

Men and Women in the Church: Part 2

Women: Pray in Godliness

Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:8-10

Sermon Series: *Timothy's Charge*

Topic: Prayer, Women, Godliness

I. Introduction

As we continue through Paul's first epistle to Timothy, today we come to part 2 of Paul's focus on church conduct in corporate worship services (See 1 Tim 3:15). Our focus is on vs.8-10.

Review

Last week we considered part 1 of Paul's focus in v.8, which is to instruct *men to pray in holiness* and today we will consider vs.9-10, in which he instructs *women to pray in godliness*.

In regard to hinderances to prayer when the church gathers for worship, there are two. First, there is angry and argumentative men.

Second, there is improperly dressed women. Whereas in v.8 Paul highlights an unhealthy tendency in men toward "*anger and quarreling*," so in vs.9-10 he highlights an unhealthy tendency in women toward overemphasizing outward appearance.

Overview

As we have noted in previous weeks, chapter 2 marks a transition. Paul's shifts from a charge to Timothy personally (chap. 1) to a charge to the church corporately (chaps. 2-4). The first priority of the gathered church is *prayer* (2:1).

Paul urged all kinds of prayer for people in all kinds of positions, because there is one God and Savior and one Mediator who gave himself as one ransom to save all kinds of people. This truth must be proclaimed and believed by faith (2:7). Thus, in v.8, Paul restates the emphasis on prayer



- I. A Sweet Salutation
- II. The Urgent charge to Timothy (1:3-20)
 - A. Warn Certain Persons (1:3-11)
 - B. Christ Jesus Came to Save Sinners (1:12-17)
 - C. Wage War by Faith (1:18-20)
- III. The Urgent Charge to the Church (2:1-4:5)
 - A. Prioritize prayer (2:1-15)
 - 1. I Urge you to Pray (1-4)
 - 2. Pray to God our Savior (2:5-7)
 - 3. **Prayer of Men and Women in Church (2:8-15)**
 - a) Men: pray in holiness (2:8)
 - b) Women: Pray in godliness (2:9-15)
 - B. Appoint godly leaders (3:1-15)
- IV. Additional charge to Timothy

by addressing men and women when they gather as the church for worship.¹

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)

Thus, Paul is teaching the majority Gentile² church in Ephesus how they ought to be ordered when they gather for worship as the church. That this is the correct understanding is affirmed by Paul as he begins a new paragraph in v.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 in every place..." (2:8). Paul is continuing his thinking. The *"then"* alerts the reader that what he is about to say follows from what he just stated. What he had just stated? He had urged all kinds of prayers, on behalf of people in all positions, because there is one God and Savior and one Mediator who gave himself as one ransom for all, which is the truth that must be accepted by faith. Therefore, *"in every place,"* prayer is to be offered to God who desires to save all who believe this truth by faith. Paul is here establishing principles that govern all churches.

Since *"then"* God desires to save, the gathered church must be committed to prayer. The church is made up of men and women and there are certain sinful tendencies in both that would hinder the effectiveness of their prayers. Thus, Paul addresses both men and women.

II. Women: Pray in Godliness (vs.9-10)

Last week, we saw that Paul addresses men first. Men are to pray in holiness—without anger and quarreling, when they gather as the church. Verse 9 continues this thought. Women are to pray in godliness without an unhealthy focus on outward appearance.

General Tendencies in Both Sexes

We should note that these are general statements about both men and women. Not all men are seething with anger. There were about three women who after last week's sermon, came to me and said to effect, "You know, it's not only men who have anger problems." Yes, of course this is true. But many men do have an anger problem. There were several men who came to me last week saying, "That's me," or "That was me." Paul knows the sinful propensities of men.

Likewise, not all women are obsessed with their outward appearance. But, many indeed are. Paul, who was helped by the Holy Spirit in writing this letter, also understands the sinful propensities of both men and women.

¹ See 1 Timothy 2:1, "First of all..."

² 1 Timothy 2:7.

