

## ON MISSION 1 Timothy 2:1-15

In Paul's letter to Timothy he wrote to encourage him in several areas as Timothy carried out his ministry as pastor of the Church at Ephesus. It would appear that this part of Paul's first letter to Timothy was directed toward the conduct of a worship meeting; however, much of what we see can be applied to everyday interactions in a variety of settings.

### Through Prayer – 2:1-7

<sup>1</sup>First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, <sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup>This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup>For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time. <sup>7</sup>For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. 1 Timothy 2:1-7 (NASB95)

The context of Paul's instructions in this chapter is better understood in light of the comments he made in verses 18 and 19 of the previous chapter. There he gave Timothy a specific charge to fulfill the prophecy given about him so that he would be victorious in the battle against the spiritual forces opposing the kingdom of God by holding on to the faith and having a good conscience. The first chapter more or less defined the objective to be accomplished and Paul addressed the "how to" in this portion of the letter.

A general ministry of the church is prayer. There are many descriptions of prayer as to types and content. Four descriptions were mentioned here by Paul. This was not intended to be a comprehensive list of every possible type of prayer. The first description (variously translated as entreaties, supplications, and requests) is the main content of most of the prayers we hear today in a typical church setting. Basically, this can be described as a "needs list." All of us have needs and it is commendable that we verbalize these in our conversations with God. Many would argue that God is already aware of our needs and this is absolutely true. However, bringing such needs to God for His help is an acknowledgment of our trust in Him rather than trusting in just ourselves or others. (In a larger context of prayer, we probably should be looking for reasons of why we have such needs in our lives. Are the needs there because of our neglect or error or some other cause?)

The second description is the word "prayers." Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's commentary suggests that the idea of "devotion" is what is meant in this case. If we accept that, then what is a "devotion" type prayer about? What does the word devotion mean in a prayer setting? Some words that come to mind are loyalty, faithfulness, and commitment. What would be included in a prayer involving such things? This may be simply a reaffirmation of our faith, a re commitment to purity in our lives and perhaps expressions of our love for God. This part of our prayer life may be the most important thing we can do to keep us on the "paths of righteousness" in our daily lives.

The third component is the idea of intercession or remembering others in their needs and also praying for them to be loyal, faithful and committed to the truth. Sometimes we become very frustrated and even angry with others when they fail to function in a way that is beneficial to themselves and the world around them. A better (more compassionate) view of these people might just be to see that the reason they behave as they do is because they have a tremendous need to be set free from the compulsions and addictions and enslavements that are controlling their lives. I don't want to imply that the Flip Wilson defense (the devil made me do it) should

be brought up in every case; however, we do need to recognize that the world, the flesh and the devil are terrible slave-masters from which those who are lost need to be delivered. These three (the world, the flesh, and the devil) still attempt to influence those who are saved, but we must never forget that we are to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and not these other things.

Of course, intercession is usually thought of in terms of our praying for those who have illnesses, injuries, financial needs, and relationship problems. Usually, these concerns are for family members, those whom we know personally, and/or someone in our community. Not only should we intercede on their behalf for the obvious immediate needs but also for their “devotion” needs of growing in their loyalty, faithfulness and commitment to God.

The fourth item Paul mentioned was giving thanks. The Greek word used here is a form of the word eucharists which has become synonymous with the Lord Supper observation in the Catholic tradition. It is the central part of their “worship” event. The word literally means “good favor.” In the context of prayer, this idea is related to remembering and acknowledging God’s good favor (His benefits) to us. Normally, the benefits we acknowledge as favorable are those which we deem to be good and desirable. We seldom include the many things that have happened to us that we considered (at the time of their occurrence) to be inconveniences or detriments. It is difficult to implement Paul’s teaching found in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 “In everything give thanks (eucharisteo).”

There is no area of life that should be omitted from our prayers. We are to pray for all sorts of people. With seven billion people on the earth you cannot pray for every person on earth except in a general manner. On the other hand, there are many specific needs that we know about. Paul was including ordinary people with whom we encounter or know about their needs, for those in the highest levels of governments (that could include civil or clergy) and all those in between these two extremes.

