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# Demystifying Gender Issues in 1 Timothy 2:9–15, with Help from Artemis

Gary G. Hoag

*1 Timothy 2:9–15 is a source of considerable debate over women's role in the church. Many aspects of the passage have long mystified interpreters. This article shows how a little-noticed contemporary love story from Ephesus may enable us to unlock this influential and often troublesome text.*

Discussions of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 can become heated very fast, because the common interpretation of this passage has limited the role of women, especially as church leaders, in ways that are quite controversial today.<sup>1</sup> The dispute has been hard to resolve due to the elusive function and meaning of rare terms and themes throughout the text. The socio-rhetorical research presented in this paper suggests that fresh evidence to demystify Paul's message on gender issues comes from the last place we might expect to find it: Artemis.

Literary evidence from a document that has been largely overlooked in New Testament scholarship, *Ephesiaca* by Xenophon of Ephesus, provides important clues that have been heretofore outside our view. Upon its discovery, this document was dated to the second or third century CE, but more recent research suggests that it was written in the mid-first century CE, around the same time frame as the ministry of Paul in Ephesus. *Ephesiaca* fills in important missing information about the social setting and cultural rules in Ephesus at that time, which can aid us in reading and interpreting texts in 1 Timothy.

In the next section, I present seven unresolved interpretive issues in 1 Timothy 2:9–15. I then show how the testimony of Xenophon of Ephesus adds to our knowledge in those seven areas. Finally, I suggest practical implications for our use of this passage.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Relevant works on the passage include Andreas J. Köstenberger et al., eds., *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); Sharon Hodgkin Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991); Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11–15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1992); James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg, eds., *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001); Bruce Barron, 'Putting Women in Their Place: 1 Timothy 2 and Evangelical Views of Women in Church Leadership', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 33, no. 4 (1990): 451–59.

2 For my exhaustive analysis, see Gary G. Hoag, *Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to*

## Unresolved interpretive issues in 1 Timothy 2:9–15

1 Timothy 2:9–15 reads as follows (in the New Revised Standard Version):

<sup>9</sup> Also that women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, <sup>10</sup> but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. <sup>11</sup> Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. <sup>12</sup> I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup> and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. <sup>15</sup> Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

Disputes orbit around nearly every word or theme in these seven verses, which should tell us that there must be social realities that the author of 1 Timothy had in mind and that we cannot see, or at least factors that have evaded us until now. I will identify seven debated interpretive issues in 1 Timothy 2:9–15 before considering ways in which Xenophon of Ephesus might help us grasp how women in Ephesus would likely have understood these verses.

1. *Having 'hair braided, or with gold, pearls' in v. 9.* Some scholars have associated the term *plekō*, translated as braided or plaited hair, with immodest or ostentatious women.<sup>3</sup> Others read it through the lens of 1 Peter 3:3–4, though different words are used there. The passage in 1 Peter aims at instructing women to cultivate inner beauty rather than at prohibiting any particular hair style or dress.<sup>4</sup> To this point, researchers have lacked evidence to explain the apparently prohibited decorum in v. 9.

2. *Dressing in 'expensive clothes' in v. 9.* Some scholars have suggested that the second part of the prohibition in v. 9, *himatismō polutelei*, meaning 'expensive apparel' or 'costly clothing', points to imprudent apparel associated with prostitutes or promiscuous women.<sup>5</sup> These scholars lean on ancient descriptions of two contrasting categories of women—those pursuing either pleasure or

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*Timothy: Fresh Insights from Ephesiaca* by Xenophon of Ephesus (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015).

3 Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 97–140; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 233.

4 E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1946), 432–35; L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 217–18; Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary* (ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 196; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation and Introduction* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 200; Paul R. Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 406; S. M. Baugh, 'A Foreign World: Ephesus in the First Century', in Köstenberger et al., *Women in the Church*, 47–48.

5 I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 450; Seneca, *On Benefits* 7.9; John W. Basore, ed. and trans., *Seneca: Moral Essays III* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 97–109; Joachim Jeremias, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 21. Jeremias also reads this text as calling women to follow the Roman municipal modesty codes.

virtue—in writings from the cultural landscape. In their thinking, the prevalent social trends leaned toward pursuing pleasure, and this prohibition regarding expensive clothing called women to virtue instead, urging them to dress with modesty rather than sumptuousness. This view, however, is only a theory without specific support.

