On Mission

Believers are to be mindful of how they represent God in this world.

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-15

MEMORY VERSE: 1 TIMOTHY 2:1

- **READ** 1 Timothy 2:1-15, First Thoughts (p. 24), and Understand the Context (p. 24) to gain more insight into the culture of Ephesus at the time of this letter.

- **STUDY** 1 Timothy 2:1-15, using Explore the Text (pp. 25–29). Review PACK ITEM 2 (Outlines of 1,2 Timothy; Titus) for an overview of 1 Timothy. Familiarize yourself with PACK ITEM 3 (Poster: Metaphors in Paul’s Letters), focusing on the metaphor of Jesus as our mediator. Read an article on “gender equality” in a trusted Bible dictionary.

- **PLAN** the group time using ideas under Lead Group Bible Study (pp. 30–31), More Ideas (p. 32), and ideas included in QuickSource. Consider how you will emphasize the importance of men leading the way in the church while affirming the role women play in reaching others with the gospel.

- **GROW** with other group leaders at the Groups Ministry blog (LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry).

- **GATHER** the following items: □ Personal Study Guides. Prepare to display the following Pack Items: □ PACK ITEM 1 (Map: The World of Paul, Timothy, and Titus); □ PACK ITEM 2 (Outlines of 1,2 Timothy; Titus); and □ PACK ITEM 3 (Poster: Metaphors in Paul’s Letters). If using the Summarize and Challenge exercise listed under More Ideas (p. 32), obtain: □ A whiteboard and a marker.

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FIRST THOUGHTS

Everywhere we go, someone is watching us. A family member, a child, a friend, a co-worker—someone is watching. This watching is not being done in some weird way, but done to see how we do things especially if we claim to be Christians. Not only are our actions being watched, but also our attitudes and motives. People want to know if the Christian life is real so they watch. Jesus gives us an opportunity to influence others for Him by representing Him in this world.

(In PSG, p. 19) When have you become aware that someone was watching you? How did that awareness change your behavior?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-15

Sandwiched between his warning about resisting false teachers and instructions for qualifications for pastors and deacons, Paul urged Timothy to lead the Ephesian believers to develop lifestyles that would impact their community for Christ. Living on mission with the gospel was not limited to missionary journeys like those Paul had undertaken. Timothy was well acquainted with the opportunities and opposition experienced when traveling with Paul on evangelistic and church planting endeavors. However, as a pastor, Timothy had a different task: to equip the believers to be on mission in their spheres of influence.

Located in the Roman province of Asia, on the western side of modern day Turkey, Ephesus was a cosmopolitan city situated as a crossroads between three major trading regions. While the Roman Empire ruled the known world at this time, various regional rulers also affected the people of Ephesus. Paul urged Timothy to lead the believers to pray for these authorities, as well as for other persons they encountered. Both men knew that prayer was foundational to every other aspect of ministry. Only the power of God could break through the barriers to the gospel.

The remainder of Paul’s instructions directed both men and women about ways they could influence their society for Christ. From prayer and worship to the way they dressed and behaved, Ephesian believers had opportunities for witnessing to people in the pagan culture of their city. Ephesus was known for its famous temple to Diana, also known as Artemis. Much of the Ephesian economy was built around this place of false worship. Paul encountered serious opposition from merchants whose businesses were related to the temple (Acts 19). The Christian community lacked the power or position to change the culture through political or economic
pressure. Paul knew their greatest source of influence was prayer and godly lifestyles.

Paul knew that God wanted all people be saved through faith in Jesus Christ. The church was God’s instrument for spreading the gospel. The believers’ prayers were powerful as they interceded for the people of Ephesus—from the authorities to the average citizen. Their consistent lifestyles and faithful worship authenticated the faith they proclaimed. By any and all means, the Christians were on mission to Ephesus and beyond.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

THROUGH PRAYER (1 TIM. 2:1-7)

VERSES 1-2
Paul called on Timothy to lead the church to pray for the salvation of all people. The phrase first of all, then, relates what he was about to say with his previous comments in the first chapter. Because the church faced opposition from false teachers in the church and false worship in the culture, the believers needed to take action. Paul’s use of the term urge emphasized what he was saying was crucial.

