

# THE MEANING OF AUTHENTEIN IN 1 TIMOTHY 2:12

*This is an excerpt from chapter 7 of  
**How God Sees Women: The End of Patriarchy** by Terran Williams.  
It is available on Amazon at [www.amzn.to/3LqB7Me](http://www.amzn.to/3LqB7Me).  
See commendations for the book at the end of the article.*

The essence of the complementarian interpretation is that Paul is telling women not to do what only (some) men should be allowed to do: to teach and exercise pastoral authority over others. In other words, teaching and exercising authority, as spoken of here, are God-ordained activities—as long as the correct person is doing it. *This reading implodes, however, when it can be shown that Paul is forbidding women from doing something that he would not want men to do either.* Put differently, if one or both of these activities is shown to be sinful, then the complementarian reading is mistaken.

The particular area of debate then is the verb, “to *authentein*.” This debate manifests in a variety of English translations: “[T]o exercise authority” (ESV) is something legitimate, whereas “to assume authority” (NIV) may be a negative action. For example, if a teacher directs the learners in a classroom, she “*exercises* authority,” whereas if a learner tries to take over the lesson, he wrongly “*assumes* authority.” Other translations include “to have dominion” (ASV), “to control” (CEB), “to domineer” (NEB), and “to lord it over” (TLB).

One issue that makes the word more difficult to translate is that *authentein* is a word *used only once* in the entire Bible.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we cannot see how else the word was used by Paul, nor by any other biblical author. Though it was used by authors in ancient Greek literature in the centuries that preceded and followed Paul’s use of it here in 62 CE, it was still an *exceptionally* rare word. In

fact, in the 100 years before and the 100 years after Paul's ministry, we have only five samples of it in the surviving ancient literature. How then can we hope to find whether its nuance is positive or negative?

Complementarians provide two reasons for their positive translation. First, the word *didaskein* (to teach) is positive, they claim, thus necessitates a positive sense for *authentain*. Köstenberger argues that, based on the occurrences of two infinitives side by side in ancient Greek literature, the two verbs *didaskein* and *authentain* are either both positive or both negative. Complementarians claim that *didaskein* is always a positive word. For example, Schreiner claims that, in Paul's pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus, *didaskein* always means "the transmission of authoritative tradition in [gathered, public worship], not to informal sharing."<sup>2</sup> The only exception, they say, is when additional negative words are used to designate it as false teaching. They therefore conclude in 1 Timothy 2:12 that a positive meaning for *authentain* is inferred by its attachment to *didaskein*.

Second, complementarian linguists like Henry Baldwin argue that in the ancient literature, the word is very commonly used positively, while Al Wolters argues that it was almost never used negatively.

Since its meaning has proven to be so decisive in the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:12, we must accept that we may never come to scholarly consensus on its meaning. As I track the scholarly study of this ancient word over recent decades, I notice that world-class scholars continue to refute each other's claims. Nonetheless, having spent many days reading and rereading recent scholarly works around this word, I conclude that the word in ancient literature is sometimes used positively, and sometimes negatively. *That said, here are eight reasons that "exercise authority" in this verse is probably not right and a more negatively nuanced translation of the word is more accurate:*

First, "to teach" (*didaskein*) may very well be a negative kind of teaching in this passage and may refer to neither positive nor formal teaching. Schreiner argues *beyond the biblical evidence* that in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, it always is a positive action, specifically and formally one done in weekly worship gatherings. In the Pastoral Letters the word is not necessarily restricted to authoritative, doctrinal teaching in gathered worship, and *sometimes* it is deemed a sinful kind of *didaskein*.<sup>3</sup>

