

WHY CAN'T WOMEN BE PASTORS AND ELDERS?

Part I: A New Look At "I Suffer Not A Woman To Teach"

by Kenneth E. Roberson, Sr.

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WHY CAN'T WOMEN BE PASTORS AND ELDERS?

Part I: A New Look At "I Suffer Not A Woman To Teach" And 1 Tim. 2:12-15

by Kenneth E. Roberson, Sr.*

I. Introduction.

A. A Common View: 1 Tim. 2:12-15 Prove That Women Cannot Be Pastors Or Elders.

Do 1 Tim. 2:12-15¹ prove that women cannot be pastors or elders? Those verses read:

“(12) But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. (13) For Adam was first formed, then Eve. (14) And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. (15) Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

In the next set of verses (1 Tim. 3:1-13), Paul discusses church offices and officeholders. He then says, “These things write I unto thee, . . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself *in* the house of God, which is the church of the living God, . . .” (1 Tim. 3:14-15, italics added.) Accordingly, some have concluded that 1 Tim. 2:12-15 prescribe limits on the role of women in churches. Specifically, some have concluded that, at 1 Tim. 2:12-15, Paul is saying that women cannot teach the general congregation of the church, and that this is something only men can do. Similarly, some have concluded that, at 1 Tim. 2:12-15, Paul is saying that women cannot usurp authority over men in church, and that men are to have authority over women. Since, according to this view, only men can teach a general congregation, and only men are to have authority over women in the church, it follows that women cannot be pastors or elders.

B. A Different Perspective: The Verses Pertain Only To Wives And Husbands.

But is this what Paul is teaching at 1 Tim. 2:12-15? 1 Timothy, like all of the New Testament, was written in Greek. The KJV is a translation of that Greek. In this essay, we will look at what Paul wrote in the Greek at 1 Tim. 2:12-15. Doing so, we will see that 1 Tim. 2:12-15 can be translated:

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¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptural references are to the KJV.

“(12) But I suffer not a *wife* to teach, nor to usurp authority over[,] the *husband*, but to be in silence. (13) For Adam was first formed, then Eve. (14) And Adam was not deceived, but the *wife* being deceived was in the transgression. (15) Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

We will later see that the Greek word translated “usurp authority” in the KJV can simply be translated “have authority,” and we will consider Paul’s use of the Greek present tense in the infinitives translated “to teach” and “to usurp authority over[.]” Our discussion of these and other factors will provide evidence that, at 1 Tim. 2:12-15, Paul was discussing, not women and men in general, but wives and husbands in particular. Moreover, this essay will supply evidence that, at those verses, Paul is teaching that a *wife is prohibited from continually (1) teaching Biblical doctrine to her husband, and (2) having a Biblical position of authority over her husband*. Thus, these prohibitions reasonably may be interpreted as prohibitions against *a wife being the pastor of her husband, or a wife being an elder over her husband*.

If this is what Paul is teaching, three things follow. First, Paul’s prohibitions at 1 Tim. 2:12-15 do not apply to *unmarried* women at all. Therefore, these verses do not prohibit unmarried women from teaching, or having authority over, men, or from being pastors or elders. Second, Paul’s prohibitions do not prohibit a *married* woman from teaching, or having authority over, a man who is not her husband. Therefore, these verses do not prohibit a married woman from being a pastor or elder over men, as long as she is not a pastor or elder over her husband. Third, Paul’s prohibitions do not prohibit a *wife from joining with her husband as a partner* to teach, or have authority over, other men. Therefore, these verses do not prohibit a wife and husband from being joint pastors or joint elders over men.

C. Issues Presented By 1 Tim. 2:12-15.

1. The Greek Words Translated “Woman” And “Man” In 1 Tim. 2:12-15 Can Also Be Translated “Wife” And “Husband,” Respectively.

One of the difficulties presented by 1 Tim. 2:12-15 is that the Greek words translated “woman” and “man” in those verses can also be translated “wife” and “husband,” respectively.

1 Tim. 2:12 contains the word “woman.” The Greek word translated “woman” at 1 Tim. 2:12 is “gunaiki” (Gk.: “γυναικι”).² “Gunaiki” is a form of the Greek word

² George Ricker Berry, *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 541.

“gune” (Gr.: “γυνε” [pronounced: “goonay”]).³ Our English word “gynecology” is, in part, based on this word. (For ease of reference, we will use “gune” throughout this essay to refer both to “gune” and “gunaiki.”) Depending on the context in which “gune” is used, it properly can be translated “woman” or “*married woman*,” i.e., *wife*.⁴ That is, “gune” can refer to a “woman” generally (whether or not she is married), or only to a “*married woman*,” i.e., a wife. Likewise, 1 Tim. 2:14 contains the word “woman,” and it is a translation of the Greek word “gune.”⁵ Again, depending on context, it properly can be translated “woman” or “*married woman*,” i.e., *wife*.⁶

1 Tim. 2:12 also contains the word “man.” The Greek word translated “man” at 1 Tim. 2:12 is “andros” (Gk.: “ανδρος”).⁷ “Andros” is a form of the Greek word “aner” (Gk.: “ανερ”).⁸ (For ease of reference, we will use “aner” throughout this essay to refer both to “aner” and “andros.”) Depending on the context in which “aner” is used, it properly can be translated “man” or “*married man*,” i.e., *husband*.⁹ That is, “aner” can refer to a “man” generally (whether or not he is married), or only to a “*married man*,” i.e., a husband.

Based on the above, 1 Tim. 2:12-15, can be translated:

“(12) But I suffer not a *wife* to teach, nor to usurp authority over the *husband*, but to be in silence. (13) For Adam was first formed, then Eve. (14) And Adam was not deceived, but the *wife* being deceived was in the transgression. (15) Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

2. *Is The “Gune” Prohibited From Teaching Anyone, Or Only Prohibited From Teaching The “Aner”?*

No one knows whether punctuation was used by the authors of the Greek New Testament,¹⁰ such as Paul. Thus, for all we know about punctuation of the original New

³ George V. Wigram and Ralph D. Winter, *The Word Study Concordance* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1972), pp. 129-130; James Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Madison, N.J.: 1890; 44th prtg. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), p. 1591/1135. That is, see page 1591, word 1135.

⁴ Wigram and Winter, pp. 129-130; see “Gune,” Strong, p. 1591/1135; Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 123; Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and adpdt. by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd ed. revised and augmtd. by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker [“BAGD”] (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 168.

⁵ Berry, p. 541.

⁶ See fn. 4.

⁷ Berry, p. 541.

⁸ Wigram and Winter, pp. 47-49; Strong, p. 882/435.

⁹ Wigram and Winter, pp. 47-49; Strong, p. 882/435. See Thayer, p. 45; BAGD, p. 66.

¹⁰ F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar Of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature* trans. and revised by Robert Funk (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 10.

