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

God's High Calling for Women, Part 2
Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:10-11
Code: 54-15

Let's open our Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 2. 1 Timothy chapter 2. We are looking again at verses 9 through 15. 1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 9 through 15. Now remember, that as Paul writes this epistle to Timothy, the instruction that is given here is for Timothy to give to the church that he is presently involved with. That is the church in the city of Ephesus, in Asia Minor which would be modern Turkey today. Ephesus had been a great church, but had fallen into doctrinal error and ungodly living. Paul then has left Timothy in that city to work with that church to straighten things out.

Chapter 3 verse 15 identifies his task is to teach them how to behave themselves in the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. The epistle then, is an instruction to a young pastor who has a responsibility before him that is very, very difficult. It is a corrective epistle because of the errors that existed in that church. Among the problems in the church at Ephesus was a problem related to the women. There was heresy in general. There was immorality and impurity in general and it affected both men and women, but one thing in particular had become a problem there. That was that there were certain women in the church who were usurping the authoritative roles of men and desiring to be the official teachers of the church. There were other women who were coming to worship in an improper way. They were improperly dressed for worship. They had an improper heart attitude for worship and they were denying with their behavior the very profession of their lips to know and worship God.

And so verses 9 to 15 then corrects this matter of the women in the church and how they are to function and serve there. The subject needless to say is very germane to our society today. The modern destruction in God's purpose in creating women is very tragic. The role and function of women today and consequently their define design and their ultimate wellbeing in life, their meaning and sense of satisfaction is being continually attacked and perverted. The sad thing is, women are not the winners, but women are the victims of this.

Women are being told to be bold, to be assertive, to be confrontive, to be independent. To be competitive, to take leadership, exert authority, be the bread winner, rise to the same function level as men and not take a back seat to anything in that regard. And sadly, tragically, there are churches and evangelical institutions and colleges and seminaries that have bought into this, even though the Word of God is absolutely clear on the matter. They are willing in this modern day, over the last 15 or 20 years to reject all of the biblical teaching or to twist it and turn it to fit the new attitudes or to just jettison centuries of Christian belief. This is tragic, because women are not best served by this. They

are ill-served by being cast into role for which God never intended them to be a part.

And I think about this in so many dimensions. I was thinking this week, that if I could identify one single attitude biblically that would be the supreme attitudes of all attitudes, the most desirable attitude of all from God's view point would be humility, that's the one most beautiful of all human virtues in an attitudinal sense, humility. And if I were to identify one activity as being most desirable, it would be the activity of service. Combining the two, I would say that the Bible teaches then that the highest attitude is humility, the highest activity is service, and for a woman then to offer humble service is for her to have a head start on men in being able to reach the highest level of God's intention for his creatures.

Her loftiest goals are found in the humble service that God has designed her for under the direction and protection of men. And when that is perverted, chaos results in society and chaos results in the church. Now this is something that we are dealing with in our society, but it is not something that only our society has faced. We got right back into 1 Timothy and we find that they were having a similar problem there. Certain women in that church were impure. We find that in chapter 5, certain of them were growing wanton against Christ. Some of them had turned aside to Satan, some of them were living in pleasure. He calls them silly women laden with sins and various lusts in 2 Timothy 3:6, but not only were some women living in an ungodly and an impure way, but there were women who were usurping the role of the men in the church. They were desirous of leadership. There were women who were flaunting their physical form and beauty in the worship of the church and becoming a severe distraction who were lustfully trying to lure men away from their own wives and there were some very serious matters that needed to be dealt with in regard to this.

And so in this passage in verses 9 to 15 he deals with those two issues, the issue of women leading in the church and the issue of women indecently appearing in the church, coming to worship God when in fact, their desire was to present themselves in some indecent fashion for some self-serving lustful end. And Timothy then is instructed to give appropriate teaching to the church to deal with such indecency of conduct and such perversion of role as was going on. Now as we look at verses 9 to 15, there are six elements that outline the women's design. Six elements that speak to the woman's place in the church. Paul speaks of their appearance, their attitude, their testimony, their role, their design, and their contribution. And these are the six that we'll be looking at as we look through the section. And it will take us a couple of weeks to finish it. Let's go back first of all to note their appearance in verse 9.

