

“YOU MUST SUBMIT”

I TIMOTHY 2:11-15

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INTRODUCTION

“You must submit!” Those words are not popular in our culture. Some time ago a popular bumper sticker read, “**Resist Authority!**” The Scriptures tell us the opposite – we must submit to the various authorities in our lives, especially God. Man’s sin problem originated with his resistance to divine authority and the dreadful history of mankind shows us the result of that horrible decision.

*Ladies, I am not **picking on** you today!* Now it is true that the passage before us today focuses upon one specific area of submission to authority – the woman’s submission to the proper authorities within the church. But this submission is only one of several stressed in the word of God. Your submission to God’s authority began the moment you repented of your sin and trusted Jesus Christ; your healthy growth in Christ depends upon your growth in proper submission to God’s authority in your life – a submission that includes all subordinate and secondary areas of submission:

- 1) To God—“Submit yourselves therefore to God” (James 4:7).
- 2) To political leaders—“Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities” (Romans 13:1).
- 3) Wives to their husbands—“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:22; see also I Pet. 3:1-2).
- 4) Children to their parents—“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Eph. 6:1).
- 5) Employees to employers—“Servants, be obedient unto those who are your masters [*think of employees to their bosses!*]... in the sincerity of your heart” (Eph. 6:5).
- 6) To church leaders—“Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account” (Heb. 13:17).

Now it is this last area of submission on which we focus today. **All of us** who are part of a local church are responsible to obey the Lord’s command through his apostles **that we submit to our church leaders**.

- They look after our souls, and it is for our own good as well as for their encouragement and success in the ministry that we submit to them.
- We need to follow the accurate instructions they give us from the word of God.

However, the New Testament is quite specific as to who those leaders are:

- They are pastors, elders, and bishops – three terms describing the three aspects of the pastoral office.
- Deacons are given ministry responsibilities in the local church also and they work under the pastoral leadership and on behalf of the congregation. However, even deacons are under pastoral authority.

In I Timothy chapters 2-3 Paul outlines the leadership persons and requirements for the local church:

- 1) He gives the qualifications for pastors in 3:1-7.
- 2) He gives the qualifications for deacons in 3:8-13.
- 3) He clearly states that deacons must be men – both groups must be “husbands of one wife” (3:2, 12).

This should not surprise us, because the Lord deliberately chose 12 men to become his apostles who would lay the foundation for Christianity.

After Paul gave general instructions to men and women in 2:8-10 – men must pray with holy hands without anger and dissension; women must practice good works and adorn themselves in modest clothing – he gives specific directions regarding the role of women in the local church: *“I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”*

Our culture rejects these biblical values, and even a large segment of evangelical Christianity refuses to accept the authority of the apostle Paul found in these words, and therefore refuses to abide by the authority of the word of God.

ILLUS: Thursday’s conference of church leaders on legal issues where at least 40% of the crowd was female.]

Many believe that Paul here spoke according to the cultural customs of the day but that he was truly “behind the times” as far as the dispensational change on the status of women – women were now equal to men and are no longer restricted in the area of leadership.

However, the same Paul who under the leadership of the Holy Spirit gave male and female spiritual equality in Galatians 3:28, here acknowledges the appropriate role of male leadership in the local church [and I submit to you that the context is general enough to include society as a whole].

YOU MUST SUBMIT TO GOD AND TO HIS APPOINTED LEADERS IN YOUR LIFE.

I. A WOMAN MUST LEARN (11).

A. She must receive instruction in quietness—same root word as an adjective is used in 2:2.

B. She must practice **entire submissiveness**.

- To submit means to rank oneself under the authority of another.
- “All” requires that submission be thorough and complete.
- “Quietness” shows that she will have a humble, meek, and quiet spirit as she learns even as Peter commands in I Peter 3:4.

II. A WOMAN MUST NOT TEACH (12).

That this command does not absolutely restrict all teaching by women is shown by:

- Timothy was taught by his grandmother and mother (II Timothy 1:5); Paul therefore endorsed the teaching of children by women.
- Paul commanded the older women to train or instruct the younger women in Titus 2:3-4. It is appropriate for women to teach other women.
- Here Paul commands in a negative sense – “I do not permit, allow.”
- In a private setting, a woman along with her husband could give instruction to a man – see Acts 18:26.

