

God's High Calling for Women, Part 3

1 Timothy 2:11

54-16

Let's open our Bibles together to 1 Timothy chapter 2, 1 Timothy chapter 2. A couple weeks ago I was reading a very interesting biographical sketch of a rather famous family. Some of us remember the name Beecher as a family in American history. Surely you know the name Harriet Beecher Stowe, a great American novelist. Harriet Beecher Stowe was one of 13 children. The oldest member of the family was Catherine Beecher. She was the oldest of the 13. She was one of 9 children by her mother and there were four other children born to a stepmother whom her father married after her mother had died. Catherine Beecher particularly grew up having a natural love for children. She found great joy in the duties of raising children. She loved to care for infants. She loved to care for little children. When Catherine was only 16 and all of the rest of the children born to the mother, 9 of them were younger than she was, her mother died. So she was left really to mother 8 other little children. Her mother had been very skilled in domestic handcraft and spent a great amount of time teaching Catherine how to take care of the home and so she was quite good at that by the age of 16. Into the home came an aunt and the aunt was to be a replacement for a mother and the aunt was remarkable for her neatness and her order and her ability to deal with things on an economical basis. Later on, she was replaced by a stepmother who was expert in all matters of administration in the home. Under them all, Catherine with experience in the tutelage of these women, by the age of 23 had learned all that there was to be learned about domestic life and decided that the state of women in the United States was so severe that she needed to do something very dramatic to train women for domestic responsibility. So, she founded the Hartford Female Seminary, the design of which was to train women to be lovers of their husband, lovers of their children and keepers at home. She and her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe not only founded the Hartford Women's Seminary, but a couple years later, they founded the same thing in Cincinnati, Ohio, with the view to training women for domestic responsibility. At that same time around 1869, she wrote a book entitled *The American Woman's Home*. Let me read you just a little of it.

"Women's calling embraces the care and nursing of babies in those critical periods of infancy and sickness. The training of the minds of children in the most impressionable years of life, childhood. It involves the matter of meeting the needs of her husband so that his life is enriched and his home a haven. It involves the responsibilities of the economy of the house for the benefit of the family and all others who grace it. These duties are as sacred and demanding as any given to man, yet where is her preparation and what body certifies her as duly prepared to give the best to her calling?"

As a result of that desire to give to women training so that they could be capable at their domestic responsibility, they founded the two seminaries and they wrote this as their purpose. "The purpose is to teach women how not only to perform in the most improved manner all the manual employments of domestic life, but to honor and enjoy them." Now the reason I read you that is just to give you a little idea of how far we have come in a few years. The cigarette commercial that said, you have come a long way, baby is indeed true. If anybody imagined to start a female seminary to train women

today in domestic responsibility, they would become the instant laughing stock of the whole United States if not most of the world.

It would be absolutely bizarre for anyone to attempt to gain societies approval for such an effort. Can you imagine the kind of ridicule that would come upon someone for doing that? To endeavor to train women to be lovers of their husband, lovers of their children, keepers at home, would put a person in direct opposition to everything that is happening in human society. By the way, such a seminary, or such training similar to that seminary is the goal of The Masters College and soon you will be hearing about our emphasis in that area. We are in a day, today, when role reversal is really high priority for Satan. It would one thing if it was occupying itself with the world, but it is even more tragic when it occupies itself with the church.

And the church today has definitely lost its sense of perspective and balance in terms of what a woman's role is to be. I am amazed, month-by-month to see more and more traditional evangelical, Bible believing people begin to change their view of the woman's role under the pressure of the society around them. Sad part is, that they are then instructing women to deny a God given and a God ordained pattern for life which would bring them the highest joy and that's sad. It was a problem in the day of Catherine Beecher. It's a problem today and I would like to add it was a problem in the day when Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy. And as you look at 1 Timothy 2, verses 9 through 15, you will note that Paul is dealing with that very problem. He is identifying here a problem of women who were asserting themselves and trying to overtake the role of men in the church. They were acting indecently in the church. They were acting shamefully. They were violating their God ordained place, defying the divine standard, and so Paul writes to Timothy encouraging him with this corrective in verses 9 to 15 to set things in order in the church of Ephesus where Timothy is located at the present time. So they had their own problems in that time as we have the problem in this time. Now, in verses 9 to 15, a very concise passage there are seven verses there, but they are very brief with the exception of verse 9, so there really aren't a lot of words here, but in a very few words, there is a very comprehensive treatment of the role of women, that's why it's going to take us the past two weeks, this week and at least one more to get through these verses, because they open up such a wide range of understanding that must be explored in order to get the full teaching of Scripture.

