

The Implications of the Chiastic Structure of 1 Timothy on the Question of Women in Church Leadership

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Introduction: The Question of Women in Authority

Does this text mean that women should not be pastors or teachers of Scripture?

^{2:11} A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. ¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach and exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. ¹³ For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. ¹⁴ And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵ But she will be preserved through childbearing if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Some believe it does. I wish to add my voice to those who believe it does not. I start with a larger literary point that most scholars do not perceive, or work from: The entire letter of 1 Timothy is a *chiasm*. And that has very meaningful implications for reading 1 Timothy 2:11 – 15.

Summary of the Chiastic Structure¹ of 1 Timothy

- A. Fight the Good Fight (1:1 – 1:20)
 - B. The Christian Household and Witness, Part 1 (2:1 – 15)
 - C. Church Leaders: Elders and Deacons (3:1 – 13)
 - D. The Truth at the Heart of the Church (3:14 – 5:2)
 - C'. Church Leaders: Older and Younger Widows (5:3 – 25)
 - B.'. The Christian Household and Witness, Part 2 (6:1 – 11)
- A'. Fight the Good Fight (6:12 – 21)

Introduction: ^{1:1} Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope, ² To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Why and How to Teach: ³ As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, ⁴ nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. ⁵ But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Using the Old Testament wrongly: ⁶ For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, ⁷ wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

Using the Old Testament correctly: ⁸ But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers ¹⁰ and immoral men

¹ For more information about the significance of chiastic literary structures, see Kenneth E. Bailey, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011) and Bailey, *Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976, reprinted 2000). To see examples in the practice of interpretation and preached messages, see: Luke 15:1 – 32 (<http://nagasawafamily.org/luke.15.11-32.bcacf.2015.pdf>); *The Literary Structures in the Book of Genesis* (<http://nagasawafamily.org/genesis-literary-outline.pdf>); *The Chiastic Structure of the Gospel of Matthew* (<http://nagasawafamily.org/matthew-chiasm.pdf>).

and homosexuals and kidnapers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

The Law confirms to Paul that he is a sinner:¹² I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.¹⁶ Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

How the Law deals with Hymenaeus and Alexander:¹⁸ This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,¹⁹ keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.²⁰ Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

The goal of our instruction is prayerful, respectful witness:^{2:1} First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men [*anthropous*],² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,⁴ who desires all men [*anthropon*] to be saved and to come to the [knowledge of the truth](#).⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men [*anthropon*], the man [*anthropos*] Christ Jesus,⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.⁷ For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a [teacher](#) of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Men/Husbands must pray, not express dissension:⁸ Therefore I want the men [*andras*] in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

Women/Wives must not adorn themselves with finery but with good works:⁹ Likewise, I want women [*gynaikas*] to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,¹⁰ but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.

Married Couples:¹¹ A woman/wife [*gyne*] must quietly receive [instruction](#) with entire submissiveness.¹² But I do not allow a wife [*gyne*] to teach and exercise authority over [*authenteo*; lead astray] a man/husband [*andras*], but to remain quiet.¹³ For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.¹⁴ And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.¹⁵ But she will be preserved [*sothesetai*] through the/her [*tes*] childbearing if they continue [*meinosin*] in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Elders:^{3:1} It is a trustworthy statement: if any man (the Greek pronoun is *tis*, which means ‘anyone, male or female’; Paul uses neither the term *aner* nor *arsenes*, neither ‘man/husband’ nor ‘male’ respectively) aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work *he* desires (there is only a conjugated verb ‘desires’ with no pronoun present here in Greek; the pronoun must be inferred from the last available subject, which in 3:1 is either male or female) to do.² An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife (literally ‘one-woman man,’ or ‘one-wife husband,’ or monogamous²), temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, [able to teach](#),³ not

² Philip B. Payne writes: “Two of the most prominent complementarians acknowledge this phrase does not clearly exclude women. Douglas Moo acknowledges that this phrase need not exclude “unmarried men or females from the office . . . it would be going too far to argue that the phrase clearly excludes women. . . .” Douglas J. Moo, “The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15: A Rejoinder,” *TJ 2 NS* (1981): 198–222, 211. Thomas Schreiner acknowledges, “The requirements for elders in 1 Tim 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9, including the statement that they are to be one-woman men, does not necessarily in and of itself preclude women from serving as elders. . . .” Thomas R. Schreiner’s “Philip Payne on Familiar Ground: A Review of Philip B. Payne, Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters.” *JBMW* (Spring 2010): 33–46, 35.” See <https://www.pbpayne.com/does-one-woman-man-in-1-timothy-32-require-that-all-overseers-be-male/>

addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. ⁴ *He* (no pronoun present in Greek) must be one who manages *his* (no pronoun present in Greek) own household well, keeping *his* (no pronoun present in Greek) children under control with all dignity ⁵ (but if a *man* (Greek pronoun *tis*) does not know how to manage *his* (no pronoun present in Greek) own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), ⁶ and not a new convert, so that *he* (no pronoun present in Greek) will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷ And *he* (no pronoun present in Greek) must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that *he* (no pronoun present in Greek) will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Deacons: ⁸ Deacons likewise must be men of dignity (literally ‘respectable,’ with no Greek pronoun indicating ‘men’ or ‘males’), not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, ⁹ but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ These men (Greek *outoi*, meaning ‘these ones’ without specifying gender) must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. ¹¹ Women/wives/deaconesses (Greek *gynaikas*, definitely indicating females) must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹² Deacons must be husbands of only one wife (literally ‘one-woman man’ or ‘one-wife husband,’ or monogamous³), and good managers of their children and their own households. ¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

The church is the proclaimer of God’s truth: ¹⁴ I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; ¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. ¹⁶ By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

There will be resistance to the OT view of the good creation – including marriage and food: ^{4:1} But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ² by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³ men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; ⁵ for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

Keep sound doctrine: ⁶ In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. ⁷ But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸ for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹ It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. ¹⁰ For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. ¹¹ Prescribe and teach these things.

Keep teaching from the OT (and NT docs that are known, like the Gospel of Luke, below): ¹² Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. ¹³ Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. ¹⁵ Take pains with these things;

³ See above

be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. ¹⁶ Pay close attention to yourself and [to your teaching](#); persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. ^{5:1} Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, ² the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Honor widows: ³ Honor widows who are widows indeed; ⁴ but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. ⁵ Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. ⁶ But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷ [Prescribe these things](#) as well, so that they may be above reproach. ⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Widows to be put on ‘the list’: ⁹ A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, ¹⁰ having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.

Widows to not be put on ‘the list’: ¹¹ But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, ¹² thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. ¹³ At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. ¹⁴ Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house [*oikodespotein*, ‘to be household master,’ which is stronger than *prostenai*, ‘to lead, guide, care for,’ applied to men in 3:5; she would be responsible for male and female servants as per 6:1 – 11], and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; ¹⁵ for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. ¹⁶ If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

Summary: Honor elders, the other teachers: ¹⁷ The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at [preaching and teaching](#). ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’ (*Note: The Gospel of Luke is known and regarded as Scripture*) ¹⁹ Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. ²⁰ Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. ²¹ I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. ²² Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. ²³ No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. ²⁴ The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. ²⁵ Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

Slave-master and poor-rich relations: ^{6:1} All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. ² Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles. ³ If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, ⁴ he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, ⁵ and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶ But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷ For we have brought nothing into

the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸ If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹ But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

Keep it up: ¹² Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴ that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which He will bring about at the proper time--He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

Challenge the rich: ¹⁷ **Instruct** those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

Conclusion – Guard the Truth: ²⁰ O Timothy, guard **what has been entrusted to you**, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called **‘knowledge’**--²¹ which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.

<i>A. Fight the Good Fight (1:1 – 20)</i>	<i>A.’ Fight the Good Fight (6:12 – 21)</i>
God our Savior (1:1)	God, who gives life to all things (6:13)
Christ Jesus, who is our hope (1:1)	Hope [not] on the uncertainty of riches, but on God... a good foundation for the future (6:17 – 19)
Love from a pure heart (1:5)	Instruct them to do good (6:18)
Strange doctrines... myths... endless genealogies... fruitless discussion (1:3 – 6)	Worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’ (6:20)
Use the Law... for those who are lawless and rebellious (1:8)	Instruct those who are rich (6:17 – 18)
Sound teaching... the glorious gospel... with which I have been entrusted (1:11)	O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you (6:20)
It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1:15)	Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate (6:13)
Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (1:17)	the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (6:15 – 16)
Fight the good fight (1:18)	Fight the good fight of faith (6:12)
Shipwrecked faith (1:19)	Gone astray from the faith (6:21)

<i>B. The Christian Household and Witness, Part 1 (2:1 – 15)</i>	<i>B.’ The Christian Household and Witness, Part 2 (6:1 – 11)</i>
That we may lead a tranquil and quiet life (2:2)	That the name of God and our doctrine will not be

	spoken against (6:1)
Respect authority: for king and all who are in authority (2:1 – 2)	Respect authority: for masters (6:1 – 2)
Life in all godliness and dignity (2:2, 10)	Conforming to godliness... godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment (6:3 – 6)
Entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgiving (2:1)	Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness (6:11)
God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved (2:3 – 4)	Foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction (6:9)
Knowledge of the truth... I was appointed... a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth (2:4, 7)	Teach and preach... sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ... deprived of the truth (6:2, 3, 5)
I was appointed... a teacher of the Gentiles in faith (2:7)	Some by longing for [money] have wandered away from the faith (6:10)
Materialism critiqued: modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments (2:9)	Materialism critiqued: But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil... (6:6 – 11)
Submissiveness: A wife must quietly receive instructions with entire submissiveness (2:11)	Service: Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more (6:2)
Deception: And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression (2:14)	Deception: He... understands nothing... of depraved mind and deprived of the truth (6:3 – 6)
Childbearing (2:15)	We have brought nothing into the world (6:7)

