



1 Timothy 2:8-15

Pursuing Faith, Love, and Holiness, with Self-control

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INTRODUCTION

Just yesterday in my daily reading of Scripture I encountered a passage that always catches me, and calls me again to repentance of sin and renewed trust in the Lord. *Jam.119 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. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.* This means (our) anger does not produce the righteous life that God requires ^(NIV), in any area. So, when I'm sitting in traffic, not only does my *anger* not improve the traffic flow, it doesn't help me on any level to live more like Jesus. In my conversations with Jean, my *anger* can't help either one of us live in *righteousness* more consistently. In my relationships with my children, my *anger* can't lead them to walk with the Lord more closely in obedience or love Him more deeply from their hearts.

Since all this is true, as I am seeking to walk in *righteousness* and put away everything that is unrighteous, the route toward that end is not aided in any way by getting (*angry*). Rather, it is aided by (*receiving*) with meekness the (*saving*) word of God that He has *implanted* within me—(*receiving*) His cleansing of my sin, His renewal of my mind, His healing of my emotions and redirection of my will—and (*receiving*) all of this with humility and gentleness as His saving *word*, His sanctifying *word*, His instructing and guiding *word* that faithfully leads me along on the path toward *righteousness*.

We have such a *word* from God before us this morning, but it's a *word* that is easy to misunderstand, or to dismiss, or even despise. It makes some people (*angry*), even

though it was given to call us out of our fallen, selfish lives and into a life of *faith and love and holiness, with self-control*. Let's address it in two parts.

A WORD TO MEN IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY – 8

In the first half of this chapter (1-7), Paul told Timothy that, because of Who God is (5a one God), and what He's doing (3 God our Savior, 4 desires all people to be saved), and how (5b one mediator, 6 gave himself as a ransom for all), the church should be praying *all kinds of prayers for all people* (1) toward achieving God's plan on every level. God is actually for us. He *desires all people* (4) to know the joy of fulfilling the purpose for which He originally *created* all us image-bearers. And we need to get our *desires* in line with His and call out to Him in (*prayer*) to fulfill them.

As we move into this morning's text, *then*, we begin to see what that should look like in our *prayers*, and in the way *we behave* in Christian community. Paul wrote this letter so that 3:15... *(we) may know how one ought to behave in the household of God...*, and he gives us some pretty specific direction here. *Then* (8) could be translated *therefore*. So, this instruction (8-15) is built on what Paul was just telling Timothy (1-7). 8 *I desire (therefore) that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling*. Two observations: 1) It's pretty well-documented that (*lifted*) *hands* were a common posture for *prayers* for both Jews (cf. 1Ki.8:22, 54; Psa.63:4; 141:2; 143:6) and Christians. In light of this, 2) the fact that Paul is contrasting (*lifted*) *hands* with *anger and quarreling*, suggests pretty clearly that the *posture* of prayer is not his primary point. The heart attitude of those who are *lifting* their *hands* is his primary point.

As the *men (lift) their hands, then*, they should be *lifting holy hands, devout, pious hands, pleasing to God* (BAGD). They should (*lift*) the *clean hands* of a *pure heart* (cf. Psa.24:3-4). Their *hands* shouldn't be stained with the blood of relational strife. They should reflect a *holy* heart that is reaching out toward 3... *God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of (His) truth*. Our petty squabbles with one another should not infect our hearts as we call out to God in *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings... for all people* (1). Our personal will and purpose and

desires should not take center stage as we seek the Lord our God for His will and purpose and *desires* to be done. That is how *the men* should *pray*. And it is uniquely the men who are being addressed here, whether because they were uniquely at fault on this point or, more probably given the context, because they were responsible for leading the community in prayer. Proper order in corporate worship is thought by many to be Paul's primary concern in this chapter. So, *men*, for everyone's good, our besetting sins should be swallowed up by God's cleansing grace, such that we (*lift up*) *holy hands* as we lead His people in prayer.

Since Paul's thought here continues from last week's text, one of the things I hear him telling us is that when we *pray* all kinds of *prayers* for *all people*, everyone listening should hear God's heart in our words ahead of our own. Our *supplications* and *prayers* and *intercessions* and *thanksgivings for all who are in high positions* ⁽¹⁾, *then*, should actually seek their good and not their destruction. When we *pray* for our President, it shouldn't be easy to tell whether we're a Democrat or a Republican. *People* should primarily hear the loving, just, merciful, righteous heart of *God* ⁽¹⁻⁴⁾.