But in these brief verses, there is a presentation of six elements related to a woman's place in the church. Now, we are not talking about the home here. We are not talking about secular society here. We are just talking about the church. In fact, we are talking about the church when it comes together to worship. We are talking about the order of the church, behavior in the church. These six elements with which Paul deals are their appearance, their attitude, their testimony, their role, their design and their contribution. And he emphasizes all of these things in a way that is sort of a building to a climax that comes in verse 15 which we will look at next week and I'm telling you, I can hardly wait, it's so wonderful. But let's be reminded in verse 9 of their appearance. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in proper apparel with Godly fear and self-control. Not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothing. Now the first thing that occupies the mind of Paul as we saw a couple of weeks ago is that women are to dress in such a way that they are fit for worship. They are dressed in such a way that they draw attention to their devotion to God and not to themselves. They are not to flaunt their sexuality. They are not to flaunt their wealth. They are not to flaunt an attitude of insubordination to their husbands. They are not to make other people look at them with envy. They are not to create sexual enticement in other men. All of these things are bound up in what we saw in verse 9. Their appearance is very, very important. Obviously, some women were coming together of the redeemed saints and calling attention to themselves for their own passions fulfillment and their

own selfish desires.

Secondly, we looked at their attitude. Their attitude was to be one of Godly fear. That word really has at its root the idea of a sense of shame. They are to have a proper shame about themselves. That doesn't mean a woman is to be ashamed of herself. That doesn't mean she's to be ashamed of her beauty and hide it. What it means is she is to have a sense of shame that says, I would never want to do anything to cause someone else to be illicitly attracted. I would never want to do anything that would cause someone else's attention to be drawn away from God to me. Her attitude is one of a sense of shame, that she should ever be the cause of someone else's sin.

Secondly, self-control, and the word is related to controlling her desires and controlling her passions and not being in a position to cause others to have wrong desire. So their appearance then out to be fit worship, their attitude as well. Thirdly, their testimony in verse 10 is a part of his discussion. A woman who professes publicly Godliness should prove that confession with good works, so you have not only appearance and attitude, but you have her action or her activity. That which she does, that which she says should indicate the legitimacy of her claim to godliness.

Now those three then brought us to the fourth and we are going to look at it again today. And that is their role. And now you come to the real heart of this text, in verses 11 and 12. The role of the woman is given in these words, 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. Now you will notice that verse 11 begins with being in silence and verse 12 ends with being in silence, and so that brackets the whole idea here and becomes the dominate thought. The dominate thought is that when the church comes together for worship, the women are to be in silence. And the middle of that, he sort of speaks to that very issue. Now as we looked at this role of women given by God and created by women by his creative power, we first of all and last week emphasized the opening statement of verse 11, let the women learn. And I hope you understood the major point that I was making is that on the spiritual level, men and women are equal, they are equal. And as a result of that, they are equally entitled to be involved in the learning process. And we suggested to you that there were no doubt people in the church at Ephesus who came out of a Jewish background or people in that church who came out of a Greek background both of which diminished the role of women. Both which held that woman are inferior. And both of which would assume that it wasn't important or even necessary that women learn anything And so this no doubt had filtered into the church and Paul is saying, let the women learn. Let them, *manthanō* is the verb we get the word disciples from it. Let them be disciples. Let them be learners, let them be in on the process of grasping, understanding, and applying divine truth. And don't let the influence of Jewish culture or Greek culture which diminishes and denigrates the role of women, speak evil of them and hinder them from learning the truth of God. And we went to the Old Testament, you remember and I told you that the law was given for men and women and the rules about the Passover were given for men and women and God personally appeared to both men and women. And the service of God involved both men and women. You came to the New Testament and men and women both serve the Lord and men and women are responsible for all the commandments and they are given all the promises and they are promised all the blessings and they are warned about all the curses.

In other words, in terms of spiritual life and blessing, all are equal. There is no question about that. But that does not mean that their role is the same. You can have spiritual equality and have all different roles. To put it another way, you and I are spiritually equal. You and I have the same spiritual responsibility before God to live to his glory, is that not so? We have the same responsibility

to obey the Word of God, the same responsibility to pray and to teach the Word of God and to witness and to live a Christ like life and we have the same promise of blessing and we have the same fruit of the Spirit. We have the same hope of eternal life, on the spiritual level, we are all equal, and yet, obviously in a role situation you are there and I'm here. Now, we should be comfortable with equal spirituality and differing roles. I don't know why we want to make a battle ground over that. For all the woman that demand to have equal roles with men would be like all the congregation demanding to have equal roles with the one who is preaching and you can understand what that would do.

These are just roles that God has designed for us to play to fulfil his will. So we see then Old Testament and New Testament, equality of spiritual life. But we do not see equality of role. And you remember as we looked at the Old Testament last time, that there were no women priests, none. There were no women holding ongoing prophetic office. There were some women who were called a prophetess, namely four of them. The wife of Isaiah was only called a prophetess because she was going to give birth to a child whose name had prophetic meaning, not because she said anything. But Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah are all three-called prophetess and all we know about them is that each of them, in the Bible is recorded on one occasion to have given a message from God. We don't know that they had any ongoing prophetic ministry, certainly not like the Major Prophets, the Minor Prophets, Elijah, Elisha, Moses. We have no such women leaders. Deborah, appears in the list of Judges in Judges 4:4, to have been in a position of giving some wise counsel in the life of Israel, but she is far and away the exception and we really don't know when and how and how many times she was used by God to give wisdom.