Anyway, it is inconsistent to argue for a static meaning for *didaskein* (as formal, positive teaching) and a context-determined meaning for *authentain*—

in fact, the most basic principle of interpretation is to allow the context to reveal the meaning of both words.<sup>4</sup> For example, when certain people in a church are *forbidden* from *didaskein*, we may assume that it refers to a serious fault in those teachers or in their teaching.<sup>5</sup> Though there are other examples of disallowed forms of teaching,<sup>6</sup> consider the other place in the Pastoral Letters in which *didaskein* is prohibited, thereby serving as a close parallel to 1 Timothy 2:12. Paul tells Titus that a group he calls “the circumcision group,” whom he describes as “people, full of meaningless talk and deception,” “must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by *teaching* things they ought not to teach.”<sup>7</sup> By Paul’s evaluation, there was something wrong with these teachers and with their teaching—hence they and their kind of speaking should be stopped. Similarly, as our study of the 1 Timothy 2 passage continues, we will discover that there was evidently something ungodly about a group of women in the church, notably their attitude and actions towards men, that justified Paul’s correction of the *way* they were speaking to men about what to believe and how to live.<sup>8</sup>

Second, there is no scholarly consensus that the word *authentain* is always used as a positive action in antiquity. In the first and second editions of the primary complementarian book on the meaning of 1 Timothy 2:12, *Women in the Church*, Baldwin was tasked with writing the chapter on the meaning of the word, and concluded that, depending on context, it may mean “rule or reign, or control or dominate, or act independently, or instigate.”<sup>9</sup> With regard to 1 Timothy 2:12, he adds that “the meanings to control or dominate ... are entirely possible,” and “to assume authority over” “could be appropriate.” Interestingly, his chapter has now been removed in the third edition and replaced by the work of Wolters, who claims that *authentain* almost *never* has a negative meaning<sup>10</sup>—a conclusion far more supportive of complementarian preferences. Yet Schreiner admits that the word may sometimes be used negatively.<sup>11</sup> Ptolemy uses the word in his *Tetrabiblos* (CE 127–148) to speak of one planet *controlling* another planet—this has an undeniable negative nuance: most scholars I have read, including Baldwin and Grudem, translate it here as “dominate.”<sup>12</sup>

Though it is true that the church in the post-Constantine era (in the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards), often came to use the word *authentain* positively, meanings of *authentain* from so many centuries later are not entirely relevant to this discussion.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, one problem with Baldwin’s and Wolters’ studies (as with

Grudem's word studies on *kephalē*) is that almost all examples surveyed occur centuries after the New Testament period, and thus are of limited use in assessing the meaning of the word when 1 Timothy was written.<sup>14</sup>

Philip Payne summarizes his findings on the historical development of the word: "The only meaning of *authentēin* that fits with 1 Timothy 2:12 and is also established to have been written before Paul's day is 'assume authority.' To 'dominate' appears as a meaning shortly after Paul's day, while 'exercise authority' is a meaning that can only be confirmed much later."<sup>15</sup> The first confirmed examples, says Payne, of this come in the fourth century in the post-Constantine era. And yet the negative use of the word continued, too—the Church Father Chrysostom prohibited husbands from *authentēining* their wives.<sup>16</sup>

Since the meaning of words change over time, we must look for usage in the closest time era. The two confirmed uses of the word we have *before* Paul's time are therefore most important to our study because they best capture the understanding in Paul's time. The first-ever usage we have is in a 27 BCE *apologia*.<sup>17</sup> Notoriously difficult to translate, it seems to tell of a man called Tryphon, who explains in a letter to his brother Asklepiades, how he had *authentēin*'ed Antiochus, who seems to be Asklepiades' subject or slave. Tryphon and Antiochus were on a ferry and, when Antiochus refused to pay the boatman for his fare, Tryphon *authentēin*'ed him to do it. In other words, he compelled him to pay.<sup>18</sup> This might sound like civil behaviour to modern ears, but in that culture it was unacceptable to command another's subject, much like it is unacceptable today to command another's child—*hence Tryphon's need for an explanatory letter*. The one thing *authentēin* cannot mean here is "exercise authority," for the letter is an attempt to explain why he took it upon himself to do what was evidently not in his right to do. Any claim that the word in antiquity is "always used positively" to communicate "exercise authority" is thus misleading.<sup>19</sup>

