

Exegesis of I Timothy 2:11-15

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Introduction

In beginning a study of these verses, there are two questions involving the context which must be answered first. Are these verses found in a context which involves the public worship of Christians? And what is the meaning of *γυνή* and *άνήρ* in this context?

The argument that this context deals only with public worship is usually based on the opening verses of chapter two in which Paul instructs Timothy about prayer. Paul urges Timothy that many kinds of prayers be spoken for all people, especially those in government, because this is God-pleasing. This instruction closes with the conclusion (*οὕν*) in verse eight that when Christian men pray Paul wants them to be the kind of men who pray “without anger or disputing” (NIV).

However, this concluding verse on prayer poses a problem for the argument that Paul is speaking only of public worship. In speaking of the place where Paul wishes his instruction to apply, he says *έν παντί τόπω* (in every place” where Christians are). The suggestion that this means “in every place of public worship” does not have much to commend it in view of the fact that when Paul uses this expression elsewhere it means “everywhere” (I Cor. 1:2, II Cor. 2:14, I Thess. 1:8) and in view of the fact that when Paul speaks of the public assembly of Christians he usually says *έν εκκλησία* (e.g. I Cor. 14:28,34,35).

We do not wish to deny that when Paul says “everywhere” this public worship as well as the daily life of Christians, but what the major point of these verses is not where the prayers are spoken. Paul is instructing Timothy to urge Christian men to pray for all people and to do so without anger or disputing. The fact that this instruction about prayer is directed to men might be used to argue that Paul has public worship in mind, but this argument cannot be used to say that the instruction given applies only to public worship. Christian men are to pray for all people not only in church, but also in their daily lives. It is morally wrong for Christian men to pray with anger and disputing not only in public worship, but everywhere.

That Paul’s words are to have a broader application than just to public worship is made more evident by Paul’s comment later in 3:15 where he gives Timothy the reason why he is writing these instructions to him. Paul says “I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.” When Paul describes the “household” and the “church” as the “pillar and foundation of the truth,” it is clear that he is not referring primarily to the conduct of Christians gathered for public worship, but to their conduct as Christians in general, both individually and jointly. Not surprisingly Paul’s instructions in the first part of chapter three involve the conduct of a Christian pastor or deacon in his home (vv. 2–5,12) and the whole community (vv. 7–8,11).

Going back to 2:9f where Paul speaks about women’s dress, we note that the same is true. What Paul says applies to Christian women at home as well as in the public worship. The words *έπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν* (“who lay claim to reverence for God”) do not describe women as taking part in public worship but rather simply as professing Christians. Peter (I Peter 3: 1-4) tells wives that their beauty should not be that of braided hair, expensive jewelry, or fine clothes, the same three things Paul mentions in v. 9, but rather a gentle and quiet spirit. Peter tells a wife that such behavior in her home might be very helpful in winning her unbelieving husband for Christ. Thus Peter’s words make it clear that it is not only in public worship that woman is to dress herself in good works instead of outward beauty, but she is to dress herself in this way at home also.

When we take up 2:11–15, then, the context does not compel us to understand that what Paul says in these verses regarding the role of a woman applies only in public worship. Rather, here too Paul is addressing

professing Christians who will want to know “how to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth.” When Paul tells a woman what is right for her (v. 11,12b) and wrong for her (v. 12a) and why (vv. 13-14) this is not a special instruction for her which applies only when she is present in public worship. While it surely applies there, yet what is wrong for her to do there is wrong everywhere, not just in church.

The instructions given in this section have a general application. This was true in the preceding context (2:8,9,10) and in the following context (3:2–5,7–8,11–12)). The exegesis which follows will show it is true in these verses also.

Now the other question, namely, the meaning of *γυνή*. Again the context is very helpful. It is clear that the meaning of *ἀνὴρ* and *γυνή* in the preceding verses is not husband and wife but man and woman. The instruction in v. 8 is not just for husbands, nor is the instruction of v. 9 just for wives. It is true that in I Peter 3 these same instructions about dress are given to wives, but, as was noted above, the context demands that there was a special reason for Peter to do so because the situation involved married women. Here in Timothy 2 the instruction of v. 9 is tied by *ὡσαύτως* to the instruction of v. 8 given to men. The natural meaning of *γυνή* then, is “women.” This is the way most, if not all, of the translations read.

When we take up vv. 11-15 there would have to be a compelling argument from within these verses for the meaning to shift from “woman” to “wife.” In the exegesis which follows it will be shown that the syntax of vv. 11-12 compel us to continue with the meaning of *γυνή* as “woman.” Some argue that the syntax and thought of v. 14b and 15 refer to a wife, but this argument strains both the syntax and the thought. The exegesis will show that the continued meaning of “woman” is most natural in these verses also (again, as most, if not all, of the translations read).

