

# Working It Through

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[ 0 : 00 ] I was thinking maybe I could somehow incorporate the cajon into this.! If you have questions that you want to formulate, there will be time to do that.

Discuss on your tables. You can ask the question yourself. You can pass your question to a spokesperson who can ask it for you. And then we will, as promised, we'll take a look at some of the trickier passages.

Go back to 1 Timothy 2 where we were a couple of weeks back and look at 1 Corinthians 11 as well. I'll quickly walk you through how to sort of try to understand that. How we interpret those passages.

And then again, there will be a chance to ask some questions and to discuss in groups. So, it won't feel quite like this morning. This morning was a preach. This is a bit more like a teach and a think and a pray and a talk together.

So, if you notice it feeling different, that's good. That's good. That's the idea. Right. Just a couple of preliminary things to say. One is, basically, it's okay to disagree about this.

[ 1 : 24 ] Right. So, to be a member here, you don't need to 100% agree with what I'm about to say or with what the elders would hold or what it says in the church documents. You just need to agree as a member not to undermine that and that you're happy for the elders to lead as they've been called to lead.

And it doesn't actually prevent us working with other churches who hold a different position either. So, we work happily with other churches in Farnham who don't hold the same position on this issue as us. That's because it's not a salvation issue.

It's not a gospel issue. Although, it is important because it's adjacent to a gospel issue. If you think about the picture of Christ and the church as a husband and a bride, we're talking about topics that are fairly closely linked to that, aren't we?

So, it is important. The second thing I just want to say, and we kind of referred to at the beginning of that first talk, is the misuse of God's ways and the abuse of male authority inside the church and in society generally has resulted in generations of women and, to a lesser degree, men, suffering. So, we need to just say that. And in ways that aren't even fully understood yet. So, that is not okay, is it? And we need to say that. We also need to say we're not trying to relaunch the patriarchy from the basis of our local church here.

[ 2 : 45 ] That is not what the Bible wants. That's not what the Lord's heart for us is. That is not our heart for us as a church. Something in the handout which is available over there about sort of the patriarchy as well.

If you want to have a look at that. One other thing that I wanted to be clear about, just that came through some of the feedback I got, was what we're not saying here is that we want all women to be leaders. Okay?

That's not kind of the drum that we're banging. We're saying that we all have intrinsic value, irrespective of our gifts, whether those are leadership or not, because God made us.

You know, even if we don't serve or we can't serve, that doesn't affect our value, how much the Lord delights in us. And the other thing we're saying is we would like all men and women to feel enabled to use the gifts that they do have.

And be valued when they do that, because that will bless us all. That's how we will flourish together. So, with those things in mind, we'll just do a really quick reminder, in case you weren't here last time.

[ 3 : 44 ] From Genesis, we saw that men and women are equal, different, and supposed to be united together. And then we went to the New Testament and we asked the question, what does

that mean for us as a church, for the church in general?

And we thought about that idea of a flower bed. Needs marking off to flourish, doesn't it? Four sides. We're all needed. We're all serving. We are all together.

And we're all served by male elders as well. And the question for today is, well, okay, what does that mean for us? And what does that look like at Bethel?

And then we'll deal with the tricky bits in sort of part two. So, I've kind of broken this up into the what, the who, and the how. Let's try and keep it simple.

So, men and women in ministry together, what is that? What are we supposed to be doing? And the first thing we need to know is that the main ministry of the church is not what I'm doing right now.

[ 4 : 41 ] The main ministry of the church, by weight of how much attention it receives in the Bible from Jesus and from his apostles, is one anothering. All those things, that huge list of things that the New Testament say, do this to one.

Love one another. Care for each other. Bear with one another. Instruct each other. Reprove one another. And that includes, then, word ministry. So, opening up the Bible, doing something with it, by both men and women.

So, teach one another, it says. That includes women. And then there is the authoritative teaching. So, a bit more like what I'm doing today. That's part of the what, isn't it?

And that is linked to reserved for male eldership, which we touched on last time and we'll look at more today. I just want to come back to that one anothering.

Comfort each other. Instruct each other. Care for each other. Encourage one another. Help each other see the truth. Discipling each other. Coming alongside each other. Drawing out gifts.

[ 5 : 46 ] Expressing appreciation. That is the joyful responsibility of all of us. And it's not gendered. It's nothing to do with whether you're a man or a woman. Except, of course, that you do it uniquely as a man or a woman.

And that happens at Bethel. We see that, don't we? So, I don't know if you knew this, but Chris Pierce mentors Micah. And Chris does that in a very Chris way. And that's wonderful.