3. *Learning 'in silence with full submission' in v. 11.* 'The woman' is instructed to learn in silence. The shift from 'women', plural in v. 10, to 'the woman', singular in v. 11, seems to imply that this statement relates to every Ephesian woman. Such a shift directs our gaze from the context of the church to the function of women in a larger world that revolved around the goddess Artemis.<sup>6</sup> Some scholars harshly apply this imperative to all women, using 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 for supplemental support, while others argue the inconsistency of this view in light of New Testament texts that treat women as equal to men.<sup>7</sup> Modern researchers tend to lean in a different direction, thinking that social and religious realities associated with women lurk in the shadows of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 and 1 Corinthians 14:34–35, as they seem to contain contextual instructions rather than universal commands.

4. *The prohibition of women teaching in v. 12.* Some read this text as prohibiting women from teaching Scripture in adult mixed-gender settings (although the text itself does not say that specifically). This interpretive tradition says that women cannot teach because their doing so would violate the creation order as expressed in vv. 13–14.<sup>8</sup> Beyond citing 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 for support, however, advocates of this view fail to reconcile their position with the portrayal of various New Testament women presented as teaching men or being labelled as apostles, who would presumably be expected to teach.<sup>9</sup> A growing number of scholars unwilling to place limits on gifted female Bible teachers contend that this injunction may be related to a local heresy linked to Artemis, who was mystically associated with Isis.<sup>10</sup>

5. *The meaning and function of authentēin ('have authority over') in v. 12.* Since the translation of this text into English, *authentēin* has most commonly been rendered as 'exercise authority' over man. This rendering has licensed men to treat women as less than equal. Later researchers have suggested 'teaching and usurping authority', 'instigating violence', or 'author or originator' as additional plausible meanings of this rare term.<sup>11</sup> When read in context, it occurs in

6 Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 213.

7 See Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 12:7 among many others; cf. Lucy Peppiatt, *Women and Worship in Corinth: Paul's Rhetorical Arguments in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015), 108–11, 141–42.

8 Leland Wilshire, 'The TLG Computer and Further Reference to *authentēin* in 1 Timothy 2.12', *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988): 120–34; James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 208.

9 See Luke 2:36; Acts 18:24–26, 21:9; Romans 16:7.

10 Elizabeth A. McCabe, *An Examination of the Isis Cult with Preliminary Exploration into New Testament Studies* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008), 99–100; Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 117; Gritz, Paul, *Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus*, 137.

11 Henry Scott Baldwin, 'An Important Word: *authentēin* in 1 Timothy 2', in Kostenberger et al., *Women in the Church*, 39–51; Linda L. Belleville, 'Teaching and Usurping Authority', in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 220.

contrast to the biblical account of creation, as if the author of 1 Timothy were seeking to set the record straight in a religious setting where prevailing beliefs were backwards.

6. *The link between these instructions and the biblical account of creation and the fall in vv. 13–14.* Again, those who read this text as universally prohibiting women from teaching see such a practice as going against the biblical order: Adam was created first and sin came into the world through woman. The context, however, may suggest that this statement is concerned not with the role of women in ministry but with demythologizing the function of women in Ephesus: they must cease cultic activities and stop promoting the renown of the goddess. Views remain mixed.

7. *The promise of salvation through childbearing in v. 15.* The statement that ‘the woman’ (singular), again seemingly implying all women in Ephesus, ‘will be saved through childbearing, provided they [plural] continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty’ (v. 15) is yet another topic of debate. Scholars have proposed a variety of possible explanations.<sup>12</sup> A few think it limits the role of women to making babies. Since the woman is singular, some suggest without evidence that it refers to Mary, though recent scholarship looks to a different woman (of sorts), Artemis. Others say that ‘saved through childbearing’ refers to the option of choosing to go ahead with a pregnancy rather than having an abortion, a practice that was growing in popularity among ‘new’ Roman women.<sup>13</sup> The diversity of views beckons us to see what fresh evidence might add to the conversation.

### ***Ephesiaca* and how it helps us interpret 1 Timothy 2:9–15**

*Ephesiaca* is a story about a young Ephesian couple, Anthia and Habrocomes, who fall in love in Ephesus and endure wild adventures that test their character and commitment to each other.<sup>14</sup> Hesychius of Miletus, an historian from the fifth or sixth century CE, provides the lone testimony ascribing authorship to a person named Xenophon who lived in Ephesus. This ascription is recorded in *Suda*, the tenth-century CE Byzantine Greek historical encyclopaedia.<sup>15</sup> However, *Suda* cites the love story as having ten books and the only extant copy of *Ephesiaca* has only five books. This discrepancy caused early analysts to argue that *Ephesiaca* is a second- or third-century epitome of a longer work.<sup>16</sup>

In 1995, James O’Sullivan analysed Xenophon’s composition technique and concluded that he primitively used formulaic phrases and repeated themes, coupled with the influence of oral storytelling, to create a new genre—the novel—which others following him would refine. O’Sullivan proposed dating the work to

12 S. E. Porter, ‘What Does It Mean to Be “Saved by Childbirth” (1 Timothy 2:15)?’ *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 49 (1993): 87–102.