Verse 11

***γυνή* = “a woman.”**

The fact that verse 11 begins with no connective indicates that Paul is moving on to a second instruction which wishes to pass on to the Christian woman in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). When the noun appears without an article here it is indefinite, thus we translate “a woman” in the sense of “any woman.” The meaning “woman” is established from the previous two verses (cf. the remarks above in the introduction) and the lack of an article with *ἀνδρός* in verse 12 (cf. the comments on *ἀνδρός*). Perhaps the obvious should also be stated, namely, the basic meaning of *γυνή* points simply to the female sex and so “woman” is the basic meaning of the word. Thus, unless the context compels the meaning “wife,” is to be understood as “woman.”

While what Paul says in this verse applies to any women because it is based on the order of creation (v. 13), it is clear that Paul is addressing himself to Christian women. This is obvious not only from Paul’s words later in 3:15 but also from the departure Paul makes from his usual pattern of giving instructions in this chapter. In 2:1,8,9 (where *βούλομαι* has to be repeated to explain the infinitive *κοσμεῖν*), and 12, Paul gives his instructions to Timothy using the first person. Here in v. 11 Paul leaves this usual pattern to speak directly to the Christian woman in Ephesus. Paul knew he could speak to her as one who was made new in the attitude of her mind and who put on the new self, created to be like God in true right righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:23-24). To such a woman he could speak with the imperative and know that the command would be heeded in faith-born love.

***μανθάνετω* = “let a woman learn.”**

The present tense of the verb indicates that the action spoken about is to be an ongoing action. Paul is not giving a new instruction which he is urging the Christian women to begin doing. Then he would more likely have used the aorist imperative (Moulton: *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. III, p. 74). The present imperative gives a command to do something constantly, to continue to do it and it is more in the nature of an

invitation one urges on another than the command which an army officer lays on an underling (Moulton III, page 75).

The action Paul speaks about on the woman's part is "learning." The Greek language has other words for "learn" (πυνθάνομαι, αίσθάνομαι, κατανοέω), but what often seems to set *μανθάνω* apart from them in meaning is that *μανθάνω* often pictures a disciple learning from the instruction of one who is a master (*διδάσκαλος*) on the subject or the technique being taught. The noun which is derived from *μανθάνω* is *μαθητής* ("disciple"). The submissive attitude of a disciple in learning is the thrust of *μανθάνω* in this context. This is made clear by the two prepositional phrases which modify it in this verse, and by the two infinitives in the next verse which are a continuation of the thought. (cf. I Cor. 14:31, II Tim. 3:14, I Tim 5:4 for other similar uses of *μανθάνω*.)

ἐν ἡσυχία = "in quietness."

With the preposition *ἐν* Paul adds the manner in which the Christian woman's learning is to take place and indicates the outward behavior which is to accompany her learning activity. The word *ἡσυχία* can mean a cessation of speaking in order to listen or, as in II Thess. 3:12, a self-restraining conduct characterized by minding one's own business instead of meddling in the affairs of others. (Note this contrast to *ἡσυχία* in both II Thess. 3:11 and I Thess. 4:11.) It is sometimes argued that since *ἡσυχία* is used in this verse in connection with learning, it must mean being silent in an absolute sense. Reference is made to Paul's instructions in I Cor 14:34 but in that passage Paul uses *σιγάω* and *οὐ λαλέω* (cf. the article on I Cor. 14 in the July *WLQ*). However, Paul uses *ἡσυχία* in verse 12 also, and so the meaning of this word must be drawn from its use in both verses and not from verse 11 alone. When we look at *ἡσυχία* in the context of both verses it seems very likely that Paul is using the vocable in the attitude of a quiet, self-restrained disciple role, who does not meddle in the affairs of a teacher, rather than absolute silence. More will be said on this in connection with the second use of *ἐν* v. 12.

ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ = "in complete submissiveness."

With this second use of the preposition Paul adds a second sphere in which the Christian woman's learning is to take place. While the first use of *ἐν* indicated the outward behavior which is to accompany the learning activity, this second use indicates the inward attitude with which the action is to be done. Basically *ὑποταγή* or the verb *ὑποτάσσω* speaks of a person who has been placed in a position (*τάξις*) where one is under authority (*ὑπό*). The Latin "subordo" and the English "subordinate" are parallel words. In the NT this vocable is used to express the relation of wives to husbands, children to parents, slaves to masters, and of subordination to secular authorities, to church leaders, to Christ, and to the will of God.

A basic misunderstanding of this word is the conclusion that subordination or being in a position under authority implies inferiority. This conclusion is not valid because the vocable is not used regularly in contexts where this meaning is inherent, nor does subordination in general automatically imply inferiority. The unbelieving world might see things this way, but our Redeemer took on the nature of a servant (Phil. 2:7) and came not to be served, but to serve (Mt. 20:28). He reminds us that the people of the world see the exercise of authority as being great or superior (*μείζων* Luke 22:24ff) but that we are not to be like that or think that way (Luke 22:26) because greatness in God's kingdom is found in being a slave and servant of others (Mt. 20:27, Mk. 10:44). The young child whom God instructs to submit to his parents, some day will care for those same parents in their old age. The Christian who is urged to submit to an unbeliever in the government is actually superior in God's sight to the unbelieving government official. The wife whom God urges to submit her husband is at the same time a coheir with him of the gracious gift of life to whom he is to give honor (*ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν*, I Peter 3:7) and for whose happiness he is to be ready to sacrifice his very life, if necessary, (Eph. 5:25,28-29). The slave whom Paul sends back to Philemon to submit to him is to be welcomed as Philemon would welcome Paul himself (Philemon 17). The church leaders to whom the congregation is to

submit are at the same time men whose desire is to minister to every member's spiritual need night and day with no concern for their own personal fame or financial security (I Thess. 2:1-12, I Peter 5:-2-3). Let these examples suffice to show that the *ὑποταγή* which Paul calls for on the woman's part in learning does not imply inferiority.