There are no women kings in all the history of Israel and somebody would no doubt ask me what about 2 Chronicles 22:12 where it says, Atheliah reigned. It does not call her king or queen. Atheliah, you remember was the mother of Ahaziah, when he died, she wanted to rule, so she massacred the entire royal seed. The only one she didn't get was Joash. You remember? He was protected and later became the king, but she usurped that throne and was not and is not, to this day, listed among the kinds of that land. No women kings, no women priests, no woman with ongoing prophetic office and no woman wrote an Old Testament book.

Ruth and Ester were named after women, but were not written by women, so they had no ongoing role of leadership in the normal course of life in God's economy in the old testament, though some of them were used by God here and there to speak a Word for God and many woman prophesied according to Psalm 68, a great host are the women who published the good news. That didn't mean that women couldn't speak for the Lord, of course, not, they should speak for the Lord. But they were not given the roles of leadership within the nation of Israel, either in political life or religious life, both of which were the same in a theocracy ruled by God. You come to the New Testament and you remember that there is neither male nor female in Christ, Galatians 3:28 and we know that we are all equal spiritually. And yet, it's very obvious in the New Testament, there are no women apostles, although there were women who accompanied Christ and the 12. They are not included in the 12. There are no women prophets. There is Anna mentioned in Luke 2 and said to be a prophets because her husband had died seven years after their marriage and she, for over 80 years had stayed in the temple waiting for the Messiah and anyone who came in the temple she would tell them about the Messiah coming and what a joy it was when she met the Messiah even as an infant. But she really is a holdover from the Old Testament and she was a prophetess in the sense that she spoke about the Messiah to anyone who came along.

And then you look in the New Testament again and you do see that the four daughters of Philip did prophecy, they did speak for God, but a lot of women speak for God, we don't know anything about it. They are not called prophets. That would be after the church began and they are not called prophets. It just says that they prophesied, they spoke forth for God. It is implied there. There were other women, 1 Corinthians 11, we'll get back to that in a minute who also prophesied, spoke forth for God, but as I said, there were no women apostles, no women called prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, elder, and no woman wrote a new Testament book, so both Old Testament make it clear that though there is equality on the spiritual level there is differing roles and all of that was just a review of what I gave you last week, so if you want the fill in on that, get last week's message and you'll have all of it.

But that equality of learning which is given here in verse 11 is qualified at the end of the verse. Let's go back to it and I want to speak the rest of the time this morning on the last half of verse 11. Let the women learn and here comes the qualifier, in silence with all subjection. In silence with all subjection. Now you have to understand what's going on in the culture to get an idea of what's going on in this situation. Now remember, you have in the church of Ephesus, a gentile culture as the basic culture in which the church exists. Asia Minor which is modern Turkey was a gentile place and women were ranked in gentile religion very low, very low. In fact, if you were to go to the temple of Diana of the Ephesians of Ephesus, you would find hundreds and hundreds of priestesses there called "melissae" whose primary function was to act as prostitutes for the male worshipers. They were chattel. They were to be used and discarded. Furthermore, any respectable Greek woman who was not some kind of prostitute, some kind of streetwalker lead a very confined life. She lived in her own quarters into no one but her husband could enter. She had not even the privilege of appearing at the meal unless she was invited to be there. She never at any time appeared on the street alone. She never went to any public assembly and still less did she ever speak or take any active part in an assembly.

So you can understand when some of these woman were converted they began to field their oats. To put it in the colloquial expression. And they would read that concept that we understand, equal as one in Christ and they would say, boy, we are going to take our place now. Other women were coming out of a Jewish background. We know that because there are indications in 1 Timothy that there were Jewish influence at the church at Ephesus. So here you have some women coming out of a Jewish background which was very much the same in terms of suppressing women and keeping them in sort of deprived situation in terms of learning and now these women have come to faith in Jesus Christ, perhaps in some cases they are growing faster than their husbands so they too began to feel the surge of the desire of prominence and to get out from under this abusive kind of chauvinistic tradition that they have known. And so, there is pressure applied in the church as these women begin to assert themselves. Now you add to that that this church was a sinful church and there are not only those pressures that come because these women are overreacting to their liberty in Christ, but you add the sinfulness of the culture around them which obviously would militate against the things of God and you have got loose and immoral woman in the church who are coming to church, flaunting their sexuality, flaunting their wealth, trying to entice and allure other men. You have got other women who are trying to surge into positions of teaching and surge into positions of leadership, women who don't want to subordinate themselves to their husbands anymore, they want to take over the authority in the church, the authority in the relationship at home, and the church is in great, great need and great, great danger. And so as Chapter 3 verse 15 says, this whole section is to set things in order in the church, the second thing he wants to set in order after the prayer passage in verses 1 to 8 is this matter of the role of the women. Because it's all out of wack. And he calls, basically, for them to learn in silence with all subjection. Two things there, they are to be silent and subject. The word silence means just that *hēsuchia* it just means silence. We have to define