Paul writes, in like manner, and what he means by that is, as I have just discussed how men are to act in worship, they are to pray and they are to be sure they have holy hands and their hearts are not filed with anger and dissension, as I have spoken to the matter of how men conduct themselves, in the same way I now speak to the matter of how women conduct themselves, both of these, verse 8 and 9 are commands. When he says in verse 8 I will, it is *boulomai,* it is the will of command. It is the

will of demand. This is not something he just wishes would happen, this is something he prescribes that must happen. So his command to the women here is first of all regarding their appearance. They are to adorn themselves in proper apparel. That is the word proper having the idea of what is well suited to worship. It has the idea of being orderly, fitting, to a God centered purposes in the spiritual life of the church. Her clothing should reflect a humble, meek, worshiping heart. Her clothing should reflect a thankfulness for her beauty and an effort to grace her loveliness, but not a preoccupation with self and not designed to call attention to herself or some evil purpose. She should designer her apparel in such a way as to point to her godliness and to point folks to the God she worships.

He becomes very specific at the end of verse 9 as we saw in our last study. It says that she is not to be adorned with braided hair or plaited hair, an old word, or gold or pearls or expensive clothing. And here he identifies the customary motifs of extravagance in that time. These were the marks of an extravagant woman. They were characteristic in that time of a woman who wanted to put herself on display. So Paul forbids dressing to show off. Dressing to flaunt wealth. Dressing to stimulate sexual desire or lust in someone else. Dressing to allure someone's husband away. Dressing to demonstrate a lack of submissiveness or subjection to one's own husband. Anything like that desecrates the worship. Anything like that dishonors God.

And we saw when we looked at that verse that Christian woman are to adorn themselves in a manner that attracts attention to their character not their wealth. To their virtue, not their physical form. To their humility not their pride. To their godly intention in worship not their evil intent. They are to call attention by the way they dress to the God they worship. So first of all, we dealt with their appearance. Secondly, their attitude back to verse 9, the middle of the verse.

He says the attitude within this woman is to be one of two things, Godly fear and self-control. Those two words combine to express the underlying attitude of heart that is a woman's true adornment. First of all, godly fear has the idea of modesty mixed with humility. Modesty mixed with humility. The root idea of the word is a sense of shame, not that she's ashamed to be a woman. Not that she's ashamed to be lovely, but that she has a sense of shame about causing any one to have an evil thought or to be distracted from worship. She would be ashamed to do anything like that. She is then to be adorned in the truest sense with a proper reserve in the matters of sex in a way that causes people to be distracted away from her to the presence of God.

Secondly, she is to be marked by self-control. That is she is to give evidence by her adornment and her attitude that she has her passions and desires under control. She must maintain the delicate balance between thanking God for her beauty and loveliness and also preserving an attitude of humility and an attitude of godliness, and attitude of self-control, a way that does not call attention to herself illicitly, but only to the fact that she loves and adores and worships God.

So her true adornment then is her character and her character should manifest itself in such a way as to enhance that character outwardly. Now that brings us thirdly and where we left off last time to the point of their testimony in verse 10. Paul is very concerned about consistency in a woman's testimony. It is essential, he says in verse 10, for those woman who profess godliness to support that profession with their conduct. Look at what it says, but rather than what we have seen to adornment at the end of verse 9, she is to be adorned with good works, then in parenthesis he says, which is fitting women professing Godliness. The point here is a woman professing godliness. That's a major idea. That is her testimony. The word profess is a word that means to communicate loudly. That means to make a public announcement.

And what he is saying here is that any woman who has made a public announcement about her commitment to the Lord, if she has professed Godliness, if she has professed to be devoted to God and to worship God, then she should conduct herself in such a way that she is consistent in her attitude and adornment and activity as well with that profession. That seems rather obvious. The word godliness is a very, very direct word, *theosabeia,* has the name God in it. The word for God. It basically means, reverence to God.

When you claim to be a Christian, you are claiming to reverence God. When you claim to be a Christian, you are claiming to worship God, to honor God. To adore God to serve God. And any woman who claims to serve and love and worship and honor and adore God should conduct herself in such a way that her good works support that profession. If I might digress at this particular juncture. I think here in lies a major problem in the contemporary woman's liberation movement in the church. There are these woman who want to preach and teach and take authority, and they want to be the preachers of the church. They want to be recognized equally with men. They want to be ordained as elders. I know one evangelical seminary very well where I have spoken in years past that is now having woman speak in their chapel program because they have now reinterpreted this very passage and they think that this can be altered somewhat to fit the contemporary desire of woman and they want them to be able to express what the Holy Spirit is doing in their lives, so they are having woman preachers in their chapels. The problem with that is, that a woman who professes Godliness and a woman who professes reverence for God should by her good works, which are intrinsically and genuinely and deeply good, the word *agathos*, show that devotion to God and any woman on the one hand saying I want to serve God. I want to honor God. I want to show my love and reverence for God cannot on the other hand, say therefore, I want to violate what God says. I want to change what God says. Those two are mutually exclusive. And so, when I see a woman who wants to step out of the God designed plan for her within the church in order to serve God, I see that nothing more than a contradiction. And if a woman professes Godliness, then she will conduct herself in her attitude in her adornment and in her activity in a way that is consistent with that profession.

