

## The Debates Over 1 Timothy 2

Where does Mike Winger go wrong in his exposition of 1 Timothy 2? Pretty much everywhere that matters, as we will show.

By Andrew Bartlett (author of [Men and Women in Christ: Fresh Light from the Biblical Texts](#) (2019)) and Terran Williams (author of [How God Sees Women: The End of Patriarchy](#) (2022))

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This article responds to Mike Winger's video 'ALL The Debates Over 1 Tim 2:11-15: Women in Ministry part 12 (it took me a year to make this)'<sup>1</sup>

If you're in a hurry, click [here](#) for a quick summary.

You can see our articles on previous videos by Mike on women in ministry at <https://terranwilliams.com/articles/>. Or use these links:

- Part 2 (Genesis 1–3) — [www.bit.ly/40lo9oh](http://www.bit.ly/40lo9oh)
- Part 3 (OT Women) — [www.bit.ly/3jAjCNX](http://www.bit.ly/3jAjCNX)
- Part 4 (NT Women) part A — [www.bit.ly/3JDVRiB](http://www.bit.ly/3JDVRiB)
- Part 4 (NT Women) part B — [www.bit.ly/3X08GXx](http://www.bit.ly/3X08GXx)
- Part 5 (Women Apostles) — [www.bit.ly/3mMssJV](http://www.bit.ly/3mMssJV)
- Part 7 (Galatians 3:28) — [www.rb.gy/2qoig3](http://www.rb.gy/2qoig3)
- Part 8 (Meaning of Head) — [www.bit.ly/3RwliET](http://www.bit.ly/3RwliET)
- Part 9 ("Wives submit") — [www.bit.ly/3l8CmVv](http://www.bit.ly/3l8CmVv)
- Part 10 (Head Covering, 1 Cor 11) — [www.bit.ly/3JV6kpD](http://www.bit.ly/3JV6kpD)
- Part 11 ("Women be silent," 1 Cor 14) — [www.bit.ly/3naLVUL](http://www.bit.ly/3naLVUL)
- Part 12 (Meaning of authenteo, 1 Tim 2:12) — [www.terranwilliams.com/why-mike-winger-is-wrong-about-authenteo-in-1-timothy-212-and-why-it-matters-2/](http://www.terranwilliams.com/why-mike-winger-is-wrong-about-authenteo-in-1-timothy-212-and-why-it-matters-2/)

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<sup>1</sup> The video can be found on Mike's own site biblethinker.org and on YouTube.

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## Why this matters

Do you care about truth? And are you serious about following Jesus and living faithfully under the authority of God's word? Then this article is for you. We hope you will find it enjoyable, interesting, helpful, and perhaps even challenging.

The New Testament teaches in many places about God's gifts of leadership and teaching. But there is no place in Scripture where there is a statement – or even a hint – that those spiritual gifts are given only to men and not to women.

Mike Winger insists on an interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 which restricts women's exercise of those God-given gifts in the church. According to Mike, Paul lays down a general rule which prohibits all women from the eldership functions of teaching and having authority in the church.

We have no doubt of Mike's sincerity. But we are convinced his interpretation is not faithful to Scripture. It wounds both women and men. It weakens the church which is Christ's body, and so hampers the fulfilment of the Great Commission, to the detriment of the world for whom our Lord laid down his life.

Our aim is to understand the words of the apostle Paul in their context, with full faithfulness to what he actually says. We will see that Paul gives important instructions for dealing with a particular situation. There are lessons to be learned. But he is not stating a general rule to prohibit all women from the eldership functions of teaching and having authority.

## How Mike has gone wrong

Mike invites correction. He says:

*I can make mistakes. ... those should be exposed, any mistakes that I've made ... for the sake of truth ...* (5hr49mins)

His video on 1 Timothy 2 (Part 12 in his Women in Ministry series) is about 11½ hours long. We will not comment on everything. But we will show how he has gone wrong and why his interpretation is not faithful to Scripture.

Mike's discussion reveals three false perspectives:

- ON HISTORY – Mike imagines that he is following the traditional interpretation of 1 Timothy 2, when in reality he emphatically rejects it.
- ON CLARITY – He believes that his "**complementarian**" interpretation is clear and obvious, but prominent complementarian scholars realistically acknowledge that the passage under discussion is not easy to interpret.
- ON MOTIVATION – He assumes that scholars who disagree with his interpretation are motivated by dislike of what Paul says, and a desire to avoid it, when their actual motivation is to be faithful and to be obedient to Scripture.

We will see that Mike uses a range of faulty methods. Here are the three which are most significant:

- A FAULTY HERMENEUTIC (method of interpretation) – Mike disregards the most elementary insight for understanding and applying Scripture: *though Scripture was written FOR us, it was not written TO us.*
- NOT ATTENDING TO THE CONTEXT – He knows in theory that he should pay close attention to the context of Paul's words, but he does not follow this through in practice.

- STRAWMANNING AND AVOIDANCE – When discussing the views of others, he sets up straw men and omits to consider substantial points which need to be addressed. His claim that he has thoroughly examined the debates over 1 Timothy 2 is counterfactual.

Mike’s faulty perspectives and methods result in a view that lacks solid support. To help us give a clear summary, we will first set out 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as translated in the ESV (since that is the version which Mike uses):<sup>2</sup>

***[11] Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. [12] I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, 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 became a transgressor. [15] Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.***

The essential features of Mike’s interpretation can be thought of as a tripod, comprising three connected beliefs:

- VERSE 12 – *Mike believes that in verse 12 Paul is stating a general ban on all women teaching or exercising authority in the church like an elder.*
- VERSES 13-14 – *Mike believes that this view of verse 12 is supported by his interpretation of verses 13 and 14.*
- NOT FALSE TEACHING – *The central idea in most non-complementarian interpretations is that Paul’s instructions are directed to a particular situation of false teaching in Ephesus. Mike believes that he successfully rebuts this central idea.*

We will show that each leg of the tripod is broken. In summary:

- Historical information does not support Mike’s favored translation of verse 12; and his interpretation is in conflict with Paul’s actual words in the context.
- His explanation of verse 13 collapses in self-contradiction; and his proposal for verse 14 lacks any discernible connection to Paul’s actual words.
- He does not provide effective rebuttal of the idea – which comes directly from the text – that Paul’s instructions are directed to a particular situation of false teaching in Ephesus. He leaves crucial questions unanswered.

Here’s a road map.

We will first explain the false perspectives and faulty methods.

Then we will take a look at the substance of what Mike says in his video. We will introduce the whole contents and examine the most important sections in order.

Having completed that exercise, we will summarize the three broken legs and state our conclusion.

## First false perspective: On history

Mike imagines that he is following the traditional interpretation of 1 Timothy 2. But that is a false perspective.

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV. We mostly cite that version in this article, because of Mike’s use of it, despite our concerns about some controversial translation choices.

Near the beginning of the video, Mike gives a quick overview of his interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Then he declares:

***An approach like this is pretty well represented throughout time. If you go through church history, the basic outline I've given you of 1 Timothy 2 – that's pretty much how people have understood it, for the large part. This is not something that's fresh and new.***  
(0hr23mins)

Later, he says:

***Some egalitarians are ... misleading people about the nature of men and women and about what God has revealed to us in his word, and about how churches should function ... The church has been fairly unified on this topic throughout history. This is a recent blip, to be honest. ... it's a recent issue.*** (7hr08mins)

Now it is true to say there is a superficial overlap between Mike's position and the traditional view that women must not teach or lead in the church. But the traditional approach to interpreting Paul's words here is quite different from Mike's. That is because *the traditional reasons* for the restriction, and *the traditional view of the nature of men and women*, are quite different from Mike's.

The traditional approach is well represented by the great Christian teacher John Chrysostom (died AD 407). He taught that Paul restrained all women from public teaching. He gives four reasons:

- Women lack the capacity for all important public functions of leadership, so women should not be leaders, whether in wider society or in the church.
- Women are more talkative than men, so must be instructed to be silent in church.
- Women are naturally more liable to sin than men.
- Women are weaker, more fickle, and more easily deceived than men, as demonstrated by Eve's false teaching of Adam.<sup>3</sup>

But, like us, Mike believes that none of these reasons is taught in the Bible.

He disagrees vehemently with the first reason, and he speaks eloquently about Deborah's exercise of authority over men in ancient Israel (8hr01min).

He strongly disagrees with the second reason:

***If you have a total silence view, then you're over-applying it. You're taking it out of context. And you're taking a word and you're expanding it way beyond Paul's initial meaning.***  
(1hr52mins)

Mike does not offer any remarks in support of the third reason (women's greater sinfulness).

Mike firmly rejects both parts of the fourth reason:

- The first part is women's greater susceptibility to deception. But Mike explains at some length why he disagrees with that view. He even calls upon those who hold that view to repent of their sinful attitudes (9hr20mins – 9hr40mins).

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<sup>3</sup> Chrysostom, *Homily 9 on 1 Timothy; On Priesthood*, 6.8 (NPNF 1/9:78-79); *Homily 37 on 1 Corinthians; The Kind of Women Who Ought to be Taken as Wives; Sermon 4 on Genesis* (PG 54.594-595). We laid out the relevant passages in our earlier article at <https://terranwilliams.com/why-mike-winger-is-wrong-about-authenteo-in-1-timothy-212-and-why-it-matters-2/>. For more citations from primary sources showing the traditional view of women, see also William G. Witt, *Icons of Christ: A Biblical and Systematic Theology for Women's Ordination* (2020), 23.

- The second part is that Paul supports the restriction by pointing to Eve’s false teaching of Adam, after she herself was taught falsely by the serpent. But according to Mike, false teaching has nothing to do with what Paul has in mind (8hr19mins).

So, in reality, Mike firmly rejects the traditional reading of 1 Timothy 2. When he says that his view is **“pretty much how people have understood it”** in the past, that is a mistake, a false claim.

Likewise, it is false when he says that egalitarian scholars are misleading people over the nature of men and women. In reality, he agrees with egalitarian scholars that women are not inferior to men in their nature but are equally human beings, in the image of God to the same extent as men. Mike has made this clear on multiple occasions in his Women in Ministry series, especially in his Part 2 video on Genesis. It follows that Mike rejects the traditional view that women are incapable and defective, as described by Chrysostom.

The traditional reasoning was refined by theologians over the centuries. Here is a historian summarizing the majority position held in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier, including by Luther and Calvin:

***Simply put, the true traditional interpretation says that, since male authority/female subordination is grounded in creation, it is normative in the temporal kingdom. Because it is normative in the temporal kingdom, it is also observed in the church.***<sup>4</sup>

Mike strongly rejects the very foundation of this view. On scriptural grounds, he firmly disagrees with the normativity of male authority and female subordination in the temporal kingdom of human society (7hr56mins – 8hr02mins). As we explained in our earlier article, Mike’s **“complementarian”** view was invented quite recently, in the latter part of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup>

Having rightly rejected traditional readings of 1 Timothy 2, complementarian scholars are still struggling to produce a satisfactory alternative reading of verses 13-14 to support their interpretation of verse 12 – but Mike seems unaware of this. Which leads us into our next point.

## Second false perspective: On clarity

Here is Mike’s perspective on the clarity of 1 Timothy 2 as supporting his complementarian view:

***It’s very clear. It’s very, abundantly, open and obvious what it means.*** (0hr10mins)

In Mike’s view there is a limited exception to this, which is that one verse – verse 15 – is difficult. But, he says, the difficulty of verse 15 is unimportant because it does not affect how we should understand the rest of the passage. (0hr21mins – 0hr22mins)

Mike places great emphasis on this perspective of clarity. He says:

***1 Timothy 2: probably the MOST CLEAR passage in the New Testament that really limits the function and role of women as far as leadership goes in the church, whether we like that or not ... .. whether it makes us mad or not ... .. It’s just there. It’s just VERY CLEAR and I don’t see any way around it.*** (9hr00mins – 9hr01min)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/historian-looks-1-timothy-211-14/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://terranwilliams.com/why-mike-winger-is-wrong-about-authentico-in-1-timothy-212-and-why-it-matters-2/>

His perspective is so extreme that he regards it as dishonest not to recognize how clear it is. His own interpretation is:

***what ... an HONEST person would say seems OBVIOUS ... from a simple reading of the text***  
(8hr41mins)

And anyone who does not accept this perspective is not only being dishonest. Even worse, they are being disrespectful to Almighty God:

***I don't think it's respectful to God to pretend that his word is less clear than it is.***  
(9hr24mins)

If it is so very clear, you may wonder why the Bible versions on Bible Gateway offer twenty different English translations of a rare word in verse 12 – Paul's Greek verb *authentēō*.<sup>6</sup> Have professional Bible translators failed to see what Mike sees? The reality is that the meaning is a matter of much dispute. That is why Mike has a section headed "***Is 'have authority' a wrong translation?***" and he spends 4½ hours of his video trying to grapple with that thorny question.

And let's compare Mike's perspective with what has been written by prominent, well-qualified, complementarian scholars, after close study of 1 Timothy 2. Here are some examples:

Dr Robert Yarbrough:<sup>7</sup> ***Bible-believing Christians of all persuasions must realize that 1 Timothy 2:12 presents an interpretative challenge.***

Dr Douglas Moo:<sup>8</sup> ***These verses [13-14] offer assertions about both the creation and the fall, but it is not clear how they support the commands in vv. 11-12.***

Moo again:<sup>9</sup> ***Paul's reference to Eve in verse 14 is difficult ...***

Dr Raymond Ortlund:<sup>10</sup> ***Paul in 1 Timothy 2:14 cites the woman's deception as warrant for male headship to be translated from the home into the church, ... Please note that I am not interpreting the logic of the apostle in his making this connection, which logic I am not satisfied that I clearly understand.***

Dr Thomas Schreiner:<sup>11</sup> ***Doubtless the verse [14] is difficult ...***

Dr Albert Wolters:<sup>12</sup> ***There are certainly difficulties surrounding 1 Timothy 2:11-15 ... in terms of its detailed exegesis ...***

If Mike's perspective is correct, these well-qualified complementarian scholars are culpably hesitating over imaginary difficulties. They are pretending that Paul's meaning is not "***very, abundantly, open and obvious***". They are not being honest. They are disrespecting God.

Note that this is not a disagreement about the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture, which holds that Scripture is clear about the way of salvation. It is a disagreement about the clarity of a particular passage, written by Paul to a long-time close colleague, who did not need explanations that we

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/1%20Timothy%202:12>

<sup>7</sup> *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 655-656.

<sup>8</sup> Moo, '1 Timothy 2:11–15: Meaning and Significance.' *TrinJ* 1, New Series (1980): 62–83, 68.

<sup>9</sup> *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (2021 printing), 247

<sup>10</sup> *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (2021 printing), 133 and footnote 38.

<sup>11</sup> *Women in the Church* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 2016), 210.

<sup>12</sup> *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 647.

might need – so Paul was able to say some things briefly, even cryptically. Even the apostle Peter considered that some things in Paul’s letters were hard to understand (2 Peter 3:16).

Because complementarians have rejected the traditional reading of 1 Timothy 2, they have experimented with fresh reasoning to try to show that verse 12 is a general rule, restricting women in teaching and exercising authority in the church. For that purpose, they need to offer a convincing explanation of how verses 13 and 14 support their reading of verse 12. They have struggled to do so, as the above quotations candidly remind us.

Mike’s perspective on the clarity of 1 Timothy 2 is extreme and unrealistic. It blinds him to the real difficulty of finding a convincing reading of verses 13 and 14 which supports his interpretation of verse 12.

### Third false perspective: On motivation

We have already seen one of Mike’s references to Paul’s instructions being disliked – disliked so strongly that they make some people “*mad*” (9hr00mins – 9hr01min).

Mike mistakenly assumes that scholars who disagree with a complementarian interpretation are motivated by a desire to avoid what Paul says. Supposedly, we don’t want Scripture to say what it says (7hr54mins). So, our exposition is driven by a desire to escape from what Paul actually taught.

Mike reads out a quotation from Andrew Bartlett’s book.<sup>13</sup> He misunderstands it, as we will explain later. Then he says what he thinks Andrew is doing, and the motivation for it:

***The ramifications of this cannot be overstated. We are throwing the apostle Paul and his work in the body of Christ under the bus in order to get away from something he taught that we don't want it to apply today. I don't know how else to look at it.*** (1hr24mins)<sup>14</sup>

He doesn’t “*know how else to look at it*”. Mike is convinced that, for fellow-believers who do not share his view of 1 Timothy, the objective is to “*pull away from*”, “*work... around*”, “*get away from*”, “*get around*”, or “*take it away from*” what the Bible teaches (0hr34mins, 1hr16mins, 1hr25mins, 9hr20mins, 11hr04mins, 11hr12mins).

Perhaps he didn’t read the Preface to Andrew’s book, or perhaps he read it and disbelieved what he read.

Andrew’s book examines the complementarian/egalitarian debate in order to try to reduce the divide and promote unity by seeking *Fresh Light from the Biblical Texts*. This reflects the instructions of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:3-4 and the teaching of Jesus in John 17:11, 20-23, concerning the unity of God’s church. It seems Mike is not able to imagine that Andrew’s motivation might be a commitment to obey the teaching of Jesus and his apostles.

And why did Terran write his book?<sup>15</sup>

It arose out of Terran’s commitment to a complementarian position, and *a commission to defend that position more securely*. When he embarked on his research, he was certainly not motivated by a desire to get around what he believed Paul was teaching! However, when he investigated thoroughly,

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<sup>13</sup> *Men and Women in Christ: Fresh Light from the Biblical Texts* (2019).

<sup>14</sup> Mike adds that he’s “*not saying people are malicious in their intent*”. He seems to mean that Andrew’s writing is for a wrong purpose but not consciously malicious.

<sup>15</sup> *How God Sees Women: The End of Patriarchy* (2022).

he discovered that he had to let go of his complementarian viewpoint because, to his surprise, Scripture did not support it.

In the video, Mike often refers to Philip Payne's book,<sup>16</sup> in order to disagree with it. Payne describes his own journey out of a belief in ruling male headship. He calls it "**My Odyssey**". After emphasizing and illustrating at some length his commitment to Scripture, Payne says where that commitment led him:

***In 1973 at a New Testament Seminar in Cambridge, England, my assumption of male headship was challenged when a scholar stated that no passage of Scripture properly understood in its context excludes women from any form of Christian ministry. Could this be true? What of 1 Cor 14:34-35 and especially 1 Tim 2:12? To check this, I read 1 Timothy in Greek daily for several months. Soon I felt with Paul the urgency of counteracting the false teaching that was threatening the life of the church in Ephesus. Key word studies in 1 Tim 2:12 and some shocking discoveries (such as how English translations have introduced a dozen or more masculine pronouns into 1 Tim 3's list of qualifications for overseer and deacon, where the Greek text has none), convinced me that 1 Tim 2 – 3 is not a solid foundation for restricting women's ministry.***<sup>17</sup>

It seems Mike either didn't read what Payne wrote, or he disbelieved it.

Payne's motivation for rejecting the complementarian view is his commitment to be faithful to Scripture. We wonder how Mike's perspectives might have shifted if he had read 1 Timothy in Greek daily for several months.

Mike is wrong to assume that scholars who disagree with a complementarian interpretation are motivated by a desire to avoid what Paul says, because of strong dislike. If Mike finds evidence that a particular scholar has that motivation, then he is at liberty to say so. But he should not assume it.

Quite apart from the issue of truth, this false assumption appears to have a damaging impact on Mike's assessments of rival interpretations. After all, if an interpretation arises from an unworthy motive, is it really worth the time and effort of engaging with it thoroughly? We will see that Mike often does not engage thoroughly with what he reads.

We will look next at Mike's faulty methods.

## First faulty method: Disregarding the fact that Scripture is written for us but not to us

Scripture was inspired by the Holy Spirit for purposes set out by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:15-17. But it was not written in a 21<sup>st</sup> century Western context. It was written many centuries ago to Middle Eastern or Mediterranean people, in a variety of times, places and cultures. In other words, Scripture was written *for* us, but it was not written *to* us.

So, if we are going to live faithfully to Scripture, we need to approach it in two steps:

- first, find out what it meant to the first readers in their situation,
- second, work out how it should apply to us.

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<sup>16</sup> *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (2009).

<sup>17</sup> *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, 28-29.

If we don't do the first step, but jump straight to the second, we will make many mistakes.

This two-step method is a basic point of 'hermeneutics' (how to interpret Scripture and apply it appropriately).

In almost any kind of Bible College, this is Hermeneutics 101. It is rightly insisted on by Bible teachers who believe in the authority of Scripture and urge us to base our lives on its truth. In the footnote we provide a link to just one of many examples.<sup>18</sup>

We shall see that Mike does not adhere to this basic two-step approach.

## Second faulty method: Not paying attention to the context

Within the two-step approach, a critical element in the first step is to pay close attention to the context.

In our earlier article on Mike's Part 12 video,<sup>19</sup> we already emphasized the importance of fully considering the whole context – literary, historical and cultural – and we lamented Mike's failure to do this.

At the level of theory, Mike knows this should be done. He says emphatically:

***Context is King. Context is, like, über-King!*** (7hr13mins)

Disappointingly, Mike's actual attention to context is meagre. As we go through, we will see how this allows him to offer an interpretation that is in conflict with the words that Paul wrote.

## Third faulty method: Strawmanning and avoidance

A straw man argument states an opposing position in a distorted way that makes it weak, and then knocks it down.

