

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth One Verse at a Time*

God's High Calling for Women, Part 4

Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:12-15

Code: 54-17

Let's open our Bibles together as we study God's Word to 1 Timothy chapter 2. First Timothy chapter 2 verses 9 through 15 is our present text. We're studying together God's plan for women in the church in our ongoing study of this wonderful epistle. And I want to read for you as the setting for the message verses 9 through 15. First Timothy 2 beginning at verse 9, "In like manner also that women adorn themselves in proper apparel with godly fear and self-control, not with braided hair, gold or pearls or expensive clothing, but which is fitting women professing godliness with good works. Let the women learn in silence with all subjection, but I permit not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence, for Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Nevertheless, she shall be saved in child bearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control."

Now to introduce our study today, let me remind you of the fears of the Apostle Paul had come to pass in the church at Ephesus. If you will remember in Acts chapter 20 when Paul gathered together the Ephesian elders at Miletus in verse 17 of that chapter, and then went on to discuss with them the priorities of ministry, he concluded the discussion with a warning section. That warning section expressed his deepest fears for that congregation. Let me read you just a few verses out of Acts 20 so that you'll be familiar with his statements. Beginning in verse 29 he says, "For I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock, also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember that for the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears and now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all men who are sanctified."

Now in that, Paul expresses his great fear that false teachers would arise within the church as well as come in from the outside. The church at Ephesus had great beginnings, marvelous beginnings. It was born out of a great revival. It was born out of paganism with a clarity of purpose and intent that is without a surpassing experience in the book of Acts. And yet Paul knew inevitably no matter how good the beginning, no matter how effective his own three-year ministry in that city it was inevitable that the enemy would begin to attack that church by bringing in false teachers, unholy leaders to bring it down from its place of effectiveness for God and to be sure Paul's worst fears did come to pass. By the time he has finished his first imprisonment in Rome, having been released from that he met Timothy in Ephesus and when they met there they found that indeed that church of his heart, that church which had taken so many years of his rather brief ministry, that church which he loved so

deeply and for which he no doubt prayed regularly had fallen prey to false teachers and those who advocated a godless living pattern. And so when he and Timothy met there, he put out of the church two of the most prominent leaders named in verse 20 of chapter 1, Hymenaeus and Alexander, it says of them, "Whom I have delivered unto Satan," indicating that he himself dealt with them. Then he had to move on west to Greece and so he left Timothy in Ephesus to set the rest of the things right and you'll notice in chapter 3 verse 15 you have the kind of key to the whole epistle. He says, "I want you to know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." In other words, I'm writing this so you will know how to behave in the church and you can do what you need to do and pass on to the people what they need to hear.

Now the primary problem in the church at Ephesus was false leadership. And beginning in chapter 3 and running all the way to the end of the epistle, really, there is a preoccupation with these false leaders. Some chapters are more totally devoted than others but the theme that is woven through 3 through 6 in 1 Timothy is the theme of dealing with false leaders. The book then is a polemic, it is a treatise against the false leaders who have arisen in the church at Ephesus. Now these false leaders brought with them a lot of baggage. Their ungodliness manifested itself in many ways. One of the ways in which their false leadership brought problems to the church was in the matter of the women's role. It is apparent that in this church there were certain women who were desirous of taking the place of official teacher in the church and usurping authority from the men to lead the church. That was one of the problems, no doubt, under the false leadership of those who had risen to the role of pastor or elder and were doing all they could to undermine the Word of God. It may well be, we don't know for certain, that some of these false teachers themselves would not only have advocated a non-biblical role of women, but it's possible that some of them may have been women themselves and that's why the qualifications for an elder given in chapter 3 are distinctively given as male qualifications, such as a one-woman man, the man who knows how to manage his own household. It is apparent at least for certain that there were women seeking to be teachers in the church and to usurp authority over the man and with that issue Paul must deal in specifics before he gets into dealing with the false leaders themselves in chapter 3. So from verse 9 to 15 Paul gives us six elements of this very important instruction regarding the role of women in the church.

