

\* The Heights Baptist Church \* Series: 1 Timothy: Instructions for the Church \*  
\* Topic: Guidelines for Worship \* Scripture: 1 Timothy 2 \* 5/12/2024 \*

## MAIN POINT

Public worship should include prayer and draw attention to God, not ourselves.

## INTRODUCTION

**Can you think of any advice shared with you by your parents, father-in-law, mother-in-law, or grandparents that really stuck with you?**

In today's lesson, we continue our study of 1 Timothy. This letter contains counsel on how Timothy should best lead the church at Ephesus. The lessons from this counsel can be applied to our church today as well. Paul spent the first chapter of 1 Timothy underscoring the importance of the gospel and the importance of not allowing peripheral issues from diluting or derailing the gospel message. Now in chapter 2, Paul switches to an emphasis on how to put that lesson into practice. What follows is a concise description of lessons on how the church is to apply the gospel in their worship, and in the real world.

## UNDERSTANDING

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

**According to verses 1 and 2, what kinds of prayers should we pray? For whom should we pray?**

In verse 1 Paul mentioned four specific types of prayers, that are to be made for all people. Petitions are requests for important needs in our lives. Prayers are additional requests. Intercessions are requests made on behalf of others. Thanksgivings are expressions of gratitude.

**Why did Paul say we are to pray for people in authority?**

So "that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." (ESV)

**How important do you think it is that we pray these prayers in America today?**

Very important. Society's support for Christians in America over the past 300 years is an anomaly when viewed in light of Christianity since the onset of the church at Pentecost.

**What do verses 3-7 add to our motivation to pray?**

1. Our prayer is pleasing to God.
2. God wants all people to be saved.
3. Through Christ, we don't need to come to God through another mediator. We have direct access to God.
4. Paul has the right and responsibility as an apostle of Christ to the gentiles to direct us to pray in this way.

## COUNSEL FOR MEN IN THE CHURCH

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 TIMOTHY 2:8

**What three directions does Paul give men in the church in this verse?**

1. Pray, lifting up holy hands.
2. Pray, without anger.
3. Pray, without disputing.

**What do you think Paul meant by “holy hands”?**

“Lifting up holy hands” was a typical posture for prayer in the Bible. Hands reaching toward God, focusing on God and glorifying him rather than the things of the world. And the hands must be holy, set apart for God. “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.” Psalm 66:18

**How can anger or arguing distract a person from true communion with God through prayer?**

All of these attributes show a focus on “self” and on wrongdoing by other people rather than on God.

**Why do you think Paul chose to specifically identify the men in the church for this exhortation?**

Men may tend to struggle worse than women do with issues such as anger or arguing.

**Can these principles also be applied to women in the church today?**

Yes. All of us need to beware of allowing sin, anger, or argumentativeness to take roost in our lives. Any of these things will prevent us from worshipping God as we should.

**COUNSEL FOR WOMEN IN THE CHURCH**

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 TIMOTHY 2:9-15

**How would you define “modesty”? Would you describe America’s secular culture as being “modest” (Remember to keep your answers rated “G” ☺)?**

**What are women to adorn themselves in, rather than in elaborate clothing and jewelry?**

One important reason to dress “modestly” is to avoid wearing clothing that may be too revealing, which can tempt our brothers and sisters in Christ, possibly impeding their pure walk with the Lord. But that doesn’t appear to be Paul’s primary concern in these verses, nor was he telling women to dress unattractively. He wanted them to avoid dressing for worship in a manner that drew attention away from God and onto themselves. Rather than give in to the cultural pressures to dress to demonstrate one’s importance, power, or social status, Paul wanted women to adorn themselves with good works and sincere devotion to God.

**What point is Paul making in verse 10, when he says women need to adorn themselves with what is “appropriate for women who profess to worship God”?**

If we are professing to be worshipping God but are drawing attention to ourselves rather than God in the process, this is not in the spirit of true worship.

**Why do you think Paul chose to specifically identify the women in the church for this exhortation?**

Women may tend to struggle worse than men regarding concerns about their appearance.