Jesus instructs us to treat others as we would have them treat us (Luke 6:31). So, strawmanning should have no place in a discussion about the interpretation of Scripture. We must strive not to misrepresent our brothers and sisters. It can be done deliberately or by mistake. Sometimes it happens because we fail to understand correctly or because we do not choose quite the right words. When our mistake is pointed out, we should correct it. For that very reason, we recently corrected a word in our response to Mike's video on Genesis 1 – 3 (Part 2 of his series on Women in Ministry).<sup>20</sup>

Even though it may be through inadvertence, inability to understand or lack of thoroughness, strawmanning is still unhelpful and misleads one's audience.

When someone puts up a straw man argument, it has the inevitable effect that *they do not address the real argument* of the person who disagrees with them. They ignore important issues instead of answering them. If strawmanning is one side of a coin, avoidance is the other side.

Because Mike distorts and misrepresents the views of those he disagrees with, he avoids engaging with important points that they raise. This leaves those points unconsidered and unresolved.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.thenivbible.com/blog/how-to-understand-the-bible/>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://terranwilliams.com/why-mike-winger-is-wrong-about-authenteo-in-1-timothy-212-and-why-it-matters-2/>

<sup>20</sup> Referring in one place to Mike's view, "*sole authority*" should have read "*unilateral authority*".

As we go through Mike’s video and look at his consideration of the debates over 1 Timothy 2, we will repeatedly see strawmanning and avoidance.

The weaknesses in Mike’s methods undermine his emphatic claim to thoroughness.

The title of his video is:

***ALL The Debates Over 1 Tim 2:11-15: Women in Ministry part 12 (it took me a year to make this) [Emphasis original]***

He writes in the introductory section of his teaching notes:

***I’ve spent a year studying all the most controversial passage in the Bible. ... I’ve never put this much time into studying just one passage or creating just one video. ... This video is going to be a thorough examination of the debate over 1 Tim 2.***

In the video, he says:

***This video today, right now, Part 12 in the Women in Ministry series, is going to be a thorough examination of the debate on 1 Timothy Chapter 2. (0hr2mins)***

***I’m not going to dodge any issue here today. (9hr14mins)***

But in reality, Mike dodges important issues, often because of strawmanning and avoidance. His claim that he has thoroughly examined ALL the debates over 1 Timothy 2 is overconfident and sharply counterfactual.

## The contents of Mike’s video

The first three sections of Mike’s video are introductory. He sets the scene by reading 1 Timothy 2:11-15, offers a brief complementarian interpretation, and gives a sample of egalitarian views. The final section of the video states his conclusions. In between, there are twelve substantive sections.

There are three substantive sections that we will not discuss:

- The section “***This is about wives, not women***” looks at an interesting and weighty issue, but it concerns a minority viewpoint. Even though Mike’s engagement with it is not satisfactory, we will skip over it, because there are more pressing issues to discuss.<sup>21</sup>
- In the section “***What does “quietly” mean?***”, Mike concludes that “***quietly***” in verses 11 and 12 does not refer to total silence. To that extent, we agree, and this section is not of prime importance for engaging with his views, for Mike considers that the competing interpretations do not drastically change the meaning of the text either way (see 2hr02mins – 2hr05mins).
- The section called “***The Elders Don’t Have Authority Anyways view***” does not need separate consideration. We briefly mentioned the nature of elders’ “***authority***” in our previous article, where we considered the meaning of the verb *authenteō* in 1 Timothy 2:12.<sup>22</sup>

Here are Mike’s titles for the nine remaining substantive sections, with time stamps and the identifying number from his teaching notes (or in one case the nearest number):

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<sup>21</sup> We engage with one aspect of Mike’s unsatisfactory reasoning in this section, in the later section “***The Bunch of Female False Teachers***” view”.

<sup>22</sup> <https://terranwilliams.com/why-mike-winger-is-wrong-about-authenteo-in-1-timothy-212-and-why-it-matters-2/>.

003 Was this just Paul's personal opinion? 33:00

018 The word "permit" shows this doesn't apply to us 1:02:50

025 Paul has no jurisdiction over us 1:21:25

038 Does the cult of Artemis change everything? 2:03:30

073 Is "have authority" a wrong translation? 3:36:44

[226] The "Bunch of Female False Teachers" view 8:03:15

288 Why does Paul appeal to Adam and Eve? 9:14:32

290 Are women more easily deceived than men? 9:20:44

292 What does "saved through childbearing" mean? 9:44:00

We will review each of these nine sections, in order, and then pull together our conclusions. If you would like to prioritize, the most important sections start at ***"073 Is "have authority" a wrong translation?"***

## 003 Was this just Paul's personal opinion? 33:00

In a rather literal translation, the ASV, 1 Timothy 2:12 says:

***But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness.***

The English words ***"I permit not"*** translate the Greek words *ouk epitrepō*. Simply as a matter of language, these two Greek words could equally well be translated as ***"I do not permit"*** or as ***"I am not permitting"***. The choice of the most suitable English translation has to be made on the basis of how one understands Paul's meaning in its context.

For a complementarian interpretation, there is a puzzle here:

- If Paul is stating a general rule which applies to all churches in all times and places, why does he introduce it with the expression *ouk epitrepō*?

That would be a counter-intuitive choice of words.

Supposedly, Paul is giving instructions against female teaching and authority, based on a creation principle of male authority, established in Genesis.

But suppose, as a Christian teacher, you were going to teach a general rule against murder, supporting it from the creation story, where human beings are made in the image of God. You would be unlikely to say: ***"I do not permit murder"***. The language of personally withholding permission is a strange choice, even for an apostle. And if for some reason you were determined to use the word ***"permit"*** for a general rule, you would show that it is a general rule by depersonalizing it, as in ***"God's law does not permit murder"*** or ***"It is not permitted to murder"***.

The Bible is a big library of books, and it contains many general rules, but there is nowhere else in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, where someone states a general rule with the expression *ouk epitrepō* – ***"I do not permit"*** or ***"I am not permitting"***.

This suggests that Paul may not be stating a general rule. It is a significant difficulty, which complementarian interpreters need to address.

Even though Mike's discussion of the phrase *ouk epitrepō* continues for an hour, spanning three sections of his video, he never addresses this difficulty head-on. He avoids it.

In the three sections, Mike strawmans what non-complementarian scholars have written about this phrase (including some things written by one of the present authors, Andrew Bartlett). As a result, what Mike says in these sections does not meaningfully advance the discussion. But we think that covering this ground is helpful in showing both the importance of not strawmanning and the necessity of the two-step method for interpreting and applying the Bible.

Mike's first section title for discussing *ouk epitrepō* is "**Was this just Paul's personal opinion?**". That title is a straw man of an argument put forward by Philip Payne.<sup>23</sup>

In the passage of Payne's work which Mike references, Payne's own section title is:

**DOES THE GRAMMATICAL FORM "I AM NOT PERMITTING" FAVOR A PRESENT OR UNIVERSAL PROHIBITION?**

Payne argues that Paul's phrase in verse 12 – "***I am not permitting***" – favors a present rather than a universal prohibition. By using the term "***favor***", Payne is suitably cautious. He is not saying that Paul's choice of words (*ouk epitrepō*) *proves* that the prohibition is current rather than universal.

In line with this caution, Payne explains, in a passage quoted by Mike:

***Paul often chose the first-person singular ("I") present active indicative ("am not permitting") to indicate his own personal advice or position for a situation that is not universal.***

Mike strawmans this. His teaching notes say:

***You can't just take first person, present, active, indicative verbs as if they mean a command can't be universal.***

But that is not what Payne is doing. He doesn't make the incorrect claim that this form of verb means that a command *can't* be universal. Instead he says, correctly, that Paul "***often***" uses this verb form for advice for a situation that is not universal.

Mike keeps repeating his straw man misrepresentation:

***Philip Payne is not telling you something that's true about Greek, that when someone uses first person present active indicative, that THAT MEANS that they don't mean it for a lasting rule or lasting time.*** (0hr37mins)

***You can't take this tense and JUST ASSUME it means this command is not universal.*** (0hr40mins)

***If it is a RULE that this construction means that Paul isn't giving a universal demand, then it would hold true pretty close to every time.*** (0hr59mins)

But Payne does not insist on such a meaning, such an assumption or such a rule.

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<sup>23</sup> In *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, 320-325.

Making things worse, Mike says, both in his notes and on video, that Payne *falsely implies* that complementarian scholar Douglas Moo agrees with Payne's reasoning.

But that is not so. Payne is meticulous in showing the extent of Moo's agreement and disagreement, with accurate quotations of Moo's words and the addition of explanatory footnotes to ensure that no reader could be misled as regards Moo's exact position.<sup>24</sup>

Mike indicates that what Payne writes is not to be trusted:

***the truth matters ... it's about facts, it's about what truth is ... I need you to know that ... you ... can't just take his word for it*** (Ohr41mins – Ohr43mins)

While Mike does not intend this as a personal attack on Payne, and he sugars the pill by mentioning that Payne, whom he has met, is a wonderful man and full of joy, nonetheless it paints a false picture of the accuracy of Payne's writing. Mike seems unaware of the irony that it is Mike himself who is misrepresenting the truth. We take this to be careless rather than deliberate, but it is not responsible scholarship.

Payne's actual argument does not rest his conclusion on the single feature that Paul's verb choice *favors* a limited, not universal, prohibition. Instead, Payne goes on to identify what he calls

***eight exegetical indicators that Paul did not intend a universal prohibition on women teaching: ...***<sup>25</sup>

Mike does not tell his audience about this feature of Payne's argument, which has considerably more substance than Mike's straw man version.

Having, as he thinks, disposed of Payne's argument, Mike moves on to Linda Belleville and claims that she makes a similar argument. He quotes Belleville's words from the book *Two Views on Women in Ministry*:

***Some have suggested that the present indicative is used because it allows Paul to give a temporary restriction: "I am not permitting [at this time]" (JB). This has some merit. "Do not let a woman teach . . ." would certainly communicate a universal norm. If this wasn't Paul's intent, then a shift from a command to a present state of affairs would make sense.***<sup>26</sup>

Mike underlines the soft phrases "***Some have suggested***", "***some merit***", and "***would make sense***". He recognizes that she does not say this strongly; she merely acknowledges that some have said it and that it has some merit.

But he then describes it as her "***position***", and claims to find five problems with it (Ohr48mins – Ohr54mins).

This is another straw man. It is not her position: it is part of her description of the debate over 1 Timothy 2.

In Belleville's view, the critical point here is not whether the restriction is temporary or permanent, but *what kind of teaching is being prohibited*. Her own position is stated eight pages further on. Her proposal is that Paul is "***prohibiting teaching that tries to get the upper hand (not teaching per***

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<sup>24</sup> See *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, 320-321 and footnotes 6 and 11.

<sup>25</sup> *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, 323-324.

<sup>26</sup> *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (2005), 81.

se).<sup>27</sup> She then offers her “*reasonable reconstruction*” of the situation at Ephesus and indicates how it fits the context.

Mike’s five reasons for disagreeing with the straw man are unsatisfactory. For brevity, we deal with four of them in a footnote<sup>28</sup> and move to the fifth.

His fifth reason is that he doesn’t “*know any single translation*” that uses the words “*I am not permitting*”. He says this even though Belleville purports to cite those exact words from the Jerusalem Bible, and indicates her source in the usual way by the abbreviation “*JB*”. The Jerusalem Bible is not an egalitarian version; it’s a Roman Catholic translation, published in 1966.

But Mike confidently asserts that she is making a false representation – that she is wrongly making it appear that the translation of this verse using the English present continuous tense (as in “*I am not permitting*”) is legitimated by being included in a published Bible version.

Mike does not know what “*JB*” stands for, and despite his researches he has not found out. He is frank about this, both in the video and in his teaching notes. We applaud his unflinching honesty. But it is hard to fathom how this was possible.<sup>29</sup>

Instead of taking any of the ordinary steps to find out, Mike glances at a Bible-versions list which he happens to have, a list which contains not even one half of the available English translations. Then, as if to suggest that he had carried out some serious research over some five centuries of Bible versions, he tells his audience:

***I surveyed 30 English translations dating back to the Tyndale Bible from 1526.***

With a degree of inappropriateness that makes us feel embarrassed on his behalf, Mike laments that Linda Belleville did not provide a footnote to explain the abbreviation (0hr53mins – 0hr54mins).

He invents out of nowhere an exotic theory that “*JB*” is not a Bible version but “*most likely*” a particular scholar with the initials JB, not an actual Bible translation.

And he speaks as if he were protecting his audience from being misled by Belleville:

***... you're going to look at her statement there and think “oh, there's even a translation that does it” and that legitimizes it.***

But it is indeed legitimate to use the present continuous tense here. Mike’s lack of thoroughness is deeply disappointing.

In English, we may choose between the present simple tense “*I do not permit*” and the present continuous tense “*I am not permitting*”, and by that choice we may communicate different nuances. But that choice does not exist in Greek, where *ouk epitrepō* does duty for both of those English

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<sup>27</sup> *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (2005), 89.

<sup>28</sup> #1 is that the writer is Paul the apostle, AS the apostle. But that goes nowhere. Paul, as apostle, sometimes gives temporary instructions. #2 is that it is Paul’s practice in ALL places. But that is mere assertion. Mike does not demonstrate that it is so. #3 is that it is grounded in creation in vv13-14. On that, see the sections “*Why does Paul appeal to Adam and Eve?*” and “*Are women more easily deceived?*” #4 is that it is tied to a clear command in v11. But it is unclear how this observation adds anything to the argument. Both the command in v11 and the restriction in v12 could relate to a particular situation which Paul has in mind.

<sup>29</sup> He could have taken five seconds to do an online search “*What Bible version is JB?*” or to look in the list of abbreviations in the front of the book. A person who read the *Two Views* book thoroughly would make substantial use of the list of abbreviations.

expressions, and all equivalents of them. The present continuous tense is used in this verse not only in JB but also in ISV (“***I am not allowing ...***”) and in NTFE (“***I’m not saying that ...***”).

If Mike had quickly checked online, or if he had thoroughly read the chapter of Payne which he strawmans (where Payne likewise quotes the Jerusalem Bible),<sup>30</sup> he would have found a small criticism that he could justifiably have made, which is that there is an editing error in Belleville’s text: the exact phrase in the Jerusalem Bible which employs the present continuous tense is “***I am not giving permission***”.

Mike’s discussion of *ouk epitrepō* continues in the next section.

## 018 The word "permit" shows this doesn't apply to us 1:02:50

Mike resumes his discussion of Philip Payne’s work.

According to Mike, mirroring the title of this section, Payne’s proposition is:

***the word ‘permit’ shows this simply doesn't apply to us*** (1hr03mins)

This is another straw man.

We have already seen in the previous section that Payne’s actual proposition is more nuanced. Payne’s full proposition concerning *epitrepō* is:

***Unless there is something in the context that universalizes it, Paul’s verb choice favors a limited, not universal, prohibition.***<sup>31</sup>

We ask you to notice not only Payne’s carefully chosen word “***favours***”, but also the “***Unless***” clause, which brings in the relevance of context.

Payne adds:

***One cannot simply assume it to be universal, any more than one can assume that the prohibition of braided hair, gold, pearls, and wearing expensive clothing (2:9) is universal or that men everywhere must raise their hands when they pray (2:8).***<sup>32</sup>

Since an interpreter should not make such assumptions but should first attend to the original intention in its context, Payne turns to discussion of his eight exegetical indicators. We do not see Mike following that orthodox approach.

Mike next turns to strawmanning one of the present authors, Andrew Bartlett (1hr17mins – 1hr21mins).

Mike cites a passage from Andrew’s book.<sup>33</sup> It is from a section where Andrew introduces and explains some of the interpretive difficulties in 1 Timothy 2 which need to be addressed. As Andrew’s successive headings show, he first lays out difficulties that *all interpreters* must face, then some particular difficulties for *egalitarian interpretations*, followed by some particular difficulties for

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<sup>30</sup> *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, 325. The full text of the Jerusalem Bible version of 1 Timothy can also be seen online at <https://morningstarinfosys.com/1-timothy/>.

<sup>31</sup> *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, 323.

<sup>32</sup> *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, 323.

<sup>33</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, 221. The reference given by Mike is 291.

*complementarian interpretations*. He is not saying that the difficulties are necessarily insuperable, but that they should be addressed.<sup>34</sup>

As we have seen, one of the difficulties that needs to be resolved in complementarian interpretations is Paul's particular choice of language in verse 12 – *ouk epitrepō*:

***Complementarians would have a stronger case if they provided a convincing explanation of why, if Paul intended an enduring rule, he chose this unusual form of words.***<sup>35</sup>

As part of the explanation of this difficulty, Andrew refers to the verbal contrast between Paul's choice of words in verse 11 (a direct *command*) and his choice of words in verse 12 (a *statement* of what he is not permitting).

Mike presents Andrew as saying this feature demonstrates that Paul is only giving his current approach to a current problem:

***He [Bartlett] says the contrast with verse 11 shows that Paul is only giving his current approach to a current problem.***

Similarly, Mike's teaching notes present this as Andrew's "***method to say it's a limited prohibition***".

Those are misrepresentations.

Mike radically misreads. He has not understood the purpose of what he has been reading. Nor has he read the very next sentence.

The words which Mike mistakenly presents as Andrew's supposed demonstration that Paul is only giving his current approach to a current problem, are not a conclusion. They are words which set up a question. We will quote the passage which Mike reads out and show you the next sentence:

***Paul positively commands that a woman should learn. Why does Paul make such a strong verbal contrast between this command and his next statement, that he is not permitting a woman to teach and assume authority over a man? Does this not rather create the impression that his restriction on women's teaching is only a statement of his current approach to a current problem? He could have written 'Women must never teach' or some similar expression, but did not. The phrase which he uses seems a counter-intuitive choice of words to express a rule which Paul intends shall apply to all worship assemblies of the church in all times and places.***

The next sentence:

***Accordingly, the first question here is whether these words convey an instruction for a particular situation or a rule which is general in scope (for all Christian assemblies everywhere) and enduring in time (until the Lord returns).***

We invite Mike to consider: How could that "***first question***" arise "***accordingly***" from what Andrew had just written, if Andrew had just answered the question? Mike's interpretation makes no sense.

Mike continues his discussion of *ouk epitrepō* in the next section.

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<sup>34</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, 214-230.

<sup>35</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, 220.

## 025 Paul has no jurisdiction over us 1:21:25

In this section, Mike again misinterprets Andrew's reasoning. Again, he erects a straw man and knocks it down.

The quotation which Mike criticizes is in the continuation of Andrew's explanation of the difficulties which *ouk epitrepō* raises for complementarian interpretations of verse 12.<sup>36</sup>

Mike puts up on the screen, in capital letters: "**PAUL HAS NO JURISDICTION OVER US**". According to Mike, Andrew presents this as "**one last method to say this is a limited prohibition**" so that we do not have to apply it today (1hr21mins – 1hr32mins).

Mike comments:

***I don't think Bartlett would word it this way, these are not his words: "Paul has no jurisdiction over us".***

So, he seems to be half-aware that he is about to erect a straw man, but he does it anyway.

Here is the passage cited by Mike from Andrew's book, where Andrew discusses the word 'permit':

***Complementarians say that 'a woman' in verse 12 refers generically to all women.<sup>29</sup> But how can that be? In a context which does not involve the use of physical force, the expression 'I do not permit' only makes sense within a range of jurisdiction. Discussing the meanings of 'permit', Tom Schreiner gives the examples of saying to his daughter that she is not permitted to go into the street or is not permitted to drive his car at one hundred miles per hour.<sup>30</sup> These statements make sense because he has jurisdiction over his daughter and his car. But he has no jurisdiction over other people's daughters or cars. If he were to say that he does not permit 'a girl' to go into the street or to drive too fast, such a statement could not be taken to mean that he was laying down the law for all girls in all times and places. If, like Philip (Acts 21:9), he had four daughters, his words would be taken to apply to them. In the same way, Paul's words must be for particular people over whom he has jurisdiction, as the apostle who built up their Christian community. There is nothing in the text to suggest that he is here meaning to claim jurisdiction over future generations everywhere.***

***Thus Paul's words express a particular restriction. He is not directly laying down the law for all women.***

This is little more than a statement of the obvious, based on the words that Paul chose to use. In 1 Timothy 2, Paul is not claiming jurisdiction over anyone except the particular people that he has in view. Therefore, the question we need to address is whether we should draw from it a principle of general application and, if so, what that principle is.

But here is Mike's straw man:

***The ramifications of this cannot be overstated. We are throwing the Apostle Paul and his work in the body of Christ under the bus in order to get away from something he taught that we don't want it to apply today. I don't know how else to look at it. (1hr24mins)***

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<sup>36</sup> It is at 221-222 in the paper copy. The reference Mike gives is 292.

This is entirely false, as Mike should have realized, if he had troubled to read what comes next. Just as Mike missed the “**first question**” on *ouk epitrepō*, he misses also the “**second question**”. Andrew’s text continues immediately with these words:

***The second question is whether a principle of general application should nonetheless be inferred from this particular restriction. Drawing an inference of this kind is a perfectly normal procedure. So, for example, Paul’s instructions on prayer in verses 1–2 are directed to particular people in a particular situation, but this does not prevent them being taken as appropriate guidance for all believers everywhere. His reasoning in verses 3–6 supports such an extrapolation of his remarks about prayer. Similarly, complementarians say that there is good reason to generalize from verse 12 to guide all believers everywhere. Their primary reason is that in verse 13 Paul bases his restriction on a creation principle. By its very nature, a creation principle applies to everyone.***

***The complementarian interpretation therefore depends on whether this understanding of verse 13 is correct.***

It seems Mike did not read these words, or perhaps he did not understand them. As every Bible teacher should know – but Mike seems to have forgotten – though the Bible was written for us, it was not written to us. When withholding his permission in verse 12, Paul was not writing to us. Therefore, to understand and apply God’s word, we need to follow the two-step approach: first, find out what it meant to the first readers in their situation; second, work out how it should apply to us.

