

# Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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**Broadcast Date:** 25 February 2001

**No.** T0151

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## Paul's First Letter to Timothy: 1 Timothy 2:1-15

### A servant for life

Some long while ago now, a well to do gentleman was visiting a market when he noticed a slave being offered for sale. Taking an interest in the event, the gentleman made an offer for this slave and this offer was accepted. He at once noticed the look of total anger on the face of the slave so he enquired as to the meaning of this. The slave challenged him with the charge that he only wanted free labour and he, the slave, was not intending to put himself out for such a harsh man. The new master replied, "I am sorry, you do not understand. I have not bought you to use you harshly, I have bought you to set you free". Suddenly appreciating the power of the love he was being shown, the slave fell on his knees before the master, saying, "Please let me be your servant for life!"

As we read through 1 Timothy 2, we are coming to verses which have caused difficulty to some Christians. Our purpose, however, essentially is to see what the Word of God says so that we can be the "servants for life" of our Master. We do not make our own rules; we seek to know what our Lord has to say to us.

In 1 Timothy perhaps the central verse of the whole letter is 1 Timothy 3:15. This reads, "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God..." Thus the behaviour of Christians in their public gatherings is considered in this Epistle. We have noticed in the first chapter, the responsibilities which Paul undertook for himself and which he also charged those same responsibilities on young Timothy. Timothy is encouraged to be "holding faith, and a good conscience", 1 Timothy 1:19. As we come to 1 Timothy 2 today, we see the behaviour proper to the spiritual Christian. 1 Timothy 2:1-15 breaks simply into two sections:

1. The concerns of God for all men: 1 Timothy 2:1-7;
2. The characteristics of the Christian to be displayed in public gatherings: 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

### 1. The concern of God for all men: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

1 Timothy 2 begins with the encouragement to pray for God's blessing. Prayer is, perhaps, one of the most difficult things to engage the Christian. How do we pray? Do we pray in an orderly way?

#### Four parts to a prayer

We find the Apostle referring to **four parts** of a prayer and it is well to note these again.

- a. There is **supplication**. This refers to the earnestness with which we describe the needs raised. We speak to a God willing to listen but our prayer must not be just a formal desire for His blessing. We must earnestly encourage that blessing.
- b. Then the Apostle mentions **prayers**. This word is more general and indicates the desires or wishes we may have.
- c. The third word Paul uses is **intercessions**. This reminds us of the unhindered communion we can enjoy with God as we bring our needs before Him. So when his nephew, Lot, was in Sodom, how well Abraham interceded so fervently with God for Sodom in Genesis 18:23-33.
- d. Three words have been used to describe the various ways in which we can make known the deep wishes of our hearts. Now there is a fourth word. Every prayer needs to be with **thanksgiving**. God is a God of blessing so we gladly give thanks for the wonderful blessings already received and on which we can depend again day by day. What is my prayer life like?

#### The Subject of Prayer

Next the Apostle tells us of the subject of prayer which concerns him. Prayer is to be made for "**all men**" (1 Timothy 2:1). The Lord Jesus encouraged His disciples to be persistent pray-ers. In Luke 18:1 we read, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint". This is vital for full blessing. When we come to the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, the Apostle encourages "praying ... for all saints", Ephesians 6:18. How often do we remember this?

Perhaps we pray for our own concerns, our brothers and sisters - saints - in difficulty. Do we leave it there? Paul tells Timothy there is another side to this matter of prayer. It should also be for "all men" (1 Timothy 2:1). Men who seem careless of Christ. Men who act in ways which we might reject for various reasons. Paul's prayers were all-inclusive. In addition to the small circle of known acquaintances, Paul adds "all men" and he tells us later the reason for this (1 Timothy 2:4).

Among the "all men" there are kings and those in authority. How much they need our prayers. Perhaps they have burdens which greatly exceed anything we can understand. They are in positions which, with God's help, can allow us to "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty", 1 Timothy 2:2. What a different world this would be if all in authority were fully guided, through the prayers of every Christian today!

The Apostle next tells us that by so praying we are doing what is "good and acceptable" to God for a specific reason. It is all concerned with the tremendous work of salvation, accomplished for "all men", 1 Timothy 2:4, by God our Saviour. We are assured by the Apostle that this Saviour is none other than God and it is God Himself who desires all men to be saved. God has become personally involved in our salvation. It could be achieved in no other way.

