

**April 15, 2012**  
**GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE GODLY WOMAN**  
**1 Timothy 2:8-15**

Several weeks before Easter we began a series of messages from 1 Timothy. And while not 100% comprehensive, 1 Timothy is the closest thing in the New Testament to a manual about how to do church. So many people minimize the importance of the local church. When they're in the mood to go to church it is a great thing to be there for them. But on other Sundays they are just as comfortable doing a thousand other things. To them the church is a holy doc in the box or McDonalds. A place to get a spiritual fix when they need it.

But beloved, Jesus has a very different view of the church. The church is His bride, the church is the ones for whom He shed His blood. The church is commissioned to complete the work of salvation that Jesus began when He came into the world and died and rose again. What higher purpose could any organization have than that? And the church is guaranteed to be successful. Jesus said, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it". Now, Jesus is talking about the universal church here, all of those who've trusted Him as Savior and Lord, from every race and nation. But God has chosen to build His church, His kingdom, through millions of local churches around the world just like Grant's Creek. We are His strategy, and there's no contingency plan. What a high and holy calling!

So 1 Timothy is the church's primary instruction manual on how to carry out God's work. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 3:14-15, "These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth". Now, I know that it is your desire as well as mine to know how we should conduct ourselves in the house of God, the church. We want to know what God wants us to do and then by the grace of God we want to do it. And so by God's grace we are going to study our way through 1 Timothy and find out.

In our first sermon from 1 Timothy 1 we saw three overarching purposes of the church. First of all we are to **exalt the Word of God**, that is, teach and preach the Bible, and we are to proclaim the Bible to have the basic answer for every human need.

We are also to **exclaim the grace of God**. Paul says that God's grace was exceeding abundant, and that Jesus will save every sinner that comes to Him in faith (1:14-16). And we are to make this grace known to all nations. And finally we are to **encounter the enemies of God**. Ch. 1:18 says that we are to wage the good warfare. Later on in 6:12 Paul says that we are to fight the good fight. There is a spiritual war going on right now in the invisible spiritual world all around us, and every true born again child of God is a soldier in His army. And God wants us to be good soldiers!

Now, in chapter 2 Paul begins to teach us how to be good soldiers, and in verse 1 he tells us that we must begin with prayer. Prayer is the bedrock for all that we do for the kingdom of God. And after talking about prayer Paul comes to the matter that we will begin to discuss today, and that is the role that women and men play in the life of God's church. They both have critical roles to play, but they are different roles. And it is imperative that we know what our roles as men and women are, for to get them confused is to cause great confusion. So today we are going to begin with God's design for the godly woman. Turn please, to 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

All the way through the Scriptures we read of the prominent role that women have played in the program of God. Sarah was the mother of the Jewish race, who miraculously conceived and bore Isaac to Abraham, and because of her faith we read her name in Hebrews 11 in the Hall of Fame of Faith. And amazingly, Rahab the Harlot made it into the Hall by her faith. Deborah ruled as a judge over Israel. Ruth was a picture of faith during a period of gross spiritual darkness. Esther's courage and faith saved the Jews from total genocide.

In the New Testament, Mary & Martha were two of Jesus' best friends and ministered to Him time and time again. Mary Magdalene was the disciple whose loyalty resulted in being the first person to see Jesus after He was raised from the dead. And we read in Acts and Romans of the wonderful ministries that Dorcus, Phoebe, and Priscilla had in the early church. And in our own denomination who are the two most famous Southern Baptists in history? Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong, missionaries for whom our two major mission offerings are named. So it is clear that down through the ages, women have played an indispensable role in the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

But ladies, what is God's role for the 21 century Christian woman? Well, it is simply the same as it was 2000 years ago. And Paul lays it out very simply in our text. He begins in verses 9-10 where he speaks of three things that God says you need to focus on in your every-day Christian life, inside and outside of the church. And the first thing that God wants you to focus on is your **attitude**. Look at verse 9. "In like manner also that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation..." Now, the words "propriety and moderation" means the attitude of humility, modesty, and self control, and Paul is talking here with reference to matters of sex.

I don't have to tell any of you that we live in a sex-crazed world. Flaunting sex is so much a part of our culture that any time you turn on the TV you're liable to see some commercial about anything from their sexy soap powder to their sexy cereal. And other commercials are down right embarrassing. And we all know where this mentality has gotten us. The Biblical standard for sex and marriage in America is a joke, and the result is countless single moms and countless fatherless children, with all the heartache and pain that goes with it, and often the poverty.

