

1 Timothy 2:11-15

by St. John Chrysostom

Paul emphasizes the importance of women's silence and submission in the church, and the role of mothers in training their children in virtue.

Scripture: Genesis 3:16, 1 Corinthians 11:9, 1 Corinthians 14:35, 1 Timothy 2:11, 1 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Biblical Womanhood", "Family Values"

Description

John Chrysostom emphasizes the importance of women learning in silence and subjection, not teaching or usurping authority over men, based on the order established by God with Adam being formed first. He explains that women should find honor in modesty and silence, focusing on faith, charity, and holiness. Chrysostom highlights the consequences of Eve's deception and the salvation of women through childbearing, encouraging them to continue in faith and virtue. He also addresses the responsibility of parents in raising children with moral values and the significance of guiding daughters to be pious and modest for the benefit of future generations.

Transcript

Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in [through the] child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Great modesty and great propriety does the blessed Paul require of women, and that not only with respect to their dress and appearance: he proceeds even to regulate their speech. And what says he? Let the woman learn in silence; that is, let her not speak at all in the church; which rule he has also given in his Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says, It is a shame for women to speak in the church 1 Corinthians 14:35; and the reason is, that the law has made them subject to men. And again elsewhere, And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home. 1 Corinthians 14:35 Then indeed the women, from such teaching, kept silence; but now there is apt to be great noise among them, much clamor and talking, and nowhere so much as in this place. They may all be seen here talking more than in the market, or at the bath. For, as if they came hither for recreation, they are all engaged in conversing upon unprofitable subjects. Thus all is confusion, and they seem not to understand, that unless they are quiet, they cannot learn anything that is useful. For when our discourse strains against the talking, and no one minds what is said, what good can it do to them? To such a degree should women be silent, that they are

not allowed to speak not only about worldly matters, but not even about spiritual things, in the church. This is order, this is modesty, this will adorn her more than any garments. Thus clothed, she will be able to offer her prayers in the manner most becoming.

But I suffer not a woman to teach. I do not suffer, he says. What place has this command here? The fittest. He was speaking of quietness, of propriety, of modesty, so having said that he wished them not to speak in the church, to cut off all occasion of conversation, he says, let them not teach, but occupy the station of learners. For thus they will show submission by their silence. For the sex is naturally somewhat talkative: and for this reason he restrains them on all sides. For Adam, says he, was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

If it be asked, what has this to do with women of the present day? It shows that the male sex enjoyed the higher honor. Man was first formed; and elsewhere he shows their superiority. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. 1 Corinthians 11:9 Why then does he say this? He wishes the man to have the preeminence in every way; both for the reason given above, he means, let him have precedence, and on account of what occurred afterwards. For the woman taught the man once, and made him guilty of disobedience, and wrought our ruin. Therefore because she made a bad use of her power over the man, or rather her equality with him, God made her subject to her husband. Your desire shall be to your husband? Genesis 3:16 This had not been said to her before.

But how was Adam not deceived? If he was not deceived, he did not then transgress? Attend carefully. The woman said, The serpent beguiled me. But the man did not say, The woman deceived me, but, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. Now it is not the same thing to be deceived by a fellow-creature, one of the same kind, as by an inferior and subordinate animal. This is truly to be deceived. Compared therefore with the woman, he is spoken of as not deceived. For she was beguiled by an inferior and subject, he by an equal. Again, it is not said of the man, that he saw the tree was good for food, but of the woman, and that she did eat, and gave it to her husband: so that he transgressed, not captivated by appetite, but merely from the persuasion of his wife. The woman taught once, and ruined all. On this account therefore he says, let her not teach. But what is it to other women, that she suffered this? It certainly concerns them; for the sex is weak and fickle, and he is speaking of the sex collectively. For he says not Eve, but the woman, which is the common name of the whole sex, not her proper name. Was then the whole sex included in the transgression for her fault? As he said of Adam, After the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come Romans 5:14; so here the female sex transgressed, and not the male. Shall not women then be saved? Yes, by means of children. For it is not of Eve that he says, If they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. What faith? What charity? What holiness with sobriety? It is as if he had said, You women, be not cast down, because your sex has incurred blame. God has granted you another opportunity of salvation, by the bringing up of children, so that you are saved, not only by yourselves, but by others. See how many questions are involved in this matter. The woman, he says, being deceived was in the transgression. What woman? Eve. Shall she then be saved by child-bearing? He does not say that, but, the race of women shall be saved. Was not it then involved in transgression? Yes, it was, still Eve transgressed, but the whole sex shall be saved, notwithstanding, by childbearing. And why not by their own personal virtue? For has she excluded others from this salvation? And what will be the case with virgins, with the barren, with widows who have lost their husbands, before they had children? will they perish? Is there no hope for them? Yet virgins are held in the highest estimation. What then does he mean to say?

