

What We Teach

THE CHURCH

God's Plan for Women in the Church ([1 Timothy 2:9-15](#))

[1 Timothy 2:9-15 \(NASB\)](#)

- ⁹ “Likewise, *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,
¹⁰ but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.
¹¹ A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.
¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.
¹³ For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve.
¹⁴ And *it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.
¹⁵ But *women* will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”

Under the pretense of gathering to worship God, women were flaunting themselves and becoming serious distractions from worship. Their actions revealed that the intent of their heart was evil. Since worship is central to the life of the church, it was high on Paul's list of issues for Timothy to confront.

Following his discussion of the role of the men when the church is called to evangelistic prayer ([1 Timothy 2:1-8](#)), Paul turns to the subject of women in worship. He addresses their **1) appearance**, **2) attitude**, **3) testimony**, **4) role**, **5) design**, and **6) contribution**.

1) The Appearance of Women

[1 Timothy 2:9a, c \(NASB\)](#)

- ⁹ “**Likewise**” [**hōsautōs=in the same way**], *I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments.*”

2) The Attitude of Women

[1 Timothy 2:9d \(NASB\)](#)

- ⁹ “Likewise” *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, **modestly** [**Aidōs= in reverence**] *and discreetly*, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments.”

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These two attitudes are to characterize a woman's approach to her appearance in worship. *Aidōs* (**modestly**) appears only here in the New Testament. It refers to modesty mixed with humility. At its core is the idea of shame (cf. the Authorized Version's translation "**shame-facedness**"). In other words, she would come to worship with an attitude of "**reverence**."

A godly woman would be ashamed and feel guilty if she distracted someone from worshipping God, or contributed to someone's lustful thought. A woman characterized by this attitude will dress so as not to be the source of any temptation. The word also has the connotation of rejecting anything dishonorable to God. Some would even suggest the meaning of the term as grief over a sense of sin. A godly woman hates sin so much that she would avoid anything that would engender sin in anyone.

This is certainly consistent with the words of our Lord, who said,

Matthew 18:6-7 (NASB)

⁶ "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

⁷ "Woe to the world because of *its* stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!"

Matthew 18:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven."

Better to be dead than lead another believer into sin!

1 Timothy 2:9d (NASB)

⁹ "Likewise" *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, **modestly** [*Aidōs* = *in reverence*] **and discreetly** [*sōphrosunēs* = *self-control*], not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments."

The basic sense of *sōphrosunēs* (**discreetly**) is **self-control**, especially over sexual passions. It, too, is a rare word, appearing twice in this passage (cf. **1 Timothy 2:15**), and in **Acts 26:25**.

1 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ "But *women* will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with **self-restraint** [*sōphrosunēs* = *self-control*]."

Acts 26:25 (NASB)

²⁵ "But Paul "said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of **sober** [*sōphrosunēs* = *self-control*] truth."

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The Greeks valued this virtue highly. Euripides called it “**the fairest gift of the gods**” (Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946], 4:224).

Plato, in *The Republic*, called it one of the four cardinal virtues. Women are to exercise control so that neither their passions nor anyone else’s are excited.