Reaching Ephesus required a spiritual approach totally dependent on the Lord. Paul urged the believers to take four actions designed to bring the power of God to bear on the populace. Christians were to offer petitions, prayers of supplication, as they asked God to act. Petitions certainly were prayers, but the term prayers encompassed all types of requests being made to God. Another kind of prayer involved intercessions, a word that suggests coming before an authority on behalf of someone else. Paul also encouraged the Ephesian Christians to offer thanksgivings, not merely for God’s blessings, but for God’s involvement with the people for whom they are praying.

The object of these four actions was not limited to any group of people but was to be for everyone. While Paul specifically identified authorities in verse 2, he wanted the believers to pray for all kinds of persons. No one was excluded from their gospel mission.

While the believers prayed for everyone, they especially needed to pray for kings and all those who are in authority. The general inclusion of all those who are in authority meant persons who exercised power at every level of government. The basic principle could also be applied to religious authorities and leaders in business.

The purpose of their prayers was the effect it might have on the believers and their community. However good or evil the authorities might be, they could influence whether the people were able to enjoy tranquil and quiet lives. Notice the phrase so that we may lead. Believers should pray for persons in authority for the benefit of all who seek a tranquil and quiet life. We do not have to agree with their policies or politics any more than the early Christians endorsed their secular rulers. As we pray for authorities, God will work in their lives for the benefit of His people and the accomplishment of His purpose.
VERSES 3-4

3 This is good, and it pleases God our Savior,
4 who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Paul normally referred to God as Father and Jesus as Savior. In this context, he referred to God as our Savior. By calling God our Savior, Paul had in mind God’s intention and provision for salvation in the following verses.

Paul asserted that as our Savior, God wants everyone to be saved. His statement is consistent with Peter’s encouragement that God is not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). Both passages address God’s will. Neither says that all people will be saved, but that God’s desire is for them to be saved.

The second phrase, to come to the knowledge of the truth, was a continuation of what it means to be saved. The word knowledge involves more than understanding the facts of the gospel; it includes a full comprehension and appropriation of the truth—the good news of Jesus. This prayer focus reflects God’s desire for all people to be saved through faith in Jesus.

VERSES 5-7

5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus,
6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time.
7 For this I was appointed a herald, an apostle (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Not only does God desire that people be saved, He provided the means by which we are saved. Paul began with the basic statement of faith common to Jews and Christians: there is one God. (See Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29.) The syntax of verse 5 equates the doctrine of one God with that of one mediator. In the Jewish sacrificial system, priests fulfilled the role of mediators. Paul proclaimed there is only one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus. Paul’s emphasis on Jesus’ being a man did not diminish the reality of His divinity. The apostle declared the dual truths of Jesus’ humanity and deity. To acknowledge Jesus as the Christ was the same as pronouncing Him to be divine. God was the Savior by giving His Son, Jesus, to mediate reconciliation between Himself and humanity.

Jesus secured our salvation when He gave himself as a ransom for all. The concept of salvation as a ransom echoes throughout the Old Testament. (See Isa. 35:10; Jer. 31:11; Hos. 13:14.) Jesus identified His primary mission as giving His life as a ransom for many. (See Matt. 20:28.)

As he thought about the gospel message he had been proclaiming, Paul used three terms to describe his role. He was a herald, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. A herald was someone who proclaimed the message of the person who sent him. The gospel Paul preached was not his message but God’s.

Similarly, the literal meaning of apostle is one who is sent out on a mission. While Paul was not one of the Twelve, God had chosen him to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Because some people had questioned his authority, Paul reiterated twice that he was telling the truth and was not lying.

Finally, Paul was a teacher of the Gentiles. Although he often preached in synagogues earlier in his ministry, Paul’s primary ministry was to the non-Jewish people. Likely all three terms—herald, apostle, and teacher—
related to his ministry to the Gentiles. His message, mission, and ministry found fulfillment in bringing God’s good news of salvation through Jesus to the nations. Paul affirmed that he had not sought these roles but was appointed by God. Thus, the source of his authority was not man, nor a council of men, but of God.