When Paul adds the word *πάσῃ*, he uses it, as it is often used, to denote an action which is done to the highest degree possible or with complete commitment. Confer Acts 17:11 where the Bereans receive the word "with *great* eagerness," or II Cor. 12:12 where the action was done "with *great* perseverance," or Eph. 4:2 where Paul urges *complete* humility and gentleness. Paul urges the Christian woman in Ephesus to subordinate or submit herself completely so that there can be no doubt as to the attitude she holds as a disciple who is learning. If a Christian woman in faith-born love subordinates herself willingly in recognition of God's good and gracious will, what a happy learning situation it will be for both the disciple and the teacher!

Summary of verse 11

Paul urges a woman to be a disciple who learns from her teacher in a way which reveals her Christian faith outwardly in the quiet self-restrained way she conducts herself and in a way which flows from an inner conviction that it is God's will that she is not in any way to step out of her role of submission in the learning activity.

Verse 12

δέ = "now."

The thought of verse twelve is tied to verse eleven by this particle. When we see each of the thoughts of verse eleven repeated by a corresponding thought in verse 12 (*γυνή* = *γυναικί*, *μανθανέτω* = (οὐ) *διδάσκειν*, *ὑποταγῆ* = (οὐ) *ἀυθεντεῖν*, *ἡσυχία* = *ἡσυχία*) it is immediately apparent that verse 12 is not added as a second instruction but rather as a further explanation of the instruction given in verse 11 (cf. the same use of *δέ* in II Cor. 6:15-16 and Hebrews 12:6).

οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω = "I do not permit."

As in verses 1, 8, and 9, Paul is speaking in the first person with his authority as an apostle of Christ. Paul had already reminded Timothy of this authority twice in this letter (1:1, 2:7). It is not that Paul wants to flaunt his authority. Rather Paul wishes to assure this young pastor that what he writes in this letter carries with it the authority of God. Paul wants Timothy to "command and teach these things" (4:11) and not let anyone make him shrink from doing so because they look down on him on account of his youth (4:12). *Ἐπιτρέπω* carries with it the connotation of a person in authority who gives his permission to a person under authority to do something. The present tense, as with *μανθανέτω* in verse 11, does not set up a new rule which is being made at this time, but an action which is ongoing. So Paul is saying that on the basis of the authority invested in him as one who transmits the teaching of Christ as his herald and apostle (2:7) there is something he cannot permit a woman to do, and Timothy is to apply this prohibition as he teaches the women how they are to conduct themselves as Christians (3:15).

διδάσκειν = "to teach."

The action which Paul cannot permit a woman to do is to teach. The Greek has at least one other word for "teach," namely, *παιδεύω*. What sets *διδάσκω* apart is the connotation that it is a kind of teaching in which a master (*διδάσκαλος*) imparts knowledge or techniques to the uninstructed (*μαθητής*, cf. Mt. 10:24). Often a disciple, after learning all he could from his master, gathered his own set of disciples and instructed them (cf. II Tim. 2:2). When Paul says that he cannot as an apostle of Christ give permission to a woman to teach, he is closing the possibility to a Christian woman that she might become a *διδάσκαλος* who could instruct men as an

authority figure. The case of Priscilla in Acts 18:26 is not completely analagous because the activity described there is not διδάσκειν but ἐκτιθέναι (“to set out, expose, explain”).

The Talmud warned against letting Jewish women learn the Torah, in fact the caution is given that the words of the Torah should be burned rather than turned over to a woman (*Trinity Journal*, Spring 1980, p. 77). Paul encouraged a woman to learn. At the same time he urged her to conduct herself as a disciple in a way which was beyond any reproach. The very qualifications Paul had set down in the two prepositional phrases in verse 11 implied that she could never step to the front of the class and become a teacher. But what was implicit in his words of verse 11, he now makes explicit so that there can be no misunderstanding and so that Timothy is not left in the dark in any way as to what his instruction to Christian women was to be.

Does this statement of Paul forbid women to do any kind of teaching? If we isolate the first five words of verse 12 from the rest of Scripture, this conclusion might be drawn. But elsewhere Scripture not only says that a woman can teach, but that she has an obligation to teach. In Titus 2:3-5 the older women are urged to be teachers of what is good (καλοδιδασκάλους) so their training of the younger women might bear rich fruit. In Colossians 3:16 Paul is speaking to all the believers in Colosse when he urges them to teach (διδάσκοντες) and admonish one another by singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to the Lord.