Third, *authentēin* can be taken as a negative action when its composite parts are considered. Though the morphemes of a word are not the best way to decide on its meaning, when there is little consensus, as is the case here, it is still a worthy exercise.<sup>20</sup> In this case, the first part of the word *authentēin* ("*aut*") means *self* and is used mostly in biblical words to refer to actions that are self-directed or self-focused.<sup>21</sup> Even if *authentēin* can be shown to be a positive use of power by non-Christian rulers, it is far more plausible that Paul,

who preferred to speak of himself as one who did not lord it over others and was the servant of all for the sake of Christ,<sup>22</sup> chose this word that had just recently come into the Greek language to describe the sinful kinds of authoritative behaviour that were nuanced towards pride (self-directed rather than God-directed) and/or selfishness (self-focused rather than other-focused).

Even if we accept Wolter's claim that the word means *to be the master of*, whether it is a positive or negative action depends in each case on who the master is. If God, an ancient king, or an ancient slave owner "masters" his people, that may be fine, but it is generally forbidden for any follower of Jesus, even a pastor, to try to be lord or master of any other follower of Jesus.

Fourth, the entire chapter is corrective. Linguists explain that if the word can sometimes be used positively or sometimes negatively, then the context determines what is implied. To restore a church ravaged by false teachers, a context which 1 Timothy 1 clearly establishes, it is likely then that Paul carries on correcting wrong behaviours in chapter 2.

In his prior commands, Paul corrects the specific, sinful actions of angry, disputing, and prayerless Ephesian men who have unholy hands (v8) and immodest Ephesian women with elaborate hairstyles and expensive clothes who lack propriety and good deeds, and who need to stop being disruptive and submit themselves again to being taught (v9–11). That Paul only addresses one gender at a time in these imperatives is evidence that he singles out their particular failures in this specific situation. In this sense, it is no more acceptable for a man to *authentain* a woman than it is for him to dress ostentatiously, or for a woman to be prayerless, angry or disputatious.

Also, a negatively nuanced understanding of *authentain* fits well when we remember that the preceding command in verse 11 is the *antithesis* of what Paul is forbidding in verse 12. Paul wants these Ephesian women, like Mary of Bethany who once sat at Jesus' feet, to learn quietly (the Greek is *hesychia*, which here means *peaceably*) and submissively (v11), and *not* to teach self-assertingly or domineeringly (v12a),<sup>23</sup> which would only bring about the very opposite of the "quiet" (*hesychia* once again) (v12b).<sup>24</sup>

Fifth, verse 12 is a prohibition. Even the wording in verse 12 implies a negative meaning. If one were to put *person A* in the place of "a woman," and *person B* in place of "a man" and the letter *x* for *didaskain* and the letter *y* for *authentain* it would read: "I do not permit *person A* to *x* nor to *y* *person B*."<sup>25</sup>

Merely reading that, one would conclude that *x* and *y* were most likely to be negative actions. In this way, the context creates the meaning—even if a word could be used positively elsewhere, in this context it would probably be negative.<sup>26</sup> Wolters’ study strangely fails to consider that of all the first occurrences of the word in ancient literature, *only in Paul’s letter is it used in the context of a proscription.*

Besides, Wolters translates Paul to forbid a woman from being “*the master of a man*”—but this does not fit with Paul’s later command to slaves to respect their masters<sup>27</sup> (and we know that many of the slaves were male, and many masters were female). Given the probable presence of male slaves in a household, Paul instructs some women to be masters (*oikodespotein*) of men.<sup>28</sup>

