



[1 Timothy 2:12-15](#)

(12) And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. (13) For Adam was formed first, then Eve. (14) And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. (15) Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

New King James Version

Paul comments on the woman's curse in this passage, a section of Scripture that has come under a great deal of scrutiny in recent years. What is immediately striking about Paul's reasoning and conclusion on [Genesis 3:16](#) regarding the church is that he upholds it! Modern theological thought would reason that the effects of "the Fall" are nullified under Christ's blood, but Paul says, "Not so!" They may be diminished, but not eradicated.

Paul cites the fact that [God](#) created Adam before Eve as his proof that God intended the man to lead. He backs this up by showing that while Eve proved subject to deception—thus, she was the "weaker" of the two—Adam, whose [sin](#) was sheer disobedience, did not. Thus, Eve's sin establishes that woman should not take the lead from man; that route, by the biblical example of our first parents, generally leads to problems. The apostle concludes that a woman, formed by God as a helper to Adam and more inclined to being deceived, should not teach or lead men in the church.

On the other hand, as [Ephesians 5:25-29](#), 33 plainly shows, Christian men must no longer "rule over" their wives. Loving authority is not domineering or despotic, but humble, caring, gentle, kind, and patient. In the same vein, Christian women should submit to and respect their husbands (verses 22-24, 33). Submission is not manipulative or grudging, but done in [faith](#), respect, and humility.

How, though, is a woman "saved in childbearing"? The word Paul uses for "saved" (sozo) can be used for both physical deliverance from danger and spiritual [salvation](#). How

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does faith, [love](#), [holiness](#), and self-control prevent or nullify the physical dangers of pregnancy? Conversely, is not salvation by [grace](#)? Which salvation does the apostle mean here?

Neither. A third explanation fits the context better. Paul's main concern in this section is proper order within the church. Men, he writes, should pray and teach. Women should adorn themselves modestly and [do good works](#), but they should not be teaching publicly or leading men. Verse 15 explains what their primary concern should be: "childbearing." Thus, it means that much of God's judgment of women will be based on how well they perform their God-given role in bearing children.

To us, this sounds quite misogynistic, but to the Greek speaker "childbearing" (*teknogonia*) covers a great deal more ground than just "popping out babies." The *Strong's Concordance* definition shows that the extended meaning is "maternity (the performance of maternal duties)." W. E. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, agrees, writing that it "impl[ies] the duties of motherhood" (p. 190). The *Twentieth Century New Testament* translates this clause, "But women will find their salvation in motherhood."

Paul's exhortation aims to bring marriage and family back to what God intended of men and women before Adam and Eve's sin. Just as God will judge men according to how well they fulfill their roles as husbands (leaders) and teachers, so He will judge women by their performance as wives and mothers. Since salvation, particularly the period of sanctification, is a process that covers our entire converted lifetimes, how well we fulfill our God-given responsibilities within our families will make a difference in God's judgment. Paul says we must perform these duties in faith, love, holiness, and self-control—just as we must do everything else in our Christian lives.

To summarize, then, the apostle simply states that God will judge and reward a woman according to her growth as a Christian within her appointed sphere of influence: her family. God Himself has drawn the lines between the sexes, and we should do our best to fulfill our roles with excellence, not rebellion or complaint. In this way, we will make progress in reversing the effects of the curses in the Garden of Eden.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:
[The First Prophecy \(Part Two\)](#)

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