



Leadership Principles Was Paul Culturally Limited?

by Chuck Gianotti

Studies in 1 Timothy—Part 5

Many today are throwing out the (centuries) long established interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-12 that a person's involvement in leadership and teaching can be affected by his or her sex. To some, a literal understanding and application of this passage stands out like a sore thumb, an embarrassment and hindrance in our modern, "enlightened" culture.

These verses do jump out abruptly and tersely—and seem clear on the face of it. In an effort to be relevant in our present day culture and "fair-minded" to women, new interpretations have unfortunately been put forward in an attempt to remain "biblical" yet soften the thrust of verses like these. Considerable pressure exists in evangelicalism to minimize or eliminate all gender based roles in church.

We take the unabashed view that a woman's profession of godliness, as noted in the previous verses of 1 Timothy 2, is *not* to include a teaching or leadership role over men. How, then, do we respond to the objections raised against this view point? Here are some of the more common ones:

1) Isn't this passage culturally limited?

Since the 1st century culture relegated to women an inferior status, Paul's appeal was for women to take their proper place in that culture. Now, as the argument goes, since women today are not inferior, Paul's teaching no longer applies. Is this a valid argument, that 1 Tim 2:11-12 was culturally limited? We believe not. If we consistently apply that kind of reasoning, we undermine other truths of Scripture. For example, one could conclude that baptism and the Lord's Supper were culturally limited because other religions had similar rituals in that era.

Or consider substitutionary atonement of Christ—the idea of someone taking another's place in judgment was probably more readily understood in the 1st culture than our present day where a person must take upon himself his own destiny. What really matters is simply that God loves us. Of course, this is nonsense. The actual substitution of Christ for us is central to the gospel message. We must be careful, therefore, not to appeal to "culture limitations" too easily. This is especially true in light of the clear command of Scripture about gender roles in the church.

2) Doesn't this view lessen a woman's value and assault her dignity?

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent (1 Timothy 2:11-12 NIV).

This is patently false. Value and dignity do not depend upon personal autonomy, and individual freedom does not require a right to every possible role. For example, a man cannot become pregnant or carry a child. Is he any less human or valued? A person's intellectual or economic limitations may prohibit him from becoming a nuclear scientist. In neither of these cases is a person's value or dignity lessened because of life or genetic circumstances beyond his control. Likewise, a limitation on women in writings authored by the Creator of life does not affect a woman's full enjoyment of humanness or her dignity as a woman.

3) Doesn't this refer to domineering teaching?

Some assert that the Greek word for *authority* (Grk: *authentain*) occurs only once in Scripture and really means "domineering", in the sense that it is OK for a women to teach men, so long as it is not in a domineering or overbearing way. Others

would add that Paul is warning against women who are false teachers.

These are weak arguments on two counts. First, there

is no reason why Paul would have singled out women for this command, since men likewise should not act in domineering ways (see Matthew 20:25). Second, *authentain* does indeed occur only once in the New Testament, and standard lexicons include both "domineering" and "have authority" as meanings of the word. So we resort to studying the meaning of the word in other ancient Greek writings. But it can also mean simply *to have authority*. George Knight II, in a major study of all occurrences of the *authentien* in ancient Greek, confirms the rendering *have authority* as the natural meaning. Wilshire Leland Edward likewise examined all occurrences of the word concluded that *authentain* means to *exercise authority*. Neither found *domineering* to be the meaning.

This fits well with the context of 1 Timothy. In rest of this letter, there is no clear indication Paul has in mind women who were domineering over men or were false teachers. In fact, the false teachers mentioned specifically were males. When women are pointed out in 2 Timothy 3:6-7, they are victims of false teaching, not purveyors of it.

4) Isn't this limited to a specific problem in Ephesus?