What kind of teaching can Paul not permit a woman to do? He does not leave Timothy or us in doubt about this but continues with a further explanation in this verse.

οὐδὲ (ἐπιτρέπω) = “namely I do not permit.”

According to Greek syntax, οὐδέ could join ἀθνετεῖν to διδάσκειν in one of two ways. One is that οὐδέ joins ἀθνετεῖν to διδάσκειν as a second and separate thing which Paul cannot permit a woman to do. This, however, would mean that διδάσκειν would stand alone as an absolute which Paul cannot permit. But as we have just seen, to make an absolute principle out of the first five words of this verse would be to posit something which would be in direct conflict with other statements of Scripture. If the other grammatical use of οὐδέ gives an interpretation which does not conflict with the rest of Scripture, then it is clear that the other use of οὐδέ is the one which the Holy Spirit intends, as in Luke 7:47.

To have to make such a choice between two grammatical uses of a particle or participle or between word meanings is not unique to this verse. For example in Mark 7:19 to read καθαρίζων as a participle which modifies Jesus instead of as a hanging nominative leads to the anti-Scriptural conclusion that already at this time Jesus was abrogating the ceremonial law; in Luke 7:47 to read the particle ὅτι as causal instead of as evidential makes the woman’s good deed the cause of her forgiveness; in Galatians 5:6b, to read the participle ἐνεργουμένη as passive leads to making deeds of love part of the essence of faith; in I Peter 2:8b, to take ἀπειθοῦντες as the antecedent of the relative pronoun, instead of taking either the main verb or the whole preceding clause as the antecedent, teaches a double predestination; in I Peter 3:18, to take the wrong meaning for σάρκι and πνεύματι is to teach a separation of the two natures in the person of Christ. In each of these cases what Scripture teaches elsewhere precludes one of the two possible grammatical possibilities.

The other grammatical use of οὐδέ which fits in this verse because it gives a meaning which coincides exactly with the rest of the Scripture is the explanatory use of οὐδέ. The technical term which the grammars use (i.e. Robertson, Blass-Debrunner-Funk, Moulton) is expegetical or explicative. The explanatory use of καί as a conjunction is commonplace (e.g. John 1:16, 1 8:12, 12:27). But the Greek language does not tie one negative clause to another with καί; instead it uses οὐδέ. Thus οὐδέ is the conjunction in negative sentences which parallels all the usages of καί in positive sentences (Robertson, p. 1185). Some examples in which οὐδέ is used after οὐ in an explanatory function (as it is used here in I Tim. 2:12) are: Matthew 6:28, Mark 4:22, Romans 2:28-29, I Cor. 5:11, I Thess. 5:5, I Peter 2:22, Acts 2:27.

A look at just one of these will help because it will help establish two points. In I Cor. 5:11, when Paul tells the Corinthians not to eat with such a man, he is not adding a second instruction to the first, but he is

clarifying what is meant by the first. The NIV tries to catch this meaning by translating “With such a man do not even eat.” A second thing that is noteworthy in this Corinthians verse is that the verb in the second clause is an infinitive. Therefore, Paul has to use *μηδέ* instead of *οὐδέ* because *μηδέ* is normally used instead of *οὐδέ* with the infinitive. This fact leads us to realize that when Paul uses *οὐδέ* in I Tim. 2:12, we have to repeat the verb *ἐπιτρέπω* instead of simply taking *οὐδέ* with the infinitive. This, too, helps establish the fact that what we have in this *οὐδέ* clause is an appositive or explanatory statement which will help clarify the meaning of the first clause in this verse.

ἀυθεντεῖν ἀνδρός = “to exercise authority over a man.”

The meaning of *ἀυθεντεῖν* and the questions that have been raised about it have been discussed thoroughly in an article in the July 1981 *WLQ*, pp. 185-191. In this context, the word must mean to “exercise authority.” The use of *οὐδέ* with this infinitive means that the verb *ἐπιτρέπω* must be repeated and that the statement “I do not permit a woman to exercise authority over a man” is added in an explanatory way to “I do not permit a woman to teach” (cf. the discussion above under *οὐδέ*).

Paul is saying that teaching which involves a woman in becoming the *διδάσκαλος* of a man cannot be permitted by God’s apostle because it violates the principle of the subordination of woman to man by God. In verse eleven the point was made that a woman is to be a learner who does this learning in full submission; now the point is made that she is not to become a teacher who exercises authority over a man. The words *υποταγή* and *ἀυθεντεῖν* express the Biblical principle involved. In writing these words to Timothy Paul applies the principle to the specific area of learning and teaching because this is an area of life in which a woman might quite easily forget the principle and begin to transgress against God’s will.

