

Women in Ministry

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[0 : 00] Good morning. We'll now have the Bible reading. Today we have two passages. Our first passage is Galatians chapter 3 verses 23 and then going into chapter 4 verse 7.

! Thank you. And then our second passage is 1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 8 to 15. In this first passage Paul is talking about the law and faith and our adoption as sons now that Jesus has come. So from verse 23. Now before faith came we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.

So then the law was our guardian until Christ came in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come we are no longer under a guardian.

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

[1 : 28] There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is no male or female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring. Heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir as long as he is a child is no different from a slave.

Though he is the owner of everything. But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also when we were children were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

But when the fullness of time had come God sent forth his son born of woman born under the law to redeem those who were under the law.

So that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts. Crying Abba.

[2 : 42] Father. So you are no longer a slave but a son. And if a son then an heir through God.

We'll now turn to the second passage. And that's 1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 8 to 15. In this passage Paul is giving more specific instructions about how we should behave as sons of God. Now that Christ has come. I desire then that in every place the men should pray lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling.

Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel. With modesty and self-control. Not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire.

But with what is proper for women who profess godliness with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.

[3 : 51] I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. Rather she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first and then Eve.

And Adam was not deceived. But the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

So this is God's word to us today. Let us all be blessed by hearing it. Well good morning. Sorry I'm just trying to get myself organised here.

Where are we? We're everywhere this morning. I'm everywhere. Galatians. Sorry. There we are in Galatians 3.

Can you sense I'm nervous? How about we pray? Let's come to God's word. Merciful God.

[4 : 58] Give us such an overwhelming reverence for your holy word. That we fear to misinterpret it. That we don't domesticate it.

Help us to want to passionately understand it and with our hearts love it. And may our wills obey it and embrace it.

Lord please give me truthfulness and clarity. Help us to know that all your word is for our good. Please give all of us listening ears to your word.

In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Well one of the reasons for having this series on men and women is our commitment as elders. It's not the only reason but one of the reasons is our commitment as elders.

We want to guide a conversation with the church to re-look at what scripture says about female deacons. But without this series if we just jumped right into that question of female deacons.

[6 : 01] I'm guessing, well going off what Christians tend to do, we pick verses and we use it as a rock to throw it at each other.

We need this series to ground ourselves in the big picture of what the Bible says about women in ministry. So that we can actually speak to each other and not speak past each other.

Today I'm not going to address female deacons directly. The elders are going to begin that conversation in term three. What we're going to do today, we're going to go on a helicopter ride and we've got some of the most trickiest passages in scripture.

So buckle yourself in. We've got a long way to go. We're just going to helicopter ride over the big picture to see what the Apostle Paul says about women in ministry.

All right, here's a quote to launch us off. Jesus treats women with respect and everything looks as if it's going in a far better direction.

[7 : 14] Equality and dignity are on the horizon. And along comes St. Paul. I'm putting my own tone in here, okay. But who messes it all up with a handful of verses.

That when taken at face value, and many people do take them at face value, very firmly put women in their place. Some people paint Paul as a misogynist.

Even while calling him saint. Tipping the hat to the fact that he is an apostle. Let's look at the words Paul has to individual women in the New Testament for a moment.

Romans 16 verse 1. Just listen. You don't have to... Or flip there if you want. Make sure I'm telling the truth. I commend to you our sister Phoebe. Now Dr. Peter Head at Oxford.

He's researched ancient letters. He says Phoebe is a financial patron of Paul's ministry. She's being commended probably because she's carrying the letter of Romans to the church.

[8 : 26] She is representing Paul to the letter of Romans. Like we prize Romans, don't we? That church, the Jews and Greeks were disunited.

It was a big entrustment for Phoebe. A few verses later, greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus who risked their necks for my life.

A husband and wife who have a church in their house. Priscilla who in private instructs Apollos about the gospel more fully. In Philippians 4, he calls two other ladies, Euodia and Syntyche, his co-workers for the gospel.

