

WOMEN KEEP SILENCE in CHURCH Pt.3: FALSE TEACHINGS, STAY SINGLE, WEALTH, 1 TIMOTHY 2:11-12

This week we are beginning to take a look at some of the false teachings that were going on in the Ephesus church. There were false teachings that forbade marriage, and eating certain foods.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 - Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

The teachings of false religions such as the worship of Artemis are based on demon worship and those that went around believing and teaching those false teachings had no conscience. They said that marrying was wrong and forbade eating certain foods.

In part one we learned that Artemis was one of the three major virgin goddesses. She asked her father for permission to remain a virgin and never had children. Artemis protected unmarried girls. Remember how powerful the pagan worship of Artemis was. It seems these empowered, independent women were carrying the false teachings of Artemis worship into the Christian church. They were taking on the same beliefs as their goddess, Artemis, and they were against marriage and the widows also did not want to remarry either.

Something else the women of the Ephesus church were doing was flaunting their wealth. This was tied to another pagan belief coming from the Temple of Artemis and it was disruptive to the church? There were false teachings that taught that those who were wealthy, were wealthy because they were godly.

1 Timothy 6:5-10 - Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing

into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

They believed that gain, that is having wealth, was godliness. They got this from Artemis worship and perverted it to make it fit in with Christianity saying that those who were rich were godly. This was a perversion of what true Christianity is. Apostle Paul goes further to show us that as Christians we are to be content with what we have as long as our needs are met. We can live in comfort but we are not striving to be rich as Christians. The ones who were trying to be rich or believed that being rich signified their godliness were erring from the faith. They were serving the god of money and not Jesus.

The main worship in Ephesus was **the goddess Artemis:**

Artemis

The goddess of fertility, also known as "The Queen of Heaven" and "The Perpetual Virgin". She was the most powerful divinity in the area and the patron and symbol of Ephesus.

Worship

The Ephesians believed that Artemis was the protector of the city and would make them successful, powerful, and rich. They would deposit money in her temple like a bank.

Images

Images of Artemis dominated the city. Depictions of Artemis often show her wearing a string of eggs or breasts around her shoulders and chest.

I read this information about Artemis in part one, but look in the middle under Worship: The Ephesians believed that Artemis was the protector of the city and would make them successful, powerful, and rich. They would deposit money in her temple like a bank.

This belief that being wealthy was godly was coming from the worship of Artemis.

Several scholars link these false teachings to an over-realized eschatology.⁷ Wealthy widows in particular seem to have been attracted to these teachings because the teachings “affirmed . . . that they were already in the ideal (eschatological) state of being single before Christ. It proclaimed an exalted status for women and a freedom from the obligation of marriage.”⁸ The widows found freedom in these false teachings because they validated their unmarried status and their wealth. Not only were certain widows targets and adopters of these false teachings, but they were also among the ones spreading the teachings throughout the church. They were going house to house “talking nonsense” (5:13),⁹ and because the women were falling for these teachings, they had “turned away to follow Satan” (5:15). The false teachings, however, are only one contextual component at play in the problems arising in the church community.

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Apostle Paul addressed widows in the church in 1 Timothy chapter 5. He gave instructions as to which ones the church should take care of and spoke of the course that young widows would undoubtedly take in that they would marry again but he also says they would turn away from Christ. **(1 Timothy 5:11-13)** Widows were to live chaste lives as widows which means to abstain from sexual relations.

1 Timothy 5:14-15 – I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after satan.

These widows could have already turned away from their Christian virtue and been deceived by satan to follow him into promiscuity. Another view is that they could have turned away from the faith and began to revile Christianity.

In addition to Greek influence, including the cult of Artemis, Ephesus was a province of Rome. The city was greatly influenced by Roman culture and was a wealthy hub of trade and travel. Because of this, the "new Roman woman" phenomenon likely spread there. The "new Roman woman" was a "sexual revolution" of sorts among Roman women.¹² While, in the Greco-Roman world, women could not officially exercise authority in the public sphere, in practice, this was starting to change during the time of the NT.¹³ Roman women had more freedom than most other women to have roles in the public sphere, so they influenced the culture of other women in society. This was predominantly true for wealthy women because "financial security gave them power to act independently."¹⁴ Wearing elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, and expensive clothing (2:9) were fashions of this "new Roman woman" trend. Wealthy Christian women seem to have been affected by this and were beginning to follow the trends they saw in broader society, changing their dress and exploring their freedom.