**Can these principles also be applied to men in the church today?**

Yes. All of us need to beware of promoting self rather than God in church.

**What is the difference between all Christians being of equal value in God’s eyes (Gal. 3:26-38) and being identical to each other? Why is it important to recognize the difference?**

Having different job functions does not make one person a better person than the next. We are all made in God’s image, and as Christians, we are all co-heirs in God’s family. To forget this tempts us to compare ourselves with ourselves, and these comparisons tend to lead to sins of pride, envy, and jealousy.

## ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 20:25-28

**What other issues make it difficult for us to choose to serve each other in Christ, rather than promote ourselves, or try to get our own way?**

These are our natural tendencies in our sinful natures, and also the way the world is training us to go.

**What point did Paul make by bringing up Adam and Eve (vv. 13-14)? How does the gospel help us understand our gender roles?**

By referencing Adam and Eve, Paul rooted the different roles of men and women in God's created order, when He created male and female to complement and complete each other. God gave men and women different roles, and these roles should be demonstrated in both the Christian home and in corporate worship. Rom. 5:12 tells us that Adam is the one responsible for bringing death on all of mankind because of his sin. He was not deceived directly by Satan, but he deliberately chose to sin, knowingly disobeying God's law.

***Note to study leader:** Christians have struggled to interpret Paul's expectation that in Christian worship, women should be silent and be in submission. He wasn't requiring that the Christian women never say a word aloud, as demonstrated in 1 Cor. 11:5, where Paul wrote that women should have a sign of authority over them if they pray or prophesy. In fact, Paul had just spent a significant time writing about each and every believer having a gift and how to use that gift for the edification of the Body of Christ. There is also thought that Paul was correcting some of the women for interrupting their husbands while prophesying and drawing attention to themselves as a result. Thus, the instruction to ask questions in their homes. All Scripture must be interpreted within its context and in conjunction with other scriptures. We use easy to understand passages to help us interpret the difficult ones. In this case, we know that there are times when Paul was giving instructions to women on how to use their spiritual gifts and we have evidence of women doing so with God's blessing. So, we must realize that the scriptures do lay out different roles for men and women and we must strive to live out our faith in a way that honors those. We, at the Heights, encourage both men and women to use their God-given gifts and we provide a platform underneath the umbrella of our Pastoral team's authority to do so. We believe that Pastoral oversight keeps us in alignment with scriptural principles. Remember, Paul's focus in 1 Corinthians 14 was on public worship where the church was meeting as a whole unit. Isn't it wonderful to see how God uses both men and women to their fullest for His Glory and Purposes! Other references include 1 Cor. 11:5; Gal. 3:26-29; 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:12; and 1 Peter 3:3-4.*

***Note to study leader:** Verse 15 is not the easiest verse to interpret. A couple of major points should be made. First, Paul was NOT saying that childbearing was a good work that women needed to perform to earn salvation. Scripture is quite clear salvation is by grace alone, and not by works. Secondly, men and women are of equal value in Christ. Paul said in Galatians 3:26-28 that "in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." In their culture, men went out to work, and women managed the home. This verse may be warning women against idleness (see chapter 5:13). Raising children while serving as a good mother and wife kept these women involved in work of the highest importance, while minimizing situations where they found themselves with nothing to do. And, as we can see from other scriptures and from our own personal experiences, people tend not to be very good at dealing with an abundance of free time.*

**Why do you think 1 Timothy 2:9-15 is such a difficult one for many of us to understand and accept?**

## APPLICATION

**What specific steps do you need to take to help you get your focus and the focus of others in the church off of you and onto Christ as you worship together?**

**What are some things you can do to help you remember to pray for our leaders on a weekly basis?**

## PRAYER

We thank you God, for our church leaders. We pray that their ministry to the church would be favorably received by the congregation, so that they may serve us with joy and be refreshed in the church. Help us respect them and highly esteem them in love because of their work. And we thank you for our brothers and sisters in Christ, for their faith in Christ Jesus and for their love for all your people. We pray that we would embrace your call to be the biblical men and women He created us to be. In Jesus' name we pray.