But that's just earthly miseries. Worse is the rampant sin against a holy God, Who has decreed, "You shall not commit adultery". And ladies and gentlemen, old and young, "adultery" means any type of sexual activity outside of the marriage of a man and a woman. And the end result of adultery is eternal death, for God has also decreed that adulterers and fornicators will not enter the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9). Now, much of this sexual perversion is the result of the multibillion dollar industry of pornography. But much of it lies at the feet of women whose attitude about sex is anything but humble, modest, and restrained. Rather, their attitude is, "My sexuality is my ticket to success in life. And I'll punch it as often as I must". And the sad part about this is that many who think this way claim to be Christians.

But what's wrong with this attitude? Just that it is exactly opposite of the attitude that God says brings success. Listen to 1 Peter 3:3-4 (read). God says that there is a beauty that is much more important than outward beauty, and that is the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. Ladies, God is not interested in your getting an extreme makeover just to become more physically beautiful than you are now. Now, I am not talking about someone who is grossly deformed having

surgery just to make life normal. I'm not talking about getting braces for crooked teeth. I'm talking about someone who looks normal but just isn't satisfied with the way they look. But God gave you the nose and the chin that you have, right? And God gave you the body that you have, right? And if God wanted you to look any different than you basically look now He would have created you differently! No, God is not concerned with your making your outward appearance more beautiful. But He is very concerned that you improve the beauty of your heart. Peter says that God wants you to develop a gentle and a quiet spirit, which is precious in His sight.

Do you know what that is, ladies? That is the attitude that says, "My joy and self-esteem lie in God alone. And I will not flaunt my appearance in order to be successful. If I am single I will not give up my virginity, or I will not give up my present purity if I no longer have my virginity. I will trust God to give me a life partner if I need one and I will trust Him with all of my successes and failures. If I am married I will never flirt with another man. I will pursue knowing Christ and being a woman of humility, modesty, and self-control". Ladies, young ladies, is that your attitude today?

Well, if that is your **attitude**, then Paul says that it will be reflected in your **apparel**. Now, when we talk about women's apparel I realize that we are treading on holy ground with many, and I intend for us to tread very carefully with our Bibles wide open. Look back at verse 9. Now, the word "modest" means well-ordered or well-arranged. It means apparel that is attractive but that does not cause someone to gawk at you, with colors and rings and bracelets and necklaces that make you look like a gypsy in a traveling circus. Does that mean that you cannot wear any jewelry or makeup at all? No, but your jewelry and makeup should only **accentuate**, and not **dominate** your appearance. Any time your clothing or your jewelry or makeup detracts from your inner beauty that Jesus gives you, you've gone over the line.

But the word "apparel" can have another meaning. It also can mean a person's demeanor, their deportment. How they carry themselves. You know, I get kind of amused when I'm channel surfing and stumble up on one of those New York fashion shows. You've seen them. Those sleek and slender models strolling up and down the runways wearing the latest designs from the most famous designers. They are supposed to be attractive women, but they all look as mean as the wicked witch of the west. They look like they have a chip on their shoulder and they are just

daring anyone to knock it off. And it makes the outfit they are wearing a whole lot less attractive.

Ladies, if you want to be truly attractive, and most of all, if you want to honor God, then don't bow down to the demands of jewelers and clothiers. Put on the apparel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is nothing less than Christ Himself. Paul says in Romans 13:14, "Put on Christ, and make no provision for the flesh..." Let everyone you meet be impressed not at what you wear, but who you are.

So ladies, young and old, God says that you are to have the right **attitude**, an attitude of humility, modesty, and self-control. And you are to have the right **apparel**. Your clothing, makeup and jewelry should be attractive but not detractive to the inner beauty of Jesus. But the right attitude and the right apparel is not enough. God says that you must also have the right **actions**. Look at verses 9-10 once more. Ladies, the crowning jewel of your inner beauty is the outward actions that it produces in you. How you serve Christ by serving others in a humble and modest way. That's the way Dorcus lived. Acts 9:36 says that she was full of good works and charitable deeds.

Let me tell you about another lady who gets it right when it comes to the actions of a godly woman. Her name is Annalou Marais. Perhaps you've never heard of her, but many in South Africa know her, and you can Google her and learn of some of her accomplishments. Devotional writer Bill Crowder tells her story. Annalou is the author of over 70 books in the Afrikaans language, which is spoken mostly in South Africa and Namibia. But when Bill met her she was not signing books at a book table and she was not speaking at a conference. She was at a Christian conference, but she was just one of the workers, doing menial tasks that anyone else might do. Maybe she was washing dishes or cleaning rooms or sweeping floors. Bill said that she might have desired the spotlight, or even deserved it, but she was perfectly content doing what she was doing, joyfully serving in the shadows and weeping as she saw God work in people's hearts. Oh, ladies, and men as well, may we all have a heart for good works like Annalou Marais, doing good works solely for the glory of God. That's when God will bless!