σωφροσυνη : How it contributes to the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Author: Jim Reiher.

This article has not been published in any other source, nor is it under consideration by any other publisher.

Biography: Jim Reiher has a BA Dip Ed from University of New England, NSW (double major in history) and a MA Theology (Hons) from the Asian Pacific Theological Seminary. His Masters Thesis was an investigation into the historical setting that birthed the epistle of James. It later became the basis of an academic article for EQ (“Violent Language – a clue to the Historical Occasion of James.” *Evangelical Quarterly*. Vol. LXXXV No. 3. July 2013) and his commentary on James: *James: peace activist and advocate for the poor*. UNOH Publishing Melbourne Australia. 2011. In his younger days Jim taught history and economics at High School. After completing his Masters, Jim taught as a full time senior lecturer for Tabor College Victoria from 2000-2008 and then part time for some years after that. (Church History and New Testament Studies). He moved on to work for with Urban Neighbours of Hope, (a Christian Community Development group) and Korus Connect (a chaplaincy provider). He continues to research and write both academic articles and books.

Contact information:

17 Margaret Road, Avonsleigh, Victoria. Australia. 3782.

M: 0419 544 112

jamesreiher@gmail.com;

Synopsis

The debate around 1 Timothy 2:8-15 has for too long focused almost entirely on 1 Timothy 2:12 and the Adam and Eve illustrations (in verses 13 and 14). This paper demonstrates that 1 Timothy 2:11 is actually a critical key to understanding the paragraph, and that the double use of *σωφροσυνης* in verses 9 and 15 reinforces the emphasis that the author is making. Sadly this emphasis has been downplayed by a poor translation of *σωφροσυνης*. The core meaning of the word is not ‘propriety’ but rather ‘clear thinking’. By emphasising that women must ‘think reasonably and sensibly’ (and that will help them to live well in every way), and by insisting that women learn (in 1 Timothy 2:11) the overall emphasis of this paragraph can be seen more clearly. Paul wants women to learn, to think sensibly, to leave behind past errors and mistaken beliefs, and to live to higher ethical standards. Only then, would they be in a place where they can teach and have authority in the church.

Key words

1 Timothy 2:8-15; *σωφροσυνης*; propriety; women; women’s ministry; women’s leadership; women’s ordination; complementarian; egalitarian.

σωφροσύνη: How it contributes to the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Jim Reiher.

The state of the current debate 1 Timothy 2:8-15

⁸ Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. ⁹ I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety (σωφροσύνης), adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. ¹¹ A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety (σωφροσύνης).

This passage has been much debated. There are two main schools of interpretation regarding this pericope: the traditional interpretation (the complementarian view) that sees the teaching about women as binding for all time,¹ and the progressive interpretation (the egalitarian view) that sees the teaching as specific to the local Ephesian churches at that point in time.² The complementarian interpretation leads to women being excluded from preaching and ordination forever, no matter what might have changed in different cultures over time (such as universal education). The egalitarian interpretation allows women to preach and to be ordained, arguing that the circumstances of Ephesus in the late first century are radically different from life today, and their unique problems requiring that temporary solution, are not directly replicated today.

Every passage in the Bible actually falls into one or the other such categories (temporal or universal in application). All of us hold some texts in one category while holding other texts in the other. We see no inconsistency in so doing: no one (that I am aware of) absolutely takes every sentence of the Bible as literally still applicable to them personally in their context today, and no Christ-follower (that I am aware of) would say that absolutely nothing in the Bible is ‘universal’.

The problem is that with *some* passages, we do not agree if it is temporal and specific to a place and time, or if it has universal in application. 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is one such passage

The arguments put forward by both sides of the debate are lengthy, complex, and focus on different words and phrases in the paragraph. Both sides extrapolate, speculate and hypothesize. They noticeably go off in different directions with their respective extrapolations.