Since Timothy was living at Ephesus at the time of writing, wasn't this injunction meant only for them and not for believers everywhere? However, we would ask on what basis such a judgment is made when we so readily apply the rest of 1 Timothy to the church today? Also, as we pointed out earlier, there is no evidence that women domi-

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Practical Ministry Training Elders

by Jack Spender

Without question, more elders are needed, both to replace those called home by the Lord, and to keep up with expansion in the local church. Do we need a plan? It depends. If you're happy with an informal approach and it's working, stick with it. But many believe that one reason some churches struggle for years is the lack of trained, qualified elders. Scripture does provide examples of older leaders training younger ones, and we can benefit by applying the lessons we discover. We surely have the liberty to do that. Think of the notable discipling relationships reflected in the Bible: Moses with Joshua, Paul with Timothy, and above all, the Lord Jesus with His disciples. Is there not a wealth of information on how leadership passes from one generation to the next?

There is a Biblical principle underlying the inquiry. Whether we are comfortable with present day terms like "mentoring," "internship," "passing the baton," or prefer a low-key approach, it is true that whatever we sow, we will eventually reap. Good leaders are not produced through neglect. Let's consider five areas that take most, if not all, of elders' time in the work, and think about how younger men of the assembly might participate with them and learn.

1) Time with the Lord.

The early believers knew the value of this, for we read in Acts 13:2 concerning leaders in the church at Antioch: "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted..." (KJV). These men of influence who spoke the Word of the Lord to the people, were spending quality time together in the Lord's presence. Do we make time to spend with the Lord collectively, i.e. in addition to private devotions at home? Do such times show our conviction that the Lord is truly present among us when we meet? Wouldn't this be a good time to include some younger men who had interest and potential in spiritual things? It is an important lesson for the younger ones to learn that relationships among brothers can be peaceful, and difficult issues cleaned up in a timely manner when each one present has a conscious awareness of the presiding presence of the Head of the church at the meeting! In this, the assembly is very different from corporate meetings in the business world.

2) Caring for the team.

Paul told the elders at Ephesus to take heed to themselves and to all the flock (Acts 20:28). To borrow an expression from Peter's epistle, we should dwell with our fel-

low elders according to knowledge (see I Peter 3:7). It takes time to really get to know our co-workers and care for them, to know their strengths and weaknesses, their spiritual gifts and talents. Our loving interest should extend to their wives and family, health, time and business constraints.

Now while we may not be comfortable sharing all these details with younger men in the church, isn't it important for them to hear elders pray for one another, speak well of one another, and make special provision for life's inevitable difficulties? It would be sad if younger believers got the impression that the sum total of team cohesiveness is simply the urgency of dealing with assembly problems and meeting schedules. Put another way, is it possible that more young men do not aspire to the work of eldership because the existing elders have hidden their vulnerability, their "humanness," so well that the younger ones doubt that they could ever be spiritual enough to work among such a group? Therefore, if it is imperative that younger men embrace the idea of plurality in leadership, they need to be included in some of the intimate times of elder fellowship. The team approach is the biblical model for leadership.

3) Laboring in the Word.


Paul reminds Timothy of the honor due to elders, "especially they who labor in the word and doctrine" (I Tim. 5:17). Many Scriptures emphasize the importance of sound doctrine, and the feeding of the flock. Not all elders are gifted teachers, but being "apt to teach" is one qualification of the elder (I Tim. 3:2). Here is a valuable opportunity to train younger men in an important leadership skill: let them participate in the study of the Word with the older men of the assembly. This brings honor to those who are more experienced or gifted in teaching the Word. It goes beyond one's private studies for discipleship, message preparation or dealing with the inevitable problems growth brings. The value is not just in what elders study, but how they do it. Listening to one another, deferring graciously to other points of view is a form of honoring one another. In addition, learning to take careful notes and maintain records, hearing the names of honored teachers of the past and their writings are all priceless training tools for young men.

4) Shepherding the flock.