## COMMENTARY

2:1 Paul didn't write 1 Timothy as an exhaustive treatise on church organization. Instead, he wrote to give Timothy confidence to face those who spread false doctrine and undercut the church's commission to evangelize. Therefore, Paul's first line of defense was prayer. In this verse, the apostle mentioned four different words for prayer. Petitions included requests individuals made of God. The term prayers was the most general word. Intercessions included prayers for other believers. The thanksgivings Paul mentioned probably included gratitude for God's blessings. The apostle may not have intended any sharp distinction among the four terms. The use of all four terms emphasizes the importance of prayer in overcoming the false teaching in Ephesus and in winning the lost to Christ. The subject of these prayers included everyone—indicating the breadth of Paul's concern.

2:2 Paul encouraged Timothy to pray for governmental authorities who could help provide an environment conducive to evangelism.

2:3 A quiet life of dignity and godliness pleases God. God is also pleased when believers express concern for the salvation of others.

2:4 Paul directly connected evangelism with pleasing God in this verse. Prayer for the lost pleases God because God wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. The false teachers promoted lies, but Paul encouraged Timothy to pray that those lies would be exposed. "Come to the knowledge of the truth" is a way of referring to being converted. "The truth" is often used in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus as a synonym for the gospel.

The Greek word translated "saved" can convey various meanings, including "to deliver, preserve, protect, heal," and "make whole." In the context of 1 Timothy 2:4 the word refers specifically to conversion, to the transformation that occurs when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior. Paul understood salvation in the believer's experience as embracing the past, present, and future. The initial moment of salvation, occurring when an individual accepts Christ as Savior, is sometimes referred to as justification. At that moment a believer enters into an eternally secure relationship of peace with God. Salvation, however, also continues in a process called sanctification or becoming more like Christ. The believer is enabled to progress toward spiritual maturity through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Ultimately the believer's salvation will culminate in a future glorification, or deliverance from the power of sin. Such is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed with Christ. These various aspects of salvation motivated Paul to share the gospel with unbelievers.

2:5 In verses 5-6 Paul reiterated the contents of the truth, the gospel. He affirmed the Old Testament declaration that there is one God (see Deut. 6:4). However, the apostle also added that there is only one mediator between God and people. Jesus is that mediator. The term mediator refers to an arbiter or negotiator between two sides in dispute. Paul knew that only through Christ, both fully God and fully man, can sinful human beings come to God. Thus the apostle emphasized not only that all people need salvation but also there is only one way for sinful human beings to come to God. These verses provide the theological basis for the preceding statement that God wants people to be saved.

2:6 Jesus brought God and humanity together by offering Himself a ransom for all people. The term ransom refers to a price paid to release captives taken in war or to free slaves from their masters. Sin held people captive and separated them from God. Jesus voluntarily gave His own life—He paid the price—to set us free. The phrase a testimony at the proper time shows that Christ's death, occurring at the perfect time in God's timetable, is testimony and proof that God wants everyone to experience salvation (v. 4).

2:7 Paul's appointment as a herald, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles gave him the opportunity to spread the gospel. The church in Ephesus was in danger of losing its evangelistic zeal. Paul urged believers then and now to move back to the basics—that Jesus died for sinners and wants all people to be saved.

2:8 The word "therefore" resumes the call to prayer from verse 1. Lifting up hands was a typical posture for prayer in the Bible (Ex 9:29; 1Ki 8:22; Ps 28:2; 63:4; Isa 1:15; Lk 24:50).

Paul did not use the generic word signifying mankind, but a word specifically targeting males. With the salvation of the lost in mind, Paul looked at the men of the church and instructed them in effective prayer. Paul's emphasis was on holiness, not physical posturing. The most general demeanor for prayer in the ancient world, for pagans, Jews, and Christians alike, was to stand with hands outstretched and uplifted, palms turned upward. It was in the spirit of such understanding and practice that Paul instructed men to pray with holy hands—to pray out of a character of righteousness, of complete devotion to God, unpolluted with sin. The implication is that our standing before God must be right. The Spirit of God promotes unity, harmony, and order; these are divine qualities. Any time we pervert our identity in Christ and become entangled in divisions, factions, and chaos, the church's mission is compromised, and our prayers are hindered. Our standing with others must be right.

