit,  
 dicendi genus aut curvum sermone rotato  
 torqueat enthymema, nec historias sciat omnes, 450  
 sed quaedam ex libris et non intellegat. odi  
 hanc ego quae repelit volvitque Palaemonis artem  
 servata semper lege et ratione loquendi  
 ignotosque mihi tenet antiquaria versus  
 nec curanda viris<sup>1</sup> opicae castigat amicae 455  
 verba; soloecismum liceat fecisse marito.  
 Nil non permittit mulier sibi, turpe putat nil,  
 cum virides gemmas collo circumdedit et cum  
 auribus extentis magnos commisit elenchos;  
 intolerabilis nihil est quam femina dives. 460  
 interea foeda aspectu ridendaque multo  
 pane tumet facies aut pinguis Poppaeanae  
 spirat, et hinc miseri viscantur labra mariti:  
 ad moechum lota veniunt cute. quando videri  
 vult formosa domi? moechis foliata parantur, 465  
 his emitur quidquid graciles huc mittitis Indi.  
 tandem aperit vultum et tectoria prima reponit;  
 incipit agnosci, atque illo lacte fovetur  
 propter quod secum comites educit asellas  
 exul Hyperboreum si diuittatur ad axem. 470

<sup>1</sup> Housni. puts a full stop after *viris*, and interprets: *aliasque res virorum cura indignas*. Postgate suggests, after one of Rupert's MSS., *haec curanda viris?*

<sup>1</sup> i.e. wear the short tunic of a man.

<sup>2</sup> Only men sacrificed to Silvanus.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. bathes in the public baths.

<sup>4</sup> A treatise on grammar by Q. Remmius Palaemon, the most famous grammarian of the early empire.

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She frequents the baths by night; not till night does she order her oil-flasks and her quarters to be shifted thither; she loves all the bustle and sweat of the bath; when her arms drop exhausted by the heavy weights, the anointer passes his hand skilfully over her body, bringing it down at last with a resounding smack upon the top of her thigh. Meanwhile her unfortunate guests are overcome with sleep and hunger, till at last she comes in with a flushed face, and with thirst enough to drink off the vessel containing full three gallons which is laid at her feet, and from which she tosses off a couple of pints before her dinner to create a raging appetite; then she brings it all up again and souses the floor with the washings of her inside. The stream runs over the marble pavement; the gilt basin reeks of Falernian, for she drinks and vomits like a big snake that has tumbled into a vat. The sickened husband closes his eyes and so keeps down his bile.

<sup>434</sup> But most intolerable of all is the woman who as soon as she has sat down to dinner commends Virgil, pardons the dying Dido, and pits the poets against each other, putting Virgil in the one scale and Homer in the other. The grammarians make way before her; the rhetoricians give in; the whole crowd is silenced: no lawyer, no auctioneer will get a word in, no, nor any other woman; so torrential is her speech that you would think that all the pots and bells were being clashed together. Let no one more blow a trumpet or clash a cymbal: one woman will be able to bring succour to the labouring moon! <sup>435</sup> She lays down definitions, and discourses on morals, like a philosopher; thirsting to be deemed both wise and eloquent, she ought to tuck up her

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### JUVENAL, SATIRE VI

skirts knee-high,<sup>1</sup> sacrifice a pig to Silvanus,<sup>2</sup> and take a penny bath.<sup>3</sup> Let not the wife of your bosom possess a special style of her own; let her not hurl at you in whirling speech the crooked enthymeme! Let her not know all history; let there be some things in her reading which she does not understand. I hate a woman who is for ever consulting and poring over the "Grammar" of Palaemon,<sup>4</sup> who observes all the rules and laws of language, who like an antiquary quotes verses that I never heard of, and corrects her unlettered<sup>5</sup> female friends for slips of speech that no man need trouble about: let husbands at least be permitted to make slips in grammar! <sup>457</sup> There is nothing that a woman will not permit herself to do, nothing that she deems shameful, when she encircles her neck with green emeralds, and fastens huge pearls to her elongated ears: there is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman. Meanwhile she ridiculously puffs out and disfigures her face with lumps of dough; she reeks of rich Poppaeian<sup>6</sup> unguents which stick to the lips of her unfortunate husband. Her lover she will meet with a clean-washed skin; but when does she ever care to look nice at home? It is for her lovers that she provides the spikenard, for them she buys all the scents which the slender Indians bring to us. In good time she discloses her face; she removes the first layer of plaster, and begins to be recognisable. She then laves herself with that milk for which she takes a herd of she-asses in her train if sent away to the Hyper-

<sup>5</sup> The word *Opican* is equivalent to *Oscan*, denoting the early inhabitants of Campania. It is used here as equivalent to barbarian.

<sup>6</sup> Cosmetics, called after Nero's wife Poppaea.

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## Focus of the Passage: Women

Who is Paul really interested in: only the men, only the women, both the men and women? A striking feature of this passage is the consistency with which Paul's language about men parallels his language about women. Eight times when men are treated, women are also treated. The stress, however, falls on the women.<sup>1</sup> That is, between the introductory and concluding appeal to tradition (11:2, 16), every excursus (4x), except one (11:12b), treats the women more fully, as the following diagram shows:

1. "The head of every man is Christ." (11:3)  
"The head of woman is man."
2. "Every man praying or prophesying with his head ... shames his head." (11:4-5)  
"Every woman praying or prophesying with her head ... shames her head."
- Excursus A (11:6)  
"For if a *woman* ..."  
"Now if it is shameful for a *woman* ..."
3. "For a man, on the one hand ..." (11:7)  
"A woman, on the other hand ..."
4. "For man is *not* from woman," (11:8)  
"but woman is from man."
5. "For man was *not* created from woman," (11:9)  
"but woman was created on account of man."
- Excursus B (11:10)  
"On account of this, a *woman* ought to have authority over her head because of the angels."
6. "Nevertheless, *neither* is woman anything without man," (11:11)  
"*nor* is man anything without woman in the Lord."
7. "For *as* woman is from man," (11:12a)  
"*so* man is through woman."
- Excursus C (11:12b)  
"But all things are from *God*."
- Excursus D (11:13)  
"Judge for yourselves. Is it proper for a *woman* to pray to God uncovered?"
8. "Does not nature teach you that" (11:14-15a)  
"*if* a man wears long hair, it is a dishonor for him,  
"*but if* a woman wears long hair, it is a glory for her?"
- Excursus E (11:15b)  
"Because [*her*] hair is given [*to her*] for a covering."

The extensive comparisons and contrasts between men and women suggest that gender distinctions are at issue. The emphasis on the women,<sup>2</sup> seen in the excurses, points to actions on the part of women, where these distinctions are not being upheld, thus bringing shame to the church.

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<sup>1</sup>The contrast is between men and women, not husbands and wives, the latter pair creating non sequiturs when read in 1 Cor 11:3, 4, 9-10.

<sup>2</sup>According to Black, there are "103 words to discuss the women and only 39 regarding the men" ("1 Corinthians 11:1-16," 1.195).



# The Problem of Uncovered Prophets: Exploring 1 Cor 11:2-16

KEN CUKROWSKI

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Headcoverings, prophets, the cryptic phrase “because of the angels”—what is going on in 1 Cor 11:2–16? Certainly one of the more difficult passages in the New Testament, 1 Cor 11:2–16 presents an array of vexing problems, each one impacting the interpretation of the passage. Despite my desire to address all difficulties in the text, engage the academic literature, and discuss the application of the text, I will restrict myself to the task of a clear explanation of an apparently murky passage. We begin with the context of the passage, and then move to some of the key issues.\*

## CONTEXT OF 1 CORINTHIANS

How does 1 Cor 11:2–16 fit within the letter as a whole? First Corinthians is not Paul’s first contact with the Corinthians. Paul founds the church at Corinth on his first visit to the city (Acts 18:1–8) with the assistance of Silas and Timothy (Acts 18:5; 2 Cor 1:19). After a stay of eighteen months in Corinth (Acts 18:11), Paul moves and spends the next three years in Ephesus (Acts 19:1–20:1, 31). During his time in Ephesus, Paul writes a letter, now lost, to Corinth (1 Cor 5:9).

Apparently, Paul hears quite a bit about the church in Corinth. He hears from Chloe’s people about quarreling in Corinth (1 Cor 1:11); Paul mentions other reports about Corinth throughout his letter (1 Cor 5:1; 11:18; 15:12); and the three envoys carrying the letter, Stephanus, Achaicus, and Fortunatus (1 Cor 16:17–18), likely converse with Paul about the contents of the letter.

