

Letters to Lead By

1 TIMOTHY 2

FIRST DAY: Introduction

How are believers to react to ungodly political leaders? What should the response of the church be toward non-believers? What is the proper conduct for a godly woman in today's culture? Such relevant questions were answered over a millennium ago by the apostle Paul in his first letter to Timothy.

Two men, Hymenaeus and Alexander, had caused shipwreck to many people in the church in Ephesus. Paul charged Timothy to correct the damage caused by these men concerning the church's perspective on: government officials, the unsaved, and the roles of men and women in the fellowship.

To fully understand this chapter, it is important to understand the context in which it was written and the issues that Paul was addressing. The Roman Empire allowed the Jews to pray to God in their synagogues, providing that they also prayed for the emperor's health and welfare. However, many zealots and legalists were forbidding intercessory prayer for anyone serving in such a pagan government. The topic of prayer for government officials had become so controversial that the church began to divide over it. Rather than prayer, the legalists advocated for rebellion and violence against Roman authorities. Paul reminded Timothy that the weapon of the church is prayer.

These same legalists taught that Gentiles could not be saved without first converting to Judaism and observing the law. They went so far as to say that God did not want certain men and women to be saved. Paul answered this false assertion by declaring the fact that God *desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth*.

In Roman times, with very few exceptions, the majority of women were illiterate. Women were also exploited; society viewed a woman's worth by her beauty, sexual appeal, and ornamentation. Furthermore, most women were excluded from education

of any form. Yet, Paul appealed to Timothy to let the women learn quietly, without drawing attention to their presence. The concept of a woman being given the opportunity to learn would have been highly controversial and would have caused many men to be threatened by such an outrageous notion. Paul lessened the shock by saying that he was not advocating for women to become pastors or overseers in the church, but rather that they be allowed to learn about their Savior.

These issues continue to be hot topics today. It is imperative that we do not allow them to cause shipwreck in the church. Rather, if we put God's grace at the center of these issues and then put these issues in the context of the whole of Scripture, the controversy disappears, and we are left with a loving God who wills that all men and women alike come to salvation and into a deep and vital relationship with Him.

*Ask God to make prayer your first
and greatest response to every controversy.*

SECOND DAY: Read 1 Timothy 2:1–4

1. Paul's *first* pastoral charge to Timothy was prayer. Paul then listed four types of corporate prayer to *be made for all men* (1 Timothy 2:1). Define and give a brief example of each of these:
 - a. *Supplications*
 - b. *Prayers*
 - c. *Intercessions*
 - d. *Giving of thanks*

(1) Why do you think Paul made this his *first* exhortation to Timothy?

2. According to 1 Timothy 2:1b–2a, for whom did Paul advocate prayer?

a. For _____

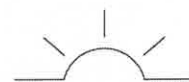
(1) What does the word *all* in this context suggest to you?

b. For _____ and all who are in _____

(1) Consider that the emperor who ruled when Paul wrote this epistle was Nero, one of the most diabolical and evil men in history. What does this convey to you about this exhortation?

3. What would be the outcome of prayer? 1 Timothy 2:2b

a. Some believe that Paul was referencing God's earlier instruction to the exiled Jews in Babylon. Read Jeremiah 29:7 and share how this speaks to you.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are at least seven different Greek nouns for "prayer," and four of them are used here.¹
—Warren Wiersbe

- b. What does this express to you about the power of prayer?

- 4. In 1 Timothy 2:3 Paul stated that these prayers are *good and acceptable* to God; this means that they are praiseworthy and pleasing to Him. Link this with Psalm 141:2 and Revelation 8:4 and record your insights.

- 5. According to 1 Timothy 2:4, why are these prayers *good and acceptable*?
 - a. Link this with 2 Peter 3:9 and share your thoughts.

 - b. How does the fact that this is God's desire:
 - (1) Minister to you

 - (2) Motivate you

- 6. Take a moment to pray for someone in authority.

THIRD DAY: Read 1 Timothy 2:5–7

1. The truth Paul wanted all men to know is recorded in 1 Timothy 2:5–6 (NLT): *For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. He gave His life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.* How does this speak to you concerning:

a. One Mediator

b. Jesus's gift

c. God's timing

(1) What does this suggest to you about salvation?

2. Paul had been *appointed* by God to reach the Gentiles *in faith and truth*. Use 1 Timothy 2:7 to list and define these three *appointed* areas of service:

a.

b.

c.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The Greek word *ransom* means *purchase price or exchange price*.