And let me say at this point the Bible is so clear on this that there really shouldn't be much discussion. At the risk of sounding a little bit simplistic in a raging debate, I want to say to you, that with all my

heart, I think this issue is absolutely clear cut in Scripture and I don't know how anyone with an open mind can come to the Word of God and can conclude anything other unless they are not diligent or biased that that that which the Word of God says about the role of a woman is so clear that there really is no discussion at all. So the testimony of a woman then professing godliness should be a life of good works, that is righteous activities, which demonstrate that that is in indeed a legitimate and faithful profession. Now that comes down to how you behave in the church. If you profess a reverence for God, then your attitude in coming to worship should indeed reflect that. You should come with a godly fear and a sense of self-control. If you do have a reverence for God and you worship and adore God, you should come adorned in such a way and clothed in such a way to speak supportively of that profession calling attention to God and not yourself. And if you do indeed worship and honor God you should conduct your spiritual activities and activities of life in a way that support that claim because they are biblical and true to God's design for you.

Now that speaks to the issue of their testimony. Demonstrating your claim to be true by the conduct of your life. Now that brings us to the fourth point, the fourth point. The third one was very brief. The fourth one will take us this time and next time to look at because it is so very important. This takes us to the woman's role, their role. We have seen their appearance, their attitude, their testimony. Paul wants to now speak to their role in the church and this is really a very, very essential understanding. Now I know that when I am done this morning, some of you are going to have questions that are not answered and that I expect because we are not yet through the passage. This is one where if you only get one of the messages, you really are going to have difficulty. Because, we are just going to get started on verses 11 and 12, but we need to begin at that point. The first thing Paul says in verse 11 and this is where we'll spend our time this morning is let the woman learn.

Now I'll stop at that point. Let the women learn. The first thing that he says about the role of a woman in the church is that she is to be a learner. The verb here is *manthan,* it is a present active imperative, which means it is a command. It is a word from which the word disciple comes. Let the women be disciple. To put it another way, disciple the women, it is a command. Teach the women. Let them be involved in the learning process. Now this indicates several things and I don't want to get to far off where we are in the matter of the role of women, but I would like to add a little footnote here, the fact that he's discussing the order of the church and how the church conducts itself as indicated in chapter 3:15, the fact that this section includes that meeting together of the church, also leads us to an understanding that when the church came together, it came together in its worship to learn. The fact that he says, let the women learn indicates that learning took place when the church met. We shouldn't be surprised by that and perhaps we aren't, because in Acts 2 it says that when they met together they met together for the apostles' doctrine. But let it just be put in the record, that in the early church and today, the church is to come together for the purpose of learning and when someone criticizes a church like ours or other churches because there is a great amount of time and effort given to the content of teaching and they say that that's not worship, they are wrong in terms of the fact of looking at the New Testament, it early church was engaged when it met together for

worship and for the Lords Table and prayer and fellowship also in the disseminating of the apostles doctrine, so that a high priority was in the area of learning.

And when the church comes together, Paul is saying, let the women learn. Don't send them all out to get the potluck ready for what is going to happen afterwards. Don't send them all into the nursery or whatever might need to be done outside, let the women learn. They were to be included in the learning opportunity. Now you say, isn't that rather obvious? Well, might be obvious to us, but apparently it wasn't not obvious to them. How is it that it wasn't obvious? Well, one of the things that we learned in chapter 1 was that existing in the Ephesian church at this time were come Jews who were holding on to their Judaism. They were into genealogies and fables, that is mentioned in chapter 1 verse 4. Chapter 1 verse 7 talks about the fact that they were into being teachers of the law, they wanted to be rabbis. There is little doubt in anyone's mind who studies 1 Timothy that there was an element within the church at Ephesus that was bringing a Judeistic mentality to the church.

