

CHURCH LEADERSHIP 1

1TIMOTHY 3:1

1Timothy 3:1, **“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.”**

Today, we begin two weeks on the subject of **Church Leadership**.

And as far as I’m concerned this is today’s most pressing issue. Moral, godly, courageous leadership is critical to the success of any Church.

Over the years, church leaders have gone by different titles – *shepherd, reverend, priest, parson, padre, cleric, vicar, rector, curate* - to name a few.

Sadly, these titles are a far cry from the titles used in the NT – *servant, slave, steward, pastor, fellow-soldier, worker, laborer, elder, brother...*

There is a trend today among status-seeking, power-hungry pastors to take a more exalted title. “**Pastor**” is not lofty enough. They go by “**bishop**.”

Usually a few years go by, then they supersize it to “**archbishop**.”

Like *private, sergeant, and lieutenant...* they create a rank, a pecking order – *pastor... then bishop... then archbishop...* And this is the very practice Jesus prohibited. Jesus saw how the Jewish leaders of His day

were using the same kind of ego-inflating titles. He warned His disciples...

“They love... to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren... but he who is greatest among you shall be your servant...”

I bring this up because of this morning’s text, 1Timothy 3:1. Here Paul uses the term “*bishop*.” God appoints men to be “*bishops*” in the church.

And the Greek word translated “*bishop*” provides an excellent definition and illustration of the role of a church leader. It’s the title, “*Episkope*.”

Here’s the combination of two words - “*epi*” means “*over*” or “*on top*” - “*skope*” means “*to see*.” Thus, think of our English word “*scope*.”

Put it together and the term “*Episkope*” means “*to oversee*” or “*to see from the top*.” Certain men in the church need to see *the big picture*!

Usually, a head football coach roams the sidelines. He stays close to the action. He gets feedback... motivates the team... argues with the refs.

But his view from the trenches is limited. Too much happens on a football field. Every play 22 men line-up, shift into motion, and create various angles. They explode into multiple collisions all over the field.

Successful plays require proper alignment. You leverage the angles.

And there's no way a coach at ground level has a broad enough perspective to see the spacing that's occurring all over the football field.

That's why strategy comes from *"on top."* A bevy of assistant coaches in communication with the sideline, fill the press box, and oversee the action.

They're the ones who see the big picture and make the crucial calls.

The outcome of a game isn't just determined by who has the best team on the field. Sometimes it boils down to whose better in the press box.

And for the same reasons it's vital for a church to have good overseers.

Church Leadership is a critical component under the hood of a church.

As you know by now, in our current series, we're comparing the Church to an automobile, and its various assemblies. *We're popping the hood on the church...* and the people in leadership are a church's steering column.

Throughout the NT three factors help to define church leadership.

One is **"character."** We need leaders with integrity. Next week we'll examine chapter 3 and the list of traits that need to be present in a leader.

Second is **"giftedness"** - 3:2 tells us an elder should be **"able to teach."**

And the third component that defines church leadership is “**gender.**”

This is the topic we want to deal with today! Let’s read 3:1 again, “**This is a faithful saying: If *a man* desires the position of a bishop...**” In the next verse Paul adds the phrase, “**a husband of one wife**” – which implies male.

Paul has just cut the prospect pool for pastors and elders in half.

Throughout the NT positions of authority in the church are limited to men. In the church and home, God wants men to step up and be leaders.

Here’s one more title that should be used for a church leader, “**Mister.**”

Yet sadly, this is not what we see happening today in most churches...

If you walk into an Orthodox Jewish Synagogue, or a Muslim mosque, or a Buddhist Temple you’ll find a preponderance of men... But not so in a typical church... *statistics show 60% of church attendees are now women.*

Author David Murrow writes, “**Of the world’s great religions, only Christianity has a consistent, nagging shortage of male practitioners.**”

To make matters worse, most churches are also led by women.

It's true, 95% of senior pastors, and the majority of assistant pastors are still men – but after that it's a train of women who rule the roost.

