

## TEACHING AND USURPING AUTHORITY

*1 Timothy 2:11-15*

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The battle over women leaders in the church continues to rage unabated in evangelical circles. At the center of the tempest sits 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Despite a broad spectrum of biblical and extrabiblical texts that highlight female leaders, 1 Timothy 2:11-15 continues to be perceived and treated as the Great Divide in the debate. Indeed, a hierarchical interpretation of this passage has become for some a litmus test for the label *evangelical* and even a necessity for the salvation of unbelievers.<sup>1</sup>

The complexities of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 are many. There is barely a word or phrase that has not been keenly scrutinized. The focus here will be on the key interpretive issues (context, translation, the Greek infinitive *authentein*, grammar, cultural backdrop) and some common concerns regarding what this text says about men and women in positions of leadership and authority. This analysis will make use of a wide array of tools and databases now available with the advent of computer technology that can shed light on what all concede to be the truly abstruse, head-scratching aspects of the passage.

### *Context*

In getting a handle on 1 Timothy 2:12, we must be clear about where the verse sits in the letter as a whole. Paul begins by instructing his stand-in, Timothy, to stay

<sup>1</sup> A case in point is Andreas Köstenberger's rationale for *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas Köstenberger, Thomas Schreiner and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995), pp. 11-12. He argues that a hierarchical view of men and women is necessary for "a world estranged from God" to "believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"

put in Ephesus so that he can command certain persons "not to teach false doctrines any longer" (1:3). That false teaching is Paul's overriding concern can be seen from the fact that he bypasses normal letter-writing conventions (such as a thanksgiving section and closing greetings) and gets right down to business (cf. Galatians). It is also obvious from the roughly 50 percent of the letter's contents that Paul devotes to the topic of false teaching.

Some believe that false teaching is a minor concern compared with that of "church order." To be sure, Paul does remind Timothy of "how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household" (1 Tim 3:15). It is critical mass, however, that determines the overriding concern.<sup>2</sup> Also, a lack of details about leadership roles and an absence of offices steer us away from viewing church order as the primary matter.<sup>3</sup> Paul's posture throughout is corrective rather than didactic. For example, we learn very little about what various leaders do, and what we do learn, we learn incidentally. Yet there is quite a bit about how not to choose church leaders (1 Tim 5:21-22) and what to do with those who stumble (1 Tim 5:19-20). There is also little interest in the professional qualifications of church leaders. Instead we find a concern for character, family life and commitment to sound teaching (1 Tim 3:1-13). This is perfectly understandable against a background of false teaching. Then there are the explicit statements. Two church leaders have been expelled (1 Tim 1:20). Some elders need to be publicly rebuked due to continuing sin, while the rest take note (1 Tim 5:20).<sup>4</sup> There are malicious talk, malevolent suspicions and constant friction (1 Tim 6:4-5). Some, Paul says, have in fact wandered from the faith (1 Tim 5:15; 6:20-21).

Were women specifically involved? Women receive a great deal of attention in 1 Timothy. Indeed there is no other New Testament letter in which they figure so prominently. Behavior befitting women in worship (1 Tim 2:10-15), qualifications for women deacons (1 Tim 3:11), appropriate pastoral behavior toward older and younger women (1 Tim 5:2), support of widows in service of the church (1 Tim 5:9-10), correction of younger widows (1 Tim 5:11-15) and familial responsibility-

<sup>2</sup>For further discussion, see Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, Tins, NIBC (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988), pp. 20-23.

<sup>3</sup>Qualifications for leaders are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and 5:9-10, but there is no instruction as to who they are or what roles they fill.

<sup>4</sup>Since the tense and mood are present indicative, Paul is dealing with a present reality not a hypothetical possibility. Thus TNIV reads: "But those who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone" (cf. NRSV, "As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all"), replacing the NIV's "Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly so that the others may take warning."

ities toward destitute widows (1 Tim 5:3-8, 16) are all concerns of Paul. Moreover, Paul speaks of widows who were going from house to house speaking things they ought not (1 Tim 5:13). That something more than nosiness or gossiping is involved is clear from Paul's evaluation that "some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan" (1 Tim 5:15).

Some are quick to point out that there are no explicit examples of female false teachers in 1 Timothy, and they are correct. No women (teachers or otherwise) are specifically named. Yet this overlooks the standard principles that come into play when we are interpreting the genre of "letter." The occasional nature of Paul's letters always demands reconstruction of one sort or another, and this from only half of the conversation. The cumulative picture, then, becomes that which meets the burden of proof. All told, Paul's attention to false teaching and women occupies about 60 percent of the letter. It would therefore be foolish—not to mention misleading—to neglect considering 1 Timothy 2 against this backdrop. "They [the false teachers] forbid people to marry" (1 Tim 4:3) alone goes a long way toward explaining Paul's otherwise obscure comment "Women will be saved [or 'kept safe'] through childbearing" (1 Tim 2:15), as well as his command in 1 Timothy 5:14 that younger widows marry and raise a family (which is different from his teaching elsewhere, e.g., 1 Cor 7:8-9, 39-40).

The grammar and language of 1 Timothy 2 also dictate such a backdrop. The opening "I exhort, therefore" (1 Tim 2:1 NASB, *parakalo oin*) ties what follows in chapter 2 with the false teaching of the previous chapter and its divisive influence (1 Tim 1:3-7, 18-20). The subsequent "therefore I want" (NASB, *boulomai oin*) eight verses later does the same (1 Tim 2:8). Congregational contention is the keynote of 1 Timothy 2. A command for peace (instead of disputing) is found four times in the space of fifteen verses. Prayers for governing authorities are urged "that we may lead peaceful and quiet lives" (1 Tim 2:2). The men of the church are enjoined to lift up hands that are "without anger or disputing" (1 Tim 2:8). The women are commanded to show sound judgment (1 Tim 2:9, 15, *sōphrosynēs*), to learn in a peaceful (not quarrelsome) fashion (1 Tim 2:11; see below) and to avoid Eve's example of deception and transgression (1 Tim 2:13-14). The language of deception, in particular, calls to mind the activities of the false teachers. A similar warning was given to the Corinthian congregation. "I am afraid," Paul says, "that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor 11:3).

