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Introduction. The first sections of Chapter 2 dealt with the importance of prayer, and in particular its connection with the church's evangelistic mission. People need to be saved, and we need to take the message to them and live in front of them. So we must be praying for all men - for their salvation - and even for civic leaders so that we might freely live the life needed to accomplish our mission. Those instructions concerning prayer arrived at specific words to men and to women. Men are to pray everywhere, at all times, in all settings. And the spirit they are to pray in is one of holiness and the absence of wrath and doubt. The spirit of women in prayer is to be without vanity, without outward concerns for high fashion and sensual appeal; they should be more concerned with their works, their conduct, than with impressing people with looks.

The Scripture follows with God's word to women concerning their conduct in the church, with specifically in view *teaching* and *rule*. Paul does essentially two things: he gives us: 1) God's instructions, and 2) the rationale behind those instructions. Teaching and authority in the church are reserved for men, and women are to willingly submit to that. Why? Three reasons: 1) the order of creation as an establishment of social order; 2) the biblical record of the deception and order-reversal in the Garden of Eden; and 3) the unique mission given to women in childbearing accompanied by godliness.

This section is immediately followed by an address specifically to men concerning the qualifications for bishops (overseers) and deacons. Clearly, God has established that the church be a shining light of His creative purpose and order among the genders. A church's oversight and governance is conducted by qualified men. And when the church is gathered, it is qualified men who teach, and the women gladly learn in silence. This is neither outdated nor oppressive. When pursued in all humility and love and mutual respect, God is greatly glorified.

1. Verses 11-12 - Instructions concerning women in the church.

- v.11 - There is both liberation and restriction in this statement. ***Let the women learn...*** There have been many places at many times in history where the instruction of women in anything beyond basic, menial household tasks was restricted or even prohibited. The church is not to be one of those places. Women are saved the same way as men, through their own personal conversion by God's grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit when they are born again. And they are to grow in their walks with the Lord just as men are, by praying, learning and obeying the word, serving God, etc. ***...in silence with all submission.*** That learning is done in an environment that requires them to honor God by respecting His social order. She is neither to teach nor disrupt teaching; she is to learn with a spirit that is subordinate to a teaching man's authority.

- v.12 - ***...I do not permit*** Some have unwisely used these words to remove the binding authority of this section and ascribe it to mere human opinion. This, of course, shows a lack of understanding of *inspiration*: all Scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). ***...to teach or to have authority*** There are two specific areas named here where women are called to ***silence***: *teaching* and *authority*. A gifted woman may certainly teach, and a gifted woman may certainly lead and oversee certain things; but that teaching and oversight must never be ***over a man***. Women can certainly teach other women and children. And she may certainly oversee activities involving the same. But to have her teach or oversee men violates important, as-old-as-time principles given in the ensuing verses.

2. Verses 13-15 - Rationale behind the preceding instructions.

- v.13 - This is very straightforward. Limiting corporate teaching and oversight to men honors God's creative order. Or, *we testify that we believe in our Creator God* when we order ourselves in accordance to these teachings.

- v.14 - The point is *not* that women are somehow inferior or worse sinners than men. We know from the historical account of the fall in the Garden of Eden that it was Eve who was **deceived** by the serpent. **Adam** certainly sinned and was the first to be confronted by God. Adam should have overruled his wife, but she was leading him. In her desire for what appeared good to her, she gave to Adam to eat. Because of the deception of the **woman**, the order in their marriage was disrupted, and sin ultimately entered. The point *is*: by not ordering ourselves properly in our churches, we show great pride, disrespecting the fallout of what we know happened in the Garden and denying God's original, intended creative order. *Teaching and authority* in the hands of gifted *men* honors God.

- v.15 - **saved...** Not a reference to being born again... That is quite obviously by grace through faith and not by any works. It is a reference to being "saved," *in a sense*, from the consequential perception of shame that results from the previous verse. Woman was deceived, and sin entered by way of that deception. That is bad. But women can bear children, in a sense redeeming the gender from the shame of the deception of Eve. That is good. That a woman can bear and raise children is a great redeeming quality of the gender. Furthermore, she can raise those children to believe and love the Lord. This is general; obviously, not all women bear children or even marry. But all women certainly can exercise ***faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.***