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Six, Gender and the Bible – THE 313

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Reading Summary 7

In the article entitled “Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism.”, Douglas Moo used 1 Timothy 2:8-15 to justify why women are not to teach or have authority over men for the Church today.

- Moo noted that 1 Timothy imposes two restrictions on the ministry of women: they are not to teach Christian doctrine to men, and they are not to exercise authority directly over men in the Church.
- Moo stressed that these restrictions are permanent, authoritative for the Church in all times and places and circumstances as long as men and women are descended from Adam and Eve.
- Moo begins with the setting of the text by emphasizing that Paul sent the letter to remind the Church at Ephesus on how they ought to conduct themselves in God’s household.
- The Church at Ephesus where Timothy has been left to continue the work of the ministry is beset by false teaching. Certain people from within the Church have departed from the true teaching of the gospel, have become quarrelsome and argumentative and are propagating doctrine that are erroneous.
- Moo in his exegesis used an aspect of false teaching that may be inferred from the pastoral epistles and related New Testament passages to shed light on the text
- Moo noted that 1 Timothy 5:15 and 2 Timothy 3:6-7 shows that false teachers had persuaded any women to follow them in their doctrine.
- Moo stressed that there is a possibility that False teachers were encouraging women to discard what we might call traditional female roles in favor of a more egalitarian approach to the role relationship of men and women.
- Falsely teaching women to abstain from marriage and the counsel in 1 Timothy 5:4 to young women to marry to have children to manage their home to occupy themselves in traditional female roles shows that some have turned away from the true gospel.
- Paul seeks to right the balance by reasserting the importance of the created order and the ongoing significance of those role distinctions between men and women that he saw rooted in creation.
- Moo emphasizes on the appropriate behavior for Christian women by stressing that Paul encourages Christian women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, with good deeds rather than with elaborate hair styles and ostentatious clothes. The situation at Ephesus is very similar to that at Corinth some years earlier.

- Paul commands women to learn in quietness and full submission. Paul was interested in the way they are to learn, that the women accept the teaching of the church, peaceably, without criticism and without dispute.
- Aside Paul's interest in the way the women are to submit themselves to the teaching of the Church, he also wants the married women to submit to their husbands, and perhaps, to the male leadership of the Church.
- Submission is the appropriate response of Christians to those who are in authority over them. The submission from the context of the text is not just to husband but to male leaders in the Church general.
- Moo noted that the encouragement to women to learn gives no reason to think that they were also to be engaged in expositing and applying biblical truth to men
- Moo explains the prohibition on the ministry of women by stating that the full submission according to Paul means that he does not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man.
- Moo noted that Paul use of the word 'Permit' "does not mean that Paul views the injunction that follows as limited and temporary. Paul's position in the pastoral epistle is consistent, he allows women to teach other women but prohibit them to teach men.
- Paul is deeply concerned to ensure that sound, heartfelt teaching be maintained in the Churches. Teaching most often has restricted sense of authoritative doctrinal instruction.
- Moo noted that any authority that the teacher has is driven, inherent in the Christian truths being proclaimed rather than in the person of the teacher.
- Moo stressed that Paul's prohibition of women's having authority over a man would exclude woman from becoming an elder in the way this office is describe in the pastoral epistles.
- Moo noted that teaching and having authority is closely related but not all exercising of authority in the Church is through teaching. Paul prohibits women from conducting either activity, whether jointly, or in isolation, in relation to men.
- Moo reiterated that the basis of Paul's instruction is the story of creation and the fall. Paul's focus is on the role relationship of men and women. For Paul, the man's priority in the order of creation is indicative of the headship that man is to have over women. The women's being created after man, as his helper, shows the position of submission that God intended as inherent in the woman's relation to the man, a submission that is isolated if a woman teaches a doctrine or exercise authority over a man.
- Moo echoed that Paul by citing creation rather than a local situation or cultural circumstance as his basis for the prohibition makes it clear that while local or cultural issue may have provided the context of the issue, they do not provide the reason for his advice. The activities involved in 1 Timothy 2:12 are transcultural in the sense that they are permanent ministries of the Christian Church.

In the article entitled "Discovering Biblical Equality: Biblical, Theological, Cultural and Practical Perspective", Linda L. Belleville explains teaching and usurping authority using 1 Timothy 2:11-15