And part of contemporary Jewish tradition of that day was low esteem for women. Jewish tradition at the time of our Lord and the time of Paul had put women into a low profile position. The mentality would be basically to keep them ignorant, barefoot, and pregnant. That kind of thing. Jewish men frankly, did not feel that women were a part of the learning process necessarily. They were not forbidden to come to the synagogue. They would come. It was immaterial whether they did. They could learn it was inconsequential whether they did. They were not required by the traditions to attend the feasts. They were not required to attend the festivals and most rabbis refused, upon meeting a woman to give her any kind of greeting at all. The rabbis did not feel that they would waste their time instructing woman. Some of the rabbis actually said that teaching women is like throwing pearls to pigs, so there was a very depreciated view as a woman's role as learner in spiritual matters. They really had not significant place at all. They could listen, but it was of little consequence whether they listened or whether they learned anything at all. Now you can understand that this kind of thing existed in the early church when Judaism with its mentality encroached upon that. And what happens in this situation no doubt in Ephesus is that there is a certain amount of suppression of women. In retaliation to that, as will always occur. There were some women who were really upset about that kind of thing and so they were determined to rise to the leadership level. And some of them according to chapter 2 verse 12, were teaching and taking authority over men.

And Paul has to tell them stop. They were over reacting to their suppression by seeking a dominate position. They were taking that aggressive role that was not fit for them, just as they were doing it today and they had to be corrected. But before Paul gets into the details of how he corrects this, he starts by correcting this issue of whether women have a right to learn and he says basically, I command that the women be given the right to learn.

The women must be taught. They must be discipled. They must learn God's truth. It is essential to their spiritual life and it is essential to their role in the plan of God. And here we find in that brief four-

word statement in English, let the women learn, which is actually two words. The word women and then the verb in the Greek, we find there the equality of the sexes in spiritual life and blessing. And that's what I want you to see as we begin.

In terms of spiritual life and blessing, men and women enjoy equality. Now, that isn't anything new in the New Testament. That was true in the Old Testament and I want to take a little bit of time to point that out to you. In spite of Jewish tradition, the Old Testament did not teach the suppression of women in spiritual matters. That was a non-biblical tradition. The Old Testament elevated woman alongside men in an equal position of spiritual life and blessing, for example, in Exodus 19 and 20 God gave the law, you don't need to look it up, but just remember it. In Exodus 19 and 20, God gave the law, the Ten Commandments, and he gave those commandments to men and woman. And he promised to men and woman, those who obeyed would be blessed and those who disobeyed would be punished or cursed and that was given equally to men and women, therefore it was from the very beginning laid down by God that both men and women are responsible for their spiritual life and their obedience before God. In Deuteronomy 6, where you have the shama, the Lord our God is one. The Lord is one, and then you have the instruction that you are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. That is not set apart only for men, that is for men and woman. And the families were to talk about it all the time, teach it to their children so that both the external Decalogue of Exodus 19 and 20 and the internal attitude of love toward God were required of men and women.

There was no difference in those areas. In Exodus 12, when God ordained the Passover, which was the single greatest celebration in the calendar of the year for the Jews, that great celebration of God's redemptive power in delivering them from Egypt, that was for men and women. Both of them were to be involved not only in responsible Christian or responsible biblical behavior, responsible obedience, but they were also responsible to be engaged in the praise and the worship festivals of the people. Men and women. Further, it is interesting to me that throughout the Old Testament penalties given for sin were given equally for all people, men or women. I was reading one of them this morning in Exodus chapter 21 versus 28 to 31, where it talks about what do you do to an ox who gores a man or a woman? A manservant or a maidservant, a brother or a sister and this position of the animal and that case under the law of the God was the same. In other words, God valued the life of a man and a life of a woman equally and the punishment of the animal that did that was the same in either case. So they had quality on the spiritual level, in terms of spiritual responsibility to obey the law, they had equality on the level of worship and praise and the great convocations of Israel, and they also were equal in terms of the value of life as indicated in the sentences and penalties given in regard to sins against them both. It is also very interesting to me that in the Old Testament, the single greatest spiritual vow, known as a Nasserite vow, a vow of separation. That single greatest Nasserite vow, that is a vow of separation from the world. A vow of devotion to God, which cut a person off from the world around them. They took a great giant step of total consecration to God. That Nasserite vow belonged not just to men, although we are most familiar with men who took it but also to women.

Listen to Numbers 6:2, speak to the children of Israel and say to them, when either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nasserite to separate themselves unto the Lord and then it goes on to describe what they do. A woman could take a Nasserite vow just as a man could. The high levels of spiritual commitment were not in any way restricted to men. There was equality in terms of spiritual life and responsibility. Furthermore, in Proverbs chapter 6 and verse 20, very interesting verse indicates that there was equality among the sexes in the knowledge of God's law and the responsibility to teach that law within the family. Proverbs 6:20, my son, keep my father's commandment and forsake not the law of thy mother. The assumption here is that both the father and the mother had known the law of God and when they commanded their children to do things, they were reflecting to those children the truth of God. Both sexes then were responsible to teach the law of God, which means they must know the law of God. Now summing that much of it up, we realized that when God had ordained man and woman, he gave them equal spiritual privilege and responsibility. They were responsible to obey his law. They were both responsible to love him from the heart.