<i>C. Church Leaders: Elders and Deacons (3:1 – 13)</i>	<i>C.' Church Leaders: Older and Younger Widows (5:3 – 25)</i>
Elders... able to teach... (3:1 – 7)	The elders... especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching (5:17)
Elders (3:1 – 7)	Older widows over sixty years old (5:3 – 10)
The husband of one wife (3:2)	The wife of one man (5:9)
Hospitable (3:2)	If she has shown hospitality to strangers...washed the saints' feet (5:10)
Temperate, prudent, respectable... not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money (3:2 – 3)	If she has assisted those in distress, if she has devoted herself to every good work (5:10)
One who manages his own household, keeping his children under control with all dignity (3:4)	Be put on the list... if she has brought up children (5:9 – 10)
Have a good reputation with those outside the church (3:7)	Above reproach... Having a reputation for good works (5:7, 10)
Deacons... not double-tongued... not malicious gossips, but temperate (3:8 – 11)	Younger widows... not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention (5:11 – 13)
Deacons... faithful in all things (3:8) ... beyond reproach (3:10)	Younger widows... get married, bear children, keep house, give the enemy no occasion for reproach (5:14)

These widows were now heads of households. Wives were typically 8 – 10 years younger than their husbands, so this was a situation that would have been rather common. Although all widows should be honored by financial support first from their children and grandchildren as per 5:3 – 4, it is important to note that the older widows are not simply recipients of charity, but being remunerated for ministry, as per 5:17 – 18. Hence Paul makes a list of character requirements for older widows compared with elders in 3:1 – 7. For example, Paul says that elders and

deacons must be the husband of one wife in 3:2 and 3:12, respectively, and widows must have been the wife of one husband in 5:9. Age and character requirements for receiving charity would be very odd, even unthinkable. And, since Paul returns to the topic of elders, preaching, and teaching in 5:17 – 25, we have the strong impression that these widows are now *spiritual* heads of households.

There are four women mentioned in other New Testament literature who seem to have led house churches: Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:13 – 15), Chloe in Corinth (1 Cor.1:11), Nympha in Laodicea (Col.4:15), and Apphia in Colosse (Philem.2). It is logically possible that they were hosts and not teachers. But since New Testament churches met in houses and were identified by houses, identifying the house churches by these names suggests that these women were heads of household and teachers.

Does 1 Timothy 2:11 – 12 Refer to ‘Women and Men’ or ‘Wives and Husbands’?

The terms used here, *gyne* and *aner*, can refer to ‘woman and man’ or ‘wife and husband’ depending on the context. Which translation should we use here?

If Paul meant, ‘I do not permit any woman to teach or exercise authority over any man,’ how would that be consistent with other Scriptures, and in addition, the whole of 1 Timothy (which is an argument not often made)? My reasons for translating *gyne* and *aner* as ‘wife’ and ‘husband’ in 1 Tim.2:11 – 12 are as follows:

- Integration with Scriptures (i.e. the highest human authority) voiced and/or authored by women
 - Miriam (Ex.15:20; Mic.6:4)
 - Deborah (Jdg.5:1 – 31)
 - Hannah (1 Sam.2:1 – 10)
 - Probably Ruth (Book of Ruth)
 - King Lemuel’s mother (Pr.31)
 - Probably Esther (Book of Esther)
 - Mary (Lk.1:46 – 56; all of 1:5 – 2:52 was probably collected by Luke from Mary)
 - If women should not teach men, then (a) these passages should not be read or studied by men; and/or (b) men were wrong to include these utterances from women into the canon of Scripture.
- Integration with everyone teaching everyone attested and encouraged elsewhere:
 - ‘When you assemble, *each one* has a psalm, has a *teaching*, has a revelation...’ (1 Cor.14:26)
 - ‘Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom *teaching* and admonishing one another’ (Col.3:16; cf. Eph.5:15 – 20)
 - It would be hard, if not impossible, to reconcile Paul’s vision of a community which speaks to one another, and teaches one another, especially in a worship service, with an absolute restriction on women not to teach men.
- Integration with the practice of women prophesying (1 Cor.11:2 – 16):
 - Paul instructed both men and women to ‘pray and prophesy’ in the congregation.
 - He also said that prophesy is the highest and most authoritative gift outside of apostleship (1 Cor.12:28). In the same verse, prophesy is higher than teaching: ‘first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...’
 - If Paul wanted women to prophesy to men in Corinth, it does appear he encouraged women to exercise an appropriate authority over men. Also, Paul’s stated goal for *prophesying* is ‘edification and exhortation and consolation’ (1 Cor.14:3 – 5) and to ‘instruct’ the rest of the church (1 Cor.14:19). Presumably that is the same goal as *teaching*. That makes it hard to draw a hard distinction between the two different gifts.
 - Moreover, ‘pray and prophesy’ (1 Cor.11:2 – 3) is probably a merism encompassing all varieties of speaking gifts which are discussed in 1 Corinthians 12 – 14. ‘Pray’ is speech towards God on behalf of people, which probably includes praying for healings and miracles; ‘prophesy’ is speech towards people on behalf of God, which probably includes teaching and even administrative leadership.
 - ‘Head-body’ relations of the church are fleshed out in 1 Corinthians 11 – 14, which has bearing on every other text dealing with ‘headship’ or authority.
 - Whereas complementarians define ‘creation order’ as men over women, because husbands are over wives, because Adam was over Eve in Genesis 2, it would seem that 1

Corinthians 11:2 – 16 needs to be included in understanding how any such ‘creation order’ is to be applied. In this passage, Paul’s conclusion is that even if my wife or daughter preaches while I’m listening, that I need to respect her authority because my actual relationship with her (husband-wife or father-daughter) is eclipsed by the ‘creation order’ as he applies it – that men come from women who are mothers, as men came from Eve. So the way Paul applies the ‘creation order’ is to neutralize the actual relationships men and women have, and to map us via our genders to our point of origin in the other gender. So he is basically saying, ‘You have to respect where you come from, in the other gender’ As a person of Japanese descent, being aware of Confucian culture(s) where such things would not really be permitted, that is fairly remarkable, if not revolutionary.⁴ This is not to say that a female preacher should speak to a congregation as if they were her children. The lesson, rather, is for the congregation. Certainly, it is a helpful check on male lust: Thinking of my mother when listening to a female preacher brings to a halt any temptation to undress that woman in my mind.

- The meaning of ‘head-body’ authority should be taken from the congregational worship context of the church, where multiple people prophesy to and speak in the congregation. There was shared authority between men and women to pray and prophesy. That practice images Paul’s assertion God is the head of Christ and Christ is the head of every *human person*, with the case of a husband being the head of a wife in the clause that follows, in 1 Cor.11:3, needing a certain special consideration. Christ’s headship over all people is expressed in the worship service by people sharing authority in their speaking gifts, not by a hierarchical church structure.
- The meaning of ‘head-body’ authority understood *as involving a sequence of communication with the goal of shared authority* should be understood in the worship service because of its witness to the statement, ‘Christ is the head of every human person.’
- It should *then* be applied to marriage – in which case in Ephesians 5, we would conclude that a husband’s true authority is bound up in his self-sacrifice as unto Christ, and his speaking God’s word to his wife for her own growth in ministry, but not in his gender or role per se. That sequence is hermeneutically and exegetically opposite from reading ‘head-body’ authority out of a hierarchical view of marriage (interpreted as authority attached to the husband’s role, or even more extreme cases, to his gender as male), and then applying it to the church to reproduce a gender hierarchy (and thus prohibiting women from speaking authoritatively over men at all).
- Parallels with the wife-husband relationship taught in 1 Peter 3:1 – 7.
 - See the paper by Gordon Hugenberger.⁵ Hugenberger suggests that 2:8 – 9 refers to husbands and wives, which I would be happy with, but I remain open to a reference to men and women, regardless of marital status. Below is his translation of both passages:

1 Timothy 2:8 – 12	1 Peter 3:7 and 1 – 6
8 Therefore I want husbands (<i>tous andras</i>) everywhere to pray (<i>proseuchesthai</i>) lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing [with their wives].	7 Husbands (<i>hoi andres</i>), in the same way live considerately with your wives, showing them honor as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers (<i>proseuchas</i>).
9 Likewise, I want wives (<i>gynaikas</i>) to adorn (<i>kosmein</i>) themselves with proper dress (<i>kosmio</i>), with decency and propriety, not with braided (<i>plegmasin</i>) hair or gold (<i>chrysiē</i>) or pearls or expensive clothes (<i>himatismo</i>), 10 but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess	1 In the same way, wives (<i>gynaikes</i>), be submissive (<i>hypotassomenai</i>) to your husbands (<i>andrasin</i>) so that, if any of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the reverence and purity of your lives. 3