Sixth, when we widen our search for the ancient usage of the word to also include the noun form (*authentēin* is the verb form of the noun *authentas*) we find that its negative associations are undeniable. In the ancient usage of the noun, negative meanings of the strongest kind abound—the oldest use of the word refers to *murder*. Wolters documents forty ancient uses of the noun with this meaning, but then also shows that by Paul’s time this meaning had largely faded. It had been eclipsed by other meanings, most notably “master.” Nonetheless, this idea continues to Paul’s time and possibly to his reading material: the *Wisdom of Solomon*<sup>29</sup> speaks of God destroying parents who “kill” (*authentas*) their children.<sup>30</sup> Though the noun’s earlier meaning of “murder” has nearly faded, it’s plausible, even if not certain, that a negative nuance would stick as its meaning evolved<sup>31</sup>—there is, after all, at least a conceptual overlap between “taking another’s life” and “taking control of another’s life.”<sup>32</sup>

Seventh, if Paul had in mind a positive exercise of authority, he could have used widely known Greek words that say as much—such as the word he used 10 verses earlier for those in authority (*hyperochē*)? Louw and Nida’s *Lexicon for the New Testament* provides 12 words that mean “exercise authority” and 47 that mean “to rule” or “govern,” but Paul used none of those. In 1 Corinthians 7, referring to the *legitimate* authority that one gender may have over the other, he selected the word *exousia*, a word he used 28 times in his letters.<sup>33</sup> If he was referring specifically to *pastoral* leadership, as complementarian scholars insist he does, then why did he not employ the word he later used in the letter for pastoral leadership (*proestōtes*) (5:17); or the word for shepherding a church (*poimainō*);<sup>34</sup> or the one the writer of Hebrews used for church leaders (*hegoumenōn*)?<sup>35</sup>

That he instead chose such a *rare* word, one with a very distinctive nuance to it,<sup>36</sup> makes it probable that *he sought to pinpoint and correct a specific, sinful behaviour common to the women in the Ephesian church.*

Eighth, other scholars seriously contest the conclusions of scholars with a complementarian precommitment. In at least seven standard reference works that Bible scholars use, most give an obviously negative translation (e.g. domineer, dictate), and even those with more positive translations still have, from a Christian perspective, negative overtones (e.g. independent, self-orientated authority). For example, the *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek NT* defines the word as: “[O]f one who acts on his own authority; hence have control over, domineer, lord it over.” *Nida and Louw* defines it as “to control, restrain, domineer” as in “to shout orders at,” “to act like a chief toward,” or “to bark at.” Similarly, the *BDAG*<sup>37</sup> translates it as “to assume a stance of independent authority, give orders to, dictate to.”

It’s no surprise then that Cynthia Westfall, having completed her own study of the word,<sup>38</sup> utilises the same database<sup>39</sup> that Wolters uses, and finds that “when *authentain* is used with a personal actor and a personal [recipient], a negative evaluation is given unless the actor has a divine or ultimate authority.”<sup>40</sup> Though complementarian scholars insist that the word means *exercise pastoral authority*, Westfall shows that in every use of the word in the database, *not one refers to any kind of benevolent pastoral care of an individual or group by a pastor or church official.*<sup>41</sup> She concludes her study:

*Since the word “authentain” is the primary source used to exclude women from ... leadership in the church, the selection of its meaning is crucial. ... [Taking] it merely as “having authority” and then interpreting it as if it describes servant leadership or pastoral care is misleading in the extreme. It should be the work of the church to flesh out an understanding of this word based on sound lexicography and linguistic methodology in order to proceed in this discussion with caution. ... The church has reached its age of accountability; it is time to assume responsibility (or liability) for excluding women from church leadership positions based on the word authentain.*

What I find most disturbing is that when leading complementarians are tasked to review Westfall’s linguistic work, they simply sidestep the result of her extensive study by claiming that Wolters’ work is superior.<sup>42</sup> In contrast, Jamin Hübner respectfully reviews her work, in conjunction with his own

research on *authentein*, and concludes that the word's negative shading as used in 1 Timothy 2:12 is "a near certainty."<sup>43</sup>

As for the meaning of the word, according to Westfall: "In the Greek corpus, the verb refers to a range of actions [in which] the people who are targets of these actions are harmed, forced against their will (compelled), or at least their self-interest is being overridden, because the actions involve an imposition of the subject's will, ranging from dishonour to lethal force."