The traditional view focuses on verse 12, and all else rotates around it. Verses 13 and 14 are drawn on to support the ongoing application of the literal words of verse 12. The conclusion is that the text is a universal command that women never have authority or teach, *because of Adam and Eve*. Proponents of this view have created a phrase to make it sound very important: ‘creation ordinances’.³ We must apply verse 12 literally because of these ‘creation ordinances’. Adam came first and so that *implies* that men lead and have authority over those who came second. That is a speculated conclusion extrapolated from the text.

¹ Consider for example Douglas Moo, “What Does It Mean Not to teach or Have Authority Over Men? 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” in John Piper and Wayne Grudem, (eds.), *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A response to evangelical Feminism*. Wheaton Illinois: Crossways Books.

² Consider for example Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Books, 1997, esp. chapter 9.

³ Consider how A.M. Stibbs wrote that allowing women to lead men would ‘violate the created order’ (in, ‘The Pastoral Epistles’, in D. Guthrie, and J.A. Motyer, *The New Bible Commentary Revised*. I.V. Press 1970, 1171.) He adds that the Adam and Eve references are ‘guiding principles of universal and abiding application’ (ibid.).

Also: Eve was deceived not Adam. That implies that *all* women are prone to deception and therefore must never teach or have authority. That is of course yet another extrapolation.⁴

Progressives, do not see verse 12 as the heart of the pericope but rather verse 11. Here the writer of the epistle insists that women are to learn. That verse contains the only imperative in the entire paragraph (*μανθανετω*): the author is insisting that women learn. When verse 12 is noted, the discussion usually rotates around the word for ‘authority’. It is a very rare Greek word (*αυθεντειν*), and not the common word Paul⁵ uses that unambiguously means ‘authority’ (*εξουσια*). *Αυθεντειν* is so rare⁶ that has generated considerable debate over its meaning.⁷ When the dust has settled, it arguably means: to *usurp* authority. 1 Timothy 2:12 is then seen as a local issue and problem in Ephesus. The progressive view then re-interprets verses 13 and 14 (the Adam and Eve verses) and see them as *illustrations* of the situation in Ephesus, not as some kind of timeless theological propositions where the speculated implications of them are binding for all time. (Progressives argue this saying that *γαρ*, ‘for’, is illustrative not causative. That is: the word ‘for’ means ‘for example’, not ‘because’, here.)⁸ Likewise verse 15.

The importance of this discussion

This paper will now be looking at one Greek word. For some readers this might seem a bit ‘specific’ or too narrowly focused. However, it is significant and relevant. This paragraph before us has been used to oppress and suppress women in the church for centuries. It is the

⁴ For the traditionalist those three verses are the key: the heart of the matter. This is despite the absurd logic being applied. If that which came before another, is greater than that which follows, and has more authority than that which follows, then John the Baptist was greater than Jesus; animals are greater than humans; David is greater than the Messiah; David’s older brothers are greater than David; Aaron is greater than Moses, etc. Likewise if all women are easily deceived because Eve was, then why on earth do we allow them to be missionaries? Or teach children? Or open their mouths? Furthermore, verse 11 is brushed over (in that verse, the author of the letter insists that women learn). Very little is said about verse 15 (women will be saved through child birth...). No absolute literal application is required of verses 8-10, (instructions to men and women respectively, where men are told to pray with their hands in the air and women are told not to wear expensive clothes and jewellery to church). Instead verses 8-10 are treated as ‘principles’ that teach us things like ‘forgiving one another’ (for men); and ‘modesty’ (for women).

⁵ The authorship of the Pastorals is highly debated and very contentious. I am not ignoring or denying the arguments against Pauline authorship, but I use the name Paul simply to represent the author who penned these letters. The debate around authorship is not being tackled in this paper.

⁶ It appears nowhere else in the New Testament and does not make any appearances in the Septuagint.