He does that with his straightforwardness and with his sense of fun. He does that in a way that nobody else can do. And you might not know this again, but Amanda is Emma Coates' mentor. And she does that with, you know, that usual diligence and care that we see Amanda bringing to almost everything that she does. And those of you here for Coffee Shop on Tuesday, Debs was here for the very first time in a really long time.

And that's because Rachel had thought, I'd like to include Debs more. How can I do that? And that's a very Rachel thing to do, isn't it? And that wouldn't have happened, actually, unless Katie had said, she won't do this with you.

[ 6 : 51 ] But she might do that. She might come down to Coffee Shop if you offered. That's Katie's insight that has brought that about. About music. In one sense, there's no official role, is there?

You don't have to be appointed to be a musician in our church. And it's not gendered. There's, in fact, a beautiful blended sound produced by men and women. And we notice.

You know, we notice when Judy plays the strings, don't we? And we notice when she doesn't. And we notice when Chris plays the trumpet, don't we?

There's an added sound there that blends into the whole. Same when someone's being welcoming. That's both an attitude that hopefully we all have in growing measure. And it's a gift as well that particular people have to be warm and including at the door.

Think of Lucy Gregory and Lucy Hunnyset. And then I couldn't pass this subject by without just picking up on this. Because this, of course, is Cheryl's handiwork around the back of the building, planting up, creating beauty in the environment that we worship in.

[ 8 : 00 ] And we would be poorer if she didn't do it, wouldn't we? All that is to say, it's easy to think of the pastor or the elders as being the ones who carry the main burden of ministry in the church.

And in a sense, that's right, isn't it? But in another sense, actually, it is for us all to do this, serve each other this way, be thankful and loving towards one another.

Notice these things. So, you know, we all have strengths and weaknesses. One of my weaknesses, I think, would be that when I walk into a room, I don't naturally create a feeling of openness and vulnerability among people.

Right? It's probably fair to say that. I think some people are willing to be open and vulnerable with me. But that's not something that sort of I exude. And do many men do that?

I don't know. You know, if the social sciences are to be believed, then most of us are better at dealing with the outside world as men and not so much the internal world of the church. But it's a weakness.

[ 9 : 01 ] So how do we make that up? We don't. Of course, it remains a weakness that isn't made up unless we all believe in this one another in the church. I just think it's really important to say that really strongly.

The only ministry that is gendered in the scripture is that subsection of word ministry that we talked about before. That kind of authoritative elder-like preaching that we'll talk about in 1 Timothy 2. But in other places, I think we actually need women to minister the word to us and teach us because they bring a perspective and an insight that men don't because we're not women. And they can speak to women in a way that men can't because we're not women. And we want to see that. We do see that. We want to see that more and more in places like community groups, which women co-lead.

Sometimes we've seen it in somebody teaching a seminar that we put on, particularly, you know, we used to have in the autumn something that Mike used to do with various different streams going on. We saw it there. But I think also it goes unseen in hundreds of conversations that happened along the way, on a Sunday morning and not on a Sunday morning, where we're ministering the word to each other.

[ 10 : 17 ] Women are ministering the word to us. What we haven't yet seen is that beauty and that giftedness expressed in women leading services, which is something that we would like to think about, I think, as an eldership.

So that's some of the what. What? Here's the who. And that one another is everyone, isn't it? Because everybody has the Holy Spirit, because we believe that the church is a priesthood of all believers together.

So we all minister to each other, don't we? Then there are official roles, diaconate, kids workers, staff, paid staff of the church. Those are all ungendered roles.

And then, as we saw before, we have eldership, which is for qualified men who are willing to use their authority to sacrificially serve. Because that's how Jesus wants it, we believe.

But how high we want the volume on that male eldership is something that we can talk about, isn't it? Help for discussion. Does that male eldership have to be on loud all the time?

[ 11 : 22 ] Or can it be quiet sometimes? So definitely during my time here, we've wanted the whole eldership to be a bit more visible. That's been one of the things we've wanted. So that the whole leadership is known by the whole church.

Hopefully that means there's a better relationship between the leadership and the church. But our goal has not been to make male leadership kind of a distinctive of Bethel.

You know, one of the flavours that immediately hits you when you come into Bethel is the men are in charge. But we haven't been aiming at that. That's all around how high does the volume need to be. It needs to function, but does it need to be felt all the time?

It's a good question to think about, isn't it? So the who, what about the how? And this is the most challenging bit, isn't it? So we want to do it so that folks feel seen, appreciated, encouraged.