Again, commending them. Paul feels indebted to women. He publicly acknowledges his dependence.

He trusts Phoebe with enormous responsibility. He puts women on the same fellow footing. My fellow workers for the gospel. He tells the church, co-workers for the gospel, look at their example.

[9 : 36] Follow their example. I think writing Paul off as a misogynist says more about the people charging him than it does about Paul.

But there is no question, Paul penned the most controversial passages that speak to women in church ministry.

Let me introduce some labels at this point just to generalise certain positions people hold among church.

So you've got egalitarians who say there's equality in everything. And then you've got complementarians, which this series is more in line with, saying we're the same but different roles. Now both egalitarians, complementarians, they pick a passage, often Galatians 3.28 and 1 Timothy 2 says this passage is clearer and interprets the rest.

[10 : 39] Well, that's my caricature of how often the debate is framed. I think it's much more useful and more interesting to ask a different question.

What is Paul's mind? What is his thinking that he penned both? What is his thinking?

Let's not use one passage to smash the other. How does that fit in his mind? How is that in harmony in his own mind?

What does he think about Jesus and his church that makes sense of all this? So we're going to look at three passages.

It's a lot to comprehend. I was about to apologise, but we need to go here to take it all in, I think. I want us to get into the mind of Paul.

[11:42] That's our goal for this morning. What is the mind of Paul? And then we're going to finish with a few conclusions. So if you can turn with me to Galatians 3. And verse 28 is the key verse.

There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and female. For you're all one in Christ Jesus.

So the context, Paul is arguing against the false gospel that you need to submit to the Mosaic law and circumcision to be saved.

Have a look at verse 26. That is the key theological claim. For in Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God through faith.

Faith unites a person to Christ. That true one flesh union that marriage points to.

[12:50] Faith unites us to Jesus. Sons isn't a gender claim. It's a theological status. In ancient times, the eldest son represented the family.

Carried on the family name and inherited the family estate. They're an heir. All believers, men and women, boys and girls, have the status as sons.

Because by faith we're united to the son. Full members of the household of God. Full heirs of the promises.

By faith alone. Nothing else. Now verse 27, when it talks about baptism, it's not saying baptism saves people. It's saying baptism is the symbol that replaces circumcision of who is in the household of God, who are sons.

So then we come to verse 28. Brings out the implications of all this. You don't need to be a Jew to be a son. God doesn't play favorites with any people group.

[14:01] It's only faith. There should be no national division in the church. No sense of superiority even. It's only faith.

You don't need to be free and not a slave to be a son. There should be no social division.

A slave in ancient times, they should know they have the highest status in the cosmos. Even as they're following orders from a human being.

I heard of a church that was near an army base. And these soldiers who were all about rank during the week and following orders and saluting, when they came into the church, they did not salute each other.

That's right. It's an expression of who we are in Christ. And even male and female distinctions. Who we are in Jesus is much more fundamental.

[15:11] It's not gender. Only faith makes you a full son. That theological status, heirs. This is revolutionary stuff.

Our church, the church, I think we do pretty well at this. But we can always improve.

We would be so much healthier if we saw each other through this, if we shared Paul's mind on this. There's no socioeconomic class.

And if we cross those boundaries, there's no cool and uncool cliques. There's no, once you're married and have a kid, you finally join this club or something.

No, we're relating across those things. There's no young and old. There's no indigenous and Anglo-Saxon. There's no wealthy or poor.

[16:11] If we thought like this, more and more. I think we do pretty well, but let's do it more and more. Paul is more revolutionary than the feminism movements.

All women believers have the highest place in the cosmos. This is revolutionary stuff. Now, I've heard complementarians sideline this passage because the context isn't about women in ministry.

Now, the context isn't about that. It's about being sons in the family of God. But as we serve shoulder to shoulder as men and women, this spiritual truth should challenge and sweep away whatever cultural baggage we're bringing in, either privilege or prejudice against men or women.

