

# Learning in Quietness and Submission in 1 Timothy 2:11: Relevance for Seventh-day Adventist Women in Nigeria

Sampson M. Nwaomah

Harriet Ikhane

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## Abstract

This paper is an exegetical study of 1Timothy 2:11. It investigates Paul's command for women to learn and do so in quietness and submission. Although there are differing views on the meaning of the text, this paper concludes that Paul's command is primarily a positive command since it encourages women to seek biblical knowledge, albeit in an orderly manner. Considering the limitations of Seventh-day Adventists women in Nigerian in the area of biblical literacy and theological education, this study, and based on the conclusions from this text, this paper encourages the women to seek biblical literacy. Further, the Church should also encourage biblical literacy among women, promote and support women pursuing theological education. This could equip them in making meaningful contributions to any religious discourse and also equip them for the Gospel Commission.

**Keywords:** learn, silence, quietness, submission, women, biblical literacy, biblical training, theological education, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria

## Introduction

The command of Paul, *gynē en hēsychia manthanetō en pasē hypotagē*, “let a woman learn in quietness [and] in all submissiveness,” in 1 Timothy 2:11 (cf. 1 Cor 14:34-35) has attracted many interpretations as to why such instruction was given. Fee on this text reasons that it implies “women were part of the public worship and were included in the instructions.”<sup>71</sup> He is though, hesitant to align with the position that the text limits their presence to learners in the congregation.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, Knight opines that the imperative *manthanetō* should be understood from its literal sense of “learning through instruction”<sup>73</sup> and is here a positive command.<sup>74</sup> Guthrie, however argues that the manner of learning in quietness was to “curb the tendencies of newly emancipated Christian women to abuse their new-found freedom by indecorously lording it over men.”<sup>75</sup>

Stitt, on the similar passage in 1 Cor 14, argues that this command was because of lack of education of the women in the Greco-Roman world.<sup>76</sup> Angel, suggests that Paul did not intend women to interrupt the teacher by asking disruptive questions, hence he instructed them to learn. Therefore, *manthanetō* could imply that women were to receive training in order to teach others.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Gordon D. Fee, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2011), 72.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2013), 138.

<sup>74</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 213.

<sup>75</sup> Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, n.d), e-book

<sup>76</sup> Patrick Stitt, “Women in Leadership Examined in 1 Corinthians,” *American Journal of Biblical Theology* 13/36 (2012), 3.

<sup>77</sup> Angel Manuel Rodriguez, *1 Corinthians 14:34-35*, <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-nt-texts/1-corinthians-1434-35/> (2021.4.1)

Correspondingly, study of the first-century Jewish history showed that women had little amount of education.<sup>78</sup> Women were only taught a little more than the domestic arts by their mothers who were given simple religious instruction sufficient to pass on to their children.<sup>79</sup> Also, training women in the Torah was not seen as mandatory and was even seen in part as improper.<sup>80</sup> Women thus were excluded from essential religious tasks of men and were not allowed to touch the Scripture but were taught in accordance with it for their daily living.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, on the command that women should learn in quietness, some commentators see it as a way of preventing any disruptive behavior of women in public worship.<sup>82</sup>

The social issues associated with the Ephesus Church which 1 Timothy was addressed to, are similar with the African context and Nigeria specifically. The cultural and gender issues that affect African women right from their birth<sup>83</sup> inhibit a girl child to receive the same educational training with a boy child.<sup>84</sup> Nonetheless, this is gradually changing and this situation is improving due to the recognition of the role of

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<sup>78</sup> Solomon O. Ademiluka, "1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 in Light of Women and Church Leadership in Nigeria," *Verbum Ecclesia*, 38/1 (2017), 1.

<sup>79</sup> Jerry A. Gladson, "The Role of Women in the Old Testament Outside the Pentateuch," *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (Silver Springs, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Biblical Research Institute Committee, 1984), 38.

<sup>80</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation," Nancy Vyhmeister, ed. *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (Berrien Spring, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 159.

<sup>81</sup> Tract West, "The Mary and Martha Story: Who Learns What Lesson about Women and Ministry?" *Quarterly Review: A Journal of Theological Resources for Ministry* 19/2 (1999), 135.

<sup>82</sup> Melissa Farley, et.al, "Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," *Journal of Trauma Practice* 2, 3/4 (2003), 58.

<sup>83</sup> H. A. Adetunji, "Re-Orientating the African Woman Today," D. O. Akintude, ed. *African Culture and the Quest for Women's Right*, (Ibadan, Nigeria: Sefer, 2001), 106.