⁴ See my notes and discussion on 1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16; http://nagasawafamily.org/paul_1corinthians.11.02-16.sg.pdf

⁵ Gordon Hugenberger, ‘Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis – A Survey of Approaches to 1 Tim 2:8 – 15,’ *Journal of the Evangelical Theology Society* 35/3 (September 1992), p.341 – 360. http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/35/35-3/JETS_35-3_341-360_Hugenberger.pdf.

to worship God (<i>theosebeian</i>). 11 A wife should learn in quietness (<i>hesychia</i>) and full submission (<i>hypotage</i>). 12 I do not permit a wife (<i>gynaiki</i>) to teach – that is, to boss her husband (<i>andros</i>); she must be quiet (<i>hesychia</i>).	Your adornment (<i>kosmos</i>) should not be merely outward – braiding (<i>emplokes</i>) your hair, wearing gold (<i>chrysiou</i>) and putting on clothes (<i>himation</i>). 4 Instead it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet (<i>hesychiou</i>) spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.
13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but his wife was deceived and became a sinner. 15 But she will be saved even through childrearing – that is, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness (<i>hagiasmo</i>) with propriety.	5 For this is the way the holy wives (<i>hagiai gynaikes</i>) of the past who put their hope in God (<i>theon</i>) used to adorn (<i>ekosmoun</i>) themselves. They were submissive (<i>hypotassomenai</i>) to their own husbands (<i>andrasin</i>), 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

- Paul’s reference to Eve and Adam (1 Tim.2:13 – 15) has to do with marriage in particular and not gender generically.
- Peter, probably writing as ‘apostle to the Jews,’ addresses 1 Peter in a Jewish idiom and thus draws upon Abraham and Sarah as an example. Paul, by contrast, known as ‘apostle to the Gentiles’ and writing to Timothy who was of mixed parentage (see Acts 16:10) concerning a mixed congregation reaches back to Adam and Eve.
- Perceiving the chiasmic structure of 1 Timothy enables us to compare the ‘household codes’ of Ephesians 5 – 6, Colossians 3 – 4, and 1 Peter 3 to the household code material of 1 Timothy which at first glance appears ‘scattered.’ If the material is in fact arranged in a chiasm, then we have a clear unity:
 - Wife-husband relations in 1 Timothy 2:8 – 15 (or at least 2:11 – 15)
 - Child-parent relations (both biological and spiritual) in 1 Timothy 3:1 – 5:25 (central section)
 - Slave-master relations in 1 Timothy 6:1 – 11

This translation would follow the same conceptual outline as the other Pauline household codes, with 1 Peter being a variant code addressing more cases where the party in authority is not a Christian. This structural similarity makes ‘wives and husbands’ much more likely:

<i>Ephesians</i>	<i>Colossians</i>	<i>1 Timothy</i>	<i>1 Peter</i>
Wives, husbands (5:21 – 33)	Wives, husbands (3:18 – 19)	Wives, husbands (2:8/11 – 15)	Wives, husbands (3:1 – 7)
Children, parents (6:1 – 4)	Children, parents (3:20 – 21)	Children, parents (3:1 – 5:25)	
Slaves, masters (6:5 – 9)	Slaves, masters (3:22 – 4:1)	Slaves, masters (6:1 – 11)	Servants (2:13 – 25)

- Perceiving the chiasmic structure of 1 Timothy suggests that at least some older widows (5:3 – 10) are heads of household and therefore a subset of the ‘elders’ who ‘work hard at preaching and teaching’ (5:17 – 18).
- The gender of ‘elders’ and ‘deacons’ in 3:1 – 13 is actually ‘anyone,’ which is inclusive of men and women based on the Greek pronoun *tis* in 3:1 and 3:5.
 - All the other conjugated verbs do not have a pronoun, and therefore have to take the most recent pronoun subject, which is ‘anyone.’
 - The phrase ‘one-wife husband’ is acknowledged by complementarians Douglas J. Moo and Thomas Schreiner to mean ‘monogamous.’ See footnote on 1 Timothy 2:12, above.

Does *Authenteo* in 1 Timothy 2:12 Mean ‘Exercise Authority’?

Whatever this word *authenteo* means, does God ever give permission to express *authenteo* towards anyone? If women cannot *authenteo* men, does it follow that men must exercise it towards women (or, husbands to wives)? Is that written or indicated in Scripture?