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So there were false teachings probably stemming from the worship of Artemis since her temple was there in Ephesus and her worship was so huge in that city. Widows were being encouraged to remain widows and if they were wealthy they believed they were already receiving their blessings from the afterlife. They had been falsely teaching that when you are wealthy it was because of being godly. These rich widows liked that false teaching because it justified them having wealth.

God never causes His children to have wealth just to sit on it or hoard it up. There are those that He has given the gift of giving and the ability to get wealth and this gifting is to help accomplish God's Kingdom work, to be used for His glory. He will meet our needs and take care of us and certainly doesn't want us to be in poverty

but when you use what He blesses you with for His glory there is never a time that we will just accumulate massive wealth to ourselves and then go around flaunting it as seemed to be the case with some of these wealthy widows in Ephesus.

There was a type of empowerment for the pagan women who could also serve as priestesses at Artemis' temple. These things were bleeding over into the church and Paul was advising Timothy on how to weed out the false teachings and set order in the church and basically get a grip so that the gospel message would not be marred.

1 Timothy 2:9-10 - In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

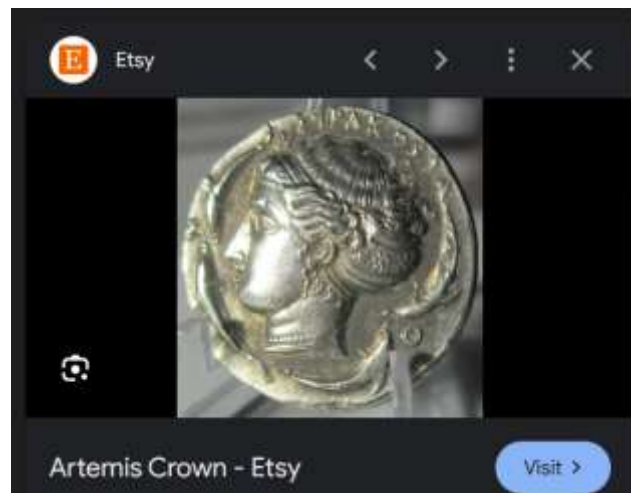
So the women were being told not to draw attention to themselves by the way they were dressing, their jewelry and the way they were fixing their hair. I think we've really been missing some things in this passage based on the actual history of the time and what was going on in the culture.



They were flaunting their wealth and status by how they dressed and fixed their hair. We automatically think about how things are today, but most of us don't have much real gold or pearls or truly costly clothes. Most of my jewelry is

costume or fashion jewelry. So if you go back to that time and think about the women who had all this real jewelry, ritzy clothes and elaborate hair styles, we begin to see better what was really being dealt with here. Apostle Paul wanted the women to be humble and modest not boasting of their wealth and status by their appearance. He ends off by advising to let their good works speak on their behalf, that is rather be known by your good works and not the other things.

We need to realize that Paul was specifically addressing what was going on in this particular church at that particular time. He is clearly not addressing all women, but only certain wealthy women, who were likely a minority in the church community. Therefore, this is in no way a mandate for all women everywhere to dress in a certain way to combat sexual promiscuity; this is a critique against flaunting wealth or dressing in a way that does not reflect one's Christian values. And even though this seems to be addressing these wealthy women flaunting their wealth in their hairstyles and jewelry and clothing, we understand that all Christian women should dress modestly as well. But I think at that time the biggest implication was against the flaunting of wealth.



This is an Artemis coin showing her with a crown and all sorts of jewelry and things in her hair.



This is just the head of an Artemis statue and you can see her elaborate hair. I'm sure the women of Ephesus were trying to dress in imitation of the goddess Artemis whom they used to serve.

Apostle Paul and Pastor Timothy were up against this false goddess and trying to root out all the beliefs the women especially had adopted from worshipping her as pagans.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 – Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

These women who had come out of paganism in the temple of Artemis and who had believed the false teachings needed to learn the truth, the pure gospel and be laid on a right foundation now. They could not learn if they did not listen and in order to listen you need to be silent and in order to receive from Pastor Timothy, they needed to be subject to him. Ministers of God cannot minister to those that do not have teachable spirits. So these women were in need of learning before they could do anything in the church.

It strikes us as rude and sexist what Apostle Paul said. That is why we need to look at all of his teachings and understand he was addressing an issue in this church alone. These women needed to unlearn the false teachings they had been practicing. Remember how Jesus taught His disciples, usually the teacher would sit down to teach and his disciples would sit quietly at his feet as the teacher gave the lesson. This is how it should be in church, in a corporate worship setting.