13 Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 109–12.

14 All citations of *Ephesiaca* follow Jeffrey Henderson, ed., *Anthia and Habrocomes by Xenophon of Ephesus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 199–365.

15 Henderson, *Anthia and Habrocomes*, 208.

16 Gottfried Bürger, ‘Zu Xenophon von Ephesus’, *Hermes* 27 (1892): 36–67; Erwin Rohde, *Der Griechische Roman und Seine Vorläufer* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1876), 38–54.

50 CE, and subsequent scholarship has concurred in that judgment.<sup>17</sup> This dating would place *Ephesiaca* in the same general time frame as the apostle Paul and in the very city where Pauline mission centred around 52–54 CE. Of interest to this study, *Ephesiaca* contains terms and themes that appear in 1 Timothy. On this basis, we can use *Ephesiaca* as a lens to help us exegete texts such as 1 Timothy 2:9–15, which have heretofore been hard to interpret.

Let us therefore consider how evidence from *Ephesiaca* may help to reconcile the seven unresolved issues listed above.

1. *Having 'hair braided, or with gold, pearls' in v. 9.* *Ephesiaca* begins with the main characters, Anthia and Habrocomes, dressing to prepare for a parade to honour the birth of the goddess Artemis. Xenophon of Ephesus portrays Anthia as looking like Artemis. Interestingly, the word used to describe Anthia's hairstyle is the same rare root word that occurs in v. 9, *plegma*:

Her hair was blonde, mostly loose, only little of it braided (*peplegmenē*), and moving as the breezes took it. Her eyes were vivacious, bright like a beauty's but forbidding like a chaste girl's; her clothing was a belted purple tunic, knee-length and falling loose over the arms, and over it a fawnskin with a quiver attached. (*Ephesiaca* 1.2.6)

No other woman looks or acts more like the goddess than Anthia, and 'often when seeing her at the shrine, the Ephesians worshiped her as Artemis' (*Ephesiaca* 1.2.7).<sup>18</sup>

The term *plekō* also appears in the bridal chamber of Anthia and Habrocomes associated with the realm of the gods (*Ephesiaca* 1.8.2–3).<sup>19</sup> Though scholars have linked this coiffure to immodest women, in the social setting of 1 Timothy 2:9–10 and *Ephesiaca*, Xenophon of Ephesus uses it to refer to the religious expectation that all young women should wear this hairstyle to show piety to Artemis.

2. *Dressing in 'expensive clothes' in v. 9.* The term *poluteleia*, 'expensive' or 'costly', occurs five times in *Ephesiaca*. In 1 Timothy 2:9–10, it refers to clothing. Xenophon of Ephesus uses it to describe costly women's clothing and appearance on four of the five occasions. In the procession to the Artemisium to honour the goddess, Anthia is described as 'sumptuously clothed or expensively dressed' (*Ephesiaca* 1.2.2). She turned heads toward the goddess and away from God. The costly clothing appears to match the prohibited decorum of vv. 9–10.<sup>20</sup>

3. *Learning 'in silence with full submission' in v. 11.* Learning started early in the Artemisium. Anthia was named a priestess from birth (*Ephesiaca* 3.11.4–12.1). Part of the daily routine for young Ephesian women included perform-

17 James O'Sullivan, *Xenophon of Ephesus: His Compositional Technique and the Birth of the Novel* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995). For a concurring view, see Henderson, *Anthia and Habrocomes*, 209–10. Also, Bridget Gilfillan Upton, in *Hearing Mark's Endings: Listening to Ancient Popular Texts through Speech Act Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), xv, dates *Ephesiaca* as 'roughly contemporary to Mark's gospel'.

18 G. Dalmeyda, *Xénophon d'Éphèse: Les Éphésiaques ou le roman d'Habrocomes et d'Anthia* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1926), 5, states, 'Anthia represents, in effect, Artemis!'