<sup>84</sup> Familusi O. Olumuyiwa, "African Culture and the Status of Women: The Yoruba Example," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5/1 (2012), 10.

women in the society and the fact that both men and women are needed in the propagation of the gospel message.<sup>85</sup> Yet, despite the increased number of women in the world's population,<sup>86</sup> especially in Nigeria where they make up 75 to 90 percent of the active membership and sustaining force in almost every congregation, including Seventh-day Adventist Churches, (SDAC)<sup>87</sup> their theological education or biblical literacy is thin when compared to men.<sup>88</sup> This situation could affect their level of contributing meaningfully to biblical discourses.

Therefore, the concern of this paper is to engage in an exegetical study of 1Timothy 2:11 with the view of examining its relevance for women in SDAC. The significance of this study is in inspiring SDAC women, in particular, and Christian women in general, in Nigeria, to respond to this command to receive Biblical training.

It should be noted here that women's biblical/theological training or education is not necessarily tied to the issue of their ordination to gospel ministry. Therefore, this research will not deal with the issue of ordination. Biblical training, Biblical literacy and theological education will be used interchangeable in reference to functional biblical knowledge for personal spiritual edification and Christian mission. This may however, include formal theological education as may be

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<sup>85</sup> Ruth Muthe James, "Women's Theological Education in Kenya," *Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays*, eds. Mary N. Getui and Emmanuel A. Gbeng (Nairobi: Acton, 1999), 109.

<sup>86</sup> Cecilia Madu, "Women in the Bible as Source of Inspiration for Women Today," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 19/5 (2014), 123.

<sup>87</sup> Kenneth Vine, "The Legal Social Status of Women," *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (Silver Springs, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Biblical Research Institute Committee, 1984), 21.

<sup>88</sup> The situation of women's biblical literacy can be evidenced in the local churches where most women demonstrate a very limited knowledge of the Bible compared to their male counterparts. Further, the authors experiences in providing theological education in Seventh-day Adventist Universities also gives credence to this situation.

necessary. This study adopts the relevant principles and procedures of New Testament (NT) exegetical study of 1Timothy 2:11. It focuses on the words *manthanetō*, “let her learn,” *hēsychia* “quietness,” and *hypotagē*, “submission,” “to gain insights into what the text says in respect to women’s pursuit of biblical literacy

### **The Context of 1Timothy 2:11**

Paul wrote 1Timothy personally to Timothy in Ephesus with the aim of addressing the issue of false teachers and false teachings in Ephesus (1:3-7, 18-20; 4:1-5, 6-10; 6:2b-10, 20-21). The neuter personal pronoun *tisin*, “certain men,” instead of *aner*, “men,” was used by Paul to refer to the teachers of ‘strange doctrines’ (1:3), showing that the teachers could be either male or female.<sup>89</sup> This command indicates that it was uncommon for women to be teachers during Paul’s time. It could be also that the result of these women who were unlearned in the faith could be in the spread of false teaching.<sup>90</sup> The effects of this false teachings were evident as seen in 2 Timothy 3:6.

There might also have been tension in worship settings in reference to Paul’s admonition for prayers to be done “without wrath and doubt” (1Tim 2:8). It may seem possible that women were involved in unruly worship behavior (1Tim 2:12) and could be easily misled possibly due to limited theological knowledge (2 Tim 3:6). Hence, the instruction of Paul on the learning requirement—submission to a teacher.<sup>91</sup> It was in this context of heretical challenges in the church that Paul commanded woman to learn in quietness and in all

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<sup>89</sup> Tromblry Charles, *Who Said Women Can’t Teach?* (U.S.A: Bridge, 1985), 31.

<sup>90</sup> Belleville L. Lindo, “Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1Timothy 2:11-15,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarily without Hierarchy*, eds. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, eds. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2005), 209.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*

submissiveness. Paul thus seems to be commands women to learn first by being educated in the faith.

A preliminary observation on this text does not suggest that Paul is averse to women seeking biblical literacy as demonstrated in the Acts and his Epistles. Priscilla taught Apollos (Acts 18:26; 2Tim 4:19). Paul made references to women praying and prophesying in public settings (Acts 21:8, 1 Cor 11:5). Euodia and Syntyche, Priscilla and Aquila, Phoebe and Junias (Rom 16:1-16, Phil 4:2-3) were all commended by him.

