

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Series | Gamma 17 – Study 4 |
| Reference | 1-Timothy 2:8-14 (The Conduct of Women) |
| Date | 12 May 2021 |
| Speaker | Dr Peter Ng |

Good evening brothers and sisters in Christ. Welcome back to Gamma 17. We're continuing our journey down the pastoral epistles written by Paul to Timothy and Titus. This is Study 4. Today, we look at a controversial topic, the conduct of women in church, looking at protecting the gospel, preparing the church. We have gone through the stewardship of the gospel, countering enemies of the gospel. Now, today we're going to be looking at the conduct of the gospel. What is conducted, how people should act within the worship meeting. We have talked about prayer last week, and this week we're looking at a very controversial issue of the conduct of women. So, let's start with a word of prayer.

So we ask, O Lord that in these difficult issues that you grant us your Holy Spirit to guide us, that we may come into the truth and live it. For we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

1 Timothy 2:9 (ESV) likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire,

Here is Paul describing how women should actually dress. An excessive ornamentation with jewelry and seductive clothing is what he was actually against. All right. And if you look in the word there, there is word called “braided hair gold and pearls of costly attire”. Costly attire is basically something extravagantly expensive. Same word is used when the lady came to Jesus and washed his feet with tears and used an alabaster jar full of perfume. And that perfume was described by Mark as very costly, the same Greek word, which is about one year's supply.

So what we're talking about in these sort of dresses, clothing could cost as much as 7,000 denarii, which is equal to 19 years wages for an average day. So, we're talking about some dresses in those days would cost up to 50,000 ringgits. So, we're talking about people coming to church with extravagantly expensive clothing or handbags and all that. Okay. Now, so these are the women, perhaps under the influence who are wealthy, they sort of prime targets, they abandon the traditional female roles for a more egalitarian position. We thought, well, you know, that Christ has come and so therefore we can now claim equality as it were.

Now, who was Paul addressing? The word used for women here is ‘gynaikas’, and gynaikas can be used either for women or for wives and the context is the one that determines its meaning. As for wives, the King James version, New King James Version, NIV, women is New American Standard, New Revised Standard version. So there's a difference, there is a controversy of which one can be used, but the context determines its meaning. And most likely this applies to women. The reason why it cannot be wives is that how can it be only wives are to dress modestly and all the women who are single can come with \$50,000 dresses. You know, or for example, only husbands are asked not to pray in anger and the non-husband, which are single people were to, they could pray in anger. Unless it is unlikely that Paul would speak only to husbands and wives in the context of warning is false teaching. And in the context of public worship is more likely that Paul is addressing prayer and teaching for everyone. Right.

So here we are talking about with what is proper for women who profess godliness with good works. We're not saying that you can't come to church with your earrings or your bangles or your nose ring. It's not a rejection of external beauty, but it's basically a prioritization of inner beauty. Women should

actually act in a manner which is godliness. Godliness focuses on good works rather than external emblems. Titus 2:14,

Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

So being zealous for good works describes both men and women and in women's manifestation of their zealousness for good works is a focus on their inner character rather than external ornaments in order to augment who they are.

Now, the next one is more controversial, an admonition to women.

1 Timothy 2:11 (ESV) Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.

So here is a manner, in which the woman is supposed to learn quietly. It applies to all women with all submissiveness and it is controversial. We have a Southern Baptist speaker, Beth Moore, who suggested on Twitter that she was going to spend Mother's Day giving a talk at a church and immediately social media controversy came by. We had the Own Strachan, a Christian theology professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary of Kansas City. And he said,

"For a woman to teach and preach to adult men is to defy God's Word and God's design,"

"Women do not preach on Sunday to the church. Doing so is functional egalitarianism. We will not capitulate here"

Here is Al Mohler president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He says,

"There's just something about the order of creation that means that God intends for the preaching voice to be a male voice,"

Why should the Southern Baptist say no more? Why does Southern Baptist should say no more to Beth Moore? Controversy. And here someone who is Wade Burleson who is basically defending Beth Moore, he is from International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He says,

"Beth does Christian ministry. She shouldn't need to defend her ministry to Southern Baptist Caucasian males who've fallen into the doctrinal trap of the eternal subordination of women."