what that is intended to say by the context. The word subjection is from *hupotassō* which means to line up under. In other words, to get in their proper line and not rebel. They are not to be unruly. They are to get inline in their proper place. So women are to learn in silence and get in line in their proper place. Now it's obvious the Bible says that, no one is going to equivocate on that. It says, let the women learn in silence. So you say, what are people who believe in women preachers going to do with this? Well, they are going to take the word silence and they are going to say it doesn't mean that. Silence means a meek and quiet spirit. What it means is that when you do teach and preach, you do so in a quiet spirited way.

All right, there are those who want to advocate that. There are others on the other hand who are hardline and they say, when it says, let the women learn in silence that's exactly what it means. No woman should ever talk in church under any conditions. Not even to the person they are sitting next too, not on the way in, not on the way out, you know, the real hardline thing. Total silence. Women never give a testimony. Women never pray. Women never speak, nothing. Now which of these two or what other option do we have? The answer is very simple. You always define terminology by context and all you have to do is look at the context to figure out exactly what he means by silence, verse 11. Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. What do you mean Paul? I mean, I don't permit a woman to what? Teach, that's the silence issue, nor usurp authority. That's the subjection issue. He defines exactly what he means. What he means by the silence of a woman is that he does not permit a woman to take the role of teacher. What he means by her subjection is, he does not permit her to rise, to usurp authority over men in the life of the church. He doesn't mean that the woman can't sing a song. He doesn't mean that in an appropriate place, a woman cannot pray a prayer, he does not mean that she cannot offer praise to God at an appropriate time. It does not mean that she cannot participate in worship. It doesn't mean that she can't even ask a question when a question is called for in a proper spirit and a proper way. What it means is that she is not to be the teacher and she is not to rebel against the role of submission which God has designed for her in the life of the church.

So silence then is in relation to teaching and it means she's not to be the teacher. We'll get into that in more detail next week as we see what the phrase in verse 12 actually means. The subjection is easily understood to mean that she is not to rebel. She is not to desire to overturn the divine pattern. Now, we need to understand what this means. Okay, we've got the church, we are looking at the church. We are saying, all right, the woman is not to be the teacher, that is plain and simple, we are not to have preachers and teachers standing up in church before everyone mixed congregations of men and women who are the official teacher of the church, the official preacher, giving the message, the sermon, the lesson. That's right, that's very obvious. But there are other passages that broaden our understanding of this and we need to look at them, so let's go back to 1 Corinthians 14, and you are going to find this, I think, very, very interesting. In 1 Corinthians 14:34, we have a very similar statement. To a very similar situation. In verse 34, it says, let your women keep silence in the churches, now it isn't too hard to figure out what that means. You do not have to be a Greek scholar. It is obvious what it means and in case you missed it, Let the women keep silence in the churches, and I love this kind of reasoning, for it's not permitted for them to speak. And you say, well, wait a minute, that's just saying the same thing twice without a reason. No, that is the reason. The reason that women are to keep silent in the churches is because it isn't permitted for them to speak. You say, it doesn't give me a reason. Sure it gives you a reason. They are commanded to be under obedience so also says what? The law. The law of who? The law of God. Do you know why women aren't to preach in the church? You say, well, it has to do with their psychologic, no. No.

Well, it has to do with the fact that if you give the woman that kind of role, she doesn't have the mentality to deal with the things that come. No, the reason that they don't do it is because God's law says they can't do it, that's all. That's the issue. It's not sociological, it's not psychological. It's not pathological, it's not anything. It's just the law of God. So women are to keep silence in the church. You say, well, what does that mean. So now we have a big debate about what it means to be silent again, well, let's find out what it means. It shouldn't be too hard, all we have to do is look at the context. So we go back in the chapter a little bit and we ask ourselves, what is this chapter all about? Well, verse 1 of chapter 14 talks about prophesying. Verse 2 talks about tongues and then you have tongues and prophesying compared all the way through the chapter and he says, of course, the best thing is to prophecy. Verse 39, you don't want to stop speaking in languages legitimately and that apostolic age, it was a legitimate gift of God, but it's better that you should desire as a congregation when you come together, that prophecy be done, that is the proclamation of the Word of God and most of all, verse 40, it out to be done decently and in order. But you want to get an idea of what's going on there, let me give you some background. Right across the bay from Corinth is another city. The name of that city is Delphi. In the city of Delphi, there is a religious structure. At the pinnacle of this religious structure is a woman by the name of Pythia. She is known as the oracle of Delphi. Have you ever heard that phrase? She is known as the oracle of Delphi in this very time. At the height of Delphic religion there were three such priestesses. The dominant one that we know of in history is Pythia, this from Stuart Rossiter and his book on Greece in which he treats this whole thing. This is a woman about 50 years of age and she is a medium who contacts demon spirits and everybody wants to know the future and everybody wants to know what it holds, and everybody wants to know the secrets and everybody wants to know how things are going to turn out and they want to know how to get rid of their problems and so forth and so forth and so everybody wants to go to get the oracle of Delphi to give them the truth.

