

Men and Women in the Church: Part 1

Men: Pray in Holiness

Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:8-10

Sermon Series: *Timothy's Charge*

Topic: Prayer, Anger, Men

I. Introduction

Review

This morning we begin a new paragraph of Paul's first letter to Timothy, where Paul turns his attention to the behavior of men and women in the church. He begins by calling *men* in the church to *pray in holiness*.



Last week we noted a shift in Paul's attention away from Timothy personally, and to the corporate life of the church and how it should be ordered.

¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:14-15 (ESV)

Paul is describing proper behavior in God's church. As chapter two begins, we see that the topic of prayer is of primary importance (ie. "*First of all...*" 2:1). Paul urges the church to pray all kinds of prayer¹ for all kinds of people in all kinds of positions in society, for there is only one God and one Savior who died as one ransom for all to make one way of salvation and God desires this truth to be known by all so that all who believe this truth can be saved. Therefore, because of this Paul urges to the church to pray.

Overview

In the next paragraph, vs.8-15 which we begin today, Paul considers various obstacles to fruitful and effective prayers and disruptions in worship services of the church. He first addresses men and then women. Today we will consider what Paul says to men and then next week what he says to women. The problem for men was anger and quarreling while the problem for women

¹ Such as "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings" (1 Timothy 2:1).

were immodest dress and overemphasis on externals. Paul's call for both is similar. He calls men to pray in holiness and women to adorn themselves in godliness.

II. Main Idea: "Men: Pray in Holiness"

Paul's charge to men is to pray in holiness, which means to pray without anger and quarreling. If men want their prayers to be heard, then they must cease from anger and arguing. God does not grant the prayers of angry and argumentative men. Paul essentially addresses 1) the place of prayer, 2) the posture of prayer, and 3) the purity of prayer.

A) The Place of Prayer

Paul begins by noting *the place of prayer*.

⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 1 Timothy 2:8 (ESV)

I desire then. Paul is still thinking of the topic of prayer. The phrase in v.8, "*I desire then*," is parallel to v.1, "*First of all, then I urge...*" Whereas Paul began by speaking about the *subjects* of prayer (ie. what to pray for), he now turns his attention to one's *attitude* prayer (ie. how one ought to pray).

That in every place. The attitude and application about which Paul is speaking, is not limited to the church in Ephesus alone. Paul is thinking about "*all the churches*"² everywhere. Paul uses this phrase elsewhere in his letters and speak about the churches in both Corinth and Thessaloniki (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 2:14; 1 Thes 1:8). Thus, the command that Paul is giving "is prescribed for all congregations."³ In the previous verse, Paul had highlighted the fact that Jesus appointed him "*a preacher, apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth*" (2:7), and Paul is here teaching a truth that is applicable to all Gentiles "in every place," not merely in Ephesus alone. This fact is reinforced by 1 Tim 3:14-15, which I read in the introduction, which in notes "*how one ought to behave... in the church of God.*"

B) The Posture of Prayer

Second, Paul notes *the posture of prayer*.

⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 1 Timothy 2:8 (ESV)

² Romans 16:4, 16; 1 Corinthians 7:17; 2 Corinthians 8:18; 11:28.

³ Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, ed. D. A. Carson, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; London: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2018), 161.

The men should pray. The word for ‘men’ here is not the general word for ‘mankind’ (ἄνθρωπος *anthrōpos*) that Paul has thus far⁴ used in the first 7 verses, but rather it is a word that specifically means ‘males’ (ἄνδρας *andras*). Thus, Paul is specifically here speaking to men when praying at worship gatherings. He is not prohibiting women from praying for in other epistles Paul presumes women will pray (1 Cor 11:5, 13). Paul is addressing a particular problem for men when they pray in church.