Now you'll remember that the first thing he speaks about is their appearance. How are women to appear in the church? You remember verse 9 says that women are to adorn themselves in a proper adorning. In other words, they are to appear in a way that expresses love for God, reverence for His holiness, an attitude of worship. The latter part of the verse indicates that they are not to occupy themselves with outward fashion. They are not to flaunt their wealth, and he refers in the plaiting of the hair, and gold and pearls to a common custom where since women were so fully clad in that culture from neck to the ground, the way they would flaunt their wealth is in their hair. And they would weave gold and pearls and tortoise-shell combs would be placed into their hair and this way they could show their wealth. They could flaunt themselves. That was the way women adorned

themselves in a carnal expression in that time. And what he is saying here is that that should not happen in the church. A tendency of women to be occupied with their adornment is only a manifestation of the carnality of their hearts, dressing to flaunt wealth, dressing to manifest lust and sexual desire, dressing to express a spirit of insubordination to one's husband. We went into all of those things in detail in a prior message. These are forbidden a woman who appears to worship God.

Secondly he discussed their attitude. In the middle of verse 9, their attitude is to be that of godly fear and self-control. Godly fear comes from a root word meaning they have a sense of shame. In other words, they are to be ashamed of causing anyone to be distracted from the worship and the glory of God. They have a proper sense of shame that results in modesty. And self-control refers to being able to control your passion and your desire. Women are to present themselves then in modesty and humbleness of heart, demonstrating total control over their passion and appearing in such a way that draws attention to their godliness and their virtue.

Thirdly in verse 10 we discussed their testimony. If they make profession of godliness, they should support that with good works. So you have not only their appearance and their attitude, but their activity or their action. Their deeds should also demonstrate that profession of godliness which they bear.

Now that takes us fourthly to their role. And this is really the heart of what we're looking at now, the role of women then is given in verses 11 and 12. We're talking specifically now about their function in the church. And the first thing we noted in verse 11 is that the apostle says, "Let the women learn." We realize that from Jewish culture and from pagan culture, women were put on a second-class level and their status was that of one who perhaps was on the level of a slave, in some cases even on the level of a beast of burden. And there was little concern in the minds of the Jews of that day whether women learned anything or not, since they were really not a part of the significant education of the populous. That was to be the men and the men were responsible for passing on truth. It was immaterial to them whether the women showed up at the synagogue, whether they came to the feasts and festivals, that was inconsequential. The same was true in Greek culture where women were not thought to be worthy in many cases of a learning process. And so in contra distinction to that, Paul says, "Let the women learn," a very affirmative statement, affirming for us the equality of spiritual privilege, the equality of spiritual rights, blessings and promises for men and women. And as Galatians 3:28 says, "In Christ there is neither male nor female." But in terms of role, he qualifies their learning by saying this, "In silence with all subjection," and that defines for us the woman's role.

Silence, you'll remember, refers to not teaching. It refers to not teaching. Subjection refers to not ruling. That is, women in the church are not to be the teachers when the church assembles itself in its constituted worship, women are not to be the teaching persons and they are not to be the ruling ones. The context makes it very clear that that's what he has in mind because verse 12 says, "I permit not a woman to teach," and therein does he define the kind of silence he's talking about, nor to usurp

authority, and therein does he define the kind of subjection he is talking about.

In the assembly of the church women are not to teach and preach and they are not to rule. Now there's no doubt that that's exactly what he is saying. Obviously in Ephesus some were seeking to do both of those things and that's why he has to deal with this. Now in our last message we looked at a parallel passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 verses 34 and 35. And in that passage we found that Paul prohibits women in the assembly of the church from speaking in languages and interpretation and also from expressing the gift of prophecy. He says, "Let the women keep silence in the churches." So we learn then from 1 Corinthians 14 when the church comes together women were not to speak in tongues when tongues were a valid gift. They were not to engage in the public interpretation and they were not to be involved in the prophesying. Here we add to that that they were not to be ruling in the church and they were not to be the preacher/teacher. Furthermore, we learned from verse 8 that women were not to lead the congregation in prayer, but the congregation was to be led in prayer by men. That's why Paul says in verse 8, using *boulema* which is the will of command, I command therefore that definite article, the men pray everywhere. So when it comes to the worship of the church, the praying, the teaching, the speaking for God and the preaching is to be done by the men.