So it is a very popular religion controlled of course, by Satan and run through demons who speak to this medium and she gives out this stuff. Now Rosseter in describing this tells us some very interesting things. Someone who goes over there, first thing they do is make an animal sacrifice, it can be a sheep, a goat, a bear or some other animal. They make an animal sacrifice well a few attendant priestesses stand around and evaluate the omens in the sacrifice. I don't know how they did that. Maybe it had to do with the way the thing burned or the way the inside of the animal fell, some kind of omen. If the omens were favorable, based on the evaluation of the sacrifice, the person could then come into the inner shrine. No woman could ever be admitted into that, only men. So the man would come in, let's say the omens were good so they accepted a sacrifice so the man comes in. He takes a tablet and on that tablet, he writes his request. By the way, archeologists have dug up that area and found some of those tablets still intact, so we know something about what the people were asking.

That tablet then as he waits in line is his consideration to be given to the oracle and finally, if all fortune goes well, he is ushered into the oracle. She is sitting on a tripod. Three legs going rather high over a huge chasm from which rises incense smelling heavy dense smoke. And she is sitting over this chasm to answer this request. Before she can take her throne she has to eat Laurel leaves and she has to go through some kind of thing. And then she gets up there and the request is taken and represented. In response to the request, she gushes out some absolutely inarticulate babble. Some kind of demon talk. Standing beside her is a poet who interprets everything she says in perfect hexameter, which is a poetic form. And that is the interpretation because nobody understands what she is saying. And the person then hears a very obscure, a very confusing hexametric, poetic, bunch of babble from this guy that probably leaves them more confused than they were when they got there, but they have had an ecstatic experience and they have encountered the super natural. Now

think about that. That's right across the bay from Corinth. Now in the church at Corinth, and Satan always counterfeits something that God does. If God has a true gift of languages and a true gift of interpretation. And a true gift of prophesying and speaking forth the Word of God, then Satan is going to move in as close as he can and counterfeit the whole thing. And so you have got some people coming to the Corinthian assembly and what they are doing is mediumistic, occultic, demon kind of stuff, they are putting these same babbles that came out of the Delphic oracle and the same kind of obscure nonsensical prophetic things that are coming over there and they are doing it supposedly in the name of Christ and the church, some people in the church are doing the true gifts and the people in the church are not rightly evaluating it and what you have in Corinth is absolute confusion, some people actually standing up, claiming to have the gift of tongues, cursing Jesus Christ and being patted on the back for it, because it must be of God because it's supernatural.

Now that is the background of 1 Corinthians. Anybody is absolutely naive who comes into chapter 14 and starts reading about tongues and prophecy and doesn't have that as background. Paul is correcting all of that. So the issue here in the Corinthian church was not only that there were woman who were flaunting their sexuality, we know there was terrible sex in the Corinthian church, wasn't there? Terrible sexual evil. But here you have some women who are looking at religion that is all women, the Delphic thing and saying, boy we ought to be prominent in this religion too. So they are pushing themselves into prominence by standing up and speaking in this unintelligible babble by standing up and giving their prophecies. So when we come to this chapter look at verse 26, he says, what is going on with you? When you come together, every one of you as a psalm, a doctrine, or a teaching, a tongue, a revelation, interpretation, let everything be done decently and in order. Get this mess straightened out. And then he says, no more than two or three people in tongues, never without an interpreter, don't let the prophets speak except two or three of them and everybody evaluate them to see if they really know the lord, they really speak the truth. Get this thing together, verse 33 because God is not the author of what? Confusion. And then in verse 34 he said, let the women keep silent, keep silent about what? Well, it's obvious, speaking publicly in the assembly of the church either in ecstatic speech or prophecy. So if we look at 1 Timothy, we see that women are not to preach or teach. If we look at 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35, we can conclude women very simply woman are not to speak in tongues and women are not to give prophecies in the church. They are not to speak forth in the church. Why? It's not permitted. Why? They are to be under obedience. Why? The law of God says that. Here is comes, it is indecent for women to speak in the church. It's not indecent for women to speak. Speak all you want, unless you are usurping the role of authority, unless you are taking leadership in the church, this is so clear. So what are we saying then, when it comes to the meeting of the church together, women are not to preach or teach. They are not to speak forth the Word of God. They are not to speak in ecstatic speech. Obviously, the sum of those things is to say that the church when it comes together is to be spoken to by men. That's just God's way.