That's a how kind of a thing. We want to do it in a way that actually demonstrates what we believe to be true about men and women. So unity, difference, equality. And yes, we acknowledge the good boundaries that God has set.

[ 12 : 25 ] You know, the commands he has given us for our good, as James was saying. But within that, we enjoy freedom. And we want that freedom to be enjoyed. That's part of the how. We don't just want a faithful theology.

We want a felt flourishing, don't we? So what does that actually look like? Are we doing okay in that, or are we not?

Certainly it's for the eldership to set an example of that, but we all play a part, don't we? Examples would be, well, what about, visibly, a man and a woman leading a service together?

Would that express our unity, our difference, and our equality? Don't know. To be discussed. What about members' meetings? That's a forum where, yes, the elders sort of usually chair the meeting and set the agenda.

That's part of our leadership, isn't it? But for the rest, it is free for men and women to speak, contribute, bring their gifts, bring their personalities. And we've tried to kind of facilitate that a bit

with small group discussions and having people feedback through Slido.

[13:29] But has that worked? Or is it still actually the case that some folks, men or women, feel they can't speak, can't bring their own faith, their own viewpoint to those discussions?

So that's kind of trying to work through a little bit how this applies at Bethel. Here's the first opportunity to talk and think about that together. But before we do, I just wanted to encourage you to be someone's man.

Okay, so if this morning's message was you are imperishable, then this evening's message is be someone's man. And the man thing is just this, this model of how to do some of this seeing and encouraging, right?

So N, we want people to feel noticed, seen and heard. A, we want people to feel affirmed. So people see how their unique strengths make a unique difference. And N, we want people to know that they're needed, relied on, indispensable, essential.

That, I think, is a kind of a practical way to do the one another thing that we've been talking about. So the question is, are we doing a good job? Could we do it differently?

[14:33] Could we do it better? Is there somebody who doesn't have a man yet? So there's the QR code for the Slido. I encourage you, just in the tables that you're on at the moment, have a chat about this.

How do you feel about what's been said? What questions, comments, reactions do you have? And then secondly, is Bethel a place where we see and encourage each other in different giftings? Men and women, if we're weak somewhere, what could we do about that?

That would be great. And of course, if I haven't covered the thing that you wanted to talk about, then. So the ways to feedback would be scan the QR code with your phone and enter your question that way.

Or ask it directly when we do the feedback bit. Or get somebody on your table to ask it for you if you don't feel like that's something you want to do. All right? Where are we up to? 25 past.

Okay, let's take five, ten minutes to discuss in groups and then we'll circle back. Thank you. Thank you.

[15:56] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[19:58] Thank you. Thank you. Just encourage you that if maybe one or two people have had the microphone in your group for a while, then relinquish the microphone and allow others to say their piece.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. I'd just love to encourage you, if you haven't yet, to formulate your questions, whether you write them down or you just think them out in your head.

[22:22] or comments so I'd invite you to just draw those discussions to a close and Chris will take us to the slido hopefully where there are some other questions so we are going to come to the specifics of two passages later so if I see a question and I think actually that will be covered under this passage that we're looking at then forgive me if I say we'll park that until after the second bit but is there anybody in the room who wants to ask a question and I'm afraid

I'll have to ask you to do it into the microphone just for the benefit of those who are watching on YouTube the YouTube broadcast is private by the way so if you ask a question it's not going out to the whole world Andy thanks James again yeah we had a question if women are to do things that are slightly different at Bethel how do we ensure that it's based on kind of gifting and there isn't any kind of pressure that might be felt to do things differently so that kind of cultural aspects of it yeah I think there are two ways to approach these things there's a kind of a there's a relational way and there's a kind of a structural way isn't there so the first way this should happen is relational we know each other well enough that we identify gifts in each other and we encourage those so that's a it's a conversation isn't it you say to somebody

I noticed that when you were talking to that person you articulated that really well have you ever thought of doing that so that it blesses even more people and if that person's reaction is oh no I couldn't ever do that then then you back off you know and maybe the Lord will work in their hearts to move them towards that at another time then there are that's it that's probably the most important way that comes in the context of the one anothering and which in which the leadership should set an example then there is a structural way which I think is important too because it is it's a visible demonstration that we are serious about these things together and and that I think could look like saying you know we are we are looking for somebody to help us lead or organise this ministry could that be you an open invitation and then you know if a leader thinks he might have found somebody with that kind of there might be a conversation where you say do you I've seen you do do you think you might prayerfully consider this you know