Now we noted last time that that does not mean women cannot pray. We saw, you'll remember, many women, including Mary the mother of our Lord in Acts 1:12 to 14, gathered with all of the men disciples and they were in a very long prayer meeting together. There is a time and a place when women ought to pray together with men. It does not mean that women cannot teach the Word of God to children or other women. It does not mean they cannot speak out for God the gospel of Jesus Christ on every occasion that they are given. It does not mean that cannot contribute in a Sunday-school class or in a Bible study or in a home fellowship meeting. What it is saying is that in the duly constituted worship and service of the church, there is to be clear line of distinction between the role of men and women that God wants established as His pattern, and that is that men do the leading and the teaching and the praying and the preaching and women learn in silence with all subjection. That is why, beloved, there are no women apostles in the New Testament. There are no women prophets in the church. One prophetess is mentioned, she was prior to the church and functioned in a unique way speaking to individual people about the coming Messiah. But there was no prophet in the New Testament church who was a women...a woman. There is no woman pastor. There is no woman teacher. There is no woman evangelist and no woman has written any book of the Bible. Now that is an affirming thing to indicate God's divine order. And this is an issue of role not spiritual inequality, as we saw last time.

Now the affirmative statement of verse 11, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection," is given a clarifying and supporting counterpart in verse 12. Let's look at it. "But I permit not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." And all the verbs in that verse are present and that means they have a sort of continuing idea. I am not allowing a woman to be

engaged in teaching or to be taking authority over the man but to be continually in silence. In other words, all of those present indicatives indicate that this is a continual commitment on the part of Paul through the Holy Spirit.

Now let me give you a little bit of insight into some of the terms. Look at the word "permit," it always means to allow someone to do what they desire to do. It has the inherent idea in it that someone desires to do something. And what he is saying here is I do not permit women to teach or usurp authority and by the choice of words he is saying, in effect, even though they desire to do that. And that was the problem in that church and it's still the problem today because there are women even today who desire to teach and preach in the church and to take authority. Women have always desired to rule. We go back to Genesis chapter 3 verses 15 and 16 and you remember that the part of the curse that God brought upon man and woman in the Fall was that woman would desire to control man and he would have to rule over her. And therein is the conflict of the sexes born out of the Fall. Woman would desire to seek control. The word for her desire there is a word used only one other time in the Pentateuch and that's in Genesis 4:7 and in its use there we understand that it means clearly to take control because there it talks about Satan taking control. And so we conclude that that word means that a woman desires to take control, to master. It's an Arabic root word and man then has to fight to keep his mastery and therein lies the battle of the sexes that has caused so much marital conflict through the centuries. And even in the church it is true there are women who are discontent with their God-given role and they seek to reach a place of prominence in teaching and taking authority over the man. But Paul says I do not permit them to do that even though that is their desire and that obviously means in the duly constituted church when it comes together in its official worship. This has reference then to the authoritative pastor/teacher role, the one who articulates the Word of God. And this kind of teacher that he has in mind is the kind of teacher we see, for example, in the five pastors of the church in Antioch in Acts 13, all five of them were men. This is the God-called, God ordained, recognized pastor/teacher/evangelist who has authority in the church in matters of doctrine and interpretation. And nowhere in the New Testament, as I said, is any woman ever presented in any such office or role as teacher in the church, nowhere.