⁷ For ‘authority’ see George Knight III, “*Authenteo* in reference to women in 1 Timothy 2:12”, *New Testament Studies*, 30, 1984, 143-157. For other meanings, see Leland Wilshire, “The TLG Computer and Further References to *Authenteo* in 1 Timothy 2:12”, *New Testament Studies*, 34, 1988, 120-134. George Knight III concluded on the basis of a study of 13 uses of the word that it meant ‘have authority over’ without any negative implications. The 13 examples used by George Knight III have come under considerable criticism. Leland Wilshire used over 300 references to the word, and came to a very different conclusion. He showed that there were a range of meanings for this word. Around the time of Paul it could mean: ‘to teach autonomously,’ ‘to teach in a contentious manner,’ and ‘to teach in a domineering manner.’ As Perschbacher’s lexicon defines it: ‘one acting by his own authority or power; ...to domineer’. See also David M. Scholer, ‘The Evangelical Debate Over Biblical ‘Headship’,’ in *Women, Abuse and the Bible: How Scripture can be used to hurt or heal*. Ed. Catherine Clark Kroeger and James R. Beck. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Baker Book House, 1996. Also Ronald W. Pierce, ‘Evangelicals and Gender Roles in the 1900’s: 1 Tim.2:8-15: A Test Case,’ *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36 no. 3 (Sep. 1993).

⁸ Progressives highlight that distinction, noting that a very unusual word (when a common unambiguous option was available) indicates an unusual – even unique – situation being addressed. (See Kevin Giles, *The Headship of Men and the Abuse of Women: Are they Related in Any Way?*. Cascade Books, Oregon, 2020, 76.) Verse 11 is the universal idea: women now, (not just men) are equal in Christ (cf Gal. 3:28) and therefore they must be taught (just as men are).

key passage that limits women's involvement in church leadership. It is the number one go to passage to allow men to continue to ignore the gifts and talents and calling of over half the members of their congregations.

There are a number of good arguments being put forward to counter that complementarian position, and some have been mentioned briefly above. But to find yet another *under-emphasised* aspect of this paragraph that points in the equality direction, adds weight and momentum to the egalitarian cause.

1 Timothy 2:9,15 share a word in common

Traditionalists who pass over verse 15 a little too quickly, also ignore an important feature in the Greek that concretely links that verse with the paragraph that precedes it. When Paul starts to talk about women (in verses 9 and 10) one of the qualities he expects of a godly woman is the word often translated 'propriety': the word *σωφροσύνης* (from *σωφροσύνη*). That word in verse 9 recurs in verse 15. It is the same word in the Greek, and it is not very common in the Greek New Testament.⁹ When Paul begins talking about women, that word enters his mind as a quality he wants them to display (initially in the context of how they dress for church). When he ends his reflections on women in the church in Ephesus, that word recurs and he finds it important to state it again. It is his last word on the matter at hand, in fact. Clearly, it was important to Paul.

The double use of that word means it was important to the writer. To start and end a short discussion about women in the church with that word means that it was in the author's mind: it book-ends his comments. It is really important and a key reason he writes what he writes in-between.

I would suggest it is similar here. Paul wants women to demonstrate *σωφροσύνης*. What does that word mean? Well most translations seem happy to translate it as 'propriety' or some synonym of that. That raises an immediate concern. 'Propriety' does not seem all that *significant* does it?

The meaning of *σωφροσύνης*

There is a good reason for that seeming problem. The Greek word so translated, does *not* mean 'propriety'. By failing to render it for what it actually means, it takes away from the contribution it should be making to understanding this paragraph.

Σωφροσύνης wrongly translated as 'propriety' creates the impression that the author wants women to show conformity to conventionally accepted standards of behaviour or morals. It is not particularly needing any more unpacking. Its meaning is supposedly obvious. And so it is passed over quickly as most commentators rush to the bigger debate around verse 12.

However, the Greek word *σωφροσύνη* first and foremost means '*soundness of mind; thinking clearly; being clear headed*'. Such clear thinking will then lead to right living.