I haven't told anybody that I've asked you so please say no if you don't feel you can do it so I think you need both of those things you avoid undue pressure by making sure you know the person and you treat them respectfully you signal this is something that we are serious about by you know making it a structural thing at the same time does that help a bit okay it's not closed question so if it was a bad answer you can come back to me or another elder another time Gareth's got his hand up there I suppose it's a bit of a general question but this type of questioning we have to I suppose be sensitive to is this is this a question that we're asking because we as the believers of Bethel believe it's a question that should be addressed for us or is it a question of how how it looks externally to other people coming into the church yeah and I think that's the latter would be more concerning I think than the former yeah so when we spoke about it a couple of weeks ago we said that what the under the Lord wants us to flourish as his people and that itself will speak to those outside so I think our motivation at least the eldest motivation here is that we flourish as God's people not that the world thinks that we are you know as on message as we as we possibly can be without ignoring the Bible that's not the motivation it goes the other way as we flourish under the Lord's hand doing what he says is good for us that will draw people in yeah John yeah sorry I think we were discussing on the table a bit about maybe it's would you be able to expand on what you mean by authoritative teaching because I think church happens throughout the week not just on Sundays yeah so where is the line between affirming someone's gift and being like a lady's gift to be able to lead but does it stop on Sunday that that it's not okay on Sunday but it's okay the rest of the time or if it's not okay the rest of the time is like listening to sermons from like Rebecca

[ 28 : 05 ] Manley Pippet or somebody like that where what's where yeah where's where's great you're asking questions about the context in which that sort of that teaching happens and what that teaching means and I think those questions will be answered when we look at 1 Timothy 2 so I'm going to kick your question into the short grass hopefully and you can come back to me if I haven't answered it at the end of that is that alright okay great just have a quick look at Slido just if anybody else wants to compose their thoughts so that question do you think within the church context that no woman should have authority over any man if so how does that fit with women roles such as leading a group I think we'll hopefully cover that in the next bit how do you decide what's still applicable today and what is cultural verses that talk about women remaining quiet in church wearing head coverings again we'll cover that in just a moment 1 Corinthians 14 again I will come back to another question on 1 Corinthians 14 yeah seeing if there's anything else can you help me understand how the

Bible shows us it's good for women to lead a service I think you would need to believe two things to believe that the Bible teaches us that it's good for women to lead a service maybe three you would need to believe that we need to see both men and women exercising their gifts in full in order to be flourishing as God's people we really are together united so you would need to believe that you would need to believe that the Bible does not restrict leading a service to men you would need to believe that as well and I think probably part of this is not the Bible really but part of it is you would need to see that in action lots of us it's difficult to imagine what something would look like without having seen it so that's part of the answer I think the Bible clearly teaches we've been talking about it that we need both men and women to bless the church with their gifts in order for us to truly flourish so that is if we want what's good that's what

God says is good on that I think this is where I struggle when you say lead a service I think we know what that means but ultimately the teaching that's happening the theme that is being discussed has already been set by the elders so essentially all you're asking that person to do is facilitate the word

lead I think is sometimes more significant than really the task that you're asking that person to perform yes it looks from an external point of view that they're leading but it's really not leading there's empty yeah I suppose we can I know semantics but it's important there is that but you're right to clarify what does it mean to lead a service absolutely absolutely on but we also shouldn't get too hung up about which words we're then using to describe it I think for me I used to be convinced that leading a service was a function of word ministry ministry now as I think we'll see from 1 Timothy 2 that doesn't necessarily exclude women from doing it because actually the Bible only restricts a certain kind of word ministry

I don't actually think that leading a service now I don't believe from the Bible that leading a service needs to be ministry of the word I think it can simply be helping people and I use the word deliberately because that is a word used of the Holy Spirit and of women in the church helping people to come to worship it can be as simple as you can do it in a way that is very leader-y and word ministry heavy absolutely does the role demand that I don't think so I don't think so I don't want to trample on people's questions but I'm looking at the time so I'm keen to get on to the next bit is that alright or does somebody want to stop me yes yeah so yes it could be controversial I think that's absolutely right and that's why we've approached it with quite a long run-up if you like because we don't want it to be something that's divisive or difficult for people why would you do it because we miss out if people have gifts in the church that God wants to use to bless us and we don't allow them to that's why and we miss out if there are members of the church who have identified gifts and who are told no you can't use them without there being a scriptural basis for that that would be bad wouldn't it if we had that situation in the church so we pursue it because we pursue God's will for us which is that we flourish as the church and that includes men and women using their gifts to the full to bless all of us otherwise we are all the poorer for it so in pursuit of God's will in pursuit of his blessing on us in pursuit of fulfilment for us all feel free to come back to me okay it's all right if we move on