Testament manuscripts, a comma might have been inserted after the word “over” in 1 Tim. 2:12. Without that comma, 1 Tim. 2:12 could mean that Paul did not suffer a “gune” to teach *anyone*, and Paul did not suffer a “gune” to usurp authority over the “aner.” With that comma, 1 Tim. 2:12 could mean that Paul did not suffer a “gune” to teach *the “aner,”* and Paul did not suffer a “gune” to usurp authority over the “aner.”

3. Conclusion.

In light of the issues presented by 1 Tim. 2:12-15, and as we noted earlier, 1 Tim. 2:12 might be translated “But I suffer not a *wife* to teach, nor to have authority over, the *husband, . . .*” According to this translation, Paul is indicating that he does not suffer a wife to teach her husband, and does not suffer a wife to have authority over her husband (as would be the case if she were a pastor, or elder, over her husband). According to this interpretation, the *only* person that the wife would not teach, or have authority over, would be her *husband*.

In this essay, we will refer to the translation of 1 Tim. 2:12-15 that (1) translates “gune” as “wife,” and “aner” as “husband,” and (2) inserts a comma after the word “over” in 1 Tim. 2:12, as the “wife/husband translation.” Similarly, we will refer to the KJV translation of those verses as the “woman/man translation.”

D. The Central Issue And Burden Of Proof: The Person Claiming That The “Woman/Man Translation” Is Correct And, Therefore, That Women Cannot Be Pastors Or Elders, Must Prove It.

Do 1 Tim. 2:12-15 prove that the “woman/man translation” of those verses is the correct one? Before we address this question, a number of observations are appropriate.

First, the issue is not whether the “wife/husband translation” is correct. The central issue is whether 1 Tim. 2:12-15 *prove* that the “*woman/man translation*” is correct and, therefore, that women cannot be pastors or elders.

Second, the central issue impacts the burden of proof. The common maxim is, “he who asserts must prove.” Thus, a person claiming that 1 Tim. 2:12-15 *prove* that the “woman/man translation” is correct and, therefore, that women cannot be pastors or elders, bears the burden of proof on that issue. The burden of proof does *not* lie on someone else to show that the “wife/husband translation” is the correct one.

Of course, if the “wife/husband translation” is correct, the “woman/man translation” cannot be correct. Thus, *the more the evidence tends to show that the “wife/husband translation” is the correct translation, the less the evidence tends to show that the “woman/man translation” is the correct one.* But if a person has the burden of proof to show that the “woman/man translation” of 1 Tim. 2:12-15 is the correct one, it is

not necessary, in order to *prevent* that person from meeting that burden, to *prove* that the “wife/husband translation” is the *correct* one. All that is necessary is to present such credible *evidence* that the “wife/husband translation” is correct that, after consideration of *that* evidence, one cannot say that it can be *proven* that the “woman/man translation” is the correct one (or, therefore, that women cannot be pastors or elders.)

Moreover, the person bearing the burden of proof to show that the “woman/man translation” is the correct translation cannot meet that burden simply by showing that that translation is *plausible*, if it is also true that the “wife/husband translation” is plausible. In that event, there are merely *two* plausible interpretations but no *proof* that the “woman/man translation” is the correct one, or therefore, that women cannot be pastors or elders.

With the above as background, we ask, do 1 Tim. 2:12-15 *prove* that the “woman/man translation” of those verses is the correct one and that women cannot be pastors or elders? It is respectfully submitted that this question must be answered in the negative based on the credible evidence that the “wife/husband translation” is correct, including the evidence that the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12 are married.¹¹

II. *There Is Evidence That The “Wife/Husband Translation” Of 1 Tim. 2:12-15 Is Correct.*

A. *1 Tim. 2:12-15, By Themselves, Provide Evidence That The “Gune” And “Aner” Of 1 Tim. 2:12 Are Wife And Husband, Respectively.*

1. *1 Tim. 2:12-14 Provide Evidence That The “Gune” And “Aner” Of 1 Tim. 2:12 Are Wife And Husband, Respectively.*

a. *1 Tim. 2:13 Refers To “Eve,” Adam’s Wife.*

At 1 Tim. 2:13, Paul begins to explain 1 Tim. 2:12. He states, “For Adam was first formed, then *Eve*.” At 1 Tim. 2:13, Paul used the term “Eve.” He did not use the term “gune” at 1 Tim. 2:13. The word “gune,” considered in isolation, could refer to a “woman” generally or, in the alternative, to a “married woman.” But the word “Eve” refers to a *married* woman. The first female was named “Eve” *after* she was married. Gen. 3:20 contains the first reference in the Bible to the word “Eve.” That verse says, “And Adam called his *wife’s* name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.” “Eve” was the name of Adam’s *wife*. Paul’s reference to “Eve” then, cannot be treated as an unequivocal reference to an unmarried woman or, therefore, to a “woman” generally

¹¹ When Paul says at 1 Tim. 2:12 that “I suffer not” a “gune,” he is referring to a “gune” who is a Christian. Paul is not asserting his apostolic authority over unbelievers or, here, an unbelieving “gune.” We will later observe additional evidence that the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12 is (like the “aner” of that verse) a Christian.

(whether married or not). Paul's reference to "Eve" provides evidence that Paul is referring to a wife.¹²

It will be remembered that after Paul wrote 1 Tim. 2:12, he began to *explain* that verse at 1 Tim. 2:13. But, as we have seen, the explanation at 1 Tim. 2:13 focuses on Adam and "Eve," i.e., Adam's *wife*. But if Paul's *explanation* at 1 Tim. 2:13 focuses on Adam and his wife, this provides evidence that *what is explained*, i.e., 1 Tim. 2:12, is focusing on a "husband" and "wife."

Finally, let us assume for sake of argument that, at 1 Tim. 2:12, "gune" should be translated "woman" (and not "wife") and "aner" should be translated "man" (and not "husband"). If we assume that, Paul's explanation at 1 Tim. 2:13 might seem inadequate. This is so because the *statement* at 1 Tim. 2:12 would then *broadly* refer to a "woman" (*married or not*) and to a "man" (*married or not*), but there would be evidence that Paul's *explanation* at 1 Tim. 2:13 would only *narrowly* refer to a "woman" who was *married* (Eve) and to a "man" who was *married* (Adam). The scope of the explanation at 1 Tim. 2:13 would arguably be narrower than the scope of the statement at 1 Tim. 2:12 sought to be explained. The reader might come away unconvinced that the broad statement of 1 Tim. 2:12 had been adequately supported by the narrow explanation of 1 Tim. 2:13. On the other hand, if, at 1 Tim. 2:12, "gune" is translated "wife," and "aner" is translated "husband," then 1 Tim. 2:13, which focuses on Adam and his wife, matches 1 Tim. 2:12 in scope, and provides a cogent explanation for Paul's statement at 1 Tim. 2:12. In light of the above, *1 Tim. 2:13 provides evidence that, at 1 Tim. 2:12, "gune" should be translated "wife," and "aner" should be translated "husband."*

b. 1 Tim. 2:14 Refers To A "Gune" Who, At The Time She Was Deceived, Was A Wife.