In many assemblies, the elders become so involved in decision making and other administrative duties that scarcely any time remains for pastoral work. Yet the instruction to elders is clear: "Feed [pastor, shepherd] the flock of God which is among you..." (I Peter 5:2). Here is a work that is desperately needed today, and a virtual gold mine of practical opportunity for training future elders. Are we taking them along on visits to homes, hospitals, convalescent homes? Are they seeing us move among the believers on Sunday morning to greet and inquire, or is all available time spent with fellow elders discussing problems and arranging programs? Young men need to watch the shepherds care for marriages, for new believers, for the aged or infirm, and for those who seem to be growing cold in the faith. All the better if there are times to discuss how these various shepherding functions were carried out, and what lessons were learned.

5) Attending the regular and special meetings of the church.

Perhaps it's obvious, but after all the above, elders still must attend meetings, often many meetings. Such times can be useful in discipling the younger ones. Recently an elder friend read a letter from a younger man in our assembly. He wrote to thank the elder for inviting him to a weekend conference in a nearby state. He enjoyed the conference, was helped by the excellent ministry of the Word, but then he added: "The part of the weekend that made the biggest impact on my life, was the conversations we had in the car driving up and back to the conference!" What seemed like a rather mundane matter of traveling to a meeting, was used by God to make some spiritual gains in a young life.

Perhaps the real hurdle in involving younger men is something deep in the heart. True shepherding is not about power and control. Rather, it's about being a servant. It comes from loving the Shepherd and the sheep. Just as the Good Shepherd did not think equality with God a thing to be grasped (Phil. 2:6), but gave Himself for the flock and then turned the work over to under shepherds, so the true elder rejoices when the Lord blesses simple attempts to bring along the next generation of servant leaders. Happy is the assembly that has elders with vision for future leaders, and some plans on how to prepare them. 

Biblical Foundations

Forgiving Others—Part 2

by Dr. Jim Rennie

As we saw in our first article, forgiveness part one is toward God. Whether I am the one who has sinned or the one sinned against, I must do business with God. He is the righteous judge and all legal matters pass through His hands first. When I have forgiven the offending party before God, He gives me grace to move on and not get stuck in bitterness, anger and resentment. I can ask the Lord for His peace to rule in my heart (Col 3:15). Also, it is vital to have a positive heart attitude to the offender. I am to love my enemies and pray for those who have persecuted me (Matt 5:43,44). It is hard to curse when you are seeking to bless (Rom 12:14).

Finally, I am directed by God to seek to make peace, if possible, with the offending party, particularly if that offending person is another elder. This relational peace may not always be achieved because it takes the two parties to agree for there to be peace (Rom 12:18). Not even our Lord, the Prince of Peace, was able to achieve relational peace with all those around Him, but He did all He could on His part. Let's look at some of the Biblical principles for making peace.

Transacting forgiveness with another person is a command of God.

Matthew 5:24 is a directive to the one who has done the wrong: "Go." In 18:15 the same directive is given to the one who has been wronged: "Go." Neglecting the effort to seek peace is an act of disobedience.

Forgiveness is a gracious gift.

In Ephesians 4:32, the Greek word for forgiveness is different from the Greek word used in the Lord's prayer. This new word, 'charizomai' literally means "to grace towards another person." 1 Peter 3:9 conveys

the same idea, "giving a blessing instead." In the same gracious spirit that forgiveness comes to me, I am invited to give it to others.

A Christian mother made up a small gift box with a bow on it and kept it handy. When one of the children wronged another, she talked to them about praying and forgiving. Then she instructed the child to offer the gift box to the offending party. What a wonderful lesson in grace!

Forgiveness requires mutual agreement.