We should look at each other with spiritual eyes like Peter and Edmund and Susan and Lucy and Narnia. Once a king or queen of Narnia.

Always a king or queen of Narnia. In a sense, we should look past gender. Now, in another sense, we shouldn't. But we are one in Christ.

[17:37] So what is Paul's mind? Men and women are one in Christ by faith alone. Full sons, heirs. All right.

Well, that's one passage. It's great stuff. Let's go to 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 11. So chapters 11 to 14 is all about the local church and ministering when the church is gathered together.

Now, chapter 11 talks about the necessity of head coverings for women when they pray or prophesy. So I'm just going to read two verses here. Verses 4 and 5.

Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head, which is talking about Christ. But every wife or woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head, which is usually the husband, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. Now, these are some tricky verses. And I'm not even going to attempt. We don't have time this morning, I'm thankful for, to even attempt to unpack this whole segment.

[18 : 58] We just don't have time for that. But it is a positive passage. It's saying men are glorious. Women are glorious. They're interdependent on one another. It's a positive passage.

In the first century, failing to wear a head covering for a woman is a signal of rejecting male authority. That's not true in our culture today.

A woman not wearing a head covering, we're not sending that signal. But scriptural principles remain, even if they don't require the same cultural expression of head coverings.

Just to step to the side to illustrate the point, when the New Testament talks about greet one another with a holy kiss. I'm not seeing enough kissing going on in this church.

Now, we could just chop that out of our Bibles, functionally. Or, in some cultures in the world, kissing on the cheek or maybe even on the lips might be appropriate expression of who we are in the church.

[20 : 12] We need to find a cultural expression for who we are. We're in Christ. We're brothers and sisters. Joe Brown is wearing me down with his hugs.

I'm not commanding hugs here. But we should be greeting one another in a way that's true of who we are. So, too, here with head coverings.

I think the principle, men and women should dress in a way that's culturally appropriate, that doesn't look like the opposite gender. If we're in Scotland, maybe I would wear a kilt.

Principle remains. Women should pray and prophesy in a manner that makes it clear they're humble and submissive to male leadership. The principle remains.

Let's not chop it out of our Bibles. So, zooming out on this passage, Paul is not prohibiting women praying and prophesying in church, in this kind of gathering.

[21 : 22] He's endorsing it. He's encouraging it. He's just saying, here's the proper way to do it. So, churches that prohibit women from speaking in the church gathering have gone way beyond Scripture.

Way beyond Paul. So, why then does Paul say in chapter 14, the women should keep silent in the churches?

Now, chapter 14, verse 34, I believe. Got that right? Yep.

Great. Now, everyone agrees. He can't be contradicting himself. If we look at the immediate context in verse 29, so chapter 14, verse 29.

He's regulating how the church service should be ordered. Let two or three prophets speak and let the others weigh what is said.

[22 : 33] The next few verses, he goes on to explain two or three prophets speaking. It should be an orderly way. If one at a time, God is not a God of confusion but of order and peace.

So, it makes sense for after he addresses two or three, he then addresses how do you do the weighing? And that's where we get women should prophesy but the weighing of the prophecy, the women should be silent for.

The only other alternative is to say that back in chapter 11, the women aren't praying and prophesying in public. But I think that's nonsense because the whole section is about the church gathering and what to do there.

Now, even if you think prophecy has ceased today, like, leave aside that debate. Consider the role of women. Like, Anna, like Anna in the temple, prophesying about Jesus as a baby and Philip's four daughters who are prophetesses.

Prophecy is a revelation from God, a direct revelation from God. It's not always predicting the future. It's anything that builds up the faith of the hearer.

[23 : 51] Now, maybe it's a timely word of encouragement that just pierces right into that person's situation. Maybe it's declaring God's will in a certain situation.