At 1 Tim. 2:14, Paul wrote "And Adam was not deceived, but the ["gune"] being deceived was in the transgression." At the time the "gune" was deceived, *she was a wife*. The female is first referred to as Adam's "wife" at Gen. 2:24-25. It was only *after* Gen. 2:25, i.e., during the fall of man recorded at Gen. 3:1-6, that the "gune" was deceived. Thus, *at the time the "gune" was deceived, she was a wife*. Paul's reference to the "gune" being deceived, then, cannot be treated as an unequivocal reference to an unmarried

¹² It is true that Adam was first formed, then an *unmarried woman was formed*, then the unmarried woman was brought to the man (Gen. 2:21-22) and they were married. Thus, if Paul had used "gune" instead of "Eve" (that is, the Greek word "Eua") at 1 Tim. 2:13, this would have permitted the inference that, at 1 Tim. 2:13, Paul was thinking about the fact that Adam was formed, then the "gune" was formed and, *at the time she was formed*, she was *unmarried*. In turn, that inference would support the conclusion that, at 1 Tim. 2:13, Paul was thinking about a "gune" who was *unmarried* and, therefore, a woman generally, whether she was married or not. But, at 1 Tim. 2:13, Paul did not use a term which could be translated "unmarried woman." What he did use at 1 Tim. 2:13 is the term "Eve" and, by doing so, he used a term which Adam used to name his *wife*. And a person who argues that, at 1 Tim. 2:13, Paul was focusing on an unmarried woman (and, therefore, women in general) must concede that that argument would be stronger if Paul had used the term "gune" instead of "Eve." But Paul did not.

woman or, therefore, to a “woman” generally (whether married or not). The fact that the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:14 was married at the time she was deceived provides evidence that the “gune” of that verse is a wife.¹³

After Paul wrote 1 Tim. 2:12, he began to *explain* that verse. 1 Tim. 2:14 is part of that explanation. But, as we have seen, the explanation at 1 Tim. 2:14 focuses on Adam and a *married* woman, i.e., Adam’s *wife*. But if Paul’s *explanation* at 1 Tim. 2:14 focuses on Adam and his wife, this provides evidence that *what is explained, i.e., 1 Tim. 2:12, is focusing on a “husband” and “wife.”*

And it is appropriate to make here comments similar to those we made in connection with 1 Tim. 2:13. Let us assume for sake of argument that, at 1 Tim. 2:12, “gune” should be translated “woman” (and not “wife”) and “aner” should be translated “man” (and not “husband”). If we assume that, Paul’s explanation at 1 Tim. 2:14 is inadequate. This is so because the *statement* at 1 Tim. 2:12 would then *broadly* refer to a “woman” (*married or not*) and to a “man” (*married or not*), but Paul’s *explanation* at 1 Tim. 2:14 would only *narrowly* refer to a “woman” who was *married* and to a “man” who was *married*. The scope of the explanation at 1 Tim. 2:14 would be narrower than the scope of the statement at 1 Tim. 2:12 sought to be explained. The reader might come away unconvinced that the broad statement of 1 Tim. 2:12 had been adequately supported by the explanation of 1 Tim. 2:14. On the other hand, if, at 1 Tim. 2:12, “gune” is translated “wife,” and “aner” is translated “husband,” then 1 Tim. 2:14, which focuses on Adam and his wife, matches 1 Tim. 2:12 in scope, and provides a cogent explanation for Paul’s statement at 1 Tim. 2:12. In light of the above, *1 Tim. 2:14 provides evidence that, at 1 Tim. 2:12, “gune” should be translated “wife,” and “aner” should be translated “husband.”*

2. 1 Tim. 2:12 And 2:15 Provide Evidence That The “Gune” And “Aner” Of 1 Tim. 2:12 Are Wife And Husband, Respectively.

Thus far we have considered 1 Tim. 2:12-14. We now turn to the evidence from 1 Tim. 2:12 and 2:15 that “gune” and “aner” at 1 Tim. 2:12 should be translated “wife” and “husband,” respectively.

¹³ The above invites observations similar to those we made in connection with 1 Tim. 2:13. That is, if the “gune” had been *unmarried* at the time she was deceived in Gen. 3, this would have permitted the inference that, at 1 Tim. 2:14, Paul was thinking about the deception of an *unmarried* woman. In turn, that inference would have supported the conclusion that, at 1 Tim. 2:14, what Paul was thinking about was an *unmarried* “woman” and, therefore, a “woman” in the general sense of that word, whether she was married or not. But, at 1 Tim. 2:14, Paul says that the “gune” was deceived, and he relies on the Gen. 3 account. That account reveals that, at the time of the deception of the “gune,” the “gune” was not a “woman” generally, but a woman *who was married*. Paul’s reliance at 1 Tim. 2:14 on the Gen. 3 account thus focuses attention, not merely on Adam and a “woman” generally, but on Adam and a woman *who was married*. And a person who argues that, at 1 Tim. 2:14, Paul had in mind an unmarried woman (and, therefore, women in general) must concede that that argument would be stronger if, in the Genesis 3 account alluded to by Paul, the “gune” had been *unmarried* when she was deceived. But she was not.

1 Tim. 2:15 says that “she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” As we will see, this verse provides evidence that the terms “gune” and “aner” at 1 Tim. 2:12 should be translated “wife” and “husband,” respectively.

a. *The Phrase “She Shall Be Saved In Childbearing” Provides Evidence That The “Gune” And “Aner” Of 1 Tim. 2:12 Are Wife And Husband, Respectively.*

i. *The “Childbearing” Of 1 Tim. 2:15 Presupposes That “She” Of 1 Tim. 2:15 Is A Wife.*

There is evidence that the “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to a female who is a wife.¹⁴ Childbearing presupposes sexual relations. As to sexual relations between unmarried

¹⁴ As an aside, it is useful to discuss (1) what Paul means by the phrase “she shall be *saved* in childbearing, . . .” and (2) related issues. The phrase “shall be saved” is a translation of the Greek word “sothesetai” (Gk.: “σωθησεται”; Berry, p. 542), which is a form of the Greek verb “sozo” (Gk.: “σωζω”; Wigram and Winter, pp. 716-717). In Paul’s epistles, he never uses “sozo,” or any form thereof, to refer merely to physical salvation. (Wigram and Winter, pp. 716-717.) Instead, in Paul’s epistles, he always uses “sozo” and its forms to refer to a salvation which has a *spiritual* component. (Ibid.) (Luke records at Acts 27:31 one instance in which Paul used the term “saved” to refer merely to a physical salvation from peril, but Paul was addressing unbelievers. The Book of Acts, of course, is not one of Paul’s epistles.)