In Corinth the false teaching involved preaching a Jesus, Spirit and gospel dif-

ferent from what Paul had preached (2 Cor 11:4-5). What was it in Ephesus? One pointer is Paul's command that women learn "quietly" (1 Tim 2:11) and behave "quietly" (1 Tim 2:12 Phillips, NEB, REB, NLT). Some translations render the Greek phrase *en hēsychia* as "in silence," and Paul is understood to be setting forth public protocols for women. In public, women are to learn "in silence" and be "silent" (KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, CEV, NIV, JB; cf. "keep quiet" TEV; "remain [or be] quiet" BBE, NAB, NJB, TNIV). But does this make sense? Silence is not compatible with the Socratic dialogical approach to learning in Paul's day. Also, Paul does not use the Greek term *hēsychion* this way nine verses earlier: "I urge . . . that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made . . . for kings and all in authority, so that we may lead peaceful and quiet [hēsychion] lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Tim 2:1-2).

Yet all too often it is assumed that Paul is commanding women not to speak or teach in a congregational setting as a sign of "full submission" to their husbands. On what grounds, though? "A woman should learn . . ." does not suggest anything of the sort (1 Tim 2:11). In a learning context, it is logical to think in terms of submission either to teachers or to oneself (cf. "the spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets," 1 Cor 14:32). Submission to a teacher well suits a learning context, but so does self-control. A calm, submissive spirit was a necessary prerequisite for learning back then (as now).

Some translations seek a way out by narrowing "women" and "men" to "wives" and "husbands" (e.g., Knox, Young, Williams). Lexically this is certainly possible. *Gynē* can mean either "woman" or "wife," and *anēr* can mean "man" or "husband" (see BDAAG s.v.): "I permit no wife to teach or to have authority over her husband." Yet context determines usage, and "husband" and "wife" do not fit. "I want the men everywhere to pray" (1 Tim 2:8) and "I also want women . . ." (1 Tim 2:9-10) simply cannot be limited to husbands and wives. Nor can the verses that follow be read in this way. Paul does refer to Adam and Eve in 1 Tim 2:13-14; but it is to Adam and Eve as the prototypical male and female, not as

<sup>5</sup>See chapter nine in this volume.

<sup>6</sup>Nor does Paul use the term *hēsychia* to mean "silence" elsewhere. When he has absence of speech in mind, he uses *sigōē* (Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 14:28, 30, 34). When he has "calmness" in view, he uses *hēsychia* and its cognate forms (1 Thess 4:11; 2 Thess 3:12; 1 Tim 2:2). This is also the case for the other New Testament authors. See *sigōē* in Luke 9:36; 18:39; 20:26; Acts 12:17; 15:12-13; and *sigē* in Acts 21:40 and Revelation 8:1. For *hēsychia* (and related forms) meaning "calm" or "respectful," see Luke 23:56; Acts 11:18; 21:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Peter 3:4. For the sense "not speak," see Luke 14:4 and, perhaps, Acts 22:2.

a married couple ("formed first," "deceived and became a sinner").

Paul's commands for peaceable and submissive behavior suggest that women were disrupting worship. The men were too. They were praying in an angry and contentious way (1 Tim 2:8). Since Paul targets women who teach men (1 Tim 2:12) and uses the example of Adam and Eve as a corrective, it would be a fair assumption that a bit of a battle of the sexes was being waged in the congregation.

#### Translation

Without a doubt, the most difficult clause to unpack is *didaskkein de gynaitiki ouk epitropō oude authentein anōros*—although the average person in the pew wouldn't know it. English translations stemming from the 1940s to the early 1980s tend to gloss over the difficulties. A hierarchical, noninclusive understanding of leadership is partly to blame. Women aren't supposed to be leaders, so the language of leadership, where women are involved, tends to be manipulated. One of the primary places where this sort of bias surfaces is 1 Timothy 2:12. Post-World War II translations routinely render the clause as "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have [or exercise] authority over a man" (e.g., RSV, NRSV, NAB, NAB, TEV, NASB/LJ, JB/NJB, NKJV, NCV, God's Word, NLT, Holman Christian Standard, ESV, TNIV)—although some, such as the BBE, qualify it with "in my [Paul's] opinion."

Earlier translations were not so quick to do so. This was largely owing to dependence on ancient Greek lexicographers and grammarians. In fact, there is a virtually unbroken tradition, stemming from the oldest versions and running down to the twenty-first century, that translates *authentein* as "to dominate" rather than "to exercise authority over."<sup>7</sup>

- Old Latin (2nd-4th cent. AD): "I permit not a woman to teach, neither to dominate a man [*neque dominari viro*]."
- Vulgate (4th-5th): "I permit not a woman to teach, neither to dominate over a man [*neque dominari in viro*]."

<sup>7</sup>There are two notable exceptions. (1) Martin Luther (1522): "Einem Weibe aber gesterate ich nicht, dass sie lehre, auch nicht, dass sie des Mannes Herr sei." Luther, in turn, influenced William Tyndale (1525-1526): "I suffer not a woman to teache neher to have auctorite over a man." (2) Rheims (1582): "But to teach I permit not vnto a woman, nor to haue dominion over the man." Rheims, in turn, influenced the ASV ("nor to have dominion over a man") and subsequent revisions of Casiodoro de Reina's Santa Biblia. See, for example, the 1602 Valera revision: "ni ejercer dominio sobre" ("neither to exercise dominion over").

- Geneva (1560 edition): "I permit not a woman to teache, neither to *usurpe* autoritie ouer the man."
- Casiodoro de Reina (1569): "I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to *take [tomar]* authority over the man." *No permito á la mujer enseñar, ni tomar autoridad sobre el hombre.*<sup>8</sup>
- Bishops (1589): "I suffer not a woman to teach, neither to *usurpe* autoritie over the man."
- KYV (1611): "I suffer not a woman to teach nor *usurp* authority over a man."

