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Male and Female Created He Them

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Series: I Timothy

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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The hapless dog wasn't happy
He didn't think he was free
Because, unlike his friend, the cat,
He couldn't climb a tree.

The cat, meanwhile, was jealous, too,
His future just as dark...
He sat alone, depressed and blue
Because he couldn't bark.

Neither seemed to understand
They should have been elated
They were simply *different*...
For they were thus created.

Oh, that in men and in women
That truth we could instill
Each of them has a purpose
The other can't fulfill.

We live in an age where men are acting like women, and women are acting like men, all in the name of something called "equality". The need for equality exists, but, oh, that the world and, in particular, the Christian world, would see that you do not have to be the same to be equal. You do not have to have the same jobs to be equal. You do not need to wear the *same* clothes to be equal. You do not need to assume the *same* roles to be equal, not in the home, not in the church. To destroy the uniqueness that makes you different in order to prove you are equal is to destroy the very proof of your equality. You see, when the cat tries to bark he is no longer equal...he's foolish. We have a cat that can't even purr; he's got a problem. But, for a cat to bark that is a different story.

And yet humanistic society, in an effort to prove the worth of men and women, has decided to erase the very things that make

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them special, replacing them with some kind of a cloned unisex mentality that, in effect, destroys everything God built into us to demonstrate His plan.

God from the beginning had a plan for us. Genesis 5 summarizes the creation process this way,

In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.

He created them male and female, (Genesis 5:1b,2a NKJV)

They were to have different roles and different responsibilities because God made men and women to *be different*. And when sin entered the world that difference was even more pronounced. Look at Genesis 3:16-19. Here God is enforcing judgement in the very areas of their distinctives, and He reinforces the roles and the differences in the process.

To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; In [sorrow] toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, And to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:16-19 NKJV)

The women were to have the children; the men couldn't. The men were to till the soil; the women shouldn't. And *even the effects of the curse were to emphasize the difference between the roles of men and women*. They were not the same. It had nothing to do with inequality. The men couldn't have the children even if they wanted to. (And I don't think any of us want to. I'm glad I won't be born in this generation where the guys have to go through more than we did. I almost passed out in the father's waiting room way down the hall. And now they have to go through the whole thing. We are not strong enough guys.) That didn't make men inferior—only different.

The man's responsibility to provide was established in

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Genesis chapters three and five. The woman's responsibility to be in subjection was made clear in Genesis chapter 3. Neither was better than the other, but neither were they the same. The incredible distinctives that God built into the human race the moment He said, "male and female created He them," were like bold strokes on the canvas of eternity, painting, once and for all, a picture of the Coming Messiah and His Bride, the Church. The man would represent Jehovah; the woman would represent Israel. The man would represent Christ; the woman would represent the church.

And just as God Himself existed in the form of the Trinity, with all three separate but equal expressions of Himself, man and woman would be separate but equal expressions of His plan, different but equal. Anytime throughout history that Satan succeeded blurring those distinctives in making men like women and women like men, God would grieve.

The Spirit of God gave us that perfect illustration in the Trinity. In the Trinity, the Spirit never tries to be the Son. You read John 14, 15, and 16. The Spirit is equal but His glory came in fulfilling His role of reflecting the Son. For that reason man was never to wear a women's clothing. That would be blasphemous.

A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man,
nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do
so are an abomination to the Lord your God.

(Deuteronomy 22:5)

It means a woman was to have the longer hair as a symbol of her submission. For the man to copy that would be disastrous. (I Corinthians 11.) The man was to be the provider; the woman was to be the responder. The man was to have the spiritual responsibility; the woman was to be the learner. Never were men to lie with men, or women with women. Homosexuality would be a curse that demanded judgment. Read Leviticus chapters 18 and 20.

All of these commandments were given to fulfill the divine purposes of God and had *nothing to do with equality*. Like the dog and the cat in the opening illustration, what the other could or couldn't do had nothing to do with who was better, only with how they were made. And so for the three of you who are still here, we come to the concluding study of I Timothy, chapter two. The remainder of our outline is as follows:

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The Two-Fold Warning to Women

The Two-Fold Explanation of Paul

The Two-Fold Expression of God

In our last lesson, we looked at the first few words of Paul's admonition coupled with the Apostle Peter's two-part harmony, and we saw that there is a two-fold glory to womanhood. There are two innate qualities that God desires to develop in woman that set her apart and allows the nature of God to be revealed through her personality. The first is the attribute of a quiet spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God. The second is the *act* of submission, followed by the *attitude* of submission, a quality that is essential if the world is to see through a woman's life what the church is like in submission to Christ. The passage read like this:

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission

Peter's admonition was even more direct. He said that instead of being known by the clothes they wear, women should be recognized by their "*inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.*" So the emphasis was on the inner self, the nature of God as it expresses itself, in particular through those two almost intangible qualities: quietness and submission.