At 1 Tim. 2:15, Paul introduces the subject of childbearing. He says at that verse that “she shall be saved *in childbearing*.” The phrase “in childbearing” is a translation of a Greek phrase which means, literally, “through *the* childbearing.” (Berry, p. 542, italics added.) The Greek phrase is “dia tes teknogonias” (Gk.: “δια της τεκνογονιας”). (Ibid.) The definite article “the” provides evidence that Paul had in mind a *particular* childbearing.

When Paul comments at 1 Tim. 2:13-14 that Eve was formed second, and that the “gune” was deceived, Paul is alluding to the Genesis account. But there is evidence that when Paul at 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to “childbearing,” he is again alluding to the Genesis account. Gen. 3 records that, after the fall of Adam and Eve, God spoke to her. Specifically, Gen. 3:16 records: “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt *bring forth children*; . . .” The NASB reads: “To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply your pain in *childbirth*, In pain you shall *bring forth children*; . . .” (NASB, italics added.) These facts supply evidence that when Paul wrote at 1 Tim. 2:15 that “she” shall be saved “through the childbearing” (Gk.), *he was referring in some way to the particular childbirth alluded to at Gen. 3:16.*

At 1 Tim. 2:13-14, Paul makes clear that events that happened long ago in the Genesis account impact the “gune” today to the extent that they explain why Paul does not permit her to teach or “usurp authority” (KJV) over the “aner.” One such event was negative: the “gune” was deceived. This ancient deception is one thing that disqualifies the “gune” today from teaching or “usurp[ing] authority” (KJV) over the “aner.”

However, 1 Tim. 2:15 presents evidence that Paul did not want his allusions to the Genesis account taken too far. The phrase “*the* childbearing” refers to a particular childbearing. The references to Genesis 3 in 1 Tim. 2:13-14 supply evidence that, by the phrase, “*the* childbearing,” Paul is referring to *childbearing today which has been impacted by the pain and sorrow which Genesis 3 promised would attend childbearing.* And when Paul teaches that the “gune” today will be saved “*through* the childbearing,” he seems to be saying that she will be saved *as she goes through the process* of such childbearing. That is, the negative consequences of pain and sorrow which Genesis 3 promised would attend “childbearing” will *continue* to attend “childbearing” by the “gune” today. But the “gune” today will *continue* to be spiritually saved through the process of such childbearing (not *by* the process, but *as she goes through it*), “if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” (We will later see that the term “they” at 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the Christian wife and her Christian husband.)

To say that the “gune” will continue to be *spiritually* saved does not mean that Paul was focusing on future eternal salvation from eternal punishment. Paul also speaks of the Christian’s salvation as present. Consider Phil.

persons, Paul admonished Christians to “Flee fornication.” (1 Cor. 6:18.) He taught, concerning fornication, “let it not be once named among you[.]” (Eph. 5:3.) But marriage is commended in Scripture. For example, Hebrew 13:4 says, “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: . . .” These facts provide strong evidence that “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15, a female engaged in childbearing, is *married* at the time of the conception of the child. But if so, the “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 is a *wife* (hence, married to a *husband*).

ii. “She” Of 1 Tim. 2:15 Is The “Gune” Of 1 Tim. 2:12.

Although, as indicated above, there is evidence that “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 is a wife, that evidence does not prove that “she” is the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12. In the next section, we turn to the evidence that “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 is the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12.

When Paul wrote at 1 Tim. 2:15 that “*she shall be saved* in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety,” the phrase “she shall be saved” implied that “*she*” is a person who was living at the time Paul was writing, and that something would happen to her in the future—she would be saved. Similarly, the fact that “if they continue,” she shall be saved, implies that “they” are living at the time Paul was writing and, since “they” can have an impact on “she,” this again implies that “*she*” is living at the time Paul is writing. (Of course, Paul expected that what he was teaching would apply, not merely at the time he was writing, but in the future. The point is that, when Paul wrote about “she” at 1 Tim. 2:15, he wrote about her as a person living at the time he was writing.)

If “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12, then what Paul was teaching at 1 Tim. 2:15 makes sense. *For Paul also treated the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12 as a person living at the time he was writing.* And Paul was then teaching at 1 Tim. 2:15 that “she,” i.e., the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12, a person who was living at the time Paul was writing, would be saved in childbearing.

But if “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers either to “Eve” of 1 Tim. 2:13 or to the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:14, then what Paul was teaching would not make sense. This is true because “Eve” of 1 Tim. 2:13 and the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:14 each refer to Adam’s wife. Thus, if “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers either to “Eve” of 1 Tim. 2:13 or to the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:14, this would illogically mean that the term “she,” a term which referred to a person *who was living at the time Paul was writing*, also referred to Adam’s wife, a person who had been *dead for centuries* by the time Paul was writing. It would also illogically mean that “she,” i.e., Adam’s wife, a person who had been *dead for centuries* by the time Paul was writing, would be saved in childbearing, *in the future*, if “they,” i.e., persons *who were*

1:19-20 and 2:12, which seem to teach that the Christian’s present “salvation” is *Christ magnified in the Christian’s body*, and that Christians are responsible to bring that salvation to fruition now. From this perspective, the “gune” can continue to be spiritually saved presently.

living at the time Paul was writing, continued in faith, etc. Therefore, “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 reasonably must refer to the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12, and not to Eve of 1 Tim. 2:13, or to the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:14. That is, this is evidence that “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12.

Further, at 1 Tim. 2:12, Paul indicates that the “gune” cannot teach or “usurp authority” (KJV) over the “aner” and, *at 1 Tim. 2:13-14*, Paul explains this by alluding to the Genesis account. At 1 Tim. 2:15, Paul indicates that “she” shall be saved in *childbearing*, an allusion to the Genesis account. Thus, 1 Tim. 2:12-14 refer to a female and the Genesis account, and 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to a female and the Genesis account. The common ties, in 1 Tim. 2:12-14, and 1 Tim. 2:15, of a female and a reference to the Genesis account provide additional evidence that “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12.

iii. *Conclusion.*

Our discussion above concerning childbearing provides evidence that “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 is a wife, hence, married to a husband. Our discussion above concerning the fact that “she” refers to a person who was living at the time Paul was writing provides evidence that “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12. These facts *provide evidence that the term “gune” at 1 Tim. 2:12 should be translated “wife,” and that the term “aner” at that verse should be translated “husband.”*

b. *The Phrase “They Continue In Faith And Charity And Holiness With Sobriety” At 1 Tim. 2:15 Provides Evidence That The “Gune” And “Aner” Of 1 Tim. 2:12 Are Wife And Husband, Respectively.*

i. *There Is Evidence That “They” Of 1 Tim. 2:15 Are Wife And Husband.*

Paul implies at 1 Tim. 2:15 that whether “they” continue in faith, love, etc., can impact whether “she” shall be saved through the childbearing process. Of course, “she” is saved because of the faith of “she,” so to speak, since each person is saved by his or her faith. (Lk. 7:50; Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8.)