This is not the same thing as 'propriety'. Propriety makes us think of modesty, quiet submission, gentle servant hearted compliance. If Paul had wanted that to be his emphasis there were more specific and clear words to say such things. (He might have used *σεμνος* for honourable, or *υποταγή* for subjection, or even *συνεχω* for constraint.) *Clear thinking* creates a very different impression. One might think of: a good debater; a rational thinker; a

⁹ It only appears in this actual form just three times: twice in this paragraph and in Acts 26:25. The word family has about a dozen other appearances, some of which will be mentioned in this article.

clear and decisive arguer; and a competent intelligent teacher, or at the very least, a thoughtful and reasonable person.

Perschbacher's lexicon offers a brief definition of *σωφροσύνη*: 'sanity, soundness of mind, a sane mind, Acts 26:25;' and then adds: 'female modesty, 1 Timothy 2:9,15'. Perschbacher's acceptance of a different meaning for the verses that deal with women (whereas Acts 26:25 refers to Paul), is not explained.

Walter Bauer's lexicon is more detailed. He gives a more thorough definition of the word, and he gives it two main meanings (the second one being much more nuanced than Perschbacher's): (1) reasonableness, rationality, mental soundness; and (2) good judgement, moderation, self-control.¹⁰ The first is the more common meaning, and the second overlaps it. Bauer explores how, under the second definition, it can be *combined* with other virtues (hence good judgement *and* moderation). But to strip this word of its natural meaning, (a meaning that is immediately given to its only other use in the New Testament, in Acts 26:25) and to just leave it as meaning 'some other virtue' is to damage the word. In our case here, it also weakens the understanding of this entire passage. It undermines seeing a more clear context for what is about to follow in verses 11 and 12, and then be climaxed in verse 15.

Kittle's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* gives 7 pages to this word and its family members.¹¹ The article initially summarises 8 different shades of meaning, all linked to 'a sound mind'. It notes: 'σωφρονεω means: 'of sound mind...It denotes a. "the rational" in the sense of what is intellectually sound...It then denotes b. "rational" without illusion...It can also mean c. "rational" in the sense of purposeful...Another sense is d. "discretion" in the sense of moderation and self-control...Again it might mean e. "discretion" as prudent reserve...Another sense is f. "modesty" and decorum...Then there is g. "discretion" as discipline and order politically...also h. as "wisdom"...¹²

Ullrich Luck, (the writer of the Kittle article) goes on to discuss its use in the Greek Hellenistic World. The examples given show that the word carried the idea of *using your reason, and applying wisdom to cause you to demonstrate modest restraint*.¹³

When Luck moves on to discuss the word family in the Septuagint and Hellenistic Judaism he notes that the Hebrew equivalent is most likely the word translated *παιδεία*.¹⁴ That word has as its base meaning, 'education'. This Greek word means to train up, to nurture, to instruct, and to correct.

Perhaps of most interest is Luck's section on how the word group is used in the New Testament. Up to this point, the word we are considering has a strong link to 'using reason and thinking wisely, and then acting with restraint and modesty as an outworking of that.'

Luck notes that the first and primary understanding of this family of words in the New Testament, is 'a sound mind' and he cites Mark 5:15 and Acts 26:25 to demonstrate that.¹⁵ In noting one of the variations of the word in Romans 12:3, he highlights how it is serving as the opposite (and the desirable quality) as opposed to high mindedness or "an inflated self opinion. He goes on to suggest that Paul 'offers an exposition of *σωφροσύνη*'¹⁶ in Romans 12:16b: '...do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position'. When another form of the same word appears in Philippians 2:3 (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*) it is usually

¹⁰ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 2nd ed., Revised and Augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, from Walter Bauer's Fifth Edition. University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London. 1979. 802.

¹¹ Gerhard Kittle (ed) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. 10 vols. Geoggey W. Bromiley Translator and Editor. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1971. Vol. VII. 1097-1104.

¹² Kittle, 1097-8.

¹³ Kittle, 1098.

¹⁴ Kittle, 1100.

¹⁵ Kittle, 1102.