In fact, let's go further into verse 12, for a woman to try to take that rule is to usurp authority over the man. And here you have a very interesting word for usurp authority, *authenteo*, yes, that word is used only here in the whole New Testament and it indicates, I believe, as it is properly translated a person desiring to usurp authority. A recent study of that verb conducted by Dr. George Knight in *New Testament Studies* concludes that the common use of that outside the Bible, when you don't have a lot of uses of a word in the Bible you go outside to find out how it was used, the common use of that word indicates, and I quote, "to have authority over." And that's really all it means. Now the reason that is important is, women who want to eliminate this verse and there are women who want to, women pastors, women teachers, and women elders would like to get rid of this verse, so what they will say is it means this, I permit not a woman to teach nor to take abusive authority. In other words, it's okay for her to teach and have authority if it isn't abusive. But a careful study of that word

means...leads us to understand that it means to take authority period. It has nothing to do with abusive authority. In fact, if he was talking about abusive authority he wouldn't be just talking about women, he'd also be talking about what? Men because it would be just as much a sin for them as for women. So the idea here is parallel to teaching. He is saying I want a woman to...to learn in silence with all subjection. Now her silence is the silence of not being the teacher and her subjection is the subjection of not being the authority. She is not to have authority. She is not to be a teacher. She is not to be a ruler in the church. That is the prohibition that the apostle gives us.

There is no hint that this is to prevent abusive authority on the part of women. There is no limiting this and some have tried, I heard a message this summer by a man who wanted us to believe that this was only related to Ephesus and nowhere else. I don't know how and why you can conclude that. Teaching and usurping authority are in contrast to silence and subjection. Rather than a woman being the teacher and the ruler, she is to be in silence and subjection. There's no way that you can come up with anything else and do any justice to the intent of the text. So women in the church then are not to be at any position where men are subordinate to them. And I say again please, it doesn't mean women can't pray, can't teach, can't speak out for God. It doesn't mean they can't ask questions in a proper environment where questions are invited. It does mean in the public worship of this church these things are set down as God's standard.

Now notice that in verse 11, "Let the women learn in silence," and at the end of verse 12, "But to be in silence." So silence here is the issue before and after. This brackets the section and thus contains the main idea. They cannot exercise the office of teacher and ruler in the church because that is inconsistent with their God-given design...their God-given design. The issue then is not the way in which women rule. It is not the way in which they teach, as some would have us to believe that they're not to teach in a...in a domineering way, it is that they will teach or rule at all. That is the issue. So women who don't lead in the public prayer of the church in verse 8 also don't teach, also don't give rulership over the church, also don't lead in public display of gifts as in the early church in prophecy and tongues, and so forth. So you get the picture.

Now you say, "Well does this wipe out all of our instruction?" No, do you remember Acts 18 where Aquila and Priscilla instructed Apollos? There was a time and a place where women are to be instructing others and there may even be a time and a place where a woman and her husband could instruct another man, even a man who was a preacher. But it wouldn't be in the public worship and service of the church.

Somebody says, "Well, do women have spiritual gifts?" Well a ridiculous question. Because you believe what you have just seen here doesn't mean we're saying, "Well, women have no gift of teaching or women have no gift of speaking for the Lord, they have no verbal gifts at all. They have no leadership gifts." That's absurd. Of course they do...of course they do. And the Lord who bestows them those gifts offers them ample opportunity to use those gifts without violating His standard design

for their role in the church. It is not necessary that because a woman has the gift of teaching she has to appear in the public assembly of the church to teach. It is not necessary that because she has gifts in the area of leadership that she has to lead the church. The thought that woman is somehow wronged when she is limited to her own God-ordained sphere as a woman and when her claim to be a man and do a man's work in the church is not admitted is absolutely irrational. There's plenty of room for her to exercise her gifts to the very fullest by God's intent.