**Believers are called to pray with a special focus on the lost.**

Because salvation comes only through faith in Jesus, believers are called to pray with a special focus on the lost. Being on mission as heralds of God’s good news, our prayers demonstrate our dependence on Him to open people’s hearts to Christ.

*Why is prayer so vital in carrying out the mission God has given us?*

**LED BY GODLY MEN** *(1 TIM 2:8)*

**VERSE 8**

This verse and the verses regarding women complement the previous section on prayer and salvation. Paul called on believers to set the example through prayer with love and unity. Specifically, he wanted the men to lead the church to be on mission for Christ by praying.

Paul previously emphasized the broad reach of prayer and salvation (vv. 1,4). Believers were to pray for everyone, and God desired everyone to be saved. He continued that refrain in verse 8, calling on *men in every place to pray.* Wherever the church gathered, the men were to pray, applying the four aspects of prayer mentioned in verse 1.

While Paul’s admonition mentions *lifting up holy hands,* his comment should not be taken as advocacy for a particular posture of prayer. The lifting of hands was secondary to the other aspects of Paul’s statement. First, prayer involves communication with a holy God; therefore, the person praying should have *holy hands.* This phrase is a metaphor for the believer’s spiritual condition. If we would come into the presence of the Almighty, we should have clean hands and a pure heart. (See Ps. 24:3-4.)

Second, the manner of prayer should be *without anger or argument.* Paul had already noted the disruptive presence of false teachers in Ephesus in chapter 1. The believers should not allow these disputes to detract from their prayers on behalf of all people.

*How can godly men in your church lead the way in praying for all people?*
VERSUS 9-10

9 Also, the women are to dress themselves in modest clothing, with decency and good sense, not with elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive apparel,
10 but with good works, as is proper for women who profess to worship God.

VERSUS 11-14

11 A woman is to learn quietly with full submission. 12 I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; instead, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and transgressed.

SUPPORTED BY GODLY WOMEN (1 TIM. 2:9-15)

VERSUS 9-10

A church on mission needs every member to participate. Paul’s directions to women in the Ephesian church would help them serve their church by promoting the gospel of Christ. Beginning this section with the word also, Paul linked what he had previously said to men with what he was about to say regarding women. As the men served the church through prayer and holy living, even so the women (a possible reference to the men’s wives) supported this servant leadership. While verse 9 focuses on the women’s appearance, it must be read in the context of verse 10. Paul was contrasting the habits of pagan women in Ephesian society with Christian women whose good works and worship of God demonstrated godliness.

Paul was contrasting the habits of pagan women in Ephesian society with Christian women.

Because the society took particular notice to women’s appearance, he encouraged them to be mindful of their dress and actions, especially when gathered for worship. Women with financial means used outward elegance to promote themselves. Elaborate hairstyles, jewelry made with gold and pearls, and expensive apparel demonstrated materialistic values common among the pagan citizens of Ephesus. Contrasted with this lifestyle were the Christian women who wore modest clothing and were known for their decency and good sense. The word translated decency carries the connotation of modesty toward people and reverence toward God. The word for good sense emphasizes the person’s self-control and sound mind. Godly women maintained honorable reputations that glorified the Lord.

VERSUS 11-14

Moving from the public appearance and reputation of godly women, Paul took the opportunity to instruct Timothy in how such women should act within the church. Verse 11 emphasizes the need for believers to learn. The idea conveyed by this term describes someone who receives instruction.

As someone in a position of being taught God’s Word, the women would best do so quietly with full submission. The idea of submission could imply husbands, but in this context of instruction in the church, it could refer to the biblical teacher in the church, possibly the pastor.

Assuming verse 11 refers to instruction by the pastor, verse 12 would follow that idea. Paul’s restriction that a woman should not teach or have authority over a man could include that she should not serve in the role of pastor. This interpretation would be consistent with Paul’s other statements in chapter 3 and in Titus regarding the qualifications for pastors.

Paul’s injunction for the woman to remain quiet does not mean that a woman cannot speak or pray in church. Instead, it infers that she should defer to the pastor and to her husband in matters of biblical teaching and authority. Some scholars see a reference to maintaining a quiet attitude as opposed to a quarrelsome spirit.
Offering support for his position, Paul noted that *Adam was formed first*. The word *formed* emphasizes God’s initiation and operation in creating all things, including human beings. By adding *then Eve*, Paul not only reiterated the order of human creation, but also noted that Eve, like Adam, was created by God in His image (Gen. 1:26-27).