I also believe this means that when we *pray*, God's big-picture agenda should be more discernible than our own wants and needs. This doesn't mean that our wants and needs are absent, or even unimportant. But I do believe we should *pray* Mat.6¹⁰ *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven, before we pray* Mat.6¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread, 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.* Our besetting sins, *men*, should be swallowed up by God's cleansing grace, such that we (*lift up*) *holy hands* in prayer.

A WORD TO WOMEN IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY - 9-15

9 *Likewise also... women* should yield to God's presence and grace in an area of their besetting sins that can intrude on Christian community and distract in corporate worship. They *should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, 10 but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.* Just as we see with the

men, Paul's closing words to the women clarify his opening words. The men are to *(lift) holy hands* in prayer, not *(angry), (quarrelsome) hands*. And the *(godly) women* are to *adorn themselves with good works*, not cosmetic flair. Now, Paul isn't saying there's anything inherently wrong with *braided hair* or *gold* or *pearls*. He's just saying that *women who profess godliness* have higher priorities. *Just as Christian men (need) to be warned that their interest in vigor and discussion should not produce strife and dissension (v.8), so Christian women (need) to be warned that their interest in beauty and adornment should not produce immodesty and indiscretion (Knight 136)*. As Peter wrote: *1Pe.34 ...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.*

Paul is making a similar point: *11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.* This is the same *(quietness)* that was so attractive to us back in v.2: *a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way*. This is the sort of disposition Paul is talking about here, not one of dismissive, forced silence. Then he continues on to offer the word that is easiest to misunderstand in this text: *12 I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet*, again, same root word. *13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.* Paul is rooting this instruction on the proper behavior of *women* in Christian community to God's original purpose in His creation of *Adam and Eve*. We need to take a few moments to remember the creation story again.

In Gen.1 we see that, as His final act on Day Six: *26 ... God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."* This was God's original great commission

to His newly formed image-bearers. They would rule over His *created* order on His behalf, and *fill* it with image-bearing worshipers. He shared His *likeness* with them, and also His reign. There couldn't be a more magnificent manifestation of the greatness of His glory! This all-powerful Deity would not control His subjects through fear, or stand apart from them in austere silence. He would fellowship with them, and be present with them, Gen.3⁸ ... *walking in the garden in the cool of the day...* He made this singular *man* a plural unity, just like Himself. He made *them* as two, *male and female*, whose love would produce life much like His own love had done.

Gen.2 the gives us more detail on these two: ⁵ *When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,* ⁶ *and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—*⁷ *then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.* ⁸ *And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east...* ¹⁵ *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.* ¹⁶ *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,* ¹⁷ *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die"*—note it: a single restriction, issued to the *man alone*.

¹⁸ *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."* At that point, however, God did something that seems odd to us. Rather than immediately creating *the woman*, ¹⁹ *(the LORD God formed out of the ground) every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens,* a different order than we anticipated from c.1, *and (God) brought (all these creatures) to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.* This activity gave Adam an opportunity not only to observe and label the unique characteristics of each animal, and to see how different they all were from him, but it also displayed his authority over them. That's what it means to *name*

something. It shows that you have a unique connection to it, and even bear responsibility for it, still today. Astronomers who identify a new star are usually given the honor of naming it. The same is true for those who purchase a building, or construct a bridge, or discover a land formation like a mountain or a waterfall. They *name* it. The ultimate example here is the naming of our children. We take this naming very seriously. We think about it for months, and consider many options. Then we often wait to see our child before conferring the name, just to make sure it fits. It's that important. Imagine what an honor it would be if a young couple came to you and said: *We've thought and prayed about it and we've decided. We want you name our child.* Would you consider that an honor? Of course you would—an honor beyond all comprehension. And almost certainly you would reply: *No, I can't do that. Who am I to deserve such an honor.* And that's just one individual child. ²⁰ *(Adam) gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field...*, at God's invitation, even before *Eve was created*, showing us the place of authority God entrusted uniquely to *the man*.

And something else is also seen clearly here: ²⁰ *... there was not found a helper fit for him.* ²¹ *So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.* ²² *And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.* ²³ *Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."* Eve, whom we already met ^(c.1) as an equal partner with the *Adam* in bearing God's *image* and in ruling over creation, we now see is also a complement to him, a companion, *brought* alongside him—literally from his side. And she is uniquely designed to be his *helper* in pursuit of their great commission to *fill the earth* ^(1:28).

³¹ *Now...*, we need to stay with this story just a bit longer to see what happened next, because it's very important for our text in 1Ti.: ³¹ *... the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.* And he said to the woman, bypassing the *man* to whom God had spoken that single restriction: *"Did God*

actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" We know where the conversation went from there. It ended with *the serpent* reversing God's words to *the man* about the consequences of eating from this *tree*: 4... *the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.* He bypassed God's authority structure, *deceived the woman*, lied to her, and enticed her into sin. Then *her husband*, forsaking his responsibility and ignoring the voice of *God*, followed her willfully into sin and death.