Significantly: ‘All known extrabiblical instances of *authenteo* prior to the second century AD (usage contemporaneous with or prior to Paul), without exception have to do with power or domination (‘to overpower,’ ‘to dominate’).’⁶

Examples:

1. BGU 1208 (first century BC): ‘I had my way with him [*kamou authentekotos pros auton*], and he agreed to provide Calatytis the boatman with the full payment within the hour.’⁷
2. Philodemus, *Rhetorica* II Fragmenta Libri [V] fr. IV line 14 (first century BC): The Philodemus text is too fragmented to be certain about the exact wording. What we have is: *hoi rhetores... diamachontai kai syn authent[]sin an[]*. The editor’s guess is *authent[ou]sin an[axin]*. The text would then read: ‘These orators... even fight with powerful lords.’
3. Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* III.13 [#157] (second century AD): ‘Therefore, if Saturn alone takes planetary control [*ten oikodespotian... labon*, literally ‘household despot’] of the soul and dominates [*authentesas*] Mercury and the moon [who govern the soul], if Saturn has an honorable position toward both the solar system and its angles [*ta kentra*], then he makes [them] lovers of the body...’
4. Hippolytus, *On the End of the World* 7 (second – third century AD): ‘Wherefore all shall walk after their own will. And the children will lay hands on their parents. The wife will give up her own husband to death, and the husband will bring his own wife to judgment like a criminal. Masters will lord it over [*authenteo*] their servants savagely, and servants will assume an unruly demeanour toward their masters.’

It is also very significant that the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) uses *authentia*, the noun form of *authenteo*, on only two occasions, and those are negative:

1. *Wisdom of Solomon* 12:5 – 6: ‘And those merciless *murderers* of their own children... And those *parents* [*authentas*] sacrificing with their own hands helpless souls...’ The noun form designates people who sinfully abuse power.
2. *3 Maccabees* 2:28 – 29: ‘None of those who do not sacrifice shall enter their sanctuaries, and all Jews shall be subjected to a registration involving poll tax and to the status of slaves. Those who object to this are to be taken by force and put to death; those who are registered are also to be branded on their bodies by fire with the ivy-leaf symbol of Dionysus, and they shall also be reduced to their former *limited status* [*authentia*].’ The noun form describes a status sinfully imposed upon people, in this case, the Jewish people under the Greeks.

Complementarians argue that the ‘*neither A nor B*’ construction used in ‘*neither teach nor authenteo*’ (using the connecting Greek word *oude*) in 1 Timothy 2:12 cannot mix a positive and a negative. Thus, they argue that because ‘teach’ (*didasko*) is a positive term about a legitimate activity, that *authenteo* must also be a positive term about a legitimate activity. But ‘teach’ can have negative connotations based on the context. It occurs twice in a negative sense in the New Testament:

- They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to *teach*. (Titus 1:11)
- But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she *teaches* and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. (Revelation 2:20)

⁶ Linda Belleville, ‘Women in Ministry,’ edited by Beck and Blomberg, *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), p.133

⁷ Belleville, p.134 notes, ‘This Berlin papyrus recounts a simple disagreement between the speaker and another individual regarding the fare that should be paid to the boatman. ‘I exercised authority over him’ hardly fits the mundane details of the text. Surely we don’t ‘exercise authority over’ another person about a taxicab fare. Nor can the preposition *pros* be construed as ‘over.’ It must mean something like, ‘I had my way with him’ – or perhaps following Friedrich Preisigke (*Wordbook of the Greek Papyri*): ‘I took a firm stand [*fest aufreten*, ‘to stand firm’].’

Therefore, the argument that *authenteo* must refer to a positive, legitimate authority is further weakened.

If this is the case, I think Stoicism and Greek soul-body dualism was the issue Timothy and the Ephesian church was facing. This is alongside or in addition to whatever impact the temple of Artemis was having. Paul is concerned about a denial of Jewish-Christian creation theology. He refers to ‘men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth’ (1 Tim.4:3). This concern fits with the following comparison:

<i>Jewish (Pharisaic) Worldview</i>	<i>Greek Worldview (general)</i>
Physical bodies good	Physical bodies bad
Death is the enemy	Death is release
Hope for bodily resurrection	Hope for souls to be free; disembodiment
Care for the poor	Not much care for poor
High sexual ethic of marriage, from creation order	Variety of sexual ethics: Stoic; etc.

Although we find it hard to believe today, given our culture, Stoicism and not Epicureanism was a dominant influence.⁸ It is possible that some of the wives were leading their husbands astray into this Greek dualistic worldview. Generally, women have an easier time than men renouncing sex. So the internal evidence of 1 Timothy, *at the center of the chiasmic structure*, which makes it very significant, provides sufficient reason for tying Paul’s instruction to wives (1 Tim.2:11 – 15) to the heresies Timothy and the church was facing.