Paul pointed out that *the woman was deceived*, unlike her husband *Adam*. This text should not be understood to minimize Adam’s responsibility in the original sin. Elsewhere, Paul referred several times to the way sin came into the world “through one man”—meaning Adam (Rom. 5:12-19). In this immediate context, Paul noted the fact that Eve transgressed. She was culpable in disobeying God’s instructions.

None of these restrictions suggest that one gender should be considered superior to the other. Both men and women have roles in the church; they are just different, focusing the strengths of each gender into the mission of the church in its culture.

**VERSE 15**

Paul’s final statement can confuse the casual reader. He appears to suggest salvation for women comes through *childbearing*. Keeping in mind that all Scriptures are consistent, this interpretation would be in conflict with countless passages dealing with salvation through Christ alone. Also, the first part of the statement links with lifestyles of faith, love, holiness, and good sense.

Keeping the larger context in mind, while Paul had just given some restrictive guidance to the women in the church, he quickly affirmed the positive nature of female believers. Their roles, particularly as mothers, were invaluable both to the church and the family. As such, they needed to maintain consistent qualities. The *faith* of godly women has led many children to trust and love Christ. A woman’s *love* for her husband and children binds families together in caring nurture. A woman’s *holiness* models the kind of lifestyle that honors the Lord. The term *good sense* harkens back to verse 9 in calling women to live with moderation and self-control.

Godly women are mindful of how they impact the witness of the church. As men and women carry out the mission of Christ’s church, each fulfills unique and important roles. Together, in prayer, they are co-laborers with Christ in His gospel mission to the world.

**How have you been influenced positively by godly women in your life?**
LEAD GROUP BIBLE STUDY

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)

READ: Direct the group to the following sentences in the paragraph on page 19 of the PSG: Not only are our actions being watched but so are our attitudes and motives. People want to know if our Christian lives are real, so they watch.

ASK: In what ways are Christians watched or judged differently than non-Christians? Why?

EXPLAIN: In 1 Timothy 2, Paul gives instructions regarding how Christians are to represent God in this world.

REVIEW: Ask the group to summarize what they learned about the city of Ephesus in their study during the last week. Use Pack Item 1 (Map: The World of Paul, Timothy, and Titus) to point out the location of Ephesus. Using Understand the Context (pp. 24–25; PSG p. 20) to highlight additional information about Ephesus, specifically the temple of Diana, that sets the stage for Paul’s letter.

TRANSITION: Explain that this setting in Ephesus intensified the need for set-apart godly examples in the church. Note on Pack Item 2 (Outlines of 1, 2 Timothy; Titus) that this session shifts to a focus on proper worship.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

READ: Direct the group to pay attention to what Paul wrote about prayer as a volunteer reads 1 Timothy 2:1-7.

ASK: What do these verses teach us about the content of prayer?

EXAMINE: Explore the differences between “petitions,” “prayers,” “intercessions,” and “thanksgivings.” Instruct someone to look up definitions for each word on his or her smartphone and another person to read the definitions in the PSG under Verses 1-2 (p. 21).

DISCUSS: How are these various aspects of prayer related to one another? What do these verses reveal about the role of Jesus in our prayer lives?

ILLUSTRATE: Display Pack Item 3 (Poster: Metaphors in Paul’s Letters). Invite the group to compare and contrast Jesus’ role as our mediator and the role of a legal mediator. Consider the differences between the groups needing mediation: Jesus as mediator is providing a connection between the perfect God and flawed man, whereas a legal mediator works to resolve a connection between two flawed and sinful humans.

DISCUSS: How should the gospel’s offer to all people impact how we pray? (PSG, p. 22)

READ: Invite someone to read 1 Timothy 2:8. Explain that in this verse, the word used for “men” refers specifically to males.
DEBATE: Encourage the group to underline this statement in the first paragraph of the PSG for this section (p. 23): Our passion for Christ can be gauged by our commitment to His mission. Our commitment to His mission can be measured by our faithfulness in prayer. Invite the group to discuss their level of agreement or disagreement with these statements and share why.