Church has become a girl's world. *Where are the men?*

Actually, in all Western society – from the work place to the bedroom - there's confusion today among the sexes. **Men** desire to lead - but they don't, or perhaps don't know how. **Women** want to be led by a loving man, but they've been so disillusioned, they feel pressured to take the reins.

Last month's cover of Newsweek Magazine pictured a man holding his little boy. The copy reads, “**MAN UP! The traditional male is an endangered species. It's time to rethink masculinity.**” The article documented the confusion that exists today in our culture – especially among young men.

When women run the ship, young men tend to jump overboard.

Understand, *young men* are in the process of becoming *real men*. They need to prove their masculinity, and they do so by acting in ways that break away from mom. “**Real man**” and “**Mama's boy**” are polar opposites.

Social commentator, Camille Paglia, offers this explanation. “**A woman simply is, but a man must become. Masculinity is risky and elusive. It's achieved by a revolt from woman - and it's confirmed only by other men.**”

This is why a Christian community led by women will not attract young men. Strong male leadership is pivotal in the development of younger men.

The fact is, most of today's social problems – *an exploding prison population, unwed pregnancies, gang violence, the drug culture* – can be traced back to young men. The church today needs to gear itself toward reaching tomorrow's husbands and fathers. *And men reach younger men.*

The biggest need in church today is strong, godly male leadership.

Paul begins 1Timothy 2 by encouraging us to pray for “all men” - but “all men” come in two varieties. God created humans *male and female...*

In Genesis when God created the universe, He did so by separating and drawing distinctions. His first creative act was to divide “the light from the darkness.” He divided the waters above the firmament from the waters below. He separated the sea from dry land. God divided day from night.

God then created fish, birds, beasts – but again with distinction. He used biological boundaries. All living things reproduce after their own kind or species. God is specific. He distinguishes between all that He creates.

And when God's creative work reaches its apex – when He creates mankind – he once again divides. God separates us into male and female.

And every time the NT speaks to gender the author almost always traces the root of the discussion all the way back to Genesis and creation.

Understand, the biblical order for the sexes transcends any of the cultural arrangements that pop up from time to time and place to place.

What the NT teaches us about gender is more than a social construct.

It's God's creative order. God designed *maleness* and femaleness. Gender and its distinctions result from His creation. Biblical roles for the sexes apply to all cultures and all generations. **Gender matters to God!**

And this means 1Timothy 2 applies to you and me. We surveyed this chapter a few weeks ago, but today I want us to take a closer look...

Verses 11 reads, **"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."** Here's why... **"For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."**

Before we tackle Paul's controversial rules, let's uncover their rationale.

Here he tells us the reason a woman's role should be limited in the public assembly of the church is that **"Adam was formed first, then Eve."**

You'll remember from Genesis, the body of Adam was formed from the dust of the ground. God then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

Eve came later. She was the result of the first surgery. God put Adam into a deep sleep, opened up his side, and pulled out “*something curved.*” *That's how the Hebrew renders it* – we're not sure if it was a rib, some cartilage, an extra organ - *we don't know* – but God turned it into a woman.

Someone describe Eve's creation as “*The first splitting of an Adam and it unleashed a force into the world that has never been contained.*”

But here's Paul's point, “*Adam was formed first, then Eve.*”

Please note, in the Bible special prerogatives and responsibilities are always given to the firstborn son. This is why Rebekah's twin boys, Esau and Jacob, wrestled in the womb. They were jockeying to be the *firstborn*.

Apparently, Esau won the initial struggle, but the wrestling match had just begun. For the title of “*firstborn*” means a lot more than “*born first.*”

That's proven later in the story. Esau comes in famished. His sneaky brother, Jacob, dangles a bowl of Hearty Campbell's Soup under his nose.

Esau is governed by his appetites rather than his convictions. He trades his spiritual birthright – *the title of*

firstborn – to his brother Jacob for some warmed-over chili. Jacob was *born second*, but he ended up “*firstborn*.”

