

7,23,26 1 Tim. 2:1-15, Varied Role Definitions in the Local Church

Before we move into chapter 2, I want to give you an overview of what a pastor (or teacher) is from God's viewpoint. Some of the points I'll make will be taken from different parts of Timothy, so we may see them again later, but most of this a summation of what this gift of pastor-teacher is given for, and what kind of men those who assume this role are expected to be and do.

As we move further into Timothy, we will see more of the specifics of this calling, but what I want to look at first can hopefully be a good foundation to build on, because sometimes it's helpful to see the finished product in the vision of the divine architect before dissecting the details of the blueprint that are used for its construction.

So, we're going to begin by trying to answer this question: What is the criteria God uses to determine a successful vs. a non-successful pastoral ministry?

(Jas. 3:1 from the Amplified Translation) Not many [of you] should become teachers my brethren, for you know that we [teachers] will be judged by a higher standard and with greater severity [than other people; thus, we assume the greater accountability].

From God's standpoint the final accountability we face at the Judgement Seat regarding success or failure as a teacher has nothing to do with the size of the church or the popularity of the pastor as a teacher or an author – it's the measure of Christ formed in him and his faithfulness to bring the truths to God's people that are characteristic of this dispensation.

But another thing we'll see in Timothy is that what matters most to the Lord, as related to the pastor himself, is the kind of Christlikeness which is *not* demonstrated in the pulpit, but is seen when no one but God is watching. Just as one example; if men are to love Christ as Christ loved the Church (Eph. 5:25), that means a man's wife (his "bride") is to be his highest earthly priority and he is to allow nothing to prevent him from doing all he can, even unto death if necessary, to honor her, protect her physically, emotionally and circumstantially, and demonstrate 24/7 that she is, in truth, his highest priority.

This is true of all husbands of course, but especially of one who is setting an example by being in leadership.

In studying the pastoral epistles, I have been reviewing, as objectively as possible, the specific calling of the pastor-teacher (for obvious reasons). I wanted to know what a person with that calling is supposed to be doing, and why.

(Eph. 4:11-14) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children.

(John 21:17) “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep”.

(Heb. 5:12-14) For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the Word of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child. But solid food belongs to those who are mature.

(1 Tim. 4:6,11,13) If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed . . . These things command and teach. . . give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

(Acts 20:26-27) I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not neglected to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

This comment of being innocent of the blood of all men is Paul’s use of the principle in Ezek. 3:17-22 applied to the responsibility of pastors under the New Covenant; here’s the passage in Ezek.;

Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore, hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul. Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless, if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also, you will have delivered your soul.

We may not be dealing with the Old Testament sin of idolatry, which is what Ezekiel was up against; but the principle of personal accountability is the same in both Ages. For Israel the issue *was* idolatry, but for Paul and us, the issue is whether the messenger of God is faithfully presenting the truth to God's people. If he is, their response is on them. Even if what Paul had presented to them was totally disregarded, Paul knew he had delivered his soul.

The Ephesian passage shows that the pastoral, shepherding gifts were given for the express purpose of bringing the Body of Christ to full stature – to spiritual maturity. The passage in John shows our Lord establishing the highest priority of ministry, which is to feed His people. Paul reinforces this in the Timothy passage. The Hebrew's passages give us the specifics of *how* bringing the body of Christ to maturity is to happen. And in Acts 20, Paul uses himself as the example of one who fully understands this and instructs Timothy and the elders in Ephesus to make sure they communicate the "whole counsel of God".

Now, with all that in mind, we'll go inside the building and look at the materials Paul says are necessary to have our lives built on a solid foundation so we can compare the ideal with the current realities.

In the first 8 verses of chapter 2 Paul makes his appeal to Timothy and the saints in Ephesus to understand and embrace what Hebrews calls the “so great salvation”. The reason men like Paul and the other apostles are given to the Church, and the anticipated outcome of their ministry is to make that salvation crystal clear. And Paul begins that appeal by reminding Timothy that nothing will happen if it’s not undergirded by prayer and supplication.