The net result of such praying is a very desirable situation: “tranquil (peaceful) and quiet lives in godliness and holiness.” This outcome sounds as if we would have a taste of “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done” if that came to pass. Such an outcome would surely be pleasing to our Savior God. It seems that many times we pray specifically for the outcome of “peaceful and quiet lives in godliness and holiness” and overlook the things that need to happen or changes that need to be made in the lives of individuals (kings, others in authority, and ordinary people) so that “peaceful and quiet lives” is an end result.

What are the identifiable needs that should be addressed and corrections applied to all men that will result in our being able to really have peaceful and quiet lives that have proper piety toward God and respect toward others? The answer is not related to those things for which we usually pray such as illness, financial well being, and interpersonal relationships. The answer is directly tied to the purpose of why God sent His Son into the world. It is God’s great desire for all people to be restored to a right relation with Himself and to know the truth about His love for us and to know to what great length He has gone to save us. In order for this to happen, then we must find ways to communicate the truth of the word of God in effective ways to the world around us.

Prayer was to be a priority – a “first of all” part of the work of the church. Why so important? We are called to implement Kingdom influence in the world in which we live. We quote the prayer that Jesus taught and we say “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” The way we get involved in bringing about the change for the Kingdom of God is through spiritual warfare. Just as the Children of Israel took the Promised Land in physical battles, we must wrest control of the earthly realm from the “principalities and powers” via

spiritual warfare. We are provided armor for the fight (Ephesians 6:14-17) and are to engage the battle by “praying in the Spirit on all occasions.”

If we were to examine the typical “order of service” for modern day churches, we would likely see about 5 percent on announcements, 5 percent in prayer time, 40 percent in singing or listening to others sing, and the remaining 50 percent in preaching. It could be argued that “the singing of hymns” has become the means of expression of devotion and thanksgiving and could be thought of as part of the prayer ministry of the church. Since this is what we are doing (singing rather than traditional praying), then the question should be addressed is “do we engage in hymn singing prayerfully or has this activity become an expression of vain repetitions (or just saying the words) without being engaged in the message of the words?”

We could argue that the priority of what we “do” in the church seems to focus of the second item Paul mentioned to Timothy regarding teaching the truth. The truth that is to be taught in our churches is very similar to the foundational teaching of Moses where he stated in Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!” Moses was a type of mediator between God and the people and he led them in carrying out a system of sacrifices that pointed to the ultimate Mediator who would be shown to be the perfect and ultimate sacrifice to redeem all mankind. As Paul indicated in verse six, this truth was openly declared (lived out in the realm of time) at the proper time. The “testimony” was the birth, life, suffering, death, resurrection, the ascension of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Paul saw that teaching this truth to the Gentiles was his life’s work. The target group of his teaching was contrary to all he had thought to be a reasonable approach in spreading the gospel. Why would you try to convince the heathen and pagans who had no basis and no preparation (compared to the Jews) for receiving the gospel? This unlikely assignment was still hard to believe as evidenced by Paul’s comment “I am telling the truth, I am not lying.” In addition to the difficulty of spreading the gospel among those of pagan backgrounds, many of the Jews were still convinced that God’s salvation was intended only for them.

### Led by Godly Men – 2:8

<sup>8</sup>Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. 1 Timothy 2:8 (NASB95)

Paul was an observer of human nature. He knew that all of us tend to be driven by physical appetites and by our emotions. Most adults realize that we should not let our physical bodies and related desires be in control of what we do. What many of us are still learning is that we should not let our emotions control us either.

A common emotion among men is a tendency to become angry with various situations that we encounter in life. It could be something as simple as a person who is driving the car in front of your car and is going so slow that his actions are going to cause you to be late. Someone may attempt to break in line when you go to vote and the reaction is likely to be anger. Another common behavior trait is when we get into a discussion about practically anything that we want to try to convince the other person that we are right and we wind up arguing and being assertive or even aggressive in our demeanor.

Paul’s instruction to the church is to not let such natural tendencies be a disruptive influence when the church comes together for worship. If we are of the persuasion that all of a Christian’s life should be an act of worship, then we can apply Paul’s advice to everything we do. Becoming angry and arguing is not a good witness for a Christian wherever he might be. In pointing out this obvious tendency that men have no one concludes that Paul is “anti male.”

The alternative to yielding to such natural tendencies that we (as men) have is to submit

ourselves to God in our worship as well as all areas of life. This submission is displayed in the posture of lifting up your hands to God as a person prays. The typical position our hands would take if we were submitting something to anyone would be “out stretched and palms up.” This is also the position our hands would take if we were to receive something from someone.