So far from being “**a dangerous teaching**” (1hr26mins), the orthodox two-step approach is an essential safeguard to prevent Scripture being mishandled and misapplied – a safeguard that Mike ignores.

Based on Mike’s criticism, Mike’s own position can be stated as: PAUL HAS JURISDICTION OVER US, SO EVERYTHING THAT PAUL WRITES APPLIES DIRECTLY TO US. We don’t need to follow the two-step approach; we should just get on with obeying.

Mike urges Paul’s direct jurisdiction on the basis of three points: (1) In 1 Timothy 2:7 Paul appeals to his authority as an apostle to the Gentiles in general. (2) Paul is giving instructions based on that authority. (3) In saying “I do not permit”, Paul is appealing to his position as an apostle to make an authoritative rule for all churches (1hr26mins – 1hr31mins, and in Mike’s teaching notes).

If those points really establish that Paul has direct jurisdiction over us, let’s see how that works:

- Is Mike diligent to obey 1 Timothy 2:8, by lifting up his hands in every place where he prays?
- In view of 2:9, are women in Mike’s church banned from having braided hair and wearing gold, or pearls, or expensive clothes?
- Does Mike ensure that his church maintains a list of widows, aged 60-plus, as instructed by Paul in 5:3-10?
- In view of 5:14, does he instruct widows below the age of 60 that it is their Christian duty to remarry?
- In view of 5:23, does Mike teach that it is compulsory to drink wine?
- If victims of modern-day slavery come into his church, does Mike instruct them to honor those who have them enslaved, as Paul does at 6:1?

Or is Mike inconsistent? When he sees an instruction which he thinks may not be appropriate for him to apply in 21<sup>st</sup>-century California, does he then abandon his belief that Paul has direct jurisdiction over him and switch over to the orthodox, two-step approach?

We also invite Mike to say how, on Mike's interpretation, Andrew's "**second question**" could arise from what Andrew wrote. If Andrew is "**throwing the Apostle Paul ... under the bus in order to get away from something he taught that we don't want ... to apply today**", how does that lead into Andrew's question about *whether to infer a principle of general application* from what Paul writes? Mike's interpretation makes no sense.

Much later in the video, Mike summarizes his own view on the implications of Paul's phrasing:

**"I do not permit", you know, implies both that it is ongoing and that it's his practice in all churches as an apostle. (9hr13mins)**

But, despite the length of Mike's video and of his teaching notes, he does not demonstrate either of those two points (ongoing, or his practice in all churches).

As to whether it is Paul's practice in all churches, Mike considers this is "**just so obvious**". But he does not explain why. Instead of offering a reasoned argument, this is what he says:

**1 Timothy 2:8 gives us some support for this: "I desire that men in every place", uh, "that in every place men should pray." This is again, this is in the same context, 1 Timothy 2. It's about men. Later he's going to say "I don't permit a woman". It's still first person. He's presenting things that are just stuff he wants to happen in churches as an apostle. That's the implication. 1 Timothy 2:12 is along the same lines. Note, Paul does this as his policy. "I do not permit". It's not a ruling that he's just come up with. It's a practice he's already got in place. It's an apostolic teaching, it seems, for churches in general. I think that that seems clear, um. You know, the 1 Timothy 2 passage, there's a reason why the complementarians and patriarchalists tend to grab this passage, to throw it out there, because it's just so obvious. (0hr50mins – 0hr51mins)**

This is mere assertion, without any recognizable reasoning.

And if he is relying on 1 Timothy 2:8, he should tell his audience whether he insists that Christian men must lift their hands in every place where they pray together.

As to whether the phrase *ouk epitrepō* implies an ongoing, general prohibition because it is in the present tense, Mike has no leg to stand on. It is contradicted by Douglas Moo, in a quotation which Mike reads out and himself relies on at 0hr37mins:

***The use of the verb epitrepō in the present tense implies nothing as to the universal nature of Paul's prohibition ...*<sup>37</sup>**

On *ouk epitrepō*, where have we got to?

Mike has spent an hour discussing the phrase *ouk epitrepō* in three consecutive sections of his video. He has not shown that Paul intends a general rule. Nor has he addressed the puzzle which a complementarian interpreter needs to resolve. Mike does not say *why*, if Paul is insisting on a general rule which applies to all churches in all times and places, he introduces it with the counter-intuitive expression *ouk epitrepō* ("**I do not permit**" or "**I am not permitting**").

## 038 Does the cult of Artemis change everything? 2:03:30

When we read New Testament letters, we are hearing only one side of a conversation, and we do not have the knowledge that the writer and the first readers had of the actual situation for which the

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<sup>37</sup> Moo, 'The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15: A Rejoinder.' (1981) *TrinJ* 2, New Series: 198–222, 199.

letter was written. So, historical background, whether drawn from the New Testament or from other information, can be helpful and illuminating. For example, if we know how words such as “gospel” and “lord” were used in Roman imperial propaganda, we gain a richer appreciation of Paul’s impact on his listeners when he redeployed that language in letters to Rome and Corinth.

If we ignore the actual historical context of the letters, we are reading in a vacuum. We are then more likely to read our own concerns into the text, instead of recognizing the writer’s actual concerns. *Though Scripture was written for us, it was not written to us.*

The great Temple of Artemis, the Artemision at Ephesus, was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and considered by many to be the greatest of them. The cult of Artemis was famous across the Greco-Roman world. It dominated the civic, social, religious and economic life of Ephesus. No reader of Acts 19:23-41 – where for about two hours the riotous crowd kept chanting “**Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!**” – could be in any doubt about the significance of Artemis in the life of the city or her significance for Paul’s ministry in Ephesus. Artemis expert, Sandra Glahn, rightly says,

***Artemis was worshiped as the protector, lord, preeminent god, and savior of the city of Ephesus.***<sup>38</sup>

So, if we are going to adhere to the orthodox two-step approach to interpreting Scripture, the cult of Artemis should be considered when we read the letters which Paul wrote to Ephesus (which are Ephesians, and 1 and 2 Timothy).

For example, in Ephesians 6:16 Paul refers to the devil’s attacks as “**fiery arrows**”? This is the only place in the Bible where that metaphor is used. Why does he use that particular metaphor uniquely in that particular context? Probably because the false goddess Artemis was uniquely prominent in Ephesus and, in her mythology, she killed people with her arrows.<sup>39</sup>

In his video, Mike keeps pushing against the orthodox two-step approach to understanding and applying Scripture. He insists on 1 Timothy 2:12 as clear words, and as directly applicable to us. But if we go down the route of thoroughly investigating what Paul’s words meant to Timothy and the Ephesian believers in their real-life situation in Ephesus, where might we end up? We might conclude – in Mike’s view, wrongly – that Paul’s instruction in verse 12 is tailored to a particular situation rather than being intended as a general rule restricting women.

Mike agrees that Artemis was very important in Ephesus. He says:

***Artemis was a false god that was A REALLY BIG DEAL in Ephesus.*** (2hr09mins)

Nonetheless, he rejects the relevance of Artemis for getting better understanding of 1 Timothy 2.

His argument has three prongs:

- Most of what egalitarian scholars say about Artemis is untrue; in particular, it was not a feminist cult.
- Egalitarian interpretation of 1 Timothy 2 requires a hyper-feminist situation in Ephesus.

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<sup>38</sup> Glahn, *Nobody’s Mother: Artemis of the Ephesians in Antiquity and the New Testament* (2023), 116. See further 71-72, 83-86, 99-100, 115-116.

<sup>39</sup> See LSJ, βέλος (*belos*), sense 1 (literal) and sense 3 (figurative), and Glahn, *Nobody’s Mother*, 55. Michael Immedörfer has demonstrated that Paul makes many allusions to Artemis and her cult in the letter to the Ephesians. See Immedörfer’s book, *Ephesians and Artemis: The Cult of the Great Goddess of Ephesus as the Epistle’s Context* (2017).

- Artemis is irrelevant anyway, because there are no allusions to Artemis in Paul's letter, or none that should affect how we read it.

Here is how he introduces the first prong:

***It turns out that most of the claims about the cult of Artemis in egalitarian writings are not accurate, not historically true, not factual, and therefore many egalitarians are basing a new understanding of 1 Timothy 2 off of made-up history.*** (2hr06mins)

In order to show that it was not a feminist cult, Mike correctly relies on various scholars, including some egalitarians.

We agree that *some things* which *some scholars* have said about the Artemis cult have been inaccurate. Importantly, the idea of Ephesus as a feminist culture where women domineered over men is not historically accurate, and Mike is right to say so. While the stories of Amazon women had some influence in Ephesus, and while women officeholders in the cult were persons of wealth and honor, who had some autonomy from men in their acts of benevolence, it was not a cult of female empowerment and it was not about women dominating men.<sup>40</sup>

Knowledge and understanding of the Artemis cult, as it was in Paul's time in Ephesus, has increased significantly in recent years. There have been fresh studies of the evidence, including new archaeological discoveries. Accordingly, discussions based on older work often contain statements which are now seen to be mistaken. This is part of the progress of historical research.

But Mike appears to believe, and repeatedly tells his audience, that the errors are derived from modern egalitarian scholars fabricating fake history to support egalitarianism (2hr06mins, 2hr53mins, 3hr10mins, 9hr10mins; 9hr14mins, 10hr03mins).<sup>41</sup>

That is a partisan misconception. It is highly misleading for Mike's audience and is unfair to scholars who have been misled by earlier errors. The history of errors goes back a long way – all the way to the Church Fathers.

For example, statues depict Artemis of the Ephesians as having rows of bulbous objects hanging on her chest. For some photographs, see <https://terranwilliams.com/the-strangeness-of-1-timothy-212/>. What are they?

Minucius Felix (in the third century) and Jerome (fourth century) interpreted them as female breasts. Despite the absence of nipples, they thought of her as the many-breasted one, an all-nurturing mother. But it is now understood that Artemis was regarded by her devotees as a *virgin* goddess, not a mother, and the bulbous objects on her chest most likely represent little bags or pouches containing materials for magical practices.<sup>42</sup>

Then what about the second prong, that egalitarians need a hyper-feminist situation in Ephesus? Mike says:

***Let me explain. They do not just need a feminist Ephesus. They need a hyper-feminist Ephesus. I mean feminism beyond that which we see today in modern 21st century countries – not, not even that kind of feminism is going to be enough to establish their***

<sup>40</sup> Glahn, *Nobody's Mother*, 78-79, 96-97.

<sup>41</sup> In contrast with the strong language that he uses elsewhere, at 2hr08mins – 2hr09mins Mike says that the false history is mistaken rather than deliberate.

<sup>42</sup> See Glahn, *Nobody's Mother*, 104-111.

**views of First Timothy. They need hyper-feminism. They need women who are dominating over men – not just saying equal rights, not just saying there's no authority differences between men and women in marriage, not just saying anything like that. They need women who are saying: "We are in charge! Men, you submit to us! That's the natural and right order of things!"** (3hr17mins – 3hr18mins)

This is over-blown.

There is one particular line of interpretation, which some egalitarians have advanced, which depends on a hyper-feminist Ephesus. It is based on a mistaken idea about the Artemis cult and social conditions in Ephesus. But other non-complementarian interpretations do not depend on that mistaken idea. Indeed, Mike has relied on some egalitarian scholars in his rebuttal of it.

Philip Payne's reading of 1 Timothy 2 does not depend on a feminist Ephesus. Nor does Craig Keener's, or Cindy Westfall's, or Terran Williams', or Andrew Bartlett's.

In the third prong of his argument, Mike contends that Artemis is irrelevant anyway, because Paul makes no significant allusions to Artemis in his letter:

***If you read the Artemis cult into the background of 1 Timothy 2, I believe it is provably unjustified. It is demonstrably wrong to do so.*** (3hr34mins)<sup>43</sup>

That is a remarkable position for Mike to take, after he has rightly accepted the high importance of Artemis in life at Ephesus.

It is even more remarkable, in view of verse 15 of chapter 2. As we shall see when we get to the relevant section, Ephesian beliefs about Artemis shine a flood of light on that otherwise strange verse.

But Mike maintains that there are no allusions to Artemis, or at least there are none that should affect how we read chapter 2 of Paul's letter.

To promote that unrealistic position, he does some more strawmanning, first of Sandra Glahn and then of Andrew Bartlett. Mike does not address their actual reasoning. We have put the details and more information at the end of this article, in Appendix 1: "**More straw men and Artemis**", where we show some of the fascinating relevance of Artemis for understanding Paul's choice of words in this letter.

As we proceed onwards through the topics that Mike discusses, we will keep in mind the orthodox two-step approach. We will find repeatedly that knowledge about Artemis and the religious milieu of Ephesus, while not changing everything, *makes a worthwhile contribution*. It helps us to understand what Paul's words meant to Timothy and to the Ephesian believers.

Mike's next section is about the specific words in verse 12.

## 073 Is "have authority" a wrong translation? 3:36:44

Regarding the debate over women's ministry, Mike says:

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<sup>43</sup> Mike seems aware that this statement may put his case too high. But he is firm about Artemis's lack of impact on interpretation. He adds: "***Doesn't mean it couldn't have had ANY influence, but it should not be seen to have the kind of influence that would have you reinterpreting the passage to mean something different than what it appears to mean on the surface. We should at least avoid doing this – reading Artemis in the background to the point where it radically changes your interpretation of any of the passages in the text.***"

***The center of this whole debate boils down to this one question: In 1 Timothy 2:12, is the phrase “have authority” a wrong translation? (3hr36mins)***

Our answer to Mike’s question is: Yes, it is a wrong translation.

This is by far the longest section of Mike’s video (4½ hours). We have written a separate article on it, which you can see here <https://terranwilliams.com/why-mike-winger-is-wrong-about-authenteo-in-1-timothy-212-and-why-it-matters-2/> (or download a pdf [here](#).)

Here are ten key points, taken from our article:

[1] Every step of Mike’s argument is a mis-step. His discussion is full of mistakes. He has misread what scholars have written. He has missed important points which they have made. His reasoning is often unsound and illogical, even self-contradictory. He has got facts wrong. There are many errors and gaps in his research. He has gone off on tangents by asking himself the wrong questions. He has not addressed major issues that he needed to address.

[2] Paul’s Greek verb *authenteō* in 1 Timothy 2:12 is hard to translate because up to Paul’s time it is a very rare word. Some Bible versions translate it as “**have authority**” or “**exercise authority**”. Mike’s interpretation depends on *authenteō* being a suitable word for the authority exercised by a church elder.

[3] Mike does not show any relevant historical example of *authenteō* being used or understood in a sense suitable to the function of a church elder. His earliest pertinent evidence is in a passage from the Church Father, Origen, which he enthusiastically describes as “**super cool**” and wants his audience to rely on. Yet, in self-contradiction, Mike himself argues that Origen’s interpretation of Paul in this passage is definitely wrong – and we agree.

[4] Near to the time of Paul, there are just two clear examples of this word being used in a sense that could fit into 1 Timothy 2:12. In both examples, it has connotations of pressure and of decisive influence. In the first example, it refers to strong-arm negotiating tactics to *overpower* another party and force them to back down. In the second example it is used of astrological influence, where a powerful planet *dominates* or *overmasters* other heavenly bodies. These are not suitable meanings for the exercise of pastoral authority by an elder. *So, on what Mike considers to be the center of the whole debate, his interpretation is unsupported.*

[5] In Paul’s writings (including in this letter at 3:5; 5:17), there is a range of common words which Paul uses to describe the functions of elders. Why would Paul step over every one of those options and select instead a rare word? Mike does not say.

[6] Since *authenteō* is a very rare word, Paul, as a skilled communicator, must have had some special reason for using it. What was it? If we can find the reason, that will help us know how to translate it. Mike does not answer this question. Despite much prompting, from us and others, he does not even consider the question. (An answer to that question would push him towards acknowledging that Paul’s remarks are tailored to a particular situation in Ephesus.)

[7] While certainty is impossible, the only answer that we know of is that *authenteō* is a word used in Hellenic astrological lore, and Paul’s target is false teaching that includes astrology (probably linked to Artemis, whose statues at Ephesus display the signs of the Zodiac). Paul is using language from the false teaching in order to combat it.

[8] In this section, Mike also argues that the word “**teach**” is used in a positive sense in verse 12, referring to good teaching. But Paul regards it as negative: he is prohibiting it, and he contrasts it with behavior that he regards positively.

[9] Mike protests that in verse 12 Paul uses the word “**teach**” rather than “**teach falsely**”, so he must be referring to a good kind of teaching, which is only prohibited to stop *women* doing it. But that is fallacious reasoning. Terran is pastor of a church. If he were concerned that some elite young widows in his church were going from house to house with astrology and other false teachings, with men in their sights, he would not forbid them to “**teach a man falsely**”. He would forbid them to “**teach a man**”, period. To allow them to teach, while saying merely that they should not teach falsely, would be too risky.

[10] According to Mike, what Paul has in mind in 2:12 is that a woman should not teach and exercise authority as an elder. But on that theory, if a woman should not exercise the functions of an elder, Paul should have said that in the church a woman must not teach or exercise authority over anyone, whether men, women or children. Yet that is not what Paul writes. He writes only that she should not teach and not *authentēō* “**a man**” (singular). Paul envisages something done to an individual man, as might happen if a deceived woman went to his house and overmastered him with false teaching. (We will explain this further in a later section.)

In sum, Mike does not demonstrate a sound basis for his understanding of verse 12.

Mike’s next section focuses on rebutting the idea that verse 12 has something to do with women spreading false teaching.

## [226] The "Bunch of Female False Teachers" view 8:03:15

Were women mixed up in false teaching at Ephesus? Is that the reason for Paul’s restriction in 1 Timothy 2:12?

This is an important section. Here Mike discusses Craig Keener’s lack-of-education theory. He lays out a five-step rebuttal of it. While doing so, he also addresses the broader question whether women became involved in spreading false teaching in Ephesus, and whether that could explain Paul’s instructions in chapter 2.

Mike quotes Keener:

***If the problem with the Ephesian women was their lack of education and consequent susceptibility to false teaching, the text provides us a concrete local example of a more general principle: Those most susceptible to false teaching should not teach.***<sup>44</sup>

In rebuttal of Keener’s theory, Mike argues:

- Lack of women’s education does not adequately explain Paul’s instructions in chapter 2, for there were high-class women in the Ephesian church (2:9), and as high-class women they would have received a Greco-Roman education.
- And anyway, the important *kind* of education for a Christian teacher is not Greco-Roman education but training in Christian truth:

***Why think that Paul's forbidding women on the basis of something he doesn't even use as a qualification for people in ministry? It's really weird to suddenly interpret Paul like he***

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<sup>44</sup> Keener, *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (2005), 233.

***only wants to have teachers in the church who have a high level of education outside of Christian doctrine.*** (8hr33mins)

So, for both of those reasons, lack of women's Greco-Roman education does not explain Paul banning Ephesian women from teaching.

If Keener was meaning to refer to lack of Greco-Roman education, we would have agreed with Mike's rebuttal. Keener's view would be a "***really weird***" interpretation of Paul. But that wasn't Keener's meaning. He was referring to lack of training in the Scriptures.

Keener is one of the leading Bible-believing scholars on Jewish, Greek and Roman culture, and New Testament background.<sup>45</sup> In his judgment:

***... we have good reason to believe that women were usually considerably less trained in the Scriptures than their husbands ...***<sup>46</sup>

Keener sees this as a probable reason for the women in Ephesus being more susceptible than men to false teaching and hence more likely to pass it on. He writes:

***... in that culture the uneducated women seem to have provided the network the false teachers could use to spread their falsehoods through the congregations (1 Tim. 5:13; 2 Tim. 3:6-7). This is probably because the women were not as well learned in the Scriptures as men were ...***<sup>47</sup>

Because Mike's five-point rebuttal is addressed to a straw man version of Keener's view, and because there are places where we extend or depart from Keener's analysis, we will organize our discussion differently from Mike's. First, we will identify the critical issue, then we will examine Mike's objections to the idea that Paul's instructions in verses 11-12 are aimed at preventing women from spreading false teaching in Ephesus.

The critical issue: [what is Paul concerned about?](#)

In chapter 2, is Paul giving *general instructions* for Christian living, or is he giving *instructions which are tailored to a particular situation*?

In our view, it is plain that his instructions are tailored to a known situation. For example, why else would Paul give instructions specifically for *men* about *prayer* in verse 8, and instructions specifically for *women* about *learning* in verse 11? It is not only men who should pray. It is not only women who should learn. There must be particular things going on which Paul is concerned about. That Paul only addresses one sex at a time in these instructions is evidence that he singles out their particular failures in the specific situation.

So, a critical issue for understanding 1 Timothy 2:12 is:

- *What was Paul concerned about, which gave rise to his particular instructions in verse 12?*

There are two possibilities, two possible scenarios, to consider.

Was it-

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<sup>45</sup> That's why he is the author of *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*.

<sup>46</sup> Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 84

<sup>47</sup> Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 112.

- **when the church in Ephesus met for worship and instruction, faithful women were teaching the truth and life that are in Christ, or were about to do so, in a setting where only men should be allowed to teach?** We'll call this **Scenario T**. ("**T**" for True teaching.)

Or was it-

- **the spread of false teaching in Ephesus, in which misguided and misbehaving women were involved?** We'll call this **Scenario F**. ("**F**" for False teaching.)

Let's also be clear here about what we mean by true teaching and false teaching. Paul was a first-century Hebrew, not a modern Western Christian. He did not think of teaching principally as imparting what we might call "**doctrines**". In the New Testament, there is no separate word for "**doctrine**", distinguished from the ordinary words for "**teaching**". In Paul's thinking, teaching is done by word and deed together, and its objective is to produce lives that are pleasing to God.