A wide range of modern translations follow the same tradition:<sup>9</sup>

- L. Segond (1910): "I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to *take [prendre]* authority over the man." *Je ne permets pas à la femme d'enseigner, ni de prendre autorité sur l'homme.*
- Goodspeed (1923): "I do not allow women to teach or to *dominate* over men."
- La Sainte (1938): "I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to *take [prendre]* authority over the man." *Je ne permets pas à la femme d'enseigner, ni de prendre de l'autorité sur l'homme.*
- NEB (1961): "I do not permit a woman to be a teacher, nor must woman *dominate* over man."
- JBCEf (1973): "I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to *lay down the law* for the man." *Je ne permets pas à la femme d'enseigner ni de faire la loi à l'homme.*
- REB (1989): "I do not permit women to teach or *dictate* to the men."
- New Translation (1990): "I do not permit a woman to teach or *dominate* men."
- CEV (1991): "They should . . . not be allowed to teach or to *tell* men *what to do*."
- *The Message* (1993): "I don't let women *take over and tell* the men *what to do*."

There are good reasons for translating *authentem* this way. It cannot be stressed

enough that in *authentem* Paul picked a term that occurs only here in the New Testament. Its cognates are found merely twice elsewhere in the Greek Bible. In the Wisdom of Solomon 12:6 it is the noun *authentes* (murderer) used with reference to indigenous peoples' practice of child sacrifice:

Those [the Canaanites] who lived long ago in your holy land, you hated for their detestable practices, their works of sorcery and unholy rites . . . these parents who murder [*authentas*] helpless lives (NRSV)

In 3 Maccabees 2:28-29 it is the noun *authentia* ("original," "authentic"). The author recounts the hostile measures taken by the Ptolemies against Alexandrian Jews toward the end of the third century B.C., including the need to register according to their original status as Egyptian slaves and to be branded with the ivy-leaf symbol in honor of the deity Dionysus.<sup>10</sup>

All Jews [in Alexandria] shall be subjected to a registration [*laographian*]<sup>11</sup> involving poll tax and to the status of slaves. . . . Those who are registered are to be branded on their bodies by fire with the ivy-leaf symbol of Dionysus and to register [*katachōrisai*] in accordance with their [Egyptian] origin [*authentian*] of record [*prosymestamenōn*].<sup>12</sup>

These two uses in the Greek Bible should give us pause in opting for a translation such as "to have [or exercise] authority over." If Paul had wanted to speak of an ordinary exercise of authority, he could have picked any number of words. Within the semantic domain of "exercise authority," biblical lexicographers J. P. Louw and Eugene Nida have twelve entries and of "rule," "govern" forty-seven entries.<sup>13</sup> Yet Paul picked none of these. Why not? The obvious reason is that *authentem* carried a nuance (other than "rule" or "have authority") that was particularly suited to the Ephesian situation.

<sup>10</sup>Branding in honor of a deity was a common practice in antiquity. See Bruce Metzger and Roland Murphy, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 289 n. 28.

<sup>11</sup>*Laographia* (registration) is a rare word found in the Greek papyri from Egypt with reference to the registration of people of the lower classes and slaves. See *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>R. H. Charles's "they shall also be registered according to their former *restricted status*" does not fit the lexical range of possibilities for *authentia* (*The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. [London: Oxford University Press, 1913]).

<sup>13</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988-1989), 37.35-47, 37.48-95. *Authentem* is noticeably absent from both of these domains.

<sup>8</sup>Compare this with "exercise authority" (*ejerza autoridad*—*La Biblia de las Américas* 1986) and "exercise dominion" (*ejerzer dominio*—Reina-Valera 1960, 1995).

<sup>9</sup>Technically, *vir* in Latin and *Wife* in German (like *gynē* in Greek) can mean either "woman" or "wife." Consequently, some translations opt for "wife." See, for example, Charles B. Williams's 1937 translation: "I do not permit a married woman to practice teaching or dominating over a husband."

**Nouns:** *Greek literary materials.* So what is the nuance? Lexicographers for the most part agree that the root of *authentēs* is *auto + entēs*, meaning “to do or to originate something with one’s own hand” (LSJ *autoentēs*). Usage confirms this. An *authentēs* is someone who originates or carries out an action. During the sixth to second centuries B.C., the Greek tragedies used it exclusively of murdering oneself (suicide) or another person(s).<sup>14</sup> The rhetoricians and orators during this period did the same.<sup>15</sup> The word is rare in the historians and epic writers of the time, but in all instances it too is used of a “murderer” or “slayer.”<sup>16</sup>

During the Hellenistic period the primary meaning of *authentēs* was still “murderer,”<sup>17</sup> but the semantic range widened to include “perpetrator,”<sup>18</sup> “sponsor,”<sup>19</sup> “author”<sup>20</sup> and “mastermind”<sup>21</sup> of a crime or act of violence. This is the case regardless of geographical location, ethnicity or religious orientation. For instance, the Jewish historian Josephus speaks of the *author* (*authētēn*) of a poisonous draught (Jewish War 1.582; 2.240). Diodorus of Sicily uses it of (1) the sponsors (*authentās*) of some daring plans (Bibliotheca historica 35.25.1), (2) the perpetrators (*authentās*) of a sacrilege (Bibliotheca historica 16.61) and (3) the mastermind (*authētās*) of a crime (Bibliotheca historica 17.5.4.5). By the first century A.D., lexicographers

<sup>14</sup> Aeschylus (2x) *Agamemnon* 1573; *Eumenides* 212; Euripides (8x) *Fragmenta* 20.645; *Andromacha* 39.172, 614; *Heracles* 43.839, 43.47; *postl* 1312; *Troades* 44.660; *Iphigenia aulideensis* 51.1190; *Rhesus* 52.873. For a detailed study of the nominal forms of *authētēn*, see Leland Wilkinson, “The TLG Computer and Further Reference to AVENTEN in 1 Timothy 2.12,” *NIS* 34 (1988): 120-34, and “1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited: A Reply to Paul W. Barnett and Timothy J. Harris,” *EvQ* 65 (1993): 43-55.

<sup>15</sup> There is a disputed reading of *authentēs* in Euripides’ *Supplicant Women* 442. Arthur Way (*Euripides: Supplices* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971], p. 534) emends the text to read *authētēs* (“when people plow the land”), instead of *authentēs*. David Kovacs (*Euripides: Suppliant Women, Electra, Heracles* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998], p. 57) deletes lines 442-55 as not original. Thus Carroll Osburn erroneously cites this text as “establishing a fifth century BC usage of the term [*authentēs*] meaning ‘to exercise authority’ and mistakenly faults Catherine Clark Kroeger for not dealing with it (“AVENTEN” [1 Timothy 2:12]—Word Study,” *RestQ*, 1982, p. 2 n. 5).