¹⁶ Kittle, 1102.

translated as humility. 1 Peter 4:7 is also noted and their *σωφρονησατε* is understood as ‘clear minded’ or ‘clear thinking’. And Titus 2:12 has *σοφρονως* which is understood to be ‘sensible’ or ‘clear thinking’. When Luck gets to 1 Timothy 2:9 and 15, he sees it as ‘sensible restraint’.¹⁷

I would suggest that Titus 2:12 helps us see how this family of words is being used by the author of the Pastorals. Note how the word is linked to godly living. It combines the core meaning of ‘using your reasoning and wisdom’ to ‘ethical living’. ‘Live *sensibly* righteously and godly in the present age’ (so the NASV). The NIV misses that balanced emphasis by translating it: ‘live *self-controlled*, upright and godly lives in this present age.’ Likewise Titus 2:2; 2:5; and 2:6 all use the same word and in all cases the NASV translates it ‘sensible’ while the NIV translates it ‘self-controlled’. 2:2 and 2:6 are written to men, and 2:5 is addressed to women. It is interesting that Luck has simply added: ‘In Tt. 2:5 the reference is especially to chastity and a disciplined life’ but 2:6 has young men being ‘summoned to a measured and orderly life.’¹⁸

Luck’s valuable article finishes with a consideration of how some of the early church fathers used the word as well. No surprises there: the word is still conveying both ideas. It still means sensible reasonable reflection leading to upright moral behaviour. Justin emphasises ‘rational teaching’ as well as moral virtues, and that combination is certainly the best way to see the meaning of the word.

As noted above, the particular form of the word used in 1 Timothy 2:9,15, *σωφροσυνης*, is only used in that form in one other place in the New Testament: in Acts 26:25. There, it is *not* translated as ‘propriety’. No. There, it is a word that the apostle Paul is using of himself, and there it is translated correctly: Paul is reasonable, clear headed, arguing wisely as he preaches the Gospel to those in power, while he in custody. The NIV translates it more ‘virtuously’ for women, but more ‘rationally’ for a man.

The verbal form makes a few appearances in the New Testament. Consider *σωφρονεω*, as found in Titus 2:6; Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 5:13; Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35; and 1 Peter 4:7. If you study those verses closely, in their context, you will see that they all indicate some kind of ‘clear thinking’ and ‘right reasoning’ that impacts lifestyle. Indeed in the Gospel stories they capture someone who has gone from terribly muddled thinking to clear thinking and a radically changed life. (That is what the author of the Pastorals wants for the women converts in the church of Ephesus: to go from muddled thinking, to a radically changed life.)

Σωφροσυνης as a part of the pericope

The critic of this paper might argue that I am making too much out of this word. After all its immediate context in verse 9, is in a comment about clothing. Paul might not be thinking any further than just that, He is saying to the women to think seriously and sensibly about how they dress. Nothing more.¹⁹

However, Paul moves on in verse 11 to talk about women being educated and trained up correctly. If he used the word initially in the context of clothing, it caused him to recall that it is critical to remind Timothy that *women are to learn!* If he was initially limiting his use of the word to being wise about how they dress, then he moves on from that. Indeed, the very fact that he used that word, drew him to think about certain wealthy women in the church, who were confused in their thinking: not just about clothing and modesty but about

¹⁷ Kittle, 1103.

¹⁸ Kittle, 1103. This is one of my points of departure from Luck. He does not offer any explanation as to why he so differentiates between the genders.

¹⁹ My first response would be, if this is *all* it is in Paul’s mind, then why translate it ‘propriety’ anyway?

lots of things: about really important things like the essential teaching of the faith. These particular women who were not even clear thinking about something like clothes and modesty, needed teaching and correction and learning more broadly. Paul gets strong about it and uses the only imperative in the paragraph to insist that women learn (verse 11).

Furthermore by verse 15 he revisits and reuses *σωφροσύνης* and there combines it with faith, love and holiness. This suggests Paul has much bigger plans and uses for that word. Yes: women should think seriously and reasonably about how they dress. But they should also think reasonably and sensibly about *everything*. In fact, if they are well trained in the things of the faith, then that will flow over into the way they approach every aspect of their daily life, (including how they dress). To reduce *σωφροσύνης* to just 'modesty' ignores the continuing flow of thought Paul moves into. It likewise ignores his concluding sentence highlighting this particular trait one more time. Paul wants women to be trained up and educated well so that they will be clear thinking and reasonable, and that will then naturally show itself in living to higher moral and ethical principles.