So, one of Paul's tasks as an apostle is:

***to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the TRUTH THAT LEADS TO GODLINESS ...*** (Titus 1:1, NIV, our emphasis)

And when he writes to the Corinthians, to instruct them, he says:

***... I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.*** (1 Corinthians 4:16-17, NIV)

What he teaches everywhere, by example and by word, is the following of Jesus Christ – life in Christ.<sup>48</sup>

So true teaching, which is by word of mouth and by good example, necessarily stands in contrast to false teaching, which involves untrue words and bad example and produces ungodly deeds. This means that, for Paul, promoting godliness and combating false teaching are not separate tasks.<sup>49</sup>

Returning to our scenarios: Scenario T could support a complementarian interpretation, a general restriction on *women* as recognized teachers and authorities in the church. Scenario F would not.

If we knew nothing of later church practices and only had the New Testament to go on, Scenario T would be a considerable surprise, as being Paul's concern. Elsewhere, Paul doesn't seem bothered about faithful women teaching. On the contrary, he encourages it. In a number of places in his letters, Paul teaches about spiritual gifts, including the gift of teaching, without saying – or giving even a hint – that there is some restriction on women in their use of that gift (see Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Ephesians 4:7-13). He urges the Corinthians, who are both men and women, to desire the higher gifts of being apostles, prophets and teachers (1 Corinthians 12:27-30). He seems to envisage both men and women contributing vocally in worship by teaching and admonition (1 Corinthians 14:26;<sup>50</sup> Colossians 3:16). When he started the church in Ephesus, he left his co-workers Priscilla and Aquila there to teach the new converts and deal with any false teaching, and he carried on with his travels (Acts 18). Priscilla was a woman.

<sup>48</sup> While we were writing this, a new two-minute video appeared on YouTube, making this very point. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFy7UP5aiTM>.

<sup>49</sup> For fuller discussion, see *Men and Women in Christ*, chapter 11, under 'Paul's concept of teaching'.

<sup>50</sup> For discussion of the anomalous remarks in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, see *Men and Women in Christ*, chapters 9-10 and <https://terranwilliams.com/what-winger-presently-gets-wrong-women-keep-silent-1-cor-1434-35/>.

Mike rightly understands that *a complementarian interpretation cannot stand, without showing that what we have called "Scenario F" is wrong*. In this section, he raises objections to that Scenario. He refers to it like this:

***The implication here is that there's enough of a background of false teachers in 1 Timothy that we can see false teachers as the unstated issue in 1 Timothy 2:12 ... that's what Paul's talking about in 1 Timothy 2: not women teaching but women teaching falsely***  
(8hr08mins)

We will identify Mike's relevant objections and consider them. (For the reasons we have already mentioned, our numbering will not correspond to the numbering in Mike's teaching notes.)

### Objection 1- Mike's bold claim: nothing about false teaching

Mike's biggest objection is that there is nothing about false teaching in chapters 2 or 3 of Paul's letter:

***The entire section around 1 Timothy 2:12 is not about false teaching. All of chapters – from beginning of chapter 2 all the way through chapter 3 – nothing there that indicates it's about false teaching. Nothing. Not in my reading. Maybe you could go with, with a magnifying glass, and try to find something, but at least you'd have to agree that it's basically not about false teaching. It's in the middle of a section of thirty-one verses that don't appear to be about false teaching.*** (8hr19mins)

This is a bold claim. For Mike himself acknowledges that ***"false teaching is a major issue in 1 Timothy"*** (8hr09mins). So, how does he support his claim that nothing in chapters 2 or 3 is about false teaching?

He proceeds by multiple mis-steps. Here are the four big ones:

- First: He draws an artificial distinction between dealing with false teaching and promoting good, faithful lives. He uses that distinction to drive a wedge between Paul's instructions in chapter 1 and Paul's words in 3:14-15.
- Second: He disregards multiple allusions to false teaching in chapters 2 and 3.
- Third: He relies on Paul not permitting a woman ***"to teach"*** rather than not permitting her ***"to teach falsely"***.
- Fourth: Mike does not pay attention to the explicit signposts which Paul gives, which signal Paul's train of thought and tie it to false teaching. This is a fundamental error, which is fatal to Mike's view.

### First mis-step: making an artificial distinction

Let's remind ourselves of some background which we can infer from Acts and from Paul's letters. In about AD 57, Paul had said goodbye to the Ephesian elders. God gave Paul a prophetic warning that some male false teachers would arise in Ephesus, even from among the eldership (Acts 20:29-30). But Paul did not expect ever to go back to Ephesus (20:25). The book of Acts ends with Paul imprisoned in Rome. But Paul was later released from this first Roman imprisonment, and headed east to deal with a crisis of false teaching (about AD 63).<sup>51</sup> At Ephesus, he expelled from the church the leading false teachers, Hymenaeus and Alexander, before hurrying off to Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3, 20).

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<sup>51</sup> For more details, see *Men and Women in Christ*, 239, 242-243, in chapter 12, under 'The historical context'.

In 1:3-5, Paul refers to leaving Timothy in Ephesus and mentions the commission he gave him, which was to deal with the remaining false teachers and promote godly lives of faith and love – repairing the damage done by the false teaching.

Two chapters later, in 3:14-15, Paul refers to his hope of returning to Ephesus. He says he is writing with *instructions in case he is delayed*. So, they are instructions for dealing with something urgent, something that cannot be left until his return. Translated literally:

***These things I write to you [singular] hoping to come to you [singular] with speed but if I delay, that you [singular] may know how it is necessary to behave in [or, with] God's household, which is a congregation of a living god, pillar and support of the truth.***

So, he is writing urgent instructions for how Timothy is to behave, to fulfil his commission to strengthen the church for maintaining the truth. To be a pillar of the truth includes living according to the truth. Those instructions are on the same topic that was introduced in chapter 1. The topic is still what Timothy should do to combat false teaching and promote godly lives of faith and love.

Some translations take Paul's phrase about behavior to refer to the behavior of people in the church, rather than to Timothy's own behavior – for example NIV.<sup>52</sup> If the NIV is correct, Paul's point remains pretty much the same. Paul wants Timothy to know what urgent steps to take, to help the church behave in a way that maintains and embodies the truth.

But Mike doesn't see it this way. Referring to 3:14-15, he draws an artificial distinction between dealing with false teaching and promoting good, faithful lives:

***It's much more broad than false teaching. False teaching obviously is one issue in the church. It always, it always has been, and always will be. But it's not the issue in this book. His stated purpose is much more broad than false teaching. It's about proper Christian behavior. I think that Paul's stated purpose trumps any sort of implications you get from chapter 1:3.*** (8hr11mins – 8hr12mins)

If so, then why in 3:15 does Paul refer to the church with the unusual expression “*pillar and support of the truth*”, in implied contrast to the false teaching? Is that just a holy thought, unrelated to the specific challenge which Timothy is facing? And why *in the very next verse* does Paul refer to the “*mystery*” of godliness, in implied contrast with the pagan mysteries? Is that just a random coincidence? And is it yet another random coincidence that *in the next line* (4:1) Paul writes:

***Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.*** (ESV)

Paul's own words show that false teaching is at the forefront of his thoughts in this part of his letter, just as it was at the start.

Despite some relevant citations from scholars,<sup>53</sup> Mike downplays the significance of how Paul starts his letter. He seems not to grasp the importance of structure in Paul's letters, especially when they have a clear statement of theme at the beginning and the end. So, for example, Paul's principal theme in Romans is calling Gentiles to “*the obedience of faith*”, as stated at the start in Romans 1:1-6 and at the end in 16:25-27. In 1 Timothy the principal theme of the letter is combating false teaching

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<sup>52</sup> NIV: “... *you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household ...*” Contrast NKJV: “... *you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God ...*”

<sup>53</sup> Westfall, *Paul and Gender*, 298, citing John White, *Body of the Greek Letter*, 3.

and promoting godly lives of faith and love, as stated at the beginning (in 1:3-5) and at the end (in 6:11-21).

And we need to raise another question about Mike's interpretation of 3:14-15. Why would Paul think that Timothy urgently needs general instructions for "**proper Christian behavior**"? Timothy has worked with Paul for years in a variety of churches and situations. In flat contradiction of 1 Corinthians 4:16-17, has Paul not taught him about proper Christian behavior? Has Paul failed to show him the basics of how to organize and lead a godly church? How could Timothy not "**know**" those things?

No. Mike's interpretation is mistaken. Paul is writing primarily so that Timothy will "**know**" what he should do (3:15) *in a particular and challenging situation*. It makes sense that Paul gives him specific, urgent instructions, in case Paul is delayed, for dealing with the situation in Ephesus, where false teaching has damaged the church.

(To be clear, this does not mean the instructions are *limited to* the immediate crisis, for they also include instructions for longer-term priorities. Reading between the lines, we can infer that Paul includes some longer-term instructions because it is possible he may never return. See the tone of 6:11-16, and see in 2 Timothy 1:4 Paul's affectionate mention of Timothy's tears when Paul left.

And to be very clear, nor does it mean that what Paul says in these situational instructions contains no lessons which churches today should properly draw from what he says, and apply appropriately in their own situations.)

Mike sets up a contrast between the command in 1:3 to stop false teachers and other commands which Paul gives to Timothy. He shows a list of other instructions picked from chapters 4 – 6 (at 4:11-16, 5:21 and 6:13) (8hr13mins).

But in presenting this list, Mike is again making an artificial distinction. He acknowledges, "**Context is King**" (7hr13mins). But he does not put that truth into practice. He posts his list of instructions and draws the contrast without considering how the context shows the artificiality of the distinction that he makes.

In 1:4 the charge to Timothy continues with mention of advancing God's work, and faith, and love. Combating false teaching certainly involves those things, including by giving sound teaching, both by words and by example. A similar combination of ideas is found in chapter 4, where in 4:1-8 Paul refers to the false teachings and then in 4:9-16 instructs Timothy in the positive actions that he needs to take. The context of 5:21 is elders who persist in sin (as the false teachers Hymenaeus and Alexander had done). The context of 6:13 is the false teaching and false teachers referred to in 6:3-10.

### Second mis-step: disregarding multiple allusions to false teaching in chapters 2-3

Mike puts up a list of 13 things mentioned in 1 Timothy, which he says are not about false teaching (8hr17mins – 8hr19mins). But he continues to disregard clues found in the context. Let's look at some things said in chapters 2 and 3:

- In 2:8, Paul speaks against quarreling. What is the connection with false teaching? Paul subsequently describes false teachers as people with "**an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words**" (6:3-4). In 2:8 Paul is probably thinking of the impact of false teachers; the disharmony is a symptom of the false teaching.
- In 2:14, Paul refers to Eve being deceived by Satan. That could scarcely be more obviously about false teaching. That is what Eve was duped by. This fits with 4:1, where he emphasizes

that the false teaching comes from deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, and with 5:15, where he laments that some of the women have strayed after Satan. Mike’s reasoning against 2:14 being about false teaching is threadbare (see it in our footnote).<sup>54</sup> (We will say more in the next two sections about how Eve taught Adam falsely.)

- In 2:15 Paul re-emphasizes part of the remedy for false teaching, which is to continue in a saved life of faith, love, holiness and self-control. (We’ll see later that verse 15 is a striking allusion to false teaching.)
- 3:1-7 contains instructions about appointing elders. Why is it necessary for Timothy to appoint faithful elders, who are able to teach, in a church that has been in existence for a decade and already has an eldership? And why in 5:22 does Paul emphasize the need for caution in selecting new elders? Because he has just expelled two of them for false teaching. (See 1:20 and compare Acts 20:29-30.)<sup>55</sup>

### Third mis-step: “to teach” rather than “to teach falsely”

Mike argues:

- Paul does not say in verse 12 that he does not permit a woman “to teach falsely”. What Paul says is that he does not permit a woman “to teach”.
- This shows that Paul is not concerned with false teaching here. (8hr8mins – 8h9mins).

This is a repeat of an argument that he made in the earlier section “*Is “have authority” a wrong translation?*” We have already shown that this argument is fallacious: see our point [9] in the discussion of that section of the video, above.

### Fourth mis-step: not paying attention to Paul’s signposts

Mike makes his fourth and most critical mis-step when he fails to trace Paul’s train of thought from what we call chapter 1 into what we call chapter 2.

The relevance of false teaching right through chapter 2 is placed beyond doubt by the explicit signposts which Paul gives, signaling his train of thought.

Chapter 1 is squarely addressed to the issue of false teaching and the promotion of saved lives of love and goodness, in place of the ungodliness produced by the false teachings. At the end of chapter 1, Paul is still on that topic. He issues rousing encouragement to Timothy to fight the good fight, contrasting him with the two prominent false teachers whom Paul has expelled (1:18-20). From there, how does his train of thought continue?

The conjunction with which Paul starts chapter 2 is “**Therefore**” (Greek *oun*). Complementarian scholar Robert Yarbrough explains that the Greek word *oun* “**serves to introduce a solemn inference from what precedes in order to lay out a vital course of action**”.<sup>56</sup> Paul is signaling that he is

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<sup>54</sup> “*False teachers, they deceive. And women are deceived, right? Deceiving and getting deceived, OK? So, Eve she was deceived in 1 Timothy 2. What we’re doing though is: we’re chopping the bits of scripture into puzzle pieces to create a puzzle they’re not making. We’re pulling these parallels out of context and smashing them together in a way that I think is unfair.*” (9hr11mins) Remembering Mike’s misguided claim to follow “*pretty much*” the traditional approach (0hr23mins), his remarks make a stark contrast with Chrysostom’s view that this is about false teaching: “*[T]he woman taught the man once, and made him guilty of disobedience, and wrought our ruin.*” *Homily 9* on 1 Timothy 2:11-15.

<sup>55</sup> Notice that there is a different reason for Paul’s instructions to Titus for appointing elders in Crete. It is because the churches there are new. See Titus 1:5. As a result, Paul’s instructions differ. For Crete, he omits the bar on appointing new converts. Better to appoint some new converts than to leave the new Cretan churches leaderless.

<sup>56</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (2018), 280. The quotation is from Yarbrough’s discussion of 1

continuing with instructions which logically follow on from chapter 1. He is now coming to the practical steps, the specifics, of what should be done to combat the false teaching and promote faithful lives.

Then at 2:8 there is another “**Therefore**” (*oun*), signaling a continuation of instructions on the same topic.

In contrast to Mike, Linda Belleville correctly identifies these signposts, under her heading “**Grammatical and lexical context**”. Here is her explanation of how chapters 1 and 2 are tied together:

***The opening “Therefore I exhort first of all” (parakalō oun; 1 Tim 2:1 NKJV) ties what follows in 1 Timothy 2 with the false teaching of the previous chapter and its divisive influence (1 Tim 1:3-7, 18-20). The subsequent “Therefore I want the men” (boulomai oun tous andras) eight verses later does the same (1 Tim 2:8 NIV).***<sup>57</sup>

Mike looks at this page of Belleville’s work. But instead of considering this important point about Paul’s train of thought, he picks a fight over whether her broad figure of 60% is the correct proportion of the letter which is taken up with false teaching and women (8hr14mins). Andrew’s book likewise points out the significance of the structure of Paul’s argument “**therefore ... therefore ...**”, but Mike again ignores it.<sup>58</sup>

Next, Paul explicitly ties verse 8 (the men) to verse 9 (women), with the word “**Likewise**” (Greek *hōsautōs*), and sets out his instructions for women in verses 9-15. And at verse 15, Paul is still on the topic of living a godly life, in implied contrast to following false myths.<sup>59</sup>

So, here is our question:

- *If chapter 2 has nothing to do with false teaching, why does Paul himself indicate that it does, in 2:1 and again in 2:8 and again in 2:9, linking his remarks unmistakably to the topic of the previous chapter by putting in place the signposts “therefore ...”, “therefore ...”, “Likewise ...”?*

Mike does not answer this question. He has not paid attention to Paul’s train of thought. He breaks the elementary rule of interpretation: when you see “**therefore**”, ask what it’s there for! He ignores all of Paul’s signals that Paul is concerned with combating false teaching in chapter 2.

## Objection 2 – ALL women banned?

Mike considers that Scenario F could only explain Paul’s instructions if there was a huge proportion of women teaching falsely:

***Here’s the idea: women became false teachers in Ephesus. And this is of course absolutely crucial for the egalitarian argument to take place. If they’re going to succeed, at least in this line of argument, to interpret 1 Timothy 2 as an egalitarian text, then they really need this to be not only a little successful but for it to be monumentally successful.***

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Timothy 5; he does not notice the significance of *oun* in 1 Timothy 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Discovering Biblical Equality* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn), 207.

<sup>58</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, 211-212 (in chapter 11, under ‘General contents of the letter’), 245 (in chapter 12, under ‘Using the first key: reading 2:9-10 in the context of 1:1 – 2:8’), 388 (in Appendix 6: Shortcomings in Complementarian Analyses of 1 Timothy 2). See also Westfall, *Paul and Gender*, 290.

<sup>59</sup> We discuss verse 15 in detail in a later section, “*What does “saved through childbearing” mean?*”

**Let me explain. So, if there are, let's say, a handful of female false teachers in First Timothy, in that setting in Ephesus, this doesn't give you enough ... leverage to say: Yeah, that explains why Paul forbids ALL women from teaching. ... It's just unreasonable to think that that is the explanation for a wide – just complete – barring of women from teaching and having authority over men, if it's a handful of women.**

**So, you need such a huge problem of female false teachers that it's a solution to actually bar women entirely from teaching. That's what egalitarians need. (8hr38mins – 8hr39mins)<sup>60</sup>**

This analysis raises an objection which would need to be addressed, if in 1 Timothy 2:12 (as Mike says) **“Paul forbids ALL women from teaching”**.

But Paul does not say that he is forbidding ALL women from teaching. The ban on **“ALL women”** is not in Paul's words; it is in Mike's complementarian interpretation of Paul's words.<sup>61</sup>

### Objection 3 – The Priscilla problem?

Mike's teaching notes refer to Priscilla being in Ephesus when Apollos was there (Acts 18), and to her being in Ephesus when 2 Timothy was written, as if she were present throughout.<sup>62</sup> In the video he says:

**“Here's the Priscilla problem. Priscilla is still in Ephesus at this time. Priscilla is present. ... So, here we have Paul forbidding all women from teaching due to a problem that we're aware about, in, in a time when we know Priscilla was present, and Priscilla was certainly a capable teacher: if Paul was going to let any woman teach it was going to be her.”**  
(8hr21mins – 8hr22mins)

But Mike is wrong. There is no evidence which shows that Priscilla was present in Ephesus at the time of Paul's first letter to Timothy.<sup>63</sup> We covered this point briefly in our previous article,<sup>64</sup> and in

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<sup>60</sup> Mike continues: *Wayne Grudem puts this correctly when he says the following: “unless women were primarily responsible for spreading the false teaching, Paul's silencing of the women (in the egalitarian view) would not make sense.”* But Mike has misread Grudem's point, which is a quite different one from Mike's. Grudem is not saying that for an egalitarian reading there have to be *many* female false teachers. He is only saying that the false teachers (however many or few they may be) need to be primarily women. Grudem's point is easily answered. Paul has excluded the principal false teachers in 1:20, who are men, so it may well be that the false teachers who remain in the Ephesian church are primarily women.

<sup>61</sup> Non-complementarian interpretations vary on the precise application of Paul's instruction. Some consider that Paul is prohibiting all the women in the Ephesian church from teaching at that particular time, or from teaching in a dominating manner, or from teaching until trained and authorized to do so. Others take a more limited view of Paul's target in 2:12. When we get to Objection 6, we will look at the context, to see what women Paul has in mind.

<sup>62</sup> **“The Priscilla problem. She is present in Ephesus at the time Yet, Es will use the circumstances in 2 Tim 3 to show support female false teachers as the reason Paul won't let any women teach. But Priscilla is, all Es agree, a capable and solid teacher!”** (page 90). **“We also know that Apollos ministered there and encountered Priscilla and Aquilla [sic]. There's obviously one woman educated in Christian theology there! And we even know she was present there when 2 Tim was written (Paul greets her)”** (page 92).

<sup>63</sup> Note that in the video Mike almost corrects himself. He says: **“Priscilla is still in Ephesus at this time. Priscilla is present. I say “this time”. I mean Second Timothy.”** It is almost as if he is about to acknowledge that there is no evidence of Priscilla's presence at the time when Paul wrote First Timothy. But he doesn't.

<sup>64</sup> We wrote: **“After Priscilla and Aquila had ministered in Ephesus for a number of years, by AD 57 they had returned to Rome (see Romans 16:3-5). About nine years later (AD 66), by the time of Paul's second letter to Timothy, we can see that they were in Ephesus again, because Paul greets them in the second letter (2 Timothy 4:19). But they are not mentioned in his first letter to Timothy; and there is no evidence that Priscilla and Aquila were already back in Ephesus when Paul wrote 1 Timothy.”**

more detail in our response to Mike’s part 4 video on New Testament Women.<sup>65</sup> It is disappointing that Mike has not taken on board this correction and keeps on indicating, falsely, that Priscilla was present in Ephesus when Paul wrote 1 Timothy.<sup>66</sup>

#### Objection 4 – Male false teachers are named

This objection is based on the sex of named false teachers:

***What gender are the false teachers that Paul actually mentions by name? Well, here's an example: First Timothy 1:20 he mentions Hymenaeus and Alexander. There are others he mentions by name. Every single false teacher Paul mentions by name is male. Every one! Every single one, male! So, forbidding all women from teaching falsely seems weird in the extreme.*** (9hr06mins – 9hr07mins)

This objection is inaccurate as to fact; it is faulty in its logic; and it shows a lack of knowledge of Paul’s habits of how he refers to opponents in his letter-writing.