God has chosen you and me, and all who belong to Christ, to be His co-laborers in making Christ known. He could have used angels (like He will during the Tribulation), but instead, He’s continuing the work Christ did, only now it will reach far beyond Palestine and will involve the commitment of the Lord’s second Body, which is corporate and not limited to one part of the world.

In Acts 1:1, Luke wrote this; “The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach . . .” The accomplishment of our salvation *began* with the 33-year life and death of Christ in the body God prepared for Him in the womb of Mary.

(Heb. 10:5-7) Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.’”

And in John 20:21-22, and Mark 16:15 Jesus’ parting words to His disciples were;

Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit . . . Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

For each of us, if we are to fulfill the calling God has placed on us, we will have a message communicated to others in whatever way the indwelling Spirit of Christ wants us to it to give them, and if we are growing, we will also increasingly take on the image of our Lord making it possible for others to see in us, at least a glimpse of what Christ is like.

And all of this *must* begin where *Paul* says it begins in the first 8 verses of chapter 2;

Therefore, I exhort *first of all* that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

“First of all,” is supplication, prayer, intercession and thanksgiving. John 15 made it clear that “apart from Christ” we can do nothing of true spiritual, eternal value. So, everything we undertake, everything we do as we are moved by the Spirit, *must* begin by casting ourselves on the Lord with a clear understanding of the fact that without Him being the Source of our guidance and strength, all our efforts will be what Heb. 6:1 calls “dead works”.

And you probably noticed that the specifics of Paul’s requests involve the Lord opening the hearts of “kings and all who are in authority” to hopefully provide an environment in which the message of the Gospel, if not fully accepted, will at least have some degree of freedom of expression.

We know from Paul’s own experience with persecution that there are times when the enemy is allowed to close doors, and that we need to trust the Lord’s decision on the what and why of those times. But we’re instructed to pray to be able to get the message to as many people as possible while there’s still time. And it’s obvious that our freedom will be impacted by the decisions of those in political power (vs. 2, “all who are in authority”).

People say we take our freedom for granted, that we don’t spend enough time thinking of our brothers and sisters who are living in countries under authorities

that have restricted or even shut down the freedom to teach the truth. I'm sure that's true, but I know that Paul's appeal to us for prayer to keep the door open is based on something he experienced numerous times.

For example; 1 Cor. 16:5-9;

I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits. But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

At the moment, the door was opened, but there are many adversaries who would love to close it if they were allowed to do so.

We don't always know what God's response to our supplications will be, but we can trust that whether He holds an open door before us, or throws us in prison, His reason for His decisions will in some way further the Gospel. Here's one example;

(Phil. 1:12-14) I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Being a prisoner can be a good way to reach prison guards, plus, accepting that painful calling for a season can also embolden other Christians to share their faith with courage. And apparently, God decided that this would be the best thing to do with Paul at this point in his journey.

Paul didn't see it as either a closed door or a victory for the enemy, he saw it as an opportunity created by the wisdom of God. Paul was a glass-half-full kind of guy, because He trusted that whatever God was doing would be the best thing possible, and the only way he could have trusted like that was if he had come to know the Lord well enough to trust Him, and hold onto Him, even in what probably looked like disastrous situations.

I also want to mention a couple of things we learn in 1 Tim. 2 that have applications far beyond that context. For example; vs. 3-4;

. . . in the sight of God our Savior, Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

I'm not sure what Calvinists do with a passage like that, since they believe that Christ died only for the elect-because this was God's desire and perfect plan. But passages like this one in 1 Tim. 2 make it very clear that there is an immense amount of personal freedom surrounding the decisions of people to believe or not believe in Christ, and that God genuinely desires that everyone would trust in Him. He will honor their decision, but He won't override it by exercising irresistible sovereignty.

