

“Church & Gender” Study Guide

Lesson 12: Women in the Pastorals

Outline

1. 1 TIMOTHY 2 & 3
 - a. Letter is concerned with congregational stability and leadership
 - i. Elders, 3:1-7
 - ii. Deacons, 3:8-13
 - iii. Evangelists, 4:1-14
 - iv. Widows, 5:1-16
 - v. Leadership, 5:17-6:2
 - b. The presence of false teaching in the community is the occasion for this concern.
2. 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15
 - a. “in every place” may mean “every place of worship”
 - b. “teach” seems to mean formal or authoritative teaching
 - c. “quietly/quiet” is term elsewhere applied to men as well
 - d. If one looks at every passage referring to women, one notices possible problems related to indecency (2:9) and immorality (5:11).
 - e. Some “learn to be idle, gadding about from house to house; ...gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not say (5:13)” and “some have already turned away to follow Satan (5:14).”
 - f. In fact, the false teachers have made “their way into households and captivate silly women, overwhelmed by their sins and swayed by all kinds of desire, who are always being instructed and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:6-7).”
3. Complementarian:
 - a. 1 Timothy 2:11-15 orients women toward quietness and submission while it orients men toward teaching, authority and leadership of the community.
 - b. The rationale for this orientation is rooted in creation and then illustrated in the story of the fall.
 - c. Complementarians will disagree regarding the application of this text.
 - i. Action View: Paul excludes women from the action of leading prayer in the assembly (v. 8) as well as any kind of teaching that involves mixed audiences of men and women since all teaching involves authority.
 - ii. Positional View: Paul only excludes women from certain kinds of authority and teaching, that is, teaching that arises out of the position of elders and evangelists as conceived in 1 Timothy.
 - d. Two Views on v. 15:
 - i. Verse 15 tells women to be domestically oriented.
 - ii. Verse 15 refers to women broadly as the mothers of salvation. The child in question is Jesus.
4. Egalitarian

- a. See ACTS 19:1 & 28
 - b. Artemis Cult
 - i. Strong, female priesthood
 - ii. Passionate population in Ephesus
 - c. Apparently, there is a problem with false teachers who desired to be teachers in the church (1:4, 7; 6:5, 20). Their teachings are “profane myths and old wives tales” (4:7).
 - d. Women are to learn the truth with a disposition of submissiveness or quietness (2:11). It is not a prohibition of all speaking. The focus is on how one should listen.
 - e. Paul’s phrase, “I am not permitting” (2:12) points to specific instructions in a specific situation rather than a permanent ordinance.
 - f. The word translated “to have authority over” is used only once in the N.T. and has the sense of “to domineer.” Moreover, “domineer” qualifies the word “teach” and specifies what type of teaching Paul is prohibiting. Only the domineering false teachers are being told to stop.
 - g. If women (and men) learn with a peaceful and gentle spirit (2:11) and teach in a peaceful and gentle manner (2:12), Paul would have no problem with women (or men) teaching.
 - h. The “For” of verse 13 indicates an illustration or example rather than a theological rationale. Just like the serpent deceived Eve, so many of the Ephesian women have been deceived by the false teachers.
 - i. Two Views on v. 15:
 - i. Verse 15 tells women to be domestically oriented rather than cultists.
 - ii. Verse 15 reflects the Roman values of the day and not an imperative for the church.
5. Responses
- a. COMPLEMENTARIAN:
 - i. What would Paul have to say if he intended to restrict women?
 - ii. Why doesn’t he say “I do not permit false teachers to teach” rather than the imprecise reference to “women”?
 - iii. How do we know the Artemis cult is the issue or that it was that invasive in the church?
 - b. EGALITARIAN:
 - i. Complementarians ignore the overall concern of the letter for a specific problem.
 - ii. Complementarians ignore the historical context in Ephesus.
 - iii. Complementarians ignore Paul’s statements in other passages.
6. Elders & Deacons
- a. Your view on 1 Timothy 3 will be heavily influenced by your view of chapter 2.
 - b. 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7
 - c. OVERSEER: Office or Work sometimes called “elder” or “shepherd”
 - i. “husband of one wife”
 - ii. “able to teach”

- iii. “manage his own household well”
 - iv. COMPLEMENTARIAN: This passage is consistent with chapter 2 in the complementarian view. Men are the leaders and authoritative teachers of the church.
 - v. EGALITARIAN: If chapter 2 is understood as a specific issue not a general command, then there is not problem with women being “able to teach” as an elder in chapter 3. “Husband of one wife” is just a general phrase for “faithful spouse.”
- d. 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13
- i. DEACON: Office or Work of a “servant”
 - ii. Why are qualifications given for a deacon’s wife but not an elder’s wife?
 - iii. “Their wives” may also be translated “The women,” as in “the women deacons.”
 - iv. This would agree with Romans 16:1-3 and Phoebe who is called a deacon.
 - v. Some complementarians find this acceptable because deacon is a service role, not an authoritative or teaching role.

Discussion Questions

1. Did either point of view on this critical passage change your mind or persuade you?
2. What do Complementarians assume in this passage? What do Egalitarians assume in this passage?