As to fact, Mike does not specify the “**others**” (plural) whom he believes that Paul mentions by name. The true position is that *one* other name is known, which is first mentioned about two or three years later: Philetus, named at 2 Timothy 2:17-18. There is no information on whether Philetus was in the fellowship and teaching falsely at the time when Paul wrote 1 Timothy. It seems unlikely (if he’d been there, Paul would probably have excluded him, along with the first two).

As to logic, the exclusion of two male false teachers prior to 1 Timothy being written, and the existence of one additional male false teacher in Ephesus a few years later, does not tell us that no women were caught up in spreading the false teaching at the time of Paul’s first letter.

As to Paul’s habits in letter-writing, complementarian scholar Robert Yarbrough points out that Paul regularly refers to opponents in the church, people of whom he disapproves, as “**certain persons**” (the Greek pronoun *tis*, in the plural), without naming them. That is how he does it in (among other places) 1:3; 1:6 and 5:15.<sup>67</sup> In his letters, Paul has various reasons for not naming such people: see our footnote, where we have set out Yarbrough’s general explanation.<sup>68</sup> This Greek pronoun does not specify male or female gender. It is consistent with a scenario where Paul has in mind certain misbehaving wealthy women, as we will show below.

#### Objection 5 – Historical information of men in Ephesus

Mike argues against the presence of women teaching falsely in Ephesus by referring to historical information of men in Ephesus who were philosophers or other kinds of teachers or leaders (9hr07mins – 9hr10mins).

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<sup>65</sup> <https://terranwilliams.com/what-winger-presently-gets-wrong-women-leaders-in-the-new-testament-part-b/>.

<sup>66</sup> Quite possibly, it may have been her absence which allowed the problem of false teaching to grow so big in Ephesus. We know that Priscilla and Aquila had returned to Ephesus by the time Paul wrote 2 Timothy; perhaps that was for the purpose of helping Timothy deal with the crisis? That would explain why he greets them in 2 Timothy and there is no such greeting in 1 Timothy.

<sup>67</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (2018), 282–283. He gives a list of 17 examples. Beyond the present letter, see particularly 1 Corinthians 4:18; 15:12, 34; 2 Corinthians 3:1.

<sup>68</sup> Yarbrough’s general explanation is: “***Across a span of his epistolary discourse, rather than name names Paul summarizes the involvement of individuals in unfortunate activities with an indefinite plural pronoun. In some cases it may be convenient generalization. In others it may involve a situation where names are not known. In others, it may be gracious restraint to spare individuals the embarrassment of being called out personally. Or it may be reluctance to dignify individuals by the mention of their names.***” For specific reasons in the particular context of 1 Timothy, see *Men and Women in Christ*, 260, in chapter 12, under ‘**The wealthy women as false teachers**’.

But such information does not say anything about teachers within the church.

### Objection 6 – Not a particular kind of woman?

According to Mike, Paul does not have in mind a particular kind of woman. He says:

**Andrew Bartlett suggests in 1 Timothy you read this list of things a woman shouldn't be, and then he says "I don't allow a woman to teach or have authority over a man". It's really Paul's only talking about that kind of woman, the one who does those bad things in 1 Timothy 2. (9hr13mins)**

Here is Mike's rebuttal:

**Except, this misconstrues 1 Timothy 2 a lot, and the passage itself, um, in 1 Timothy 2:12 and 11. The reason is because Paul doesn't give a list of bad things. He actually just gives a list of things women should do. They're not bad things. He doesn't give a description of a bad woman and then say: "Therefore, don't let that kind of woman teach." That's fabricated and pushed onto the passage. If you read it, you'll see it just doesn't read that way. (9hr13mins – 9hr14mins)**

But what do we actually see in Paul's letter? What does the context show?

Because Mike neither traces Paul's train of thought nor looks closely at Paul's Greek, he overlooks an intriguing difference between verse 8 and verse 9 of chapter 2. Paul uses the Greek article in verse 8 ("**THE men**") but not in verse 9 ("**women**"). This contrast suggests that his instructions for men in verse 8 may be for the men in the Ephesian church in general, but that his instructions for women in verses 9-15 may be for *some* women in the Ephesian church, not all.<sup>69</sup>

Even without this grammatical prompt, it is plain from the words of verse 9 that Paul has a particular target in mind, not all women: women who dress immodestly, and with braided hair and gold or pearls or "**expensive clothes**" (NIV). (ESV "**costly attire**".)

Paul's instruction not to dress in this manner has no application to most women. The availability of pearls was not like today. They were for the super-rich only. And the word for "**expensive**", which describes the clothes, is the same word used in Mark 14:3-5 for the perfume that could have been sold for more than a year's wages.

Paul is referring to unseemly fashions which were adopted by certain very rich women. They have adopted the same fashions as were worn by courtesans, as is confirmed by Chrysostom and by several complementarian commentators.<sup>70</sup> Seneca (brother of Paul's judge, Gallio, in Acts 18) praised his own mother for not adopting these fashions – the use of jewels and pearls and fashionable see-through clothes which "**exposed no greater nakedness by being removed**".<sup>71</sup>

Paul is concerned about the misbehavior of some elite, rich women, who have joined the fellowship of the church. It is these women, who are not living in faithfulness to Christ, who need to be told to

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<sup>69</sup> For further explanation, see *Men and Women in Christ*, 262, in chapter 12, under '**The wealthy women as false teachers**'. If this is not a correct interpretation of the grammatical difference, the result would be that we should probably regard the men of 2:8 as involved in the false teaching also, though not as elders.

<sup>70</sup> Chrysostom, Homily 8 on 1 Tim. 2:8–10 ("**Imitate not therefore the courtesans**"); Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (1981), 199; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (1992), 135 ("**the mode of dress of courtesans**").

<sup>71</sup> Seneca the Younger, *ad Helviam* 16.3–5, cited by Winter 'You Were What You Wore in Roman Law: Deciphering the Dress Codes of 1 Timothy 2:9–15.' (2004) *SBL Forum*, <http://sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=277>.

adorn themselves decently and with good works, as is proper for women who now profess reverence for God (2:10). (We do not know how many of them there were; we could imagine perhaps two or three, or five.)

Mike himself says:

***Paul's warnings about the elaborate clothes and hairstyles of women implies some of these upper-class women were part of the church in Ephesus, pushing back a little bit on the idea that he would have to have a whole, like, sweeping bar on all women.***

(8hr26mins)

That is exactly the point. In verses 9-15, Paul is not giving an instruction directed at all women, but at the elite, rich women, who are flaunting their wealth and their physical attractions. They are probably recent converts, as Mike almost recognizes, when he refers to 3:6 ("**not be a recent convert**") and 5:22 ("**Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands**") (8hr37mins).<sup>72</sup> And as rich people, they are socially powerful, but as new believers they will need to learn the truth in humility and quietness, and learn to do good works.

What might those women have been involved in, before they became involved with the church? Complementarian Steve Baugh has made a particular study of Ephesus and the Artemis cult.<sup>73</sup> According to Baugh:

***In fact, all Artemis priestesses were from wealthy families ...***<sup>74</sup>

We cannot say that these particular new converts had been priestesses of Artemis. But we do know that the Artemis cult was of high importance in the social, religious and economic life of Ephesus. Wealthy people would be expected to play their part in honoring the goddess, lest she withdraw her protection from the city. So, there is a high degree of probability of the women's involvement in the cult, with its associated myths, mysteries, magic and astrology. When people turn from pagan religion to Christ, they do not lose all their pagan ideas overnight.

And what might those women have been involved in, after they came into the church? What had Alexander and Hymenaeus been teaching, and to whom?

We note that in 2 Timothy it appears that Hymenaeus is targeting women (2:17; 3:6), which suggests that he may have done so previously. And we remember that a Jewish man named Alexander had been put forward as a spokesman at the time of the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:33-34). So, it is quite likely that the Alexander who was expelled by Paul for false teaching was the same Jewish person. Whether it was the same Alexander or not, there were certainly Jews in the Ephesian church (Acts 18:19-20; 19:8; Ephesians 2:11-18). We know that the false teachings included elements with a Jewish flavor – misuse of the Jewish law, dietary restrictions, and genealogies (1 Tim. 1:4–8 and 4:3). The elite women would likely be among those who heard this teaching. What a cocktail of ideas would be in their heads! Remnants of pagan myths, magic, and astrology, mixed into a distorted version of Judaism.

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<sup>72</sup> "*The only way uneducated Christian women could be there is if they just showed up, they're new converts or those people who show up like for Christmas and Easter ... If that was the concern Paul could just say not to let new converts teach, just like he told Timothy. And he did tell them this. "Don't lay hands on new believers to appoint them to new ministries; wait till they're ... a little more mature in the Lord. Don't ... lay hands on anyone too quickly," he said.*"

<sup>73</sup> Mike quotes Baugh many times in the video.

<sup>74</sup> *Women in the Church* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn), 46.

Mike does not notice that Paul's remedial actions for the people mixed up in false teaching who remain in the fellowship are conspicuously different from the steps that he has already taken with Hymenaeus and Alexander.<sup>75</sup> Timothy is not to exclude them; instead, he is to instruct them not to teach falsely and not to occupy themselves with the contents of the false teachings (1 Tim. 1:3–4) but to live a pure life of love and sincere faith (1:5). Encouragements are offered. If God can save Paul, who was a blasphemer and persecutor, he can save also these false teachers (1:15–16), for God wants everyone to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (2:4).

Paul's difference in approach must reflect some material distinction between the prominent male false teachers whom he has excluded, and those persons mixed up in the false teaching who remain. The latter are presumably not recognized teachers in the church, or Paul would have had to impose the discipline of exclusion from the fellowship. Rather, they are people who, though they do not understand God's law, want to become teachers of it (1:7-8). This fits into a scenario that those who remain, whom Timothy must correct, are mainly women who have come in to the church, have been influenced by the false teaching and have been spreading it in personal contacts.

Mike needs to explain how he thinks that the instructions in verses 9-10 could be addressed in real life to women in general, when only the rich elite would dress with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive and indecent clothes. But no explanation is possible. Mike's position is not realistic. Paul's instructions address actual women in the Ephesian church. (We will see this further confirmed when we discuss verse 15.)

And Mike does not consider what ideas those women may have had in their heads, given the influence of the Artemis cult and the impact of false teaching within the church.

In this context, Paul's instruction that a woman must learn quietly and not teach or overmaster a man makes sense as a restriction which applies to these particular women.

### Objection 7 – Irrelevance of 5:13?

Compared with every other Pauline letter, there is an extraordinarily large amount in this letter that is specifically about women – including the long passage of instructions at 5:2-16. We infer that, when Paul was writing 1 Timothy, some particular Ephesian women loomed large in his mind, as severely problematic.

Mike notes that egalitarian scholars place reliance upon 5:13 for showing that there were women involved in false teaching in Ephesus.

Correct translation and interpretation of this verse is a matter of controversy. In the ESV, it says:

***Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.***

Mike argues that egalitarian reliance on this verse is misplaced, for it is "***just about widows who are wasting time***" (8hr56mins).

But again he fails to pay proper attention to context, strawmans egalitarian arguments, and avoids dealing with points that he needs to address.

His audience could be forgiven for thinking that the argument from this passage, which he is rebutting, relies solely on three elements in verse 13. But what about the verse as a whole? And what about the context, where there are other significant statements about the women in 5:6, 5:11-

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<sup>75</sup> It is pointed out in Andrew's book at 261.

12, and 5:14-15. What about the cross-links to the false teaching 1:6 and 6:20? What about the remarkable verbal link to 2:15? Mike does not give proper consideration to any of these features.

In our view, the great value of chapter 5 for the present discussion is that it helps to confirm the understanding that in 2:12 Paul is addressing a specific problem in Ephesus – just as we saw in 2:8 (instructions for the men to pray peacefully) and in 2:9-10 (instructions for rich women to adorn themselves with good works) – and that the relevant problem is the misbehavior of some particular women, mixed up in false teaching (Scenario F).

There are links between the women of chapter 5 and what Paul writes in chapter 2. These chapters fit together, if Paul is concerned to forestall what may be done by a woman to a man – that is, if he is concerned that a deceived and ungodly woman, dressed as in 2:9, may go to a house and overmaster a man with false teaching, leading him astray.

In order to keep the length of this section within bounds, we have put our detailed discussion of chapter 5 into Appendix 2: “**The relevance of 1 Timothy chapter 5**”, where we show what a lot Mike misses about the links between chapter 5 and chapter 2.

Our understanding that Paul is concerned about Scenario F is also supported by three further matters:

- the lack of evidence for Scenario T,
- what Paul says about Adam and Eve in verses 13-14, and
- what Paul says in the strange verse 15.

We’ll conclude the present section by considering the lack of evidence for Scenario T. We’ll get to verses 13-14 and verse 15 in subsequent sections.

### Lack of evidence for Mike’s complementarian scenario

You may have noticed that Mike’s discussion in this whole section is a purely negative exercise, of trying to rebut Scenario F. He does not point to any positive support for Scenario T.

Aside from Mike’s controversial interpretation of verses 11-14, where are the indications in Paul’s letter that in the Ephesian church there are faithful women teaching or proposing to teach, when it should be done by men?

In the whole of Mike’s 11½ hours, we have found reference to only one such feature from which Mike might infer that Scenario T could be Paul’s concern. There is a section where Mike considers whether in chapter 2 Paul has in mind “**women**” or “**wives**”. In that section, Mike argues that in chapter 2 Paul is focused on a particular setting, which is *the gathering of the church as a congregation*. If that were correct, it could go part way towards Scenario T.

Mike says:

***... he's talking about a congregational gathering setting ... Go read 1 Timothy chapter 2. The whole chapter fits better in a church gathering context than a family one, right? Men praying in every place: that's not so much family as it is church gathering. That seems to be the focus. Um, uh, modest clothing and good works, um. That seems to fit a church gathering. ... even today, ... they're more likely to put on different sort of showy clothes when they go to church. Then we have teaching and learning – the teaching and learning context of verses 11 and 12. That obviously seems to fit a church gathering ...***  
(1hr39mins – 1hr40mins)

Then he approvingly cites Belleville's phrase "***the broader context of congregational worship***".<sup>76</sup>

It is right to say that many commentators, irrespective of their position on women's ministry, have interpreted chapter 2 on the basis that it is mainly focused on a setting of congregational worship.

But if you were in Paul's shoes, and you were thinking about prohibiting faithful women from teaching the congregation, would you write, "***I am not permitting a woman to teach and authenteō a man***"? If that is the focus, Paul's words in verse 12 look distinctly odd, with his choice of the word "***man***", especially in the singular. Didn't the congregation at Ephesus contain both men and women? If his concern is a function reserved for male elders, involving their authority over the flock, why doesn't Paul say, straightforwardly, that a woman mustn't teach the assembly? Or, if his concern is not eldership functions but some other concern about how women relate to men in the assembly, why not say that a woman mustn't teach "***men***"? Is Paul imagining a congregation that contains only one "***man***"?

Now suppose instead that Paul is concerned about something done by a woman to an individual man, as might happen if a deceived woman, dressed as in 2:9, went to a house and overmastered a man with false teaching, leading him astray. Then the singular in verse 12, "***a man***", makes better sense.

There is no mention of the assembly in verses 11-14. When we look again at Paul's actual words, there is no indication anywhere in chapter 2 that he is thinking specifically of the worship assembly.

Paul starts the chapter with his most important practical instruction for combating false teaching and promoting godly lives: pray! He urges "***supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings***". He says nothing about confining these to the public worship gatherings of the church. We know his view of prayer – that it should be done continually, in all circumstances (Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

In 2:8, turning to the men, he does not urge them to pray together specifically in the assembly but "***in every place***".

In 2:9-10 he urges women to dress decently, and to adorn themselves with good works. The most likely setting for the rich women's immodest fashions would not be the assembly, but high-class social occasions in people's homes. The idiom "***dressed to kill***" seems particularly apt.

And should we really imagine that Paul wants the "***good works***" of verse 10 to be done specifically in the assembly, as Mike indicates? No. Good works are to be done across the whole of life, especially out among the poor and the needy.

The quiet learning of verse 11 can take place in any setting, large or small, whether congregation, or small group, or one to one, and by observing how godly people live.

What about the "***childbearing***" in verse 15? Whatever it refers to, we can be confident that Paul does not envisage it taking place in the assembled congregation!

And what about the condition referred to in verse 15: "***if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control***"? Are those qualities to be displayed just in the assembly? That would be absurd.

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<sup>76</sup> *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (2005), 79.

In sum, there are *no* indications in chapter 2 that Paul's focus is specifically on the assembly, and there are *multiple* indications that Paul's focus is *not* limited in that way. There is a complete lack of evidence to support Scenario T.

And there is a further problem with Scenario T.

It requires that Paul addresses the ungodly behavior of some rich women in verses 9-10, then suddenly and without any signal switches in verses 11-12 to challenging some quite different women – godly women who are unaffected by the false teaching but who are making the mistake of thinking that it is right for them to teach men in the church. Such a switch is not plausible. It is all the more implausible in light of the signals which Paul *does* give in verses 1, 8 and 9, which tie chapter 2 into the topic of dealing with false teaching and promoting godly lives.

Mike's interpretation insists on a reading of 2:12 which is in conflict with Paul's explicit signals, and is starkly divorced from the surrounding context. In our view, this is fatal to Mike's whole position.

The lack of evidence for Scenario T invites a comparison with Mike's own reason for rejecting the mistaken idea that verse 14 is about women being more easily deceived than men:

***The idea that all women in general are more easily deceived than men is a brand-new idea. ... .. It's totally brand new in the middle of 1 Timothy 2! (9hr28mins)***

By "**brand new**", Mike means: if this is really what Paul is thinking, it emerges suddenly out of nowhere, completely unconnected to the context. That shows it is very unlikely to be what Paul is thinking.

We can use the same reasoning here, and apply it to verses 11-12:

- *The idea that Paul is restricting faithful women from teaching Christian truth and exercising authority is a brand-new idea. It's totally brand new in the middle of 1 Timothy 2!*

That shows it is very unlikely to be what Paul is thinking.

Instead of insisting on an interpretation that is divorced from the context, we should recognize that Paul wants the women's ostentatious and alluring dress to be replaced by good deeds, he wants their misbehavior to be replaced by submission to the God whom they claim to profess, and he wants them to learn in quietness and humility. They must not be permitted to lead a man astray.

In the next two sections we will see that Paul's concern with false teaching is the reason for his reference to the story of Adam and Eve in verses 13-14. Consideration of verses 13-14 will help us to offer a fuller explanation of Scenario F.

## 288 Why does Paul appeal to Adam and Eve? 9:14:32

Here, again, are verses 13-14:

***[13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.***

Mike's discussion of verses 13-14 spans two sections:

- He spends six minutes on why Paul appeals to Adam and Eve to support the restriction on women;
- Then he spends 23 minutes explaining why he rejects the idea that women are more easily deceived than men and offering a different interpretation of verse 14.

After he has spent 4½ hours trying to support his preferred translation of *authenteō* in verse 12, the relative shortness of these two sections suggests that Mike’s false perspective on clarity may have distracted him from seeing the full difficulty of these two verses for complementarian interpreters, who strive to read them as theological reasoning in support of their interpretation of verse 12.

They start by interpreting verse 13 as a statement about Adam’s (supposed) authority over Eve. Because they are so accustomed to it, some do not perceive what a big jump it is, to get from Paul’s *actual text* to the *meaning* that they attribute to it. They make a leap from Paul’s mention of *sequence in the story* (Adam formed first, then Eve) to a *hierarchy of authority* (Adam over Eve). They connect it with their translation of *authenteō* as “**exercise authority**”. With a more historically accurate understanding of *authenteō*, the leap appears even bigger.

Not only is it a large leap. It reflects poorly on Paul, if he really intended to rely on such a weak and opaque argument for male authority over women. Even John Calvin, who was an enthusiastic patriarchist, acknowledged the weakness of the argument, if that was what Paul really meant:

***Yet the reason Paul assigns, that woman was second in order of creation, appears not to be a very strong argument in favour of her subjection; for John the Baptist was before Christ in the order of time, and yet was greatly inferior in rank.***<sup>77</sup>

Mike starts his own discussion from a fairly uncontroversial place:

***What is the basic purpose of verses 13 and 14? I think that the simple answer – and this should be very obvious, right – is just to provide an explanation, or a “why”, or a support for verses 11 and 12.*** (9hr15mins)

This is a good start. We need to remember that Paul did not insert any verse divisions into what he wrote. The word “**for**” (Greek, *gar*) introduces some kind of support for what has just been said. This word is only stated once. So, it will help us if we adjust the ESV’s punctuation, remove the division into verses, and notice the shortness of the whole supporting statement:

***... for Adam was formed first then Eve and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.***

The big question here is: what is the nature of the support for what Paul has said about restricting women? Is it illustrative or theological? In other words, is it an Old Testament illustration which Paul uses to provide support for what he just said, or is Paul appealing to some kind of creation principle about men and women? Based on Paul’s prior practice in using the Old Testament, it could be either an illustration (see 1 Corinthians 10:11) or a theological reason.

If it is an illustration, Paul does not need to explain it in full. He can rely on Timothy’s knowledge of the Genesis story to fill in the details and work out the full application. Adam is in the Garden before Eve, but he doesn’t go astray until taught by Eve, who was deceived by the devil’s teaching. Adam was overpowered. He “**listened to the voice**” of his deceived wife and disobeyed God (Genesis 3:17). In Ephesus, Paul doesn’t want a man to be led astray by false teaching from one of the deceived women. That is why he is not permitting it.