And, as we've seen before, 1 Jn. 2:2 reinforces this by stating plainly; "(Christ) is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Ok, that was just a side note to show some of the implications of God's desire that all be saved.

Paul both opens and closes that section in 1 Tim. 2 with an appeal for prayer. Without taking off a tangent on the mystery of prayer, I would just stress (since Paul does) that the honor we have of co-laboring with Christ in the work of both reaching the lost and strengthening the saved through personal prayer is something that we can hopefully develop a deep appreciation and gratitude for. Not only are we, by grace, the children of God, we are also allowed to stand by His side and work hand-in-hand in accomplishing His eternal purpose in Christ.

He has taken us from the lowest, most undeserving position possible, as enemies of the Cross of Christ and for no other reason than love, grace and mercy, He has raised us to highest position possible by making us members of His own family, a new humanity eternally in union with His Son.

That's why the Gospel is called "good news", and is only one of many reasons Paul wanted Timothy to communicate this to all who would listen.

I'm pretty sure that when people understand what Christ has accomplished on the Cross, most people fixate on the forgiveness of their sins and their escape from condemnation. And if the only thing the Lord provided through His sacrifice was the assurance that we will never be cast into the Lake of Fire, that would be enough to genuinely worship Him forever. But when you add all the other things that are now ours also, things Paul calls "the unsearchable riches of His grace", we should have all the motivation we need to both trust and fully commit to the Person Who would do that for us.

I came across a very unique approach to God's forgiveness that I thought you might find interesting too. It's by Watchman Nee and he's commenting on the Lord's exhortation for us to love our enemies;

But I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you (Matt. 5:44); These actions are taken because there is love, and the love in view here is neither due to liking nor to familiarity, rather it is because of mercy. We should never shut up a heart of mercy. By acting according to this verse in Matt. 5, we may be sons of the heavenly Father, since we have exhibited His nature. The next verse, verse 45 ("That you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good...") shows us how liberal is the way God treats mankind. Were He like us, none would ever be saved. Only God can forget man's evil. Man does not possess the ability to forget evil; he does not have absolute forgetfulness.

That phrase "absolute forgetfulness" was something I'd never heard before and I'm not even sure, technically, that it's accurate, but I think I understand his point. Once God bestows mercy on someone, He never takes it back. His official, eternal, position is "absolute forgetfulness".

I haven't personally struggled with the issue of heaven and hell as my destiny; I was taught early how heaven can be assured and hell avoided. There are things I *do* struggle with though, the enemy knows our weak spots and seems to go after them relentlessly.

But if anyone listening to this study *does* occasionally doubt their salvation, hopefully, what Nee (and Paul) have said about this can be helpful. If your trust is in Christ to save you, then in spite of whatever faults you might have, God has applied the principle of “absolute forgetfulness” to your sins. However unfaithful we might be, God never changes. (2 Tim. 2:13) “Even if we are faithless, yet He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”

In Dillow’s book called “Final Destiny” he touched on the issue of assurance;

When we examine ourselves, it is not to see whether our holiness, our works, or the fruit of the Spirit in our lives warrant assurance of salvation. Rather, it is to determine that such assurance rests on the proper foundation of God’s mercy in Christ. We can see that our feelings are an unreliable test of our standing with God. Therefore, if we are to be sure of our salvation, we must always direct our gaze to Christ, in whose face we see the love of God for us fully displayed. We are not to ask “am I *trusting* in Christ?”, but instead am I trusting in *Christ*?”. The emphasis of our assurance is not the *strength* of our faith, but the *object* of our faith. We will often fail; Christ cannot fail. As Paul wrote in Rom. 8:31, “If Christ is for us, who can be against us?”

Before we move to the next section, I want to comment briefly on 1 Tim. 2:5-6 which says, “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all. . .”