### **The Lord Jesus Christ - a Mediator.**

To press this even further, Paul puts the whole truth of salvation in another way. The Lord Jesus Christ is a **Mediator**. If we go back to Job 9:33, Job laments, "Neither is there a daysman [that is, a mediator] betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both". If there were to be understanding between God and Job, this man felt he needed a mediator, one who could "lay his hand upon us both". When we come to 1 Timothy 2:5, Paul reminds Timothy that there is a Mediator - God our Saviour. This Mediator has effectively worked in the life of every believer and is still active for "all men".

In Galatians 3:19-20 Paul writes of the law that it was given, only until "the seed should come ... in the hand of a mediator". He then goes on, "a mediator is not a mediator of one, [that is of one side only] but God is one". Here is the wonderful and effective work of the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator. As God, He possesses Deity and fully understands the requirements of God. He is also Man and possesses humanity so He fully understands the need of man. In Job's words, He can "lay his hand upon us both". How thankful we can be for such a Mediator!

The Epistle to the Hebrews reminds us that He is a "Mediator of a better covenant", (Hebrews 8:6). The first covenant, with Israel, was not faultless; it became old and had to be renewed. Then in Hebrews 9:15 we learn that "He is the mediator of the new testament". A last will and testament will only become effective with the death of the testator. So our Mediator - God our Saviour - has died. "He gave Himself a ransom for all", 1 Timothy 2:6. He paid the cost in His own death. His hand is upon us both! Little wonder is it that He has brought you, a believer, into the full blessings which God has determined for us and so we can bring our thanksgivings to Him.

Paul tells Timothy that he has been appointed as a preacher or herald to the Gentiles of these truths (1 Timothy 2:7). No wonder is it that he seeks that prayer is made for "all men" as he reaches out far and wide for them all, knowing that the desire of God our Saviour, the only Mediator, is for "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth", 1 Timothy 2:4. Do we share the desire of the Saviour for this? If so, we too, should pray for "all men".

## **2. The characteristics of the Christian to be displayed in public gatherings: 1 Timothy 2:8-15**

If we were to look at this letter as it was written, without chapters, we would see that the writing of the Apostle in 1 Timothy 2:20 goes on into 1 Timothy 3:1, with just a change of subject, but all in keeping with the character every Christian should be displaying to please the Lord. In some instances the men are considered (1 Timothy 2:8, 3:1-13). In others the concerns are for the women (1 Timothy 2:9-15). Each has his and her own place and there should be a unity together in fulfilling the place the Lord has given. The Master, who has saved us, is the One who knows best the place He has for all His own. Our place is to know His mind if we want to be the best servants for life.

### **Men pray every where...**

The first matter for mention is "that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting", 1 Timothy 2:8. Other translations put in the article, "the men", to understand the meaning better. So the Word of God specifically encourages "the men" in public prayer. When a man prays it is not just an active approval of what Paul is saying, and what the Word of God requires, but there is a positive responsibility placed on the men. We can also notice that there is no restriction placed as to the class of man involved although certainly a man in contrast to a woman is specified. He does not have to be a "bishop" or "elder", discussed in 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Nor is it a matter of having a specific gift, for prayer is not mentioned in the Word of God as a gift. So that, in every place, there is complete liberty for the men to pray. Let us not forget, however, the need to pray as guided by the Holy Spirit so that we ask those things which are in accord with His will.

1 Timothy 2:8 refers then to “lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting”. We see in this the sense of holy reverence for, and dependence upon, God. To be effectual, prayer must be made by those who seek to live a holy life before God. How often some would live carelessly and, when some special need arises, will then seek to pray. They cannot be surprised when they sense that their prayer is hindered because of unjudged sin. In Psalm 66:18 we read, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me”. Wrath is expressly forbidden. There is no place for anger to assert itself, perhaps by way of seeking judgement or revenge. Also there is no place for doubting. In Mark 11:24, the Lord Jesus says, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them”. We cannot pray with confidence and dependence upon God and express doubts at the same time. Such doubts will destroy confidence and communion with a loving God.