19 For more on this coiffure that links it to the realm of the gods, see *Athenaeus, The Deipnosophists* 525E.

20 Sandra L. Glahn, 'The First-Century Ephesian Artemis: Ramifications of Her Identity', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 172 (2015): 455–59.

ing daily rituals to ‘serve the cult of the goddess’ (*Ephesiaca* 1.5.1).<sup>21</sup> They also said prayers aloud to the goddess in her temple courts (*Ephesiaca* 1.5.3–5). For Xenophon of Ephesus, the context for religious learning for Ephesian women was not characterized by silence or any measure of submission, but rather by repetition and incantation combined with rigorous competition to attain religious roles associated with advancing the renown of the goddess.<sup>22</sup>

4. *The prohibition of women teaching in v. 12.* Xenophon of Ephesus depicts Ephesus as a ‘sacred city’ and claims that *Ephesiaca* was inscribed on the walls of the Artemisium, exalting the goddess as ‘saviour’ (*Ephesiaca* 5.15.2).<sup>23</sup> Scholars suggest that based on its structure and composition, *Ephesiaca* represents not a classical Greek novel, but rather a *hieros logos*, a sacred writing with a didactic aim.<sup>24</sup> Readers see Ephesus as home to the Artemisium, the place where visitors from across the ancient world came to learn about Artemis, who throughout *Ephesiaca* is mysteriously depicted synonymously in the oracles (*Ephesiaca* 1.6.2) and prayers (*Ephesiaca* 5.13.4) as one with Isis. Women like Anthia aspired to cultic posts in which they benefitted from promoting the Artemis myth. As the social norms expected all Ephesian women to serve Artemis/Isis, the prohibition regarding women’s teaching, when read in context, seems to instruct women (along with men) to stop teaching the myths and legends that conflict with the biblical record (*Ephesiaca* 1.6.2; cf. 1 Timothy 1:3–4).

5. *The meaning and function of authentein* (‘have authority over’) in v. 12. According to Xenophon of Ephesus, all aspects of life for Ephesian women had cultic and religious expectations linked to the goddess. When we understand the gravity of this social norm alongside the content of the actual myths, the picture comes more clearly into view. We find that the Artemis/Isis myths included a warped view of the creation of man and woman and the origin of sin when compared with the Genesis account. Whether *authentein* is rendered as ‘exercise authority over’, ‘usurp authority over’, ‘instigate violence towards’, or ‘be the originator of’ man becomes a moot point, as each expression can be explained in light of this heresy. The Isis myth of the origin of man stated that Isis (the woman)

21 While Baugh, ‘A Foreign World’, 15–32, may be accurate in saying that women did not have a monopoly on priestly roles in Ephesus as compared with other ancient Mediterranean cities, what *Ephesiaca* adds to our knowledge is that all young Ephesian women participated in cultic activities that honoured the goddess, while also competing for roles of prominence.

22 For more on ‘silence and submission’ in 1 Tim 2:11, see Thomas R. Schreiner, ‘An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15: A Dialogue with Scholarship’, in Kostenberger et al., *Women in the Church*, 97–99. Examination of the function of women associated with Aphrodite, the goddess of Corinth, may prove helpful, as the Corinthian text may likewise have a demythologizing function for Corinthian women who may have participated in cultic prostitution (as their behaviour in marriage comes into view) and propagating myths (such as alleging that God’s Word originated with women; cf. 1 Cor. 14:36).

23 On Artemis as ‘saviour’ see Guy MacLean Rogers, *The Mysteries of Artemis of Ephesos: Cult, Polis, and Change in the Graeco-Roman World*, Synkrisis (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); Sandra L. Glahn, ‘The Identity of Artemis in First Century Ephesus’, *Biblioteca Sacra* 172 (2015): 330–33.

24 R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 249–53; cf. Reinhold Merkelbach, *Roman und Mysterium in der Antike* (Berlin: Beck, 1962), 94. R. E. Oster, ‘Ephesus as a Religious Center under the Principate’, *ANRW* 18, no. 3 (1990): 1677, describes it as ‘literary propaganda for the goddess Isis’.

had usurped authority from Ra (the man) in the *Legend of Ra and Isis* so as to become as powerful and prominent as Ra. She also instigated violence in the story by forming a serpent that would bite him, resulting in great pain. Additionally, the Artemis myth gave her authority as the author of all life.

In light of the myths present in the world of *Ephesiaca*, the injunction from the author of 1 Timothy to silence 'the woman' (singular in v. 12) sends a message to Ephesian women like Anthia to abandon the myths and cease retelling the legends learned from childhood.