The word *ἀνδρός* has no article. If in this verse Paul would have been addressing a wife about her relationship to her husband, *ἀνδρός* would here need an article to convey the thought “her husband.” The lack of the article indicates that the meaning in this verse is not “wife-husband” but “woman-man.” This in turn affects the meaning of *γυνή* in verse 11 because verse 11 and 12 are obviously correlated. As was noted in the discussion of verse 11, the meaning “woman” fits that verse best in view of the use of *γυνή* in the two preceding verses. Both context and syntax combine, therefore, to give the meaning “woman-man” in verses 11 and 12.

ἀλλ’ = “but.”

This particle tells us that in the last part of verse 12 the apostle will indicate the totally other thing which the woman is to do instead of becoming a *διδάσκαλος* and thus exercising authority over a man.

εἶναι = “to be.”

The continuation of the thought with an infinitive means that *ἐπιτρέπω* must be repeated one more time, only this time without the negative. One might have thought that Paul would have repeated the verbal idea used with *ἡσυχία* in verse 11, namely, “I do permit a woman to learn in quietness.” Instead he uses the verb “to be.” What possible additional thought does the apostle convey by the switch to this verb with a more general meaning? Undoubtedly this, that not only is a woman’s *learning* to be done in quietness but her whole conduct is to be characterized in this way. This the apostle permits her because this is God’s will established at the time of her creation. The use of *ἐπιτρέπω* with *εἶναι* does not make this a caustic remark on Paul’s part, but as is true of the use of the first person verbs throughout this chapter, it is a reminder that these words are spoken by a herald and apostle appointed by God to teach the true faith to the Gentiles (1:1, 1:12, 2:7).

ἐν ἡσυχία = “in quietness.”

As verse 11 began, so verse 12 concludes. After studying verse 12 and noting that Paul uses *ἐν ἡσυχία* with the verb *εἶναι* instead of *μανθάνω* as in verse 11, it becomes more obvious that the meaning “total silence”

is not what fits best here. In Acts 11:18 the verb ἡσυχάζω does not mean total silence (because the people immediately spoke) but rather something like the NIV translates “They had no further objections.” In Acts 21:14 the use of this same verb conveys the thought that the people no longer tried to get Paul to change his mind (NIV “gave up”). In Acts 22:2 μᾶλλον is used together with ἡσυχία to mean “even *more* quiet.” In chapter 2 of Timothy Paul used the adjective ἡσύχιος. When Paul encourages prayer for the government so that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, he does not mean that we want to have a life of complete silence. Peter also uses the adjective in his first epistle (3:4). In describing the beauty which pleases God he speaks of a woman with “a gentle and quiet spirit.” Again, this does not mean that the woman who pleases God is one who is totally silent.

Scripture does not enjoin total silence on a woman either at home or in church. The one exception is in I Corinthians 14:34. There God does command a woman to be silent and not to speak but this is in a setting where an individual rising to speak would necessitate the silence of another speaker or where one would rise to judge what was spoken by another (cf. the article on I Cor. 14 in the July 1981 *WLQ*). In I Cor. 11:5, we learn that women did pray and prophesy in the public worship without censure, as long as they did so without disregarding the custom of covering the head (which in Corinth gave expression to the headship of man, cf. *WLQ*, April 1981). The prophesying spoken of in I Cor. 11 was a joint discussion of God’s Word (which is suggested by Paul’s linking the word prophesying together with the word praying in I Cor. 11:5 and which is encouraged by Paul in Colossians 3:16); or it was prophecy in the sense of a direct revelatory action and thus prophesying in which the impulse came from God, not the will of the speaker (II Peter 1:21).

This use of ἐν ἡσυχία, therefore, means what many of its other uses in the NT suggest (including those from I and II Thess. discussed under this word in verse 11). A woman not only is to learn as a disciple in a quiet self-restraining way which avoids any meddling in the affairs of the teacher (v. 11), but this should also be true of her entire conduct (εἶναι). Rather than aspiring to be a διδάσκαλος and thus to exercise authority over men, she, according to the will of God, is happy in her God-given position and to carry it out in a resolute quietness. Total silence is not required, but complete submission is. We note from Paul’s other epistles that the woman who conducted herself in this way could assist in the work of Christ’s church; and she also received the unqualified praise the Lord’s apostle (Phil. 4:2-3, Romans 16:1,2,3,6,12).

Summary of verse 12

Paul instructs Timothy that God’s will does not permit a woman to become a teacher when this activity would in any way involve her in exercising authority over a man. Instead, her whole conduct is to be characterized by resolute self-restraint.

Verse 13

γάρ = “because.”

Verse 13 and 14 give two reasons why the instructions given in verse 11–12 apply.

ἐπλάσθη = “was formed.”

This verb means to “form, mold.” Paul picks up the verb used in the Septuagint (Genesis 2:7) to describe the special way that man was created, “And the Lord God *formed* man from the dust of the ground.” The aorist tense merely designates action which has taken place. This verb must be repeated with Eve. The special way in which God made Eve (Gen. 2:22) can also be spoken of as a forming. The passive voice is significant because it emphasizes that in both cases God is the doer of the action, not Adam or Eve.

