

PROPER CONDUCT IN THE CHURCH

TEXT: I TIMOTHY 2:7-15

INTRODUCTION:

1. The Lord called Paul to be a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity (truth).
2. "Ordained" (2:7) means God appointed Paul to this ministry.
3. Chapter 2 begins with prayer, and Paul returns to this theme again in verse 8. Praying everywhere "without wrath and doubting" is easy enough to understand, but the reference to "lifting up holy hands" (2:8) has puzzled some people.
4. First of all, Paul says "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere..." (2:8). Paul says in I Corinthians 14:34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak."
5. These Scriptures indicate women should not lead in public prayer (cf. I Tim. 2:11-13).
6. Perhaps "lifting up holy hands" (2:8) was customary in the apostolic church. It was customary for Jewish men to pray with their arms extended and their hands open to heaven.
7. "Holy" hands indicates the man praying is a godly man living a holy life.
8. Psalm 24:3 and 4 says, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."
9. Therefore, the emphasis should be on "holy," not on the "hands."
10. After his instructions about men leading in prayer, Paul moves on to the conduct of women in the church (2:9-15).

I. MODEST APPAREL (2:9)

1. Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines "modestly" this way: "Not boldly; not arrogantly or presumptuously; with due respect; decently, as, to be modestly attired; to behave modestly. Not excessively; not extravagantly." (Compare I Tim. 2:9b)
2. Here is how Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines "modesty" -- "The word is used also as synonymous with chastity, or purity of manners. In this sense, modesty results from purity of mind, or from the fear of disgrace and ignominy fortified by education and principle.

- Unaffected modesty is the sweetest charm of female excellence, the richest gem in the diadem of their honor." (Compare I Tim. 2:9b)
3. Here is how Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines "immodest" -- "Wanting in decency; Wanting in chastity; unchaste; lewd; as an immodest female. Impure; indelicate; obscene."
 4. Here is Webster's 1996 edition's definition of "modesty": "Showing regard for the decencies of behaviour, speech, dress, etc. Decent: *a modest neckline on a dress.*"
 5. First Timothy 2:9 reminds us that most modern dress styles are indecent and inappropriate and immodest -- tight slacks, low-cut blouses, mini-skirts, shorts, bikini bathing suits, etc.
 6. Some Christians teach that tight pants on women are immodest, but loose pants on women are acceptable. However, Deuteronomy 22:5 says, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God."
 7. There should be a distinction between men and women's clothing, but nowadays that distinction has been erased.
 8. Even secular writers and secular publications are complaining about the sloppy way people dress today -- nasty-looking blue jeans and tee-shirts are now considered acceptable attire for both men and women going to work or to church or going out to eat in a restaurant, etc.
 9. "Modest apparel" (2:9) indicates that some apparel is immodest, and Christian women should set a good example by dressing modestly.
 10. Proverbs 7 describes a young man void of understanding, meeting "a woman with the attire of an harlot" (Pro. 7:7).
 11. A preacher said, "God clothed Adam and Eve, but ever since then the devil has been trying to unclothe their descendents."
 12. Remember the demon-possessed maniac in Gadara? After Jesus cast out the demons, the first thing the man did was put some clothes on. Mark 5:15 says, "And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. "
 13. First Timothy 2:9 is not only referring to the woman's modest attire, but her deportment, the manner in which she conducts herself. In a similar passage in I Peter 3, Peter refers to "the hidden man of the heart" and "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:4).
 14. We seldom hear the word "shamefacedness" (I Tim. 2:9) these days. Richard Trench's *Synonyms of the New Testament* defines the word as

"prudence, which shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty."