Let us consider a bit more, the transition in Paul's comments that happens in verse 11. With that word noted as a trait Paul wants of certain women – women who tended to wear expensive clothes and jewellery – he goes on to say in verse 11 'I want women to learn...'. That word in verse 9, is a key part of his opening summary of what is a main concern for Paul. He wants the women in the church to learn and understand and to *think clearly and reasonably* about the things of the Gospel (not just their clothing, but that too). He is particularly targeting the women who can afford to wear expensive clothes and jewellery.

Note: Some women were wearing expensive clothing and jewellery to church. That could not be *all* the women in the Church in Ephesus. Most converts were from the lower classes, but over time some from more noble birth and position, did find faith in Jesus Christ as well. Not many women would be able to wear expensive jewellery to church. Recall Paul's words in the first book of Corinthians: not many of you were wealthy, or of noble birth etc. (1 Corinthians 1:26). Verses 9 and 10 are a strong indication that some wealthy women of noble birth had indeed been converted and joined the church in Ephesus.

That being so, it also meant that those same women had some *new learning* to experience and some *unlearning* to do as well. The more wealthy women of Ephesus had their own religions and cults that they were a part of²⁰ (before finding Christ) and they would have a worldview and certain beliefs that would be at odds with the Christian message.²¹

²⁰ In Ephesus, heresies were particularly rife among some women. (cf. II Tim 3:5-7). Ephesus was a city that had unusual cults and religions in regards to women. The primary deities of Asia Minor were female. The so called "Great Mother" had many names in different parts of Asia Minor, but she bore the same characteristics: she was the mother of gods and of men, she was the mistress of the wild animals, from her came all life and the dead were gathered into her womb. One of her names was Artemis of the Ephesians. (The Romans called her Diana of the Ephesians). In fact the most famous of all shrines to the Great Mother was at Ephesus: one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world, the Temple of Artemis. At Ephesus, Artemis was not the only mother goddess. Another was Cybele, sometimes called the Mountain Mother, and she was worshipped in mountains, caves and the wilderness. Another goddess that appeared in Ephesus was Isis, the Egyptian goddess who was seen as both mediator and saviour. At times she became almost indistinguishable from Artemis of Ephesus, and was even called Artemis-Isis. Both goddesses were lunar deities, well acquainted with magic and expert in the safe delivery of babies. Eve, the mother of all living, became closely identified with Isis in Gnostic stories. In fact, as Gnosticism grew in Ephesus, the attributes of the Great Mother were given to Eve, in Asia Minor. Ephesus has been called the bastion of feminine supremacy in religion. William Ramsay, the archaeologist, said it is no coincidence that the virgin Mary was first given the title "mother of God" at Ephesus (Artemis herself had earlier borne that very title). See See Richard Clark Kroegeer and Catherine Clark Kroegeer, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence*. Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Books, 1992.

²¹ The roots of Gnosticism have been found in the late first century around the city of Ephesus and there is a whole thesis that has been offered that argues that this passage is making allusions – and seeking to correct –

Paul wants these women to learn (verse 11) and to stop showing off their wealth and nobility in church (verses 9,10). He wants them to be clear thinking, (verse 9) and to learn correctly (verse 11). And he says it again in verse 15. Women who are keen to be in positions of authority; those of you who are even grasping at it before you are properly trained: there is no shame in motherhood. You can be saved through childbirth too you know! It is not to be shunned as if it is inferior. Of course, you would demonstrate that salvation by a life of love and faith and holiness, and clear-headedness.

Verse 15 wants this group of women to demonstrate those four features. Three of the features he lists might normally be considered 'big ticket items' for every Christian: faith love and holiness. If you wanted to list three key things they are critical to the Christian walk they are a great summary to hold up.²² Faith, love and holiness... nothing controversial there. Hugely important. And to those universal wonderful words, concepts, ideals, features to have in our life... he adds the same word he used in verse 9: *σωφροσύνης*.