So now he is likening this to the subordination of women, Beth herself was quite hurt. She says,

"I am compelled to my bones by the Holy Spirit - I don't want to be, but I am - to draw attention to the sexism & misogyny that is rampant in segments of the SBC, cloaked by piety & bearing the stench of hypocrisy,"

Ouch! Women in ministry, it is an area of honest disagreement. On either side, we shouldn't be casting each other as heretics. This is an area where actually good Christians on either side, Baptist or non-Baptist, they actually disagree.

So let's look in to the scriptural basis of all this controversy.

1 Timothy 2:11 (ESV) Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.

So this applies to all women, quietly is the manner in which they learn, not boisterously, not having objections, in all submissiveness. This submissiveness is what? Submissiveness to whom? God, the congregation, is it to all men or certain men. And most likely this will apply in submissiveness not to all men but to the elders who are basically the leaders of the church. All right.

The next one is.

1 Timothy 2:12 (ESV) I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man;

Their word that is controversial here is basically authority, because not teaching. Teaching is basically the application. The principle is actually authority. The word *authentein* is a difficult word to interpret. All right. Now this word is a hapax legomenon, which means it is a word it is only one time in the New Testament and in Greek literature it only occurs about 114 times and it is very difficult to interpret.

There are only two options here in which we'll look at this. One, I don't permit women to teach or to dominate over men or I don't permit women to teach or to have authority over men.

Let's look at the two options that we actually had. The first option; I don't permit women to teach or to domineer over men. And if you look in the context of the Ephesian church to which Paul was addressing, they were a church in a city famous for the worship of Artemis, goddess of Ephesus. So women were like quite prominent there. We got a woman goddess which they all worship. Catherine Kroeger in 1979 put forward a theory that the background to the pastoral epistles is that the people were engaging in fertility cults and women proclaim their selves the author originator of men. So therefore there were false teachers here who were actually promoting the superiority of women and that's why women weren't allowed to teach or to have authority.

Now, the problem is, if you look at the Greek reconstruction of the sentence, okay, this favors the interpretation of *authentein* positively.

I do not permit women to teach or to domineer.

Domineer means, it is a translation of the word *authentein* and something negative. If you look at the Greek reconstruction word, it is not likely to be negative, it is more likely to be positive. So therefore, this is the favored Greek reconstruction of the sentence, which means I don't permit women to teach or to have authority over men, which means the main verse here is that the principle is women are not to have authority over men. And the application in exercising authority over men, they are actually teaching men. So that is the main principle which Paul is putting out here, which a lot of the denominations are battling over, but the principle is clear. The issue is authority, women are not supposed to authority over men. And this is actually accepted by early church fathers like Chrysostom as well as Origen.

And there's a reason for prohibition and basically there are about three. Paul says, for Adam was formed first. The word *form* means there is a reason. The reason is,

1 Timothy 2:13-15 (ESV) For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

Now let's look at the first reason. The first reason is because Adam was formed first and then Eve. The justification is the intrinsic order of creation, where there is actually male created first and then women

and women is created for men, which basically implies male leadership. Some people object animals were created before Adam, so they should be above Adam, right? And the first doesn't necessarily mean leader. For example, John the Baptist came first Mary came before Peter, how come Peter was the leader and sometimes God can override this first. For example, Jacob was chosen over Esau. So these are some of the legitimate objections.

The other one was the second reason is, Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. What does this mean? There are a couple of reasons which we can discuss. First of all, Eve was deceived and taught Adam, just like the Ephesian women, they were uneducated. Eve taught, actually was taught the command secondhand because she wasn't there when God told Adam not to eat of this fruit on the particular tree. So therefore she taught heresy, but however, if you look at all the false teachers there, 2-Timothy 2:16

Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

2-Timothy 4:14 to 15, Alexander the coppersmith

Why ban women when all the men were the problem? They should actually banned the men from actually teaching, the victims were actually the women. The second possible reason behind is that perhaps women were more easily deceived because Eve was deceived first. So therefore they cannot teach, they are more gullible, which means the way they are created, they are ontologically by design, intellectually inferior, so therefore easily deceived. However, if you look in scripture, women teach other women and children. Number two, it goes against God's goodness in creation when he created man and woman to create one as defective or intellectually inferior. All right.