And somebody else says, "Well, what about missions? What about missions? We need missionaries, what would we do without women missionaries?" God bless women missionaries, but I don't think women being on the mission field necessarily have the right to violate the Word of God. Paul was a missionary. He had a lot of missionaries traveling with him. And if ever there was a great need for the expanding church to have leadership, it was then and the pragmatic argument, if it ever was valid would have been valid there, and Paul would have thought, "Well we don't have many men but a great host of women keep coming to faith, so maybe we'll just kind of stick those women in there till we get some men. Wouldn't be bad to have a few women teachers and preachers and elders." But no, I mean, look at it this way, God wrote on a wall a message to Belshazzar but it isn't His pattern to use walls. God doesn't do that. God doesn't violate His own principles for expediency sake. People say, "What about the shortage of men?" Well if there's a shortage of men, Jesus gave us the answer, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth...what?...laborers into His harvest." Elizabeth Elliot who most of us know as a marvelous instrument of God in the expansion of the Kingdom, the wonderful wife of the martyred Jim Elliot, after the massacre of her husband and the several other missionaries in Ecuador, she was the only biblically trained person left who could speak the Alca language, the only one left...

But so convinced was Elizabeth Elliot in her heart that she could not violate the Word of God that she took one of the Alca men and weekly taught that man a sermon so that he could preach it in the church on the Lord's day. Much like Aquila and Priscilla, she would not step up to the preaching but she did not mind instructing the preacher. Don't get carried away with that. (Laughter) But I do appreciate it when you do instruct me, believe me.

Now I want to add to this that this in no way abuses women but this is a ...a tender and sympathetic understanding of the role and intent of a woman. Let not a woman enter into the sphere of activity for which God has never designed her. She is planned for a different role. Women don't sing bass and men don't have babies. People have lied also. You say, "Well, the only power in society and the best place to be is to be in leadership that is more fulfilling to lead than to follow." Think about that. Is that really true? You want all the stuff that comes with being a leader? You better have a heavy, heavy, heavy load on your back and be able to carry it. You better have some strong legs and a strong back because leadership is not the easiest thing. Ego makes people seek prominence and with it to seek the responsibility to prove their power. But such responsibility, take my word for it, is not always a welcomed friend. Frankly if you want to know the truth, subordination and subjection is the condition

of the greatest peace and the greatest happiness, the greatest contentment, the greatest safety and the greatest protection because somebody else is doing all the caring for you. So don't live under the illusion that you can really know a great experience in life if you could just get on top of the pile and control everything. I say to women who would seek to do that, stay where you are under the loving care and nurture, nourishment, strength and protection of your husband and of the leaders of the church and that's a much happier place to be, the burden is much lighter. Subjection, my dear friends, is not a punishment, it is a privilege...it is a privilege that someone should care for you and that's by God's design.

And speaking of God's design, let's go to our next point...their design...their design. And here to support what he has just said come these two wonderful verses, 13 and 14. Here is the root of the role of a woman in the design of God. Verse 13, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Now that is so clear. Woman's place was ordained in the order of the creation. Adam was made first and then woman. First, protos, first in rank, chief, he is ish(?), she is isha(?), in the Hebrew. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 8, "For the man is not of the woman but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man." And that's why she ought to recognize his authority. In creation, God made man first. Now keep this in mind, man was made for God and woman was made for man. Eve was made for Adam. She was made to be his helper. Genesis 2:18 to 25, she is his glory. Man is the glory of God, woman is the glory of man. She is made to be the helper of man. She is to follow his lead, live in his provision, find safety in his strength and protection in his courage. A tendency to follow was built into Eve until the Fall and then came the curse and in that curse the tendency to rule and then the conflict.

This is not a cultural issue, friends. This is not a cultural issue. Those people who say, "Well this was just some bias." This is not any Pauline bias. This is not some rabbinical gloss. This is Genesis. This is creation. It isn't temporary and it isn't cultural. Adam was first formed, then Eve.