<sup>16</sup> Anthon (6x) *Imagines* 23.4.6, 23.11.4, 24.4.3, 24.9.7, 24.10.1; *On the Murder of Herod* 11.6; *Lysias* (1x) *Orationes* 36.348.13.

<sup>17</sup> *Orations* (1x) *History of the Peloponnesian War* 3.58.5.4; Herodotus (1x) *Historia* 1.117.12; *Apollo-nius* (2x) *Argumenta* 2.754, 4.479.

<sup>18</sup> *Appian* (5x) *Mithridatic Wars* 90.1; *Civil Wars* 1.7.61.7, 1.13.115.17, 3.2.16.13, 4.17.134.40; *Philo* (1x) *Quod Deterius Potior Instauri Solam* 78.7.

<sup>19</sup> Josephus (1x) *Jewish Wars* 1.582.1; Diodorus (1x) *Bibliotheca historica* 1.16.61.13.

<sup>20</sup> *Posidonius* (1x) *Fragmenta* 165.7 (= Diodorus *Bibliotheca historica* 3.3435.28.1.4).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Josephus (1x) *Jewish Wars* 2.240.4; Diodorus (1x) *Bibliotheca historica* 17.5.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., Diodorus *Bibliotheca historica* 17.5.4.5.

defined *authentēs* as the perpetrator of a murder committed by others (not the actual murderer himself or herself).<sup>22</sup>

Was there a meaning that approached anything like the ESV’s “exercise authority over” and the NIV’s “have authority over”? “Master” can be found, but it is in the sense of the “mastermind” of a crime rather than one who exercises authority over another. For example, in the first and second centuries B.C. historians used it of those who masterminded and carried out such exploits as the massacre of the Thracians at Maronea<sup>23</sup> and the robbing of the sacred shrine at Delphi.<sup>24</sup>

*Greek nonliterary materials.* A search of the nonliterary databases (Duke papyri, ostraca, tablets and inscriptions of the Packard Humanities Institute [PHI]) produces quite different results. While *authent-* appears quite regularly in Greek literature from the sixth century B.C. on, it first appears in nonliterary materials in the first century B.C.<sup>25</sup> The popular form is *authentēnikos* (from which we derive our English word *authentic*) and not *authentēs* (murderer). Numerous examples of *authentēnikos* can be found in Greek inscriptions and papyri of the Hellenistic period.<sup>26</sup>

*Verbs.* Verb forms contemporary with or prior to Paul (including the verbal noun [infinitive] and verbal adjective [participle]) are rare to nonexistent in Greek literary and nonliterary materials. There are a mere handful in the TLG (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae) and PHI (Packard Humanities Institute) databases. But these are of critical importance for shedding light on the verbal noun *authentēn* in 1 Timothy 2:12.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Harpocration *Lexicon* 66.7 (1st cent. A.D.): “*Authētēs*: Those who commit murder [*foiis phonous*] through others. For the perpetrator [*ho authentēs*] always makes evident the one whose hand committed the deed.”

<sup>23</sup> *Polybius Histories* 22.14.2.3 (2nd cent. B.C.).

<sup>24</sup> Diodorus of Sicily *Bibliotheca historica* 17.5.4.5 (1st cent. B.C.). In the patristic writers the noun *authentēs* does not appear until the mid to late second century A.D. and then in Origen in the third century—far too late to provide a linguistic context for Paul. Predominant usage is still “murderer” (Clement 3x), but one also finds divine “authority” (Trenaeus 3x; Clement 2x; Origen 1x) and “master” (*Shepherd of Hermas* 1x; for the second-century dating of the *Shepherd* 1x) and “master” (*Shepherd of Hermas*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1992], p. 331). The rest—the vast majority—are uses of the adjective (“authentic,” “genuine”). The verb does not occur until well into the third century A.D. (Hippolytus *Short Exegetical and Homiletical Writings* 29.7.5).

<sup>25</sup> The root *authent-* appears six times in first-century A.D. inscriptions, ostraca and tablets: (1) *authenteia/authentia* (“power,” “sway,” “mastery”; *Sybia* [125]; *Mytila* 10), (2) *authentēnikos* (*Mytila* 2, 6) and (3) *authentēs* (*Third Asia Minor* V 23; *Ephesos* 109). It surfaces in the first-century B.C. papyri only once (see above). It picks up steam in the first century A.D., but virtually all are the term *authentēnikos* (“genuine,” “authentic”); 22x).

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 2.260.20 (A.D. 59): “1, Theon, son of Onoprios, assistant, have checked this authentic [*authentēnikē*] bond.”

The first is found in the fifth to first centuries B.C. *Solia* (or explanatory remarks) on a passage from Aeschylus's tragedy *Emmenides*: "His [Orestes'] hands were dripping with blood; he held a sword just drawn [from avenging the death of his father by killing his mother]" (42). The commentator uses the perfect participial form of *authenteō* to capture the intentional character of the deed: "Were dripping" is explained as "The murderer [*ho phonētēs*], who just now has committed an act of violence [*authentēkota*] . . ."