Given the same educational opportunities, research has shown that women are not more gullible. They have PhDs, they've got university degrees. They're just as clever as men. And in any way, Adam has a greater culpability. So why do we prohibit women? The third, most important reason is that Eve was deceived first as the serpent subverted male leadership and approached Eve. It is not because women are more gullible. It is because when the serpent came, he had just subverted male leadership and actually approached Eve rather than Adam. Adam was present, but he abdicated his leadership role. He did not intervene. So what Paul is saying, is the issue of authority. The problem is when male leadership is over term and the culpability of sin, even though Eve who sinned and that gave the fruit to her husband, God sought out Adam to answer first. It wasn't say, hey Eve where are you? Actually he said, Adam, where are you?

Romans 5:12 is clear.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, (didn't mention woman) and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

So basically the male culpability of sin is actually a male. Males are supposed to exercise leadership. And lastly, the third justification is that women actually should be saved through childbearing. Yes, she will be saved through childbearing if they continue to faith and in love and holiness with self-control. This is a difficult verse to get our heads around. We'll try to get through it. The word saved. What does it mean? Is this spiritual salvation, spiritual preservation or physical preservation? It can't be preservation because many, many women die during childbirth. All right. More likely that what he means is that women have salvation through childbirth. All right, now we are look at the context. If you look in chapter four, at the same letter, we have a situation where false teachers are not only requiring abstinence from certain foods, they also forbid marriage. If they forbidden marriage means they're

forbidding sex, they are forbidding marital union. All right. So it is against this that Paul says, it is countering false teachers by saying the genuineness of your salvation is evidenced by women conforming to her traditional God ordained role.

You see, there is no role that is most gender distinctive than giving birth, because men can't give birth. There's one thing that women can do and no man can actually replicate that is giving birth. So, and yet it is not just through childbearing. She'll be saved through childbearing if, there is a word if, they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control, which means woman would be saved by adhering to the divinely appointed role. All right. Evidence of new life. They will be saved if there is evidence of new life contains the traditional role, uniquely women giving birth, as well as faith, love, holiness and self-control, virtues of a godly life.

It is not just I give birth, so therefore I am saved. No, it is women staying within the lane of their traditionally designed roles as giving birth and not rejecting that, as well as having faith in Jesus Christ, love, holiness and self-control, virtues of a godly life. All right.

So is this teaching just cultural? It's not cultural, you know why? Because childbirth present in those days as it is today. Look at three passages in the New Testament that talk about restrictions against women. Why? How Paul cast them? All written by Paul, restrictions. For example, in 1-Corinthians chapter 11, women can pray and prophesy but they had to wear head covering. So, this is revolutionary. Women were not allowed to pray or stand in public or speak. Paul breaks that mold and says, yes you can, but you must wear head covering. There is a restriction. Corinthians 14, women can't weigh or contradict the prophecies of men, possibly their husbands.

1-Timothy chapter 2, wives can't teach or have authority over men. And then. The why? Well, 1-Corinthians chapter 11, they had to wear head veil why? Because there's a shame culture and the head veil gives you gender distinction between male and female. 1-Corinthians chapter 14, same issue, which say shame and submission. If the woman is weighing the prophecy of man, it basically undermines him. And basically the 2-Timothy chapter two is again the submission to male leadership. Now to support these restrictions, Paul points to the theology and all tree invokes Genesis chapter two, which means it traverses culture. Culture has changed thousands of years until from Genesis chapter 2 to Corinthians and yet Paul goes back to the design of human being in saying, well the law is invoked in Genesis chapter 2. Women are created for men, so therefore this cannot be superseded in culture. So that is not a cultural thing, it is a design thing.

1-Corinthians chapter 14, again the reason invoked there is Genesis chapter two. Men leadership, headship, so therefore women cannot weigh the prophecies of men. Timothy chapter two, the law is again invoked in Genesis chapter 2 and 3, Adam was created first. All right, this is a design issue and not a cultural issue. So therefore this command would apply throughout. So let me just summarize 1-Corinthians chapter 2 in junction.