But notice, it is meant to be weighed. It's meant to be evaluated. It does not have, it's a direct revelation, but it does not have the authority of apostles or Old Testament prophets. So what's the criteria to evaluate a revelation from God? Well, he goes on to talk about his apostolic authority.

I think it's reasonable to conclude apostolic teaching is the criteria to weigh prophecy. So teaching has more authority if it's in line with the apostles' teaching than prophecy does.

I cannot weigh apostolic teaching. I've got no right to sift it. You have no right to sift. You can sift what I'm saying, what's there.

[25 : 07] But we've got no right to sift what we've got. But prophecy, we need to. It's going to be mixed. Some truth, some error. So what is Paul's mind?

Again, he's revolutionary. Greek and Jewish gatherings back then, women weren't even meant to be learning. But Paul is encouraging women to prophesy and pray in the gathering.

But only men and presumably elders would evaluate the quality of the prophecy according to apostolic teaching.

Now it's a lot to take in. We're going one more passage, okay? 1 Timothy 2.

So we are one. Paul's mind. We are one in Christ.

[26 : 12] Full heirs. Women speaking. Serving the church in appropriate ways in the gathering.

And then 1 Timothy 2. There's so many attempts to make this passage not applicable today. They all fall into this category of that was then, but this is now. That's basically the thrust of the argument. Often it appeals to Ephesus, where Timothy was, where they had the worship of the goddess Artemis, saying that women were overruling their husbands and domineering in their authority.

Now, whatever is true or not of that picture, whatever is true or not, here's the important principle when we come to any passage.

We've got to put more weight on what we find in the text than what we learn from socio-historical context that we learn outside the Bible.

[27 : 19] We've got to put more weight on the data we've got in here. There's three reasons in the text that I think we should be taking this as universally applicable.

So flip over chapter 3, verses 14 and 15. 1 Timothy 3, 14 and 15. Here's his purpose for writing this whole section.

He's not talking about the workplace.

He's not talking about schools or clubs. These are instructions for the church, the household of God, how it should be ordered. The second reason we should take these as universal is the start of chapter 2.

Paul has a big vision for why he's giving these instructions. Chapter 2, verse 2. So that we live peaceful, godly, dignified lives.

[28 : 40] God wants all people to be saved. There's only one mediator, Christ Jesus. So these instructions to men and women that he goes on to talk about, it's part of his broad vision of living dignified lives for the sake of the mission of the church.

That's his goal. And that's true in all times. The third reason we should take this as applicable today is the reasons he gives the restriction on women in verses 13 and 14.

In verse 13, for Adam was formed first, then Eve. We've got the order of creation. Then verse 14, Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

We've got the reversal of that order in the fall. He could not have picked a more universally applicable time than creation and fall.

Okay, so quickly working through these verses then. Verse 11. I've already said this, but women weren't allowed to learn.

[29 : 57] Sorry, in Jewish and Greek schools. But here, women are to learn all doctrine. It's the manner of their learning.

It's a respectful attitude. And in the context, I think it's a respectful attitude to the appointed church leaders. Then we've got verse 12, which is the heart of the prohibition.

I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man. Rather, she is to remain quiet. Now, remember, the context is the gathered church.

How do we order the church? I don't think it's just restricting wives because their husbands are present. The previous verses are all about men and women, generally.

To not teach isn't any and all kinds of teaching. Titus talks about older women teach the younger women. They need you to.

[31 : 02] It can't be all teaching. Given this section goes straight in chapter 3 into the qualification for elders.

I think this is saying that women aren't to occupy the church-recognized public teaching authority over men.

It is male elders who are to give authoritative doctrinal instruction. Then we've got exercising authority. Now, that's a different verb.

But it's a rare one. And there's so much debate over this. Now, it only occurs seven times in ancient literature, apparently.

Now, some argue that the word means domineer, abuse authority. By the end of the second century, it just had the mutual meaning, having authority.

[32 : 04] But why would Paul restrict all women if only a few were being ungodly?