The second use of *authenteō* is found in the first-century B.C. grammarian Aris-tonicus. Commenting on a portion of Homer's *Iliad* ("So he [Odysseus] spoke and they [King Agamemnon and his people] all became hushed in silence, marveling at his words; for so masterfully did he address their gathering"), he states, "This line, which appears in other places, does not fit well here; for it usually is spoken, where the author [*ho authentēs*] of the message delivered something striking. But now, however, he [the author] would speak for Odysseus, who relates the things which had been spoken by Achilles."<sup>27</sup>

The third use of *authenteō* is found in a 27/26 B.C. letter in which Tryphon re-counts to his brother Asklepiades the resolution of a dispute between himself and another individual regarding the amount to be paid a ferryman for shipping a load of cattle: "And I had my way with him [*authentēkotos pros auton*] and he agreed to provide Galarytis the boatman with the full fare within the hour" (BGU IV 1208). Evangelical scholarship has been largely dependent for its understanding of *authentein* on George Knight III's 1984 study and his translation of *authentēkotos pros auton* as "I exercised authority over him."<sup>28</sup> Yet this hardly fits the mundane details of the text—payment of a boat fare. Nor can *pros auton* be understood as "over him." The preposition plus the accusative does not bear this sense in Greek. "To/toward," "against" and "with" (and less frequently "at," "for," "with refer-ence to," "on" and "on account of") are the range of possible meanings.<sup>29</sup> Here it likely means something like "I had my way with him" or perhaps "I took a firm stand with him."<sup>30</sup> This certainly fits what we know of the Asklepiades archive. As John White notes, this part of the archive (BGU IV 1203-9) is a series of seven letters written between family members—three brothers, Asklepiades, Paniskos

<sup>27</sup> Aris-tonicus *De signis Iliadis* 9.694 (1st cent. B.C.).

<sup>28</sup> George Knight III, "ΑΥΒΕΝΤΕΩ in Reference to Women in I Timothy 2.12," *NIS* 30 (1984): 145.

<sup>29</sup> See LSJ 1497 C, with the accusative.

<sup>30</sup> See Friedrich Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyriusurkunden* (Berlin: Papyriusurkunden Berlin, 1925), s.v. *ἑστ ἀφ' ἑστίν* (to stand firm).

and Tryphon, and one sister, Isidora. Although various business matters are discussed in the correspondence, it is evident that these are private letters, written for the most part by Isidora, who is representing her family's interests abroad.<sup>31</sup>

The fourth use of *authenteō* occurs in Philodemus, the first-century B.C. Greek poet and Epicurean philosopher from Gadara, Syria. Philodemus wrote against the rhetoricians of his day and their penetration into Epicurean circles. Rhetors were the villains; philosophers were the heroes of the Roman Republic. He states, "Rhetors harm a great number of people in many ways—those shot through with dreadful desires." They [rhetors] fight every chance they get with prominent people—'with powerful lords [*syn authent[ou]sinanaxin*]? . . . Philosophers, on the other hand, gain the favor of public figures . . . not having them as enemies but friends . . . on account of their endearing qualities" (*Rhetorica* 2 Fragmenta Libri [5] fr. 4 line 14).

Once again Knight's analysis falls short. He states that "the key term is *authent[ou]sin*" and claims that the rendition offered by Yale classicist Harry Hubbell is "they [orators] are men who incur the enmity of those in authority."<sup>32</sup> But Hubbell actually renders *authent[ou]sin* rightly as an adjective meaning "powerful" and modifying the noun *lords*: "they [rhetors] fight with powerful lords [*diamachontai kai syn authentousinanaxin*]."<sup>33</sup>

The fifth use of *authenteō* is found in influential late-first- and early-second-century astrological poet Dorotheus. He states that "if Jupiter aspects the Moon from time . . . it makes them [the natives] leaders or chiefs [some of civilians and others of soldiers] especially if the Moon is increasing; but if the moon decreases, it does not make them *dominant [authentas]* but subservient [*hyperotomousus*]" (346). Along similar lines, second-century mathematician Ptolemy states: "There-fore, if Saturn alone takes planetary control [*fen oikodespotian*] of the soul and *dominates [authentetas]* Mercury and the moon [who govern the soul] [and] if Saturn has a dignified position toward both the solar system and its angles [*ta ken-*

<sup>31</sup> John White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), p. 103.

<sup>32</sup> Knight, "ΑΥΒΕΝΤΕΩ," p. 145. Knight also overlooks the fact that *syn authent[ou]sinanaxin* is actually a quote from an unknown source; not Philodemus's own words. Fallacies have the tendency to perpetuate themselves. See, for example, H. Scott Baldwin, who cites Knight's inaccuracy (instead of checking the primary sources firsthand), "Appendix 2: *Authenteō* in Ancient Greek Literature," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas Köstenberger, Thomas Schreiner and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995), p. 275).

<sup>33</sup> Harry Hubbell, trans. and commentary, "The Rhetorica of Philodemus," *Commentary Academy of Arts and Sciences* 23 (1920): 306.

*traj*,<sup>34</sup> then he [Saturn] makes [them] lovers of the body . . . *dinadorial, ready to punish*. . . . But Saturn allied with Jupiter . . . makes his subjects good, respectful to elders, sedate, noble-minded . . . (*Tetrabiblos* 3.13 [no. 157]). Although Dorotheus and Ptolemy postdate Paul, they provide an important witness to the continuing use of *authenteō* to mean “to hold sway over, to dominate.”

Ancient Greek grammarians and lexicographers suggest that the meaning “to dominate, hold sway” finds its origin in first-century popular (“vulgar” versus literary) usage. That is why second-century lexicographer Moeris states that the Attic *autoitken*, “to have independent jurisdiction, self-determination,” is to be preferred to the Hellenistic (or Koine) *authentes*.<sup>35</sup> Modern lexicographers agree. Those who have studied Hellenistic letters argue that *authenteō* originated in the popular Greek vocabulary as a synonym for “to dominate someone” (*tratin ti nos*).<sup>36</sup> Biblical lexicographers J. P. Louw and Eugene Nida put *authenteō* into the semantic domain “to control, restrain, dominate” and define the verb as “to control in a domineering manner”: “I do not allow women . . . to dominate men” (I Tim 2:12).<sup>37</sup> Other meanings do not appear until well into the third and fourth centuries A.D.<sup>38</sup>

So there is no first-century warrant for translating *authentein* as “to exercise authority” and for understanding Paul in I Timothy 2:12 to be speaking of the carrying out of one’s official duties. Rather the sense is the Koine “to dominate, to get one’s way.” The NIV’s “to have authority over” therefore must be under-

<sup>34</sup>Knight misreads (or perhaps mistypes) F. E. Robbins’s (transl., LCL) “angles” as “angels” (“AY-GENITEŪ,” p. 145). Baldwin once again quotes Knight’s inaccuracy rather than doing a fresh analysis as the book’s title claims (“Appendix 2, *Authenteō*,” p. 275).