Her conclusion syncs up with the fact that Jerome, in his fourth century Latin Vulgate translation, translated *authentein* in 1 Timothy 2:12 as *dominari*—the same word family he used in another place where Paul, who despite his legitimate spiritual authority, says that the one kind of leadership he *never* utilizes is *to be lord of* those he leads.<sup>44</sup>

Whether the word means *to assume authority over* (Payne's translation), *to be master of* (Wolter's translation), or *to impose one's self on and override* (Westfall's translation), neither Christian women *nor* Christian men should do so—and hence the complementarian reading of 1 Timothy 2:12 fails.

Though God alone knows what exactly Paul meant by *authentein*, given the sheer weight of these arguments for a negative nuance, I conclude that the complementarian reading and its commonly used translation ("exercise authority") is probably incorrect. The updated NIV translation ("assume authority")<sup>45</sup> and, in this case at least, the older English translations ("usurp authority")<sup>46</sup> are to be preferred, though I suspect "to control" (CEB), "to domineer" (NEB), or "to lord it over" (TLB) may be more accurate.

## COMMENDATIONS

*"This is, in my opinion, the best book on the complementarian / evangelical egalitarian debate. Buy a copy, buy copies for friends, lend it widely. It highlights the truth that the gospel sets the oppressed free. The Bible from cover to cover is good news for men and women." —Dr. Kevin Giles, author of What The Bible Actually Teaches on Women*

*"Terran Williams develops a meticulous case that shows God's moral compass always points to the unity of men and women, in creation, in the church, and in Christ. A terrific resource for anyone wrestling with this topic." —Dr. Michael Bird, author of Evangelical Theology*

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The technical term is that it is a hapax legomenon.

<sup>2</sup> Women in the Church, 3rd Edition, p. 175

<sup>3</sup> The word for “teach” is used differently in different passages. Schreiner has no substantial argument to claim that the word *didaskhein* should *always* be read in the Pastorals as formal doctrinal preaching by spiritual leaders in a worship service, or that it always refers necessarily to the teaching of wholesome content. Though *didaskhein* may mean what Schreiner says in other places in the pastoral letters, it sometimes takes other meanings: *Contra Schreiner, it sometimes refers to informal sharing outside gathered worship*. Paul may, by using *didaskhein* in 1 Timothy 2:12, mean something like speaking to others so as to shape what they believe or how they live. This would include informal sharing as well as more formal preaching. When, where women may not by complementarian standards teach men, are women meant to instruct other women if there are always men in the weekly worship (Titus 2:3–5)? And may one only teach and instruct “opponents” in the worship services (2 Timothy 2:24–25)? How can it be said that in gathered worship only one person (“a woman”) is trying to teach only one other person (“a man”) (1 Timothy 2:12)? How might a flow of teaching happen, where one taught person teaches other people who will teach other people, if only gathered worship teaching is in view (2 Timothy 2:2)? And what about the teaching that was affecting entire households (Titus 1:10–11)? *Also, contra Schreiner, it may refer to a sinful kind of teaching*. For example, Paul uses the very word *didaskhein* to describe the verbal actions of those who are sharing not authoritative apostolic tradition but heretical content (Titus 1:11).

<sup>4</sup> *Didaskhein*, in itself, is neither negative nor positive. The meaning in each case is determined by the context—for example, one may teach in an arrogant or coercive way, or one may teach error. In conclusion, instead of assuming, as complementarian scholars do, that it is inherently positive and should thus govern the partner word *authenthein*, it makes more sense to let any partner words, and the larger context, determine its meaning. Complementarian scholars who say that *didaskhein* is “always positive unless there is a qualifying word that states that false teaching is in view,” create an artificial interpretive rule—no, *context always determines meaning*.