Some interpret his meaning thus. As what happened to the first woman occasioned the subjection of the whole sex, (for since Eve was formed second and made subject, he says, let the rest of the sex be in subjection,) so because she transgressed, the rest of the sex are also in transgression. But this is not fair reasoning; for at the creation all was the gift of God, but in this case, it is the consequence of the woman's sin. But this is the amount of what he says. As all men died through one, because that one sinned, so the whole female race transgressed, because the woman was in the transgression. Let her not however grieve. God has given her no small consolation, that of childbearing. And if it be said that this is of nature, so is that also of nature; for not only that which is of nature has been granted, but also the bringing up of children. If they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety; that is, if after childbearing, they keep them in charity and purity. By these means they will have no small reward on their account, because they have trained up wrestlers for the service of Christ. By holiness he means good life, modesty, and sobriety.

Chap. iii. ver. 1. This is a faithful saying.

This relates to the present subject, not to what follows, respecting the office of a Bishop. For as it was doubted, he affirms it to be a true saying, that fathers may be benefited by the virtue of their children, and mothers also, when they have brought them up well. But what if she be herself addicted to wickedness and vice? Will she then be benefited by the bringing up of children? Is it not probable that she will bring them up to be like herself? It is not therefore of any woman, but of the virtuous woman, that it is said she shall receive a great recompense for this also.

Moral. Hear this, you fathers and mothers, that your bringing up of children shall not lose its reward. This also he says, as he proceeds, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children. 1 Timothy 5:10 Among other commendations he reckons this one, for it is no light praise to devote to God those children which are given them of God. For if the basis, the foundation which they lay be good, great will be their reward; as great, if they neglect it, will be their punishment. It was on account of his children that Eli perished. For he ought to have admonished them, and indeed he did admonish them, but not as he ought; but from his unwillingness to give them pain he destroyed both himself and them. Hear this, you fathers, bring your children up with great care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4 Youth is wild, and requires many governors, teachers, directors, attendants, and tutors; and after all these, it is a happiness if it be restrained. For as a horse not broken in, or a wild beast untamed, such is youth. But if from the beginning, from the earliest age, we fix it in good rules, much pains will not be required afterwards; for good habits formed will be to them as a law. Let us not suffer them to do anything which is agreeable, but injurious; nor let us indulge them, as forsooth but children. Especially let us train them in chastity, for there is the very bane of youth. For this many struggles, much attention will be necessary. Let us take wives for them early, so that their brides may receive their bodies pure and unpolluted, so their loves will be more ardent. He that is chaste before marriage, much more will he be chaste after it; and he that practiced fornication before, will practice it after marriage. All bread, it is said, is sweet to the fornicator. Sirach 23:17 Garlands are wont to be worn on the heads of bridegrooms, as a symbol of victory, betokening that they approach the marriage bed unconquered by pleasure. But if captivated by pleasure he has given himself up to harlots, why does he wear the garland, since he has been subdued?

Let us admonish them of these things. Let us employ sometimes advice, sometimes warnings, sometimes threatening. In children we have a great charge committed to us. Let us bestow great care upon them, and do everything that the Evil One may not rob us of them. But now our practice is the very reverse of this. We take all care indeed to have our farm in good order, and to commit it to a faithful manager, we look out

for it an ass-driver, and muleteer, and bailiff, and a clever accomptant. But we do not look out for what is much more important, for a person to whom we may commit our son as the guardian of his morals, though this is a possession much more valuable than all others. It is for him indeed that we take such care of our estate. We take care of our possessions for our children, but of the children themselves we take no care at all. What an absurdity is this! Form the soul of your son aright, and all the rest will be added hereafter. If that is not good, he will derive no advantage from his wealth, and if it is formed to goodness he will suffer no harm from poverty. Would you leave him rich? Teach him to be good: for so he will be able to acquire wealth, or if not, he will not fare worse than they who possess it. But if he be wicked, though you leave him boundless wealth, you leave him no one to take care of it, and you render him worse than those who are reduced to extreme poverty. For poverty is better than riches for those children who are not well-disposed. For it retains them in some degree of virtue even against their will. Whereas money does not suffer those who would be sober to continue so, it leads them away, ruins them, and plunges them into infinite dangers.

Mothers, be specially careful to regulate your daughters well; for the management of them is easy. Be watchful over them, that they may be keepers at home. Above all, instruct them to be pious, modest, despisers of wealth, indifferent to ornament. In this way dispose of them in marriage. For if you form them in this way, you will save not only them, but the husband who is destined to marry them, and not the husband only, but the children, not the children only, but the grandchildren. For the root being made good, good branches will shoot forth, and still become better, and for all these you will receive a reward. Let us do all things therefore, as benefiting not only one soul, but many through that one. For they ought to go from their father's house to marriage, as combatants from the school of exercise, furnished with all necessary knowledge, and to be as leaven able to transform the whole lump to its own virtue. And let your sons be so modest, as to be distinguished for their steadiness and sobriety, that they may receive great praise both from God and men. Let them learn to govern their appetites, to avoid extravagance, to be good economists, affectionate, and submissive to rule. For so they will be able to secure a good reward to their parents, so all things will be done to the glory of God, and to our salvation, through Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom, etc.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-chrysostom/1-timothy-211-15/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net