<sup>35</sup>Moeris, *Altit Lexicon*, ed. J. Pierson (Leiden, 1759), p. 58. Cf. thirteenth- to fourteenth-century Aristotelian Thomas Magister, who warns his pupils to use *autoitken* because *authentes* is vulgar (*Grammatica* 18.8).

<sup>36</sup>See, for example, Theodor Nagel, *Der Wortschatz des Apostels Paulus* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905), pp. 49–50; cf. James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), s.v.; and the Persens Project, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “to have full power over *tinōs*” <http://www.persens.nl/fts/edu>

<sup>37</sup>Louw and Nida also note that “to control in a domineering manner” is often expressed idiomatically as “to shout orders at,” “to act like a chief toward” or “to bark at.” The use of the verb in I Timothy 2:12 comes quite naturally out of the word “master, autocrat” (*Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 91); cf. BDAG, which defines *authenteō* as “to assume a stance of independent authority, give orders to, dictate to.”

<sup>38</sup>The noun *authentes* used of an “owner” or “master” appears a bit earlier. See, for example, the second-century *Synepistol of Hermas* 9.5.6, “Let us go to the tower, for the owner of the tower is coming to inspect it.”

stood in the sense of holding sway or mastery over another. This is supported by the grammar of the verse. If Paul had a routine exercise of authority in view, he would have put it first, followed by teaching as a specific example. Instead he starts with teaching, followed by *authentein* as a specific example. Given this word order, *authentein* meaning “to dominate” or “gain the upper hand” provides the best fit in the context.

### Grammar

So how did “to exercise authority over” find its way into the majority of modern translations of I Timothy 2:12? Andreas Köstenberger claims that it is the correlative that forces translators in this direction. He argues that the Greek correlative pairs synonyms or parallel words and not antonyms. Since “to teach” is positive, *authentein* must also be positive. To demonstrate his point, Köstenberger analyzes “neither” + verb 1 + “nor” + verb 2 constructions in biblical and extrabiblical literature.<sup>39</sup>

Yet there is a grammatical flaw intrinsic to this approach. It is limited to *functionally* equivalent constructions, excluding *functionally* equivalent ones, and so the investigation includes only correlated verbs. Thus it overlooks the fact that the infinitives (“to teach,” *authentein*) are functioning grammatically not as verbs but as nouns in the sentence structure (as one would expect a verbal *noun* to do). The Greek infinitive may have tense and voice like a verb, but it functions predominantly as a noun or adjective.<sup>40</sup> The verb in I Timothy 2:12 is actually “I permit.” “Neither to teach nor *authentein*” modifies the noun “a woman,”<sup>41</sup> which makes the *authentein* clause the second of two direct objects. Use of the infinitive as a direct object after a verb that already has a direct object has been amply demonstrated by biblical and extrabiblical grammarians.<sup>42</sup> In such cases the infinitive re-

<sup>39</sup>Andreas Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence Structure in I Timothy 2:12,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas Köstenberger, Thomas Schreiner and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995), pp. 81–103.

<sup>40</sup>See, for example, Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, vol. 3 of *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, ed. Nigel Turner (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963), p. 134, who classifies infinitives as “noun forms.”

<sup>41</sup>See, for instance, James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1979), especially “The Infinitive as a Modifier of Substantives,” pp. 141–42. Köstenberger overlooks the role of the infinitive as a verbal noun (“Complex Sentence Structure,” pp. 81–103).

<sup>42</sup>E.g., Edwin Mayser (*Grammatik der Griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäer-Zeit* [Berlin/Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1926, 1970], 2:187), BDF §392), Ernest Dewitt Burton (*Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900], nos. 378, 387), Turner (*Syntax*, pp. 137–38). Of particular relevance is Nigel Turner’s observation in his volume on Greek syntax

stricts the already present object. Following this paradigm, the I Timothy 2:12 correlative *neither to teach nor authentein* functions as a noun that restricts the direct object "a woman" (*synaitikē*).

It behooves us, therefore, to correlate nouns and noun substitutes in addition to verbs. This greatly expands the possibilities. "Neither-nor" constructions in the New Testament are then found to pair synonyms (e.g., "neither despised nor scorned," Gal 4:14), closely related ideas (e.g., "neither of the night nor of the dark," I Thess 5:5) and antonyms (e.g., "neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free," Gal 3:28). They also function to move from the general to the particular (e.g., "wisdom neither of this age nor of the rulers of this age," I Cor 2:6), to define a natural progression of related ideas (e.g., "they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns," Mt 6:26), and to define a related purpose or a goal (e.g., "where thieves neither break in nor steal" [i.e., break in to steal], Mt 6:20).<sup>43</sup>

Of the options listed above, it is clear that "teach" and "dominate" are not synonyms, closely related ideas or antonyms. If *authentein* did mean "to exercise authority," we might have a movement from general to particular. But we would expect the word order to be the reverse of what we have in I Timothy 2:12, that

that the infinitive as a direct object with *verba putandi* (e.g., "permit," "allow" and "want") is peculiar to Luke, Paul and Hebrews in the New Testament. In such cases, he argues, the infinitive restricts the already present object.

Daniel Wallace (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996], pp. 182-89) identifies *authentein* as a verb complement ("I do not permit to teach . . .") instead of the direct object complement that it is (ibid., pp. 598-99). It is not that Paul does not permit to teach a woman, but that he does not permit a woman to teach. Cf. Romans 3:28; 6:11; 14:14; I Corinthians 11:23; 12:23; 2 Corinthians 11:5; Philippians 3:8.