But the underlying thing that I want you to understand here is this, this does not mean that a woman can never, under any circumstances, speak in a group of Christians. What this speaks to is the women who usurp that. Who push themselves in the place of prominence. Remember, God used Miriam to speak a word for him. God used Deborah and Huldah to speak a word for him to very important men. God used Anna for scores of years in the temple, spacing of the coming Messiah to anybody that came there. So there is no reason to believe that in the right time and the right place, women can't speak. When Paul traveled on his trips through the book of Acts it says that he went into an area, to a church and he dialogued with them out of the Scriptures. I believe there were men and women. I believe honest questions could be asked by women in a right format and answered by the apostle Paul. I think there was a time and place for women to speak a testimony of praise to the

Lord. I don't think that he's saying they can never do that. What he's saying is that they cannot rise to leadership in the church so that they become the ones who dominate the church with their authority and their teaching and their gifts. There is a place, of course, when it is the right environment and we ask for those to ask questions, where a woman has every right to ask a question in a right spirit just as a man does. There is a time when we ask for praise to be offered to God when a woman has every right to praise God, just like anyone else does. That's when the preacher or teacher deflects the communication responsibility to his congregation and says, I want to hear from you.

But that wasn't the issue here. The issue here was interruption. The issue here was usurpation. That's a different issue, so we understand what he's saying. Now let's go back to 1 Corinthians 11, because we can't understand this whole picture without understanding this passage. By the way in Chapter 14 he says not to do this is absolutely unthinkable, because he says in verse 36, what? Came the Word of God out from you or came it unto you only? In other words, he says, if you defy this are you telling us that you are the originator of the Word of God. You are going to decide how it out to be done, or maybe it was just written for you to twist anyway you want. It's ludicrous to him. What? Did you write the Bible? You who want to exercise authority in the church. You who want to speak out and be the preachers, teachers and prophesiers and tongue speakers and all that. It's just ludicrous to imagine that you can overturn the Scripture, that you can do it any way you want. And going back to 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 2, he says, I praise you brethren, because you remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I deliver them to you. We often get the idea that everyone in Corinth was corrupt, but this verse tells us not so. There was a great number there who were not and he says, I know you remember me in all things and you do keep the commandments or ordinances the way I delivered them to you. But there is something you have to know. Now remember, this is Corinth. In the middle of Corinth was a temple to Aphrodite, a thousand priestess prostitutes with heads open and exposed and hair cut short flaunting their sexuality trying to lure men into sexual acts in the temple. Put up on the acro of Corinth, the hilltop outside of Corinth, this big temple. And these women again flaunting their liberation, flaunting their liberation, flaunting their sexuality. There was a whole attitude there, very much like Ephesus, so he says, I know you obey me, I know you remember what I said, but I want to tell you this, folks. You have to realize the head of every man is Christ. And the head of the woman is the man and the head of Christ is God. You have to get one thing straight. Women are put in a place of submission to men. That's just how it is. And again, I remind you, it's not to say women can't speak. It's not to say women can't pray. It is to understand as an attitudinal objective that the man is the head of the woman. Now, look at verse three again, nobody argues about this. The head of every man is Christ. You know anybody that doesn't believe that?

You know anybody that has sort of a Christian's liberation, demanding equality with Christ. Anybody running around saying I want to be equal with Christ, or forget it? No. And everybody understands that God is the head of Christ. Christ comes in subjection to his father, becomes a servant. Takes upon him the form of a servant, humility and all that, Philippians 2, the *kenosis*. Then why do we debate about the fact that the man is the head of the woman? That's just basic. So, let me give you a little cultural thing. In Corinth, woman, as a custom, covered their heads. That was how a woman identified her humility. That's how she hid herself as if to say, I'm not available. I belong to one man. And that was her modesty, that was her femininity.

This is how she carried herself and how she clothed herself to demonstrate her womanliness, her femininity. In the Corinthian society, men were uncovered. Their heads were bare, their faces were open and that as the mark of maleness. Somehow, in the Corinthian church, these things were