Nonetheless, an *environment* of mutually supportive faith, love, etc. can enhance the individual faith, love, etc., of each person in that environment. And the one-on-one impact of the wife/husband relationship is *uniquely* suited to permit the creation and maintenance of an environment of mutually supporting faith, love, etc. *This provides evidence that the term “they” at 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to a wife and husband.*¹⁵

¹⁵ Some have suggested that the term “they” at 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to women in general. There are several problems with this, however. First, if “they” refers to women in general, and not to a wife and husband, the

ii. *There Is Evidence That “They” Of 1 Tim. 2:15 Refers To The “Gune” And “Aner” Of 1 Tim. 2:12.*

Although, as indicated above, there is evidence that “they” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to a wife and husband, that evidence does not prove that “they” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12. In this section, we turn to the evidence that “they” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12.

As we will see below, there is evidence that the term “they” at 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12. When Paul wrote at 1 Tim. 2:15 that “she shall be saved in childbearing, if *they continue*” in faith, etc., Paul treated “they” as persons *who were living at the time Paul was writing*.

If “they” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12, then what Paul was teaching makes sense. For Paul was then teaching that “they,” specifically, the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12, persons *who were living at the time Paul was writing*, were to *continue* in faith, etc.

But if “they” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers either (1) to Adam and Eve of 1 Tim. 2:13, or (2) to Adam and the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:14, then what Paul was teaching would not make sense. This is true because the references to Adam and Eve at 1 Tim. 2:13, and Adam and the “gune” at 1 Tim. 2:14, each refer to Adam and his wife. Paul would then be illogically teaching that “they,” a term which referred to persons *who were living at the time Paul was writing*, also referred to Adam and his wife, persons who had been *dead for centuries* by the time Paul was writing. Paul would also be illogically teaching that Adam and his wife, who had been dead for centuries, were to *continue* (presently) in faith, etc. Therefore, “*they*” of 1 Tim. 2:15 *reasonably must refer to the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12.*

It is noteworthy that 1 Tim. 2:12 and 15 contain references to the *present*, while 1 Tim. 2:13 and 14 refer only to the *past*. When 1 Tim. 2:12 says, “But I *suffer* not a woman to teach, nor to *usurp* authority over the man, but *to be* in silence[.]” these are references to the *present*. Paul is teaching about what he prohibits and requires *at the*

uniqueness of the one-on-one impact of the wife/husband relationship is replaced by the indirect relationship between (1) an amorphous and unspecified number of Christian women in general (some of whom the “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15 cannot even know), and (2) the “she” of 1 Tim. 2:15. Second, if “they” refers to women in general, this would suggest that what Paul was saying was that “she” would be saved in childbearing, if “she,” like women in general, continue in faith, love, etc. This in turn would suggest that the female referred to as “she” was an example of *women who would generally marry and bear children*, and be saved in childbearing, if “they” continue in faith, love, etc. But Paul in fact teaches that, while marriage is good, it is better *not* to marry. (1 Cor. 7:1-9, 25-28, 32-40.) Third, if “they” referred to women in general, why did not Paul simply say at 1 Tim. 2:15, “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if *women* continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety”? Finally, the position that “they” refers to women in general is inconsistent with the evidence discussed below that that “they” refers to the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12.

*time he is writing.*¹⁶ And when 1 Tim. 2:15 says, “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they *continue* in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety[,]” “continue” is a reference to the *present*. Paul is teaching that “they” are to “continue” *at the time he is writing.*¹⁷

On the other hand, 1 Tim. 2:13 refers to the fact that Adam “*was formed*, then Eve.” This refers to the *past*. 1 Tim. 2:14 says that “Adam *was not deceived*, but the woman being deceived *was* in the transgression.” Again, these are references to the *past*.

Thus, at 1 Tim. 2:12, Paul associates the “gune” and “aner” with references to the present, i.e., to the time he is writing. And at 1 Tim. 2:15, Paul associates “they” with a reference to the present, i.e., to the time he is writing. This provides additional evidence that the persons referred to by the term “they” at 1 Tim. 2:15 are the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12.¹⁸

iii. *Conclusion.*

We have seen in our above discussion concerning the unique suitability of marriage to maintain an environment of mutually supporting faith, love, etc., that there is evidence that the term “they” at 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to a wife and husband. Our discussion above concerning the fact that “they” refers to persons living at the time Paul was writing provides evidence that “they” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12. But if so, this provides evidence that the terms “gune” and “aner” at 1 Tim. 2:12 should be translated “wife” and “husband,” respectively.

B. 1 Tim. 2:11 Provides Evidence That The “Gune” And “Aner” Of 1 Tim. 2:12 Are Wife And Husband, Respectively.

Of course, Paul did not write in chapter and verse, and he wrote 1 Tim. 2:11 with 1 Tim. 2:12-15. It is useful to consider, then, 1 Tim. 2:11 in our discussion.

1 Tim. 2: 11 states: “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.” The word “woman” is, again, “gune.”¹⁹ Therefore, “gune” does not tell us whether it refers to a woman generally, or only to a married woman, and we have to look elsewhere to determine the correct interpretation.

¹⁶ Of course, Paul expects that what he prohibits and requires at the time he is writing will also be prohibited and required in the future. The point here is that, when Paul *wrote* about what he prohibited and required, he *phrased* the prohibitions and requirements *as applying at the time he was writing*. We will later discuss the meaning of the word “silence” at this verse; suffice it to say at this point that Paul is not referring to absolute silence.

¹⁷ See fn. 16. The fact that “shall” in 1 Tim. 2:15 is a reference to the future does not change that. Paul is teaching that if “they” “*continue*” *at the time he is writing*, a certain result will occur in the future.

¹⁸ As mentioned, this evidence is inconsistent with the position that “they” of 1 Tim. 2:15 refers to women in general. See fn. 15, above.

¹⁹ Berry, p. 541.