Now look at verse 14, and this is fascinating. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." We talk about the Fall of Adam, and rightly so because in Romans chapter 5 that is the way Paul refers to it as in Adam all died, and so forth. We talk about the fall of Adam because Adam, his name represents generic man, if you will, his name represents the race. He is the head of the race and he did fall. But we have to keep in mind that he didn't fall first. First the woman fell and her fall confirms what verse 13 said, that woman needs a head. She needs a strengthener because when she got out from under the strength of Adam and tried to operate independently in conflict with the enemy, she was...what?...deceived. And the intent of what the Word is saying here is that woman needs protection. That she has a certain vulnerability. She was designed with the need for a head. She was designed with the need for a leader. She was designed with the need for a protector and a savior. And I said I was going to say this, and I'm going to say it right now, some of you men around here are leaving these girls leaderless. Now if you see some lovely Christian girls around here, you better ask them to marry you and get this thing moving.

(Laughter) They're...they're ready to fulfill their God-given calling but some of you guys have a standard that's absolutely on the fantasy level of what you're looking for. You're not that hot a catch yourself. (Laughter) So come down. Enough of that, right?

But woman...woman who is designed by God to be under a head and a leader and a helper and a protector and a savior, when she stepped out on her own and acted independently of the headship of Adam, when she acted without his leadership, without his counsel, without his protection, she became vulnerable. And it is inherent in the nature of woman that she should not find herself in that position of ultimate responsibility. For woman has a deceivability when out from under the headship of a man. So the woman then in verse 14 was deceived. She showed by that her inability to lead effectively. She met her match and more than her match in Satan. She shows an inability to act independently of her protector. And by the way, the term for being deceived is very strong, it is stronger than just a common word for deceived, it is a word that means because it has the addition of a preposition on the front of it, it means to be fully deceived, to be thoroughly deceived, to be completely deceived.

So we conclude then, beloved, that when a woman leaves the shelter of her protector and savior, provider and nourisher, she has a certain amount of vulnerability because she is designed for protection. That's true even in the physical sense, isn't it? So the Fall then was the result of not only disobeying God's command not to eat, but the Fall was the result of violating the divinely appointed role of the sexes and woman acting independently of man. Woman assumed leadership, and you know what man did? He messed up his role and then he instead of maintaining the leadership acted in submission to whom? To the woman. And the whole reversal was part and parcel of the Fall. So subordination of women in the church wasn't invented by Paul, it is rooted in the nature of the sexes and it is confirmed in the Fall.

Now may I say to you that a woman is not more defective than a man? Please. She was deceived and he subjected himself to her deception. The weakness of a woman is that she needs a head. The weakness of a man is he needs a woman. We are not less defective than women, we are differently defective. We're defective in different ways. We're temptable and vulnerable in different ways. So that's the reason that we have affirmed the leadership of men, is in the creation and the Fall. And no daughter of Eve should follow the path of Eve and lead to tragedy by entering into the forbidden territory of rulership which was intended for man.

Now at this point somebody might conclude that, "Wow, women are really causing this race a lot of problems. That's right. She's the one that did this thing. She's more susceptible, perhaps, to sin or temptation." No, just different. But doesn't this leave a terrible stigma on women? I...I...many women would say, "Boy, I'm happy in Romans 5, but I'm not too happy in this passage. I don't mind Adam's fall, but this is a little heavy for us to bear." It might leave the impression that woman sort of lies under God's permanent displeasure.

So to avoid that we come to the final point, their contribution in verse 15, and this is just marvelous. I don't know why people get so mixed up about this verse. They're contribution, wonderful instructive verse. "Nevertheless," or not withstanding, or in spite of all that, "she shall be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety and self-control."

Now look at this verse, what a fascinating thing. She shall be saved through childbearing. Now this is in contrast to another phrase. Look at verse 14, "Adam wasn't deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression," parabasis, she stepped over the boundary. She stepped over the line. So she's in the transgression. Women are in sin. The stigma of the Fall is on woman. But she shall be saved through childbearing. Now somebody says, "What kind of salvation is this? You mean you're saved from sin for having babies?" No, it couldn't possibly be that.