getting inverted, and women were praying and speaking the Word of God with their heads uncovered, actually sort of identifying with the prostitutes and the women's liberation movement. And men, maybe from some Jewish background or something, were covering their heads and praying and people were looking at them and saying, they are feministic. So, he says in verse 4, look, every man who prays or prophesies having his head uncovered dishonors his head. What are you doing, don't do that. Why? You say, you mean it's a sin to put something on your head when you pray? No, not unless your culture perceives that as something that's feminine. And the point there was for a man to cover himself was to be acting like a woman, men didn't do that. Verse 5, and every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head and she might as well be like one who is totally shaved. She might as well destroy all of her femininity, look like a prostitute. Or some liberated person. Verse 7, a man ought not to have his head covered, see in their society that said something, so what Paul is saying is this, now listen carefully, look at your society and mark out the symbols. What are the symbols of femininity in our society? What are the symbols of masculinity and identify with those, if they don't violate Scripture. If they don't violate God's design for morality, then adhere to those symbols because that says something to your society. Listen, even this this society today still knows when a woman looks like a woman. There are symbols in our society for femininity, and you know as well as I do, that you can look at a woman who obviously has adapted the symbols of femininity and looks like a woman and you can look at another woman who looks like she is rebelling against everything that womanhood absolutely means, can't you tell that difference? Of course, you can, because even our society has symbols. Every society does. Our society has symbols of maleness. You can look at a man and by the way he appears and carries himself and dresses, you can say, now that guy is a man. And you can look at another guy and you get the impression that this guy is really very feminine, because he's denying the symbols of maleness and he's conveying an inverted perverted message. So that's all he's saying to the Corinthians. Look, when you behave yourself as Christians, do so in a way that adheres to the perception of your culture so they will understand. And further on down in verse 14, even nature has provided an analogy for the symbol of head coverings by giving faster growing hair to women as a special covering from God. So women then are to take a role of submission as the one who is under the headship of man.

Now, people say about verse 5, now wait a minute, here are women praying and prophesying. Isn't that in the church? Well, it doesn't say so. Let me show you something. I think he's just talking about general things. I don't think he's talking about the formal worship of the church, the coming together of the church. Say why don't you? Go down to verse 18, this is really the first time he gets into issues about the church, look at what it says, for first of all, what is that again? Literally, in the Greek, in the first place, which means, if this is the first place, there isn't any place before this. If this is first of all, there isn't anything else related to what he's going to talk about. So first of all, when you come together in the church, may I suggest to you that nobody has come together in the church until that verse. First of all, when you come together in the church, I want you to take care of these divisions. SO prior to this, he hasn't been talking about the worship of the church, so the women who are permitted to pray or prophesy with their head covered are not doing that in the church. They are doing that other in that duly constituted worshiping place of the church. He doesn't get to describing the church until verse 18. So here he is just saying in general, maybe it's in a home fellowship, maybe it's in a Bible study, maybe it's in a prayer time. Maybe it's when you get together as a family around the table. Maybe it's when several families get together. When you Christians get together, wherever it might be, you women maintain the decorum of submission, you men, maintain the decorum of headship.

And then later on, he gets to the church when it comes together in its formal assembly, so the

allowance for a woman to pray and prophesy in verse five does not overturn what Paul says in 1 Timothy. Sure a woman should pray, of course she should speak forth the Word of God, every time she has an opportunity, but not when given the title of the official teacher or prayer on behalf of the church when it comes together for worship and certainly not as an intruder into the worship of the church. This is very important. So in verse 13 he says, decide for yourselves. Just decide for yourselves. Take a look at the symbol and make a decision. Is it right for a woman to pray to God uncovered? And you know in your society you are going to say no. So follow the custom. The sum of what he says is this, if a woman is veiled when she prays or speaks the Word of God, she attests to her womanhood, she affirms her role, she reflects her husband's protective covering over her. She protects the relationship she has with her husband. She doesn't rebel. She knows heaven is pleased verse 10 says, even the angels are watching. She is acknowledging what verses 7 and following say, and this is so important, man is the image and glory of God and woman is the glory of man, boy that is a verse that just sends the women liberation people right up in space. So man is in a sense is the sun and woman is the moon that reflects the light of the sun.

Man is the representative of the glorious dominion and headship of God and woman is the representative of that one who follows, the woman is the glory of man. God could have created them together, he could have said, man, woman. And they would have been there and he would have said you are equal, go out and see who wins. He didn't do that. And why do we want to fight that? She was taken out of man, verse 8, the man is not of woman, but the woman of the man. You talk about which came first, the chicken or the egg, the man came first, in this case, the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman was created for the man. Now why do we not want to accept this? Let me tell you what the underlying philosophy is, very simple. God is designed all of human life in terms of this key word relationships, okay, everything is built on relationships, family. Fathers and mothers and children. Husbands and wives. Everybody has their relationship and within their relationships, there are differing roles, is that not so?

All right, in our culture and our society, the word is not relationship, the word is individuality. I want my rights. I want to do my thing. If you fit into my life for a little while, you can come in. The first time I don't like the way you are doing it, you are gone. Marriage, divorce, marriage, divorce, live with somebody, whatever it is, everybody living for himself. The family is being desinigrated, it's just a bunch of sticks all living side by side. And in a society where relationship as a concept of life is lost and it is replaced by individuality, why not everybody having equal rights and equal roles. You see, so what does Satan do to undermine the role of women? He attacks the whole concept of family, devastates, destroys, the family and in the devastation and destruction of the family, all you have left is a bunch of individuals who look at the whole world through their own eyes and see only their own individuality and scream for their rights. That's the whole thing, bottom line. But the church is an organism and the family is an organism. And the relationships of the family take right into the church that same kind of attitude. The feminist movement is nothing more than the human race being defined as a bunch of unrelated individuals all demanding their own rights. That's Satan's big lie. Now, I'll tell you to be honest, you may not agree with what Paul says, you may not like what he said, but he said it.