That sounds sexist. When Paul doesn't want someone to do something, if domineering is wrong, he wants men and women not to domineer.

I think it's better, given the context, that it's legitimate authority over the church.

Because part of the elder qualifications is managing their own household and able to teach. So that they're able to manage the household of God.

And across the New Testament is through teaching. Now, I've tried many times to get people to wash my car and get me coffees and things.

[33 : 07] But you guys just don't submit to my authority. An elder's authority isn't jump and you say, how high, David. My governing, our governing, is exercise through teaching.

So, yes, there's two verbs here. But I think even governing is in as much as it's through true teaching.

Our decisions as elders is meant to be applying biblical teaching to a situation. Our pastoral conversations is trying to apply biblical teachings to a person's situation.

So, we come to the reasons given in verses 13 and 14. That men should teach and have authority over the church. Or male elders qualified.

Verse 14. The order of creation. Adam was formed first, then Eve. Now, pigs were made before Adam and Eve. That does not mean pigs are in authority over us.

[34 : 27] It's not just the sequence. As we saw in Genesis 2. Eve being made after Adam was to be a helper for him.

Providing the power that he lacks. He was responsible for the human family and he was held responsible for the human family.

So, there's the order of creation. She was a helper fit for him. Bringing the power that he lacks. The second reason is the reversal of that order in the fall.

So, verse 13. Is it 13? No, 14. Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

Eve being deceived, I don't think it's saying women are more gullible or more emotional or... I think that's rubbish. Men and women can equally be deceived away from Christ.

[35 : 36] Eve and Adam sinned differently, though. I think it's saying Eve and Adam sinned differently.

Eve was deceived and didn't submit to Adam and transgressed.

Adam wasn't deceived. He was passive. Eve stood by. He didn't lead. He didn't teach. And he knowingly transgressed.

It was the subversion of the order. The man not taking the spiritual responsibility and the woman not coming under that, embracing that.

Finding protection in that. It was reversing the order that led to the fall. It's not good for men or women if we go against God's good design.

[36 : 46] Then we've got verse 15, if that wasn't hard enough. Now, I want to address this because it's probably in your mind.

It's probably a trip point. But yet she will be saved through childbearing. Singular. She. If they, plural. If they, plural. Continue in faith and love and holiness and self-control.

It seems to be this balancing. Okay. It's just men who should be looking after the church in that eldership position. Don't fall into the fall situation where we subvert that order.

And then it's balancing. But women. Look at the high value of women is what this verse is doing. Now, it can't be saying that you need to have a baby to be saved. That would go against the entire New Testament. It can't be saying it's salvation by works. It can't be guaranteeing safety in childbirth. Many godly women have died.

[37 : 52] There's two main options. Either childbearing is just a general way of saying faithfully living as a woman with the roles God has given. Maybe it's that.

Or the second option is that Paul is still in Genesis 3. And he's thinking of the first promise of a saviour. Where it's the woman's seed who will crush the head of the serpent.

I'm leaning towards that one personally. I like what John Stott says about it. We must never forget what we owe to a woman. No greater honour has ever been given to a woman than in the calling of Mary to be the mother of the saviour of the world.

We all owe our salvation through Jesus in the high place given to Mary.

I think this one really elevates motherhood. When our culture says I'm only a mother and there's some embarrassment over that, that's a problem with our culture.

[39 : 09] That the saviour came through women. Elevates motherhood as God's high calling.

So either of those interpretations I think are legitimate. But I slightly lean towards the saviour came through a woman.

Okay, so what's Paul's mind then? Well he confronts our society's thinking that equality of importance and equality of significance is bound up in status and the right to be in charge.

His mind is that just like in Christian marriages, when godly male elders bear that buck stops with them responsibility and serve the church like a slave.

The family of God can thrive. Because of God's good design. Why does Paul say these radically social transforming and strong conservative statements?

