

# April 2019 Newsletter



Sundays At 6:30 AM on



**Editor's Note:** This month we are running only one article instead of two; thus, we will not be able to print an article by one of our brethren in another country. This article covers a much-needed subject, and Christians in every country will benefit from having this information.

## THE MODERN APPLICATION OF 1 TIMOTHY 2:11-12

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*"Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:11-12).*

The instruction delivered by the Apostle Paul in the above passage is widely rejected by the denominational world. As postmodern society increasingly embraces egalitarianism in all aspects of life, many dismiss Paul's teaching here as "misogynistic" and "obsolete." Is Paul simply antagonistic toward a woman's public speaking ability? Or is there spiritual wisdom behind his words?



### Setting

When exegeting a text, it is always important to pay attention to the context in which it was written. One purpose of Paul's letters is to instruct Timothy and the Ephesian church to be wary of a particular strain of false teaching that would appear in coming days. One characteristic of this false teaching was the subversion of traditional role distinctions between men and

women in favor of a more egalitarian view. While this idea is not stated explicitly in Paul's epistle, it can be inferred with a high degree of probability, based on the tenets of this false teaching. It is similar in many aspects to the false teaching that prompted Paul to write 1 Corinthians: (1) It involves a denial of a future, physical resurrection in favor of a present, "spiritual" resurrection (**2 Timothy 2:18; 1 Corinthians 15**), leading to incorrect attitudes toward (2) food (**1 Timothy 4:3; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13**), (3) marriage (**1 Timothy 4:3; 1 Corinthians 7**), and (4) disregard for appropriate gender roles (**1 Timothy 2:9-15, 5:13-14; 1 Corinthians 11:2-18**). Paul's teaching in **1 Timothy 2:11-15** is a response to this false teaching regarding gender roles.

### Appropriate Behavior for Christian Women (verses 8-11)

Having encouraged Christian women to "dress modestly, with propriety and moderation" rather than having elaborate hair styles and wearing ostentatious clothes, Paul then reminds Timothy that Christian women are to adorn themselves with "good works." He warns about certain activities that do

not fall into this category. In verse 11, he commands women to "learn in silence with all submission." Paul's teaching here is straightforward: in the public assembly of the church, women are expected to demonstrate submission to God's order of headship by learning quietly and peaceably. According to **1 Corinthians 14:33-36**, this rule is not limited to the Corinthian church: it is the rule "in all the churches of the saints."

**4/7 Sermon #1190**  
Your Worst Enemy

**4/14 Sermon #1191**  
Social Drinking

**4/21 Sermon #1192**  
Evidence of Jesus' Residence

**4/28 Sermon #1193**  
Keeping Connected

### Prohibitions on the Ministry of Women (verse 12)

The concept of “all submission” connects the command in verse 11 with the prohibitions in verse 12: “*And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.*” The grammatical construction of verse 12 indicates Paul has two distinct activities in mind—“teaching” and “having authority.” What kind of teaching is under consideration here? The Greek word in this passage translated as “teach” (*didaskein*) is used in the New Testament primarily to indicate the transmission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the authoritative proclamation of God’s will to believers (e.g. **1 Timothy 4:11**). Paul certainly has the preaching and teaching of the Bible and doctrine in a public forum in view here. As for the following word (*authentēin*), the majority of textual scholars agree that “*to have authority over*” is the most accurate rendering. This definition would extend the limitations placed on a woman to positions of church leadership (elder, deacon) and from taking a leadership role in the assembly (leading a song, leading a prayer).

### An Appeal to Creation (verses 13-14)

Opponents of Paul’s instructions frequently argue that application of this passage is circumstantial and applies only to women who succumb to false teaching. Others suggest that Paul was compelled to conform to existing cultural standards regarding women’s roles, thus rendering his command obsolete. But Paul makes it clear that although local issues at Ephesus provide the *context* of the issue, they do not provide the *reason* for his admonition. He demonstrates this point by appealing to the order of Creation: “*For Adam was formed first, then Eve*” (**verse 13**). Man’s priority in the order of creation indicates that man is to have headship over woman. The fact that woman was created after man to be his helper shows that God intended for submission to be an inherent part in the woman’s relationship to the man. It is this submission that is violated if a woman teaches doctrine publicly or exercises authority over a man. There is no indication that restrictions are the product of sin or the fall of man; on the contrary, they are the product of Creation itself!

### Positive Roles for Christian Women (verse 15)

In verse 15, the apostle provides a qualification to what

he said in the previous verses: if a woman cannot teach or have authority over a man, in what other ways can she be a diligent worker in the kingdom? Although the ministry of women is limited in respect to the public assembly of the church, there are several other key roles that Paul instructs women to fulfill: instructing other women and children; being faithful, helpful wives; raising children to love and revere God; managing the household (**1 Timothy 5:14; 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15; Titus 2:3-5**). In this verse, Paul uses the example of “*childbearing*” as a representation of appropriate female roles because it is a universally recognized distinction between the roles of men and women.

### Conclusion

It is apparent that the prohibitions of **1 Timothy 2:11-12** remain applicable to the church today. The New Testament’s teaching on this matter is consistent, and there are no good textually-supported reasons to limit its application. The root cause of society’s objection to Paul’s instructions is that it teaches distinct gender roles, which postmodernists denounce as “misogynistic.” But a difference in role or function does not inherently imply that women are inferior to men. On this matter, New Testament scholar Thomas R. Schreiner writes:

“The Son will submit to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:28), and yet he is equal to the Father in essence, dignity and personhood. It is a modern, democratic, Western notion that diverse functions suggest distinctions in worth between men and women. Paul believed that men and women were equal in personhood, dignity, and value but also taught that women had a distinct role from men...The different inclinations of women (and men!) do not imply they are inferior or superior to men. They simply demonstrate that men and women are profoundly different. Women have some strengths that men do not have, and men have some strengths that are generally lacking in women. Yet some people become enraged at any suggestion that men and women have different strengths and weaknesses...” (*Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*).

Our society’s conflict with this text is not exegetical, but emotional; and human emotion should never be allowed to overrule Biblical authority.



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