1. *There Is Evidence, Related To The Greek Word Translated “Subjection” At 1 Tim. 2:11, That The “Gune” Of 1 Tim. 2:11 And 12 Is Married.*

The word “subjection” at 1 Tim. 2:11 is a translation of the Greek word “hupotage” (Gk.: “υποταγε”), which is a noun.²⁰ 1 Tim. 2:11 is the only verse in the New Testament in which “hupotage” is used in connection with a “gune.”²¹

“Hupotage” is related to the Greek verb “hupotasso” (Gk: “υποτασσο”),²² which conveys the idea of “submit.”²³ The only New Testament Scriptures in which “hupotasso”²⁴ is associated with a female are 1 Cor. 14:34, Eph. 5:22, Col. 3:18, Titus 2:4-5, and 1 Pet 3:1 and 5.²⁵ A reading of those verses in context makes clear that *the female is always married, i.e., a wife.*²⁶ That is, these verses teach that a *wife* is to submit to her *husband*. They do not teach that women generally, or wives in particular, are to submit to men generally.²⁷ And in each of the above six sets of Scriptures, except for Titus 2:4-5, the female is always referred to as a “gune.”²⁸ That is, *whenever the New Testament refers to a “gune” in connection with “hupotasso,” the “gune” is always a wife.* For example, “hupotasso” is used in connection with a “gune” at Ephesians 5:22, which states, “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*”²⁹

²⁰ Berry, p. 541; Friberg and Friberg, p. 636.

²¹ Wigram and Winter, p. 780. When we refer to “gune” we will be referring to “gune” or other grammatical forms of that word.

²² Wigram and Winter, p. 780; Strong, word number 5292; Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), p. 1156.

²³ Wigram and Winter, p. 780; Strong, word number 5293; Bromiley, pp. 1159-1160.

²⁴ When we refer to “hupotasso,” we will be referring to “hupotasso” or other grammatical forms of that word.

²⁵ Wigram and Winter, p. 780. As to the above, a form of “hupotasso” is translated “to be under obedience” at 1 Cor. 14:34; “submit yourselves unto” at Eph. 5:22; “submit” at Col. 3:18; “obedient” at Titus 2:5; “be in subjection” at 1 Pet 3:1; and “being in subjection” at 1 Pet 3:5. Wigram and Winter, p. 780.

²⁶ For example, immediately after 1 Cor. 14:34, Paul writes at 1 Cor. 14:35, “let them ask their husbands”

²⁷ As an aside, Eph. 5:22 teaches that wives are to submit to their husbands. But the verse is interpreted to teach that husbands are *not* to submit to their wives, something the verse does not expressly say. If that interpretation were correct, then, by parity of reasoning, husbands are to love their wives (Eph. 5:25), but wives are *not* to love their husbands. Eph. 5:22 cannot be divorced from its context. Eph. 5:18-21 describe four sets of activities by which one is filled with the Spirit: “speaking,” “singing and making melody,” “giving thanks” and “submitting yourselves *one to another* in the fear of God.” This fourth activity is the overarching responsibility that governs the relationship between a Christian and all other Christians, including the relationship between a Christian and a Christian’s spouse. If the first three activities apply to all Christians without restriction, so does the fourth activity. (Cp. 1 Pet. 3:1 “ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands” and 5:5 “all of you be subject one to another[.]”) Viewed from this perspective, Eph. 5:21-28 remind Christian wives to submit to their husbands, but remind Christian husbands to *love, and* submit to, their wives. The principle that the husband is the head of the wife (Eph. 5:23) does not conflict with the above; the husband can be the leader in love and submission.

²⁸ Wigram and Winter, p. 130. Titus 2:4-5 refer to “young women,” a phrase based on a Greek word other than “gune.”

²⁹ Wigram and Winter, p. 780.

Thus, whenever the New Testament refers to a “gune” or to a female, in connection with “hupotasso,” the “gune” or the female is always married. And, as we have seen, “hupotasso,” the verb, is related to “hupotage,” the noun. *This provides evidence that when Paul uses “hupotage” at 1 Tim. 2:11, the “gune” is a wife.* And since Paul also refers to the “gune” at 1 Tim. 2:12, this provides evidence that the “gune” of *Tim 2:12 is a wife.*

2. *There Is Evidence, Related To The Greek Word Translated “Silence” At 1 Tim 2:11, That The “Gune” Of 1 Tim. 2:11 And 12 Is Married.*

The word “silence” at 1 Tim. 2:11 is “hesuchia.”³⁰ The only New Testament Scriptures in which “hesuchia” is associated with a female are 1 Tim. 2:11 and 12 where, each time, the female is referred to as a “gune.”³¹

Further, “hesuchia” is related to the Greek word “hesuchios.”³² The only time a form of “hesuchios” is used in the New Testament in connection with a female is at 1 Pet. 3:4.³³ There, a form of the word “hesuchios” is translated “quiet.”³⁴ 1 Pet. 3:4-5 make clear that Peter is referring to *married* women, and the word translated “women” at 1 Pet. 3:5 is a form of “gune.”³⁵

Thus, “hesuchios” is used only once in the New Testament, at 1 Pet. 3:4-5, in connection with “gune” (women), and they are wives. “Hesuchios” is related to “hesuchia.” “Hesuchia” is used in connection with a “gune” at 1 Tim. 2: 11. This provides evidence that the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:11 is a wife. But “hesuchia” is also used in connection with a “gune” at 1 Tim. 2:12. This provides evidence that the “gune” of *1 Tim. 2:12 is a wife.*

C. *There Is Evidence From 1 Tim. 2:12-15 That The Only Person A “Gune” Is Prohibited From Teaching Is Her Husband.*

Our discussion above has provided evidence that the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12 are wife and husband, respectively. But is the “gune” prohibited from teaching *anyone*, or is she merely prohibited from teaching *the “aner”*? Viewing this issue from the standpoint of punctuation, should a comma be inserted after the word “over” in 1 Tim. 2:12?

³⁰ Berry, p. 541.

³¹ Wigram and Winter, p. 358. “Hesuchia” can also be translated simply “quietness,” and is so translated at 2 Thessalonians 3:12. Wigram and Winter, p. 358. It seems unlikely that, at 2 Thessalonians 3:12, Paul was commanding the Thessalonians to work in *absolute* silence. Nonetheless, 1 Tim. 2:12 is frequently interpreted as requiring *absolute* silence from *all* “gune.”

³² Wigram and Winter, p. 358.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Berry, p. 598; Wigram and Winter, p. 358.

³⁵ Berry, p. 130.