The significance of adding *σωφροσύνης* to faith, love, and holiness, is noteworthy. But to add this word to such huge and significant concepts as 'faith, love and holiness' lifts this seemingly lesser concept (still important but just not normally highlighted) that Paul seems to be obsessing over, to a whole new level. It is *really*, important! Women: learn! Get sound teaching. Be clear headed and drop the nonsense of the past that is contrary to the truth of the Gospel. Build a sound base into your life. Be rid of the errors in your past worldview, and embrace the truths of the faith. Become clear thinkers. It will help keep you in the faith. Think soberly, rationally, and wisely. That wisdom will be seen in the way you live. *Then*, you will be ready to teach others, but not before.

If the newly converted wealthy women can do that, then all manner of benefits will flow. They will naturally dress modestly and not want to show off their wealth to others; they will lose that pride and feeling of superiority; they will realise that to live for Christ logically implies they must change how they live in the world. They will be willing to learn in quiet submissiveness to their male instructors; they will realise that humility and servant-heartedness are attributes of Christ-followers. They won't try to usurp the authority from their male teachers; they will allow themselves to be trained well, and they will know what was right and wrong from their past views and beliefs.

some of that early heretical teaching. For example: Gnosticism reinterpreted the early chapters of Genesis: matter was evil and the ultimate good God therefore could not have made it. A lesser, more evil god created the world and he was not the true ultimate good God. That teaching had interesting 'outworkings'. If an evil god created matter and that evil god told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge (Gnostics were very big on getting 'knowledge') then to disobey that evil god would be a good thing to do. So Eve was not actually deceived by the evil god when she disobeyed and ate the fruit. Adam was deceived because he was trying to serve the evil god. Paul's comment in verse 14 is therefore seen as directly correcting that particular false teaching. 'Adam was not the one deceived, it was the women who was deceived...'. Likewise with a merging of feminine religious cults, especially the cult of Artemis, with early Gnosticism, another error that circulated was that an original woman birthed all life. Verse 13 can be seen as a correction to that: Adam came first then Eve. Finally, some strands of Gnosticism taught that if you had children (if you had sex, to have children) then you would forfeit any chance of salvation because of your lack of self-control and your love for material sensations. This teaching forbade marriage (cf. 1 Timothy 4:3). Verse 15 is seen as a direct response to that error (women can be saved through childbirth). This thesis argues that all three verses (13-15) are in fact specific examples of some of the 'muddled headed worldview' of these newly converted wealthy women, who have come out of Ephesian cults. See Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, for a detailed examination of this thesis. There have been those who sought to rebut Kroeger and Kroeger. See: S. M. Baugh, "The Apostle Among the Amazons," *Westminster Theological Journal* 56 (1994): 153-171. and Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (eds.) *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-11*, Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Book House, 1995.

²² Paul uses faith, love and hope in 1 Corinthians 13 (close but not exactly the same).

The author's emphasis

In conclusion, the word *σωφροσύνης*, (to be clear thinking and to reason rightly), adds weight to the argument that this whole paragraph's key emphasis is to train up women converts in correct doctrine and practice. Paul wants to help the new women converts get to the point where they *can* teach because they will be well trained and thinking correctly and reasonably. They would have dropped all the false understanding and mistaken worldview that they brought into the church at the time of their conversion. But ... *until* they are properly trained, they can't teach yet, and they certainly can't usurp authority over their male teachers. They might have been prominent in their previous feminine religious cults that Ephesus was famous for, but it is different now. Now, they have to learn and be trained up.

Furthermore, as the same writer would say in 2 Timothy 2:2, once competent men *and women* (*άνθρωπος*, not *άνηρ*, interestingly) are trained up, *then* they will be able to train up others after them.

The progressive, temporal interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is not dependent upon this understanding of *σωφροσύνης*, but it is bolstered by translating *σωφροσύνη* more accurately, as 'clear thinking'.