Well notice it says, "She shall...she shall be saved," future tense shows that it couldn't refer to Eve. Some would like to think it refers to Eve and the bearing of her children, but it doesn't, "She shall be saved." Furthermore, if they continue in faith means it's more than one woman. Some think it's Mary and that she is the she being Mary was saved by bearing Christ. It's a nice thought but I can't imagine anything more obtuse to this passage. How in the world you could ever read that into it, I don't know. I don't see Mary and I don't see the birth of Christ here. She must be the generic sense when compared with the word they. The woman was deceived and in the transgression, nevertheless she, broadens to include all women, shall be saved in childbearing if they continue in...so she sort of melts into the they.

Now what is he saying? All women are saved through childbearing. Well in what way? What kind of a general statement is that? What kind of saved do you mean here?

Well not saved from sin, but listen to this..the word saved can mean delivered, or it can mean saved from things other than sin. What we have to understand here is that all women are delivered. Now listen carefully. All women are delivered from the stigma of having caused the Fall of the race by childbearing. In other words, women led in the Fall but by the wonderful grace of God they are released from the stigma of that through childbearing. What's the point? Listen carefully. They may have caused the race to fall by stepping out of their God-intended design, but they also are given the priority responsibility of raising a godly seed. You understand that? That's...that's the balance. Not soul salvation, not spiritual birth, but women are delivered from being left in a second-class permanently stigmatized situation for the violation of the garden. They are delivered from being thought of as permanently weak and deceivable and insubordinate. Can you imagine what it would be like if men had babies and all women ever contributed to the human race was the Fall. The balance of it, women led the race into sin, but bless God, God has given them the privilege of leading the race out of sin to godliness.

You say, "How so?" Mark it down, because in the raising of a godly seed it is the godliness and the virtue of the mother that has the greatest impact on the young life in the next generation. Is that not so? Theirs is the challenge to raise a godly seed. God has designed this to give woman back her dignity. She is saved from the stigma of the Fall and her path to dignity and usefulness and her great contribution comes in accepting what God said that you will bear children. Motherhood then is woman's appointed role in general. Now obviously God doesn't want all women to be mothers, some of them He doesn't even want to be married. First Corinthians 7, some have the gift of singleness. Some He allows to be barren for His own purposes. But as a general rule, just like marriage is generally the grace of life, as Peter calls it, so motherhood is that which reverses the stigma of woman and allows them to provide for society the rearing of a godly seed which in a real sense reverses the curse for which she was so responsible. The pain of childbearing was the punishment for her sin, but the result of bearing child...bearing the child is the deliverance of the stigma of that sin. Marvelous how God has worked that out. The pain she goes through reminds her of her sin, the result reminds her of God's restoring grace and puts her back in the place where she makes a positive contribution to the godliness of the next generation. She may have caused a generation to plunge into sin, but she can by being a mother who raises godly children bring a generation to God.

What Paul is saying by the Holy Spirit is that a woman must accept her God-given role and that role is not to give outward overt leadership to the church, but to raise a godly seed and that's why he says she'll be saved in childbearing, but only if...look at it...she continues in faith and love and holiness and self-control. If she is godly, she can raise that godly seed. And you know, to me it's so sad and tragic that women want to whine over an unfulfilled life because they can't act like men. And they have the unique privilege of raising a godly generation of children who are nursed at their very breast and who bear an intimate relationship with them that no father can know and thus do they restore dignity to that fallenness to which they contributed and thus do they become all that God intended them to be. They are delivered from the results of sin and able to maintain a positive influence in society and in the church by accepting the role as a mother who raises godly children. That's why it says even when younger widows lose their husbands, verse 14 of 1 Timothy 5, "I will therefore that the younger women marry and bear children and rule the house." That's their calling. The highest ideal of Christian womanhood is here, and this is how the church is to work, beloved. Look, we're led by men in the worship of the church, they pray, they preach, they teach, they give leadership to the church, but the perfect balance of that is the influence of godly women that raised that godly generation. And the only way that will happen is if they...and look at it closely in verse 15...if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self control. They have to be the kind of woman described in verse 9 and 10, who are not into the clothes and of the outward flaunting of sexuality and desire and wealth, but they are women whose hearts are marked by godly fear and self-control, who are strong in faith, they believe God, strong in love toward God, who are pure and holy and who manifest self-control. Godly Christian women will raise the next generation.