I lost my clicker here we go so we're going to look at two passages first of all 1 Timothy chapter 2 I'd encourage you to turn there in your Bibles it's page 1192 in the church Bibles a woman should learn in quietness and full submission I do not permit a woman to teach or assume authority over a man that's exercise authority in the original language she must be quiet for Adam was formed first then Eve and Adam was not the one deceived it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner but women will be saved through childbearing if they continue in faith and holiness with propriety so I want to say again something I said in the handout we don't want to over emphasise the upfront gifts because the Bible emphasises one another and upfront gifts that kind of culture that over emphasises the upfront gifts leads to the celebrity pastor model and putting people on pedestals that they inevitably fall off of and abuse in the worst cases and we don't want that so let's not over emphasise it but this passage speaks about it doesn't it so we should as well what does [ 34 : 58 ] Paul do in this passage he restricts teaching and exercising authority by women over men so how do we interpret that well you can take that together that's what some people have done and you read it as authoritative teaching I think that's the natural sense I think Paul puts it in a pair because they go together so we're supposed to understand this not as two separate issues teaching and having authority but we're supposed to understand them together because that's what Paul does but even if you take them separately which some people do you still find that they're linked by context Paul thinks they both go in this box that he is talking about together in the context of what he's teaching about so authoritative teaching that's what's being restricted here what does Paul base that on he bases it on the creation order doesn't he for Adam was formed first then Eve and the role of men and women in that creation order so Adam was made first that's that representative responsibility and authority that we were talking about he receives from God and passes on the commands first one be free let's remember that that's what the elders are supposed to do receive pass on the commands of God he works to feed

Eve protect her from the lies of Satan that's what the elders are supposed to do provide for the flock protect them from the lies of Satan and she is to rule with him and help him as the spirit helps us and the reversing of that order by Satan results in Eve sinning first so Satan approaches Eve as the representative of humanity and she leads Adam into sin so Paul says on the basis of that creation order what happened there I'm telling you what I think here should happen with men and women teaching and authority and just a reminder again just as the spirit's role in the trinity does not diminish his equality with the father and the son neither does the role of a helper for a woman

diminish her in any way so the question that we're then left with is does that apply to all women and all men in all situations and that's where we need to be clear on the context so we ask the question into what situation was Paul speaking that helps us establish the scope of this restriction doesn't it and the two important pieces of context are at the level of the letter as a whole what's Paul doing and the passage what's Paul doing specifically here so Paul is writing this letter to a local church Ephesus to Timothy in the context of his help with Ephesus he doesn't write to anybody else interestingly he's speaking into the local church he's not speaking to parachurch organisations he's not talking about bible colleges or conferences for instance that's the context of the letter what about the context of the passage well in chapter two you probably can see it in the NIV heading he's talking about orderly worship how worship is to be conducted in the public gathering of the local church church that he's writing to and that for us is a Sunday worship service that is the equivalent for us not bible study groups or discipleship in Sunday school or seminars or anything like that that's the context the local church gathered for worship on a Sunday morning public worship and then we need to ask okay so which men does Paul have in mind when he says I don't want women to teach or have authority over a man I want men to do that is implicit so which men well if you look at the immediately following chapter

Paul answers the question of which men he has in mind because he starts talking about elders so the restricted activity I'm using very technical not very friendly terms but the restricted activity is this authoritative teaching and that is restricted to elders so that means everybody else actually should not be doing this authoritative teaching whether they are men or women maybe with the exception of those who are being sort of discipled towards eldership because that's Timothy himself isn't it so in other words the activity and the office go together in Paul's mind authoritative teaching is teaching in an elder like way reflecting that role that Adam had in the garden and as only men are to be elders Paul does not permit a woman to teach or have authority in that way so other up front leading teaching activities like leading bible studies teaching youth groups facilitating or leading services teaching seminars they are all open to men and women who are not elders as is anything that is not authoritative elder like teaching done in the context of the local church gathered for public worship and actually think about that fits very well with the one anothering that we're supposed to be doing and which includes instructing and teaching one another what about alternative interpretations and we want to treat those respectfully don't we so what about the argument that this is just situational it relates to their church and their time and their problems or what about no that's just a cultural thing it was for that time and for that culture but not for us let's think about that so the situational argument goes something like this the real reason

