ON MISSION

Believers are to be mindful of how they represent God in this world.

1 TIMOTHEY 2:1-15

Everywhere we go, someone is watching us. A family member, a child, a friend, a coworker—someone is watching. This watching is not being done in some weird way, but it’s done to see how we do things, especially if we claim to be Christians. Not only are our actions being watched but so are our attitudes and motives. People want to know if our Christian lives are real, so they watch. Jesus gives us an opportunity to influence others for Him by representing Him in this world.

When have you become aware that someone was watching you? How did that awareness change your behavior?
UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-15
Sandwiched between his warning about resisting false teachers (chap. 1) and instructions about qualifications for pastors and deacons (chap. 3), Paul urged Timothy to lead the Ephesian believers to develop lifestyles that would impact their community for Christ. From prayer and worship to the way they dressed and behaved, Ephesian believers had opportunities for witnessing to people caught up in the pagan culture of their city.

Setting a godly example as representatives of Christ would be essential for both men and women in the church. Paul expected men to practice godliness. Effective prayer was connected to the pursuit of holiness. Women, likewise, were challenged to pursue godliness by the way they presented themselves to others. The Temple of Diana threw a licentious shadow over the culture of Ephesus. Prostitutes would dress provocatively to lure men into immorality. Paul did not want the female followers of Christ to imitate such scandalous attire. Modesty was the style of dress for women who represented Christ.

Furthermore, Paul gave guidelines regarding male and female roles. Both men and women were to practice submission to Christ. Paul honored women by treating them as equally capable as men of learning. However, given the Ephesian culture and his missionary mindset, he instructed them to exercise restraint by demonstrating a quiet demeanor. A boisterous and contentious disposition, such as some false teachers advocated, was not an appropriate testimony for a woman fully surrendered to Christ. Moreover, Paul did not want women to exert a domineering and distasteful authority that would hinder the spread of the gospel.

Godly lifestyles and faithful worship would authenticate the faith the Ephesians proclaimed. By any and all means, they were on mission to Ephesus and beyond.

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-15, circling the commands given by Paul. How do these commands relate to each other?
EXPLORE THE TEXT

THROUGH PRAYER (1 TIM. 2:1-7)

1 First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone,² for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.³ This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus,⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time.⁷ For this I was appointed a herald, an apostle (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

VERSES 1-2

Paul urged Timothy to make prayer a priority in his life and in the church. The phrase first of all emphasized the essential role of prayer. The term petitions denoted specific requests to God about spiritual needs. The word prayers was a comprehensive expression for all types of appeals to God. Intercessions indicated an intervention on behalf of someone while thanksgivings expressed the profound gratitude to God for His grace and goodness. Moreover, the scope of prayer was made for everyone.

While prayers were to be offered for everyone, kings and those in authority stood in special need because of the responsibility they carried and the influence they exercised. This exhortation from Paul was given at a time when Nero wielded uncontested power in Rome. As the tide of persecution rose, it was imperative to pray for governing officials. God can achieve more through our prayers for leaders than we can achieve through our own plans regarding them.

VERSES 3-4

The phrase this is good is related to the practice of prayer for all kinds of people. The reason it is good is because it pleases God our Savior. God is pleased when believers pray for everyone to know Him as Savior. He wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. This passage does not teach that all people will be saved. Salvation is forced upon no one but is available to everyone by God’s grace through faith. God offers salvation to everyone without distinction of human
status. The verb *wants* (v. 4) expresses God’s desire and delight. His desire is not a type of despotic coercion. He delights to extend a grace-drenched invitation. God, through His sovereignty, allows men and women the opportunity to receive or reject it.

**VERSES 5-7**

The statement *there is one God* declares the uniqueness of God. It served as a rebuke to the plurality of idols in Ephesus. God is the one and only God who has no rival. Because He is the one God, He alone can provide the way of salvation through His Son, our Savior. Consequently, there is *one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus*. A mediator is someone in the middle who acts to reconcile two parties into a relationship that would not otherwise exist. Sinful humanity could not properly relate to a holy God unless there was a mediator who was both fully human and fully God. Jesus uniquely fulfilled this purpose.

Jesus died an atoning death for our sin. The term *ransom* describes a payment for setting captives free. Jesus’ death paid the price to release us from the penalty of death and sin. The term *gave* points to His voluntary surrender. He offered Himself at the cross as our substitute by dying for sin on our behalf. Once again, the extent of His salvation included *all* who would respond to Him by faith. None are denied reconciliation with God except those who deny their need of His forgiveness and refuse His grace through Christ Jesus.