The illustration is apt for Scenario F (women mixed up in false teaching, which we have seen is supported by the context). It would not be apt for Scenario T (maintaining a hierarchy of authority to teach truth). The illustration appears all the more appropriate for Scenario F when we remember

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<sup>77</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on 1 Timothy*.

that *authentēō* in verse 12 most probably does *not* mean “**exercise authority**” in an eldership way but means something like “**overpower**”. (We will say more about the appropriateness of the illustration at the end of the next section.)

But Mike believes that Paul is making an appeal to a creation principle, to support a general and enduring restriction on women teaching and exercising authority over men. While John Calvin was troubled by the weakness of that argument (because *sequence* is not *authority*), Mike Winger considers it a “**no-brainer**”:

***This would seem to make whatever Paul says in verses 11 and 12 lasting and permanent and something that should go throughout the church, because if it comes from Adam and Eve and creation and, and, and perhaps partly the fall, but if it comes from that, and Paul's applying it to New Testament Christians, it would certainly apply today, as well. That seems like a no-brainer. It's going to be continuing and ongoing.*** (9hr16mins – 9hr17mins)

To establish his view, Mike first needs to explain *how we can be sure that Paul is appealing to a creation principle rather than giving a supporting illustration.*

He reads out some words of Tom Schreiner:

***... an argument from the OT based on the created order is almost certainly transcultural. Jesus argued from creation in defending monogamy and God's intention that husbands and wives should not divorce (Matt. 19:3–9); Paul argued from creation in prohibiting homosexuality (Rom. 1:26–27). There is no reason, in the case of 1 Timothy 2:13, to think Paul is only arguing analogically. Paul prohibits women from teaching and exercising authority over men because of God's intention in creating men and women.***<sup>78</sup>

But Mike does not read out Schreiner's previous sentence, where he says that the nature of Paul's reliance on the Old Testament in this passage is “***an important and complex issue that deserves more discussion than is possible here***”. Whether a reference by Paul to the Old Testament is meant as an illustration or as an appeal to a creation ordinance can only be determined by careful attention to the full context.

In this quotation, Schreiner starts from the position that Paul is making “***an argument from the OT based on the created order***”. Of course, *if* Paul is indeed making an argument from the Old Testament based on the created order, *then* we would agree that such an argument is quite likely to be transcultural. But what we need to know first is: is Paul advancing an argument from the created order, or is he giving an illustration? How are we to decide?

Schreiner does not here explain *why* he thinks it is the former rather than the latter. His *assertion* that there is no reason to take it analogically is not an *explanation*. On the face of it, in context, there seems to be ample reason to take it as an illustration, since the Genesis story appears an apt fit for a concern about false teaching.

So, *why* does Mike consider that we should read Paul's words as an argument based on the created order, rather than as an illustration? He doesn't say.

Since Mike gives no explanation of his own, let's consider Tom Schreiner's reasoning. When Schreiner discusses verse 13 in more detail in later work, his principal argument is:

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<sup>78</sup> Schreiner, in *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (2005), 260.

***When Paul gives a command elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles, the γάρ [gar] that follows almost invariably states the reason for the command.***<sup>79</sup>

But this argument is misconceived. The meaning of an ordinary word like *gar* in a particular context depends on the context, not on statistics of usage elsewhere, and still less on arbitrary statistics from a tiny sample (confined to commands in the Pastoral Epistles).<sup>80</sup> The word *gar* can introduce any kind of support for something just said. Paul's very next use of *gar* in this letter is at 3:13, where it introduces not a logical or theological reason but a supporting encouragement.

In 3:13, the meaning of *gar* would be well represented by the English expression "***After all ...***". Paul speaks of the high standards for deacons, then adds this word of encouragement: "***After all, those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus***".<sup>81</sup> The word "***because***" would not make sense. Paul is adding a supporting statement, not a logical or theological reason.

The meaning "***After all***" readily fits the context at 2:13. A parallel to 2:13 might be a father saying to his child: "***I'm not allowing you to go near the cliff edge. After all, when I was young, I fell off and broke my back.***" Our point is that Paul uses the story of Eve and Adam as a warning illustration.

Proceeding from his unproven assumption that Paul is making a theological appeal to the created order, rather than giving an illustration, Mike tries to explain the nature of Paul's (assumed) theological reasoning.

Mike's main support for his interpretation of Paul's reference to Genesis in verse 13 is his own interpretation of Genesis 2, which he covered in his Part 2 video in the Women in Ministry series.

But that runs into two difficulties:

- It's a circular argument, by which he tries to pull himself up by his own bootstraps.
- It proves too much, for it leads to conclusions which Mike rejects, so his view collapses in self-contradiction.

We will explain what we mean.

First difficulty – the circularity.

In his Part 2 video, Mike discussed the sequence in which Adam and Eve were created. He suggested it was likely that ancient readers of Genesis 2 would infer, from this sequence, that Adam had authority over Eve. They would infer this by somehow making a connection between the stated sequence and the unstated concept of *primogeniture*.

We pointed out in our Part 2 response how weak that argument was, for multiple reasons. Mike offered no evidence at all to show that Hebrew readers would have somehow understood a story about the forming of a Man first from the ground, and the forming of a Woman from the Man's side,

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<sup>79</sup> *Women in the Church* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn), 200. Schreiner also surveys a selection of unconvincing attempts to explain the illustration.

<sup>80</sup> If meaning depended on statistics, all uses of a word should be interpreted according to the most commonly occurring meaning elsewhere, which is obvious nonsense. Faulty statistical arguments of this kind are seen all too often in Bible commentaries and related academic work. Usage of a word elsewhere gives us possibilities for consideration. Only context can tell us whether a particular possibility is a correct fit in the passage that we are trying to interpret.

<sup>81</sup> This is ESV, except for "***After all***", where ESV has "***For***".

in terms of an eldest son's privileges of primogeniture. There is nothing in the Genesis story (or anywhere in Scripture) which presents Adam as born to be the eldest son in an existing family.

We said:

***It is possible that Mike realizes how weak this point is. He tries to buttress it by referring to a complementarian interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:12-13. Of course, we should try to understand the Old Testament not only on its own terms but also in light of the New Testament. But Mike here simply assumes that a complementarian interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:12-13 is correct. That is a circular argument. Non-complementarians interpret Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2 quite differently from Mike.***<sup>82</sup>

If we now add together what Mike says in Part 2 about the significance of *Adam being formed first* and what he says about it in Part 12, here is the reality of Mike's reasoning:

- In the Part 2 video: Even though Genesis 2 does not actually say that Adam has authority over Eve, and even though no evidence is given to support the primogeniture argument, Mike knows that *Adam being formed first implies* that he has authority over her, *because it is confirmed by Mike's interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:12-13.*
- In the Part 12 video: Even though 1 Timothy 2:12-13 does not actually say that Adam had authority over Eve, Mike knows that *Adam being formed first implies* that he had authority over her, *because of Mike's interpretation of Genesis 2.*

That is circular – a bootstraps argument.<sup>83</sup>

The lack of anything actually said in the text about authority invites a comparison with Mike's own reasoning, where he moves on to verse 14 and firmly rejects the traditional interpretation that women are more easily deceived than men. He rightly says:

***Where in Genesis 2 does it SAY that the reason why Eve was tricked is because she was more easy to trick? We read that into the text. You can assume that if you want, but I don't want to base a belief about women universally, about billions of people, off of just that kind of a guess.*** (9hr33mins)

The same can be said of Mike's view of Paul's reference to Genesis 2:

- *Where in Genesis 2 or 1 Timothy does it SAY that Adam was formed first, so that he would be in authority over Eve? Mike reads that into the text. We don't want to base a belief about men and women universally, about billions of people, on that kind of a guess.*

That guess appears all the more untenable when we reject the common mistranslation of *authenteō* in verse 12 as "**exercise authority**" or "**have authority**", as if referring to the function of an elder. Without that mistranslation, there is no reason at all to imagine that Paul might be saying something about a hierarchy of authority in verse 13. There has been no prior mention of a hierarchy of authority anywhere in chapters 1 or 2.

Second difficulty – Mike's interpretation of verse 13 proves too much.

It proves something that he does not agree with, which makes his view self-contradictory.

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<sup>82</sup> <https://terranwilliams.com/what-winger-gets-wrong-with-genesis-1-3/>.

<sup>83</sup> You can't pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, you need to pull on something else, something solid and independent.

Mike is clear that Scripture places no restriction on women’s authority outside the spheres of marriage and the church. He is emphatic in his disagreement with what he calls “**patriarchalists**”, who would limit women’s authority in all walks of life, including government, business and civil society. Mike allows authority to women over men in all areas of wider society outside the church, because he rightly acknowledges that Scripture drives him to do so (7hr56mins – 8hr02mins).

But a creation principle applies to all aspects of human life and society. As patriarchists point out, it cannot be limited to church or home. If God has established a creation ordinance of men’s authority over women, then women should not exercise authority over men in civil society, politics, business, or anywhere else.

Mike Bird explains the difficulty in typically lively style:

***The problem I have here is that some complementarians appeal to Genesis and the order of creation to show that it is inherently wrong for a woman to be in a position of authority over a man, and yet they only apply that restriction to church life or Sunday worship. But that is like saying that it is okay for someone to commit adultery as long as they do not do it on Sunday or in the church auditorium. Or it is like saying that it is okay to commit adultery as long as you do it with an unbeliever. If it is such a clear violation of God’s ordering of creation for a woman to have authority over a man, then this should apply to all spheres of life whether it is business, government, politics, civil service, or church because God is sovereign over all institutions, and all of life is lived before God and under God.***<sup>84</sup>

If Paul is really putting forward an argument from a creation ordinance of men’s authority over women, then Paul is a patriarchist, and Mike Winger should be one too. But Mike knows that an insistence on patriarchal rule of wider society cannot be squared with Scripture; there are just too many strikes against it.

Mike introduced this section by stating:

***I’m not going to dodge any issue here today.*** (9hr14mins)

Mike has already quoted from the chapter of Andrew’s book where he lays out this difficulty, that a creation principle proves too much.<sup>85</sup> So, what is Mike’s answer?

None. Instead of being thorough, he dodges the issue.

In the absence of an answer, Mike’s complementarian view collapses under the weight of self-contradiction.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Bird, *Bourgeois Babes, Bossy Wives and Bobby Haircuts: A Case for Gender Equality*.

<sup>85</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, chapter 11.

<sup>86</sup> Mike is not unusual in this respect. He is in good company. In *Women in the Church* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn), Tom Schreiner discusses 1 Timothy 2:9-15 over more than sixty pages (163-225) without offering an answer to this difficulty. Instead, he magnifies it by making clear that there is no real basis for restricting the application of the principle of male leadership to church and marriage. He claims explicitly that Paul “***inferred from the order of creation in Genesis 2 that women should not teach or exercise authority over men.***” (201) He says: “***role differences were common in ancient societies. The original readers would have understood Paul, then, to be defending such role differences and to be doing so on the basis of the created order.***” (204) The complementarian position contradicts this, because it applies exclusively male leadership only to marriage and church and not elsewhere. The complementarian analysis of Paul’s reasoning is incoherent. It is worth noting that some complementarians have tried to resolve the difficulty by interpreting Paul as relying on a more limited creation principle which is not about *men and women* but is only about *husband and wife*. But there is no biblical way of

In summary, so far:

- On its face, Paul's reference to Adam and Eve seems an apt Old Testament illustration to support a restriction on a woman leading a man astray with false teaching. Mike does not provide an explanation of *why* it should be regarded not as an illustration but as an appeal to a creation principle. He proceeds from an unproven assumption that the latter is Paul's intent.
- Mike offers a reading of verse 13 as an appeal to a creation principle. But his argument is weak and circular.
- If verse 13 is an appeal to a creation principle, Mike's position collapses in self-contradiction. Mike should be restricting women in wider society – something which for biblical reasons he is strongly against.

We add this. The rule of men over women is presented in Genesis 3:16 ("**he shall rule over you**") as a consequence of human disobedience to God. That rule is what has been seen in most societies for most of history. But in Christ, things are to be different (Galatians 3:28). The church is the pilot project of God's new creation. Mike rightly does not believe that women will be under the authority of men in the new creation.<sup>87</sup> Compared with unredeemed human society, God's church is the least likely place for male rule over women to be appropriate.

## 290 Are women more easily deceived than men? 9:20:44

Mike selects for consideration four views on verse 14, labelling them as A, B, C and D.

We do not find any view of our own recognizably represented in Mike's selection or discussed by him.

View A is the traditional view that Paul is referring in verse 14 to a created fact of life, shown in the Genesis story, that women are more easily deceived than men.

Under a patriarchal world-view, where women were seen as inferior to men and by nature unfit for leadership, it seemed not too difficult to regard Paul's reference to Eve's deception as showing the need for women to be under men's authority. Since women are more easily deceived than men, only men should be the leaders and teachers!

But the recent general recognition of Scripture's true view of women has rightly led most interpreters to reject View A, leaving complementarians struggling to find a viable alternative, which still supports a general restriction on faithful women.

Mike rightly protests that there is nothing to support View A anywhere in Scripture. We agree with him on that. But that does not cause him to revise his false perspective on history. He does not make clear to his audience that by rejecting View A, he is rejecting the traditional view of 1 Timothy 2:11-14.

There is also another reason why View A is unsustainable, a reason which Mike correctly notices:

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getting from the relations of husband and wife to the authority of elders in the church. Whenever a marriage analogy is used of the church in Scripture, it is always God or Christ as husband, with the church as bride. It is never the strange notion of male elders as husband, with male and female non-elders as bride. If Paul were truly relying on a principle about husband and wife, that would support the minority egalitarian interpretation which takes 1 Timothy 2:11-14 to be addressing the conduct of wives towards their husbands.

<sup>87</sup> His view is that "**role distinctions**" remain "**until the resurrection**", when they will be "**overturned**" (9hr42mins).

- Paul says that “**Adam was not deceived**”. If Paul is referring to the Genesis 3 story to make a general statement about men and women, it would not show what Paul needs it to show. Instead, it would show that, while women are “**more prone to be deceived**”, men are “**more prone to do it wrong on purpose**”, to “**rebel intentionally**”, to “**deliberately disobey God knowingly with our eyes wide open**”. That would not support male teaching and male eldership authority. (9hr30mins, 9hr35mins-9hr36mins)

Could Paul be so foolish in his reasoning? No.<sup>88</sup>

Mike rightly says:

***That doesn't make any sense. I don't think Paul was making that point at all.*** (9hr36mins)

But Mike fails to draw the obvious conclusion, which is that Paul is not drawing on Genesis for general principles about men and women but for an apt illustration of his concern that a deceived woman may lead a man astray, as happened in the Garden.

So, what is Mike’s own interpretation of Paul’s reasoning in verse 14, and how does it support the general restriction which Mike sees in verse 12?

Here we find Mike’s view opaque. We have tried hard to understand it, studying what he says both in the video and his teaching notes, but have not been successful.

In his notes he says that “**context pushes against wrong views**”, and then makes five numbered points. It seems that his conclusion on interpreting verse 14 is in point 4. In his notes, he says:

***4. The differences between Adam and Eve are not balanced.***

- ***Adam was made first, Eve was second,***
- ***Adam was not deceived, Eve was deceived.***
- ***Conclusion: It isn't responding to a hyperfeminist Ephesus by restoring egalitarian views. It is showing an unbalanced authority between men and women.***

In the video, he says the same (9hr36mins – 9hr37mins).

By “**unbalanced authority**”, we take Mike to mean what he has taught throughout his series about men being the higher authorities, men having authority over women (except, somehow, in wider society).

But it is not clear to us what connection he sees in verse 14 between *his interpretation* (“**it's showing an unbalanced authority relationship between men and women**”) and *Paul's words* (“**Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor**”). On the face of it, those words of Paul have nothing whatever to do with an unbalanced authority relationship between men and women, in which men have greater authority.

How does Eve being deceived and Adam not being deceived show an imbalance of authority? Mike does not say. Perhaps the fault is ours, but we cannot perceive a link between presence or absence

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<sup>88</sup> Kevin DeYoung steers close to the traditional view. He offers a suggestion that Paul is referring to the nature of women as being “**more likely to acquiesce to doctrinal deviation**” (chapter 6 of *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction*, 2021). But would any thoughtful person refer to Genesis 3 to demonstrate that men are more likely to take a firm stand on God’s truth? What did Adam do? He acquiesced. DeYoung’s suggestion makes Paul look stupid.

of *deception* and an imbalance of *authority*. There is no verbal connection. There is no logical connection.

In Mike's interpretation, what Paul *meant* in verse 14 is completely different from what Paul *wrote* in that verse. We have not been able to find in Mike's five numbered points, or in the video, any justification for his novel interpretation of verse 14.<sup>89</sup>

After the five points, and discussion of an objection to his view, Mike restates his overall conclusion on Paul's reference to Adam and Eve:

***The rules that we see in verses 11 and 12 about men and women teaching, and authority, are supported by transcultural principles we find in Genesis 2 and 3.*** (9hr43mins)

But Mike has not given a viable explanation of how he finds in verses 13 and 14 some transcultural principles, drawn from Genesis 2 and 3, which Paul supposedly relies on. In summary:

- Mike does not tell us how he knows that Paul is appealing to a general truth from the creation order rather than giving an apt illustration from the Old Testament. He proceeds from an unproven assumption.
- Mike's interpretation of verse 13 is weak and, crucially, it is self-contradictory. *If* verse 13 is a transcultural appeal to a creation principle of men's authority over women, then Mike's position on men and women is wrong. Across all of human society, women should be barred from exercising authority over men.
- Mike's explanation of verse 14 is opaque, lacking a discernible connection to Paul's words.
- Mike's reading of verses 13-14 is designed to support his interpretation of verse 12, but that interpretation is itself divorced from the surrounding context, where Paul shows no sign of a concern about faithful women teaching (Scenario T) but shows multiple signs of concern about false teaching (Scenario F).

There is more to say about the appropriateness of the illustration for Scenario F.

First, let's remember that Paul did not insert verse numbers. The separation of the first six Greek words from the rest of Paul's illustration is artificial. We should read it as a whole. Here it is again:

***... for Adam was formed first then Eve and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.***

How does the story go? Timothy knows the full details:

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<sup>89</sup> Here are Mike's other four points in his notes, with our brief comments. (1) "***Eve is contrasted with Adam.***" But there is no indication in the words of verse 14 that Paul has in mind anything to do with an imbalance of authority. (2) "***Eve is being used [as] a representation of women specifically***". But again, there is no indication in the words of verse 14 that Paul has in mind anything to do with an imbalance of authority. And in Paul's illustration, Eve illustrates the danger of a deceived woman teaching falsely. See further Genesis 3:17. (3) "***This is not introducing a NEW idea but defending a previous idea. ... Vs 11-12 is the idea.***" In principle, yes. But this does not explain how Mike gets to his interpretation of verse 14. (5) "***In Genesis, we are told the consequence of Eve's deception will reverberate into the male female relationship. Not that it results in all women being more easily deceived.***" But if this is Paul's point, it would mean that he is reinforcing the results of the fall, rather than showing how they are overcome through Christ. This then gives rise to the objection, which Mike discusses at length, that Mike is "***supporting the fall rather than reversing it***". If Paul supposedly means to rely here on the imposition of male rule in Genesis 3:16 as a consequence of the fall, then we are back to the traditional view which Mike rejects. And in any event, Paul does not make any point about male authority in the words of 1 Timothy 2:14.

Adam was formed first, so he was in the Garden before Eve. Before she was formed, he did not fall into disobedience. But after she was formed, the serpent falsely promised knowledge to her (Genesis 3:1-5), and the woman was deceived and transgressed (3:6, 13). And how does the story show that she became a false teacher for Adam? Well, what might a false teacher do? Set a bad example of sinning, put the opportunity for sin in front of someone, and verbally urge them to do it? That is what Eve did. She set him a bad example by taking and eating the fruit herself, she gave it to him to eat, and she verbally pressed him to eat it (see 3:6, 17). Her threefold teaching overpowered him. He listened to his wife's teaching and then disobeyed God's command (3:12, 17). He took the fruit and ate it, even though he was not deceived (3:12; 1 Timothy 2:14).

Paul does not want something like this repeated in Ephesus. As in the Garden, false teaching in Ephesus falsely promises "**knowledge**" (see 1 Timothy 6:20). It is deceitful, and it comes from Satan (4:1; 5:15). Some women have been taken in by it. Paul does not want one of these women doing what Eve did: teaching (*didaskō* – v12) and overpowering (*authenteō* – v12) a man – in other words, leading a man astray by false teaching. Paul is not permitting it, and neither should Timothy.

Some good questions have been raised about this understanding of the illustration, and we will take the opportunity to answer them here.

*(1) If Paul's point is about Eve teaching Adam falsely, why does he mention that Adam was formed first?*

Because Adam was in the Garden first, but stayed on track until the woman came along and led him astray.

At the time of Paul's writing 1 Timothy, the male false teachers have been expelled. Men who remain have stayed on track – they have not been taken in by the false teaching. But they are in danger from women who are mixed up in it, who may press it on them, as Eve did to Adam.

There is also a possible additional feature, though we do not insist on it. Paul's choice of words "**Adam was formed first then Eve**" may be intended also as an implied rebuke to women who take pride in Artemis, who was supposedly born *before* her male twin brother, Apollo.

*(2) What does Paul mean when he says Adam was not deceived? How could Adam have sinned without being deceived?*

The sequence is: Adam was not deceived, Eve was deceived, Eve became a transgressor, Eve led Adam astray. This last step need not include deception. As Mike rightly says, Adam sinned with his eyes wide open.