⁹ likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire,
1 Timothy 2:9 (ESV)

Likewise also (v.). The word '*likewise*' informs us that Paul is continuing the same idea which he began in v.8. "*likewise*" means that just as Paul has a *desire* for men, so also he has the same *desire* for women.

The word '*desire*' (βούλομαι *boulomai*) is different from the usual word *thelō*, which Paul tends to use when he means a preference, desires or intention.³ This word carries a stronger meaning which refers to a "settled determination."⁴ What Paul "desires" is not merely his own preference, but rather his settled conviction as an "*preacher, apostle, and teacher*"⁵ regarding what is proper "*behavior in the church of God.*"⁶

Just as Paul desired that "*in every place men were to pray in holiness,*" likewise also he desires the same for women, namely, that "*in every place women are to pray in godliness,*" which we find stated in v.10, which is the conclusion to which Paul is moving.

"...what is proper for women who profess godliness."
1 Timothy 2:10 (ESV)

Paul is speaking to "*women who profess godliness.*" He has believing women in mind. Paul is writing to Christian women. He is not addressing unbelieving women. What he is prescribing he is directing to "*women who profess godliness.*"

In summary, Paul is writing, "*Likewise also* [in every place where the church gathers to pray] *women should adorn themselves...*" Paul understands that both men and women are responsible for proper decorum when the church gathers for worship. Men are to be on guard against expressions of anger and arguing while women are to be on guard against immodest attire. Both men and women bear responsibility to properly prepare for and participate in a worship gathering.

Women should adorn themselves. The word '*adorn*' (κοσμέω *kosmeō*) is the word from which we have the English word 'cosmetics.' The word means, "to put in order⁷; to cause something to be beautiful by decorating."⁸ Thus, Paul is not here saying that women should come to worship

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.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ 1 Timothy 2:7.

⁶ 1 Timothy 3:15.

⁷ Ralph Earle, "1 Timothy," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 361.

⁸ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 694.

looking like a disordered mess. It is not wrong to make yourself look beautiful. The key question has to do with *what means should women adorn themselves?* Paul notes two kinds of adornment; external and internal. He warns against the former and commends the latter.

A. External Adornment (v.9)

Paul uses four words to describe three instances of merely external adornment; *braided hair, jewelry—gold and pearls, and expensive clothes.*

...not with braided hair and gold or pearls and costly attire...

1 Timothy 2:9 (ESV)

These things are not wrong in themselves. God made hair, he made gold and pearls, and he also made the first clothes (by killing animals to make “garments” for Adam and Eve⁹). But there are at least three potential problems with these things; 1) they can draw attention to self and away from God, 2) their use can flow from pride and vanity, 3) they can confuse the distinction between what is holy and sinful.

1. ***They can draw attention to self and away from God.*** Recall that Paul has in mind the church when they are gathered for worship—in prayer, which is a time when attention should particularly be focused on God alone. These external adornments can draw the eyes to the creature, rather than to the Creator. When the church gathers for worship and prayer, we ought to do everything in our power to draw as little attention to ourselves and as much attention as possible to the Lord God Almighty. How we dress must be something we prayerfully consider.
2. ***Their Use can flow from pride and vanity.*** Paul would have certainly remembered a time in Israel’s history when God pronounced harsh judgment upon them because of their proud and arrogant idolatry and their insolent rejection of obedience to God above all. Through Isaiah, God spoke breathtaking judgment upon his sinful daughters.

¹⁶ The LORD said:

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty
and walk with outstretched necks,
glancing wantonly with their eyes,
mincing along as they go,
tinkling with their feet,

¹⁷ therefore the Lord will strike with a scab
the heads of the daughters of Zion,
and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts.

⁹ Genesis 3:21.

¹⁸ In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; ¹⁹ the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; ²⁰ the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; ²¹ the signet rings and nose rings; ²² the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; ²³ the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.

²⁴ Instead of perfume there will be rottenness;
and instead of a belt, a rope;
and instead of well-set hair, baldness;
and instead of a rich robe, a skirt of sackcloth;
and branding instead of beauty.