Paul was teaching things that were wrong false teachers and so Paul had to put in a specific instruction which only counted for those women then and the biblical data for that is that 1 Timothy talks a lot about false teaching which is true that's true there is a lot about false teaching in 1 Timothy but if you're going to go with that interpretation there are some questions to ask here they are if that is right and he is putting in a specific instruction for a group of women who were teaching things which were not true then why does he mention for instance in chapter 1 verse 3 flick back there why does he mention certain people who are teaching things that are wrong not certain women and why does he mention some people chapter 1 verse 6 and not some women in connection with false teaching you would expect if he had a particular group in mind at that point it would be a word which describes that group or at least the gender of the word matches the gender of the group that he has in mind neither is true in this case in fact the only people mentioned by name in the letter 1

[ 42 : 02 ] Timothy as having strayed away from what is right and good are two individuals called Alexander and Hymenaeus chapter 1 verses 19 and 20 both men so I think the stronger argument really is that Paul doesn't have a particular group of women in mind instead he has in mind when he talks about false teachers anyone who teaches otherwise and those words are straight from chapter 6 verse 3 anyone who teaches otherwise so if you're going to go with that interpretation you have to answer those questions the data the biblical data appears to be against you another question you'd have to ask for that interpretation is why does he justify a specific instruction for just that time and place based on the creation order which is permanent and universal doesn't really match does it and you have to ask the question fine so if that is your interpretation then what is the relevance of this passage for us today what truth are we to take from it instead because the obvious one is that we shouldn't listen to female false teachers but do we need this passage to tell us that we don't do we so that's the situational approach here's another one the cultural interpretation

here's the argument these prohibitions were just for that time and culture because of the patriarchal society that they lived in to preserve a sort of appearance of order for the outside world almost picking up on what you were thinking about Gareth how does this look from the outside so that was for them there so they didn't upset their culture and really what's true is there's no male or female in the

Lord Jesus and so they don't apply to us today so then we have to ask the question of that argument why would Paul be supporting a patriarchal culture here when elsewhere he teaches mutual submission and self-sacrificial leadership Ephesians 5 Romans 16 which of course are anti-patriarchal again why does he base his prohibition just for that culture that time in the creation order which is permanent and universal doesn't match and again you ask the question well then what is the application of this passage for us today if that argument is correct is it that we shouldn't upset the culture around us that's the natural application if you're making that argument but of course we know from the rest of the Bible that we are going to upset the culture around us so the better interpretation is to understand Paul's teaching like we understand all other teaching which is a principle enshrined in a situational application right we have a principle and then we have an application of that principle into a specific situation so what is the principle you're all thinking here we go the principle principle is that only male elders should be teaching while carrying authority only they should be doing the authoritative teaching in the orderly gathering of the local church for worship because of the creation order there's your principle and the application that Paul makes into the situation in

Ephesus is you should correct this disorderly public worship that I have heard about by not allowing women to teach in the local church as only elders should be doing that's the clear application so that's 1 Timothy 2 I'm aware that I've rattled through that so if you want to ask me for the notes and you know go over them rigorously later you're very welcome to do that yeah just when you read it yeah so as you read that and you put the context on it the correctly disorderly worship service I mean what are the women we're teaching well so that was my only bit when I read these things I just think what if the women always say they shouldn't be teaching because they're teaching wrong things but what if they were teaching well

I had some people that I met from Iran and they were Christians and a lot of their leaders are women because they say when the women comes to Christ the whole family comes to Christ and there's so many other sects that we know that they actually ostracize anyone that comes to Christ and their family disowns them so I just wonder if they were teaching well and proper that's still wrong so it depends how they were teaching I think is the answer so what Paul says is clear as day I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man so it's that eldership type teaching now that doesn't exclude women teaching well I think and that's not the situation into which Paul is speaking it seems to me either so in one sense can't answer your question because it's not a situation that Paul has answered in another sense Paul seems fairly clear as to where he thinks the line is but there's another reason I'm really glad you've asked me that question and that is because when it comes to how this is supposed to work in the family how God envisaged it to work in the family and in the church we are all faced with reality aren't we and the reality is that sometimes it doesn't work like that and it can't work like that because we live in a fallen world and I think that's why we should hold this as a secondary issue this is not something we should say well if you don't do this you're not a