And it's obvious what he said. You say, well, now when can women prophesy? Any time you want to speak the Word of God, speak it. Any time and any place, but don't try to take over the church. Don't try to step into the territory where you are not allowed. A woman can speak the truth, Anna spoke it. Mary when she gave her magnificent at the announcement of the birth of Christ spoke forth the Word of God and no one ever more modeled the virtue of womanhood than she. Listen women, I pray God

that you speak forth the truth over and over again as long as you live. You say, what about at a Bible study, can we share what we see? Of course.

Of course, in the right environment when that is given to you, when the leadership says, yes, we want to hear from you. Share what the Spirit of God is doing, offer praise to God. Yes. You say, what about praying, can women pray? What if there are men there, can woman still pray? Look at Acts 1. In Acts chapter 1, we have a prayer meeting. Verse 13, they came in, they came into Jerusalem from Mount of Olives and they went into the upper room and there abode Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. This is what's left after Judas of course, who is called Iscariot, is gone. Here are the remaining disciples. Now look at verse 14. These all continued with one accord, in what? What were they doing up there? In prayer and supplication. Watch this, with the women. And Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers. Can women get together with men and have a prayer meeting? Of course, there is one right here. And it involved the 11 disciples, a lot of women including Mary and some other people. In fact, how many were there in that upper room? 120 weren't there? They had a prayer meeting. There is a time and a place for women to speak forth the Word of God, there is a time and a place for a woman to pray, there is a time and a place when asked, for a woman to share a question, the point of all of these things is this, you go back to 1 Timothy again and it's very obvious what he means when he says, let the women keep silence, he's talking about in the official meeting together of the church and he's meaning their silence in the sense that I do not allow a woman to teach and what I'll show you next week is that that phrase a woman to teach literally in the Greek should be translated, I do not allow for a woman teacher, as an ongoing official office. It's just that that's consistent in the Old Testament no women kings, no woman prophets, no woman priests, no woman Bible writers, in the New Testament, no women prophets, in the ongoing New Testament sense of the prophet. No woman evangelists, no woman pastor teachers, no woman elders, no woman Bible writers. So, why are we concerned when the church goes on with the same pattern that when it comes to the order of the worship of the church, that responsibility to be the preacher, the teacher, the one who speaks for God, the one who leads in prayer as we saw in verse 8, where he says, I command that the men pray, the one who lead the congregation before the throne of God. This is a role given to men.

You say, well, now why would God give all the good stuff to men and leave us woman just sitting here listening in silence? You know something, we have the easy part. You say, well, where is the balance? Come next week. It's exactly what I'm going to get too and it's what I wanted to get to today, but I couldn't get there. I just couldn't go fast enough. Let's bow in prayer. Father, how thankful we are. How thankful we are for your Word. How thankful we are for its clarity. We understand what you ask of us as men and women. Help us Lord, not to be looking for the toothpick in somebody else's eye, till we have taken the 2x4 out of our own eye. Help me as a man and the rest of the men of this congregation not to be faulting the women until we have become the head that we should be. Help us not to be criticizing others until we have examined our own hearts and if we are the head of the woman as Christ is the head of us and God is the head of Christ then help us to act in a way consistent with that. Father, may the men of this church be men as men ought to be, giving spiritual leadership and direction. Taking responsibility for support. Nourishing and cherishing their wives, protecting and saving and delivering them from harm and danger. Encouraging, supporting, and strengthening them in their spiritual life. And Lord, may the women be women. May they bear all the grace and loveliness and beauty of womanhood. May they enjoy all the spiritual privilege, promise, blessing and instruction, may they be on the front lines in prayer, on the front lines in speaking forth the Word of truth and understanding in that role that is designed for them there is complete fulfillment. We thank you that you have given to the church teachers, men, godly men who

can stand in the place of Christ as his representatives bearing his glory before the congregation. We pray that we might always be faithful, to that design, that we might see that the place of men is in the overt leadership of the church, the teaching, preaching, praying, decision making, ruling authority of the church and that the role of the woman is to learn everything they can and to come alongside in submission so that they can be prepared for that immeasurably profound and far-reaching task that is theirs, within the home as we shall see in our next time together. And Lord, may the combination of the men who lead in the church and the women who powerfully, profoundly, and for life influence in the home, build a godly seed, for the praise and the glory of the Savior and the generations to come.

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