ASK: How can anger influence a person’s prayer requests? How does anger get in the way of prayer? (PSG p. 23)

DISCUSS: Direct the group to the following sentence in the second paragraph of the PSG for this section (p. 23): The phrase “lifting up holy hands” referred more to purity of the heart than to posture of the body. Ask: What signifies a pure heart?

READ: As a volunteer reads 1 Timothy 2:9-15, encourage the group to consider if these directives given are specific to Christian women as opposed to all women.

EVALUATE: Invite the group to list some of the directions given to women in these verses. Ask: What did Paul seem most concerned with? How does the historical background of Ephesus impact your understanding of these directions?

HYPOTHESIZE: Call for the group to discuss which of these commands might have been most radical to Paul’s original audience and why. Then consider which of these commands are the most radical today.

READ: Direct a volunteer to read Proverbs 3:5-7. Assert that there may be Bible passages that seem counterintuitive to what the world believes, but we can trust in the goodness of God’s Word.

DISCUSS: Affirm that men and women were created equally in the image of God. Ask: How has God uniquely equipped women to fulfill His gospel mission? How about men?

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)

REVIEW: Direct the group to the three bulleted summary statements under In My Context (PSG, p. 27). Call on the group to discuss how each of these statements pertain to a missional mind-set. Lead them to reflect on how the discussion has influenced how they previously felt about living on mission.

RESPOND: Guide the group through the first question set under In My Context in the PSG (p. 27): As a group, discuss ways of being more intentional in praying for the salvation of others. In what ways can your group consistently pray for the lost in your community?

CHALLENGE: Invite the group to share ways they can be more effective missionally in light of today’s study. Call on a volunteer to read 1 Timothy 2:1-2 again. Encourage the group to pray for those in authority this week. Ask: How can prayer impact our responses toward current events?

PRAY: Close in prayer, thanking God for the opportunity to represent Him in the world and participate in His good work.
PRACTICE

• Consider the third question set under In My Context in the PSG (p. 27), specifically as it pertains to your role as a group leader: Take time to pray, asking God to reveal any actions of yours that might get in the way of sharing the gospel. Commit to make changes as He reveals to you those actions. Record any actions you plan on taking as a result of what God reveals to you.

• Recruit leaders from the group to implement the suggestions made regarding ways to consistently pray for the lost in your community.

MORE IDEAS

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)
As your group begins, ask: Who are some of the most famous people alive right now? Discuss how many of the most famous people go to great lengths to maintain privacy and avoid being watched all the time. Ask the following from the PSG (p. 19): When have you become aware that someone was watching you? How did that awareness change your behavior?

EXPLORE THE TEXT

• To enhance discussion of 1 Timothy 2:1, direct the group to each write last week’s memory verse (1 Timothy 1:15) at the top of a piece of paper and this week’s memory verse (1 Timothy 2:1) at the bottom of the paper. Encourage the group to use the middle of the paper to sketch, write, or notate the relationship between these two verses.

• For further study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15, lead the group through the Bible Skill activity in the PSG (p. 26): Using a concordance, find other passages dealing with the different roles each gender has in church life and ministry. Review an article on “gender equality” in a Bible dictionary. Write a description of the roles men and women have in fulfilling the church’s mission. What are some similarities? What are some differences? Why is prayer so important for both men and women in fulfilling Christ’s commission?

• Use the following to discuss how Jesus modeled leadership and submission. Invite volunteers to read John 13:1-17. Guide the group in considering ways that Jesus led, taught, and exercised authority but also modeled submission and servanthood. Refer to Philippians 2:5-11.

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)
As a group, list three or four current events that threaten tranquility and peace. Call on someone to read 1 Timothy 2:1-2. Encourage the group to identify a leader, authority figure, or group of leaders to pray for with regard to each situation. Pray through this list now or encourage the group to pray for these throughout the week.

SUGGESTED MUSIC IDEA
Believers are to be mindful of how they represent God in this world. Ask God to continue His sanctifying work as you listen to “Refiner’s Fire,” by Brian Doerksen.