First Corinthians is a response to the letter from the Corinthians carried by those three emissaries; Paul responds to their questions as 1 Cor 7:1 indicates: “Now concerning (*peri de*) the things about which you wrote.”<sup>1</sup> The same phrase (*peri de*) occurs several more times in 1 Corinthians, probably indicating matters that the Corinthians have raised to Paul in their letter.<sup>2</sup>

Was the matter about headcoverings a topic mentioned in the letter from the Corinthians? It seems possible, even though “now concerning” (*peri de*) does not begin the passage. It is worth noting that no *peri de* precedes 11:17–34, which, nevertheless, appears to be part of Paul’s response to specific questions about the Lord’s Supper (note v. 34b). At the same time, it is also possible that Paul is responding to information from the other sources (1:11; 5:1; 11:18) or the three envoys sent from Corinth (16:17).

## WHAT PAUL MIGHT HAVE READ

We don’t actually know what Paul might have read. So, in what follows we engage in a significant degree of conjecture; let the reader beware. However, the attempt is not without merit. In fact, envisioning the circumstances that produced Paul’s response is a key, perhaps lost, to understanding this passage. The danger is mirror reading, assuming that every statement of Paul’s is a response to or denial of what the Corinthians wrote. The challenge for any interpreter is to account for Paul’s praise in 11:2 and his critique in the following verses. In other words, the Corinthians were doing something right, but not completely right.

Taking into account key words from 1 Cor 11, I attempted to craft a fictitious letter approximating what Paul might have read:

Paul,  
Some of us are shocked about the behavior of *women* while they are *praying and prophesying* in our assemblies. The *women's uncovered heads* are not *proper* in public, where a number of *men* are present. The *women* claim the authority to *pray and prophesy* with their *heads uncovered* because gender distinctions do not matter *in the Lord*. They base this claim on the *traditional* recitation at their baptism, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female." We want to *maintain the traditions* you *delivered* to us, but this *tradition* certainly does not permit *women* to act in this way, does it? Paul, we need your advice, since the discussions about this *custom* are becoming *contentious*.<sup>3</sup>

### CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE: WORSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION

Why are headcoverings such an issue? Since the church meets in a house—the domain where women have greatest freedom—it seems possible that the women think of the church meeting as a “private” context. Others in Corinth likely view the assembly as a “public” place, since outsiders or unbelievers freely enter (14:23). As support for the public/private distinction, note the contrast between “at home” and “in church” in 14:35.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the differing views of the nature of the gathering, the purpose of the gathering is clear: the church is gathered together for worship. First, the structure of the letter points in this direction. As Carl Holladay notes, in 1 Cor 11 one moves from “the relation of Christians to pagan worship” (chapters 8–10) to “the question of Christian worship”<sup>5</sup> (chapters 11–14). The worship issues in chapters 12–14—praying (in tongues at 14:15) and prophesying—are the same issues here (1 Cor 11:4–5, 13).<sup>6</sup> Second, the contrasting phrases in the immediate context point to a parallel structure (i.e., 11:2 “I praise you;” 11:17 “I praise [you] not”), connecting 11:2–16 with the discussion of the Lord’s Supper in 11:17–34, which is clearly in the context of worship. Third, prophecy “by definition, presupposes an audience; it is not a private act.”<sup>7</sup> Fourth, reflection on the situation virtually demands a public setting, since it “is difficult to imagine why the problem addressed would exist if a private setting were assumed.”<sup>8</sup> Fifth, and most persuasive, Paul explicitly places his discussion in the context of church practice in 1 Cor 11:16.

### OUTLINE OF THE PASSAGE

Following the contours of Paul’s thought in 11:2–16 is notoriously difficult. The following outline, however, shows that Paul, in a recognizable pattern of repeating appeals, argues for women having headcoverings based on tradition, culture, and creation:

Introductory appeal to tradition	v. 2	“maintain the traditions” (v. 2)
A Appeal to culture	vv. 3–6	“shames; shameful” (vv. 4, 5, 6)
B Appeal to creation	vv. 7–10	“image of God (v. 7); “created” (v. 9)
C Appeal to “new creation”	vv. 11–12	“in the Lord” (v. 11)
A’ Appeal to culture	v. 13	“proper”
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Concluding appeal to tradition	v. 16	“such a custom”

Although the argumentation may not match our expectations, it accords surprisingly strongly with other ancient arguments for maintaining gender differences.<sup>9</sup>

**FOCUS OF THE PASSAGE: WOMEN**

Who is Paul really interested in: only the men, only the women, both the men and women? A striking feature of this passage is the consistency with which Paul's language about men parallels his language about women. Eight times when men are treated, women are also treated. The stress, however, falls on the women.<sup>10</sup> That is, between the introductory and concluding appeal to tradition (11:2, 16), every excursus (4x), except one (11:12b), treats the women more fully, as the following diagram shows:

- |                            |   |  |  |
|----------------------------|---|--|--|
| 1.                         | "The head of every man is Christ." (11:3)   |  |  |
|                            | "The head of woman is man."   |  |  |
| 2.                         | "Every man praying or prophesying with his head ... shames his head." (11:4-5)                    |  |  |
|                            | "Every woman praying or prophesying with her head ... shames her head."                           |  |  |
| <u>Excursus A</u> (11:6)   |   |  |  |
|                            | "For if a woman..."   |  |  |
|                            | "Now if it is shameful for a woman ..."   |  |  |
| 3.                         | "For a man, on the one hand ..." (11:7)   |  |  |
|                            | "A woman, on the other hand ..."  |  |  |
| 4.                         | "For man is <i>not</i> from woman, (11:8)   |  |  |
|                            | " <i>but</i> woman is from man."  |  |  |
| 5.                         | "For man was <i>not</i> created from woman, (11:9)  |  |  |
|                            | " <i>but</i> woman was created on account of man."  |  |  |
| <u>Excursus B</u> (11:10)  |   |  |  |
|                            | "On account of this, a <i>woman</i> ought to have authority over her head because of the angels." |  |  |
| 6.                         | "Nevertheless, <i>neither</i> is woman anything without man, (11:11)                              |  |  |
|                            | " <i>nor</i> is man anything without woman in the Lord."  |  |  |
| 7.                         | "For <i>as</i> woman is from man, (11:12a)  |  |  |
|                            | " <i>so</i> man is through woman."  |  |  |
| <u>Excursus C</u> (11:12b) |   |  |  |
|                            | "But all things are from <i>God</i> ."  |  |  |
| <u>Excursus D</u> (11:13)  |   |  |  |
|                            | "Judge for yourselves. Is it proper for a <i>woman</i> to pray to God uncovered?"                 |  |  |
| 8.                         | "Does not nature teach you that (11:14-15a)   |  |  |
|                            | " <i>if</i> a man wears long hair, it is a dishonor for him,                                      |  |  |
|                            | " <i>but if</i> a woman wears long hair, it is a glory for her?"                                  |  |  |
| <u>Excursus E</u> (11:15b) |   |  |  |
|                            | "Because [ <i>her</i> ] hair is given [ <i>to her</i> ] for a covering."                          |  |  |

The extensive comparisons and contrasts between men and women suggest that gender distinctions are at issue. The emphasis on the women,<sup>11</sup> seen in the excurses, points to actions on the part of women in which these distinctions are not being upheld, thus bringing shame to the church.

**FEMALE PROPHETS**

The congregation in which I was reared did not mention female prophets. Since others may share a similar history, a word about female prophets and prophecy may be in order. Found both in the Old Testament and New Testament, female prophets play a role, often significant, in the life of God's people. From Miriam (Exodus 15:20) to Deborah (Judges 4:4), from Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:9) to the female prophets at Corinth (1 Cor 11:5), mention of their activity dots both testaments.<sup>12</sup>

### WHAT DOES A PROPHET DO?

If we were to walk into the assembly at Corinth where prophets were prophesying, what would we see? Based on the evidence from Acts 15:30–32 and 1 Cor 14:1–4, 19, 29–32, several characteristics are clear. We can say something about the context of prophecy, the actions, the length of the speaking, a means of prophecy, and the control of prophets, as the following chart illustrates:

	Acts 15:30–32	1 Cor 14:1–5, 19, 28–33
Context	Congregation gathered (v. 30)	The church (vv. 3–5, 28, 33)
Actions	Exhort (v. 32)	Up-building (v. 3)
	Strengthen (v. 32)	Exhortation (vv. 3, 31)
		Comfort (v. 3)
		Edify (v. 4)
		Instruct (v. 19)
		Teach (v. 31)
Length	“Many words” (v. 32)	
Means		Revelation (v. 30)
Control		Be silent (v. 30)

In other words, a prophet is someone who speaks for an extended period of time in the context of the gathered body of believers, proclaiming words that exhort, strengthen, comfort, edify, and teach. This description sounds much like what most would now call preaching. Two points of clarification are needed. First, prophecy and preaching do overlap to a high degree, more than many have realized. Second, prophecy and preaching are not entirely identical, despite the overlap, since we also have to reckon with the unexplained aspect of “revelation” (1 Cor 14:30) and the predictive element with one New Testament prophet.<sup>13</sup>

### HEADCOVERING, NOT HAIRSTYLE

Some interpreters have seen the issue as one of hairstyle, but several factors militate against this interpretation. First, the expression in 11:4—“[while] having [a covering hanging] down from [his] head”—is not found connected with a hairstyle, but often with a garment.<sup>14</sup> Second, the language of 11:5 has the clear sense of “uncovered” in ancient sources.<sup>15</sup> Third, there is no evidence that the wording of 11:6 (“cover”) ever has the sense of “binding, wrapping.” Fourth, those who would translate *peribolaion* (“garment”) as “wrapper” go against the clear OT evidence, where the verb is connected with a headcovering (Gen 24:65) and the noun is paralleled with a garment (Psalm 101:27, LXX). In short, the language does not support the hairstyle interpretation in four key verses of 1 Cor 11.