<sup>5</sup> See Matthew 5:19a, Titus 1:11 and Revelation 2:14, 20 where it is used in a negative context.

<sup>6</sup> Especially in the context of actions being forbidden by Jesus or the apostles, a negative partner verb for the word “teach” may guide us to assume a sinful kind of teaching is in view. For example, in Revelation 2:20 Jesus reprimands the Church in Thyatira for permitting a Jezebel-like female in the church from “teaching” (*didaskhein*) “and misleading” (*kai plana*) his servants. If the Thyatirans have tolerated sinful teaching by a woman, Paul will not do the same in the Ephesian church—“I am not permitting ...” What is crucial to observe, however, is that only a sinful kind of teaching by women is to be banned in both places. The corrective context and the partner verb “mislead” shows that Jesus forbids the Thyatiran woman not from good teaching but from a deceptive and heretical kind. Similarly, the corrective context and the partner verb *authenthein* (which may mean “domineer”) shows that Paul was forbidding the Ephesian women not from a good teaching but from a dishonouring and aggressive kind.

<sup>7</sup> Titus 1:10–11

<sup>8</sup> In fact it can be shown that all three ideas that concerned Paul about the people to be silenced by Titus (insubordination, unhelpful content, deception) might relate to his concerns with the women being corrected in 1 Timothy 2:12–14.

<sup>9</sup> Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, Appendix 7

<sup>10</sup> Albert Wolters, “A Semantic Study of Αὐθεντία and its Derivatives,” *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 1.11 (Spring 2006): pp. 44–65, 45.

<sup>11</sup> In “Two Views on Women in Ministry”, Schreiner says, “It is certainly possible in particular contexts that the term could have a negative nuance.”

<sup>12</sup> Wolters stands alone as he translates the word in Ptolemy as “gain mastery” or “assume authority.” Nonetheless, so doing he admits the negative nuance Baldwin and Grudem recognises when they translate it as “dominate.” Wolters, however, makes too much of Ptolemy’s verb being an aorist tense and, therefore, only now carrying an overriding facility. But the sentence context is the real decider of its meaning: as Wolters shows, *authentēin* is used in parallel with Saturn “taking total ... control” of the human soul and causing other planets to “make” humans to be lovers of the body. Though an aorist tense may capture the “ingressive” (i.e. beginning of a action), as In “assume authority,” this does not mean that the ongoing action, signified by the present tense, of controlling what the subject earlier took control of now becomes a neutral or positive action. Also, with so few ancient samples of the word, and Wolter’s readiness to accept the meaning of the noun form of *authentēin* into his study of the word, this seems to arbitrarily deny the nuance of a much closer cognate of the word, and one used in a close time proximity to Paul’s use. As far as I know, no other scholars of any persuasion try to create this distance of meaning between the aorist tense and the present tense into their interpretation of the various ancient samples of *authentēin*.

<sup>13</sup> Especially when we consider that within the first few centuries of its existence, the church, influenced as it was by Aristotelean misogyny, came to read 1 Timothy 2:12–14 as a blanket prohibition against women ever leading men in all spheres on the basis of Eve’s inferiority. Thus, it is likely that many in the church came to assume *authentēin* meant a positive exercise of leadership—this also throws light on the two places in church writings in the 4th century where God is said to *authentēin* as Lord.

<sup>14</sup> Wolters is honest about this problem: “The meaning of “exercise authority” is based primarily on the verb’s later usage. ... It is a pity that there are not more attestations of *authentēs* from around the turn of the era.”

<sup>15</sup> Philip Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, ch. 20

<sup>16</sup> John Chrysostom, *Hom. Col. P. 27–31*.