Christian or if we find a real situation for instance where somebody is married to a non Christian or where the men simply are not willing to step up and show the responsibility in the church we don't use that as a stick to beat those people with we say praise God that you are willing let's pray for those men to step up yeah yeah so I think the context helps us with that the context is the local church and the public gathering for worship those are the only two areas where it says this shouldn't be happening there are numerous places where the NIV will say or husband that's because the Greek word is basically the same and it means two different things depending on context I think context here would lead me to stick with what the NIV says up front elsewhere I think context would say no we're talking about the husband there yeah sorry head coverings 1 corinthians 11 verses 1 to 12 just looking at the time

[ 49 : 23 ] I'm not going to read it all we're in page 1 152 just going to pick up 1 corinthians 11 verse 3 but I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man look at the footnote actually says her husband and here in the context I would say yes it's the

husband and the head of Christ is God every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head but every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head and then there follows the instruction that women should have their heads covered so what we want to do is take the same approach that we've taken to 1 corinthians 2 into this passage we want to find what the principle is at the heart of this and we want to distinguish how that has been applied in the situation that the

Corinthians find themselves in here is what I think the principle is men and women should be differentiated in appearance women should be under the sacrificial leadership of their husbands and the elders because they are under shepherds who carry authority for Christ as they serve together that I think is the basis of the teaching and again Paul links that principle to the creation order doesn't he not culture or situation in fact Paul goes one further here and he links it to the trinitarian order because the head of Christ is God Christ submitting to the father the difficulty in Corinth I think is that both men and women were dressing in such a way that the differences between the sexes was confused and that then has implications for well okay so who is in charge here what is going on so I want to be really clear Paul is not taking aim at women alone he's saying all of you are a part of this none of you are helping each other in this so there's the principle men and women ought to be differentiated in appearance reflecting the differences in creation in the creation order and it ought to be clear what is going on in your church you ought to reflect in the way that you do things the order that God has given us situational application is exactly that for them that translates to heads and what heads look like long hair short hair is it covered is it uncovered in other words head coverings are part of the situational application not the principle I hope you follow that it's not the truth that he is teaching is not concerned with hats it's concerned with being a good reflection of how God has made us to be and our church functioning the way that he wants it to function and that makes sense doesn't it because if you look at our situation today head coverings don't serve to distinguish men from women do they a hat is just a hat it doesn't matter who wears it you might have male or female type hats that might be a discussion but it's not about whether you wear one or not not anymore anyway so the application is the same for us we need to worship in a way that is pleasing to God and that means dressing in a way that reflects the differences between the sexes and not clouding how God has said the church should work so worshipping in a way that makes it clear you respect authority God's authority first God being the head of Christ because that glorifies God I think we do both of these things in Bethel we are I think joyfully obedient to the Lord in both of these commands here so the application question for us is why aren't you wearing a hat the application question for us would be do you think for yourself that the Lord would be pleased with how you dress since he is your Lord or maybe a little bit more biting is there a reason you're not wearing your wedding ring these are the outward symbols that we have today aren't they we don't have head coverings as a sign of authority we have wedding rings as a sign of commitment and exclusivity so those might be things you could ask I probably would put it slightly more gently than that in a personal conversation that was slightly direct wasn't it but to illustrate the difference in stark terms to make it clear so in each case what we're saying is the principle binds us today no question right but the situational application that's a guide for us to help us think through what that means in our day and time today it reminds us you can't leave this just as a principle you have got to do something about it this is what it looked like what does that look like for you there's some other implications that I really want to draw out here very quickly the first I think is that men and women from this passage men and women ought to minister as men and women Paul's pointing up the fact that we ought to be recognisably male and female masculine and feminine in our approaches in fact I think he goes further probably he's not explicit but I think you can go further and say we don't just need to minister in a distinctively masculine or feminine way but you need to minister in only the way that this woman or that man can uniquely because our masculinity and femininity is part of who we are and our unique blessing to the church so that's one Paul cares he says it ought to be different because that's when we're blessed most implication number two since Paul is concerned with the optics he wants how things look to match the reality that God wants us to live out too since he's concerned with optics then we too need to be concerned about anything that visually clouds the differences between the sexes and obscures God's ordering of the church that's really interesting isn't it wonder how much we think about that okay I'm aware it's five past eight so I'm going to stop talking there's an opportunity to reflect on very similar questions how do you feel about what's been said do you think the differences are clear

here do we do we think we minister in distinctively masculine and feminine ways or not if we don't what can we do about that take a few minutes again it's five past eight so if you said sorry I'm checking out at eight you can check out you're free to go sorry if I wasn't clear there's a chance to discuss and feedback as we did before but there's an out if you want to go home that's what I was saying it's all right do you want to ask this question now or do you want to save it for the feedback time is that

[ 57 : 21 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 59 : 51 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

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[ 62 : 21 ] Thank you.