### “BECAUSE OF THE ANGELS”

The phrase “because of the angels” has prompted numerous proposals but little consensus. In my opinion, the most convincing argument is that angels are thought of as watching over the activities of humans, including worship. A number of texts from diverse sources point to this idea, as the following quotations illustrate. From the Septuagint and the Apocrypha, one finds:

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart, because you heard the words of my mouth, and I will sing to you before the *angels* (Psalm 137:1 [LXX]; cf. Psalm 138:1 Hebrew “*gods*”).

I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints and enter into the presence of the glory of the Holy One (Tobit 12:15).

From the Dead Sea Scrolls, one finds the following description:

No madman, or lunatic, or simpleton, or fool, no blind man, or maimed, or lame, or deaf man, and no minor, shall enter into the Community, for the Angels of Holiness are with them...<sup>16</sup>

In the Greco-Roman realm, one finds this same idea in Jewish, as well as pagan authors:

In the midst of men and angels, Moses sang his hymns with every kind of harmony and concord, in order that both humans and ministering angels might give heed; that humans might learn thankfulness similar to his own; that angels, as overseers watching, might listen in accordance with their own musical expertise, lest there be any dissonance in his song. (Philo, *On the Virtues*, 74)

Plutarch also depicts “daemons,” whom Philo equates with angels, as “posted on earth as guardians and overseers of the deeds of humans.”<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere Plutarch envisions these daemons as “overseers of the holy rites of the gods” and as a “ministering class, midway between gods and men, in that they convey thither the prayers and petitions of men, and thence they bring hither the oracles and the gifts of good things.”<sup>18</sup>

What can we conclude from these passages? Those across the religious and ethnic spectrum, from sectarian Jew to Greco-Roman pagan, would understand Paul’s comment about the angels. Thus the Corinthians would understand 11:10 to be saying, “For this reason (that is, woman reflects the glory of man, not God) a woman ought to exercise control over her head [and cover it while praying and prophesying] because of the angels [who watch over worship and report shameful behavior to God].”

### THE RESULTING INTERPRETATION

#### *Appeal to Tradition (11:2)*

What picture emerges when all of these pieces are brought together? Paul begins by praising the Corinthians for remembering him and maintaining the traditions, likely referring to something similar to Gal 3:28. This tradition had been used to justify the practice of women praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered (11:2). The women likely argued that gender distinctions do not exist in Christ. Since Paul disagrees with how the women are praying and prophesying, he makes a series of appeals for headcoverings on the women in an attempt to restore gender distinctions.

#### *Appeal to Culture (11:3–6)*

Next, Paul appeals to culture (11:3–6). He argues for gender distinctions, the key word being “head,” which is used seven times in 11:3–5. The concentration of uses of the word “head” in 1 Cor 11:2–16 (9x) probably indicates that Paul is picking up this term from the language of the Corinthians. Although not Paul’s point, here the implied relationship between male and female appears hierarchical.

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and female appears  
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The language of “shame” controls the ensuing discussion, occurring three times in 11:4–6. In an entirely balanced way, Paul points out that both men and women can incur shame while they are praying and prophesying because of a headcovering. In other words, the call for headcoverings on the women does not unfairly target only women; men too will be critiqued if they do not pray and prophesy with their heads attired in a proper way. Paul concludes his argument from culture and shame with an extrapolation. To paraphrase Paul in 11:5b–6, “If a woman wants to

act like a man (i.e., pray and prophesy with her head uncovered), then she might as well look like one and shave her head.”<sup>19</sup> Paul hopes that each woman will recognize that eliminating gender distinctions (i.e., shaving off her hair) brings shame. And if she concludes that her behavior brings shame, then she will “cover herself” (11:6).

### *Appeal to Creation (11:7–10)*

Based on 11:4–6, two natural questions arise: Why is it that men should not be covered? Why is it that women should be covered? To answer these questions, Paul appeals to creation in 11:7–10, the key word being “glory” (2x in 11:7). In response to the first question, Paul states that man is the glory of God (11:7a), the implication being that since man reflects this glory, he should not be covered because he would be covering God’s glory. Paul then answers the second question. He states that woman is the glory of man (11:7b), the implication being that since woman reflects man’s glory, she should be covered while praying and prophesying because only God’s glory should be reflected during worship.

At this point, one can imagine a Corinthian woman asking, “How is it that woman is the glory of man?” Paul anticipates this question and responds in two ways. First, he points out that “woman is from man,” implying that one reflects the glory of one’s source (11:8). Second, turning now to the purpose of creation, Paul points out that “woman was created on account of man” (11:9).

Paul appeals yet again to creation in 11:10 (“on account of this”). Paul presumes that angels watch over creation. Thus he counsels the women to exercise control over their heads by covering them while they pray and prophesy, lest angels see and report this shameful behavior to God.

**We are male and female because we live in the present age, but we are also members of a community shaped by Christ’s sacrifice, rendering gender a matter of indifference (Gal 3:28).**

### *Appeal to “New Creation” (11:11–12)*

Paul’s argument takes a turn at 11:11 (“nevertheless”). Lest anyone conclude that he disagrees with the rationale for the actual practice of women praying and prophesying, Paul appeals to the “new creation,” where “neither is woman anything without man, nor is man anything without woman in the Lord.” Two features are noteworthy in 11:11. Paul changes the order; “woman” is mentioned first. Also, Paul emphasizes the “new creation” in Christ by breaking the parallelism of the verse with the addition of the phrase “in the Lord.”

In yet another appeal to creation, Paul explains (*gar*, “for”) the interdependence of woman and man with an analogy in 11:12: “For as woman is from man (echoing 11:8), so man is through woman (i.e., birth).” This interdependence is God’s plan, since “all things are from God” (11:12b), a phrase emphasized by Paul’s break in the parallelism.

### *Appeal to Culture (11:13)*

Paul’s second appeal to culture comes in 11:13 (“proper”). Focusing on the woman, Paul returns to his primary task of restoring gender distinctions. Picking up “pray” and “uncovered” from 11:5, he asks rhetorically, “Is it proper for a woman to pray to God uncovered?” Of course, he is prompting a response of “no.”

### *Appeal to Creation (11:14–15)*

Paul appeals to creation for a third time (11:14–15), here described as “nature.” Using the example of “long hair” (3x), Paul argues that nature teaches both men and women that how one’s head is covered can

bring “dishonor” or “glory” (echoing 11:7). Paul’s point is clear; just as nature teaches women that “long hair is given for a covering,” so a woman should grasp that headcoverings are given to women for a covering while praying and prophesying.

#### *Appeal to Tradition (11:16)*

Paul concludes in the same way he began in 11:2: with an appeal to tradition. In 11:16 Paul calls on those who might be “contentious” to consider that “neither we nor the churches of God have such a custom,” namely women praying and prophesying uncovered.

### CONCLUSION

What have we seen, and what should we conclude? First, Paul’s call for the women to cover their heads functions in two ways: (1) to preserve gender distinctions by calling for the women to cover their heads; and (2) to enable the women to continue to pray and prophesy, *not* to restrict women from praying and prophesying. Second, Paul addresses *how* the women are to pray and prophesy (*viz.*, with a covered head), *not that* they are praying and prophesying. In fact, it would not make much sense for Paul to address the *how*, if he thought those actions in themselves were wrong. Third, there are tensions inherent in the argument. Creation is used both in a hierarchical context (11:7–10) and in an egalitarian context (11:11–12). Paul’s argument implies both an ontological hierarchy (11:3) and an ontological interdependence (11:11–12).<sup>20</sup> What is going on here?