THE TWO-FOLD WARNING TO WOMEN

Now comes Paul's *two-fold warning*, a statement that gives practical application to the principles he has been carefully explaining. He adds:

I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. (I Timothy 2:12 NIV)

If the verse before this doesn't cause a sense of tension in the air, this one should do it. But before you begin to bristle and dismiss this portion as either a Pauline prejudice or a cultural catastrophe, be sure to look fairly at the text itself. Remember the context. Paul is struggling to regain both order and priority in the church assembly meetings. He is concerned about *anything that would detract from the worship of Jesus Christ as Lord*. And obviously, there was some confusion and dissension developing that created a "non-worshipful" atmosphere and took men's eyes off of Christ. The women in the fellowship were a part of the problem.

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The manner in which the women were dressing had served to become a distraction and was bringing reproach to the name of Christ. Secondly, the *manner in which the women were beginning to assume certain roles and responsibilities in the church was becoming a serious source of contention and confusion*. Woman, in Christ, was experiencing a whole new level of freedom to express her spiritual sensitivity; and Satan was exploiting that, trying to equate roles with relationship and identity with equality.

God had ordained two special qualities to be expressed through the woman, that of a quiet spirit and that of a submissive heart. Those qualities did not indicate inferiority, but rather indicated a willingness to fulfill the plan God had designed for them in eternity past. Now, two new wrinkles were apparently causing waves in the upper echelons of church administration. It appears that some of the women who had natural teaching skills were standing in the public assemblies and giving their interpretations of the passages. It also appears that it was becoming common for women to desire the roles of leadership and the roles of church management. It was probably welcomed by many of the men, who longed to be relieved of some of their responsibilities and who wanted to hear what the women had to say.

The problem wasn't with *what they had to say*. They probably had more spiritual insight in many cases than the men who were doing the teaching; and they probably had more administrative skills, particularly in the management of details. The problem wasn't one of *ability*. It had to do with the portrait a Sovereign God had painted, in eternity past, and had designed for the woman to portray. She was to represent the church; the man was to represent Christ. He was to be the head; even as Christ was the head of the church. And He was to be teacher; even as the Holy Spirit was to be ours. For the woman to teach in the public assemblies would be likened to the church teaching Christ. It was not a matter of natural abilities, but of assigned responsibilities.

There was, then, a two-fold restriction. Women, who were to reveal Christ to the world through a quiet, submissive spirit could not do two things and still accomplish that. They could not teach men in the church assembly, and they could not exercise authority over men in the church or in the home.

In I Corinthians 14, the apostle was taking great pains to

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bring order to the Corinthian church where he says,

Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.

If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. (I Corinthians 14:34,35 NIV)

The women in that fellowship had been interrupting the services asking questions, no doubt, good questions. But they had made a mockery of the worship environment in the process. Again, the issue was not spiritual inferiority; their questions may well have gotten right to the heart of the matter, and they may have even discerned the doctrinal errors that were plaguing that church. But there was divine law of character being negated. That law of character said that the world needed to see certain qualities in woman in order to see certain relationships in eternity; those two qualities were quietness and submission. Quietness meant the absence of discord and confusion, the presence of harmony and peace. Submission meant the yielding of one's rights to another for the sake of fulfilling divine order. In order to properly portray how the church would look when rightly related to Christ, women had to remain silent in the assemblies where teaching and preaching were concerned; and they had to remain in submission and not become the spiritual leaders of the home or of the church. There was simply no choice.

It did not mean the women were not to teach *at the church*. It meant they were:

- a) not to teach the men
- b) not to teach in the worship services.

Obviously, they were to teach the children. Paul acknowledged to Timothy that his very spiritual foundation came from his mother and his grandmother as found in II Timothy 1:5, 3:15. And obviously the older women were to teach the younger women. Titus 2:3,4 instructed them to do just that. The issue wasn't their gift of teaching, but their obedience to divine order. It did not mean that women could not teach in certain situations where they were under male authority. The words translated *usurp authority* literally mean *to exercise dominion over*. It meant making spiritual decisions out from under authority.

Does that preclude having women pastors? I think so. Does it

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mean women are not to preach in the assembly of the church? I think it does. Does it mean that women are not to rule as elders? I think it does. Does it mean they are less spiritual? Not on your life. The women are often the most spiritually sensitive of the flock. They are usually the prayer strength of the church and the workers behind the scenes that make it all happen. Often they possess spiritual wisdom that discerns error long before their male counterparts. Their role is a harder one to play. They must remain silent and in subjection, *even though they may be wiser*, trusting God to work through their obedience to accomplish His purposes.