And likewise, generation after generation of human beings were born before that first Christmas, when a virgin conceived and brought forth her firstborn Son. Mary laid Him in a manger, and called His name, “*Jesus*.”

Jesus was *born first* only in Mary’s family, but God awarded Him with *firstborn* status. In Colossians 1:15 Jesus is called “*the firstborn over all creation*.” Our Lord Jesus is now head and authority over all the universe.

And so it was originally with Adam. God made a choice. “*Adam was formed first*.” God bestowed on the man the title and duties of “*firstborn*.”

Eve was as loved by God - and gifted by God – as Adam. But God gave the man authority over both *the human family* and *his immediate family*.

What a privilege! But with it came an obligation – a *heavy responsibility*.

The weightiness of the man’s role appeared later, when sin entered the world. It was Eve that sinned first – not Adam. *Yet God held the man responsible*. In fact, sin passed down to all men through Adam - *not Eve*.

Eve bit the fruit, but Adam got the bigger bite of responsibility.

Theologians have a name for this concept. It's called **federal headship**.

One man takes authority over a family or race. One man acts on behalf of all men. Later the Bible teaches that since all men are condemned in Adam, we all can be saved in Christ. One man acts in proxy for a group.

As David and Goliath fought it out for their respective sides to determine the battle between Israel and the Philistines, all men fight for their tribe.

The man is head – a representative – he acts on behalf of his family.

Don't misunderstand God holds Eve, and every other sinner, personally accountable for his or her sin. In this sense, Eve's sin had nothing to do with Adam. In fact, 2:14 let's Adam off the hook morally. *"Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."* Eve was clearly to blame, but since Adam was head he shared in the responsibility.

Likewise, Jesus had nothing to do with our sin – our failures are not His fault – yet as our head, our *firstborn*, Jesus took responsibility for our folly and rebellion. *Our Lord* carried *our sin* to the cross, and died in *our place*.

Biblical headship means *taking responsibility for what's not my fault!*

So when a man becomes a husband and a father – or he assumes leadership in the church - he takes on this concept of **biblical headship**.

He takes up grave, serious, weighty responsibilities. He agrees to cover his wife and kids. He stands in the gap for others. He doesn't grumble about problems he didn't cause. He doesn't duck issues other folks create.

A husband at home – a leader at church - takes responsibility for what's not his fault. Though he's not part of the problem, he tries to be part of the solution. He's willing to become accountable for the people under his care.

Here's how this works in a marriage... Husband, your wife bears scars and hurts from past relationships. Her wounds - and the dysfunctions they cause - are not your fault, but they are they are now your responsibility.

As the head of your home you're God's healing agent! You need to be a soothing, stabilizing influence on your wife – not a voice of condemnation...

Stop reminding your wife of her shame, and regrets, and mistakes.

Encourage her with *God's forgiveness* and *your grace*. Honor your wife. Build her up. Cherish her until she values herself. Love her until she acts lovable. Jesus redeems his bride. He doesn't condemn her. *Be like Jesus!*

For some of you, your wife brought *a kid with an attitude* into your life.

This kid is also not your fault. But a man – a man like Jesus – takes on responsibility. Headship is being accountable for stuff that's not your fault.

A lot happens in life we tend to blame on our wife, or child, or dog – but real men don't bellyache about what's not their fault. A man takes on the responsibility... *to pay her debt... to forgive their sin... to fix the break...*

A man shows those under him a better life. *He's like Jesus to his family.*

And this looks very similar to what happens at church... Godly leaders realize people make mistakes... Problems arise they didn't cause...

A church leader doesn't cast blame. He works to solve problems.

He takes on responsibility for stuff that's not his fault... Church leaders are God's healing agents to help the hurting people God seeks and saves.

Adam was created first, but with authority came responsibility. This is headship. Churches need leaders who embrace duty as well as authority.

I love how Peter describes gender roles in the church and in the home. He talks about males in authority, and females with a submissive spirit.