For the interpreter, the temptations are two-fold: either to have the hierarchical verses trump the interdependent verses or to have the interdependent verses trump the hierarchical verses. But Paul does neither, and neither should we. To collapse either side is to commit one of two errors. First, to act as if gender distinctions do not exist is “a sign not of authentic spirituality but of an adolescent impatience with the world in which God has placed us.”<sup>21</sup> Second, to act as if the creation order of 11:7–10 determines faith and practice is to ignore the “in the Lord” (11:11) existence of God’s people. In other words, it would be acting as if Christ came, but nothing changed. Furthermore, it is worth noting that creation is used in both a hierarchical (11:7–10) and interdependent context (11:12); that is, those who stress the argument from creation in 11:7–10 usually ignore the appeal to creation in 11:12, not to mention the implications for headcoverings.

Why does Paul preserve that tension? It seems to reflect the tension in his own eschatological framework, where Christians live an “as if not” life (1 Cor 7:29–31). For Paul, Christians are those “upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor 10:11). In other words, we Christians live on the “hinge” between the present age and the age to come; we are in a sense amphibious. We are male and female because we live in the present age, but we are also members of a community shaped by Christ’s sacrifice, rendering gender a matter of indifference (Gal 3:28).

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### NOTES

\*All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

1 For further uses of “now concerning” in 1 Corinthians, see 7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 14:1; 16:1, 12.

2 The italicized words reflect words from 1 Cor 11:2–16. Including even more of the wording might result in the addition of the following: Furthermore, they support their actions by saying, “If the *head* of man is *Christ*, and the *head* of woman is *Christ*, then neither is the *head* of the other. To call anyone “*head*” is *shameful* for those *in the Lord*. The spiritual realm does not have distinctions based on gender. After all, *angels* do not marry. Since both *men* and *women* are *created* in the *image of God*, both are the *glory of God*. To *cover* our *heads* is to *cover* the *glory of God*.” Compare the “letter” by Richard Hays in *First Corinthians* (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching; Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 1997), 182–183.

3 For primary sources, see Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 7.29–36; Livy, *History of Rome*, 34.2.9–14; Valerius Maximus,

- Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, 6.3.10–11; 8.3.1–3; Juvenal, *Satire*, 6.398–401; Plutarch, *Lycurgus and Numa*, 3.5–6.
- 4 Carl R. Holladay, *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians* (Austin: Sweet, 1979), 138.
  - 5 Mark C. Black, "1 Cor. 11:2-16: A Reinvestigation," *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, ed. C. Osburn, vol. 1 (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1993), 194.
  - 6 Holladay, *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians*, 140. See also 1 Cor 14:2–4, 26, 29–33.
  - 7 Holladay, *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians*, 140.
  - 8 See Epictetus, *Discourse*, 1.16.9–14.
  - 9 The contrast is between men and women, not husbands and wives, the latter pair creating non sequiturs when read in 1 Cor 11:3, 4, 9–10.
  - 10 According to Black, there are "103 words to discuss the women and only 39 regarding the men" ("1 Corinthians 11:1–16," 1.195).
  - 11 For other female prophets, see also Huldah (2 Kings 22:8–20; 2 Chron 34:14–28); Isaiah's wife (Isaiah 8:3); Anna (Luke 2:36); daughters and maidservants (Acts 2:17–18 quoting Joel 2:28–29). Other possibilities include Elizabeth (Luke 1:41–45 comparing 1:67) and the women admonished in 1 Cor 14:34–35. Beyond the NT period, see the description of Ammia (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.17.1–4). Note also the false female prophets Noadiah (Neh 6:14) and Jezebel (Rev 2:20–25).
  - 12 See the description of Agabus in Acts 11:27–28; 21:10–11.
  - 13 See *kata kephales echon* in Plutarch, *Sayings of Romans*, 200EF and *kata kephales* in Plutarch, *The Roman Questions*, 267BC; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 12.16.4; 15.9.1–2; Esther 6:12 (LXX [implied]). Thanks go to my research assistant Robert Merchant for collecting these sources.
  - 14 See *akatakaluptos* in Philo, *Special Laws*, 3.52–63, esp. 56, 60; Lucian, *Essays in Portraiture*, 1.
  - 15 Damascus Rule (CD) 15 in G. Vermes, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 3d ed. (Penguin: New York, 1987), 92. See also Messianic Rule (1QSa) 2.
  - 16 See Philo, *On Dreams*, 1.141; Plutarch, *On Fate*, 573A.
  - 17 *Obsolescence of Oracles*, 417A; *Isis and Osiris*, 361C in Frank Cole Babbitt, trans., *Plutarch's Moralia*, 16 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1927–67), 5.65. For further descriptions of these daemons, see also Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 123, 253; Plato, *Symposium*, 202E–203A; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1.77; Plutarch, *Obsolescence of Oracles*, 415AB, 416C–F (cited by Babbitt, 5.64–65); Plutarch, *The E at Delphi*, 390EF (cited by Babbitt, 5.379).
  - 18 For women looking or acting like men, see Deut 22:5 and Juvenal, *Satire*, 6.444–447.
  - 19 Judith M. Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16: A Study in Paul's Theological Method," in *Evangelium Schriftauslegung Kirche: Festschrift für Peter Stuhlmacher zum 65. Geburtstag*, J. Adna, S. Hafemann, and O. Hofius, eds. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 160–171.
  - 20 Hays, *First Corinthians*, 191.



## Understanding 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

- **The Context of 1 Corinthians 14: Tongues and Prophecy**
  1. Context of the Letter: A Response to a Question about Spiritual Gifts (Chapters 12-14)
  2. Structure of Chapter 14 (Fee, 652-653)
    - What's the big difference between tongues and prophecy? Intelligibility (14:1-25)
    - What is Paul's main point? Edification (14:26-40)
  3. Key Terms in Chapter 14
    - "Tongues:" chapter 14 contains 14 of the 19 occurrences in 1 Corinthians.
    - "Prophecy:" chapter 14 contains 8 of the 11 occurrences in 1 Corinthians.
    - "Prophecy:" chapter 14 contains 2 of the 5 occurrences in 1 Corinthians.
    - "Prophet:" chapter 14 contains 3 of 5 occurrences in 1 Corinthians.
    - "Edification" is mentioned 7 times in chapter 14 (14:3, 4 [2x], 5, 12, 17, 26).
  4. Key Features of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40
    - Note the inclusio (bracket) in 14:26, 40 ("Let all things be done ...").
    - Note the number of commands in this section (14:26, 27, 28 [2x], 29 [2x], 30, 34 [2x], 35, 37, 39 [2x], 40)—fourteen commands in fifteen verses!
  
- **An Outline of the Text**
  - I. Tongues and Prophecy: How to Edify the Church (14:26-35)
    - A. Theme (14:26)
    - B. Use of Tongues (14:27-28)
    - C. Use of Prophecy (14:29-35)
      1. General directions for orderly use (14:29-33)
      2. Specific directions to women for orderly use (14:34-35)
  - II. Concluding Remarks (14:36-40)
  
- **General Instructions for Tongues (14:27-28)**
  1. Number: "Two or at most three" (v. 27)
  2. Manner: "In turn" (v. 27)
  3. Accompaniment: "Let one interpret" (v. 27)
  4. Modification: "If there is no one to interpret" (v. 28)
    - "Let each be silent" (v. 28).
    - "Let each speak to himself and to God" (v. 28).
  
- **General Instructions for Prophecy (14:29-33)**
  1. Number: "Two or three" (v. 29)
  2. Accompaniment: "Let the others weigh" (v. 29)
  3. Modification: "If a revelation is made to another" (v. 30)
    - "Let the first be silent" (v. 30).
  4. Manner: "One by one" (v. 31)
  5. Purpose (v. 31)
    - "All may learn" (v. 31)
    - "All may be encouraged" (v. 31)
  6. Argument for Self-control (vv. 32-33)
    - "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (v. 32).

- Reason: "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (v. 33).
- **Links between 14:34-35 and the Immediate Context**
  1. Be Silent (14:28, 30, 34)
  2. Speak (14:27, 28, 29, 34, 35)
  3. Be Subject (14:32, 34)
  4. Learn (14:31, 35)
- **Four Options for the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35**
  1. A Quotation
    - + The passage reads smoothly.
    - + Paul quotes the Corinthians elsewhere (1:12; 15:12), especially from their letter to him (6:12, 13; 7:1; 8:1, 4; 10:23), and indicates other sources of information available to him (1:11; 5:1; 11:18; 16:17).
    - + There are no problems reconciling 1 Corinthians 11.
    - No other quotation in 1 Corinthians is this lengthy.
    - The traditional reading of 1 Timothy 2 is still an issue.
  2. Not a Part of the Text (An Interpolation)
    - + The passage reads smoothly.
    - + Some Greek manuscripts move 14:34-35 after 14:40.
    - There is no textual basis for the omission; that is, *no* manuscript omits the 14:34-35.
    - The text can be read coherently *with* the passage.
  3. A Rule for All Time
    - + The passage reads smoothly.
    - + It fits with the traditional reading of 1 Timothy 2.
    - The prophesying by women in 1 Corinthians 11 is a problem, not to mention other passages regarding women in general (e.g., Gal 3:28). Women speak (e.g., as prophetesses) elsewhere in the OT and NT and in the immediate context (14:26).
    - Given the mention of "husbands" in 1 Cor 14:35a, the restriction on speaking would apply only to "wives."
  4. Specific Instructions for a Specific Problem
    - + The passage reads smoothly.
    - + It fits the closer (1 Cor 11) and wider (Gal 3:28) context of Paul's instruction and thought elsewhere.
    - The traditional reading of 1 Timothy 2 is still an issue.

