

Preparation for Session 5

Read I Timothy 2:8 – 15 (concentrate on verses 13 – 15). In this session we will explore Paul's use of the narrative in Genesis 1 - 3 to back his argument for instructions to women regarding their role in the church. During a later session we will return to Paul's specific injunctions regarding the role of women in the church in I Timothy 2:8 – 12.

Consider the following questions:

1. Is I Timothy 2:13 – 15 the critical New Testament passage regarding the role of women in the church? Many have said it is the passage by which all other passages regarding the role of women in the church must be interpreted. If so, why? If not, why?
2. Is Paul speaking of public worship or all situations in which Christian women and men are gathered together in I Timothy 2:8 - 15? What are your reasons for your answer?
3. Is Paul dealing with a specific problem in Ephesus? If so, is I Timothy 2:11 – 13 part of the response to the specific problem or is it the declaration of a general theology? What are the reasons for your answer?
4. What is the significance of Paul using the phrases "I urge..." and "I want..." in the second chapter of I Timothy compared to "Here is a trustworthy saying..." (I Timothy 3:1) or "The Spirit clearly says..." (I Timothy 4:1)?

5. Is Paul referring to the relationship between men and women or to the relationship between husbands and wives in this passage? The Greek words *aner* and *gyne* used in this passage can either refer to men and women or husbands and wives.

6. Is Paul using analogy to make an argument specific to the church in Ephesus or is he reminding Timothy of a general Biblical truth? Consider two accounts of Rahab in the New Testament as possible examples of the use of analogy. (Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25)

7. What do you believe was happening in the church in Ephesus that leads Paul to write I Timothy 2:8 – 15? Many believe a specific heresy had crept into the church in Ephesus. Can you find evidence in the letter for a specific heresy? If so, what is that evidence? If not, what do you believe was the problem in the church? Depending upon your interpretation of the problem in Ephesus, how does the problem relate to I Timothy 2:8 – 15?

8. Are women in general more likely to be deceived than men? Is this what Paul is writing?

9. Is Paul referring to Genesis 2, to Genesis 3 or to both in I Timothy 2:11 – 13?

10. If you do not find evidence of the establishment of male spiritual leadership in Genesis 2, how do you explain Paul's statements regarding Genesis in I Timothy 2:11 – 13?
11. Do you find evidence in the creation narratives (Genesis 1 – 3) that the woman was deceived but not the man? Are there other passages of scripture which suggest that man was deceived as well?
12. What do you think Paul means when he writes “women will be kept safe through childbirth”?