Ἄδὰμ πρῶτος, εἶτα Εὕα =

“Adam first, then Eve.” The key words in this clause are πρῶτος and εἶτα. Adam and Eve are both described as being formed by God. The one thing which Paul highlights as different is the time of their creation.

God did not create them simultaneously; God made them in a definite order, and the inspired apostle calls attention to this order of their creation as evidence or proof of the divine instruction given in verses 11-12. God made man first and then Eve so that it might be clear that woman was to be subordinate (not inferior, cf. the discussion in verse 11 on ὑποταγή). This principle Paul had applied as Christ's herald and apostle (2:7) to the learning-teaching activity involving man and woman (2:11-12) so that both might know how to conduct themselves as God's children (3:15).

It will be helpful to recall at this point that Paul had stated this same principle and the same proof of the principle in I Cor. 11:3-9 (cf. *WLQ*, April 1981). The only difference between I Cor. 11 and 1 Timothy 2 is the application of the principle. In the former it was applied to guide man and woman's conduct in regard to the custom in Corinth; in the latter it is applied to guide man and woman in the learning-teaching activity in general.

Verse 14

καί = "and."

This conjunction ties verse 14 together with verse 13 as a second proof of the instructions given in verses 11 and 12. The scene shifts from the creation of man and woman to the fall of man and women. In particular we should recall selected portions of Genesis 3:13-17:

The woman said "The serpent *deceived* me, and I ate." ... To the woman [God] said, "I will greatly increase your pains in *childbearing*; with pain you will *give birth to children*. Your desire will be for your husband, and he *will rule over you*." To Adam he said "Because *you listened to your wife* and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you."

Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη = "Adam was not deceived."

The verb ἀπατάω means to "deceive, mislead." In the second part of this verse this verb is repeated in its compound form, ἐξαπατάω.

It should be remembered that in Hellenistic Greek there is a tendency to use the compound form of the verb rather than the simplex form without attaching any special meaning to the verb (Colwell and Mantey, *A Hellenistic Greek Reader*, p. 5-7; Moulton, Vol. I, pp. 111-118). Surplus ideas on numerous examples of a compound and simplex form of a verb appearing in the same context with no difference in meaning (cf. Rev. 10:10, John 1:11-12, 1 Peter 1:10-11, II Cor. 5:2-4, 1 Cor. 10:9, Phil. 1:24-25, Rom. 2:9).

Often the compound form of the verb has a perfective meaning, that is, it indicates that the action of the verb is conceived of as having been consummated or as on its way to completion (Blass-Debrunner-Funk, 318.5). Sometimes the compound form of a verb is intensive, that is, it indicates a more intense action than the verb in the simplex form. But this latter use is not the case with verb compounds using the preposition ἐκ.

The comprehensive study of ἐκ compound verbs in the NT by Moulton (Moulton, Vol. II, pp. 308-311) indicates that either the local force (i.e. "out, from, forth, or off") or the perfective sense applies. In only a very few cases is there a nuance of the intensive sense; but in each of these it seems the meaning of the simplex verb is itself intensive, and the context indicates that the preposition carries the perfective sense (Moulton, Vol. II, p. 309). Especially noteworthy is II Cor. 4:8. where an ἐκ compound verb is used together with the simplex form in the same verse in a perfective sense (Moulton, Vol. II, p. 310).

A study of the NT use of ἀπατάω (Eph. 5:6, 1 Tim 2:14, James 1:26) and ἐξαπατάω (Rom. 7:11, 16:18, I Cor. 3:18, II Cor. 11:3, II Thess. 2:3, 1 Tim. 2:14) reveals that either ἐξαπατάω is used (as many compound verbs in Hellenistic Greek) without any special meaning attached, or it is used in the perfect sense. Kittel discusses these two words together with only the comment that ἐξαπατάω is used more often than ἀπατάω.

When Paul uses ἀπατάω with Adam, then, the reason is clear. The perfective form which might carry the nuance that deception was consummated would be out of place. Adam was not deceived by the devil, but he took the fruit and ate of it at the suggestion of Eve. When God asked Adam whether he had eaten from the tree, Adam did not say, as Eve did, that the serpent had deceived him. Instead he said that the woman had given him some fruit and he ate it. Eve stepped out of her role of subordination to become a leader, and Adam stepped out of his role to follow her lead. It is this very point to which God speaks when he addresses Adam's disobedience and curses the ground for his sake. God says, "Because you listened to your wife and ate..." What a tragedy resulted when woman stepped out of her role to become a leader and when man followed her lead! What a powerful second argument this adds to verse 13 showing why instructions given in verses 11-12 should be followed by Christian men and women!

δὲ = "but."

Paul contrasts the action of Eve to that of Adam, but by the use of γυνή with the article and by the use of a perfect verb he does more than just make a simple contrast.

ἡ γυνή = "the woman."