Several factors provide evidence that, at 1 Tim. 2:12, the only person a “gune” is prohibited from teaching is the “aner.” First, as we will later see, there is evidence that the teaching by the “gune” that Paul is referring to is the teaching of *Biblical doctrine*, and the “authority” which the “gune” is taught not to “usurp” (KJV) is a *Biblical position of authority*, e.g., a pastor or elder. Obviously, those in such Biblical positions of authority frequently teach Biblical doctrine, and those who teach Biblical doctrine are frequently in Biblical positions of authority. This provides evidence that the teaching by the “gune,” and the usurping of authority by the “gune,” are *related issues*. But if so, the fact that Paul expressly refers to the “aner” as the person from whom the “gune” is not to “usurp authority” provides evidence that, as to the *related issue* of the “gune” teaching, Paul is concerned only about the “gune” teaching *the “aner.”*

Second, the explanations in 1 Tim. 2:13-14 explain *both* (1) Paul’s prohibition in 1 Tim. 2:12 against a “gune” teaching, and (2) Paul’s prohibition in 1 Tim. 2:12 against a “gune” usurping authority over the “aner.” The fact that Paul’s explanations apply to both prohibitions is another evidence that the prohibitions are *related*. But again, if so, the fact that Paul expressly refers to the “aner” as the person from whom the “gune” is not to “usurp authority” provides evidence that, as to the *related issue* of the “gune” teaching, Paul is concerned only about the “gune” teaching *the “aner.”*

Third, as we previously discussed, there is evidence that Paul’s explanations at 1 Tim. 2:13-14 pertain to a married couple, i.e., Adam and his wife. This provides evidence that what is sought to be explained, i.e., 1 Tim. 2:12, pertains to a married couple, i.e., that Paul is there concerned about the “gune” teaching the “aner.”

Fourth, as we have discussed, the (1) Christian childbearing referred to at 1 Tim. 2:15, and (2) the unique suitability of marriage to maintain an environment of mutually supporting faith, love, etc., referred to at 1 Tim. 2:15, both give evidence that, at 1 Tim. 2:12-15, Paul is concerned only about a husband and wife. If so, this also provides evidence that, at 1 Tim. 2:12, Paul is concerned about the “gune” teaching the “aner.”

Fifth, it cannot be proven from 1 Tim. 2:12-15 that, in those verses, Paul is referring to anyone other than a “gune,” an “aner,” Adam, and Adam’s wife. The argument that, in those verses, Paul is teaching that a “gune” should not teach *anyone* is weakened by the fact that, in those verses, Paul expressly refers only to the *above four persons*, and does not expressly refer to other *people in general*.

Sixth and finally, in a separate essay,³⁶ we provide evidence that 1 Tim. 3:1-13 teach that women in general can be overseers (KJV: bishops), elders, and deaconesses. But if the evidence shows this, then 1 Tim. 2:12-15 *cannot* be teaching that women

³⁶ The essay is part II in “Why Can’t Women Be Pastors And Elders?”

cannot teach Biblical doctrine to men in general, or that women cannot have a Biblical position of authority over men in general.

In sum, the above six factors provide evidence that the only person that the “gune” of 1 Tim. 2:12 is prohibited from teaching is the “aner.” But if so, this supports the insertion of a comma after the word “over” in 1 Tim. 2:12, with the result that that verse should read, “But I suffer not a wife to teach, nor to usurp authority over, the husband” In that event, Paul is teaching that he does not suffer a “gune” to teach the “aner.”

IV. *Additional Observations Re: 1 Tim. 2:12.*

We have provided evidence above that the terms “gune” and “aner” at 1 Tim. 2:12 should be translated “wife” and “husband,” respectively, and that the “wife/husband translation” of 1 Tim. 2:12-15 is correct. Some related observations are appropriate.

A. *There Is Evidence That Paul Is Prohibiting The “Gune” From Continually Teaching The “Aner,” Or From Continually Having Authority Over The “Aner.”*

First, the phrase “to teach” at 1 Tim. 2:12 is a translation of a Greek present infinitive,³⁷ which means that the activity which is the subject of the infinitive is on-going or progressive.³⁸ This provides evidence that Paul is teaching that the “gune” is not to engage in *on-going or continuing* teaching of the “aner.”

Second, the phrase “usurp authority over” at 1 Tim. 2:12 is also a translation of a Greek present infinitive.³⁹ The Greek word is “authentein” (Gk.: αυθεντειν).⁴⁰ “Authentein” can be translated “have authority,” or “domineer,” and, when a person is its object, conveys the idea “have authority, domineer . . . over someone.”⁴¹ It can also be translated “to govern, or exercise dominion over.”⁴²

Thus, “authentein” need not be translated “to *usurp* authority over” as the KJV translates it. The phrase “to usurp authority over” presupposes that the “aner” normally would have authority except for the fact that the “gune” has wrongly taken it from the “aner.” On the other hand, if “authentein” is translated simply “to have authority over,” this translation does not assume that the “aner” once had authority, or that the “gune” wrongly took it, but merely that the “gune” has authority over the “aner.” This supplies

³⁷ The Greek present infinitive is “didaskein.” Berry, p. 541.

³⁸ David Alan Black, *Learn to Read New Testament Greek* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), sec. 135, p. 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Berry, p. 541.

⁴¹ BAGD, p. 121.

⁴² Thayer, p. 84.

evidence that Paul is teaching that the “gune” is not to have *on-going or continuing* authority over the “aner.”

B. *There Is Evidence That 1 Tim. 2:12-15 Pertain To The Wife Teaching Biblical Doctrine, And Having A Biblical Position Of Authority.*

At 1 Tim. 2:12, Paul is not teaching that, e.g., a “gune” should not teach “secular” subjects in public or private schools, or that the “gune” should not have authority as a corporate C.E.O. over an “aner” who is a corporate employee. The context is Biblical. When Paul says, “But I suffer not a woman *to teach*, . . .” the phrase “to teach” is a translation of the Greek word “didasko” (Gk.: “διδασκω”).⁴³ At 1 Tim. 4:11 and 6:2, Paul uses a form of the word “didasko” to refer to the teaching of Biblical truths. That fact (and the fact that Paul is discussing what Timothy should do “in the house of God” (1 Tim. 3:15) provides evidence that, at 1 Tim. 2:12, Paul is saying that he does not suffer a “gune” to teach *Biblical truths* to the “aner.”

The Greek word “didasko” is related to the Greek word “didaskalia” (Gk.: “διδασκαλία”).⁴⁴ The word “didaskalia” is used by Paul 19 times.⁴⁵ In the KJV, it is translated “doctrine” or “doctrines” 17 times; “teaching” 1 time; and “learning” one time.⁴⁶ This evidences that, at 1 Tim. 2:12, Paul is saying that he does not suffer a “gune” to teach *Biblical truths or Biblical doctrine* to the “aner.”

A few verses later (1 Tim. 3:1-13), Paul will speak about the qualifications of overseers (KJV: bishops) and deacons, i.e., persons in *Biblical positions of authority*. And at 1 Tim. 3:14-15, Paul tells Timothy, “These things write I unto thee, . . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself *in* the house of God, which is the church of the living God, . . .” (Italics added.) This provides evidence that Paul is teaching Timothy how to conduct himself in an *assembly* of Christians.

In sum, the above supplies evidence that, at 1 Tim. 2:12, Paul is teaching that the “gune” is not to engage in the teaching of *Biblical doctrine* to the “aner,” and the “gune” is not to *have a position of Biblical authority* over the “aner,” as would result if the “gune” were a pastor, or elder, over her husband.⁴⁷ And as we have seen, Paul is referring to *continuing* teaching and authority.