[40 : 30] Let's try and bring this together. Now one attempt to resolve this tension are the endless, complicated, convoluted debates pulling apart every word.

That was then, this is now arguments. Those arguments, they're implicitly charging Paul as not being courageous enough to apply the gospel to his culture fully.

Or it's charging him with a blind spot that we know better than Paul. We shouldn't imitate him as he imitates Christ in this regard.

I reckon there's a much better explanation. That we live in the overlap of the ages. Since creation, God's good design, and the new creation has already come in.

Paul's eschatology makes more sense of the data. Christ restores the created order, while at the same time ushering in a new created order.

[41 : 47] We live in the times of the outpouring of the Spirit on men and women alike. I think that makes much more sense of all that Paul has to say.

So how do we disagree well? I'm assuming there's disagreement in this room right now. How do we disagree well with other believers and other churches?

If we embrace Paul's mind that we live in the overlap of the ages, Christ restores the original design and yet ushers in a new creation.

It's helped me to respect those on either side I disagree with. Egalitarians who say all distinctions are gone.

Women can be elders, church leaders, preach and so on. I can wholeheartedly agree with them. We are sons of God. The age of the outpouring of the Spirit is here.

[43 : 01] All flesh. All men. All women. I can respect them for that. I can see where they're coming from. Even while disagreeing that we're still in this created order.

The patriarchal position that says women shouldn't even write books or give podcasts on theology. Often it shouldn't be involved in church gatherings.

I can respect that they are trying to make families and churches flourish by embracing God's good design. Even while I disagree, we're in the age of the Spirit.

We're all full sons of God. I think it helps us respect one another. I think it also makes sense of why we struggle to agree on how to apply all this.

Of course it's complicated. If we're living in this tension of now and not yet, it's not really surprising that we all come to slightly different convictions on this.

[44 : 11] I think we need to have Paul's mind. Let's put down the war banners that we've got in the church over this issue.

We're hating and being hated by one another when we've got so much more in common. In Christ, there's no Jew or Greek.

There's no slave or free. There's no patriarchy, egalitarian and complementarian. Imagine if we saw each other like that.

We are one in Christ. But we need to recognize churches. I would encourage all of us to have convictions based off Scripture.

We need to wrestle with what Scripture says. And churches, we need to have a position. All churches do. Now, if you're struggling through this series, disagreeing with a lot of what I'm saying, thank you for staying with me so far.

[45 : 25] But the elders want to keep this secondary. We believe this is good enough to preach on, obviously, and it's for our good.

But we want to keep this secondary. If you can respect the church's position and why we hold it, we want... That's fine. Become association members.

Get involved in formal ministries. You'll be fine in teaching capacities even. We want to keep this secondary. Can I encourage us to honor each other's conscience before God on this?

If a woman turns down an invitation to speak at youth because she's convicted that there's male youth there, or if a woman gets up and is wearing a head covering, gets up here to say something to the church, let's honor and applaud when people are acting according to their conscience before the Lord.

Or if you see a woman doing something that your own conscience would be violated by, but the church says, no, this is our position, pray for them, honor them, encourage them, go for it, preach Christ, teach Christ, teach the youth about Christ.

[46 : 46] Pray with all your might and bring glory to Jesus. Let's honor each other's conscience in this. We can try and persuade each other, but let's honor each other's conscience.

Now, I don't think we're left to our own wisdom to decide the specifics. I want to leave us with just some principles. Firstly, only qualified men should be elders and teachers.

We elders will be held to a much higher account when we get to the judgment seat. I feel sick sometimes, often.

I have a position of influence here. I will be held to much higher account. The New Testament charge as elders to bear the responsibility for what is taught in the church, refuting error, shepherding the church individually and as a collective to make sure that we're living according to true doctrine as well.

So I think only men should preach. Now, I can respect others who come to different convictions that as long as it's under male leadership, women can preach.