Consider this analogy: Imagine Alan is in a restaurant with his dear friend Eva, who has invited him to celebrate with her something good that has happened. They have drunk some wine. Alan knows that they should now stop, because if they have more, the alcohol will start to affect them and they will cross the threshold from receiving God's good gift of wine with a thankful heart (1 Timothy 4:4; 5:23) to the beginnings of drunkenness and a risk of lack of self-control. The allure of more wine deceives Eva, and she orders more. She drinks some herself and gives some to Alan, and urges him to drink it. He is not deceived; he knows it is wrong; but he listens to her. He allows himself to be pressurized, persuaded, overpowered, and joins her in her transgression.

*(3) Why has Paul chosen this particular illustration, which involves one woman and one man? Why is Paul specifically concerned about "a man" being overpowered (verse 12)? Don't women also need to be protected from false teaching?*

This question is easily answered by comparison with verses 8-10 of chapter 2. Paul's pastoral instructions are tailored to the particular situation which he knows about, having just been in Ephesus.

In verse 8 Paul's instructions are only for men in a particular situation, even though women should also pray. In verses 9-10 his instructions are only for women in a particular situation, even though men should also dress decently and without ostentation and should do good works.

In verses 11-12 Paul commands that a woman should learn in quietness, with all submission, and he's not permitting her to teach and overpower a man but to remain quiet. He has in mind a particular situation where a woman needs to learn and where, if she teaches, she will be a danger to a man.

Of course, in general, it is both men and women who should be protected from false teaching. And Paul could have said that she must not teach anyone, or that she must not teach men, but he has in mind a situation involving personal contact with a particular man, where her teaching might overpower him. Such a situation is aptly illustrated in the story of Adam and Eve, where a woman was deceived and her false teaching overmastered a man.

After all, if some male false teachers targeted women (2 Timothy 3:6), why should there be any surprise that a woman caught up in the false teaching may target a man?

There is even less reason for surprise when we recall that the manner of dress described in 2:9 indicates a flaunting of physical attractions.

This fits also with 5:6 – the widow who *“lives for pleasure”* (NIV) or *“is self-indulgent”* (ESV). It fits with the young widows of 5:11, where (in NIV) *“their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ”* or (in ESV) *“their passions draw them away from Christ”*. (For more on the relevance of chapter 5, see our Appendix 2.)

In sum, the Adam and Eve illustration is apt for a particular situation on the lines of Scenario F, which Paul knows about and is giving instructions for.

In the next section, Mike moves on to verse 15. After we have considered that, we will be in a position to pull the strands together and state our conclusion.

## 292 What does "saved through childbearing" mean? 9:44:00

In the ESV, 1 Timothy 2:15 says:

***Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.***

The core point in Mike's favored interpretation of verse 15 is that the childbearing is a reference to the birth of Christ to be the Savior. We do not disagree with that core point (compare Galatians 4:4-5). Christ-centered interpretation of this verse has a long history. It is possibly attested as early as Ignatius of Antioch, who was taught by the apostle John.<sup>90</sup> There is salvation through Christ for those who continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> For references, see *Men and Women in Christ*, 382 (Appendix 5).

<sup>91</sup> Paul adds: *“Faithful is the word”* (our translation). It is a faithful word, that Christ will save those who follow him in faith, love, holiness and self-control. And Christ himself is the faithful Word. Conventional verse numbering separates this saying by putting it in chapter 3. For discussion of the unhelpfulness of the chapter

But here is the extraordinary thing:

- Mike acknowledges that verse 15 is one of the strangest in the New Testament.
- Mike acknowledges the high importance of Artemis in Ephesus.
- The strangeness of this verse is readily explained by the Artemis connection, and this is the *only* available explanation for Paul's otherwise strange choice of language.
- Yet Mike steadfastly denies that the cult of Artemis makes a material contribution to our understanding of 1 Timothy 2.

Allow us to explain.

We've already noted Mike's acknowledgment of the importance of Artemis:

***Artemis was a false god that was a really big deal in Ephesus.*** (2hr09mins)

And here is what he says about the strangeness of 1 Timothy 2:15:

***Now verse 15. OK, I got to admit along with everybody else, OK, verse 15 has no straightforward meaning. What does verse 15 mean? "SHE will be saved through childbearing if THEY" (from "she" to "they" now!) "if THEY continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control" ...***

***... this hardest, most confusing verse in the book of First Timothy and in a lot of the New Testament even ...*** (0hr21min – 0hr22mins)

Mike notes the strangeness of the language of verse 15 – the switch from "*she*" to "*they*", the rare word *teknogonia* ("*childbearing*"), the whole Greek phrase that can be translated as "***but she will be saved through the Childbearing***".<sup>92</sup> In reference to the Christ-centered interpretation, Mike cites a commentator who says:

***... if that were the writer's interpretation, he could hardly have chosen a more obscure or ambiguous way of saying it.***<sup>93</sup>

Mike adds:

***To say "childbearing" and be referring to the ... birth of the Messiah is just a really weird way of using the word "childbearing". ... There had to have been plenty of other ways to say this.*** (10hr47mins)

Yes, indeed. Why would Paul choose such an unusual and obscure form of words to refer to salvation through the coming of Christ into the world?

But what is "***obscure or ambiguous***", or "***really weird***", to a reader in a different century, a different place, a different culture, would not have been obscure or ambiguous or really weird to Timothy, as the addressee of Paul's letter, or to those whom he was teaching in first-century Ephesus.

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division, see *Men and Women in Christ*, 275-277, in chapter 13, under 'The link to chapter 3'.

<sup>92</sup> Greek: *sōthēsetai de dia tēs teknogonias* (σωθησεται δε δια της τεκνογονιας).

<sup>93</sup> Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (2015), TNTC, 78. Nevertheless, Guthrie tentatively adopts the Christ-centered interpretation.

There is a mass of evidence that Artemis, especially Artemis of the Ephesians, was specially looked to for saving women during childbearing.<sup>94</sup> In the myth of her own birth, she provided midwifery services to her mother, who was in agony while giving birth to her twin, Apollo.

In the first century, childbearing was dangerous and painful. Women prayed that Artemis would give safety in childbearing, or else a quick and painless death with her swift arrows. Mike knows this. He himself cites some of the evidence, such as the traditional explanation for her great Temple having burned down in 356 BC: Artemis did not protect it because she was away from Ephesus, ensuring a safe birth for Alexander the Great (9hr51mins – 9hr52 mins).

As so often in this letter, for rhetorical effect, Paul picks up the language of the false beliefs and employs it for his own purpose and with a new referent (for more explanation, please see our footnote).<sup>95</sup> This language will make an impression both on Timothy and on anyone to whom he reads out Paul's letter. Timothy knows the Genesis story. He knows the promise of Christ, the seed of Eve who will strike the serpent's head. Timothy knows this promise is immediately followed by Genesis 3:16 (ESV, "***in pain you shall bring forth children***"). Timothy knows the pagan background of the elite women whose conduct is Paul's concern. He knows the reputation of Artemis as the one who saves women in childbearing. So, as Andrew summarized in his book:

***Paul casts a sidelong glance at the Artemis cult's belief that the goddess would keep mothers safe during childbearing. In Paul's gospel there is an even more important kind of safety for women, by means of a particular event of childbearing, which is the salvation found in following Christ with faith, love, holiness and self-control.***<sup>96</sup>

The Artemis cult readily explains Paul's "***really weird***" choice of language.<sup>97</sup> We do not know of any other available explanation for the strange language. Mike does not offer one.

Yet Mike will have none of it. He cannot allow such an explanation. He downplays the Artemis connection. While admitting that women did call on Artemis for help in childbearing, he associates it with "***fabricated history***" (10hr03mins). His suggested reason for verse 15 is that Paul loves to "***interject***" the Messiah "***randomly into various other subjects***" (10hr35mins).

When someone characterizes words of Paul – highly unusual, skillfully chosen words – as a random interjection, we can be confident that Paul's train of thought has not been understood.

Mike's teaching notes crisply summarize his unrealistic position:

***Reading the Artemis cult into the background of 1 Tim 2 is unjustified.***

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<sup>94</sup> See Glahn, *Nobody's Mother*, 52-54, 72, 115-116, 143. (While Glahn affirms the relevance of Artemis to verse 15, she does not adopt the Christ-centered interpretation.)

<sup>95</sup> It is important to grasp this aspect of Paul's rhetorical strategy. We see it repeatedly in this letter. The referent of *authentēō* (2:12) is not a planet. The referent of *mustērion* (3:9, 16) is not a pagan ritual. The referent of *stulos* (3:15) is not a pillar in the Artemision. The referent of *meγas* in 3:16 is not Artemis. The referent of *argos* (5:13) is not the astrological house of death. The referent of the phrase *perierchomenai tas oikias* (going from house to house, 5:13) is not progress around the astrological houses. The referent of *oikodespoteō* (5:14) is not planetary control. The referent of *parathēkē* (6:20) is not a deposit of gold in the Artemision. Here in 2:15, the referent of the phrase *sōthēsetai de dia tēs teknogonias* is not being saved by Artemis during childbearing. These are all allusions, not direct references.

<sup>96</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, 272, in chapter 13, under 'Understanding verse 15'.

<sup>97</sup> There is no difficulty with the *relevance* of the Artemis allusion in 2:15 to the rich young widows. Paul urges them to re-marry and bear children (5:14).

But the responsible interpreter must consider: *why* does Paul use such unusual language in verse 15? Mike does not address this question. If he had done so, it may have driven him towards a non-complementarian interpretation.

Mike tries to head off the possibility that verse 15 may contribute to our understanding of the whole passage. He takes a strong line. According to Mike, any attempt to make verse 15 influence our interpretation of the rest of the passage is a sham:

***Your understanding of the whole chapter does not depend on your understanding of this verse. And if you pretend it does, it's because you're trying to leverage an unlikely interpretation using a confusing verse, so that you're making the whole passage turn on verse 15, when you really should be relying on the clarity you've already got, before 15, for understanding 15.*** (9hr44mins)

Trying to justify his position, he states a good principle in his teaching notes:

***We don't use the obscure to change what's clear, it's the other way around.***

We agree with the principle, but Mike is not applying it correctly.

First, as we have shown, he is unrealistic about the clarity of verses 11-14, which prominent complementarian scholars acknowledge are far from easy.<sup>98</sup>

Second, understanding verse 15 is not optional. The difficult words are part of Paul's concluding statement in the particular passage of concern. If an interpretation of the passage does not satisfactorily explain Paul's concluding statement, it cannot claim to offer a reliable understanding of Paul's thought.

On our interpretation, verse 15 is an appropriate conclusion. After instructions which protect men from being led astray (verses 12-14), Paul rounds off with an encouragement that the deceived women will be saved through Christ, if they walk in Christ's way.

Third, Mike is forgetting that close attention to difficulties can often turn up useful clues.

We agree that the tail should not wag the dog. But careful examination of the tail may reveal what kind of dog it belongs to.

That is what happens here. The obvious and only explanation for Paul's choice of language is that he has very much in mind the false beliefs of women in the Artemis cult.

This supports the interpretation that Paul is concerned to prevent elite women, who have come into the church from the Artemis cult, and who have been deceived by false teaching, leading a man astray. It helps to confirm that verse 12 is not directed at barring faithful women from teaching faithfully.

This conclusion is confirmed by the signal which Paul gives by his strange grammatical switch in verse 15 from "*she*" to "*they*".<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See above, "*Second false perspective: On clarity*".

<sup>99</sup> The next five paragraphs are taken substantially from *Men and Women in Christ*, 273-274, in chapter 13, under 'Using the fourth key: Paul's signposts in verse 15'.

The structure of Paul's discussion is plain. He gives instructions for the misbehaving women in the plural in verses 9–10, switches to the singular in verses 11–15a for his Adam and Eve illustration, then switches back to the plural at 15b, part way through his sentence.

The “**she**” in verse 15 refers to “**the woman**” of verse 14.<sup>100</sup> This woman is Eve, who taught Adam falsely (see Genesis 3:6 and 17). Her conduct, and its dire consequences, illustrates the importance of the instructions which Paul provides for the “**woman**” of verses 11–12. (The future tense in verse 15 – “**she will be saved**” – anticipates the general resurrection, when salvation will be completed.)

If we track back from verse 15, looking for a plural referent for “**they**”, we find it in the “**women**” of verses 9–10, who are not to dress expensively and indecently but who instead are to adorn themselves with good works. These are exactly the women who need to be advised to live a saved life of faith and love and holiness, with self-control (ESV, verse 15) or propriety (NIV), and to learn in quietness and full submission and not to teach and overpower a man (verses 11–12).

By his unusual use of grammar, Paul forcefully brings to the reader's attention that he is equating “**she**” and “**they**”. In other words, *he is equating “woman” in verses 11–12 (singular) with “women” in verses 9–10 (plural)*. This signpost confirms that Paul's instruction in verses 11–12 concerning “**a woman**” is aimed at the “**women**” of verses 9–10. These are particular rich women in the Ephesian church, not every female believer in the world.

To bring out the meaning of the compressed format which Paul adopts in verse 15, an appropriate expansion is:

***But a woman who misbehaves like Eve will be saved through the Childbearing, as will all the deceived women I am writing about who are being tempted into misbehavior, if instead they remain in faith and love and holiness, with self-control/propriety.***

## Three broken legs, and our conclusion

Mike is very confident. He says:

***My conclusion is very strong, and I don't see how ... it could be wrong, potentially, based upon the data that I've got available. I feel very confident about my conclusion.*** (0hr3mins)

But he acknowledges he “**could be wrong**” (0hr3mins), and he invites his audience to identify his mistakes:

***Every one of us can make mistakes. I can make mistakes ... those should be exposed, any mistakes that I've made ... for the sake of truth ...*** (5hr49mins)

We have taken up that invitation. (We offer a similar invitation. If you find that we have made some errors of our own, please write and tell us, so that for the sake of truth we can make any needed corrections. You can email us at terranwill -at- gmail.com.)<sup>101</sup>

Mike does not see how his conclusion could be wrong, because his examination of the debate falls short of the thoroughness which he claims. We have seen that his false perspectives and faulty methods result in many errors. His conclusion is overconfident.

The essential features of his view comprise three connected beliefs, like three legs of a tripod.

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<sup>100</sup> In the Greek there is no separate word for ‘she’ in v. 15 but the effect is the same.

<sup>101</sup> You'll need to replace “ -at- ” with “@”. Please put these words in the subject-line: Winger Part 12.

First leg: *In 1 Timothy 2:12, Paul is stating a general ban on all women teaching and exercising authority in the church like an elder.*

But it is a broken leg:

- Mike's reading of verse 12 depends on *authenteō* being a suitable word for the exercise of authority by an elder. In his view, this is "**The center of this whole debate**". But the historical evidence shows that in and around Paul's time it was not a suitable word for an elder's exercise of authority in the church. Paul had other words for that, and he doesn't use any of them. Instead, he uses this unusual and forceful word that meant something like "**overpower**", "**overmaster**", "**dominate**". As we see it, this defeats Mike's reading of verse 12. This meaning supports a non-complementarian reading of verse 12.
- Paul must view the teaching in verse 12 negatively, because he is not permitting it. So, what is he negative about? Is his restriction aimed at a faithful woman who holds to the truth, but who teaches men (Scenario T), or is it aimed at a misbehaving woman who is mixed up in false teaching (Scenario F)? Mike needs to demonstrate from the context that Paul's concern is Scenario T. But Mike has not done that. He has not identified any solid contextual evidence of Scenario T.
- In the context, Paul himself signals that in this passage he is giving instructions for dealing with false teaching (Scenario F). Chapter 1 is about dealing with false teaching. Then in 2:1, 2:8 and 2:9 Paul links his remarks to the same topic with the signposts "**therefore ...**", "**therefore ...**", "**Likewise ...**". He is still on this topic through verse 15. So, Mike's interpretation is not faithful to Scripture because it is in conflict with Paul's express words. This is a fatal defect. He must have seen this central problem for his view spelled out in *Discovering Biblical Equality*,<sup>102</sup> in Andrew's book,<sup>103</sup> and in other places, yet in his 11½ hours of video and his 120 pages of teaching notes he never mentions or addresses it.

Second leg: *Mike's view of verse 12 is supported by his interpretation of verses 13 and 14.*

But it is a broken leg:

- Mike does not say how he knows that verse 13 is not part of an illustration from the Old Testament but is intended as an appeal to a creation principle. This is an unproven assumption.
- His interpretation of verse 13 is erected on a weak and circular argument, and his explanation collapses in self-contradiction. If Paul is truly appealing to a creation principle of men's authority over women, then that principle should be applied in all walks of life, but Mike vehemently rejects that conclusion.
- His novel proposal for verse 14 is opaque. It lacks any discernible connection to Paul's actual words.
- Conversely, verses 13-14 are readily explainable as a supporting Old Testament illustration. It is a warning of the seriousness of false teaching, which deceived Eve and led to dire consequences.

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<sup>102</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> edn), 207.

<sup>103</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, 211-212 (in chapter 11, under 'General contents of the letter'), 245 (in chapter 12, under 'Using the first key: reading 2:9-10 in the context of 1:1 – 2:8'), 388 (in Appendix 6: Shortcomings in Complementarian Analyses of 1 Timothy 2).

Third leg: *Mike rebuts the central idea of most non-complementarian interpretations, which is that Paul's instructions are directed to a particular situation of false teaching in Ephesus.*

But it is a broken leg:

- As noted, Mike misses Paul's explicit signals that he is concerned with combating false teaching.
- He repeatedly strawmans those with whom he disagrees, avoiding their actual arguments.
- He makes a false separation between combating false teaching and promoting right teaching and living.
- He adopts an unrealistic approach to the relevance of Artemis and other pagan beliefs.
- He leaves crucial questions unanswered, such as:

(1) If Paul is stating a general rule which applies to all churches in all times and places, why does he introduce it with the counter-intuitive expression *ouk epitrepō* ("**I am not permitting**" or "**I do not permit**"), which is an unprecedented and unlikely choice for stating a general rule? Mike does not say.

(2) Why in verse 12 does Paul use the very rare word *authentēō*, which is found in Hellenic astrology, a likely element in the women's beliefs? Mike does not say.

(3) What explanation could there be for Paul's very unusual choice of language in verse 15, except that he is alluding to what is believed in the cult of Artemis? What is Mike's explanation? He does not say.

Our conclusion is that Paul is not stating a general rule that faithful women must not teach or exercise authority in the church. He's insisting that a woman caught up in false teaching must learn, and he is not permitting her to lead a man astray. Instead, she should learn with quiet humility, and walk with Christ our Savior, in faith, love, holiness and self-control.

If you are a man reading this, we urge you to give your sisters every encouragement in using their gifts, and to receive what God will teach you through them.

If you are a woman, know that the Bible does not artificially restrict your use of the spiritual gifts that God has given you. They are to be used in love, to bless others and build them up (1 Corinthians 12:31-14:4).

## Appendix 1: More straw men and Artemis

Sandra Glahn is an expert on Artemis. In her recent book, *Nobody's Mother*, she gives many interesting examples of allusions to Artemis in 1 Timothy.

There is a cluster of allusions in the unusual way that Paul starts his letter.

Glahn lays out six titles used of Artemis: "**first throne**", "**regal**", "**lord**", "**savior**", "**god**", "**manifest**". She says that four of the six appear near the beginning of 1 Timothy, and "**manifest**" appears in 3:16. Then she makes two points about the unusual way that Paul starts, which we will label [1] and [2]:

***One might expect to find overlap in titles of gods, but what is unusual is [1] Paul's use of four of the six right at the beginning, particularly since [2] his doing so borrows from a vocabulary outside his norm.***<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Nobody's Mother*, 118.

Mike holds up her book for the audience to see (3hr01min), but he does not tell his audience that those are her two points, nor that they are well justified by the evidence which she cites.

Instead, he erects a straw man, referring to the one word “**Savior**”:

*She's going to try to find parallels, little hints, ... parallels between Artemis and some of the text in First Timothy. Like maybe Artemis is called ... Savior in her cult, she's called Savior. And then in First Timothy, Paul (First Timothy chapter 1 verse one), he refers to God as our Savior and so ... maybe this idea of Savior is a hint that Paul's combating Artemis. Artemis was called Savior, he introduces God as our Savior, so he's sort of introducing God as: he's better than Artemis, he replaces Artemis, any sort of adoration you have for Artemis is replaced by God, any needs you had for Artemis is replaced by God. (3hr01min – 3hr02mins)*

He then knocks down the straw man:

*But Paul also calls God our “Savior” in Ephesians 5:23; in Philippians 3:20; in First Timothy 2:3; 4:10; in Second Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:3; Titus 1:4; Titus 2:10; Titus 2:13; Titus 3:4; and Titus 3:6; yet Titus isn't being written to an Artemis background. There are 24 uses of soter or “Savior” in the New Testament and 12 of them are from Paul, only three of which are in First and Second Timothy, right. So, Paul's majority of his uses of “Savior” are outside of First Timothy. That's to say, we're reading a lot if we think there's a special hidden meaning behind Paul simply calling God “Savior”. That's pretty common. God is our Savior after all. It's not a special name for Artemis. (3hr02mins – 3hr 03mins)*

Even his demolition job is faulty, because five of Paul's uses of “savior” are written to Ephesus, and six others are written about the same time as 1 Timothy, in his letter to Titus, who was in Crete, where Artemis was worshipped (though less prominently than in Ephesus).<sup>105</sup> That leaves just one use of ‘Savior’ unconnected to an Artemis context (in Philippians – which may have been written around the same time as 2 Timothy).

But the paramount issue here is that Mike does not engage with Glahn's actual argument, which depends upon a combination of four titles and on careful comparison with Paul's language elsewhere.

