

**LC STUDY GUIDE: DONE IN SYNC WITH**  
**THE SERMON FROM 6.1.14**  
**The Passage – 1 Timothy 2:1-15**  
 For LCs meeting 6.1.14 – 6.15.14

*These LC studies complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application.*

***This being a particularly complicated passage and topic, we suggest you give each person their own copy of this guide.** This is an important time in our church and possibly in your LC, so may we listen to one another, communicate respectfully and pursue unity. May our hearts and this time be surrendered to the Lord in prayer and practice.*

**Big Idea: Paul has two great concerns in 1 Timothy 2:**

- **Confronting the false teaching in Ephesus**
- **Encouraging women to learn the Christian faith**

*Context:* Ephesus was one of the most frequently traveled port cities of Asia Minor. It was wealthy, educated, spiritual and decadent. Think of it as a cross between Boston and New Orleans. The Temple of Artemis (also called Dianna by the Romans) was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and countless of travelers would stop and pay homage in the temple that was led by female priests. It's noteworthy that though many were not faithful believers of Artemis, it was the nature of pagan practice for one to worship whichever pagan god/goddess might grant you health/fertility/success/victory.

One of the critical themes of I & II Timothy is Paul's confrontation of false teachings, namely Gnosticism, which claimed special enlightened knowledge and rejected the physical world in favor of the spiritual world. Gnostics consistently attacked Christianity, saying that there was only one spiritual resurrection and no future second coming of Jesus or a future bodily resurrection of the saints in Jesus (2 Timothy 2:18-19).

The Gnostics believed that this hidden knowledge was kept from the followers of Artemis as well. It's easy to see how there could be a lot of confusion, false teaching, and the spreading of corrupt doctrine. **Paul is trying to guard the young Christian community and preserve and promote sound Christian teaching.**

**I Timothy 2:1-15 (NIV © 2011)**

<sup>1</sup> I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— <sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.

Q – Why do you think Paul begins this section by promoting prayer for people, including government leaders?

*(First, it's hardly ever a good idea to be regarded as an enemy of the state. Second, Paul would love to see Roman leaders become Christ-followers. This is part of his motivation of writing Romans, which was likely written about 5-8 years before 1 Timothy. Further, there is a similar call in Romans to pray for leaders 13:1-7).*

Q – Why does Paul encourage Christians to “live peaceful... lives in all godliness and holiness?”  
*(Paul does not want violent insurrection against an already violent, pagan culture. Instead, he wants to inspire a Christian counter-culture that draws people into a life of Christian redemption and community.)*

Q – What do you think is the significance of Paul giving a brief theological lesson on the oneness of Christ Jesus?

*(He wants to reaffirm the centrality of the gospel of salvation found only in Jesus and nowhere else which, again, was easy to lose focus in a city that offered worship to many other gods. Paul is saying “only Jesus.”)*

**<sup>8</sup> Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. <sup>9</sup> I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, <sup>10</sup> but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.**

Q – Why do you think Paul transitions from calling for the intercession of government leaders to offering instructions on men praying instead of disputing and then, the way women dress for worship?

*(This is where understanding the specific context of the early church in Ephesus is crucial. Paul is getting reports filled with various concerns. One is that the men are disputing with one another. And among others, the women were influenced and distracted more by their surroundings and were not focused on worship. The further issues of gossip from house to house is referenced later in I Tim. 5:13-18. Some commentators have even speculated that the braided hair, immodest dress, and jewelry were consistent with pagan living. While there is dispute that braided hair was a common sign of prostitution, Paul is concerned with a fractured and distracted community and is offering solutions based on prayer, simplicity, and focused study.)*

Q – Follow up question: What would Paul call out in the North American Church today? Take inventory of our disputes and distractions and consider which of Paul’s aforementioned advice would serve us well today.

**<sup>11</sup> A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. <sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve. <sup>14</sup> And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. <sup>15</sup> But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.**

*Commentary:* In the last century, there has been much debate concerning the term “assuming authority” (v. 12). The ancient context and the Greek language must be explored. It is extremely noteworthy that the Greek word used is *authentein*. Usually, Paul and the New Testament writers use the more popular and less ambiguous term *kurieuein* when they mean “to bear power.” *Authentein* (“assume authority”) is a more aggressive term. More strikingly, it is often used in the negative and carries violence and sexual overtones.

Earlier usages of *authentein* can be found in the various accounts of Greek tragedies. For example, one version has Menelaus responsible for the death of Achilles and Menelaus is considered an *authentēs* (and a *miastor*—crime-stained wretch who pollutes others). (Source—Sophocles’ *Electra* 272-275.)

Looking back in verse 12, *epitrepo* is used for “I do not permit.” Scholar John Towes makes the point that when *epitrepo* occurs, it is used “to speak to of a specific and limited situation rather than a universal one.” (Gen. 39:6, Ester 9:14, Job 32:14, and Hebrew wisdom literature such as Wisd. of Sol. 19:2, I Macc. 15:6, 4 Macc. 4:17-18. Source—*Women in Church Leadership: I Timothy 2:11-15* ... p. 84.)

Q – If Paul is inferring the negative usage of *authentein*, how would that affect the teaching of verses 11-12?

Q – Discuss how this changes the understanding of this problematic passage and discuss what Paul might have been trying to communicate to Timothy (remembering the context of Gnosticism and pagan worship).

*(If Paul’s intention is specific to Timothy’s use in his church in Ephesus, this would make sense, as many of the Hebrew and Gentile women did not have the benefit of a Torah education (like their Jewish male counterparts or children born into very wealthy families). This is tragically why so many women were the recipients and givers of bad doctrine—they were not educated to know the difference.)*

Q – Why do you think Paul finds it important to remind Timothy in verses 13-14 that it was Adam who was formed first, and Eve deceived first?

*(Two co-existing theories to be discussed: The most obvious is to return to the Hebrew creation account as a starting point. But this only offers a partial explanation. The second part is that*

*throughout ancient history, and our own, there have been competing creation stories. One Gnostic-like creation myth has mythologized Eve as the firstborn of humanity and as “the one who brings knowledge and meaningful life to Adam.” (Source—On the Cherubim, Philo. 57-60 as quoted by I Suffer Not a Woman by Kroeger and Kreoger. pg. 65). This creation myth did exist before 45 A.D. which is a full decade prior to the believed earliest writing of I Timothy. Thus, some find Paul’s need to explain the Hebrew Genesis Creation story to be very plausible).*

Q – What could Paul possibly mean when he says, “Women will be saved through child-bearing?”

*(First, we know that tragically, not all women survive child-bearing so Paul must be referring to something allegorical or big-picture theological. Two theories exist. One is that through God’s goodness, the female gender will continue because women are still being born. This theory is a bit too obvious and lacks Paul’s usual sophistication. The second theory is that God is so good, that He brought salvation in the form of Jesus and He was born of a woman—thus women are saved through child-bearing.)*

#### *Conclusion:*

This is perhaps one of the most complicated passages in all of Scripture. As we remember the false doctrines and competing narratives that Paul was fighting in his day, let us remember how the Spirit strengthens us today and how the Scriptures inform us in belief and practice to be the people that God has called us to be. Let’s spend some time in prayer for men and women to be faithful to Christ, serve together, and love others.