Paul himself emphasized singleness and tempered Christian marriage in 1 Corinthians 7. So it is quite reasonable to think that some in Ephesus promoted the idea of ‘celibate marriages’ with the Stoic inclination popular at the time – perhaps especially the wives addressed in 2:11 – 15.

The Hebrew Scriptures, the Teachings of Jesus, and Their Bearing

The letter of 1 Timothy is repeatedly concerned to uphold the teaching entrusted to the church, teaching which flows from the Hebrew Scriptures and informs the question of women in leadership roles in the people of God. Reference to ‘the word of God,’ ‘tradition,’ ‘the truth,’ ‘words of the faith,’ ‘what you have received,’ and so forth abound. I have highlighted them in red, above. For example, Paul instructs Timothy give his time ‘to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching’ (1 Tim.4:13). The letter is also explicit about commending the Ten Commandments (1 Tim.1:8 – 10) for use in ministry and teaching. How exactly, and in what sense, the Sinai commandments are relevant for Christian ministry are not entirely clear by the letter itself. Nevertheless, 1 Timothy gives ample evidence of being rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures and the narrative therein.

That narrative takes as its beginning the story of God’s creation in Genesis 1. Jewish creational monotheism is evident through the warning of false teachers Timothy will face: ‘men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude.’ (1 Tim.4:3 – 4) Paul redeploys an image familiar to 1 Corinthians 9:9, portraying apostles serving the church as animals in the creation order made to serve the human (1 Tim.5:18; quoting Deuteronomy 25:4). I suggest that 1 Timothy therefore shows an awareness not simply of the ethical teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures, but of the entire ‘creation order’ flowing from Genesis 1. This is Hebraic creational theology.

Moreover, 1 Timothy 5:18 refers to the Gospel of Luke 10:7 and includes it with Deuteronomy 25:4 as ‘Scripture.’ It is important to hold in view that for Luke 10:7 to be called ‘Scripture,’ it must have been in a written form, and we only have it in Luke, in Matthew 10:10 with slight variation,⁹ and in Didache 13:2. So, whether we think 1 Timothy is a genuine letter of Paul or not, whether we think 1 Timothy came before Luke or not, whether we think the sayings of Jesus were transmitted in oral or written form by what point, whether we think there was a ‘Q’ source,

⁸ C. Kavin Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016)

⁹ Matthew 10:10 uses the word ‘trophes’ (support or nourishment) whereas Luke 10:7 uses ‘pisthou’ (wages or hire). See A.E. Harvey, “‘The Workman is Worthy of His Hire’: Fortunes of a Proverb in the Early Church,” *Novum Testamentum* XXIV, 3 (1982), p.209 – 221 for discussion

whether we think 1 Timothy is a composite letter from Paul and Luke,¹⁰ all have some bearing on interesting historical questions. However, from a literary and canonical perspective, 1 Timothy seems to already turn our attention to written sources. Ultimately, for practical purposes, we have to read 1 Timothy as referring to two previous sources of information: (1) the Hebrew Scriptures and, (2) at the very least, some repository of Jesus' teaching which can be represented by the four Gospel accounts we have today.

If that is the case, how does that narrative as a whole impact the question of women in church leadership? Gordon Hugenberger is one who argues that New Testament elders are patterned after, not Old Testament priests (who were male), but Old Testament elders (who were both male and female). The connection is significant because it fits a pattern which explains why God seems to initiate covenants with men. What meaning does that have?

The pattern: God begins a covenant with a man

The man then:

- Communicates God's word and wisdom to others
- Shares his authority with others
- Is the inclusive one

Covenant communicated:

- Adam → Eve
- Adam and Eve → men and women share in messaging (Prov.1:8; 8:22 – 36) and rule of creation (Gen.1:28)

Covenant communicated:

- Abraham → Sarah
- Abraham and Sarah → men and women in family line (Gen.25ff.); shared in the naming and blessing of their children (e.g. Rebekah receives the word from God in Gen.25:22 – 23 and acts like God by clothing Jacob in skin, directing Isaac's appetite to bless Jacob; both Isaac and Rebekah name their children in Gen.25:25 – 26; whereas Rachel and Leah, not Jacob, name their children in Gen.29:31ff.)