A. A woman must not teach men—notice the generic use of “a woman” in both the 11 and 12.

B. Women must not exercise authority over a man-- again notice the generic use of “man.”

C. A woman must remain “in quietness”, and all things must be done “decently and in order.”

- These instructions by Paul are in exact harmony with Paul's teaching in I Corinthians: 34-35.
- In the context, Paul speaks especially of speaking in tongues and prophecy; but the passage is applicable to teaching as well.
- The woman was told to ask her husband her questions when she gets home – she must not act like an authoritative teacher in the assembly.
- This restriction by Paul cannot possibly be considered a temporary restriction [because it is present tense] that would change later. To translate other commands in such a way would become ridiculous – consider e.g. Ephesians 5:18.

III. A WOMAN MUST ACCEPT GOD'S EXPLANATION (13-14)

A. God created Adam first, then Eve (13).

- Notice that the New Testament consistently regards Adam and Eve as real historical persons—cf. Romans 5: 12-14; I Corinthians 15:45.
- God intentionally created the man first, and Adam had leadership authority even before their sin and fall.
- Notice also that the creation order would apply more widely than merely to the local church.

B. Eve was the First to Sin (14).

1. Adam sinned “with his eyes wide open” – see Romans 5:12ff. He is responsible for the downfall of the human race in all the negative consequences.
2. However, he was not the **first** to sin; Eve “was in the condition of transgression.”
 - She passed by, crossed over God's righteous standards; she transgressed.
 - She entered a state of transgression; her sinful condition became permanent.
3. Moreover, Adam “was not deceived”, but Eve was thoroughly deceived.
 - Paul uses a compound form of the same verb used for Adam not being deceived.
 - The additional preposition intensifies the meaning of the word.

Because of Eve's deception and rejection of divine authority and rejection of her place under Adam's leadership, she is not permitted to teach or to have authority over men.

IV. A WOMAN STILL HAS HOPE (15)

A. She shall be saved through childbearing. [What does this mean?]

1. What this does not mean:

- Not a reference to the birth of Christ – the seed of the woman mentioned in Gen. 3:15. Notice that the verb tense is future, and the reference is to the women of Paul's day.
- It does not refer to the woman's educating children, and then have a reference to the children's salvation. The word clearly means “bearing children” and all that is connected with it.
- It does not simply mean “coming safely through” childbirth [be saved]. Throughout the context Paul refers to spiritual salvation.

- It does not teach salvation by works – even such a work as having children does not save a person! The same Paul who made this statement gave us Titus 3:5 – not by deeds which we have done but by his mercy.
 - If childbirth were necessary for a woman’s salvation, what about all of the women who are unmarried or who are unable to have children!
2. What this does mean
- The woman must stick to her God-given role, and while keeping that role she will find salvation from the consequences of her initial transgression.
 - She will not find salvation through her own efforts and by rebelling against divine authority.
 - The context depicts the woman in question is already being a believer – notice the condition that she must “continue in” the qualities mentioned.
 - Childbirth is not the means of her salvation, but it is the accompanying circumstances of her salvation—cf. I Cor. 3:15: “saved through fire” (same preposition).
- B. She must continue to manifest godly Christian character.
1. Faith—through which all must be saved
 2. Love—what the Spirit puts in our hearts and by which we live the Christian life
 3. Holiness-- the sanctification and separation beginning with salvation and continuing through life
 4. Discretion and moral decency with self-control—the same quality mentioned of the woman in v. 9.

These are the proper qualities manifested by a godly Christian woman, and this is her proper sphere of operation in the local church – not the sphere of teaching and authority. No Christian woman will find genuine fulfillment, happiness, and contentment outside the divine plan and permission for her life.

CONCLUSION

Paul is not anti-women:

- 1) He mentions favorably many women in his letters.
- 2) He uses women in gospel service.
- 3) He stresses the spiritual equality of women.
- 4) He makes significant statements concerning women.

But Paul does command the Christian woman to learn quietly with complete submissiveness.

What Paul says of the Christian woman being submissive in her proper sphere, he could also say of the Christian man in his proper sphere –**all must submit to God and accept His proper role for their lives.**

YOU MUST SUBMIT TO GOD AND TO HIS *APPOINTED LEADERS* IN YOUR LIFE AND TO *HIS PLACE* FOR YOU.