II. WOMAN'S CONDUCT IN CHURCH (2:9-14)

1. The word "sobriety" (2:9) means, "self-control." John Phillips says the word means to have "complete command of one's passions."
2. Phillips says, "It refers to the inner discipline that erects barriers to prevent one's natural lust from stampeding" (*Exploring the Pastoral Epistles*).
3. Certainly dressing modestly is a good way to put up a barrier. Jesus said in Matthew 5:28, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."
4. In addition to dressing modestly, women should have a modest demeanor -- "(which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (2:10).
5. "Broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (2:9) refers to worldly attempts to look glamorous and attractive, etc.
6. Phillips says, "The believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and is not to be the vehicle for elaborate display of worldliness and wealth. Christian women have other, nobler ways of accenting their personal beauty" (*Exploring the Pastoral Epistles*).
7. Sunday evening we looked at the life and ministry of Tabitha (Dorcas), an example from Acts 9 of a Christian woman "professing godliness with good works" (2:10; cf. Acts 9:36-43).
8. First Timothy 2:11 and 12 are not popular with modern worldly women, but our authority is the Word of God, not bossy women's lib leaders.
9. These Scriptures do not refer to a woman teaching in a secular setting, but refer to a woman preaching or teaching the Word of God. There are no female pastors in the Bible, and female preachers were unheard of until modern times (cf. I Tim. 3:1-5).
10. As liberalism started corrupting the churches, they abandoned their Biblical standards and accepted female pastors.
11. Titus 2:3 and 4 says the aged women "may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."
12. Women should teach women and children, but women teaching men in the church is unscriptural. Paul gave two reasons for the

- subordination of women: the order of creation (2:13), and the story behind the fall of man (2:14, 15).
13. Adam and Eve were not created simultaneously. Eve was "formed" in order to be Adam's helpmate. The LORD took one of Adam's ribs, and from that rib, he made Eve (Genesis 2:21-23).
 14. By creating man first, God intended for him to be the head, the one who would give direction, the one who would have the authority (cf. I Cor. 11:3, 8, 9).
 15. First Timothy 2:13 teaches that God's program goes all the way back to creation. It is not merely a cultural issue as some liberals teach.
 16. Paul also mentions the fall of man (I Tim. 2:14). Both Adam and Eve sinned, but Eve was the one who was deceived by the devil.
 17. Here is an interesting quote from Pastor W.A. Criswell, "I read where one of these feminists was ranting and raving before an audience, and she said, 'I ask you, where would the man be without the woman?' And, there was silence. And, she repeated again, and said, 'I ask you again. Where would the men be without the women?' And, when she stopped the second time, a fellow in the balcony hollered out and said, 'I'll tell you. We'd be in the garden of Eden.'"

III. SAVED IN CHILDBEARING (2:15).

1. In my opinion this is one of the most difficult verses in the Bible. It certainly does not teach that women are saved from hell by giving birth, for that would contradict the Gospel.
2. The word "saved" is used in different ways in the Bible.
3. For example, Matthew 8:25 says the disciples asked to be "saved" from shipwreck out on the tempestuous sea.
4. First Timothy 2:15 says the woman shall be saved *in* childbearing, not saved *by* childbearing.
5. In verse 15, Paul switches from "she" (singular, referring to Eve) to "they" (plural, referring to women in general).
6. D. Edmond Hiebert says childbearing "denotes the proper sphere in which the woman finds the true fulfillment of her destiny. It speaks of the highest ideal of Christian womanhood. It brings out that which is noblest and best within her being" (*First Timothy*).
7. Today, the worldly crowd belittles child bearing and motherhood, but God's Word magnifies it.

8. By accepting their God-given functions, women can be saved from deception, and saved from the trouble that results from violating the clear teachings of Scripture.
9. God has established different roles for men and women. And if these roles are ignored, there will be confusion, tension, turmoil, and trouble.
10. The woman can be saved from all of this by submitting to God's Word (cf. I Tim. 4:16).
11. Their deliverance from deception and from trouble is conditional – “if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety” (I Tim. 2:15b).

CONCLUSION:

"In this passage God puts before us the consistent Christian woman -- and what a testimony for God is such a woman in the world today! I do not know of anyone whose influence counts more than that of a godly woman. It counts with her husband, the children, and with all those with whom she has to do. I do not know of anything that puts a greater reflection on Christianity than a careless, slothful, vain, carnal woman professing to be a Christian" -- H.A. Ironside (*I Timothy*).