Lifting holy hands. The typical posture of Jewish prayer was standing⁵, with arms stretched out, and palms facing upwards toward God in heaven⁶ and eyes open.⁷ However, Paul’s primary concern is not the posture of the body, so much as it is the posture of the heart. God does not listen the prayers of unholy people. If men are to pray in a way that is fruitful and acceptable to God, then the hands—which represent his deeds, actions, and work—must be holy. If the work of the hands is sinful, then that person’s prayers are powerless.⁸ The LORD said through Isaiah,

15 When you spread out your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,

17 learn to do good...

Isaiah 1:15-17 (ESV)

Here we see that wicked people “*make many prayers.*” It is not as though wicked people are not praying people, for surely they are. Jesus did not rebuke the Pharisees for failing to pray, but rather for praying to impress men rather than God. These men have hands that are covered with blood and yet they are frequent prayers. They may hide “*the evil of their deeds*” from the eyes of men, but they cannot hide them from the eyes of God. God sees the work of their hands and evil in their hearts. “*The LORD tests the hearts,*” says the psalmist (17:3). Therefore, he “*will not listen.*” God does not hear the prayers of unholy men. Men who want their prayers to be heard must be holy in all that they *do!*

³ Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴ 1 Timothy 2:1, 4, 5.

⁵ Matthew 6:5; Mark 11:25; Luke 18:11.

⁶ 1 Kings 8:22, 54; Ezra 9:5; Psalms 28:2; 63:4; 134:2; 141:2; Lamentations 2:19; 3:41; Isaiah 1:15.

⁷ Jesus often prayed with eyes open (John 11:41; 17:1; Mark 6:41) as did the tax collector (Luke 18:13). See also commands to “watch and pray” (Matthew 26:41; Colossians 4:2; Ephesians 6:18).

⁸ Proverbs 15:8; 28:9.

⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.
Psalms 24:3-4 (ESV)

Clean hands and pure heart are required for the Lord God to hear prayer. Paul knows this. Thus, we see the call for purity in prayer.

C) The Purity of Prayer

For Paul, *the purity of prayer* for men means praying without anger and arguing.

⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 1 Timothy 2:8 (ESV)

Without anger or quarreling. Paul understands the particular propensity to sin that most likely affects most men; anger. Paul commands men to pray in holiness *without anger*. Four facts about anger and one suggestion:

1. Men are Prone to Anger

There are many examples of men who give in to their anger and get themselves into deep trouble.

1) *Cain*. The first place we find anger in Scripture is in Cain (Gn 4). Cain's offering was not accepted by God and he became angry at God.

⁶ The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Genesis 4:6-7 (ESV)

Something Cain had done has caused his offering to be unacceptable to God. God pointed out "if you do well, will you not be accepted?" The implication is that if he did "do well" then he would certainly be accepted. The invitation was to "do well" in regard to whatever he was "not doing well." Would Cain accept God's invitation and change his behavior? God warned, "If you do not do well, then sin is crouching at the door" desiring to master him. Cain chose not to change his behavior and he gave in to sin by murdering his brother. That which ended in murder, began in anger.

2) *Jonah*. If you recall the story of Jonah, God sent him to preach against the wicked city of Nineveh and to warn them that if they did not repent of their sin, then they would be destroyed in 40 days. They listened. They believed Jonah's message. They repented of their sin with prayer and fasting. Therefore, God relented of the destruction that he had previously pronounced on the wicked city of Nineveh. When Jonah learned

of God's grace toward them, "it displeased him exceedingly and he was angry" (Jon 4:1). And God said to him, "Do you do well to be angry?" (4:4). Jonah responded saying, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die!" (4:9). The Lord then rebuked him for his misplaced anger.

3) **Moses**. Moses lost his temper with the people of Israel and instead of obeying the Lord and speaking to the rock to get water, he out of anger struck the rock and thereby lost the privilege of entering the Promised Land (Num 20:10-12).

4) **Saul**. King Saul was so enraged with David that he attempted multiple times to murder David and even commanded the execution of an entire city of priests of God (1 Sam 18-19, 22).