Indeed, it was with some embarrassment that I came a few minutes ago to the Forum right through a crowd of women. If I had not held in respect the dignity and basic decency of each woman as an individual (it would mortify them to be seen receiving a scolding from a consul), I would have said: "What kind of behavior is this, running around in public and blocking streets and talking to other women's husbands? Could you not have asked your own husbands the same thing at home? Are you more persuasive in public than in private, with others' husbands than with your own? And yet it is not right, even in your own homes (if a sense of shame and decency were to keep you within your proper limits), for you to concern yourselves about which laws are passed or repealed here." That's what I would have said.

Our ancestors were not willing to let women conduct any business, not even private business, without a guardian. They wanted them to remain under the control of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. We, for heaven's sake, now allow them to take part in politics and to mingle with us in the Forum and to attend assemblies. . . . To be quite honest, they desire freedom, nay rather license in all matters. And if they win in this matter, what will they not attempt?

Women and Education

Roman women were expected to have enough education to appreciate their husbands' work, wit, writing, and opinions; they were not, however, expected to express opinions of their own. In public they were best seen—nodding in agreement or smiling appreciatively at their husbands' wit—but not heard. An intelligent and talented woman had to be careful not to appear more clever than the men around her.<sup>85</sup>

Juvenal's Sixth Satire is a scathing attack on women. Many of his criticisms involve an exaggeration of the situation but nonetheless reveal what sort of behavior irritated Roman men. Apparently Roman men were embarrassed by, and thus disliked, women who were openly more learned than they.

293 Juvenal, Satires 6.434-456

Really annoying is the woman who, as soon as she takes her place on the dining couch,<sup>86</sup> praises Vergil,<sup>87</sup> excuses Dido's suicide,<sup>88</sup> compares and ranks in critical order the various poets, and weighs Vergil and Homer<sup>89</sup> on a pair of scales.<sup>40</sup> Gram-  
<sup>85</sup> Sapphronia, vehemently criticized by Sallust in selection 291, evidently did not conceal her talents.

<sup>86</sup> *dining couch*: the Romans reclined at dinner parties.

<sup>87</sup> *Vergil*: Rome's greatest epic poet; author of the epic poem *Aeneid* which recounts the journey from Troy to Italy of Aeneas, a Trojan prince who survived the Trojan war.

<sup>88</sup> An episode from the *Aeneid*. Dido, queen of Carthage, a city in North Africa, had fallen in love with Aeneas when he landed there. After a few months, however, Aeneas sailed away to continue his journey to Italy. The unhappy Dido committed suicide. Readers of the *Aeneid* have either blamed Aeneas for deserting a friend and causing her suicide or, like the woman at the dinner party, excused Aeneas for Dido's suicide because *pietas* demanded that he continue on to Italy. On Aeneas's *pietas*, see note 88 of Chapter XV.

<sup>89</sup> *Homer*: Greek epic poet who composed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

<sup>40</sup> A figurative expression: she tries to determine the "weightiness," the value, of each poet's work.

mar teachers<sup>41</sup> surrender, professors of rhetoric<sup>42</sup> are defeated, the entire group of guests is silent; neither a lawyer nor an auctioneer nor even another woman will get a word in. So loud and shrill are her words that you might think pots were being banged together and bells were being rung. . . .

Like a philosopher she defines ethics. If she wants to appear so learned and eloquent, she should shorten her tunic to midcalf! . . . Don't marry a woman who speaks like an orator—or knows every history book. There should be some things in books which she doesn't understand. I hate a woman who reads and rereads Palaemon's<sup>44</sup> treatise on grammar, who always obeys all the laws and rules of correct speech, who quotes verses I've never even heard of, moldy old stuff that a man shouldn't worry about anyway. Let her correct the grammar of her stupid girlfriend! A husband should be allowed an occasional "I ain't."

Women and Luxuries

In the same satire from which the previous passage came, Juvenal, who lived around A.D. 100, blames women's immorality on Rome's affluence. In the "good old days," life was hard and women were pure, or so Juvenal thought.

294 Juvenal, Satires 6.286-295, 298-300

Do you wonder where these monsters come from? In the good old days, poverty made our Latin women chaste; small huts didn't provide opportunities for immoral behavior. Hard work, lack of sleep, hands rough and callused from working wool,<sup>45</sup> Hannibal<sup>46</sup> near the city, their husbands performing militia duty—these things just don't allow vices to develop. Now, however, we are suffering the ill effects of a long peace. Luxury, more destructive than war, threatens the city and takes revenge for the lands we have conquered.<sup>47</sup> No crime or justful act is missing, now that traditional Roman poverty is dead. . . . Obscene wealth brought with it foreign customs,<sup>48</sup> and unmanly luxuries and ugly affluence weakened each generation.

<sup>41</sup> *grammar teachers*: Latin *grammatici*; see selection 136.

<sup>42</sup> *professors of rhetoric*: Latin *rhetores*; see selection 137.

<sup>43</sup> The tunic (Latin *tunica*), which reached about midcalf, was a man's garment; the woman's garment was a *stola* which extended to the feet. Juvenal is saying, let her wear men's clothing if she wants to act like a man.

<sup>44</sup> *Palaemon*: see note 29 of Chapter VI.

<sup>45</sup> On wool working as a matron's duty, see note 14 of this chapter.

<sup>46</sup> *Hannibal*: see note 33 of this chapter.

<sup>47</sup> Lands conquered by Rome in war sent money to Rome for taxes and tribute. These lands also offered Roman capitalists new territory in which to expand their business ventures. However, as Rome became more affluent and prosperous, it also became, according to Juvenal, weaker and immoral, and thus conquered lands could indirectly cause the downfall of Rome.

<sup>48</sup> On Juvenal's prejudice against foreigners, see selection 212.

**“Even as the law says” (1 Cor 14:34b): An Allusion to Miriam (Num 12)?**

I. Why might there be an allusion to Miriam?<sup>1</sup>

A. In general, she is a prominent figure—a prophet and leader of Israel.

- Eight women are mentioned in 3 OT books.
- Two women are named in 4 OT books.
- Miriam is the only woman named in more than 4 OT books (Meyers, *Women in Scripture*, 11; cf. unnamed in Exodus 2:1-10; a possible allusion in Jeremiah 31:4).

- Exodus 15:20-21            Prophet
- Numbers 12:1-15        Prophet
- Numbers 20:1            Death
- Numbers 26:59          Genealogy
- Deuteronomy 24:9        Alludes to Numbers 12
- 1 Chronicles 6:3         Genealogy
- Micah 6:4                Leader

B. She is the first female prophet mentioned in the OT.

C. She is an example of a disruptive female prophet in Numbers 12.

II. Why might there be an allusion to Numbers 12?

A. Numbers is one of the five books of the “law” (cf. 1 Cor 14:34).

B. 1 Corinthians 13:12a alludes to Numbers 12:8.

C. 1 Corinthians 14:5 probably alludes to the passage about prophets in Numbers 11:29.

D. Is there any other language in Numbers 12 that reflects the situation in 1 Cor 14?

- “Speak against” (Num 12:1, 8; compare 1 Cor 14:36-38)
- “Shameful” (Num 12:14; compare 1 Cor 14:35)

III. What would an allusion to Miriam in Numbers 12 mean?

The import would be something like this: “Female [prophets] are not permitted to keep on speaking, but they should be subject to themselves (14:32), as the law says [about disruptive female prophets like Miriam in Numbers 12].”

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<sup>1</sup> See C. Holladay, *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians*, 189-190.

## Unraveling 1 Timothy 2:8-15

- **The Context of 1 Timothy**

1. False Teaching: The church is under attack.
  - Words pertaining to teaching (viz., “able to teach,” “teaching,” “teacher,” “teach,” “teach otherwise”) occur 17 times in 1 Timothy (1:3, 7, 10; 2:7, 12; 3:2; 4:1, 6, 11, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 2, 3 [2x]).
  - See especially 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 4:1-4, 7; 6:3-5, 20-21.
2. Women in 1 & 2 Timothy: The home is under attack.
  - Note the amount of discussion given in 1 Timothy 5:3-16.
    - “Real widows” in 5:3, 5, 16
    - “Younger widows” in 5:6-7, 11-15
  - “Weak women” in 2 Timothy 3:6-7
  - Note also the emphasis on the home and the relationship to society in the description of elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:2, 4-5, 7, 12).