The use of the article with γυνή might at first glance suggest that we should translate "his wife." But when we look ahead to verse 15 and see that ἡ γυνή must be repeated as the subject of the future verb σωθήσεται, and then that Paul switches to a plural in μένωσιν, it is clear that "his wife" cannot be the translation. Instead γυνή is obviously being used with the article in the generic sense referring to a certain class of people as a whole (Moulton, Vol. III, p. 180). This doesn't mean that Eve isn't being spoken about, but it does mean that she is now being spoken about as the representative of her class, namely, woman. For this reason Paul can move without any strain to the future tense in the next verse and then, just as easily, end up with a plural.

ἔξαπατηθεῖσα = "by being deceived."

By way of leading up to the main thought in this clause, Paul mentions the fact that the woman, unlike Adam, was deceived by the serpent (Gen. 3:13, II Cor. 11:3). Satan led Eve to doubt God's love and to believe that eating some of the forbidden fruit would be a blessing (adjectival) and would be describing a characteristic of the woman. Since it has no article, it most likely is circumstantial (adverbial) and tells us of an action which preceded that of the main verb. Such preliminary circumstantial participles are usually aorist as this one is. The compound form of the verb adds the perfective idea and stresses that the action of the verb was consummated (cf. the discussion of ἀπατάω above).

γέγονεν ἐν παραβάσει = "(the woman) came to be in a state of transgression."

The verb γίνομαι can be used of persons or things which change their nature or to indicate their entering a new condition. For example: in Mt. 4:3 the devil suggested that the stones might *become* (be turned into) bread; in Lk. 13:19 the mustard seed *became* a large tree; in Jn. 16:20 Jesus promises that grief will *become* (be turned into) joy; and in Jn. 1:12, those who receive Jesus and believe in his name are given the right to *become* children of God. After the woman was deceived and ate of the forbidden fruit, she entered a new condition. With the perfect tense Paul tells us that this change of condition was completed and the results of it continue.

The new condition or sphere (ἐν) which women entered is described as παράβασις. The Holy Spirit uses numerous words for "sin" in the NT (ἁμαρτία, ἀνομία, παράπτωμα), but what sets παράβασις or παραβαίνω apart from the others is that it is disregard (an overstepping, a going alongside, a passing by) of God's clear command (Kittel, Thayer, Trench). Paul says in Romans 4:15, "Where there is no law, there is no transgression (παράβασις)." God's command in the garden of Eden was clear, and Eve's disregard of that command was also very clear as God emphasized in speaking to her.

This transgression had terrible consequences. When the woman was deceived and ate of the tree, her condition changed (γέγονεν) from one of holiness according to the image of God to one of transgression. And the results of this change continued; they were not temporary but permanent (perfect tense).

Lest this fact lead to despair, God promised the gracious gift of a Savior. But as a chastening, a reminder of her sin and of the promised Savior from sin, God said that woman's childbearing would be done in pain and that her desire would be to her husband "and he will rule over you." Her position as a beloved helper to man, which God had arranged in love as a blessing for man and woman would be affected by the state of transgression they had entered. Her position of subordination would still be a blessing for her, especially if the relationship between man and woman were guided by faith-born love. But in the state of transgression her subordination would also be a burden because man's Old Adam would abuse it and her Old Adam would rebel against it.

Again, what a tragedy resulted when woman stepped out of her role to become a leader, and what a powerful argument this adds to verse 13, encouraging Christian men and women to follow the instructions given in verse 13.

Summary of verses 13 and 14

Paul gives two reasons why the instructions he gave in verses 11-12 apply: 1) In creation, the order in which God formed Adam and Eve was deliberate and intended to underscore Eve's role as man's helper; and 2) In the Fall, the tragic results of Adam and Eve's stepping out of their God-given roles show clearly the dire consequences of disregarding God's will in this matter.

Verse 15

δέ = "but."

Paul continues his discussion of the woman in her state of transgression to show by way of contrast the blessing God bestows on the Christian woman who gladly conducts herself according to her God-given role.

σωθήσεται = "(the woman) will be saved."

The verb σώζω means to rescue from a disaster. Since the disaster Paul has just described is the entrance of the woman into the state of transgression, σώζω must mean to be delivered from this fallen state. The future tense indicates that Paul is speaking not only of Eve, but as the use of ἡ γυνή in both verses 14 and 15 indicate, he is addressing womankind. He holds out to her the promise of deliverance from her fallen state. The passive indicates that this is something which will be done to her. The means by which, or the manner in which, this action will be accomplished is stated next.

διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας = "by way of (διὰ of attendant circumstance, 2 Cor 2:14) childbearing."

The connection of v. 15 to v. 14 seems significant. Paul continues in this verse with the same subject (ἡ γυνή) he had used in the previous verse and mentions the only other topic about which God had spoken to women besides her relationship to man, namely childbirth. Recall the words of Genesis 3:16: "To the woman he said, 'I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.'" God said that pain in childbearing would be a chastening for woman in her state of transgression. But Paul now states that woman will be saved by way of childbearing. What does he mean? Childbearing, more than any other characteristic of woman, sets her apart from man. This is the unique task for which God created her. If a woman recognizes this and treasures children as the gift from God that they are, and if she willingly and gladly serves God in this unique function even though it be with pain, in no clearer way can she show her submission to God's will in the matter of her role as woman. This is apparently what the article with τεκνογονίας is intended to emphasize, namely the well-known kind of

childbearing God spoke about to Eve as the representative of her class. Or else the article may just mean “her” childbearing, that is, the way each woman conducts herself in this activity.