Similarly, Paul affirmed his testimony to the gospel message as a man who was *appointed* by Christ for a three-fold mission. First, he was a *herald*. As the term denotes, Paul was someone proclaiming to everyone a crucial message about Jesus’ victory. Second, Paul was an *apostle*. He was one commissioned by the Lord and sent out with full authority to exercise a task. Third, Paul was a *teacher* instructing the Gentiles in faith and truth. The inclusion of Gentiles indicated that the scope of the gospel was to everyone and was not limited to the Jews. Therefore, Paul reinforced the necessity of praying for all people because all people need to hear the truth regarding Jesus and need to place their faith in Him.

*How should the gospel’s offer to all people impact how we pray?*
**KEY DOCTRINE: Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation (Gen. 1:26-30).

**LED BY GODLY MEN (1 TIM. 2:8)**

> Therefore, I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument.

**VERSE 8**

Our passion for Christ can be gauged by our commitment to His mission. Our commitment to His mission can be measured by our faithfulness in prayer. Consequently, Paul challenged men to pray. The word *therefore* resumes the previous emphasis on prayer. In view of the threats against the church from false teachers inside and antagonists outside, Paul wanted men to pray whenever and wherever believers gathered for worship.

**Our passion for Christ can be gauged by our commitment to His mission.**

The phrase *lifting up holy hands* referred more to purity of the heart than to posture of the body. A man who passionately strives to honor God can pray effectively with hands folded or hands lifted. Although standing with hands outstretched toward heaven was a customary practice for prayer, Paul specified that it was to be done *without anger or argument*. A church full of men holding resentment toward one another could not advance the mission of Christ. Men who indulged in arguing with one another rather than praying for each other stifled the spread of the gospel.

*How can anger influence a person’s prayer requests? How does anger get in the way of prayer?*
SUPPORTED BY GODLY WOMEN (1 TIM. 2:9-15)

9 Also, the women are to dress themselves in modest clothing, with decency and good sense, not with elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive apparel, 10 but with good works, as is proper for women who profess to worship God. 11 A woman is to learn quietly with full submission. 12 I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; instead, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and transgressed. 15 But she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with good sense.

VERSES 9-10

Women and men are both created in the image of God and hold equal status before Him. God created them to hold different but no less important roles according to His purpose. Both men and women are to demonstrate godliness.

Modest clothing minimized provocative attire as it maximized decency and good sense for the sake of making the gospel known and glorifying the Lord. Expensive clothing and other accessories such as elaborate hairstyles, gold, and pearls likewise conveyed the wrong impression in Ephesian culture. The fact that some of the women could adorn themselves with gold and pearls indicated a high degree of wealth that was flaunted.

Paul wanted women to adorn themselves with good works. Many pagan women in Ephesus adorned themselves seductively. By contrast, Paul wanted women who had been transformed by Christ to affirm the inward reality of their salvation by their outward appearance and faithful deeds. Modesty and self-control are appropriate guidelines for all believers.

How does clothing reveal what people feel about themselves? How can a person’s clothing choices be a positive influence for Christ? Does it really matter? Explain.
VERSES 11-15

Moving from the public appearance and reputation of godly women, Paul took the opportunity to instruct Timothy in how such women should act within the church. Paul encouraged women to learn. This involved a radical departure from the first-century stigma against women and signaled a new freedom for all women who had become Christians. Some scholars see the word quietly as a reference to maintaining a quiet attitude as opposed to a quarrelsome spirit. The phrase full submission emphasized a willingness to be taught and to learn. Paul honored women as teachable members of the church, equally as capable as men to study and learn God’s Word.

Much of the unnecessary controversy surrounding this verse has centered on the word submission. Jesus modeled submission, and was no less God the Son because He submitted to the Father. Moreover, women played a crucial role in Jesus’ ministry. They followed Jesus courageously. The Gospels reveal that they were the last to leave Jesus on crucifixion Friday and the first to arrive at the tomb on resurrection Sunday. Without women fulfilling their God-assigned role, men would be hindered in their God-assigned tasks as spiritual leaders in the home and the church.

We can identify at least two reasons for Paul’s prohibition, I do not allow a woman to teach. First, within the context of worship Paul knew the problems posed by the false teachers and the temptation for the women to misuse their new freedom. Some of the false teachers may have stirred women to claim for themselves a more prominent standing in the church. Paul instructed Timothy not to allow anyone to serve in a leadership position, including newly saved women, who were not spiritually mature in their faith.