That is what I Peter 3 is speaking of as it describes a godly woman changing the life of her unbelieving husband, *without saying a word by the way she demonstrates a quiet, gentle spirit*. Hers is the harder role, but God is glorified the more she obeys. It defies natural instinct. And the harder it is for her to obey, the more glory God receives. So the issue isn't culture or society or Paul's prejudices. The issue is divine order, distinctive obedience, and ultimate glory.

THE TWO-FOLD EXPLANATION OF PAUL

Paul gives two reasons for his two-fold warning. The passage goes on,

...she must be silent.

For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

But women will be saved [kept safe] through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

(I Timothy 2:12b-15 NIV)

So there you have the *first conceived, last deceived argument*. Paul is saying that God in His eternal plan created man first, and woman second. Man was created out of nothing to reflect God's power. Woman was created out of man to reflect God's love. She was to be *a helper fit for man*, one designed to respond and reflect, rather than to instruct and initiate. Secondly, Paul says that when women stepped out of that role by listening to the voice of the stranger, rather than yielding to the leadership of her husband, she was the first to sin. She led the parade of mankind to the gates of hell by attempting to deal with the enemy out from under her God-ordained head. Now there are at least three thousand,

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four hundred sixty-nine and three-quarter's explanations of that passage. And you and I cannot profess to add something new to its interpretation. All God meant, we do not know, maybe we don't need to know. But what He said through Paul is plain. He said women were given the glorious responsibility of remaining silent in the assemblies, and the glorious privilege of letting man be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the flock. And it is a privilege to submit. With her, the buck stops when her heart says, "Yes, Sir," and yields. But the man who assumes the role of elder or pastor or leader also assumes the awesomeness of that responsibility and the eternal consequences it carries.

He concludes by saying:

But women will be saved [kept safe] through childbearing—
if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.
(1 Timothy 2:15 NIV)

Now there are at least three basic interpretations of that passage that I found:

1) Woman's deliverance through Messiah's birth.

2) Woman's salvation through the ultimate putting down of Satan; the end of the curse that is exhibited through pain in childbearing.

3) Woman's fulfillment of her divine role through childbearing.

Take your pick. We won't know for sure until the Lord returns. But whatever it means, it means that God once again has a special blessing for the godly woman who understands her role, understands her responsibility, and understands the glory that accrues to God every time she is obedient to her calling. The roles of men and women were designed by God in eternity past to be so distinctly different that only through the leading of God's Spirit could they be fulfilled.

THE TWO-FOLD EXPRESSION OF GOD

The man who refuses to lead in his home or his church and refuses to accept his spiritual responsibility that God has assigned him is in sin. Likewise the woman who refuses to quietly submit to her authority as unto God is in sin. The man who sits idly by when doctrinal impurity is preached is in sin. The woman who attempts to exercise authority over the men in the flock is in sin. It has nothing to do with who is the more mature. A woman's maturity will not be judged by what she knows, but by

how quietly and submissively she responds to what she knows.

That is because God made us different for different reasons. Neither is better; but we are not the same. The Scripture teaches that the man is physically the stronger (I Peter 3:7). I believe it also teaches that the woman is emotionally the stronger. The word *strength* means *capacity*. Men have greater physical capacity. Women have greater emotional capacity, a greater natural ability to feel, to demonstrate compassion, to be aware, and to discern honesty in people. Men have a greater capacity to be objective, to discern doctrinal purity, to exercise restraint. Thus while man is physically stronger and woman emotionally stronger, both are spiritually equal. They both have unlimited potential in the Spirit. Both can do “all things through Christ who strengthens us”. Both are free to go directly to the Father through the Son.

But the man will be judged by his obedience as a man. The woman will be judged by her obedience as a woman. That obedience requires that she willingly abstain from stepping out of her role. She must not preach or teach in the public worship; and she simply must not assume the role of spiritual headship over the man either in the home or the church. Is it because she is not fit to do so? No. It is because she is not called to do so.

We don't know what kind of a stir Paul's letter created in the Ephesian church when young Timothy stood up and read it. We don't need to know. We do know that even today it runs against the grain of what society calls equality. But we also know that if we're honest, all of God's ways run against the grain of society because:

- a) they are spiritually discerned (I Corinthians 2),
- b) they are as much higher than man's ways as heaven is above the earth (Isaiah 55),
- c) they operate on absolutes, rather than on relative concepts. With God, what was eternally true in the first century is no less true twenty-one centuries later.

God does not change to accommodate the progressive sinfulness of man. And so it is that in the beginning, “male and female created He them”. He created us to be divinely different that we might magnify on earth our relationship with Him in heaven. Will it be natural? No! Therefore it will have to be supernatural.

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Because His ways are higher;
We may not understand;
But who are we to question
The work of His great hand?

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