

PAUL AND PUBLIC WORSHIP IN I TIMOTHY 2:8-15 AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY
CHRISTIAN CONDUCTS

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BY
OLAGOKE BOLAJI
UJ/NB/08/0088

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ABSTRACT

Today, there is the rampant problem of what, biblically, should be the role and conducts of both men and women, and of women in relation to men in the public worship. For the church, these issues are complex. One of those passages of the scriptures that address these issues is I Timothy 2:8-15; which forms the nucleus of this thesis. Issues as complex as these can hardly be resolved, or even be adequately dealt with, in a single thesis. Nonetheless, the researcher pinpoints that the problem is not as such the doctrinal or historical connotation of I Timothy 2:8-15, but the practicality of the messages/instructions of this text that many churches and denominations side-step. Can we say we really believe and obey scripture? It seems not good when the instructions in this text are side-stepping because it seemed strange, yet the idea of women not to teach does seem strange. Owing to these unparallel situations is the researcher strongly wishes to inquire into this passage. Therefore, through exegetical methods, library research, and interpretation tools such as Bibles, Greek Lexicon, Dictionaries, Journals, e.t.c., this study provides, first of all, a clear and informative background to the whole study. Second, there is the analogical review of the scholars' works on or interpretations of I Timothy 2:8-15. Here, their diverse positions are clearly known, and these form useful bases for the exegesis in chapter three. Third, chapter three contains two parts-the life settings of this text, and the critical study or analysis and objective interpretation of the text. Here, the text is allowed to speak for itself in a clear term in ways which are academically but biblically, theologically, spiritually, ecclesiologically, and morally responsible. Based on these, is the implications of the study of this passage written in chapter four. And, also there is the conclusion that, according to this text, both men and women should exude godly, pious, righteous and faithful behaviour and conducts, and for both to dress modestly in the public worship; and that the text prohibits women from, mainly, teaching or exercising authority over men, especially, in the church. Although some allowances and exceptional cases are considered. Further, the researcher recommends that there is the need for further study on this text. And there is the need to use method that give a clear character of the text; and that distance must be put between the text and interpreter; also to learn how this text has been understood and interpreted by other believers and scholars in diverse settings.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Although, the researcher cannot claim that he has given the definite and final interpretation of this passage, however, this text yields a coherent and comprehensible meaning. Paul gives the instructions that men should pray without anger and disputing and women should adorn themselves modestly with good works, not with ostentatious or seductive dressing. And, women should not engage in teaching and exercising of authority over men because of the creation order (verse 13), and because they are more easily deceived (verse 14). Haubert says “Tertullian called women the ‘Devil’s gateway’” (4).

Paul reminds his readers that women will experience eschatological salvation by adhering to their proper role, which is seen in child bearing. They must also practice other Christian virtues in order to be saved. Both lake and Baab agree that women should be known for their works (such as prayer, fasting visiting the sick, teaching of women, assisting in baptism and communion) and their faith rather than for their words and for the governing responsibilities of authority.

The main problem with the text is not in the main exegetical but practical Paul’s injunctions are contrary to the thinking and practice of the modern world. But, the word of God should change and correct our thinking and our behaviour. The happiness and strength of the church today will be in direct proportion to our obedience to the biblical text. Therefore, there is the need to hear Paul’s intention in the text (I Timothy 2:8-15)

and its clear directives in order not to mitigate and silence the clear moral and theological imperatives of this biblical faith. Also, this study should benefit the church in the areas of theology formation, preaching and proclamation, and personal appropriation (Hayes and Holladay 142).

Finally, although, Paul in his instructions in I Timothy 2:8-15 leaves no room for any modification, some exceptions should be allowed as touching women in ministry. If they (women) are distinctively, emotionally, biblically and spiritually matured, and are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, then, they may be practically involved in leadership, ministerial, and liturgical roles and offices in the church, and Christian organization or having their own ministries. Yet God has ordered his world, and that order holds men responsible for leadership in the church, and even in the home, especially for the authoritative teaching of doctrine. Nonetheless, God has imparted both sexes. Thus, the callings of men and the gifts of women should be recognized that the church may serve Him in unity.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION

There is the need to further embark on serious and sustained study of this text, and on using a method which can help us hear this text on its own terms in its distinctive historical and literary character.

The church and individual interpreter should respect the “life” of this text, allowing it to speak its own distinctive word (intent) believe, embrace and practically manifesting it.

Distance must be put between the interpreter and the text, and allow the text to exercise its power and authority over the interpreter.

Further, this text need to be heard, read and reread in order to discover its distinctive structural relationships, contrasts, comparisons, repetitions, and progression. And, how the key words relate to each other should be noted.

Also, there is the need to learn how the text has been understood and interpreted by other believers and scholars in diverse settings.

Finally, those with limited experience in Bible study should not feel overwhelmed by the extensiveness of the above recommendations which can aid in further study of I Timothy 2:8-15.