I doubt anyone listening to these studies has bought into the ‘alternate’ mediators that different pastors and authors have come up with. Some say we can go to the Father through angels, or saints, or we can pray to Mary and she, in turn, can influence her Son – and the list goes on. But our verse in 1 Tim. 2 makes it clear that our access to the Father is through the Son – *only* the Son.

Not long after I was saved, I came across a verse in the book of Job that did more than any I’d read up to that point to clarify the reality and clarity of this principle of access to God through Christ. I’ll read the verse and then show you what I got out of it;

(Job 9:33) Neither is there any daysman between us, who may lay his hand upon us both.

The word “daysman” is only translated that way in the King James Version; most translations have “mediator”. Here’s the definition of “daysman”;

A daysman is an archaic English term for an umpire, arbitrator, or mediator. In the Book of Job, it refers to a go-between who has the authority to resolve a dispute and bridge the gap between two opposing parties.

So, when I first came across that, I felt that the picture we’re given is that Job is longing for, and looking for, a Person Who can lay one hand on God and the other hand on man – in other words, a Person Who is both God and Man, someone qualified to bring them together.

I’ve been using “daysman” as my Email for a long time. Christ is our “daysman” and in Rom. 5:10 Paul says that Christ died for us when we were his enemies, how much more will He do for us now that we are His family? We literally couldn’t be more safe than we are in Christ.

Now, here’s the final section of 1 Tim. 2 (vs’s 9-15);

(I desire) that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

The generation we are living in is not exactly aligned with Paul’s approach to the role of women in the Church. But like everything we study, I have to try and clarify what’s here and, if possible, explain *why* it’s here.

So, I'm going to work backward from the "why" in vs's 13 & 14 before we look at the "what" in vs's 9-12.

After the Fall, men and women were assigned certain roles. In the context of marriage, for example, this is what we see in Eph. 5:22-26;

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word. . .

The "why" of this role assignment is based on the underlying reasons for Adam's and Eve's sins in the Garden. The woman was deceived; the man was not deceived - he rebelled. For Paul to emphasize the deception issue shows that in general, it's more likely for the woman to be deceived than the man. I say "in general" because I'm sure we've all see those roles reversed under some circumstances.

The Lord set up the ideal relationship based on the motivations of Adam and Eve at the fall- the current susceptibility of deception in the natures of men and women, and the responsibility each person has in protecting against deception. If the husband is the spiritual head and if the wife follows his lead, then the outcome will have a minimum of deception in the family. If the husband fails to lead or the wife fails to submit, things fall apart.

The husband can't love, sanctify and cleanse as Christ did the church if he bails on his responsibility to spiritually lead; the wife can't reap the benefits of staying on the right path if she moves independently from the husband and rejects his headship.

You can see how ingenious it was for Paul to match these roles to Christ and the Church. If Christ fails to love and sacrifice, or if the church fails to submit to the Lord's Headship, the relationship is damaged and the enemy will get the upper hand.

Both roles are difficult and are filled with a great deal of pressure, responsibility and the strong inward pull of the flesh to move according to our own desires, especially if the partner is failing to do what they are supposed to do. But the solution to a situation where one person is failing in their role is not for the other one to also abandon *their* role in an attempt to fix things. We see this in 1 Pet. 3:1-7

Wives be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do *not* obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by reverence. . . it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good. . . Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

So, when I said earlier that the abandonment by either person of their role in this relationship will cause things to fall apart, one of those things that is either limited or eliminated is answered prayer. For our personal prayer life to be effectual, we have to be doing whatever we can to stay faithful to what God has called us to do.

Peter acknowledges that there will be husbands who do not obey the word; the solution is not for the wife to leave her responsibility in an attempt to “fix” her husband. From the Lord’s perspective, the husband is more likely to respond to God’s discipline for failing to be what he is meant to be if the wife remains faithful to her role.

Also, the wife’s submission turns God loose on the husband. Which brings up the whole issue of what happens to the husband who actually does abandon his role as the spiritual leader of the family. The Lord is aware of what’s happening and He won’t remain passive if the wife is neglected and deprived of solid spiritual leadership; He will move on her behalf and bring divine discipline to the husband.