Many other examples⁹ could be named, but it seems clear that men have a particular weakness when it comes to anger.

2. Not All Anger is Sinful

It needs to be noted that not all anger is sinful.

- 1) God is angry every day at those who are evil and wicked in this world.¹⁰
- 2) Jesus was angry when he discovered commerce had overtaken the space for prayer in the temple (Jn 2:13-16). He was angry again when the leaders of the synagogue tried to stop him from healing a man on the sabbath (Mk 3:1-5).

3. The Anger of God is Very Different from the Anger of Men

The anger of God is always just and the anger of Jesus was never motivated by sin. This is not the case of any man. Thus, His anger is very different from our anger.

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20 (ESV)

The anger of men almost never leads to righteousness. This is why David said, "Refrain from anger and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself, for it tends only toward evil" (Ps 37:8). Men must learn how to deal rightly with anger. Though we may think we have a right to be angry, only God knows how often this is truly the case.

4. Sinful Anger Hinders Prayer

⁹ Nebuchadnezzar throwing 3 men in a furnace (Dan 3), David's near slaughter of Nabal (1 Sam 25), and Peter in the garden of Gethsemane (John 18:10).

¹⁰ Psalm 5:5; 7:11; 11:5.

This is serious. Men who want their prayers to be answered must take seriously their relationship with anger. Men who do not, will find the Lord does not listen to their prayers. Sinful anger is most often seen at home.

...husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

Generally speaking, most men are physically stronger than most women. Peter here teaches us that God therefore calls men to “*live in an understanding way that honors women*” in light of those differences. The purpose of strength is to protect and provide for those who are weaker. There are physical differences between men and women, but those differences do not extend into eternity. Women and men are fellow “*heirs in the grace of life.*” Both have the same share in eternal life. Believing men and women will both inherit God’s goodness in his eternal kingdom. Men who fail to live in a way that understands this and honors their wives will find their “*prayers are hindered.*” Paul gives similar instruction.

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

Colossians 3:19 (ESV)

Men can very easily be harsh with their wives. This does not please the Lord. Men have a sinful tendency so respond in anger towards the wives whom God has given. Such anger and harshness hinders the effectiveness of prayers of the men who fall into such sin. These facts must be faced and fought against.

5. How Should Men Deal with Anger?

1) *Recognize the spiritual danger of unresolved anger.*

²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

Ephesians 4:26-27 (ESV)

Anger that is dealt with quickly may not necessarily be sinful. However, if it is not quickly dealt with, then it will be used by the devil as an “*opportunity*” to attack. Unresolved anger turns into overflowing “*root of bitterness that defiles many.*”¹¹ Do not give the devil this opportunity.

2) *Quickly act to resolve anger.*

¹¹ Hebrews 12:15.

²² But I say to you... who is angry with your brother... ²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 5:22-24 (ESV)

The first step here comes from the *offender*. If you are the cause of the offense, then Jesus calls you to take the first step towards reconciliation. This presumes confession. If you have wronged someone, then you need to go to them and confess it.

Anger that only results in verbal abuse (ie. "you fool") and "insults" leaves one guilty in the sight of God (Mt 5:22). Therefore, it must be talked out. We are commanded to "*reason frankly*" about differences (Lev 19:17), while using "*gentle, not harsh words*" (Prov 15:1).

Unreconciled issues ought to be the highest priority. It is even more important than offering sacrifices. Participation in reconciliation with one another is more important than participation in worship services. If husband and wife are unreconciled, and it has not been dealt with, then don't go to church and pretend nothing is wrong. Rather, go sit down with each other and start talking it out.

- 3) *Don't justify anger, rather crucify it.* We cannot allow anger to be at home in our hearts. We must not justify our anger, but rather crucify it. We must cast it off. *All* of it!