Isaiah 3:16-24 (ESV)

Beauty ultimately comes from God. God is beautiful and glorious. However, when he is forgotten, there are always consequences. When others are worshiped more than him, he does not fail to notice this sin. When more attention is given to anklets, armlets, pendants, perfume, and piercings than to him, then he will take away those things. When more effort and energy is expended to get the attention of men—glancing wantonly with the eyes, and mincing walk—than of God, then he promises to “lay bare their secret parts” and expose the rottenness of that sin. God knows how to humble the pride of men and women.

3. *They can confuse the distinction between what is holy and sinful.* Prostitutes wear such things in order to capture the attention of men. How then can holy women of the light dress the same as the unholy women of the night? John Chrysostom (c.347-407), preacher in Antioch in Turkey, wrote of this problem in his day. “We can no longer distinguish harlots and virgins.” He lamented that young women were coming to worship services wearing “colored robe is drawn closely round the breast”¹⁰ that she cannot breathe, with “painted face, sharp pointed shoes,” and gloves as tight fitting as skin. “These things and many others, invented only to be seen and to attract beholders.”¹¹ Women who profess godliness will seek above all to be pleasing in the sight of God, rather than only in the sight of men.

The “great prostitute” spoken of by John in his Revelation is described in similar language.

¹ “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute... ² with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality... ⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls...”

Revelation 17:1-4 (ESV)

¹⁰ John Chrysostom, “Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to Timothy,” in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. James Tweed and Philip Schaff, vol. 13, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 433-4.

¹¹ Ibid, 434.

The apostle Peter similarly warns against mere outward adornment.

³ Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— ⁴ but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. ⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham...

1 Peter 3:3-6 (ESV)

Peter is not forbidding the braiding of hair, wearing gold, and jewelry. For if he were, then he would similarly be forbidding “*the clothing you wear.*” This is certainly not the case. He is forbidding thinking only about how one appears in the sight of the world rather than how one appears in the sight of God.

Peter and Paul are writing almost the exact same thing. External adornment ought not be the driving passion of the heart of a godly women. What ought to most deeply motivate a godly woman is inward adornment, for “*God sees the heart.*”¹² God looks upon the hidden, inner person. Such inner beauty is precious in the sight of God.

External adornments are not always wrong, but they can be. They ought to be avoided in worship services since they can draw attention to the creature and away from the Creator; they can flow from pride and vanity; and when they blur the distinction between what is holy and what is not.

B. Internal Adornment (vs.9-10)

With what should godly women adorn themselves? Godly women are to adorn themselves with what is *respectable*, with *modesty*, and *self-control*, and *good works*.

1. ***Adorn yourself with that which is respectable.*** The word ‘*respectable*’ (κόσμιος *kosmios*) is very similar to the word ‘*adorn.*’ It sounds similar. ‘*Respectable*’ carries a range of meanings that includes, “honourable (sic), modest, orderly, beautiful. It... conveys... a sense of discipline and decorum.”¹³ This word says more about the inner person than outer apparel. This word reveals the character of the women more than the construct of her clothing. It means that a godly woman respects herself and wants others to treat her respectfully. She wants to be seen as honorable and orderly, rather than dishonorable and disorderly. Because she respects herself, she will dress respectfully.

¹² 1 Samuel 16:7.

¹³ I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 448.

2. **Adorn yourself with modesty.** This word appears in NT only here. In secular usage the word meant "reverence before God"¹⁴ while avoiding being shamed in the sight of man for any kind of sexual impropriety.¹⁵ When used in this context with clothing, the meaning is a call against wearing clothes that will arouse sexual desire.

Apparently there were some women in the church in Ephesus who were intentionally choosing clothes to get sexual attention. Dressing with modestly would keep in mind that God sees everything that is worn and out of reverence to him the clothing choices should be holy and honoring to him. At the same time, clothing should be avoided that intentionally aims to arouse sensuality.