They were responsible to worship and adore him. Their life was of equal value. They were also able, either one, to take the vow of absolute, total consecration to God, the supreme level of commitment was available to both of them. And they were responsible, both of them to know the law so that they could pass it on to the next generation. Furthermore, in the Old Testament we see that there is equality between the sexes in regard of God's dealing with woman. God did not avoid dealing directly with women. He didn't go through men every time he wanted to communicate with a woman. He had very intimate, very personal, very glorious and miraculous appearances to women, for example in Genesis 3:13 and following, he appeared to Eve. In Genesis 16 verse 8 and following, he appeared personally to Hagar. In Genesis 18 verses 9 to 15, he appeared personally to Sarah, the wife of Abraham. And in Judges 13:3 he appeared to the mother of Samson. God had personal intimate contact with individual woman. Furthermore, we see the quality of the sexes in the fact that men and women both served God in very special ways.

A choir is described in Nehemiah 7:67 made up of 245 singing men and singing women. They had a part then in the worship of the temple. In leading the temple, in praise through music. In the tabernacle ministry also, in Exodus 38:8, it says there were women who served at the door. Now we don't know what they did, whether they were a welcoming committee, whether they were a cleanup crew. We really don't know what they did, whether they took women aside who were coming to worship and instructed them. Whether they ministered to women in need, but they served the purposes of God in the tabernacle. You can read Deuteronomy 12:10 to 12. You can read 2 Samuel 6. You can read 1 Samuel 1, and many other scriptures and you can find that women shared in the great national convocations of Israel, and that by God's design. So we see then that they had equal spiritual responsibility in terms of their own spiritual life. They were given opportunities of service within the framework of God's design for the people. God personally, intimately appeared to them.

They had ministry opportunity. So they served God in the Old Testament in the spiritual dimension alongside men. Now let me hasten to add this and listen carefully. This does not mean that they had the same role as men. And that is something that we must understand.

When we say that a woman has a different role in society and in the church than a man, we are not in any sense diminishing her spirituality. There are many roles in society there are many functions in society and one great distinguishing line in all those functions is that between man and women. Anybody with any mentality at all knows that. I mean, you can talk about equality till there is no more people left to talk too. And you can do all you can to bring about that equality but no man is every going to produce and bear and give birth to a baby. Obviously, to the most limited intellect men and women have a different role.

I mean, how plain can something be. But to say they have a different role does not depreciate them and does not diminish their spirituality in any sense. But think about role for a minute in the Old Testament. And let's talk about that aspect of it. There are no women kings listed in the kings of Israel and there are no women kings listed in the kings of Judah. There are none. It would seem to me that that is a fairly significant statement about leadership. There are none. There are no women priests in the entire Old Testament. None. There are no women who wrote a book or a portion of a book in the Old Testament. None, 39 books, no one of them or even a portion of one of them, was written by a woman. Though two are named after women, Ruth and Ester, they were not written by women. There is no woman in the entire Old Testament who had an ongoing prophetic ministry. That fascinates me as well. There is no woman who had an ongoing prophetic ministry, who winds up in the Minor Prophets or the Major Prophets or who stands alongside Elijah, Elisha, or any other great teacher or leader of the Old Testament with an ongoing ministry.

Now people today want to advocate woman preachers want to say, but there are several women mentioned as prophetess in the Old Testament. That is correct, there are five and I would like you to listen carefully as I describe those five to you. The first woman listed as a prophetess is Miriam. Miriam is called a prophetess in Exodus 15:20. Miriam is the sister of Moses. She is called a prophetess because and only because she on one occasion lead the women of Israel in a great hymn of praise with timbrel and dance, wherein God gave her a revelation to speak, a very brief one. But at that time, she was a mouthpiece for God. God chose to speak to those women at that time of praise through her.