The whole point about being silent or quiet is so they could learn and so they were not being disruptive trying to teach false teachings from the cult of Artemis or argue on behalf of what they had known previously. They were not to try to have power over Timothy as he was the pastor of the church. They were to honor the authority in God's church and Pastor Timothy was the authority figure of that church at that time. All of this in no way meant a woman could not be a leader in the church, it meant that these women in particular needed to unlearn false doctrine and learn the pure gospel.

Apostle Paul never barred women from speaking in church or prophesying or speaking in tongues. **(1 Cor. chapter 14)** In 1 Corinthians when Paul used the word silent as in being silent or not speaking it was referring to having order in the church services. If someone is speaking and someone else has a revelation then the one speaking must be silent so the revelation can be given. If someone speaks in tongues but no one can interpret, then they should remain silent and not speak in tongues. Women who had questions were not to be disruptive, but ask later, not during the service. So when you take the whole counsel of God's Word you can see the "women keep silence" in Timothy does not match up with what Paul taught in 1 Corinthians. That is because he was dealing with a totally different issue in the church of Ephesus.

Remember we are all equal in Christ and Jesus gave the following offices in the church to both men and women alike:

Ephesians 4:11 - And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Christ gave these offices to equip the saints, to help in building up the church which is the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit chooses vessels fit for the Master's use and fills them, men and women alike.

In The Old Testament there were women singers right alongside the men **(Nehemiah 7:67)**. Deborah was a prophetess, meaning she spoke God's Word to the people, men and women alike. When someone needed to seek God on something they came to her, whether it was a man or a woman. She was also a judge over all of Israel. This meant she delivered justice in all matters of dispute

and controversy for men as well as women. God did not have a momentary lapse of reason from the Old Testament to the New and all of a sudden decide that women were not that intelligent or that they were not trustworthy or that they could not minister. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. **(Hebrews 13:8)** I always find when you bring up Deborah the women judge and prophetess to those that are against women doing anything in the church, they don't want to discuss that at all or they quickly dismiss that and say that is only one time that God did that. God doesn't change.

Paul is not permitting women to exercise *abusive* authority over men.³² It is here that understanding the cultural context of Ephesus is critical. The cult of Artemis reinforced the idea that women are superior to men and the "new Roman woman" phenomenon was encouraging wealthy women to seek independence, allowing them access to positions of power in society. Both influences were likely leading to uneducated women taking on self-appointed roles, through which they were spreading false teachings that were continuing to validate the way they were living. Therefore, Paul is not prohibiting *women* from having authority; Paul is prohibiting the kind of abusive authority that exists at the intersection of gender hierarchies, wealth, ease of access to power, and the spread of self-validating false teachings. In the Ephesian church at this time, it happened to be women who were exercising this kind of leadership.

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CLOSING

So in a corporate church setting the woman is not to usurp authority over the man. The man also is not to usurp authority over the woman. Again, Paul was dealing with specific issues in the Ephesus church at that time. If men in corporate church settings believe they are elevated above women in every way, where is the equality in Christ? We understand that in the home the man is the

head of the household and the wife submits to him but in this passage of Scripture we are dealing with order in the church and those who are learning whether men or women are not to usurp authority over the minister or the teacher. In this case, the women seemed to be arguing and wanting to teach false doctrine and so they needed to be quiet, submit to Pastor Timothy and learn the pure gospel and unlearn all their false doctrine.

PRAYER

<http://www.threeheartchurch.org/index.php/sermons/sermon/167-women-in-the-church-part-one>

<http://www.threeheartchurch.org/index.php/sermons/sermon/168-women-in-the-church-part-two>

<http://www.threeheartchurch.org/index.php/sermons/sermon/169-women-in-the-church-part-three>

Tom Brown Ministries on Can Women be Pastors

http://www.tbm.org/can_women_be_pastors.htm

<https://greek.mythologyworldwide.com/artemis-and-the-concept-of-female-power-in-ancient-greece/>

<https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/pauls-concern-for-ephesus-a-survey-of-1-timothy-28-15/>

<https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/women-in-scripture-and-mission-junia-the-apostle/>

<https://kbonikowsky.com/2018/02/26/artemis-worship-instigated-the-restrictions-of-1-timothy-29-15/>

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Ephesus>

<https://eaglesanddragonspublishing.com/tag/children/>