He says that he will go through a list of the hints that Artemis is in the background of 1 Timothy (3hr02mins), but in practice that is not what he does. He confines himself to a small number of selected points.

Mike goes next to something said by Glahn in a blog, about how the Artemis story may shed light on Paul's choice of words in 1 Timothy 2:13.<sup>106</sup> He describes it as “**bunkum**” (3hr04mins) and he accuses her of “**deceptive language**” (3hr07mins). We are not confident that Mike has correctly understood her point, especially as he goes on to quote her own words, from a scholarly article, as being inconsistent with his interpretation of the blog (3hr08mins).<sup>107</sup> We will not say more about that here; we have discussed verse 13 at sufficient length in the main text of our article.

Mike moves on to what he calls in his teaching notes: “**Other attempts to put Artemis in the background of 1 Tim**”. This phrase reveals a distorted perspective. It is historically naïve. There is no

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<sup>105</sup> See *Nobody's Mother*, 82, 118, 126.

<sup>106</sup> The reference given in Mike's teaching notes seems to be incorrect. The blog is at <https://sandraglahn.com/blog/2022/01/artemis-of-ephesus> (11 January 2022).

<sup>107</sup> Glahn, ‘The Identity of Artemis in First-Century Ephesus’ *Bibliotheca Sacra* 172 (2015), 328.

question of attempting to *put* her into the background. She was there, and she was very prominent, as Mike himself has admitted (2hr09mins).

Mike says:

***I've heard one person say: "Well, Paul never uses the names of these false deities, he just hints at them". And so [here Mike laughs], you now have to look for hints for Artemis. Now that can be legitimate. I'm not laughing at the prospect of looking for such hints, but I do giggle a little bit at the quality of the hints that they actually find.*** (3hr20mins)

Perhaps he would have giggled a little less if he had engaged more accurately with Glahn's actual arguments.

Mike also reads out a quotation from Andrew Bartlett's book:

***There are numerous implied cross-links between the text of 1 Timothy and the known religious life of Ephesus.***<sup>108</sup>

He then skips over Andrew's first example,<sup>109</sup> and proceeds to argue that four examples in Andrew's paragraph are not provable allusions to Artemis.

There are two principal defects in Mike's arguments. The defects are inter-related.

*First*, implied allusions, by their nature, cannot be *conclusively demonstrated*. That is precisely because they are implied, rather than stated. The *probability* of implied allusions has to be considered by assessing all candidates collectively and cumulatively. If there are just one or two possibles, we will remain unconvinced. They may just be random coincidences. But if there are perhaps twenty in the course of one short letter, and the choices of words differ materially from other letters, the cumulative case can become weighty. Mike does not grapple with the fact that there are many material differences in the language of this letter, when it is compared to most of Paul's earlier letters.<sup>110</sup>

Mike does not lay out or examine any cumulative case, but picks at examples one by one. Since no single example, taken on its own, provides proof, his piecemeal approach necessarily arrives at the fallacious conclusion that none of them is an allusion.

*Second*, because he selects just four examples from one paragraph, that means that he ignores many other allusions which are identified in the course of Andrew's book. Mike would benefit from reading the letter as a whole, in Paul's Greek, and hearing the multiple echoes of the language which Paul skillfully chooses to great rhetorical effect – language of the Artemis cult, of magic, and of astrology. (See further our previous article, 'Why Mike Winger is wrong about *authentēō* in 1 Tim 2:12', where we discuss allusions to Artemis and astrology.<sup>111</sup>)

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<sup>108</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, 242, in chapter 12, under 'The historical context'. The reference that Mike gives is 315.

<sup>109</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, 242. "God the Saviour (1:1; 2:3-4) and Jesus the Lord (1:2, 12; compare 1:15) stand in contrast to Artemis, who was acclaimed by her devotees as Saviour (*sōteria*) and Lord (*kuria*)."

Footnote: "Although salvation is a common theme in Paul's letters, it is only in this letter (with the letter to Titus, written around the same time) that Paul, apparently provoked by beliefs about Artemis, describes God as Saviour." Mike may think he has already answered this point in the course of his unsatisfactory discussion of Glahn's book.

<sup>110</sup> Such differences of language constitute one of the reasons why, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there has been debate over Paul's authorship of 1 Timothy. Allusions to Artemis are part of the explanation for the different language.

<sup>111</sup> <https://terranwilliams.com/why-mike-winger-is-wrong-about-authenteo-in-1-timothy-212-and-why-it->

The straw man which Mike knocks down here is the imaginary proposition that allusions to Artemis can be definitively demonstrated from individual examples of Paul's choice of words, taken singly. We do not know of any scholar who argues for that extreme idea. Mike only addresses selected examples, and only one by one. He does not anywhere address the strong cumulative case.

In addition to his two defects of method, he gives poor answers to the examples which he selects from Andrew's work.

First example, 1 Timothy 3:9:

Mike concedes that in this verse Paul

***might even be using the term "mystery" to talk about how the religious views and beliefs and practices within Christianity were the genuine article compared to the fake stuff in the mystery cults.***

Yet Mike says the term "**mystery**" does not allude specifically to Artemis, because other pagan cults also had their "**mysterics**" (3hr23mins).

But Andrew did not suggest that the term related only to Artemis; instead, he wrote:

***Deacons are required to hold to the mystery of the faith (3:9), not to the mysteries of Artemis and other pagan deities who were worshipped in Ephesus.***

And Artemis was the most prominent false god in Ephesus, so how could she not be included in this allusion to pagan mysteries?

Second example, 1 Timothy 3:16:

Mike reviews Paul's use of "**megas**" – "**great**" – in this verse, which calls to mind the chant at the massive riot, so vividly described in Acts 19: "**Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!**".

Mike misses that the riot, quelled by the town clerk, has already been alluded to in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, as Andrew explains.<sup>112</sup>

And he mistakenly says that Andrew changes the meaning of what Paul says. He objects to Andrew having Paul affirm

***that Jesus Christ, who embodied the mystery of godliness, is megas.***

Relying on how he reads the ESV, Mike thinks that the mystery of godliness is not Jesus but something abstract, and he thinks that this abstraction breaks the parallel with Artemis.

But Paul's Greek speaks of the mystery (*mustērion* – a neuter noun), *who* was manifested in the flesh (Greek *hos*, the masculine relative pronoun).<sup>113</sup> Paul's grammatical switch from neuter to masculine emphasizes that the true mystery of godliness is embodied in a real person, Jesus Christ.

Third example, 1 Timothy 3:15:

Here, the church is called "**church of a living god**".

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[matters-2/](#)

<sup>112</sup> *Men and Women in Christ*, 245, in chapter 12, under 'Using the first key: reading 2:9-10 in the context of 1:1 – 2:8'.

<sup>113</sup> There are English versions in which this is visible, for example, ASV, DLNT, LSB, LEB, MOUNCE, NABRE, NASB, NASB1995.

Mike dismisses this, on the ground that there is no explicit mention of idols. He relies only on an English translation, where ESV gives us “**the church of the living God**”. Notice the editorial decision to put a capital “**G**” for God and the definite article “**THE living God**”.

But, unusually, the article is omitted in the Greek, from before the word for “**god**”.<sup>114</sup> So, Paul’s point is that the assembly of believers is the assembly of a living god, with an implied contrast to a lifeless god, an idol, such as Artemis.

In addition, Paul’s next two phrases in 3:15-16 make further allusions to Artemis. Before he repeats the term “**mystery**”, which we have already discussed, he describes the church as “**a pillar and buttress of the truth**”. In the whole of the New Testament, the word “**pillar**” is used only four times. Here, it suggests an allusion to the great Temple of Artemis. The church is a living pillar, which holds up and maintains the truth, in implied contrast with the lifeless pillars of the Artemision, which are associated with false teachings.

Fourth example, 1 Timothy 4:7-10:

There are similar problems in Mike’s attempted rebuttal of the allusion in these verses.

To comply with expectations of language in English Bibles, ESV inserts the definite article twice in verse 10: “**THE living God, who is THE savior of all people.**” But again, the Greek omits the article in both cases. Paul’s implied point is that he and Timothy have set their hope on a living god, who is savior of all people, not on a lifeless idol, savior of Ephesus.<sup>115</sup>

Mike’s approach to allusions robs Scripture of its richness and downgrades Paul’s brilliance as a teacher.

Imagine a commentary on Matthew 11, where Jesus speaks to the crowd about John the Baptist, who is in prison:

***What did you go out to the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces.*** (Matthew 11:7-8, NIV).

A commentator who considers the historical setting will remark on Jesus’ brilliance as a teacher. Jesus’ words can rightly be taken in their plain meaning. But Jesus *also* makes implied allusions to Herod Antipas, who has imprisoned John. The reed was the symbol with which Herod decorated the coins that he issued in the early part of his reign. And Herod had gained a reputation for vacillation, like a reed swaying in the wind. Herod, in his palace, is doubtless dressed in finery, contrasting with John’s rough clothing. The hints are unmistakable.

But a commentator adopting Mike’s approach would protest that Herod is not named anywhere in the passage. And in the wilderness, reeds literally sway in the wind, so you shouldn’t see any allusions to Herod in that phrase, because “**you shouldn’t just assume that what COULD BE there IS there**”.<sup>116</sup> And the clause about fine clothes is in the plural, not indicating a particular individual. So,

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<sup>114</sup> For explanation of the usual use of the article before the Greek word for God (*theos*), see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (1996), 222-223.

<sup>115</sup> A few English versions bring out Paul’s point by employing the phrase “**a living God**” (CJB, DARBY, VOICE).

<sup>116</sup> 3hr27mins.

**“there's nothing specifically about”** Herod.<sup>117</sup> If Mike's approach to reading Scripture is correct, it would seem Jesus is not such a brilliant teacher after all.

It was the risen Jesus who gave Paul a gift for teaching. Let's consider another implied allusion in Paul's letter.

At the end of the letter Paul contrasts the *truth* that Timothy must guard with the *worldly wealth* mentioned in the previous paragraph. But he doesn't use the word *truth*. Instead, with a striking rhetorical flourish, he urges Timothy to guard the good *deposit* (*parathēkē*) entrusted to him (1 Timothy 6:20).

This is unprecedented language for Paul. He has not previously used the word *parathēkē* (deposit) in this letter, or in any known letter. (The only other occurrences of this word in the New Testament are in his second letter to Timothy, written again to Ephesus.)

Think of the similarity between the Temple of Artemis and the United States gold depository at Fort Knox.

Kings, rulers and rich people deposited large amounts of gold in the Artemision, entrusting it to Artemis for safe-keeping, believing that the great goddess and protector of Ephesus would kill anyone who tried to steal a deposit from her Temple. Paul's vivid allusion is obvious to anyone with knowledge of life in Ephesus. Artemis guards the gold. Timothy must guard a much more valuable deposit, which is the truth of Jesus.

We invite Mike to say, if Paul's use of *parathēkē* in this context is not a deliberate, implied allusion to the Temple of Artemis, why does he introduce that unusual word just here?

We mention further Artemis allusions in Appendix 2 and in the section where we discuss verse 15 of chapter 2.

## Appendix 2: The relevance of 1 Timothy chapter 5

In 5:3-15 Paul gives lengthy instructions concerning widows. There is nothing remotely like this in any other New Testament letter. There must have been some particular problems with widows in Ephesus.

On the positive side, Paul urges care for widows who are over sixty, and living faithful lives, and in need because of lack of a family who can support them.

On the negative side, Paul has much to say about the conduct of some younger widows. They are self-indulgent (5:6). Some of them have strayed after Satan (5:15). In verses 11-14, as translated in ESV, this is what Paul says, with some significant Greek words inserted by us:

***... when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry [12] and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. [13] Besides that, they learn to be idlers [argos], going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips [phluaros] and busybodies [periergos], saying what they should not. [14] So I would have younger widows marry, bear children [teknogoneō], manage their households [oikodespoteō], and give the adversary no occasion for slander.***

Mike's position is that 5:13 is **“just about widows who are wasting time”** (8hr56mins).

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<sup>117</sup> Mike says: **“there's nothing specifically about Artemis”** (3hr26mins).

But is that view sustainable when we look closely at Paul's language?

As support, Mike cites John Stott, in a passage where Stott writes:

***Paul gives no explicit indication that they are doing more than wasting their time in frivolous talk.***<sup>118</sup> (8hr56mins)

While we greatly respect John Stott, we have to say that this sentence is an uncharacteristic lapse. It sits ill with 5:15, where Paul states explicitly that some of them have turned away to follow Satan. That is a step well beyond mere time-wasting with frivolous talk.

In 5:14, Paul makes a conspicuous verbal link back to what he said in 2:15. In 2:15 he used the noun *teknogonia*. In 5:14 he uses the related verb *teknogoneō*. These are unusual words in the context of Christian instruction. They are not found elsewhere in Paul's letters, or indeed anywhere in the New Testament. Unless this is a remarkable, random coincidence, it is a deliberate link, which should not fail to strike the reader. It suggests Paul is signposting that he has the same women in mind here as in chapter 2.<sup>119</sup> But Mike makes no comment on it.

In 5:13, the translation of *phluaros* as "**gossip**" is erroneous. It doesn't come either from evidence of ancient usage or from consideration of the context. It seems to reflect cultural prejudice concerning women. In a scholarly article written in 1990, the great New Testament scholar Gordon Fee pointed out that there is no example in Greek literature of *phluaros* being used of a gossip. It refers to a babbler, a talker of nonsense. The faulty translation was corrected in the NIV 2011 edition ("**who talk nonsense**").

The expression "**talk nonsense**" corresponds with Paul's descriptions of the false teaching at the beginning and end of the letter. In 1:6 he calls it *mataiologia* – babble, NIV "**meaningless talk**".<sup>120</sup> In 6:20 he calls it *kenophōnia* – empty talk, ESV "**babble**".

Mike gets confused here. He mistakenly thinks that *phluaros* is translated by the NIV as "**busybodies**" (8hr52mins).<sup>121</sup> He refers to a brief mention of the translation issue by Keener, where Keener does not lay out the data or give a cross-reference. Mike says:

***I don't have that data. I couldn't go and look, look up all these, all these references, or check out any sort of work that validates this.*** (8hr53mins).

But he could have done, and easily. The sources are indicated by Phil Payne and by Andrew Bartlett, in their respective books, which Mike claims to have read.<sup>122</sup>

Mike displays on screen the LSJ lexicon entries for *phluaros* (8hr54mins). The word "**gossip**" is not there. The LSJ entries correspond to Paul's descriptions of the false teachers as babblers and of the false teaching as babble and nonsense. It's not entirely clear whether Mike notices that LSJ supports Fee's position, but he concedes:

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<sup>118</sup> Stott, *Guard the Truth: The message of 1 Timothy & Titus* (1996), 134.

<sup>119</sup> For further explanation, see *Men and Women in Christ*, 274-275, in chapter 13, under 'Using the fourth key: Paul's signposts in verse 15'.

<sup>120</sup> At 1:6 ESV calls it "**vain discussion**".

<sup>121</sup> There is an editing error in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, on page 232, where the word "busybodies" should read "gossips".

<sup>122</sup> Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, 301-302; Bartlett, *Men and Women in Christ*, 253, in chapter 12 under 'Using the second key to aid understanding of 2:11-12'. Gordon Fee's 1990 article is 'Issues in Evangelical Hermeneutics, Part III: The Great Watershed – Intentionality & Particularity: 1 Timothy 2:8 – 15 as a Test Case' *Crux* 26 (1990): 31-37.

***It's possible that gossip is not the best translation. It's possible that it could be foolery, foolish talk or something along those lines.*** (8hr55mins)

He nonetheless cites Grudem, in a classic example of missing the point:

***The standard lexicons do not mention the sense “to communicate false teaching” and such a verbal idea would be surprising to find for a definition of an adjective in any case.***  
(8hr55mins)<sup>123</sup>

What is Mike’s answer to the similarities of the three descriptions of false teaching in 1:6, 5:13 and 6:20 – three different words for babble or meaningless talk? None. He ignores the similarity.

In 5:13, the translation of *periergos* as “busybody” is linguistically possible, but is not sensitive to the context. The translators assume, without clear contextual support, that the misbehaving young widows are no more than busybodies in the ordinary sense. But Ephesus was a great center for magic. Written magic spells were called Ephesian letters. Artemis had bags of magic materials hanging on her chest. The only other occurrence of this word in the New Testament is in Acts 19, in the account of the burning of the books of magic in Ephesus, where it refers to meddling by occult means, that is, to magic arts.<sup>124</sup>

Unless this is another random coincidence, the natural meaning in the Ephesian context is that these young widows are dabbling in magic. Magical beliefs easily fit into Paul’s categories of myths and speculations (1:4). And in Paul’s second letter to Timothy, again written to Ephesus, Paul again refers to magicians.<sup>125</sup> That’s unlikely to be yet another random coincidence.

What is Mike’s answer to this point? None. He does not address it.

In 5:13, Paul twice describes the women, with fierce negativity, as “**idlers**” – Greek *argos*. Doubtless, he regards them as literally idle, as does Mike, but why such emphasis by repetition? Unless it is yet another random coincidence, it is probably an allusion to astrology (as with his word-choice *authentēō* in 2:12). The term *argos* is the name of the eighth of the twelve astrological houses, known as the idle house or house of death. Paul would certainly have regarded this learning as a myth and a useless speculation (1:4), as something falsely called knowledge (6:20) and as leading to death rather than salvation. We have already mentioned the link between astrology and Artemis.<sup>126</sup>

What is Mike’s answer to this point? None. He does not address it.

In 5:13, Paul says the women are “**going about from house to house**”. Doubtless this is meant literally, as Mike takes it, but unless it is yet another remarkable coincidence, it is another astrological allusion, since progress from house to house was a key idea in ancient astrology. There were

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<sup>123</sup> Grudem also refers to the BDAG lexicon, but that contributes nothing to the discussion, since it simply repeats the mistaken translation ‘gossips’ in this verse.

<sup>124</sup> Acts 19:19 neuter plural (meddlesome things), referring to magic arts; 1 Tim 5:13 feminine plural (meddlesome women), referring to women practicing magic.

<sup>125</sup> See 2 Timothy 3:8 (the magicians Jannes and Jambres) and 3:13 (*goēs*, sorcerer). See further *Men and Women in Christ*, 240-242 (in chapter 12, under ‘**The historical context**’), 254 (in chapter 12, under ‘**Using the second key to aid understanding of 2:11-12**’).

<sup>126</sup> See further *Men and Women in Christ*, 257-258, in chapter 12, under ‘**Using the second key to aid understanding of 2:11-12**’. Notice also the link between *oikodespoteō* in 5:14 and *oikodespoteia* in the most relevant passage of astrological lore which uses *authentēō*. We mentioned this in our previous article <https://terranwilliams.com/why-mike-winger-is-wrong-about-authenteo-in-1-timothy-212-and-why-it-matters-2/>.

understood to be twelve houses, each representing a different stage or aspect of a person's life.<sup>127</sup> Again, it appears that Paul is picking up a concept from the false beliefs and using it polemically against those beliefs.

What is Mike's answer to this point? None. He does not address it.

In 5:13, the women are "**saying what they should not**". This phrase would aptly cover both false teaching and the saying of magical incantations. Mike dismisses the similarity with the false teachers of Titus 1:11, who are "**teaching ... what they ought not to teach**" (8hr42mins – 8hr51mins).<sup>128</sup> But he has not addressed multiple indications in this paragraph of 1 Timothy that Paul has false teaching in view. Is every seeming allusion to false teaching and magic and astrology an extraordinary and random coincidence? That is improbable.<sup>129</sup>

And why the references to self-indulgence in 5:6 and to their sensual passions in 5:11? Those words link to the women for whom Paul writes in 2:9. Just another random coincidence? Mike makes no comment.

And why the reference to Satan in 5:15? That harks back to deceiving spirits in 4:1 and to Satan's deception in 2:14, which turned Eve into a false teacher of Adam. Just another random coincidence? Mike makes no comment.

In conclusion, our understanding of Paul's remarks in 2:9-15 – that he is concerned with women who are mixed up in false teaching – does not *depend on* our reading of chapter 5. But our reading of chapter 5 provides significant additional support for that understanding. Mike addresses a minority of the pertinent points, with unsatisfactory answers. He misses most of them.<sup>130</sup>

(For further explanation of allusions, see also footnote 95, where we explain how Paul makes allusions by employing language from the false beliefs and applying it to a new referent.)

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<sup>127</sup> See further *Men and Women in Christ*, 255, in chapter 12, under 'Using the second key to aid understanding of 2:11-12'.

<sup>128</sup> Mike relies on a quote from Westfall about networking by women, to suggest that Paul's target is women gossiping to women (*Paul and Gender*, 302). But this disregards every indication that Paul has false teaching in view in 5:13. We are not told the precise circumstances of the going from house to house. But it is not hard to imagine a woman, dressed in the manner alluded to in 2:9, and on the look-out for a man (5:6, 11), attending what we might call high-class dinner parties with other socially elite members of the Ephesian church, where she targets a man with her confused version of Christian truth (1:3–7) and provides diversion with astrology and magic. See further *Men and Women in Christ*, 259, in chapter 12, under 'The wealthy women as false teachers'.

<sup>129</sup> Understanding the women of 1 Tim 5:13 to be involved in magic has a long history. See J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (1963), 118, 234; A.T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (1982), 99, 175.

<sup>130</sup> Mike's discussion additionally covers 1 Timothy 4:7, where Paul refers to false teaching as "**old wives' tales**" (9hr01min – 9hr03mins). But Mike misses that this description is particularly pointed polemic if the false teachings are being promoted by rich, young widows.