<sup>43</sup>Here are other examples: (1) Synonyms: "neither labors nor spins" (Mt 6:28), "neither quarreled nor cried out" (Mt 12:19), "neither abandoned nor given up" (Acts 2:27), "neither leave nor forsake" (Heb 13:5), "neither run in vain nor labor in vain" (Phil 2:16). (2) Closely related ideas: "neither the desire nor the effort" (Rom 9:16), "neither the sun nor the moon" (Rev 21:23). (3) Antonyms: "neither a good tree . . . nor a bad tree" (Mt 7:18), "neither the one who did harm nor the one who was harmed" (2 Cor 7:12). (4) General to particular: "you know neither the day nor the hour" (Mt 25:13), "I neither consulted with flesh and blood nor went up to Jerusalem" (Gal 1:16-17). (5) A natural progression of closely related ideas: "born neither of blood, nor of the human will, nor of the will of man" (Jn 1:13), "neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet" (Jn 1:25), "neither from man nor through man" (Gal 1:1). (6) God or purpose: "neither hears nor understands" (i.e., hearing with the intent to understand; Mt 13:13), "neither dwells in temples made with human hands nor is served by human hands" (i.e., dwells with a view to being served; Acts 17:24). See Linda L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2000), pp. 176-77.

is, "neither to exercise authority [general] nor to teach [particular]." They do not form a natural progression of related ideas either ("first teach, then dominate"). On the other hand, to define a purpose or goal actually provides a good fit: "I do not permit a woman to teach so as to gain mastery over a man," or "I do not permit a woman to teach with a view to dominating a man."<sup>44</sup> It also fits the contrast with the second part of the verse: "I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a dominating way but to have a quiet demeanor [literally, 'to be in calmness']."

### Culture

Why were the Ephesian women doing this? One explanation is that they were influenced by the cult of Artemis, in which the female was exalted and considered superior to the male. Its importance to the citizens of Ephesus in Paul's day is evident from Luke's record of the two-hour long chant, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:28-37). It was believed that Artemis (and brother Apollo) was the child of Zeus and Leto (or Latin *Latona*). Instead of seeking fellowship among her own kind, she spurned the attentions of the male gods and sought instead the company of a human male consort. This made Artemis and all her female adherents superior to men. This was played out at the feast of the Lord of Streets, when the priestess of Artemis pursued a man, pretending she was Artemis herself pursuing Leimon.<sup>45</sup>

An Artemis influence would help explain Paul's correctives in I Timothy 2:13-14. While some may have believed that Artemis appeared first and then her male consort, the true story was just the opposite. For Adam was formed first, then Eve (I Tim 2:13). And Eve was deceived to boot (I Tim 2:14)—hardly a basis on which to claim superiority. It would also shed light on Paul's statement that Christian "women will be kept safe [or 'saved'] through childbirth" (I Tim 2:15 NIV [1973 and 1978 editions]), presumably by faith in Christ. Thus they need not look to Artemis as the protector of women, as did other Ephesian women who turned

<sup>44</sup>Cf. Philip Payne ("Authentein in I Timothy 2:12," Evangelical Theological Society Seminar Paper (Rehoboth Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, November 21, 1986). His own position is that "neither-nor" in this verse forms a closely associated couplet (like "hit 'n' run"; "teach 'n' dominate").

<sup>45</sup>Pausanias *Guide to Greece* 2.27.4; 8.53.3. For further details, see Sharon Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991), pp. 31-41, and "Artemis," in *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Netscape Navigator, Netscape Communications, 1997.

to her for safe travel through the childbearing process.<sup>46</sup>

The impact of the cults on the female population of Ephesus and its environs has been challenged by S. M. Baugh, who contends that the lack of any first-century Ephesian high priestess runs counter to an Artemis impact on the church.<sup>47</sup> Although Baugh is correct in saying that urban Ephesus lacked a high priestess during Paul's day, he overlooks the fact that suburban Ephesus did. While Paul was planting the Ephesian church, Luliane served as high priestess of the imperial cult in Magnesia, a city fifteen miles southeast of Ephesus. She is honored in a decree of the mid-first century.<sup>48</sup> There were others as well. Inscriptions dating from the first century until the mid-third century place women as high priestesses in Ephesus, Gyziacus, Thyatira, Aphrodisias, Magnesia and elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

Baugh also argues that female high priestesses of Asia did not serve in and of their own right. They were simply riding on the coattails of a husband, male relative or wealthy male patron.<sup>50</sup> This simply is not true. Many inscriptions naming a woman as high priestess do not name a husband, father or male patron. In the case of those that do, prestige was attached to being a relative of a high priestess and not vice versa. Luliane's position, for example, was hardly honorary. While it is true that her husband served as a high priest of the imperial cult, Luliane held her position long before her husband held his. Nor was her position nominal. Priests and priestesses were responsible for the sanctuary's maintenance, its rituals and ceremonies, and the protection of its treasures and gifts. Liturgical functions included ritual

<sup>46</sup>As the mother goddess, Artemis was the source of life, the one who nourished all creatures and the power of fertility in nature. Maidens turned to her as the protector of their virginity, barren women sought her aid, and women in labor turned to her for help. See "Artemis," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

S. M. Baugh takes issue with the premise that Artemis worship was a fusion of a fertility cult of the mother goddess of Asia Minor and the Greek virgin goddess of the hunt ("A Fertility World: Epheus in the First Century," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas Kostenberger, Thomas Schreiner and H. Scott Baldwin [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995], pp. 28-33). But fourth-century B.C. "Rituals for Brides and Pregnant Women in the Worship of Artemis" and other literary sources support the fusion. See Franciszek Sokolowski, *Les sacerdes de l'Asie Mineure*, Tarraux et mémoires 9 (Paris: E. de Boccard 1955); idem, *Les sacerdes des cités grecques. Supplement*, Tarraux et mémoires II (Paris: E. de Boccard 1962); idem, *Les sacerdes des cités grecques*, Tarraux et mémoires 18 (Paris: E. de Boccard 1969).

<sup>47</sup>See Baugh, "Foreign World," pp. 43-44.

<sup>48</sup>*Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Mæander* 158.

<sup>49</sup>See R. A. Kearsley, "Asiarchs, Archierats and the Archiereiai of Asia," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 27 (1986): 183-92.

<sup>50</sup>Baugh, "Foreign World," pp. 43-44.

sacrifice, pronouncing the invocation and presiding at the festivals of the deity,<sup>51</sup>

Baugh further maintains that Asian high priestesses were young girls whose position was analogous to the private priestesses of Hellenistic queens. Theirs was a nominal position of no real substance, given to daughters and wives of the municipal elite.<sup>52</sup> This too runs counter to Greco-Roman evidence. The majority of women who served as high priestesses were hardly young girls.<sup>53</sup> Vestal virgins were the exception. Delphic priestesses, on the other hand, were required to be at least fifty years old, came from all social classes and served a male god and his adherents.