By way of childbearing, then, the Christian women in her unique way confesses herself to be a child of God and so is saved. Such a woman will not be one who will be chafing under her God’s-given station life and grasping for a position where she can exercise authority over men. On the other hand, it should not be surprising to see that those women who rebel against their position of subordination to men are often women who also denigrate the role of childbearing by which God set them apart from man in such an obvious way.

Still we must ask, “how can something which a woman does save her?” In the last part of v. 15 Paul adds the qualification that a woman is saved by way of childbearing only if it is an act of faith. It is not the act of childbearing itself which saves, but it is the faith, to which the act points as proof, which saves.

Before we leave this first part of verse 15 we should comment on another possible interpretation. This interpretation suggests that v. 15a refers to the birth of the Savior. The article with *τεκνογονίας* then, would refer to “the well known” childbirth. This would give the meaning that womankind would be saved by the birth of the Savior if the condition set forth in the protasis (15b) were fulfilled. The switch to the plural verb in the protasis would individualize the statement and say that not all womankind would be saved by the birth of the Savior but only those who fulfill the condition of the protasis. While this interpretation poses no syntactical or doctrinal problems, it does not follow as well in the development of the thought of verses 11-15 in which the apostle is addressing himself to woman and her conduct in her God-given role.

ἐὰν μείνωσιν = “if they remain.”

The use of *ἐὰν* with the subjunctive in the protasis and the future in the apodosis makes the sentence a future more vivid conditional. This means that what Paul has stated in the apodosis with the future tense will take place only if the condition in the protasis is fulfilled. This is important to note, for it seems to foreclose the translation suggested by the NIV (in the text proper): “women will be kept safe through childbirth.” If a woman is to be kept safe in childbirth only if she is a believer (which is the condition the construction demands be fulfilled for the apodosis to take place), then no unbelieving woman should come through childbirth safely.

As was noted earlier, Paul’s switch to the plural indicates that in verse 14b and 15a he had been using *ἡ γυνή* to refer to womankind. The meaning of the verb stresses that this must be an ongoing condition which the woman fulfills throughout her life.

ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἁγιασμῷ = “in the sphere of faith and love and holiness.”

This is the sphere in which woman is to remain. There are not three separate spheres (as the repetition of with each noun would have indicated) but one sphere in which three things are woven together in one pattern. The word *ἁγιασμός* is the act of doing what is holy or living according to God’s will (not the state of holiness which is *ἁγιοσύνη*).

Faith is mentioned first because it is the gift of the Spirit from which the other two flow as fruits. It is by her Spirit-worked faith in Christ’s redemption that the woman lays hold on for forgiveness of sins and justification. This saving faith is not a dead thing, but it is living and active (James 2:14-26). It expresses itself through love (Gal. 5:6). Compelled by the love of Christ who died for all, believers no longer live for themselves but they live for him who died for them and rose again (II Cor. 5:14). It is a “life of love” (Eph. 5:2) which does not conform to the pattern of the world but is transformed to follow God’s good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2). “The grace of God that brings salvation” teaches Christians “to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.” (Titus 2:11-12).

Faith which trusts God’s saving promise, love which is a living faith reaching to others in the pattern of God’s love, holiness which is a zeal born of faith to live one’s life according to God’s will—if a woman remains in the sphere woven together with these three threads, she will be saved.

μετὰ σωφροσύνης = “with sound judgment (about their conduct).”

With this final prepositional phrase Paul adds one more characteristic to the three he had tied together in one sphere. The word *σωφροσύνη* refers to the virtue of being able to analyze what is called for in a given situation and then to shape one’s conduct accordingly. Earlier in this same chapter (v. 9) Paul had urged women to dress themselves *μετὰ σωφροσύνης*. Now he is applying this instruction to the matter of woman’s relationship to man since this is the thrust of the thought which began with his use of *ἡ γυνή*. The woman who remains in faith, love, and holiness will also grow in her ability to know God’s will for her in this area of her life, and motivated by thanks to her Redeemer, she will shape her conduct accordingly.

Summary of verse 15

The Christian woman who lives a life characterized by faith, love and holiness will not resent her God-given role but will see her unique function of childbearing as a blessing of God and will at the same time conduct herself toward man in a way which pleases her Lord. In doing so she gives proof that she is a child of God and an heir of salvation.

Conclusion

In I Timothy 2:11-15 Paul applies the principle of the subordination of woman to the activity of learning and teaching (*μανθανέτω, οὐ διδάσκειν*). The principle, which God underscored by the deliberate order in which he created man and woman and which was broken with tragic results in the Fall, is clear: *ὑποταγή, οὐκ αυθεντεῖν*. The application requires *ἡσυχία* and *σωφροσύνη*.