- **The Context of the Passage**

1. Inconsistencies in Translation
  - The Greek text reads “humanity” in 1 Timothy 2:1, 4, 5 and “man [male]” in 1 Tim 2:8. Compare the diverse translations.
  - Some translations read “peaceable, quiet [adj.]” in 1 Timothy 2:2 (referring to all Christians), but “silent [noun]” in 1 Tim 2:11, 12 (referring to women).
2. Paul is concerned about the behavior of the church (1 Timothy 2:1-3:15, esp. 3:15).

- **Structural Features of the Passage: An Emphasis on Modesty**

1. *Inclusio* (bracket) in 2:9, 15 (“with modesty;” *meta sōphrosunēs*)
2. *Inclusio* (bracket) in 2:11, 12 (“with quiet behavior;” *en hēsuchia*)

- **Keys Terms in the Passage: An Emphasis on Modesty**

1. In 2:9, note the piling up of words connected to modesty:  
I desire that the women adorn (*kosmein*) themselves in modest (*kosmios*) attire with modesty (*aidōs*) and moderation (*sōphrosunē*).
2. Paul also shows attention to the idea of modesty in his use of *prepein* (“be fitting, be seemly/suitable”) in 2:10.
3. Note the importance of *sōphrosunē* as follows:  
“The term means ‘temperance’ but also connotes chastity and self-restraint. It was the pre-eminent virtue of Greek women; it is mentioned more frequently than any other quality on women’s tombstones.<sup>1</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> S. B. Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 70.

## The Interpretation of the Text

### Verse 8

- Notice the following passages from 1 Timothy, in which we see some probable causes and evidence for the men's quarreling in 2:8:
  - They pay attention to myths and endless genealogies that promote useless speculations (1:4).
  - Some, while going astray, turn away to fruitless discussion (1:6).
  - Avoid godless and silly myths (4:7).
  - He is sick with a morbid craving for debates and disputes about words, from which come envy, strife, slanders, evil suspicions, wranglings of people who have corrupt minds and lack the truth, thinking that godliness is a means of gain (6:4-5).
  - Avoid the godless, empty chatter and the contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge (6:20).

### Verses 9-15

- Why does Paul devote these seven verses to women?
  - It seems that there is a specific problem with the women in Ephesus.
  - See **Links Between the Women in 1 Timothy 2:9-15 And the "Younger Widows" in 1 Timothy 5** below.

### Verses 11-12

- Why does Paul single out women and teaching?
  1. It seems likely that they are involved in the false teaching in some way.
  2. See 1 Timothy 5:13; 2 Timothy 3:6-7.
- What is the best translation for *authentein*?
  1. On the translation of *authentein* as "bossy," note the definition in BDAG: "to assume a stance of independent authority, *give orders to, dictate to ...* (practically = 'tell a man what to do' [Jerusalem Bible].)"
  2. Note how "to teach and to be bossy over men" is in contrast to the phrase "but she is to be in quietness."

### Verses 13-14

- How is the OT being used?
  1. A proof text: Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:3
  2. An example/illustration/analogy: 1 Cor 10:1-11; 2 Corinthians 11:1-4
    - "Watch out for the 'Eves' who are being deceived by the false teachers."

-Structure (C. Osburn in Geer, *EWEC*, 1. 296 n. 45)

A	I am not permitting a woman to teach	2:12
B	nor domineer over a man	2:12
B'	for Adam was formed first, then Eve	2:13
A'	the woman, when she was deceived, became a transgressor	2:14

### Verse 15

- See the instruction to the "younger widows" in 1 Timothy 5:14.
- "Bearing children" is shorthand for a "well-run family" (Geer, *EWEC* 1.298).
- On "salvation," compare the advice to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:16.

## **Links Between the Women in 1 Timothy 2:9-15 And the “Younger Widows” in 1 Timothy 5**

Question: If Paul is not speaking about women in general, but rather to a particular problem with immodest women in Ephesus, then what evidence is there to connect the women in 2:9-15 with a specific problem in 1 Timothy? Notice the following links between the women of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 and the young widows described in 1 Timothy 5:3-16.

### 1. Immodest expenditures

In 1 Timothy 2:9, Paul cautions women not “to adorn themselves with braids or gold or pearls or very expensive clothing.” Correspondingly, Paul describes the young widows in 1 Timothy 5:6 with the verb *spatalan*, which means “to indulge oneself beyond the bounds of propriety, live luxuriously/voluptuously” (BDAG). Thus, 1 Timothy 2:9 contains specific examples of what it means to “live luxuriously” (1 Tim 5:6).

### 2. Good deeds

In 1 Timothy 2:10, Paul remarks that a proper woman adorns herself “with good deeds.” In his contrast between the younger widows and the real widows in 1 Timothy 5, Paul affirms that a “real widow” (5:3) should be “attested for her good deeds and devoted to every good deed” (5:10). With this item, we have a strong, verbal parallel between the two passages.

### 3. Quiet behavior

If Paul is concerned with *how* the women are behaving and speaking in 2:11-12, is there any evidence of unacceptable behavior among the younger widows in 1 Timothy 5? In the language of 1 Timothy 2, do the younger widows exhibit a lack of “quiet behavior” (*hēsuchia*)?

Paul has at least three descriptions of behavior that is not quiet behavior. The younger widows are described as “busybodies” who “run about from house to house” (5:13). Apparently their behavior has been so scandalous that it has provided others an opportunity to “revile” the church (5:14). Paul issues a command to avoid luxurious living in order that younger widows may be “without reproach” (5:7). Each of these three descriptions is connected to the absence of “quiet behavior” in other New Testament texts. As evidence, Paul contrasts *hēsuchia* with “busybodies” in 2 Thess 3:11-12 (cf. how the verb *hēsuchazein* (“live quietly”) is parallel to “to mind your own business” in 1 Thess 4:11). Also, those who “live quietly” earn the “respect” (not “reproach”) of outsiders (1 Thess 4:11-12).

### 4. Problems with teaching

When Paul writes “I do not permit a woman to teach” (2:12), is there any evidence that false teaching is a problem among women in Ephesus? Or, is Paul talking about women teaching in general? From our earlier investigation of the “angry men,” we know that there is ample evidence that the church is under attack from false teaching. Seventeen times Paul uses words associated with teaching (1 Timothy (1:3, 7, 10; 2:7, 12; 3:2; 4:1, 6, 11, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 2, 3 [2x]). But what about the younger widows? Is there any false teaching connected with them? In 5:13, Paul describes the younger widows as “saying what they should not,” a phrase that is associated with false teaching in Titus 1:11 (namely, “teaching what they should not”). It also appears that false teachers are using the homes of women as outposts for the false teaching (2 Timothy 3:6-7).

### 5. Deception

Twice Paul uses the language of deception in his illustration treating Adam and Eve—“Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (2:14). What evidence is there that the younger widows have been deceived? Paul uses neither the verb “deceive” nor the noun “deception” in 1 Timothy 5. However, it seems highly likely that the younger widows, who “have followed after Satan” (5:15), can be described as “deceived.”

### 6. Bearing children

Finally, what is one to do with the cryptic phrase “she will be saved through the bearing of children” (*teknogonia*) in 2:15? Interestingly, the verb (*teknogonein*) appears in 1 Timothy 5 when the younger widows are admonished “to marry, bear children (*teknogonein*), and manage their households” (5:14). In other words, it is highly unlikely that Paul, in 2:15, is saying that a woman must bear a child to be saved. Rather, the word “bearing of children” (*teknogonia*) is a compressed way of saying, “Pay attention to your domestic responsibilities.”<sup>2</sup> This interpretation of 2:15 not only fits well with the admonition to the younger widows, but also with other passages in 1 Timothy (e.g., those people who “forbid marriage” in 4:3).

Elsewhere in 1 Timothy, Paul also shows care for the state of the home, likely indicating that there are problems in that area. For example, in his instructions regarding elders and deacons, Paul highlights the importance of a strong home. In effect, he also tells potential elders and deacons, “Pay attention to your domestic responsibilities” (3:2, 4-5, 7, 12). Thus, in a context where the home is under attack, and possibly being used as an outpost for false teaching (cf. 2 Tim 3:6-7), such instructions from Paul are not surprising.

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<sup>2</sup> “Bearing children” is shorthand for a “well-run family” (Geer, *EWEC* 1.298).