We know of no other occasion where she ever acted in a prophetic office, and had no ongoing prophetic ministry. The word prophet or prophetess or to prophecy means to speak forth. Obviously, having reference to speaking forth the Word of God on that occasion and she did that, but shows no ongoing prophetic work. The second of the five women called prophetess is a woman named Deborah, who appears as a unique instrument of God in Judges chapter 4. And verse 4, she is therefore called a prophetess only because she was used by God to give a direct revelation from God

to man named Barak. She gave that direct revelation on that unique occasion on the battle that was going on and thus, at that moment, she was a prophetess. She was speaking on behalf of God. God used her at that time to speak that message to an individual. Miriam gave her prophecy to women, and Deborah spoke her prophecy basically to a man, but again, we know of no other occasion wherever she engaged herself in any kind of ongoing prophetic work. The third woman mentioned and called prophetess is Huldah, h-u-l-d-a-h. She is mentioned in 2 Kings 22:14 and following and 2 Chronicles 34:22 and following, parallel passages. She is called a prophetess only because she was given a revelation from God as Deborah was to be given to Hilkiah the priest about the coming judgment on Jerusalem and Judah. God spoke through her on that occasion. We know of no other such occasion, none other is ever recorded about her and we know of no ongoing prophetic ministry.

The fourth woman called a prophetess is a woman named *Noahdiah*, and she is mentioned in Nehemiah 6:14 and is called a false prophetess. So, we eliminate her. She was antagonistic against the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and would have been an ally of Sanballat and Tobiah and the enemies that tried to keep the Jews from rebuilding their city. She was a false prophetess. And there have been many woman false prophetesses to be sure.

The fifth one mentioned is the wife of Isaiah and in Isaiah chapter 8 verse 3, his wife is called a prophetess, only because, she gave birth to a child whose name had prophetic meaning. She never spoke a prophecy. She simply gave birth to a child whose name had prophetic meaning and she is called a prophetess only in that sense. Now you can see from that illustration of the wife of Isaiah, that the word prophetess was used in a somewhat general way. So you have five mentioned. One is a prophetess simply because she gave birth to a child whose name had a prophetic meaning, another is a false prophetess and three are called prophetess because on one occasion, they spoke a word on behalf of God, but there is, and I repeat again, no ongoing prophetic ministry of a woman in the Old Testament.

Now what does that tell us? Without woman kings, without women priests and without woman authors of Scripture and without woman prophets we learn very much about God's design for the role of man and women. Please keep in mind that this is not to speak depreciating in any way, the woman's spiritual capability. It is talking about her role. And we'll fill that out as we go down through the rest of the passage. No woman in the Old Testament is seen in an ongoing role of leadership under the authority and the plan of God or in any public preaching, teaching ministry.

But women were used by God in many, many areas. Now we come to the New Testament, listen to what I show you in the New Testament which parallels that. The same equality of blessing and privilege is in the New Testament. The same thing is there. Let's go to Galatians chapter 3. And this is the passage that seems to be creating the controversy. Galatians 3:28 and this is where people who advocate women ordination and woman elders and women preachers and all that, this is where they like to go. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither bond nor free, there is neither male

nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Now, that's pretty simple and I don't have a problem with that and you don't. No one really should. All it is saying we are all one in Christ, in what sense? In what sense are we one in Christ? Well, you need to read the context to find out what he's talking about. So you go back a little bit and you find out that he's talking about salvation, you go back, for example, well, you could go back to verse 13, Christ has redeemed us. And he talks a little about redemption. You could go back to verse 22, the Scriptures concluded everybody under sin and then the promise by faith of Jesus Christ is given to them that believe and of course, that is another way to look at salvation, we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are at the end of verse 24, justified by faith. That is we are made right with God through our faith, verse 26, we are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, we have all been baptized into Christ. We have put on Christ. So the equality and the oneness he speaks of, listen carefully, is that we are all one in the sense of salvation.

You see that? There is nothing to do with the role of a woman or a man. We are all one in Christ. The point is, everyone can come to Christ. It doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, it doesn't matter if you are a bond slave or a free man. It doesn't matter if you are man or a woman, you can all receive eternal life in Christ, is that not the obvious intent of the passage, of course, we are all sons of God.

We are all the seed of Abraham. That is we are connected to Abraham who is sort of like the father of those who have faith. We are all heirs, verse 6 of chapter 4. We are all sons. We all possess the Holy Spirit. The whole passage before and after is talking about the wonderful reality of salvation in Christ which is available to all people, Jew, Gentile, bond, free, male, or female, that's all it's talking about. It has nothing to do with the role of women in the church. And it certainly doesn't mean that when you become a Christian, all that is rubbed out. I mean, do we preach that when a Jew becomes a Christian he ceases to be a Jew? Or if you are a slave and you become a Christian you are no longer a slave, or if you a freeman and you become a Christian you are no longer a freeman, no, whatever you are you are. You are a Christian Jew or a Christian Gentile. You are a Christian Freeman or a Christian bondman. You are a Christian man or a Christian woman. You don't stop being a man or a woman. No, those distinctions are obviously maintained. And so it's a ludicrous distortion of Scripture to try and take that passage and advocate through it that roles are equal when it's not even talking about roles, it's talking only about spiritual life available through the grace of God in Jesus Christ. There is no question that there is spiritual equality in the New Testament. All the commands of the new testament, all the spiritual promises of the New Testament, all the blessings of the new testament, all the accountability of the New Testament spiritually in terms of how we live and what God will do in response to it, is enjoined upon men and women. It is not isolate to men only. But to men and women, so we have all the same spiritual resources, all the same spiritual promises, all the same spiritual responsibilities. And I am not even going to take time to go through all the New Testament and explain that to you, everything you read in here is for men and women. Never is that distinction sorted out in terms of spiritual responsibility or blessing or capacity. But, though there is equality again, as in the Old Testament in the spiritual duties and spiritual blessings. There is a still a difference in roles. In roles.