Ephesian women should not take official teaching and authority role for themselves. They should learn submissively and quietly from the elders, which are male elders. The reason;

- Created order, the creation of Adam before Eve signal that men are to teach and exercise authority in church are the primary teaching and authority role.
- Reason two, Eve's fall into sin was due to subversion of male headship.
- And Reason three, woman will be saved by adhering to their proper roles, which is exemplified by giving birth to children and expressing other Christian virtues as evidence of their salvation, not as a way of getting salvation, but evidence of their salvation.

So here we look at the summary, here's a practice and here's the principle. So in chapter two, women are asked to have modest clothing or adornment, and basically it is the emphasis on your character. The principle is the character, godly character and good works. That is what you have to focus on and so therefore that gives you the practice of modest clothing and adornment. Same thing is the principle of male leadership and so therefore women aren't supposed to be teaching and having authority over men or any other situation where that male leadership would be subverted. Right.

So can we wear gold in the society where it does not imply shallow character? You can wear gold. Women can wear gold and whatever you want to wear as long as thy focus of your adornment is modest and it is a focus on your character rather than what you actually own. Can women teach in such a way as not to undermine, can women teach at all? I think women can teach, but can they teach such a way that it is not to undermine male leadership? Some women can teach under the authority of male elders. Because teaching is exercising authority.

Now we're also told to teach each other Colossians 3:16.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

So we actually are all asked to teach each other. 2-Timothy 1:5, Timothy was taught women

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

So therefore, Timothy actually brought up in a believing family by his womenfolk. If you look at all the gifts throughout the New Testament, whether teachers, or utterance of knowledge and faith, gifts of healing, none of them actually gender specific nor office related. Right.

Look at all off Pauline epistles. All 13 Pauline epistles, there is only one with a prohibition of women teaching and this is an occasional letter, which means Paul was writing to correct certain problems. So it can be that this prohibition is based only for the Ephesian church, it may not necessarily apply and then there is a disputed word, the meaning of the word authentein, uncertain cultural contexts. And then if you will look, lots of women are in ministry. Phoebe describes as a deaconess. Priscilla was actually Aquilla actually took and explain the way of the gospel to Apollos. Junias was actually called an apostle. We're not quite clear what that apostle means and then lots of Pauline coworkers were actually women. What about Deborah in the Old Testament? She actually led the entire nation of Israel at the time of Judges. Right.

What about Jesus and women? A lot of women in Jesus' genealogy, specifically included. Women were healed by Jesus. Simon mother-in-law, women with menstrual bleeding, Jairus daughter, prostitute was the one who washed his feet and showed the greatest actually evidence of love and worship of Jesus Christ. His entourage included many women. It is scandalous for a rabbi to be included with so many women. Mary was his feet learning in Luke chapter 10. This is a scandalous posture. Learning the Torah was forbidden to women, but Mary was allowed to learn. John 4, Samaritan women. What about resurrection witnesses? All women. Right. And the divorce teaching of Jesus, it gives equal treatment of men and women. This is Jesus and women. All right. But there's a difference.

If you look at the various circles of disciples around Jesus Christ, we've got women included in the outer circle where they got all the other disciples, women included, but in the inner elder kind of leadership nine apostles. It's right in the center, Peter, James and John they're all totally male. He never embraced

full-fledged egalitarianism. All right. So there's a spectrum of offices we find in the church, and this will be defined by the culture of the church and society to a certain extent, if you are actually from a brethren or reformed church, and the ladies can only basically teach Sunday school. If you're looking at AOG churches, they can do everything including becoming elder of the church. In First Baptist Church, we have women ministering every situation right up to being deacons up there, but not actually at elders. That's where we are.

So women in ministry is an area of honest disagreement. All right. The reason why our church takes this stand is because of, even though it is one passage, it is 1-Timothy chapter two, where we do not think women should have areas of authority over man, but we have many churches that disagree with us and we should learn to basically practice differently according to our convictions about scripture. Well, I hope you have good time discussing this in your implication of this in your groups. Thank you very much.