This whole scene from Gen.1-3 explains the situation we still find ourselves in today. It explains what we're up against: we were made for sinless, unbroken fellowship with *God* in seamless community with one another as His image-bearing creatures, but instead we're trapped in sin and death, separated from *God* and one another, hell-bent on pursuing our own best interest as we ourselves perceive it, and on defending our perceptions even to the death if we must, vehemently justifying ourselves, even in our pitifully fallen, broken state. That's the legacy of the fall.

Adam and *Eve* then heard the curse of their sin—a curse we still live under today: 16 *To the woman (God) said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing... And your desire shall be for your (husband's authority), (but) he shall rule over you"*—the beauty of that original authority structure fractured and distorted. 17 *And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' forsaking the role and responsibility I entrusted to you, cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life*—a dark picture.

But *God* didn't leave them without hope, even right then. Folded in with His curse of *the serpent*: 14 *The LORD God said...*, 15 *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."* *The woman* will give birth to One *Whom the serpent* will injure, but will not be able destroy. But this same One will destroy *the serpent* with a fatal blow. We, today, know Who this is. We know the woman's *offspring* Who was dealt a death-blow by the scheme of Satan, but Who rose again in victory over sin and death and so is our hope of living in *faith and love and holiness, with self-control*,

however imperfectly in this life, but quite perfectly in the life to come. He's the One in Whose Name *Paul* is writing to *Timothy* (1:1-2), (*urging*) him to 13 ... *charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine*, and writing so that he and all the church 315 ... *may know how (they) ought to behave in the household of God...*

Back to 1Ti.2, *then*, taken in context this passage doesn't hang responsibility for the sin of the world on *Eve*, or even suggest a greater susceptibility for *woman* to be *deceived*. Rather, it calls our attention to what happens with God's *created* order is bypassed or dismissed. It reminds us of the essential importance of honoring His *created* order in our own community as *men* and *women* in Christ. Specifically, it helps us see that when Paul says: 12 *I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet*, this isn't punishment for *Eve's* sin. Neither is it because a *woman* is incapable of (*teaching*). She doesn't lack any competence or capacity *to teach*. Paul is just citing God's creation account to re-establish an understanding in the church of how His image-bearing creatures were designed to function in community, and remind us of what disastrous consequences ensue when His design is not honored. He's reminding us that Christian community, and especially corporate worship, is no place for *men* or *women* even to skirt close to self-exalting or self-justifying expressions. *Men* shouldn't be (*arguing*) their own ideas. And *women* shouldn't be drawing attention to themselves either in dress or in speech. No extravagant *attire* and no assuming a posture of improper *authority*. There's just no place for that. It never works out well when God's design and not embraced and enacted.

Finally, although *men* and *women* have long tasted of the unrelenting bitterness of that curse of Gen.3, Paul reminds us that here (15), again, we're not left without an explicit hope. He's speaking specifically of the *women*, but his words apply to us all. At the very heart of the woman's uniquely feminine role, spotlighted in the original great commission (Gen.1:28) and targeted by the curse (Gen.3:16), Paul finishes by affirming that they will know God's salvation and blessing, as they fully embrace His calling: 15 ... *she will be saved through childbearing —if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with*

self-control. I believe the reference to *childbearing* here is intended to remind us not of Gen.3¹⁶ where (*multiplied*) *pain* is in view, but of Gen.3¹⁵ where the promised *offspring of the woman* is in view. ¹⁵... *She will be saved through childbearing—the Child that is borne of the woman, Mary, meaning Jesus Christ our Lord—as will everyone receives Him as Savior, if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.* We will all be saved by He who was born of a woman, He ⁶ *who gave himself as a ransom for all, if (we) get our desires in line with His—if (we) receive Him by faith, and then continue on by His grace in... love and holiness, with self-control.*

CONCLUSION

Paul's *desire* ⁽⁸⁾ for the *men and women* in Ephesus in Timothy's day is God's Word to His people *in every place* ⁽⁸⁾ still in our day. This is how *we men and women* of God should *behave* (cf. 3:15) in Christian community.

Men, lead this body *lifting holy hands* in prayer *without anger and quarreling*.

Women, adorn yourselves above all else with *good works* that embrace and enact God's purpose and plan and call in creation.

Men and women together, rejoice in the presence of God among us and enter in with all your heart to that which pleases His heart ⁽³⁾, which is summarized here as *faith and love and holiness, with self-control* ⁽¹⁵⁾.