[48 : 20] I can respect where you're coming from. But the eldership here, we think only men should bear that responsibility because the sermon is the church-recognized time that we're sitting under the word of God in an authoritative sense.

You've got to check what I'm saying is right, but it's a different time in the service, isn't it? Like in Christian households, when godly men lead as slaves, protecting the family of God, it enables the whole church to serve.

We want to be every person ministry. A second principle, women are spirit-filled.

I like a phrase by an egalitarian, spiritual gifts don't come in blue and pink. Women are spirit-filled. The church needs women ministering in word and deed if we're going to flourish as a church.

They're indispensable for our life. Let's not have a fearful attitude. If we're in doubt, then we don't do it.

[49 : 41] No, let's think about it. Let's give careful thought to particular situations. Let's train women to teach and preach as they've got appropriate opportunities.

Let's send women into vocational ministry. Our church has been so blessed by appointing chairs onto the star.

Ephesians calls all of us to speak the truth in love. Hebrews says, exhort one another every day. Now, that is not gender-specific.

We need men in the room. We need to listen to the women teaching us into our lives. We need women for the church to flourish, to be exercising their gifts in speaking roles.

I think a third principle here is, let's be careful what we mean by certain titles. We call, like, fresh and youth volunteers leaders.

[50 : 52] Now, is that governing? Exercising authority? Because we use the term leaders. Or in a mixed small group, we call the assistant to the small group leader second in command.

Oh, they've got command. Let's not be, let's be careful with our titles. The context of 1 Timothy 2, as I've tried to show, I think it's about eldership.

Let's not get fussed over titles that we've come up with that aren't trying to exercise this kind of authority.

If the ladies... Oh, no, I won't say that. It's not in my script. It's a bad idea. All I'll say about female deacons is that where the elders are up to is we need to do more work as elders and as a church to carefully define the role of deacon.

And we need to decide... We'll come to this question. Does a deacon have governing authority like an elder or not? So I'm just going to give you that question to think on.

[52 : 12] Not all teaching comes with the authority that elders are called to exercise. When a woman gets up to pray, that's a big responsibility.

They're saying things about God. They're saying things about God's will for us. There's teaching in that sense in a prayer. If there's a Christian woman who's an expert in some area, like if we got Megan Best to come talk about the Bible and ethics, wonderful, let's learn from her.

If a woman in a small group makes a comment, a truth claim, of course, if it's true, men, we should be submitting to it. So not all teaching comes with the same authority that elders are called to have. And let's be careful about titles. And lastly, we need to be consistent. As husbands are called to be the spiritual leaders in the family, let's not create a conflict of loyalties there in the church.

As husbands are called to be spiritual leaders, there should be that spiritual leadership in the church as well. Now, I know that's probably not getting to the specifics as much as you'd want me to, but that's as far as I'm willing to go at the moment in terms of guiding us.

[53 : 54] Well, in our culture, there is so much angst, isn't there? There's so much blame, there's so much rivalry amongst men and women.

As the family of God, we're called to stand out. We're called to be a city on a hill. We're called to be this attractive, different community that people come into and go, what's driving these people?

What's going on? To do that, we need to share the mind of Paul. That Christ redeems creation, the created order, and he's ushering in the new creation.

That we're rejoicing, both in the fact of God's good original design, and that we see each other and we treat each other as heirs filled with the Spirit and we need men and women using their gifts in the church.

If people can see in the family of God, in this family, that women, you don't feel restricted, but you feel cared for and encouraged to serve under male authority, shoulder to shoulder for the sake of the gospel, that's going to be a community, it's going to be a household that is just unnatural.

[55 : 25] You will not find that in the world. It is supernatural. It is. Because it only comes, it can only possibly be created and maintained by Jesus.

Well, will you pray? I know it's an abrupt ending, but let's pray. Father, make us that winsome household of God so that we please you and so that we are a light to our world that is so confused and lost and most of all don't have Christ.

Give us every grace in this. In Jesus' name. Amen.