2:9-10. Next Paul directed his attention to the women. He wanted them to dress modestly, with decency and propriety. He then went on to list some things which he deemed inappropriate for women to wear in public worship services: braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes. Paul's call to modesty could also have sexual overtones, recognizing that men easily get distracted and tempted by visual stimuli. A woman of good works calls attention to God and promotes worship. A preoccupation with glamour can cause a mind to wander and possibly awaken lust. Our good deeds as Christian women (and men) are to call attention to God, not ourselves. Character, not clothing, should identify us and promote proper corporate worship.

2:11-12. To learn in quietness and full submission does not mean women should never talk. Quietness here means peaceableness. It could be that as women experienced new freedoms within the Christian community, they began to throw off restraint. Their disagreements, questions, and assertions then became not a learning experience but a disruption that worked against true worship. Paul did not want the women to be contentious. His main concern was the establishment of orderly worship.

Full submission has to do with the overall decorum of women. It has nothing to do with their ability to think or the importance of one person over another. Rather, God has an order for leadership and a preference for character which, in the case of women, includes the qualities of peacefulness, gentleness, and the willingness to surrender questions of spiritual authority to the male. Women were free to question, contemplate, and formulate ideas, but the characteristics of peace and submission were to prevail.

Clearly Paul did not teach that women are inferior to men. But this text does support the idea that men and women are different (some would disagree with this). These teachings about authority have nothing to do with a woman being president of the United States or a corporation. It is specifically about spiritual leadership in the church. (The same hierarchy of authority is extended to the home in Eph. 5:22–33; Col. 3:18–19; and 1 Pet. 3:1–7, with clear commands and responsibilities extended to the husband.) Paul's continued concern is for order, for respect, for a good reputation within the community.

The word for “silent” is used as a noun in 2 Thessalonians 3:12, where people are urged to “settle down.” In Acts 11:18 it is used in reference to people who had no further objections; literally they “held their peace.” And Paul instructed everyone in 1 Thessalonians 4:11: “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life.” This does not mean we are never to mumble a word. Rather, we are to rest in the sovereign teaching and will of God. It is this kind of silence that Paul required of women in worship.

2:13. Paul supported his instructions for men and women upon a theological structure which reaches back to the order of creation and sin's entrance into human affairs. It is a section which is hard to understand in its implications. Probably no teacher is totally convinced of his or her interpretation, and we should not hesitate to admit the difficulty of this section. But it is inspired of God, and so we must attempt to understand what Paul was saying.

He declared, “For Adam was formed first, then Eve.” It appears that Paul was implying a hierarchy from the very start, even before sin. The order of creation evidenced a role structure that placed man in leadership and woman in a supportive position. Perhaps the difference between life before and after the fall is that these structures and positions of authority changed from joyful harmony to festering conflict, from loving leadership to insensitive authoritarianism, from willing submission to agitated compliance. However, by returning to the Genesis account, Paul affirmed that these structures existed from the start and were still valid and operative.



Many Christians understand this section as a cultural issue that had application in first-century society but which does not apply to today. They see it in much the same way as 1 Corinthians 11, which also uses the Genesis account as a basis for women covering their heads in public worship. It is a good reminder that each section of the Bible must be dealt with on its own claim and in concert with other passages of Scripture.

2:14. Paul continued to draw on the Genesis record as he wrote, “Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.” Paul was not trying to cast all blame for humanity’s mess upon Eve or women in general. Nor was he portraying Adam as better or more spiritual. On the contrary, Adam’s sin was more blatant, more intentional. It is good to remember that Paul was writing a personal letter to a fellow minister and a specific group of believers. Timothy’s mission was made clear from the start (1 Tim. 1:3); he was sorting out truth and deception, order and chaos, propriety and license. It is highly possible that this reference to Eve’s deception is a link in understanding Paul’s concerns—women in the Ephesian church were usurping the authority of the church leaders. Perhaps they were also being carried along by the deceptions of the false teachers.