(1) Why do you think these *appointed* services were so crucial for Paul in evangelizing?

(2) Why is the gospel message so important for all men to hear? See also Romans 1:16.

FOURTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 2:8–10

1. In 1 Timothy 2:8–10, Paul instructed Timothy to persuade the men and women of the church to use spiritual means rather than cultural means to effect change. Paul began by addressing the men. According to 1 Timothy 2:8, what are *men*:

a. To do

(1) Link this with Luke 18:1 and James 1:20 and share your thoughts.

b. Not to do

(1) Why did Paul's instruction offer a better way? See also James 5:16–18.

2. Women were not to use their feminine wiles to try to change society; rather, *in like manner*, how did Paul desire *women* to:

a. *Adorn themselves* (1 Timothy 2:9a, 10)

b. *Not* adorn themselves (1 Timothy 2:9b)

(1) The heart of this exhortation was not to censure fashion, but to encourage Christian women to focus on internal, spiritual things more than external, superficial things. Link this with 1 Peter 3:3–4 to understand and remark on God's heart for women.

(a) How does God's perspective of these things minister to you?

(b) Why is this fitting for *women professing godliness*?

3. From your study today, what is the best way to effect change?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Silence in Greek is hesychia and means desistence from bustle, or stillness.

FIFTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 2:11–15

- Paul, continuing with his directives for the church, stated that a woman should be free to *learn*. The word *learn* is the Greek word *manthano*, which means *to increase one's knowledge, be informed, hear*. In Paul's time, the idea of a woman being given opportunity to learn was revolutionary, unconventional, and controversial. Use the chart below to consider the following phrases from 1 Timothy 2:11–12 and their definitions. Then note your thoughts and impressions:

PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE(S)	YOUR THOUGHTS
<i>Learn in silence</i>	Receiving the Word of God peaceably, without contention.	<i>Mary</i> See Luke 10:39–42	
<i>With all submission</i>	Respecting the God-given order of authority.	<i>Mary</i> See Luke 1:38	
<i>I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man</i>	The word for <i>authority</i> (Greek <i>authenteo</i>) is used only here and means <i>to master, govern, or dominate</i> .	<i>Priscilla</i> See Acts 18:26, Romans 16:3–4 <i>Phoebe</i> See Romans 16:1–2	

- a. The essential issue here is that of *authority*. Women are not restricted from speaking or ministering in church (see Luke 2:38; Acts 2:17a; Acts 21:9; Romans 16:1), but they must be submitted to authority, specifically to the men God has appointed to oversee the church. This has nothing to do with inferiority or subjugation; as Wiersbe points out, *Anyone who has served in the armed forces knows that 'rank' has to do with order and authority, not with value or ability. ... Just as an army would be in confusion if there were no levels of authority, so society would be in chaos without submission.*² How does this help you understand the importance of:

(1) *Authority*

(2) *Submission*

- b. Why do you think this concept is such a challenge in our modern culture?

2. In 1 Timothy 2:13–14, Paul explained his rationale for this exhortation: God created Adam first and gave him authority over creation. Before Eve was created, Adam had received God's command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). Therefore, although Eve was *deceived*, Adam was *not deceived*, but knowingly rebelled when he ate the fruit. Remember, in Paul's day women did not have access to God's Word because they were illiterate. How does this help you understand Paul's reasoning?

- a. Paul's line of reasoning hinged on Genesis 3, where Eve was deceived by Satan and fell under a curse. In 1 Timothy 2:15a Paul referred to the lifting of this curse through the divine child, the Son of God. Use Genesis 3:15 to remark on what the woman's *seed* would do to the serpent.

(1) Link this with Galatians 3:13 and share your thoughts.

3. Paul listed four evidences of salvation in 1 Timothy 2:15b. Cite and describe the importance of these evidences:

a.

b.

c.

d.

(1) Why is it so vital to *continue* in these areas?

4. Use the following verses to underscore the importance of learning:
 - a. Matthew 11:29
 - b. Titus 2:3–5

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. From your study this week, share something about:
 - a. Your response to secular leaders
 - b. Prayer
 - c. The right way to effect change
 - d. The wrong way to try to effect change
 - e. God's heart for women

2. Considering Paul's exhortations in 1 Timothy 2 concerning prayer, take a moment to pray for:
 - a. Someone in authority or leadership
 - b. An unsaved person
 - c. The men in your fellowship
 - d. The women in your fellowship