The primary flaw of Baugh's study is that it is not broad based enough to accurately reflect the religious and civic roles of first-century women in either Asia or the Greco-Roman Empire as a whole. Because Roman religion and government were inseparable, to lead in one arena was often to lead in the other. Mendera, for example, served at one time or another during Paul's tenure as magistrate, priestess and chief financial officer of Sillyon, a town in Pisidia, Asia.<sup>54</sup>

#### Common Concerns

What about the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:12: "I do not permit a woman to teach . . ." There are several aspects of 1 Timothy 2:12 that make the plain sense difficult to determine. The exact wording of Paul's restriction needs careful scrutiny. What kind of teaching is Paul prohibiting at this point? Some are quick to assume he means a teaching office or other position of authority. But teaching in the New Testament period was an activity and not an office (Mt 28:19-20), a gift and not a position of authority (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28; 14:26; Eph 4:11).

There is also the assumption that authority resides in the act of teaching (or in the person who teaches). In point of fact, it resides in the deposit of truth—"the deep truths of the faith" (1 Tim 3:9; 4:6), "the faith" (1 Tim 4:1; 5:8; 6:10, 12, 21), the trust (1 Tim 6:20) that Jesus passed on to his disciples and that they in turn passed on to their disciples (2 Tim 2:2). Teaching is subject to evaluation just like any other ministry. This is why Paul instructed Timothy to publicly rebuke (1 Tim 5:20) anyone who departed from "the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim 6:3).

<sup>51</sup>Kearsley, "Asiarchs," pp. 183-92.

<sup>52</sup>Baugh, "Foreign World," p. 43.

<sup>53</sup>See Riet van Bremen, "Woman and Wealth," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), pp. 231-41.

<sup>54</sup>*Inscriptions Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes* 3.800-902.

It is often countered that teaching in I Timothy takes on the more official sense of doctrine and that teaching doctrine is something women can't do. Yet doctrine as a system of thought (i.e., dogma) is foreign to I Timothy. Traditions, yes; doctrines, no. While Paul urged Timothy to "command and teach these things" (I Tim 4:11, 6:2), the "things" are not strictly doctrines. They included matters like avoiding godless myths and old wives' tales (I Tim 4:7), godly training (I Tim 4:7-8), God as the Savior of all (I Tim 4:9-10) and slaves treating their masters with full respect (I Tim 6:1-2). The flaw therefore lies in translating the Greek phrase *hyginousē didaskalia* as "sound doctrine" instead of "sound teaching" (I Tim 1:10; 4:6; cf. I Tim 6:1, 3; 2 Tim 4:3; Tit 1:9; 2:1).

What about Paul's naming Adam as first in the creation process? Isn't Paul saying something thereby about male leadership? "For Adam was formed *first*, then Eve" (I Tim 2:13). Yet if one looks closely at the immediate context, "first-then" (*prōtos . . . eitia*) language does nothing more than define a sequence of events or ideas. Ten verses later Paul states that deacons "must first [*prōton*] be tested; and then [*eita*] . . . let them serve" (I Tim 3:10). This, in fact, is the case throughout Paul's letters (and the New Testament, for that matter). "First-then" defines a temporal sequence, without implying either ontological or functional priority. "The dead in Christ will rise *first*. After that we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" is a case in point (I Thess 4:16-17). "The dead in Christ" gain neither personal nor functional advantage over the living as a result of being raised "first" (cf. Mk 4:28; I Cor 15:46; Jas 3:17).

But doesn't *gar* at the start of I Timothy 2:13 introduce a creation order dilemma? Women must not teach men *because* God created men to lead (following the creation order of male, then female); Eve's proneness to deception while taking the lead demonstrates this. This reading of the text is problematic for a number of reasons. First, there is nothing in the context to support it. Paul simply does not identify Eve's transgression as taking the lead in the relationship or Adam's fault as abdicating that leadership. Second, the conjunction *gar* ("for") typically introduces an explanation for what precedes, not a cause.<sup>55</sup> If the sense of I Timothy 2:12 is that women are not permitted to teach men in a dominating fashion, then I Timothy 2:13 would provide the explanation: that Eve was created as Adam's partner (Gen 2:24) and not his boss. By contrast, *effect* ("women are not permitted to teach men

in a dominating fashion") and then *cause* ("Adam was created to be Eve's boss" [i.e., first]) surely makes no sense. Third, those who argue for creation-fall dictums in I Timothy 2:13-14 stop short of including "women will be saved (or kept safe) through childbearing" in I Timothy 2:15. To do so, though, lacks hermeneutical integrity. Either all three statements are normative or all three are not.

What about Eve's seniority in transgression? Isn't Paul using Eve as an example of what can go wrong when women usurp the male's created leadership role? "And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman . . ." (I Tim 2:14). This view is without scriptural support. Eve was not deceived by the serpent into taking the lead in the male-female relationship. She was deceived into disobeying a command of God, namely, not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She listened to the voice of false teaching and was deceived by it. Paul's warning to the Corinthian congregation confirms this: "I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor 11:3).

The language of deception calls to mind the activities of the false teachers at Ephesus. If the Ephesian women were being encouraged as the superior sex to assume the role of teacher over men, this would go a long way toward explaining I Timothy 2:13-14. The relationship between the sexes was not intended to involve female domination and male subordination. But neither was it intended to involve male domination and female subordination. Such thinking is native to a fallen creation order (Gen 3:16).

### Summary

A reasonable reconstruction of I Timothy 2:11-15 would be as follows: The women at Ephesus (perhaps encouraged by the false teachers) were trying to gain an advantage over the men in the congregation by teaching in a dictatorial fashion. The men in response became angry and disputed what the women were doing.

This interpretation fits the broader context of I Timothy 2:8-15, where Paul aims to correct inappropriate behavior on the part of both men and women (I Tim 2:8, 11). It also fits the grammatical flow of I Timothy 2:11-12: "Let a woman learn in a quiet and submissive fashion. I do not, however, permit her to teach with the intent to dominate a man. She must be gentle in her demeanor." Paul would then be prohibiting teaching that tries to get the upper hand—not teaching per se.

<sup>55</sup>The principal Greek causal conjunction is *hoti* (or *thoti*). See BDF 456.