He will also use the faithfulness of the wife staying true to her role to bring inner conviction to the husband as he (quote) “observes her chaste conduct accompanied by reverence . . . “

Neither the wife nor the husband is going to do their part perfectly, it’s just important to remember that the Lord will be very involved in whatever way He believes has the best hope of resolving problems and maintaining a right relationship in the family.

So, to put the “why” and “what” together, the bent of the man after Adam’s Fall is to be passive and fail to take full responsibility for the spiritual guidance and sacrificial love his wife needs from him. The tendency of woman is to succumb to deception and to assert herself into a headship role, often out of fear of what will happen if she doesn’t. But, as we saw, the solution is to first remember that the Lord is going to be directly involved and that neither person should leave the role assigned to them due to the failure of the other person. Both the man and the woman have to fight against the world, flesh and devil to remain on the path God has given them trusting Him to work through whatever circumstances exist to shape both people into what they are meant to be.

Since we are no longer under Law, but under Grace, if we understand *why* the Lord has structured the relationship like this; if we trust that His wisdom is behind this, it will be a lot easier to assume these roles than if we inwardly resist them. By nature, men tend toward passivity and women tend toward dominance; but as those who are born again, we are new creations in Christ and the new nature *He* gave us agrees with what Paul and Peter have written. As long as *that* nature, and not the flesh, is driving us, taking on these roles will be our desire, not something we reluctantly do because it’s commanded. We obey because we trust the wisdom and heart of the One Who set things up this way.

Now, the “modest apparel” issue is an obvious exhortation. The Muslims have taken that to an absurd extreme, but it’s never helpful for any woman to dress in a way that is going to challenge a man’s self-control in the area of lust.

And finally, there is a vast difference between a woman being a guest-speaker at a conference and a woman taking an authoritative, leadership role in a congregation. When we get to that part of Timothy, we'll see that the leadership of the church is an ongoing, shepherding function designed to shape the souls of those in the Church through the ministry of God's Word.

If it's done in the way the Lord wants it to be done, the pastoral role is much more involved and impactful in the long run than any guest-speaking event that might occur. Paul isn't prohibiting women from sharing something God has shown them; he's prohibiting them from being the one who is responsible to take the congregation from infancy to maturity.

Now, I'll give you a quick explanation on Paul's comments in vs. 15 about women being (quote) "... saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control." There's a lot of theological speculation about this passage, but Joseph Dillow had what I think is the best explanation;

God promised women a life of fulfillment as mothers in the home, provided they walk with the Lord, rather than as leaders in the church. The meaning of *sozo* [to save] in this passage is once again referring to 'spiritual health,' a full and meaningful life. This fits the context quite well. Paul has just excluded women from positions of authority in the church (1 Timothy 2:9-14). What then is their primary destiny? They will find life through fulfilling their role as a mother IF they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety.

Finally, what author Steven Cole said definitely has to be added to this;

A woman should not teach men, nor should she do anything else to exercise authority over men. So, does Paul mean that a godly woman can never teach men? Then how do we explain God's manifest blessing on women missionaries who have evangelized, planted the church, and taught whole cultures of men and women? We need to be careful not to put God in our doctrinal boxes. He is notorious for doing as He pleases. The many noteworthy exceptional women in Scripture tell us to be careful here. But the exceptions, as well as the plain teaching of the scriptures, show us that

the exceptions are just that. The norm should be men in leadership and teaching positions in the church. If God raises up a gifted woman, we ought to recognize her ministry. But even so, she will have an attitude of submission to male leadership. And, she will focus primarily on teaching women. I think Elisabeth Elliot is an example of such a gifted woman.

Ok, that takes us to the end of 1 Tim. chapter 2; we'll move into chapter 3 next week. I'll stop the recording and we can discuss any questions or comments you might have.