For example, in the New Testament, there is no woman preacher, none. There is not a woman pastor/teacher. There is not a woman elder, there is not a woman evangelist. There is not a woman who wrote and you have 27 books in the New Testament, any portion of the New Testament. All 66 books are written by men and the New Testament is consistent with God's plan for women as revealed in the old. No woman is an evangelist. No woman is a preacher/teacher, no woman pastors a congregation. No woman takes the role of an elder. There is no recorded in the text of all the New Testament a sermon delivered by a woman or teaching given by a woman. None. They are not prophets, they are not evangelists, and so women will come along and say, but what about the four daughters of Philip in Acts 21:9 it says, and Philip had four daughters, virgins who did prophesy. It does not say they were prophets. It does not say they were evangelist. It does not say they were missionaries. It does not say they were elders. It does not say they were pastor teachers. It says they prophesied. Some time, someplace like Deborah or Miriam by God's design and God's holy purpose, they gave a word from God. We don't know why or how. We don't know whether they spoke in unison like a quartet or whether they spoke independently of each other. We just know that there was a time and a place that God spoke through them. Listen, Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus herself spoke prophetically when she received from the Word of God himself the response, you remember in the presence of Elizabeth and she poured out what is become known as her magnificent, her glory to God. She gives an utterance that is divine inspiration, in that sense, Mary prophesied, spoke forth, the word means. Spoke forth the Word of God and I'm sure there were many occasions when other women spoke forth the Word of God. In 1 Corinthians 11:5, it even says, a woman who prays or prophesies should have her head covered. There were times and places for women to pray and to speak for the Word of God.

It says in Acts 2:17 that in the later times, quoting from Joel, women will prophesy. It says your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will dream dreams and your daughters will prophesy. The words simply means speak forth. There are times and places when women speak the Word of God. I hope every woman in this church does that, but that is distinctly different than being identified as a pastor, teacher, elder, evangelist, apostles. There are no woman apostles. There are no women disciples, there are no woman pastors, evangelists, et cetera, et cetera, that has to be noted and no woman wrote any part of the New Testament Scripture. They have different roles. Does that mean that they were inadequate spiritually? Not at all. Not at all.

We are going to get to it women, but do you realize that men are in most cases the product of women. Not only physically, in that sense, they are all products of women, but in terms of their character development, they are most strongly influenced by woman. Timothy who learned at the feet of his mother and grandmother is a product himself of a woman who learned the Word of God and who spoke it forth. But that is very much different than taking the role intended for men in the church.

Now let me speak a little further about the equality of sexes so you are not misled by this. In no sense is a woman second class in the New Testament. For example, Jesus first lead a woman to the knowledge of himself in John 4, the first person he ever exposed his Messiahship to was a woman. Not just a woman, but a wicked woman who had a whole handful of husbands and was living in adultery. It was to that woman of Samaria he met at the well in Sychar that he brought the wonderful truth of who he was and I believe brought her salvation. In Luke 13 and Mark 5, Jesus healed woman. He had just as much compassion on them as he did on men. He was just as concerned to heal them as he was men. Jesus taught women, Luke 10:38 to 42, shows him in that role of teaching women. He was ministered to personally. It says in Luke 8 verse 3 that a whole group of woman surrounded him and offered their care and support and sustenance. I don't know what their ministry was. Maybe they provided food and lodging and perhaps repaired clothes and perhaps came along side to pray, but the traveling band of disciples would be Jesus and the disciples and a whole group of women. But at no time do those women preach or teach. They had a role there, but that role was distinct from Christ and the 12. In John when a sinful woman was dragged before Jesus, he defended that sinful woman, forgave her sin, loved her, redeemed her and then chastised the men who hypocritically condemned her without condemning themselves for the same sin.