## Three Options for the Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15

### 1. A Rule for All Time

- + Paul's instructions do not allow women "to teach or have authority over men" (RSV; 2:12).
- + There is an appeal to creation in 1 Tim 2:13-14.
- + They argue for a hierarchical relationship between men and women, primarily based on the phrase "Adam was created first" (2:13).
- + They argue that 1 Cor 14:34-35 fits with this interpretation
- It is difficult to consistently apply 1 Timothy 2:8, 9, 12, 15 as rules for all time.
- If men should occupy positions of authority based on creation, then there are difficulties with modern application. Today women fill virtually every position of leadership in our culture.
  - Supreme Court Justice
  - Senator
  - Mayor
  - Doctor
  - Lawyer
  - Judge
  - Professor
  - Umpire
  - School principal
  - Manager
  - Counselor
  - Teacher
  - Voter
  - Engineer
  - Architect
- 1 Timothy 2:8 seems to apply to a specific problem with men in Ephesus.
- There are other places in the OT and NT where women teach or lead.
- Does the appeal to creation mean that all women are by nature more gullible than men?

### 2. Specific Instructions for a Specific Problem

- + Since 1 Timothy 2:8 seems to respond to a particular problem with men in Ephesus, it seems likely that 2:9-15 respond to specific problems with women in Ephesus.
- + One can easily apply 1 Timothy 2:8, 9, 12, 15 on the level of principles. For instance, with 2:12 one might say the following:
  - If we had problems with immodest, bossy women teaching false doctrine, then we would tell those women not "to teach or be bossy"<sup>3</sup> (2:12); but we don't have that problem. The principle is 'Stop immodest and bossy behavior, as well as false teaching.' Such behavior today should evoke a similar response.<sup>4</sup> In fact, Jesus condemns any disciple—male or female—who behaves in an overbearing way (Luke 22:24-26).
- + There seem to be connections between the women in 1 Timothy 2 and the younger widows in 1 Timothy 5.
- + The appeal to creation in 2:13-14 functions as an illustration.
- + There are no problems with biblical passages showing women teaching or leading.
- ? If the situation with the younger widows changed, would the instructions in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 also change?
- Opponents argue that 1 Cor 14:34-35 does not fit with this interpretation.
- There is an appeal to pre-Fall creation in 1 Tim 2:13-14.

### 3. Diversity in the New Testament on this Issue

- + Not all the NT passages affirm or restrict the roles of women.
- + The NT is diverse on some issues (e.g., the attitude of Christians to government, metaphors for salvation, attitude toward slavery, etc.).
- + Perhaps the church was still in the process of working out this issue.
- + Diversity is a reality today with a number of practices in our churches.
- Is diversity an option on this issue?
- The other options fit the evidence.

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<sup>3</sup> On the translation of *authentēin* as "bossy," note the definition in BDAG, "to assume a stance of independent authority, give orders to, dictate to ... (practically = 'tell a man what to do' [Jerusalem Bible]."

<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere in 1 Timothy, men are also called to modest behavior with the same word as the women (*kosmios* ["respectable, appropriate"] in 2:9 and 3:2) and with a word built on the same root (*sōphrosunē* ["prudence"] in 2:9, 15 and *sōphrōn* ["prudent"] in 3:2).

# Women and Wealth in 1 Timothy<sup>1</sup>

KEN CUKROWSKI

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**S**eparate and yet interconnected, the themes of women and wealth play significant roles in 1 Timothy. The investigation of 1 Tim 2:8-15 shows women and immodest displays of wealth—abuses of wealth that may be connected to those in 1 Timothy 5. Later, two passages in 1 Timothy 6 reveal further discussion about wealth. The examination of these themes illustrates just how contemporary antiquity can be.

## **WOMEN IN 1 TIM 2:8-15**

Without a doubt, 1 Tim 2:8-15 is one of the most challenging passages in the whole letter. However, a couple of things are clear. First, the problems are specifically related to gender; the men have some specific problems, and the women have some specific problems. Second, the men's difficulties regard anger and quarreling, and the women's difficulties regard modesty.

From Super Bowl halftime shows to music videos, we likely think about the problem of female modesty in terms of wearing too little. In the context of 1 Tim 2:9, however, some of the women were wearing too much! Plus, there appears to be a problem not only with what the women were wearing, but also with what they were saying—and perhaps *how* they were saying it.

In 1 Tim 2:8-15, Paul turns to internal problems that the church is facing. Although Paul addresses both males and females, by far the greater attention is on the females. Attending to both structural and thematic features helps readers to understand this passage.

### *Structural Features*

Perhaps here more than the other passages in 1 Timothy, it is important to recognize the structural features of this passage. First, Paul begins by connecting 1 Tim 2:8-15 to 2:1-7 by means of the hook word "pray." Paul, however, moves in a different direction from the focus on praying for outsiders (2:1-7). Here in 2:8, Paul stresses *how* Christians should pray, namely "without anger and quarreling."

The next two structural features provide both a larger and smaller frame for reading 2:9-15. The larger bracket includes the prepositional phrase "with modesty and moderation" in 2:8 and a shortened version of the phrase in 2:15 (namely, "with moderation"). In fact, the final two words of the whole passage are the phrase "with moderation." Within 2:9-15, Paul includes another pair of prepositional phrases. This time, the same phrase (namely, "with quietness") begins and ends 2:11-12.



Finally, it is worthwhile to recognize the two connections between 2:8 and 9. The word *likewise* links the two verses. In addition, the phrase "I desire that" in 2:8 governs 2:9; that is, 1 Tim 2:9 is translated ("I desire that) the women adorn themselves ....

### *Key Themes and Terms*

One of the difficulties of this passage is the translation of key words and ideas. For example, how should one translate the phrase *in quietness* in 2:11 and 12? The adjective (*hēsuchia*) is translated as quiet or well-ordered in 2:2. Translators recognize that in calling Christians to pray and "lead a calm and quiet (*hēsuchia*) life," Paul is not telling Christians they cannot speak! Yet, when the corresponding noun (*hēsuchia*) is used in 2:11 and 12, some translations have "in silence," which is a possible translation if women's speaking at all is the issue. However, if *how* the women are speaking is part of the issue, than a better translation is "with quiet behavior" or "with respect."

Another difficulty is the piling up of words connected to modesty in 2:9. I offer the following annotated translation as an illustration:

I desire that the women adorn (*kosmein*) themselves in modest (*kosmios*) attire with modesty (*aidōs*) and moderation (*sōphrosunē*).

Paul also shows attention to the idea of modesty in his use of *prepein* ("be fitting, be seemly/suitable") in 2:10.<sup>2</sup> All throughout the passage, Paul uses terms synonymous or parallel to modesty.

### *The Context and Interpretation of the Passage*

In 1 Tim 2:8-15, Paul treats two problems, the first briefly and the second more extensively. In both cases, there is some indication that Paul is dealing with specific problems at Ephesus. Thus, this investigation of both problems will involve some description of the context of 1 Timothy.

### **ANGRY MEN**

The context of 1 Timothy points to some evident false teaching in Ephesus (1:3-7; 4:1-4, 7; 6:3-5, 20-21). Notice the following passages from 1 Timothy where we see some probable causes and evidence for the men's quarreling in 2:8:

They pay attention to myths and endless genealogies that promote useless speculations (1:4).

Some, while going astray, turn away to fruitless discussion (1:6).

Avoid godless and silly myths (4:7).

He is sick with a morbid craving for debates and disputes about words, from which come envy, strife, slanders, evil suspicions, wranglings of people who have corrupt minds and lack the truth, thinking that godliness is a means of gain (6:4-5).

Avoid the godless, empty chatter and the contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge (6:20).

The problem in 1 Tim 2:8 is that these arguments are now occurring in the context of prayer! Men seem to be attacking others with their prayers of all things! In contrast, Paul tells the men that the hands they lift in prayer should be *holy hands*. Unfortunately, even the best things, such as prayer, can be co-opted by sinful individuals. Even though angry, quarreling prayers such as these may be rare today, prayer is still sometimes used to preach personal, theological, and political positions. There are prayers to which one cannot, in good conscience, say "Amen."

### *Immodest Women*

The four cardinal virtues in the ancient world were justice, courage, wisdom, and moderation (*sôphrosunê*). Of these four virtues, by far the one most associated with women was moderation. Sarah Pomeroy describes *sôphrosunê* as follows:

The term means "temperance" but also connotes chastity and self-restraint. It was the pre-eminent virtue of Greek women; it is mentioned more frequently than any other quality on women's tombstones.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, some women in Ephesus are behaving immodestly. A major question is whether we can learn what these immodest women were doing.

### *Links Between Women, Widows*

If Paul is not speaking about women in general, but rather to a particular problem with immodest women in Ephesus, then what evidence is there to connect the women in 2:9-15 with a specific problem in 1 Timothy? An examination of the two passages reveals a surprising number of substantial links between the women of 1 Tim 2:9-15 and the young widows described in 1 Tim 5:3-16.