But he calls us “**heirs together of the grace of life.**”

We're “**co-heirs**” in God's family. We serve the *same Lord*. We're saved by the *same grace*. We're sealed with

the *same Spirit*. We're recipients of the *same blessings*. We hold title to the *same heaven* and *same glory*.

We're different in role, but we're equal in status, giftedness, and favor.

Men need to *lovingly lead* and women should *willingly follow*. But no man should ever become proud, and callous, and act superior to a woman.

A Christian man should never try to dominate or intimidate his wife.

Biblical masculinity is not some arrogant machismo, its *leadership among equals*. Christian men should be *head* and *heirs* – not *airheads*!

So here is Paul's rationale – male headship is as old as Adam and Eve.

Gender roles are part of God's creative order. It's embedded in our genes. This is how God fashions the sexes. From the beginning until now, this is how God orders society. *“For Adam was formed first, then Eve.”*

Adam was made by God to take charge – to provide for and to protect his wife. He was a loving leader. And Eve *wanted* Adam to lead. She found security and satisfaction at his side... And I believe if we were all honest, these same desires still brew in the heart of every man and every woman.

So how does Paul get from *“Adam was formed first, then Eve”* all the way to *women should be silent in the*

church? In the words of Neil Armstrong, “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

Here’s Paul’s logic: **If God calls men to lead women should let them.**

It’s not that God doesn’t like hearing a woman’s voice in the church – or some hellish force will be unleashed if a woman dares to teach or make a decision - or women are incapable of welding and managing authority...

I don’t think this is Paul’s thought process at all. It’s much simpler. Paul is a man, and he knows if women don’t *shut-up*, men will never *speak up*.

If a woman doesn’t allow a man to lead – if she jockeys and competes for power – if she never lets go of the reins and keeps wrestling leadership away from her man – she’ll end up sabotaging what she says she wants!

Show me a good husband who leads his wife in godliness, and steers his kids in loving paths - and I’ll show you a smart, sensitive woman who’s learned to *step back* - at times and in ways - that help her man *step up*.

Show me a church with strong male leadership - *and I won’t just show you determined men*. I’ll show you strong women, probably more talented than their husbands – but women wise enough to deliberately take a backseat, so their husbands will feel inclined to grab the wheel and steer.

Whereas, show me a church where men are missing in action, and I'll show you a church where foolish, bossy women competed for leadership.

Understand, once a wife declares war on her husband, there is nothing he can do to win. If she wants to fight him, he's destined to be miserable.

If he hits her... it goes very bad. He sleeps on the couch, or goes to jail. Or she packs her bags and leaves, and he ends up with hefty alimony.

If he caves in... he's not a real man. He feels defeated and deflated.

Men learn from an early age *not to fight with girls*. They never win.

If a wife wants to fight with her husband, for a short time he might try to shout and argue. But he's not as good with words – or tears - as his wife.

He can't compete. In a marital tug-of-war 99% of the time the wife wins by default. Here's what ultimately happens to most men - *they withdraw!*

They vacate. They *live in the garage* - or *hang out with their buddies* - or *work a lot* - or *take up golf* - or *go fishing*. They abandon the headship and leadership of their family. *If his wife wants to lead, the man will let her!*

Some women are intimidated by strong male leadership. Perhaps they've been *hurt* and *abused* by selfish, evil men. This has developed in them a general *dislike* and

mistrust for all men. Why these women married I don't know, but now that the knot's tied, they have the need to control their husband. They beat him down to keep him in line.

Proverbs 14:1 describes two types of women. *"The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands."* Every wife here this morning should ask herself, *"How do my actions and attitudes influence my husband? Do I help him man up – or am I pulling him down?"*

Some wives are gourmets in the kitchen, but they've failed to cook up a good husband. Don't let you him grow cold... Don't keep him in hot water, until he burns... Make sure he marinates in the right sauces and spices...

Ladies, do you show your husband respect? What every man wants most from his wife is some *R-E-S-P-E-C-T*. That's how a man spells *"love."*

Do you try to build up your husband's confidence? Do you encourage him to reach for the stars, or does your criticism keep him in a foxhole?