6. *The link between these instructions and the biblical account of creation and the fall in vv. 13–14.* Regardless of our vague understanding of the mystical unity of the cultic identities of Artemis, Isis and (as the goddess was known in the Roman world) Diana, the prevailing cultic tradition in the mindset of Xenophon of Ephesus promoted the view that Ra was the one who was deceived in their creation account. On the other hand, 1 Timothy 2:13–14 emphasizes the creation of Adam (the man) first, then Eve (the woman), and identifies the teaching that Adam was not the one deceived but, rather, Eve. The construction of the statement in vv. 12–14, when compared to this foundational belief from the world of *Ephesiaca*, demonstrates that the author of 1 Timothy may be aiming at demythologizing life for Ephesian women, turning everything they had learned right side up.

7. *The promise of salvation through childbearing in v. 15.* Xenophon of Ephesus, like other ancient authors, stresses the centrality of honouring the goddess Artemis *or else!* Artemis was known widely as the 'saviour' or 'deliverer', the mother of all life, the goddess of childbearing, a goddess of vengeance who strikes down those who do not follow her purity laws, and the one in whom all women placed their trust.<sup>25</sup>

With this reputation, the debated expression 'saved through childbearing' takes on new meaning. It could point to a local expression linked to how the goddess aided her supplicants in delivering babies.<sup>26</sup> It may also have alluded to the threat that likely gripped young women who came to faith in Jesus Christ and ceased service to Artemis, since according to the prevailing tradition, those who failed to follow the purity laws of the goddess would meet an untimely demise.<sup>27</sup>

Pregnant Ephesian women would thus find themselves alone and at risk of the wrath of the goddess of childbearing at the time of delivery. In this light, v. 15 offers them hope and protection in place of fear and intimidation. Ephesian women could trust God to deliver them.

## Applications

When we examine *Ephesiaca* alongside 1 Timothy 2:9–15, a fresh reading emerges that calls Ephesian women to shift their allegiance and service from Artemis/Isis to the Lord Jesus Christ. This interpretation demystifies gender issues in the passage and helps bring three applications into view.

25 Artemis gained distinction as the goddess of childbearing by helping her mother, Leto, deliver her twin brother, Apollo. For a contemporary testimony that all women put their trust in Artemis, see Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* 15.694D.

26 Glahn, 'The First-Century Ephesian Artemis', 468.

27 For implications tied to disobeying purity laws, see Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 8.6.11–14.



First, just as Ephesian women of faith needed to abandon social and religious norms linked to decorum and deeds associated with the goddess, women who turn to Christ in modern times would do well to follow suit. Almost certainly, this will lead them to make dramatic shifts in spending related to appearance and apparel. As a result, they will exhibit a lifestyle characterized by modesty and good deeds. Imagine this application globally. As women everywhere set their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, they rise above both pagan practices and cultural expectations. They are free from having to adorn themselves or act in a way that aims to please people (inside or outside the community of faith). Their decorum and deeds reflect their reverence for God.

Second, Ephesian women who decided to follow Christ would have to disregard the long-standing, local tradition of competing to teach legends about creation and the origin of sin. This was not an easy choice to make. A woman who failed to obey the rules related to the goddess of childbearing, according to her myth, faced the danger of death during delivery. Likewise today, in some places around the world, choosing to live for Jesus means putting your life at risk. The threat of vengeance from spiritual forces of evil is real. This text inspires disciples everywhere to rest in the fact that just as Ephesian women would be kept safe through childbearing, God will preserve those who persevere in the faith.

Third, as joint heirs of the gospel of grace, both men and women should be very cautious in approaching texts with divisive readings. Closer examination has shined light on social realities that previously lurked in the shadows. Consequently, we discovered that this text does not actually prohibit women from teaching God's Word to men or women. The text had a higher target. It spelled out what they should stop teaching. In similar fashion today, let us take the high road and stop contending that this text is about the role of women in ministry. Gender status distinctions are levelled in the New Testament. So, rather than battle each other or posture for position, men and women must work together on an equal plane, remembering that the aim of instruction is to make the truth known in love and holiness.

Ephesian women in antiquity had to take bold steps to live out their Christian faith. How ironic to learn that from Artemis! Obedience looked radically countercultural back then and still does today. In light of the larger literary context of 1 Timothy, I desire that we rethink this text altogether in light of ancient evidence rather than argue about it, lest we find ourselves guilty of promoting tradition rather than truth. In particular, I encourage female Christ-followers to dress modestly, live simply, do good works, teach about Jesus, and live out their faith in love and holiness with modesty, despite the potential risks of doing this inside and outside God's church.