You want to know why there's a Women's Liberation Movement, because there's a devil who doesn't want God to get His work done. Her faith in the Lord, her sincere love for God, her holiness and purity of life, her modest self-control mark her spiritual state as such who will bring forth children who will bless the world. And as she brought forth once a curse, she now brings forth a blessing. That's her calling.

I think about, in closing, I think about Susanna Wesley, wife of a pastor and mother of 19 children. She's gone down in Christian history as one of the greatest mothers. Here are some of her rules. Here are the rules she kept. No child was to be given a thing because he cried for it. If a child wanted to cry, cry softly. (Laughter) Nineteen children and it says, in her house was rarely heard loud cries. Second rule, no eating and drinking between meals except when sick. Rule number three, sleeping was also regulated. When very small the child was given three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon. This was shortened until no sleeping was allowed during the daytime to be productive. Four, punctually the little ones were laid in the cradle and rocked to sleep. At seven P.M. each child was put to bed, at 8 P.M. she left the room. She never allowed herself to sit by the bed until the children went to sleep. The little ones, fifthly, had their own table near the main table. When they could handle fork and knife they were promoted to the family table. That is a great idea. (Laughter) Sixth, each one must eat and drink everything before him. Seventh, children must address each other as sister and brother. Eighth, she never allowed herself to show through her ill temper or by scolding, she would always explain and explain. Listen, she spent one day each...pardon me, one hour each day shut up with God alone in her room praying for every one of her children. And her two sons under God brought revival to England while France was bathed in a bloody war. We know about John Wesley, but maybe behind all of that was a godly mother, surely that's true.

G. Campbell Morgan, that great preacher said, quote: "My dedication to the preaching of the Word was maternal. Mother never told it to the baby or the boy, but waited. When but eight years old I preached to my little sister and to her dolls arrayed in orderly form before me, my sermons were Bible stories which I had first heard from my mother." And G. Campbell Morgan, by the way, had four sons, all four of whom became preachers. And on one occasion when G. Campbell Morgan was explaining all the preachers in his family, someone said to him, "Who is the greatest preacher in your family?" And he replied without hesitation, "My mother."

Joseph Parker once said that when Robert Moffit(?) was added to the Kingdom of God, a whole continent was added as well and a mother's kiss did it. Charles Spurgeon's father once told Dr. Ford, an American minister, how when he had been taken away from home a good deal trying to build up congregations, there came a conviction that he was neglecting the religious training of his own children. So he decided that he would preach less. On returning home he opened the door and was surprised to find none of the children around the hall. Ascending the stairs he heard his wife's voice and knew that she was engaged in prayer. One by one she named the children. When she had

finished her petition and instruction, Spurgeon said, "I can go on with my work, the children are well cared for."

Now there is the role of a godly woman in the church. May God grant us such godly women. Let's pray together.

Father, we thank You so much for Your precious truth. In a world of confusion and chaos where everything sacred seems to be overturned, we can come back and find perfect clarity, understanding in Your truth. We bless Your name. Thank You that the design that You've given for us is so clear. O Father, may this church be a church marked out by godly women who bring up a godly generation of young people and thus attain by the Spirit's power to that divine purpose for which they were created. And may we not waste lives on the trivia of this world while children are lost to the Kingdom. Father, help us to be a beacon light in this generation for this very truth for the Savior's sake. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gracetointia.org/resources/PDF/Sermons/54-17>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2011 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/MeetGTU/Copyright>).