A second reason Paul did not want a woman to teach was because the position and influence of a teacher in first-century churches was equated with the office of the pastor, a biblical role for men. The expression have authority referred to a domineering and abusive disposition toward someone. Such an attitude should never be displayed by any teacher, whether by a woman or a man.

In verses 13-15, Paul appealed to creation as the theological basis of gender roles (Gen. 2:18). God established the divine order of male and female before sin entered the world. The fact that Adam was formed first indicated that God placed upon Adam a mantle of authority without superiority. Adam’s role of leadership did not
mean he was better than Eve. Eve’s role of submission did not mean she was less than Adam. Paul intended for his instruction to correct the twisted interpretation of the creation account proposed by some Ephesian women that championed female dominance in the church.

The statement, *Adam was not deceived*, did not mean that Adam was less guilty. Adam’s sin was not characterized as deception because God had plainly instructed him about the fruit of the tree he must not eat. His sin was one of defiance. He knew better. He chose to disobey. In Paul’s letter to the Romans he placed the primary blame for humanity’s sinful nature on Adam (Rom. 5:12-21).

There is no indication that Eve had been instructed about the tree although Adam may have done so. Her sin was characterized as deception because she listened to Satan, believed his lies, and broke God’s command.

Paul’s final statement appears to suggest salvation for women comes through *childbearing*. This interpretation would be in conflict with countless passages dealing with salvation coming through Christ alone. Paul had just given some restrictive guidance to the women in the church, then quickly affirmed the positive nature of female believers. Their roles, particularly as mothers, were invaluable both to the church and the family. The faith of godly women has led many children to trust and love Christ.

Godly women are mindful of how they impact the witness of the church. As men and women carry out the mission of Christ’s church, each fulfills unique and important roles. Women and men are co-laborers with Christ in taking His gospel mission to the world.

**BIBLE SKILL: Use a concordance and Bible dictionary.**

Using a concordance, find other passages dealing with the different roles each gender has in church life and ministry. Review an article on “gender equality” in a Bible dictionary. Write a description of the roles men and women have in fulfilling the church’s mission. What are some similarities? What are some differences? Why is prayer so important for both men and women in fulfilling Christ’s commission?
Session 2: On Mission

Meaning he was better than Eve. Eve’s role of submission did not mean she was less than Adam. Paul intended for his instruction to correct the twisted interpretation of the creation account proposed by some Ephesian women that championed female dominance in the church. The statement, *Adam was not deceived,* did not mean that Adam was less guilty. Adam’s sin was not characterized as deception because God had plainly instructed him about the fruit of the tree he must not eat. His sin was one of defiance. He knew better. He chose to disobey. In Paul’s letter to the Romans he placed the primary blame for humanity’s sinful nature on Adam (Rom. 5:12-21).

There is no indication that Eve had been instructed about the tree although Adam may have done so. Her sin was characterized as deception because she listened to Satan, believed his lies, and broke God’s command.

Paul’s final statement appears to suggest salvation for women comes through childbearing. This interpretation would be in conflict with countless passages dealing with salvation coming through Christ alone. Paul had just given some restrictive guidance to the women in the church, then quickly affirmed the positive nature of female believers. Their roles, particularly as mothers, were invaluable both to the church and the family. The faith of godly women has led many children to trust and love Christ.

Godly women are mindful of how they impact the witness of the church. As men and women carry out the mission of Christ’s church, each fulfills unique and important roles. Women and men are co-laborers with Christ in taking His gospel mission to the world.

BIBLE SKILL: Use a concordance and Bible dictionary.

Using a concordance, find other passages dealing with the different roles each gender has in church life and ministry. Review an article on “gender equality” in a Bible dictionary. Write a description of the roles men and women have in fulfilling the church’s mission. What are some similarities? What are some differences? Why is prayer so important for both men and women in fulfilling Christ’s commission?

IN MY CONTEXT

- Believers are to pray with a focus on the lost.
- Godly men are to set the example when it comes to praying for others.
- Godly women are mindful of how their dress and actions impact the witness of the church.

As a group, discuss ways of being more intentional in praying for the salvation of others. In what ways can your group consistently pray for the lost in your community?

Reflect on your attitude and motives for prayer. What changes do you need to make to follow in greater ways the directives about prayer in this passage?

Take time to pray, asking God to reveal any actions of yours that might get in the way of sharing the gospel. Commit to make changes as He reveals to you those actions. Record any actions you plan on taking as a result of what God reveals to you.

Prayer Needs