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:31-32 (ESV)

These are so important that Paul gives the same instruction to the Colossians (3:8). *Malice in the mouth flows from anger from the heart.* We cannot make room in our lives for *any* kind of bitterness or wrath or anger or angry words or slanderous and malicious talk. You must "*put away from you all*" harboring of angry thoughts and malicious imaginations. None of it can be tolerated.

Stop allowing yourself to run the imaginary tape of what you really want to say to this person to put them in their place. "*Put away all*" anger and malice and hateful words. You must crucify, not pacify anger. You cannot justify anger, you must crucify it.

Run the tape in your mind of what it looks like when you are *kind* to that one who has angered you. Have a holy imagination, not a sinful one. Pray for him or her. Practice being kind to him or her. Run the tape of what it looks like to be *tenderhearted* toward her. What does it look like to forgive others as Christ has forgiven you? Of how much offense has Christ forgiven you? Then of much should you forgive others?

4) *Stay away from angry people.*

Make no friendship with a man given to anger,
nor go with a wrathful man,
Proverbs 22:24 (ESV)

A man of wrath stirs up strife,
and one given to anger causes much transgression.
Proverbs 29:22 (ESV)

If you want to rid yourself of anger in your heart, then be sure to rid yourself of angry people in your life. If you want to control anger in your heart, then control anger among your friends. Don't spend time with angry people. Anger is contagious. It spreads and grows with greater exposure. But just as a "*fire goes out for lack of wood, so quarreling ceases when there is no one*" to fan the flames (Prov 26:20).

5) *Surrender to and be filled with the Holy Spirit.* An angry man often finds himself out of control. Thus, he needs the help of the Holy Spirit to have self-control.

A man without self-control
is like a city broken into and left without walls.
Proverbs 25:28 (ESV)

A man who lacks self-control is defenseless and wide open to the attack of the enemy.

Whoever is slow to anger
is better than the mighty,
and he who rules his spirit
than he who takes a city.
Proverbs 16:32 (ESV)

The man who is slow to anger and who rules his spirit is stronger and mightier than a man who conquers a fortified city. No man has such strength apart from the grace of God. Thus, Christian men need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control
Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

Being totally surrendered to and filled with the Holy Spirit supplies the godly man with love, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control that he does not otherwise have in himself. Being slow to anger is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

- 6) *Trust God and leave wrath to him.* In order to put away all wrath from ourselves, we must entrust judgment to God.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
Romans 12:19 (ESV)

When [Jesus] was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.
1 Peter 2:23 (ESV)

If you want to deal rightly with anger, you must trust that God knows how to punish those who do wrong and one day he will do just that. In the mean time, we—like Jesus—must entrust our souls "to him who judges justly."

III. Conclusion

The Lord desires that his church pray to him. Men, one thing that will hinder your prayers is anger in your heart and quarreling in your home. The Lord will not answer the prayers of the man who is angry and harsh towards those with whom he lives. This is true if you're married or not. The Lord desires prayers that flow from holiness, not harshness.

Men, if you want God to hear your prayers, then put away from you all anger, wrath, malice, and quarreling. Confess your sin. Repent of your transgressions. And humble yourself before the Lord. Stop justifying your anger and crucify it. Pray lifting holy hands, not hot-headed words.

The Lord desires in every place men pray in holiness, not in anger and quarreling. Therefore, pray like that now.

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What is the main point of this message?
2. Paul states that anger is a particular problem for men. Why do you think he believes this? Do you agree or disagree with him? Why or why not?
3. What is anger?
4. When is anger not a sin? When is it a sin?
5. Scripture teaches that anger hinders prayer (Is. 1:15; 1 Ptr 3:7). Why and how does anger hinder prayer?
6. What are some ways you deal with anger in order to avoid falling into sin? What are some ways suggested in the sermon?
7. What does this message reveal about men?
8. What does this message reveal about God?
9. What does it reveal about Jesus?
10. What is the Lord inviting you to do as a result of hearing this message?