### **The Woman's Deportment**

Now the Apostle speaks of women (1 Timothy 2:9-15). The first matter raised is that of deportment. Let us read 1 Timothy 2:9-10, “In like manner also that the women in decent deportment and dress adorn themselves with modesty and discretion, not with plaited hair and gold, or pearls, or costly clothing, but, what becomes women making profession of the fear of God, by good works” (JN Darby Translation). We notice that in all that is said, the controlling part of this verse is “what becomes women making profession of the fear of God”. Everything is dependent upon that. So the Apostle speaks of decent deportment and dress. This refers to conduct and behaviour as well as dress, so that what is done “making a profession of the fear of God” is done modestly and discreetly. How different from the person who has no thought of God and desires only to create the greatest impression amongst her peers! Each one is allowed to decide for herself what is modest and discreet but this will be done, in the sense of 1 Timothy 2:9-10, in the fear of God, knowing that such actions are good works.

The Apostle Peter speaks similarly in 1 Peter 3:3-4, concerning adornment and says “let it be ... even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price”. What a tremendous blessing to act in the sight of God to His great pleasure! God has given to Christian women today the wonderful privilege of testifying to Him, not with the brash gold-plated self-attracting dress of those of this world, but with that quiet spirit and love for Him.

### **Learning and teaching**

The next matter we read of concerns learning and teaching. “Let the woman learn in silence [quietness] with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence”, 1 Timothy 2:11-12. We must remember that Paul is still discussing the public testimony of the Church. The Bible does not say that a woman can never teach and we have examples in the Bible of godly women doing so. For instance, in Acts 18:26 Priscilla with her husband, Aquila, undertook to teach Apollos the truth of the Gospel of which, up to that time, he was ignorant.

### **Authority**

It is clear also, that the authority of the man is not usurped at a gathering where only women are present. In 1 Corinthians 11:7 in a similar passage dealing with the gatherings in the Church, we read that man “is the image and glory of God”. It is he who represents God. In Genesis 1 we find that man was made in the image and likeness of God. That is:

- in image, he is the representative of God in the world;
- in likeness he resembled God as upright and without evil.

When Adam sinned (see Genesis 3:1-24) he lost the likeness to God but continued to represent God. The New Testament links the Church to the “Bride of Christ”. So we see a relationship between Christ and the Church as we have between man and woman. It is the man God chooses to stand before the people as the representative of the Lord Himself and who chooses to speak to the people through His servant. The woman represents the Church in subjection to Christ and receives instruction from Him. Each has their own place before God and the woman “making profession of the fear of God” will take that place of subjection as God desires.

We then see that the matter of subjection goes beyond the Church, for Paul adds, “For Adam was first formed, then Eve”, 1 Timothy 2:13. So the Apostle goes right back to the beginning to set out the position as seen by God for both man and woman.

This whole matter of the separate place of man and woman in the Church can be seen in other ways. For instance, we find that Scripture gives man the responsibility for supporting the home. 1 Timothy 5:8 tells us that he who does not support his family is “worse than an infidel”. Each has a place in the home. It is often claimed that the man generally is ruled by his head, whilst the woman is ruled by her heart. Each is invaluable to a unity in marriage. It is in

the context of this chapter that the Apostle here again illustrates the position of each by referring to Adam and Eve. "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression", 1 Timothy 2:14. The Devil did not go to Adam and say "Hath God said...?" (Genesis 3:1) Adam might have instantly dismissed Satan with the truth. However, Satan approached Eve. How much better it would have been for Eve to direct the Devil to Adam for an answer rather than trying to settle the matter herself. Adam's trouble was that he did not sin in ignorance but knowingly ate of the fruit and sinned out of love for Eve. He did not put love to God first.

In 1 Timothy 2:15 the Apostle includes a blessing on the Christian family seeking to follow the path of "faith and love and holiness with sobriety". This way of depending on the Lord, day by day, brings its own reward of comfort and care, in the trial of childbearing and preservation through it all.

### **Conclusion**

Through 1 Timothy 2:9-15 we see the life of a consistent Christian woman as God intended for her. This cuts right across many of the assumptions of present day society yet what a testimony to the Lord is such a woman in the world today. How well the Gospel story illustrates the way in which women were honoured in the care they showed the Lord Himself and through into "The Acts of the Apostles", so called. May the Lord help us to go on day by day, until He calls us into His presence and we enjoy eternity with Him.

### **Prayer:**

Let us pray:

*Blessed God, our Father, may we always desire to be true to all that the Scriptures teach us. Our desire is to be led by the Holy Spirit and please Thee in all things. So bless our way, both during this day and each of those to come that all may be for Thy glory. Amen.*

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