⁴³ Wigram and Winter, pp. 150-151.

⁴⁴ Id. at p. 150.

⁴⁵ Wigram and Winter, p. 150.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ In a separate essay (see fn. 36, we will examine whether 1 Tim. 3:1-13 prove that women cannot be pastors or elders.

C. The “Gune” And “Aner” Of 1 Tim. 2:12 Are Christians.

Finally, there is evidence that the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12 are Christians. Of course, Paul was writing to Timothy concerning the “house of God” and the “church of the living God.” (1 Tim. 3:14-15.) Moreover, 1 Tim. 2:15 says, “she shall be saved in childbearing, if *they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*” “Charity” is a translation of the Greek word “agape” (Gk.: “αγαπε”)⁴⁸ which, elsewhere, is commonly translated “love.”⁴⁹ “Faith,” “love,” and “holiness” are obviously Christian virtues. Indeed, “faith” and “love” are part of the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22.) Thus, the lives of “they” are to be characterized by Christian virtues. That is, the persons referred to by the term “they” at 1 Tim. 2:15 are Christians. But we already have seen the evidence that “they” at 1 Tim. 2:15 are the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12. If so, the “gune” and “aner” of 1 Tim. 2:12 are Christians.

V. Conclusion.

In conclusion, there is evidence that the “wife/husband” translation of 1 Tim. 2:12-15 is correct, and that those verses should read:

“(12) But I suffer not a *wife* to teach, nor to usurp authority over, the *husband*, but to be in silence. (13) For Adam was first formed, then Eve. (14) And Adam was not deceived, but the *wife* being deceived was in the transgression. (15) Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

This essay has provided evidence that, at 1 Tim. 2:12-15, Paul is teaching that he does not permit a *wife continually* to teach *Biblical doctrine* to her *husband*, and Paul does not permit a *wife continually* to *have a Biblical position of authority* over her husband, as would be the case if the wife were a pastor, or elder, over her husband. The reasons are rooted in the Genesis account, including the facts surrounding the fall of mankind. However, the Christian wife will continue to be spiritually saved (see fn. 14), even as she goes through the childbearing process with its pain and sorrow rooted in the Genesis account, if she and her husband continue in faith, love, and holiness with sobriety.

But if so, as we mentioned at the beginning of this essay, three things follow. First, Paul’s prohibitions at 1 Tim. 2:12-15 do not apply to *unmarried* women at all. Therefore, these verses do not prohibit unmarried women from continually teaching Biblical doctrine to men, and do not prohibit unmarried women from continually having a

⁴⁸ Berry, p. 542.

⁴⁹ Wigram and Winter, pp. 3-4.

Biblical position of authority over men, as would be the case if unmarried women were pastors or elders.

Second, Paul's prohibitions at 1 Tim. 2:12-15 do not prohibit a *married* woman from continually teaching Biblical doctrine to a man who is not her husband, or from continually having a Biblical position of authority over a man who is not her husband. Therefore, these verses do not prohibit a married woman from being a pastor or elder over men, as long as she is not a pastor or elder over her husband. Third, Paul's prohibitions do not prohibit a *wife from joining with her husband as a partner* to teach continually Biblical doctrine to men, nor do Paul's prohibitions prevent a wife from joining with her husband as a partner to have a Biblical position of authority continually over men. Therefore, these verses do not prohibit a wife and husband from being joint pastors or joint elders over men. (Compare Priscilla and Aquila, a married couple (Acts 18:2) who had a church in their house. (Rom. 16:3-5.) Note also that, at one point, they jointly "expounded unto [Apollos] the way of God more perfectly." (Acts 18:26.)

The Book of Genesis reveals that Eve was first referred to as Adam's wife at Gen. 2:24-25. The fall of man occurred later, in Gen. 3. Gen. 3, read in light of 1 Tim. 2:12-15, reveals that Eve, Adam's *wife*, was deceived by the serpent and ate the forbidden fruit. She did not sin by being *deceived*; it is no sin to be victimized. The sin was in the eating. (Gen. 2:17 ["thou shalt not eat of it[.]"]) Gen. 3:6 records that Eve then "gave also unto her *husband* with her; and he did eat."⁵⁰ (Italics added.)

The Genesis account of the fall thus involved Satan and a *married couple*. The account does not involve an unmarried man or woman. That is, the account provides evidence that (1) a *wife* is uniquely susceptible, in a way an unmarried woman is not, to Satanic deception with respect to God's Word, leading the wife to commit transgression *and contribute to the transgression of her husband* (not men in general), and (2) a *husband* is uniquely susceptible, in a way an unmarried man is not, to taking Satan's deception of a *wife*, and the wife's transgression, as an occasion for the *husband* to transgress knowingly. The account does not prove the broader propositions that (1) women in general are susceptible to such Satanic deception, leading them not only to transgress but to contribute to the transgression of men in general, or (2) men are susceptible to taking the deception of women by Satan, and women's transgressions, as occasions for men to transgress knowingly. The account, therefore, does not prove that the "woman/man translation" of 1 Tim. 2:12-15 is correct, but the account does support the "wife/husband translation."

⁵⁰ The Hebrew word translated "husband" at Gen. 3:6 is "eesh." (George V. Wigram, *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance Of The Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 60. Depending on context, it is sometimes translated "man." The KJV, NASB, NIV, and RSV, all recognizing that the events of Gen. 3:6 occurred when Adam was married, translate "eesh" at that verse as "husband."

As mentioned, those who take the position that women cannot be pastors or elders, and who rely on the “woman/man translation” of 1 Tim. 2:12-15 to support that position have the burden of proof on the issue. Accordingly, there has been no need in our discussion above to *prove* that the “wife/husband translation” is the correct one. Nonetheless, one might reasonably conclude from this essay that *it is easier to prove that 1 Tim. 2:12-15 pertain only to wives and husbands, and that the “wife/husband translation” is correct*, than it is to prove that those verses pertain to women and men generally and that the “woman/man translation” is correct. But there is no need to reach that issue. It is sufficient if this essay has presented such credible evidence that the “wife/husband translation” is correct that, after consideration of that evidence, one cannot say that there is *proof* that the “woman/man translation” is the correct one. If such credible evidence has been presented above, then the person who has the burden of proof to show that 1 Tim. 2:12-15 *prove* that the “woman/man translation” reflected in the KJV is the correct translation cannot meet that burden. And it is no answer to say that the “woman/man translation” is a common, or even plausible, translation. It is respectfully submitted that this essay has presented credible evidence that the “wife/husband translation” is correct, with the result that 1 Tim. 2:12-15 do not *prove* that the “woman/man translation” of the KJV is the correct translation, or, therefore, that women cannot be pastors or elders.