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[ 64 : 51 ] Thank you.

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[ 67 : 51 ] Thank you.

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[ 70 : 21 ] Thank you.

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[ 72 : 51 ] Thank you.

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Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 75 : 51 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 78 : 21 ] It does.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 80 : 51 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 83 : 51 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

I feel like there's a Yes.

You have to ask you.

So, you know, would the light, you know, is there, you know, who have to say, you know, and you know,

[ 88 : 51 ] I have to say, you know, and the way that you know, but you know, but you know,

Thank you. No more questions on Slido, I think. Any more questions in the room?

Oh, Chris has a question. Chris has a question. Chris has a question. Really give yourself a microphone back there, Chris. Yeah, I can turn myself up. I'm going to try and ask this in a very gentle way.

Yeah. So obviously the Bible sets out what eldership looks like and what a person who wants to be an elder should be.

But we know that they're human and they won't always meet that standard. So I guess my question is to an outsider, they might say that's a bit hypocritical, that we might accept that somebody might have a flaw.

[ 90 : 50 ] They might not meet that standard. And we're accepting that. But we're absolute about this. So, yeah, how does that work? Yeah.

So let me reflect that back to you to make sure that I've understood it. You're saying, as Christians, we say this is what the Bible says. And these are the implications.

Male elders, no female elders. But you're saying sometimes the men who fill those spaces don't look much like elders sometimes. The preacher is poor.

Yeah. They just don't have a gift for teachers. Yeah. Yeah. So the gifting of an elder is a whole other topic, I think. And what a gift of teaching in an elder means, what context it gets operated.

I think all I can say is who's in charge ultimately. It's not us as male elders, is it? It's the Lord Jesus.

So as we've said before, what it comes down to is this is a lordship issue.

[ 91 : 52 ] Do we take the Lord at his word, his authoritative word, when he says this is how I want my church to function, even if in the experience of that sometimes it's very hard and messy?

Or do we say I'm going to judge it based on my experience and my observation and I'll make the decision based on that? So I think what you say is valid.

The question is does it mean that we ought not to follow what Jesus says in his word? And I think the answer to that is we should follow what Jesus says in his word. And look for good elders.

And tell them if they're failing. And if we get it right, most of all, the Lord is pleased.

And our hearts will grow. And I hope, I pray, as a secondary outcome of that, people will see flourishing and they will come. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, in essence, from what I've just heard, there really isn't a radical change from what we've just discussed.

[ 93 : 02 ] Essentially, the only thing really for prayerful consideration is, are there couples, female, with a female partner that wants to potentially step up at the front on a Sunday morning?

I wouldn't restrict it to couples. I don't think that necessarily, yeah, I can't read that anywhere. And I also wouldn't say we will never have a woman solo helping us come to worship in the church.

I think that's something we can talk about. I think, and in terms of practical changes, that's the only one I've mentioned. But that doesn't mean that's the only one that we should be thinking about.

That's why I've wanted to spend time, you know, inviting your input. Because the goal is mutual flourishing within the boundaries that God has set for us. And the elders don't have, you know, we don't have the trademark on all the good ideas of how to make that happen.

We don't have all the insight either. So that's one of the things we want to talk about. And there's an opportunity in the members' meeting to do that a bit more. But if there are other suggestions, you know, we want to hear those.

[ 94 : 15 ] Fine. Thank you for being patient, for staying here longer than advertised. I'm just going to pray. We'll just flick back to the slides one more time. I just want to leave you with this.

Don't stone me because it's from a Catholic. I can do things you cannot. You can do things I cannot. Together we can do great things. And I would only add, we can do great things for God, with God.

That's what it amounts to. That's what we're aiming for. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your word. Lord, we pray that things that are good and right that have been said, questions that have been asked, comments that have been made, will be remembered, will stick with us. We pray that things that were wrong or unhelpful in what I have said, that they would be forgotten. That they would not have any further influence in our church life. Lord, we want to be good at seeing one another's giftings, encouraging, appreciating those things. We want to one another. We want to receive and give to each other the life-giving word that we were hearing about this morning. We want to do that well within the bounds you've set for us. [ 95 : 22 ] Please, Lord, would you bless our right desire before you. Bring it to fruition. We pray for your glory, for our good. In Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.

There are some handouts there if you want to take one. You can catch me now or later if you want to. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.