

Teaching Plan
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: June 9, 2019

Lesson Title: "On Mission"

Lesson Passage: 1 Timothy 2:1-15

ABOUT THIS LESSON

In our Bible passage, Paul talks first about the importance of prayer as an element in Christian worship. Then he gives Timothy instructions concerning proper conduct in public worship services.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

- (1) Explain why Christians should pray for even pagan rulers.
- (2) Explain why the conduct of women was a crucial issue in the Ephesian church.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

Begin by asking, "Should Christians pray for non-Christian rulers?" Let class members respond, then, after reading 1 Timothy 2:1-4, make the following points: (1) The universal nature of Paul's instructions in this passage comes through clearly in the phrases "all men," "all who are in high positions" and "all men" in verses 1, 2, 4. (2) The Christian attitude in New Testament times is stated plainly in Romans 13:1-4 and 1 Peter 2:17. (3) Then offer this explanation: The basis for this attitude is that "there is one God" (1 Tim. 2:5); and this one God is Sovereign even over those who do not acknowledge Him (e.g, Isa. 45:1 refers to Cyrus, a pagan ruler, as "God's anointed").

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. *Continue this line of discussion by pointing out that Paul gives a compelling reason for praying for leaders of government in verse 2--"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life."* COMMENT: God's will is that all people live in peace and security, and Christians should pray for leaders to that end. War, civil discord and political strife are detrimental to God's purposes. ILLUSTRATION: The early expansion of Christianity was greatly aided by the *Pax Romana*, the universal peace enforced by the Roman Empire for two centuries. Had the world been at war, Christian missionaries would not have been able to travel freely. (As an example, refer to the terrible civil war that has forced thousands of Christians in the Congo to flee for their lives.)

2. *Comment on the radical claim for the absolute uniqueness of Christ in v. 5 ("there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"). Note the saying of Jesus in John 14:6, "No man cometh*

unto the Father, but by me." ILLUSTRATION: A Hindu merchant said to a missionary, "If this claim was true, then, of course, we must accept it; but if it was false, then the man who made it was a rank impost-er. The Man who said things like that forces you to a decision." (And he was absolutely right.)

3. Call attention to the conditions essential to prayer in v. 8: (1) "in every place" (wherever Christians worship). (2) "holy hands" ("undefiled hands"). Persistent sin makes prayer ineffective (see *Isaiah 1:15*). (3) "without anger or quarreling" (read *Mark 11:25*).

4. Let class members read 1 Tim. 2:9-10 silently, then comment: (1) Verses 11-15 usually attract so much attention that verses 9-10 are overlooked. But, Paul's point is applicable today. In Graeco-Roman society there were many women whose lives revolved around luxurious clothing, gaudy ornaments, and expensive hairdos. Paul is saying that this is not appropriate for Christians. (The words "adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel" do not rule out good grooming; rather, they warn against unbridled extravagance.) (2) *Lead a discussion of the meaning of verse 10.* APPLICATION: What is meant by "good works" in our day?)

5. To interpret 1 Tim. 2:11-15, offer these thoughts: (1) "Let a woman learn" (v. 11) was a radical departure from the usual custom in that cultural context. To most people in both Jewish and Greek society, the education of females was unthinkable; but Paul insisted that women be schooled in the faith. (2) In Gal. 3:28, Paul wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Why, then, did he tell the women in the church at Ephesus to "learn in silence with all humility"? *Suggest this:* There were two strong cultural elements in the Ephesian community--Jews and Greeks. Both assigned a very low place to women. Women had no part whatever in the Jewish synagogue service; they observed services from a gallery where they could not be seen. In most Greek households, women were confined to their own quarters, receiving no visitors other than their husbands. They never went to public meetings. In this kind of social context, had women become highly vocal in Christian meetings, the church would have become known as a gathering place for wanton, undisciplined women. (3) Many biblical scholars believe that Paul's words in vv. 11-12 were intended to curb the tendencies of Christian women to abuse their newfound freedom by indulging in behavior that could have given the whole Christian community a bad reputation. (*Paul was referring specifically to Christian worship. We should be cautious about applying what he says here to all other contexts.*)

CLOSING THE LESSON

A closing thought: Paul's appeal for modesty and dignity in the demeanor of women in worship services could well be applied to

worshippers of both sexes and all ages today. Anything that detracts from experiencing the presence of God in worship is inappropriate.

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