<sup>17</sup> Papyrus BGU 1208. See [www.bit.ly/3BKHI0Q](http://www.bit.ly/3BKHI0Q). I will not mention the second ever usage, because it seems to have a completely different meaning than the one in 1 Timothy 2:12. In a work by the grammarian Aristonicus, he comments on a section of Homer’s *Iliad* to speak of the “*authentēin*” (as in, “author” or “originator”) of the speech.

<sup>18</sup> In response to those scholars who claim that Antiochus was in fact under Tryphon’s rightful authority to start, it is hard to understand how or why Tryphon, in a shame-honour culture would devote so much of his letter to defending his action—his own actions would reveal weakness and dishonour because he was out of control of his servant or slave and he would be personally responsible for the insult to the boatman.

<sup>19</sup> Schreiner in *Two Views of Ministry* (p. 108) states that “In the recent studies of H. Scott Baldwin and Al Wolters show the term signifies a positive use of authority.” Read Jamin Hübner’s study on how complementarian scholars misinterpret their own word studies: “At the very least, all of this shows that complementarians are noticeably confused about what complementarian studies (among others) of *authentēō* have shown.” See [www.bit.ly/3EKqWM8](http://www.bit.ly/3EKqWM8) (p.17)

<sup>20</sup> So says D.A. Carson in “Exegetical Fallacies”: “Though etymology is a somewhat “clumsy tool for discerning meaning,” it is useful, however, “especially in attempts to understand the meanings of hapax legomena.” (p. 33)

<sup>21</sup> Such as *authadēs* = “self-satisfied”, *authairetos* = “of one’s own accord”, *autarkeia* = “self-sufficiency”, *autarkēs* = “self-sufficient”, *autokatakritos* = “self-condemned”, *autocheir* = “with one’s own hand”, *aucheō* = “I boast.” Source: [www.bit.ly/3EKqWM8](http://www.bit.ly/3EKqWM8) (p.18)

<sup>22</sup> See 2 Corinthians 4:5.

<sup>23</sup> The conjunction “*de*”, though absent in most translations connects the two sentences, connecting the flow of thought between verse 11 and 12. It more likely means “and” than “but”—especially because in the very same verse, Paul uses “*alla*” when he wants to say “but.”

<sup>24</sup> Given an earlier parallel phrasing in 1 Timothy, this is the natural reading: “Note that Paul’s progression of thought in v. 12 (*not* to teach *and not* to overpower a man *but* to be in quietness) is not far different from his progression of thought on the same topic of teaching in 1:3–4 (*not* to teach differently *and not* to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations

rather than a stewardship of God in faith). The first two of these are viewed negatively, the last positively.” (Andrew Bartlett, *Men and Women in Christ*, p. 340)

<sup>25</sup> Thanks to Jamin Hübner for this insight.

<sup>26</sup> To put it another way, if Paul was praising positive behaviour, and teaching was one of the things being commended, then there would be no possibility of the teaching in question being a negative form of teaching. But because Paul is correcting negative behaviour, it opens the possibility of this being a negative form of teaching

<sup>27</sup> 1 Timothy 6:2

<sup>28</sup> In 1 Timothy 5:14 he tells newly married women to “manage their households”—the word for manage here is literally “despot of the house.”

<sup>29</sup> Probably written two or three decades before the turn of the era, and part of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, Paul was quite possibly familiar with this literature (See [www.bit.ly/3EKKrE4](http://www.bit.ly/3EKKrE4) for a discussion of this.)

<sup>30</sup> Wisdom of Solomon 12:6. I find Wolters argument that the word in the Wisdom of Solomon only means “kin-murderer” not murderer neither here nor there—either way, a drastically negative action is connoted.

<sup>31</sup> Baldwin wrongly tries to separate the verb form from its noun, saying that in most languages the noun form of a word may change its overall meaning when used in verb form. However, most linguists assume that there may remain some kind of correspondending *nuance*. For example, the verb “adulterate” has a different meaning to the noun “adultery,” but the negative nuance carries across the two words.