On a personal level we are to forgive in the same way God forgives us. Note the "just as" in Eph. 4:32. God gives forgiveness *if* I confess my sin (1 John 1:9). I am by my confession humbly admitting that I need the gift of forgiveness. Likewise, there is the same *if* in Luke 17:3 and Matt 18:15. It is not biblical to *unilaterally* give forgiveness. If I have sinned, I can initiate the transaction by asking for forgiveness. But if I have been sinned against, I can only make an *offer* to transact forgiveness; for example, "I would like to forgive you. Would you like to be forgiven?" I must leave room for the other person to express agreement with the truth that he has sinned and ask to be forgiven. If I don't provide this liberty for the other person, then the gift of forgiveness may well be given where it is not wanted, and therefore may be despised. The template for this transaction is the preaching of the gospel. God presents the gift of forgiveness to the guilty sinner as a gracious offer which he is free to accept or reject. God never demeans forgiveness by giving it where it is not wanted (Matt 7:6).

Forgiveness is to be transacted in private.

Forgiveness is a one-on-one business transaction. When it is done in the company of others it may cause unnecessary embar-

assment and shame both for the parties transacting. That is why God says it is to be done "in private" (Matt 18:15). This will require courage when there is fear of the other person, but God provides courage when I am willing to do His will.

When asked to forgive, I must forgive.

This applies even when I doubt the other person's sincerity. Note the lesson in Luke 17:4. The offence in question is repeated seven times in a row! That surely requires a commitment to grace! Remember, the goal in forgiveness is to honor and obey God, not to change the other person. Sometimes our attitude is, "I won't forgive him until I see a change in his behavior." God alone sees the person's heart. Let Him be the judge. Act on faith, not feelings, and give grace when it is requested.

If the other person refuses to transact, I must continue to show the grace of love.

Matthew 18 describes the further steps one may take if both parties are under the authority of the church. All these steps are to be done in love with a view to restoration. It takes much grace to return love when evil is being done to you (Matt 5:43-44). It requires the control of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22).

If there is no agreement, I must still recognize the spiritual benefit.

There is honor to God because His grace and truth are being upheld. There is blessing to the other person; a spiritual seed is being planted that may take time to bear fruit (James 3:18). There is personal blessing for me, because I am doing the work of a peacemaker (Matt 5:9). If I suffer for doing right, I am blessed (Matt 5:10-16).

May the Lord bless you as you seek to make peace for His name's sake.



Leadership Principles (cont. from page 1)

nating or promoting false teaching was the issue. Clearly, this is a weak argument.

5) Doesn't Galatians 3:28 override this?

"In Christ there is ... neither male nor female." God does not contradict Himself. In both cases, He speaks clearly and unambiguously ... and theologically! Galatians speaks of our equal standing in relationship to the promises of God attained through faith. 1 Timothy speaks of functioning in the church. One is Soteriology, the other is ecclesiology. Our vertical relationship with God is not dependent upon our sex, but our horizontal relationships with each other is. For example, though we are equally re-

deemed, a man is *not permitted* to do certain things a woman is permitted to do. A man is *not permitted* to marry a man, whereas a woman *can* marry a man. Galatians 3:28 does not remove *all* distinctions between male and female. Neither does it negate or limit the teaching of 1 Timothy.

We conclude there is no reason to dismiss the face value of 1 Timothy 2:11-12. In fact, a more literal translation of the underlying Greek would read, "not to teach, nor even have authority." Godly femininity avoids exercising authority or leadership over men, for otherwise femininity sacrifices itself in an attempt to take

on masculinity. Godliness in a woman, rather, includes having a quiet submissiveness toward the teaching and authority in the church. This doesn't mean she cannot discuss or interact with the teaching, but addresses the attitude with which she learns.

Rather than providing a comprehensive list of specific approved or banned activities, we are left with the simple question to pose about any activity or ministry, "Does this involve a woman teaching or having authority over a man?" If the answer is *yes*, a woman should refrain.

In our next issue we will continue with the rationale the apostle provides for his teaching.



Wives' Corner Stress!!

by Ruth Rodger

Stress: state of mental, physical or emotional tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.