- Belleville focuses on the key interpretive issues by using context, translation, the Greek infinitive *authentein*, grammar and cultural background.
- Belleville elaborated on the common concern regarding what the text says about men and women in position of leadership and authority
- The historical context of the text shows that false teaching is Paul's overriding concern. Paul begins by instructing Timothy to stay in Ephesus so that he can command certain persons not to teach false doctrine any longer.
- The text shows little interest in the professional qualification of Church leaders but there is a concern for character, family life and a commitment to sound teaching.
- Belleville noted that even though no woman was explicitly mentioned as a false teacher but there is a possibility that some women were engaged in false teaching because the language of deception is used of both Ephesians women and the false teachers. The false teachers deceive others and themselves.
- The grammatical and lexical context show that Paul's command that women learn quietly and behave quietly points to some sort of disruption. Some translate the Greek phrase *en hesychia* as in silence and understand Paul to be setting forth public protocol for women in public worship. Yet the semantic range for *hesychia* does not include silence.
- The term *hesychia* refers to a gentle and peaceful disposition and is synonymous with *eirenikos*, peaceful. What is overlooked is the preposition *en* with *hesychia*. The prepositional phrase is adverbial and hence are descriptive of how a woman is to learn and conduct herself, namely calmly and submissively (*en pose hypotage*). The phrase is adjectival and therefore does not refer to submission in public worship.
- Belleville noted that permissively "let a woman learn, comes first, while the how "submissively" comes second. Translating *gyne* in 1 Timothy 2:11, 12-15 "Let a wife learn and I am not permitting a wife to teach or *authentein* a husband is possible lexically.
- The concern for peaceable and submissive behavior suggest that women were disrupting worship while the men too were disrupting worship by praying in an angry and contentious way. The context shows a battle of the sexes.
- There was a translation concern. For instance, English translations stemming from the 1940s to the present tend to gloss over the difficulties. A hierarchical, non-inclusive understanding of leadership was predominant. The language of leadership where women are involved tends to be manipulated because it was said that women are not supposed to be leaders.
- The post-World War II translations render the clause "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but the earlier versions and translations were not so

quick to do so. There was negative domineer because of largely owing to dependence on ancient Greek lexicographers.

- Belleville noted that evidence from classical literature shows the primary material and sources. The Greek tragedies used the noun and adjective *authentēs* and the verb *authenteō* exclusively of murdering another person or oneself during the sixth to second centuries BC.
- Evidence from Hellenistic literature shows that the primary meaning of “authentic” means to commit murder. There was semantic development during the Hellenistic period, when the range of both the noun and the verb referred not just the person who committed the murder but also the one who implemented the deed through the architect, mastermind, sponsor, perpetrator, or author. In the Greco-Roman thinking, the one who planned a murder or other act of violence was considered as much a killer as the one who committed the deed.
- There is evidence from koine Greek, nonliterary materials to show that murderer and commit murder in every day speech became domineer, dictate and the architect of a murder became author. The astrological texts, *authentēs* means domineer.
- Belleville shows the etymology and development of Greek grammarians and lexicographers. The development of a first century vernacular usage “to dominate, hold sway over” is supported by ancient grammarians and lexicographers.
- *Authentein* is put into the semantic domain, to control, domineer and translate 1 Timothy 2:12a as “I do not allow women to dominate men. Teach and dominate are not synonyms closely related ideas or antonyms. The text should read as “I do not permit a woman to teach with a view to dominating a man but to have a quiet demeanor.
- Belleville explains the rationale for 1 Timothy 2:13-15. Women were probably teaching in domineering fashion. Women were influenced by cult of Artemis, in which the female was exalted and considered superior to the male.
- Paul's corrective is that the Ephesian women should no longer place their trust in Artemis but in Christ, their true Savior.
- Many inscriptions naming a woman as high priestess do not name a husband, father, or male patron.
- It is possible that Paul was not permitting women to teach with the intention to dominate a man. Women were to be gentle in their demeanor. Paul prohibited women teaching that tries to get the upper hand and not teaching *per se*.

I agree with Belleville that the historical context of the text shows that false teaching is Paul's overriding concern. Paul begins by instructing Timothy to stay in Ephesus so that

he can command certain persons not to teach false doctrine any longer. The concern for peaceable and submissive behavior suggest that women were disrupting worship while the men too were disrupting worship by praying in an angry and contentious way. The context shows a battle of both sexes. I agree with Belleville rationale for 1 Timothy 2:13-15, that women were probably teaching in domineering fashion. Women were influence by cult of Artemis, in which the female was exalted and considered superior to the male. Paul corrective is that the Ephesian women should no longer place their trust in Artemis but in Christ, their true Savior. I think Paul expected the women to be gentle in their demeanor. Paul prohibited women teaching that tries to get the upper hand and not teaching per se. I do not agree with Moo women were not allowed to teach Christian doctrine to men, and they are not to exercise authority directly over men in the Church and that the restrictions are permanent, authoritative for the Church in all times and places and circumstances since men and women are descended from Ada and Eve. I agree with Moo that Paul is deeply concerned to ensure that sound, heartfelt teaching be maintained in the Churches but I do not think prohibition of women's having authority over a man in domineering way would exclude all women from becoming an elder in the way the office is describe in the pastoral epistles.

References

John Piper and Wayne Grudem "Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism" published by Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois. 2021.

Ronald W. Pierce, Cynthia Long Westfall, Christa L. McKirland "Discovering Biblical Equality: Biblical, Theological, Cultural and Practical Perspectives". Published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove Illinois. 2021.