### *Immodest expenditures*

In 1 Tim 2:9, Paul cautions women not "to adorn themselves with braids or gold or pearls or very expensive clothing." Correspondingly, Paul describes the young widows in 1 Tim 5:6 with the word *spatalan*, which means "to indulge oneself beyond the bounds of propriety, live luxuriously/voluptuously" (BDAG).

### *Good Deeds*

In 1 Tim 2:10, Paul remarks that a proper woman adorns herself "with good deeds." In his contrast between the younger widows and the real widows in 1 Timothy 5, Paul affirms that a "real widow" (5:3) should be "attested for her good deeds and devoted to every good deed" (5:10).

### *Quiet Behavior*

If Paul is concerned with *how* the women are behaving and speaking in 2:11-12, is there any evidence of unacceptable behavior among the younger widows in 1 Timothy 5? In the language of 1 Timothy 2, do the younger widows exhibit a lack of "quiet behavior" (*hêsuchia*)?

In fact, Paul has at least four descriptions of behavior that is not "quiet behavior." The younger widows are described as *busybodies* and *idlers* (5:13). Apparently their behavior has been so scandalous that it has provided others an opportunity to revile the church (5:14). Paul issues a command to avoid luxurious living in order that younger widows may be *without reproach* (5:7). Each of these four descriptions is connected to the absence of quiet behavior in other New Testament texts. As evidence, note these passages where *hêsuchia* is connected to the following items: busybodies (2 Thess 3:11-12; 1 Thess 4:11), idlers (2 Thess 3:11-12), and revile and reproach (1 Thess 4:11-12).

### *Problems with Teaching*

When Paul writes "I do not permit a woman to teach" (2:12), is there any evidence that false teaching is a problem among women in Ephesus? Or, is Paul talking about women teaching in general? From our earlier investigation of the "angry men," we know that there is ample evidence that the church is under attack from false teaching. Thirteen times Paul uses words associated with teaching (1 Tim 1:10; 2:7, 12; 3:2; 4:1, 6, 11, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 2, 3).

But what about the younger widows? Is there any false teaching connected with them? In 5:13, Paul describes the younger widows as “saying what they should not,” a phrase that is associated with false teaching in Titus 1:11 (namely, “teaching what they should not”). Thus, there is likely a link between the women’s teaching in 2:12 and false teaching among the younger widows in 1 Timothy 5.

### *Deception*

Twice Paul uses the language of deception in his illustration treating Adam and Eve—“Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (2:14). What evidence is there that the younger widows have been deceived? Paul uses neither the word *deceive* nor the word *deception* in 1 Timothy 5. However, it seems highly likely that the younger widows, who “have followed after Satan” (5:15), can be described as *deceived*.

### *Bearing Children*

Finally, what is one to do with the cryptic phrase “she will be saved through the bearing of children” (*teknogonia*) in 2:15? Interestingly, the verb (*teknogonein*) appears in 1 Timothy 5 when the younger widows are admonished “to marry, bear children (*teknogonein*) and manage their households” (5:14). In other words, it is highly unlikely that Paul, in 2:15, is saying that a woman *must* bear a child to be saved.<sup>4</sup> Rather, the word “bearing of children” (*teknogonia*) is a compressed way of saying, “Pay attention to your domestic responsibilities.” This interpretation of 2:15 not only fits well with the admonition to the younger widows, but also with other passages in 1 Timothy (e.g., those who “forbid marriage” in 4:3).

Elsewhere in 1 Timothy, Paul also shows care for the state of the home, likely indicating that there are problems in that area. For example, in his instructions regarding elders and deacons, Paul highlights the importance of a strong home. In effect, he also tells potential elders and deacons, “Pay attention to your domestic responsibilities” (3:2, 4-5, 7, 12). Thus, in a context where the home is under attack, and possibly being used as an outpost for false teaching (cf. 2 Tim 3:6-7), such instructions from Paul are not surprising.

In summary, it is difficult to provide an airtight connection between the women of 1 Tim 2:9-15 and the younger widows in 1 Timothy 5. Nevertheless, the evidence is substantial and worthy of consideration. In addition, such a connection explains some of the puzzling features of 1 Timothy 2:9-15.

## **THE APPLICATION OF THE PASSAGE**

When Christians attempt to apply 1 Tim 2:8-15, the focus is almost always on its words to the women. That consistent focus, however, has not guaranteed a unanimous conclusion. In fact, there are diverse opinions; the following reflection will briefly outline three main options.

### *Option 1: A Rule for All Time*

With this first interpretation, people contend that Paul’s instructions do not allow women “to teach or have authority over men” (RSV; 2:12). They point to the appeal to creation in 2:13-14. Seeing that appeal as a proof from scripture, they argue for a hierarchical relationship between men and women, primarily based on the phrase “Adam was created first” (2:13). They also argue that 1 Cor 14:34-35 fits with this interpretation.

Those who disagree with this position point out the difficulty of reading the other admonitions in this passage as rules for all time (see 2:8, 9, and 15). The prohibition against having “authority” is also difficult to apply in a generic sense; in our society, women vote as well as exercise leadership in many ways (e.g., justices, senators, mayors, professors, managers, principals).

Furthermore, in the same way that the men’s problems with anger and quarreling do not reflect problems with men in general, but are connected to the context at Ephesus, so also the women’s problems seen in 1 Tim 2:9-15 do not reflect problems with women in general, but are connected to the context at Ephesus.

Last, opponents point to several other passages where women teach or appear to teach (see Luke 2:38; John 4:29-30, 39, 42; Acts 18:26; 1 Cor 14:19, 31).

*Option 2: Specific Instructions for a Specific Problem*

Others apply Paul's admonition in 2:12 on the level of principle; that is, just like Paul gives specific instructions to men in 2:8 because there is a particular problem with some men in Ephesus, so also Paul gives specific instructions to women because there are particular problems with some women in Ephesus, likely connected to the behavior of the younger widows in 1 Timothy 5. In other words, the argument sounds something like the following:

If we had problems with immodest, bossy women teaching false doctrine, then we would tell those women not "to teach or be bossy"<sup>5</sup> (2:12); but we don't have that problem. The principle is "Stop immodest and bossy behavior, as well as false teaching." Such behavior today should evoke a similar response.<sup>6</sup> In fact, Jesus condemns any disciple—male or female—who behaves in an overbearing way (Luke 22:24-26).

Proponents also point to the context and application of 2:8, 9, and 15 on the level of principles. They argue as well that this reading fits well within the context of the younger widows in 1 Timothy 5. Finally, they read the appeal to creation as an illustration—much like the appeal to Eve in 2 Cor 11:3-4—warning the church in Ephesus to avoid deception similar to that experienced by Adam and Eve.

Opponents point out the appeal to creation in 2:13-14 and the apparent contradiction with 1 Cor 14:34-35. Furthermore, they doubt—even if there is a specific connection between 1 Timothy 2 and the younger widows—that the instructions to women in 1 Timothy 2:9-15 would change if the specific problems were solved.

*Option 3: Diversity in the New Testament on This Issue*

Still others are not concerned whether this passage is understood in the first or second way. They contend that the New Testament has passages that both affirm and restrict the roles of women. In other words, they see attempts to squeeze all the passages about women into one end of the spectrum or the other as forced.

In support, they argue that the New Testament shows diversity on other issues (e.g., metaphors for salvation and the attitude of Christians toward the government). Furthermore, proponents contend that the early church may still have been in the process of working out an answer to the issue of women's roles, much in the same way that it was still working out the Christian response to slavery.

Opponents question whether there is diversity on the issue of women's roles. Furthermore, many opponents of Option 3 do not see a problem fitting all the evidence into their interpretation.

**WEALTH IN 1 TIM 6:6-10, 17-19**

As we move to the topic of wealth, it is worth considering that the United States is likely the wealthiest nation in all of human history. From one perspective, one might argue that the U.S. is also the most generous, since it gives more developmental assistance than any other country in the world. Unfortunately, the U.S. ranks *last* (22nd of 22) among the industrialized nations when the aid is calculated as a percentage of the ability to give.<sup>7</sup> As a percentage, U.S. giving is at .13%. As a point of comparison, Ireland's rate is over three times the U.S. rate (.40%), while Norway gives at over six times that rate (.89%).

The U.S. gave at a rate of 2.79% during the Marshall Plan, the highest in our nation's history.<sup>8</sup> Why has the U.S. become less generous as it has become wealthier? In this context of our vast wealth in America, the church needs to be prophetic, as well as informed about the *spiritual danger* of wealth. 1 Timothy 6 offers both warnings and constructive advice to the church.