What God says is often contrary to our natural inclinations. But we must remember that we see through the skewed lens of fallen humanity. Even the whole issue of forgiveness grates against our desire for revenge. So we need not always understand the logic of God’s instructions, but we do need to think carefully and then obey.

2:15. Paul declared, “Women will be saved through childbearing.” Which women? What kind of “saved”—eternal salvation? Whose childbearing? Here are two possibilities. First, believing women will be physically protected during childbearing. This has not always been the case, nor does it seem to have much to do with the context in 1 Timothy. Or second, godly women will find fulfillment and safe passage in life by bearing children. This would imply God has a definitive plan for the roles of men and women.

Though universal in scope, the promise of salvation has conditions. It is extended to those who continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety. Though addressed specifically to women since they were the cause of concern at the moment, it is a universal principle—salvation rests with those who bear the marks of genuine Christianity.

## GENESIS 2:18-25

2:18-23. The theme of God providing for Adam’s needs is picked up again here, as God declared that Adam’s being alone is not good. God created the man with a need to relate to one as his complement, and now God will meet that need. Adam’s understanding of the nature of the animals he named only highlighted the differences that existed between him and the rest of God’s creatures: no helper was found as his complement. At what must have been a moment of loneliness in Adam’s life, God stepped in to create one who would perfectly meet Adam’s need. Because God took one of Adam’s ribs to use as His raw material, the woman would correspond perfectly—though not identically—to Adam. Like Adam, the woman possessed God’s image. Adam’s first recorded words express his delight with God’s handiwork and his recognition of the unique suitability of God’s last recorded creation in the creation accounts.

2:24-25. God’s timeless design for marriage is declared here. The one-flesh relationship certainly involves sexual union, but also includes a husband and wife coming together in spiritual, mental, and emotional harmony. Because the devastating effects of sin had not yet ravaged nature or humanity, there was no need for clothing. Adam and Eve could live without the barriers needed to shield them from their environment and each other without a sense of shame.

## ROMANS 16:1-12

16:1-2. Before Paul begins his greetings to his friends in the church in Rome, he commends to them a fellow believer, Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. It is widely agreed that Phoebe was likely the carrier of Paul’s letter to Rome. Her designation as a servant probably implies a position of responsibility in the church at Cenchrea, perhaps that of deaconess. Paul’s request that she be given any help she may need is doubtless a response to the great help she had been to many. Paul’s reference to Phoebe as a great help is

probably more than just physical assistance, meaning that Phoebe was possibly a woman of means who had helped to support the Cenchrean church and possibly Paul himself.

16:3-16. Next, Paul enters into a lengthy list of greetings to acquaintances in Rome. Immediately coming to mind is the image of Christ as the Good Shepherd of His sheep (John 10:3). As a shepherd of the church in Rome, Paul obviously knows many of the sheep there by name. Yet another side of the apostle Paul is seen in his conveyance of personal greetings and expressions of well-being to so many by name. Two final words from Paul in verse 16 add additional insights into the state, or the need, of the church at Rome. First, for the fourth time in his letters, Paul urges the believers to greet one another with a holy kiss (cf. 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; see also 1 Pet. 5:14). Was this exhortation because they were lacking affection for one another or because they were being encouraged to continue it? Either way, it is a good word for the church today. Second, all the churches of Christ send greetings to the church in Rome. These greetings most likely came from the members of Paul's entourage who were about to leave with him on the journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). They would represent churches in Macedonia and Achaia as well as Asia Minor (Galatia). Paul worked hard at doing whatever might increase the unity of the body of Christ.

Many scholars have claimed that Romans 16:7 indicates that Junia (a woman) was an apostle. These verses, in the original Greek, however, can just as easily be interpreted to say that Junia and Andronicus were well known by the apostles.