However, in 1Timothy 2, Paul provides several correctives to specific ways of behaviors, beginning from the (i) manner of praying (vs. 1-8), (ii) appropriate dressing (v. 9), and (iii) the appropriate way of learning (vs. 11-13). With regards to the manner of women's learning the emphasis is on the manner of their learning and not on whether they are to learn. As such, verse 11 directly connects to verse 12. The two verses have syntactical connection to the continuative conjunction—*dē*, “however.”<sup>92</sup> The term *hēsychia* is also common to both verse and here “used to mean a particular manner of behavior in verse 11.”<sup>93</sup> Some scholars argue that verses 11 and 12 should be considered side-by-side based on the literary inclusion. Thus, it is posited that there is a clear correspondence between the command to learn, “*manthanetō*,” and the prohibition, “to teach,” *didaskein*, as well as between the phrases *en pasē hypotagē* and *authentēin andros*, command and prohibition, respectively.<sup>94</sup> However, this paper will focus more on verse 11 because of the scope and purpose of the study.

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<sup>92</sup> Wallace D. Daniel, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan: 1992), 671.

<sup>93</sup> Hubner Jamin, “Translating αὐθεντέω (*authentēō*) in 1Timothy 2:12a,” *Priscilla Papers*, 35/2 (2015), n.p.

<sup>94</sup> Kostenberger J. Andreas, “Women in the Church,” in *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1Timothy 2:9-15*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., eds. Andreas J. Kostenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 157.

## Let a Woman Learn in 1 Tim 2:11

The verse begins with the noun *gynē*, “woman.” Paul in this verse may not be addressing any specific woman (or wife) when he uses the anarthrous noun, which is a nominative singular noun and the subject of the sentence. This noun could be used to denote an adult female person, “woman” or “wife” or in a few instances’ “bride,”<sup>95</sup> and is not associated with *andras* as in 1 Timothy 3:1. Thus, this may not be specific to a woman or a wife. However, there are debates among translators about translation *gynē*, as “woman” or “wife.”<sup>96</sup> The choice between wife and woman could be defined by the context. Nevertheless, translating the word *gynē* in verses 11 and 12 as “woman” and not “wife” is more appropriate because in verse 8 Paul tells Timothy “I will therefore that men, [*andras*],” pray everywhere ...” and in like manner also, that women [*gynaikas*] adorn themselves... (v. 9)<sup>97</sup>

The verb *manthanetō* is a present active imperative third person singular, from *manthanō*.<sup>98</sup> According to Aida, *manthanetō* is the first imperative in the letter and although the verb is in the third person.<sup>99</sup> It can in the context of v. 11 be translated as let a woman learn.<sup>100</sup> This present imperative is from the verb *manthanō*, “to learn.” It occurs twenty-five

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<sup>95</sup> Bauer Walter, “γυνή” *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2000), 208-209.

<sup>96</sup> Master R. John and Master L. Jonathan, “Who is the “Woman” in 1Timothy 2?” 3-21 *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry*, 10 (2008-2009), 8.

<sup>97</sup> See Ephesians 5:22-35 and 1Timothy 3:1-13.

<sup>98</sup> *μανθάνω* means ever learning (1Tim 2:11; 2Tim 3:7), to continue learning (1Cor 14:31, 35; Tit 3:14; 2Tim 3:14; Phil 4:11).

<sup>99</sup> Spencer Besancon Aida, *1Timothy: New Covenant Commentary* (Oregon: Cascade, 2013), 58.

<sup>100</sup> Mounce D. William, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 310.

times in the NT.<sup>101</sup> In the Gospels, the word occurs twice in the context of Jesus contentions with his adversaries. And in both cases, he points them to the Scriptures (Matt 9:13; cf. John 6:45).<sup>102</sup> This verb could also be used technically for a formal study of the Scripture as may be the case in John 7:15<sup>103</sup> where the Jews marveled at the depth and appropriateness of Jesus Scriptural understanding since he had not obtained the prescribed theological education.