<sup>32</sup> Wolters posits that the word “authentēs” meaning “murderer” and the same word meaning “master” may have different etymologies. Then again, they may not. The most he can say is that “scholars have repeatedly suggested that they have different etymologies”—but other scholars have suggested otherwise. The overlapping idea seems to be the idea of using what power one has to assert one’s self over another.

<sup>33</sup> Perhaps an important difference between exousia and Paul’s use of authentēin is that the former is the use of authority one does have, such as a woman’s exousia to have sex with her own husband (1 Corinthians 7:4), while the latter (as we find in Tryphon’s letter) may denote a claiming of authority that one does not legitimately have, such as a woman having sex with another’s husband.

<sup>34</sup> See John 21:16, Acts 20:28, and 1 Peter 5:2.

<sup>35</sup> See Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24.

<sup>36</sup> To understand what I mean by the word having “a distinctive nuance” compare the English verb “to teach” with “to pontificate” or “to harangue.” Or compare “to lead” with “to drive” or “to compel.” The latter verbs, in both cases, have the same core idea as “to teach” or “to lead,” but they add additional shading. I have sought to establish that “authentēin,” even if it has the component idea of “leading” someone, is a word with additional shading—it derives from an earlier word for “murder” and it has the morpheme “aut” (self).

<sup>37</sup> Which stands for The Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

<sup>38</sup> [www.bit.ly/2prxkqm](http://www.bit.ly/2prxkqm)

<sup>39</sup> The Thesaurus Linguae Graecae database has over 300 uses of the word covering a 1,200 year span.

<sup>40</sup> Westfall, *Paul and Gender*, ch. 9

<sup>41</sup> Westfall, *Paul and Gender*, ch. 9

<sup>42</sup> Tom Schreiner’s critique of Westfall’s book does not adequately engage with the claims she makes about her study on authentēin, but instead merely claims that “she does not seem to have done the same amount of careful exegesis as Wolters on the word ‘authentēin’.” She in fact delivers a very solid, albeit respectful critique of Wolters’ work. Similarly to Schreiner, [www.cbmw.org](http://www.cbmw.org) commissioned Casey Haugh to review Westfall’s book, and he compares her exegetical study to Wolters and says, “Westfall does not demonstrate equal concern for her understanding of authentēin.” Wolters, at least, has a different tone: “Though I disagree with much of Westfall’s analysis, I commend her for bringing issues of theoretical linguistics into the discussion and look forward to seeing how her arguments will be received by those who are more knowledgeable about linguistics than I am.”

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<sup>43</sup> [www.bit.ly/340JLIS](http://www.bit.ly/340JLIS)

<sup>44</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:24: English: “lord it over”; Latin Vulgate: “*dominamur*.” Though Jerome used the word *dominari* elsewhere in the Vulgate for the autocratic rule of God and of Jesus, he seems mindful that it is not suitable a word for pastoral leadership. In fact, he uses the same word to translate both Jesus’ and Peter’s warnings to Christian leaders to not “lord” (or “lord it over”) others—see Mark 10:42–43; 1 Peter 5:3. With these connotations of autocratic power evident in Jerome’s understanding, it is quite improbable that he uses the word in 1 Timothy 2:12 merely to refer to a godly, pastoral authority. It is true that Jerome in one of his personal letters contrasts the rule (*dominari*) of a bishop with that of a king, but the comparison shows how ecclesial and political power had come to inhabit the role of a bishop in late 4<sup>th</sup> century Rome.

<sup>45</sup> By translating it this way, the NIV allows the reader to decide whether it refers positively to asserting a proper authority, or negative one in which authority is illegitimately seized. My endorsement on the translation assumes the negative meaning.

<sup>46</sup> See for example: “Geneva (1560 edition): “I permit not a woman to ... vsurpe authoritie ouer the man.” Bishop (1589): “I suffer not a woman to ... vsurpe auctoritie ouer ye man.” KJV (1611): “I suffer not a woman to ... usurp authority over the man.”