Covenant communicated:

- Moses → Elders
- Moses and Elders → men and women who become more elders, from whom judges were selected (Ex.3:16 – 18; 4:29; 18:1 – 26; Dt.1:9 – 18; 21:1 – 9), and prophets (e.g. Notably, Deborah was a judge, and therefore was also an elder, and was also a "prophet like Moses"¹¹)

Covenant communicated:

- Jesus → Apostles
- Jesus and Apostles → men and women share in the messaging (1 Cor.11:2 – 16) and rule of new creation (1 Cor.6:1 – 8) as elders, judges, and prophets again (1 Cor.11 – 14; 1 Tim.3 – 5; Acts 2:17 – 18 quoting Joel 2:28 – 29).
 - By gifting, women were apostles (Junia in Rom.16:7), prophets (women generally in Acts 2:18; Philip's daughters in Acts 21:9; women in the worship service in 1 Cor.11:2 – 16), evangelists (Anna in Lk.2:36 – 38; the Samaritan woman in Jn.4:28 – 42), and teachers (Priscilla who taught Apollos in Acts 18:26). A woman, Phoebe of Cenchrea, was a *diakonos* (Rom.16:1 – 2, which means both 'deacon' and 'minister') and entrusted by Paul to carry to Rome his letter to the Romans, which meant that she was to answer questions and interpret the letter as his representative. Thus, if the gift of teaching (as opposed to prophecy or evangelism) was the baseline for being an elder, women qualify by gifting.
 - By description of activity, women were leaders of house churches: Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:13 – 15), Chloe in Corinth (1 Cor.1:11), Nympha in Laodicea (Col.4:15), and Apphia in Colosse (Philem.2). Paul says that four women 'worked hard in the Lord': Mary, Trophæa, Tryphosa, and Persis (Rom.16:6, 12). The phrase 'worked hard in the Lord' seems to refer to either apostolic

¹⁰ Paul M. Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, edited by Douglas B. Miller and Loren L. Johns (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2010), p. 29

¹¹ Mako A. Nagasawa, *The Theme of Women in Judges and the Portrayal of Deborah as Leader*; <http://nagasawafamily.org/judges-theme-women.pdf>

and/or evangelistic ministry, as Paul also refers to Timothy that way (Rom.16:21). He names as his 'fellow workers' the wife-husband duo Priscilla and Aquila in Rome (Rom.16:3), along with Euodia and Syntyche in Philippi (Phil.4:2). He also used the term 'fellow workers' for Timothy (Rom.16:21), Epaphroditus (Phil.2:25), Clement (Phil.4:3), Philemon (1), and Mark and Luke (Philemon 24). Thus, if being a head of household, or sharing leadership of a household as a wife-husband duo, was the baseline for being an elder, women qualify by description of activity.

God indeed initiated covenants with men like Adam, Noah, Moses, and David. But that does not mean that the covenant is permanently represented by men, or that the male gender per se and by itself represents God in a particular way, which is a conclusion that gender-complementarians often reach. Rather, we must note the sequence of communication and the sharing of authority subsequently as the covenant community grows. That pattern is of critical importance. And in every stage depicted above, what results is a community of men and women who share in the authority God has given to them by His word.

The objection is often raised that in Mosaic Israel, the kings and priests were male by requirement. Indeed, probably by their associations with death: animal death in the case of priests, war in the case of kings. But since Jesus fulfilled both the role of priest and the role of king, he arguably does not need a representation of himself in those offices (i.e. the Protestant position in contrast to the Catholic or Orthodox positions, which opens up a much larger question, admittedly); therefore any claim of men uniquely to represent Christ in a priestly or kingly leadership role dissolves. As the biblical narrative does many times, the motif of the new creation recapitulating the original creation appears with the question of church leadership. I therefore affirm Hugenberger's argument that New Testament elders in 1 Timothy and elsewhere seem to be patterned after Old Testament *elders*, who were both men and women. That Israelite institution itself seems to be anchored in God's intention for the community of humanity from creation: a community of men and women speaking God's word and wisdom to one another, tracing a sequence of information back to Adam, to be sure, but sharing equally in Adam's – and God's – rule over the creation.

Summary

Thus, on the question of women in church leadership, I find:

- Some of the older widows 'on the list' that Paul discussed were heads of their households (5:9 – 10) and also teaching elders (5:17 – 18).
- The fact that elders in 3:1 – 7 are spoken of in the 'anyone' pronoun logically requires that the role be open to men and women. Even if monogamy is referred to in the masculine pronoun, there is good reason to read that as being reversible. The male pronoun does not preclude women from being elders.
- There is no categorical prohibition on women teaching men in 2:12. The concern was for something happening among married couples.
- The relevant prohibition in 2:12 would be against wife leading her husband astray, as Eve did Adam. Today, the principle would also apply vice versa: husbands must not lead their wives astray either. Back then, the heresy into which wives were probably leading husbands astray had to do with a Greek soul-body dualism. Today, the heresy might be different. The admonition is to anchor one's self and one's community in the appropriately Hebraic understanding of the cosmos, relations, and the human.
- Men and women of appropriate moral character and teaching ability can be elders in the church.