A woman came to me last week noting that it is almost impossible to find modest clothing since almost the entire fashion industry is aimed arousing sensuality. She is not wrong. Finding modest clothes can be a lengthy seek and find adventure. However, Paul here calls godly women to some serious self-reflection. When you are shopping for clothes, is modesty and reverence for God on your mind? If not, then should be it?

3. **Adorn yourself in self-control.** The idea of 'self-control' has some notion of restraint. It means that you are able to regulate your own desires. Paul uses this word often. It is a requirement for elders (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8), older men (Titus 2:2), younger men (Titus 2:6), younger women (Titus 2:5; cf. 1 Pet 4:7), and all women (1 Tim 2:9, 15).¹⁶ Paul also reminded Timothy that God "gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Tim 1:7). Self-control comes from God. As we were reminded last week, self-control is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23). It seems Paul wants to remind both men and women of the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to faithfully live out the Christian life.
4. **Adorn yourself with godly good works.** Paul teaches us that God "created us for good works" and that we are to "live (daily do) in them" (Eph 2:10). Paul says that the church should honor and care for widows who "have a reputation for" and "were devoted to good works" (1 Tim 5:10). Paul told Titus that he was to be in the sight of the church a "model of good works" and that all Christians were to be "zealous for good works" (Tit 2:7, 14). The author of Hebrews commands Christians to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (Heb 10:24). Thus, the godly woman ought to adorn herself with godly good works.

¹⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, "Αἰδώς," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 169.

¹⁵ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 113.

¹⁶ Ibid, 114.

The godly woman who adorns herself with good works is a woman who has learned to think about the needs of others and not only her own needs. The woman who thinks about other people more than herself is a beautiful woman.

My first girlfriend became beautiful in my sight the day she wrote me a kind card and visited me when I was sick. Before that day I thought she was cute, but I really didn't pay much attention to her. But after she took the time to visit me because I was sick and showed me kindness, she suddenly became beautiful in my eyes.

A few weeks ago we learned that someone who has attended this church for the past 7 years was moving. One woman, upon hearing this, instantly said, "We should host a going away party for him." That was beautiful. Her thoughts were immediately for the benefit of another person and not about the cost to herself of hosting a party.

I say "godly" good works, because Jesus commanded his followers to do good works in such a way that people "*see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven*" (Mt 5:16). Every one can do good works, but only Christians do good works in such a way that God gets the glory rather than themselves.

III. Conclusion

1. ***Give more time to inward adornment than you do to outward.*** Don't spend more energy and effort on external adornment than you do on internal adornment. How much time do you spend on makeup, and hair, and clothes? How much time do you spend on adornment of your body? Do you spend a comparable amount of time giving attention to the adornment of your soul? Which is more important, the body or the soul? The body is not unimportant, but since the soul is eternal and the body is temporal, which ought to have the greater amount of attention?
2. ***Plan to please God above men.*** Women when you get dressed, make it your first aim to be pleasing in the sight of God, rather than in the sight of men. When you stand in front of the mirror, consider saying to God, "Father, how do I look?" What would he say about what you're wearing? Would Jesus be pleased with how you dress? If so, then don't give another thought whatever you think men might think.
3. ***Consider your metric for beautiful adornment.*** What qualifies as beautiful in your thinking? What informs your standard of beauty? Does 'good works' make your list? Do you see good works as beautiful? What does God think about them? Do we need change anything about what we consider to be beautiful?

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What is the relationship between v.8 and v.9? What does the word 'likewise' at the beginning of verse 9 communicate?
2. In what context is Paul giving these instructions? (See 1 Tim 3:15)
3. How could inappropriate dress hinder prayer in a worship service?
4. In what way should women adorn themselves?
5. How would you define modesty?
6. Do you think it is always wrong to wear braided hair, jewelry, or expensive clothes? If so, why? If not, why not? Explain your answer.
7. What does Paul mean by saying that godly women should adorn themselves with good works? How would a women do that? Give specific examples.
8. What is the main idea of this portion of Scripture?
9. What should you do in response to this message?