Why should he take initiative, if it's never enough? Some men prefer to lay low, and fly under the radar – than risk their wife's ridicule and digs.

Why should a husband take charge, when his wife is just going to buck his efforts until she gets her own way? - Why step up with his kids, if she's going to cut him off at the legs the first time she differs with his discipline?

All that Paul is saying in 1Timothy 2... *that women should learn in silence, be submissive, let the men teach and have authority...* implies that these women had tremendous confidence that their men will lead well.

Rather than belittling or prohibiting the women, Paul's instructions commend them for knowing how to manage and encourage their men.

And this is a skill some wives in our church need to learn. Sometimes, less is more. You can lose to win. You don't always have to compete to get ahead. There are times when the best way to move forward is a step back.

There's one certainty, no matter how fired up and excited a husband gets for leadership he'll never follow through if a wife blocks his intentions.

Ladies, if you're married to a Christian who loves God and loves you, it's time to learn to trust him. Loosen your grip and dare to let him lead.

A couple of weeks ago I was with a group of pastors, and someone asked me if our church had female ushers. I said, "No." He asked, "*Why?*"

I think he was expecting some detailed theological explanation.

My answer was much more basic. I told him, "*Men have always been ushers in our church - so why would I take a job from a man and give it to a lady, when men need to step up and be more invested, rather than less...*"

Today, Calvary has scores of women *willing, ready, and able* to serve, but God is calling men to lead both *in their house* and *in the household of God*. Its way past time for Christian men to *man up* and *put on the britches*!

I doubt if the troops of the Swedish National Army have ever been known for their fierceness in battle. But I hope they don't get tested soon.

Recently, feminist troops petitioned to make a change to the Nordic Battlegroup's Coat of Arms. Traditionally the Swedes have marched to battle under the banner of a lion. But the female troops had the lion neutered. Today, the Swedes march off to war under *a castrated lion*.

I'm sure the change in symbols inspires fear in their enemies' hearts! Yet I look at some churches today, and this could be their coat of arms.

In Revelation 5, Jesus is seen as a Lion – but not a neutered lion. He's the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He's ferocious. Jesus is King of the Jungle.

He roars and nations tremble. He returns and devours His enemies.

Yet today, the Church that marches under His banner more closely resembles a neutered lion. Today's church has been stripped of much of its manliness. Women demand greater roles, while men shrink to the rear.

A-century-and-a-half ago Charles Spurgeon commented, *"There has got abroad a notion, somehow,*

that if you become a Christian you must sink your manliness and turn milksop.” Somehow that notion is still afloat.

Just because the NT calls the Church “the bride of Christ” doesn’t mean Christian men need to be put on a skirt! “The bride” is a spiritual idiom for the Church as a whole - but when Paul refers to individual men like Timothy and others, he calls them, “O man of God,” or “my fellow soldier.”

The church today needs strong, godly men. Church leaders go by titles like “pastor” and “elder” - but first of all, they should be called “Mister.”

Thirty years as a pastor has taught me that this issue is no trivial matter.

I’ve been involved in the selection process of countless pastors and elders, and there’s one factor that stands out as the most reliable indicator of a man’s success in leadership... **Does he wear the pants in his own family?** Whenever Calvary looks for new leaders this is our starting point...

This is what Paul tells Timothy in 3:5, “For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?”

This morning I have a request. Here’s what I need to pastor this church into the future, and impact our community, and win our world for Jesus...

I need men... who'll love their wives and sacrifice for their kids.

I need men... who'll pay their bills, work hard, and feed their families.

I need men... who'll speak up, and live a life that points to Jesus.

I need men... who care more about people than fame or fortune.

I need men... who aren't afraid to shake things up and do things right.

I need men... who care enough to confront a brother who's cheating on his income tax, or shacking up with his girlfriend, or neglecting his kids.

I need men... who'll give time, and money, and expertise to build a great church, and leave behind a legacy of faith... I need pastors, elders, and deacons – all kinds of leadership – *but it starts with you... Mister!*