Jesus called woman to the highest priority in life and that was to obedience. He called women to be obedient Luke 11:28 is an illustration of that. When Jesus rose from the dead to whom did he first appear? A man or a woman? First appeared to a woman and Jesus called for women to be evangelized. He said, go into the all the world, Mark 16:50 and preach the gospel to every creature, that includes women. In 1 Peter 3, he said, yes, women are the weaker vessel. That's by the design of God, physically they are weaker, sure. Men are to be their protector and they are to be their strength, but even as the weaker vessel he said, you too are heirs together of the grace of life. When it comes to inheriting grace from God, you inherit it together. The fruit of the Spirit of Galatians 5 is for men and women. The blessing of obedience are for men and women. And when Paul chronologs in Romans 16, all the people who helped him in his ministry, the list is full of women. You see, beloved, women have a very, very important place in the economy of God and they are on equal level with the men in terms of spiritual life. But not role.

Now that's why he says, and let's look at our text, let the women learn. They have to learn. Why? How else can they speak it to their children? How else can they give counsel to others? How else can they be used to bring people to Christ? How else can they live obediently to the glory of God? How else can they be blessed? How else can they be enriched? Let the women learn. This does not rub out the difference. The difference is the same, it's there, God's designed it. And I want it to be clearly understood when we say there is a difference between the role of a man and a woman, we are in no sense saying there is a difference in their spiritual capacity or their need to know the Word of God.

Now as we close, I want to say something very personal. I thank God over the years at this church for the tremendous, tremendous ministry that women have had. I want you to know that this church

wouldn’t be in the place that it’s in now, being so blessed by God if it were not for the women of this church. I have never seen a church with more aggressive, faithful, Christ exalting women than this church. And I have never seen a church where women feel more freedom, more liberty, more joy, more exhilaration in doing that ministry, and yet from the outside we are accused of being chauvinistic. We are accused of being narrow minded, antiquated, traditional. We are accused of belonging to the dinosaur age. But the truth of the matter is, I praise God that for all the years of my ministry in this church a high priority has been to let the woman learn. I rejoice that woman are learning in this church and from the very earliest days when on Tuesday mornings I taught a woman’s Bible study, where right on through to today where we now have every week, every woman’s grace which is a learning time on Wednesdays. We have every woman’s grace, I don’t know if you know this, in English. We have every woman’s grace in Spanish, and we have an every woman’s grace on Friday in Korean and woman are learning and it’s marvelous, it’s marvelous. It strengths even dimension of the life of the church and many of you men can be blessed by God and grateful to him that your wife has grown and learned things from the Word of God that can enrich her own life and her relationship to you and your family.

I praise God for that. I don't believe, as the press tries to paint it and as people outside try to paint it that we have a whole lot of deprived women who are bound in a traditionalism that’s not true to the contemporary mentality as I read about us in this and that. I believe that our woman at Grace Community Church have experienced the true freedom to be all that God wants them to be in the role that God has designed for them. And I thank God for all of you and I thank God for the commitment of this whole church to the fact that women have to learn.

So Paul says, let the women learn and we shall be committed whole-heartedly to that so that they can fulfill their role. Having said that in that verse 11, he then qualifies it by saying, in silence with all subjection. And you say, wait a minute. What’s that mean? And I say, come back next Sunday. And I’ll tell you what it means. Let’s bow in prayer. Father, we can’t express in words what a joy it is to be a part of a fellowship where there are Godly men and Godly women. To be part of a church where the woman have learned and lived the truth of your Word.

Where they know the freedom of Christ to be a part of a fellowship where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female. To know that all of us together enjoy the blessings of spiritual life in thee. Where all of us enjoy the richness of the precious Word. I thank you Lord, through the many years for the women who have learned, who have read the books and listened to the tapes and studied on their own. Who have hard the teaching and who as a result of that, are serving effectively for you in their families and in their areas of life and responsibility and even in the church. I thank you, Father for that. I thank you for these Godly women who understand both the high priority of spiritual equality and also the very clear definition of the role you have designed for them. Bless them Lord, and honor them for that faithfulness.

I thank you also, Lord, that you have been so clear in your Word. That these things are so obvious to us. As we look at your holy book. Help us, Lord, to be a part of the solution, not the problem. Help us to clearly define the place of man and the place of woman so that each can come to the fullest satisfaction of living out the divine intention. And may we know that any perversion of that is a terrible tragedy as it alters your plan, violates your will, and brings great distress on to people who otherwise would be fully satisfied in the place of your design. Make us willing, Lord, to be what you want us to be and to rejoice in that privilege, and to fulfill the role that you have given us in order that your kingdom might go forward.

That we might be blessed and your name exalted. Amen.

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