### Supported by Godly Women – 2:9-15

<sup>9</sup> Likewise, *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, <sup>10</sup> but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness. <sup>11</sup> A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. <sup>12</sup> But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. <sup>13</sup> For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. <sup>14</sup> *And it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. <sup>15</sup> But *women* will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint. 1 Timothy 2:9-15 (NASB95)

Paul did a similar analysis on some of the obvious natural tendencies of women. Women behave differently than men partly from cultural influence and partly from natural hormonal make up. Just as anger and arguments from men would be disruptive in worship experiences, excessive adornment can be a distraction and disrupt a church’s worship experience. A natural tendency that women have (and apparently most men do not have) is to create distinctiveness from other women by the way they dress, fix their hair, the perfume they use, and any number of other things. This is why we see so much more variety in women’s clothes and hair styles than men’s clothes and hair styles. Paul suggested an alternative (less distracting and much more beneficial) way to be distinctive and that is by being creative in the ways they help and minister to others. That is a distinctiveness that is beneficial to many people and can be applied in the church or the community or workplace.

When it came to the subject of teaching and receiving instructions, Paul cautioned women to not try to push their thoughts on others. This admonition which was directed toward women was likely based on the tendency that has been noted in some recent publication such as “Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus.” One of the observations made in this study of the differences between men and women is that women tend to think aloud. Basically, this means that if a thought or question comes to mind it gets verbalized immediately. Most men do not say a whole lot of what they are thinking. Women do verbalize more readily. If I consider this on a personal basis, the thing with which I struggle is realizing that the question that is asked or a statement that is made by my wife does not necessarily require a response from me.

In a teaching environment the process of getting the message across for those who are learning would be disrupted if everyone one in the room was constantly interjecting whatever thoughts popped into their minds. In the continuous news discussions on cable TV we see a variety of “panels of people” giving their opinions on a particular subject. When everyone talks at the same time, nothing is learned and confusion results. There is considerable benefit in having a variety of inputs and that why the early church services allowed for this as we read in 1 Corinthians 14:31 “For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged.” This certainly indicates that such interactions are needed. However, the interactions and dialogue should be orderly and deliberative or as Paul wrote “one by one.”

What about the prohibition regarding women exercising authority over men by becoming their teachers? Put this statement in context of how most of the teaching was done in the early church. The elders were the likely teachers of the congregation. If some people are trying to take over the class by sharing their latest thought on whatever subject that comes to mind then those people are literally exercising authority over the elders doing the teaching. Paul’s instruction to these is to remain calm and share in the orderly fashion mentioned earlier.

Paul reminded them that the first time that happened was when Eve thought that she and Adam could become like God if they would just partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. She was all excited about it and Adam (I think) was guilty of not wanting to squash or quench her enthusiasm by asking the obvious question of “What are you doing, do you not know that God said that we must not do that?” Instead, Adam did not take a proper leadership role but, in effect, allowed Eve to exercise authority over him and disaster resulted.

The result of that terrible decision was a curse that was pronounced upon Eve that childbearing would be with multiplied pain and sorrow. That pronouncement was the judgment of God; however, this judgment did not prevent women from experiencing salvation if they put their trust in the redemption work of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. To put it another way, even while under the “pain in childbearing judgment” salvation is available. The evidence of that salvation is that the transformed life of the person continues to show faithfulness, love, self-control, and holy living.

Another possible interpretation of verse 15 is to consider that the construction of the Greek text is such that the subject of the two parts of the verse may have changed. The Greek Interlinear Bible says this: “But **she** shall through the childbearing, if **they** abide in faith and love and sanctification with discreetness. . .” The subject of the preceding verses is about ministry in the church – how to have an influence for the Kingdom of God. A possibility in what Paul was teaching here is the following: A woman’s greatest potential influence to minister salvation is to those children she has borne. The Greek word translated “but she shall be saved” could be translated “she shall save [others].” The combined sense of that verse then could be “A woman’s greatest opportunity for ministry is to her children, if they (the children) continue in the faith, etc.”

The bottom line is that the church has many opportunities to influence the world and that the means of doing so are through the power of prayer and the teaching of the truth of God’s word and doing it in such a way that our human nature does not disrupt what God is accomplishing through us as the Body of Christ.