So goes the dictionary definition of one of life's great challenges. As believers we are not exempt from stress and as women, we are perhaps even more prone to it. Yet God built into the human body the very process that produces the stress reaction- the release of adrenalin - which enables us to "fight or flee" under threatening circumstances. Good stress can lead to increased productivity and improved focus, such as when we have a deadline to meet. It can enable a group to tackle an overwhelming job and, working together, conquer it, such as when a town pulls together to reinforce a levy against a rising river.

Too often, however, the stress we experience has a debilitating effect on our bodies, our families and our ministries. That is because stress is meant to be short-term, not an on-going state. When it is prolonged, we pay a toll in our physical, emotional and spiritual health which the Lord never intended. So what can we do about it?

Recognizing the source is a good place to start and may be easier said than done. When the source of stress is outside our control - accidents, illness, death of a loved one, job loss, moving - our *response* will determine the impact that stress has on our life, health, and faith. And the response is within our control. We know from Romans 8:28 that whatever comes to us is filtered through God's hand of love and that He has a purpose and a plan for our good, even in situations which look and feel completely the opposite. If we remember that, cling to Him and continue to trust Him in spite of the circumstances, we cooperate with God's plan for us.

To be able to do that, it is necessary to do

some "rock-gazing." When the children of Israel crossed over the Jordan River, God commanded them to build a pile of rocks, brought from the dry river bed, as a visual reminder to them and their children of God's miraculous provision, protection and power.

In the same way, we need to **build "rock piles"** by keeping a record of God's wonderful works in our lives so that in times of doubt and darkness, we can "gaze" at them and remember and be assured of His love, His faithfulness and power and His ability to care for us. Even the hardest of trials can become opportunities for growing in faith, endurance and dependence on the Lord when we turn to Him and trust Him. Jesus told us in John 14:27: "My peace I give you...not as the world gives..." For the world, peace means absence of problems and turmoil. But in Christ we can experience peace in the midst of problems and turmoil. Our response to hard times in our lives will make all the difference in the stress level we experience.

There is stress, however, over which we have some control. Much of this comes from within ourselves: **1) Do I have a "Martha Stewart" complex**, wanting perfection, with unrealistic expectations for myself, my spouse or my children? Remembering that only God is perfect, cutting myself and others some slack will help in that area. Take the pressure off. Do what you can do, to the best of your ability and allow yourself and those around you to be human.

2) Am I a procrastinator? A dear friend who always seemed to have time for others, yet kept a busy schedule herself, shared a secret with me. "Do it now," she said. We often waste little 5 or 10 minute snippets of time, thinking we can't get started on any big project. But there are myriads of little jobs

we *can* do in those times. Sewing on a button, emptying the dishwasher, making a quick call, writing a brief note of encouragement ... all can be done in 5 minutes or less. Using our time wisely can reduce the stress of those little jobs that pile up and nag at our minds.

3) Do I over-commit, a common problem for those in ministry? Whether out of need to be needed, fear of rejection or censure, when we feel compelled to say *yes* when asked to do a job, we put ourselves in a stressful situation. Learning to pray first about our involvement in any project, no matter how important or noble the cause, and then seeking our husband's approval will help keep our schedules under control. The world will not stop if we say *no* and in fact, the Lord may want someone else to exercise her giftedness in that area.

Finally, take care of yourself. 1) Keep your daily quiet time with the Lord inviolate. Without it, each of us is ill-equipped to handle the stresses of the day. 2) Eat right—good nutrition enables our bodies to react properly to stressful situations. 3) Exercise. It's a great stress reliever but hard to schedule and maintain without focus. 4) Get enough sleep. Most women don't get as much rest as they need. If you know you need 8 hours of sleep, do everything in your power to get it -regularly. 4) Schedule wisely. Keep a planner with everyone's schedule on it. Mark those things which are labor/time intensive and schedule "down" times around them. Plan family times diligently so that nothing else intrudes.

Stress is inevitable but with the Lord's strength and wisdom, it can become a tool to keep us focused and close to Him, more efficient and at peace mentally, emotionally and spiritually.



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"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers ..." 1 Peter 5:2a NIV