In Pauline corpus the meaning of *manthanō* includes increasing a person's knowledge or desire to be increased in knowledge (Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 14:31, 35; Phil 4:9; 2 Tim 3:7). This verb could also mean to hear or to come to the knowledge of an information or event by someone (Acts 23:27; Galatians 3:2). It could also mean the habit or an attitude over time (Phil 4:11; Titus 3:14). Therefore, in the context of 2 Timothy 2:11, *manthanō* could mean the desire to increase one's knowledge and in this case knowledge about faith. Hence, it could refer to the women's desire of acquiring biblical knowledge from the designated teachers in the Church at Ephesus in the midst of false teachings. It is then appropriate to affirm that in this command Paul approves of women to seek biblical literacy by being instructed in learning and here state his expectations of women. Moo has pointed out that Paul's concern for a woman to seek increased knowledge of faith is of great significant which was uncommon to the Jews.<sup>104</sup>

No doubt learning was a threat to piety in the Church at Ephesus. Hence Rengstorf observes that "officiousness and an intellectualistic piety are widespread, especially among the women (2 Tm. 3:6f.; 1 Tm. 5:13)."<sup>105</sup> This situation could have provided the false teachers the opportunity of misleading

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<sup>101</sup> K. H. Rengstorf, "Μανθάνω," *TDNT* 4: 406.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Douglas, 176.

<sup>105</sup> Rengstorf, 410.



them. Thus, Paul's concern for caution even in the process of learning (1 Tim 2:11). Therefore, it is the manner in which they are to learn that matters to Paul. This was to be 'in quietness' and 'in all submissiveness.'

### **Learning in quietness and in all submissiveness**

Paul commands women to learn in quietness in all submissiveness. The question that arises from this command would be "what did Paul intend to convey for women to learn "in quietness and in all submissiveness?" The Greek preposition, *en*, "in," is dative of manner in context and here indicate the way women are to learn. Paul employs *hēsychia*, "quietness," (a noun, dative, feminine singular) and *pasē hypotagē*, "all submission to emphasize the manner of learning. This means having a peaceful and non-disturbing attitude in the learning process and having a submissive spirit.<sup>106</sup>

The phrase *en hēsychia*, can refer to a state of quietness or of silence<sup>107</sup> which may be more similar to a peaceful disposition that is most conducive to a teacher- student relationship.<sup>108</sup> Luke uses *hēsychia* to report that Paul's audience in Acts 22:2 kept quiet when they learned of his identity. In this context this word implies they listened to Paul. Similarly, in 2 Thessalonians 3:12, Paul also uses this word to instruct the Church to admonish the busybodies and the lazy to "work in quietness." One also cannot understand it here to mean lack of communication. Rather *hēsychia* is an attitude of respect and dignity that was expected of the group as they engage in working for their livelihood.

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<sup>106</sup> Danker William Frederick, *The Concise English Lexicon of the New Testament*

(Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2009), 366.

<sup>107</sup> Walter, 440.

<sup>108</sup> Bullock Noel, "First Timothy 2:8-15," *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry*, 11 (2009-2010), 84.

Therefore, *hēsychia* in 1 Timothy 2:11 does not imply that women should be passive learners and could not seek clarifications in the process of learning. Rather the condition of silence or quietness seems a peaceful and respectful attitude towards the teacher/authority and in the context of worship reverence and devotion. This attitude could also be demanded of the male learners since some of them were also theologically ignorant (cf. 1 Tim 1:3,7). Accordingly, this word should be understood within the context of the situation of the Ephesian women in Ephesus as some of them were known as “loiterers, gossiping and in general being busybodies hence, quietness and submission are not negative qualities in this context, for they facilitate learning.”<sup>109</sup> Consequently, since the meaning of the term *hēsychia* “can range from absolute silence to quietness of spirit in respect of some speaking activity,”<sup>110</sup> the context of quietness and submissiveness may imply showing keen attention during learning.

From the above discourse, it is obvious that Paul’s intent was not for women to keep passive quietness (cf. 1Tim 2:2; 1Thess 4:11; 1Pet 3:4) but they are to demonstrate a peaceful and tranquil spirit while learning. This understanding of *hēsychia* could be further supported by the fact that in the context worship sessions could become occasions for dispute and debates, hysterical and noisy (1 Tim 1:7; cf. 1 Cor 14:1-40). It seems also that women were known for elaborate and costly attires which could overshadow the purpose of worship and even adversely impact their disposition towards teachers and learning (1 Tim 2:9-10). The latter is an important context to understand what Paul meant in the preceding verses. Thus, verse 11 presents similar standard of actions; instead of focus on clothing the aim is a peaceful and self-discipline manner of conduct.

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<sup>109</sup> Chatela Teresa David, “Women, Teaching and Leadership in 1 Timothy 2:11-15: A Rhetorical-Critical Study, with Reference to Angola” (MTh Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2019), 18, <https://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/106008>, (2021.4.1).

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, 19.

The other prepositional phrase *en pasē hypotagē*, “in all submission,” follows the injunction for women to learn quietly; in all submissiveness.<sup>111</sup> This noun *hypotagē* shows the connection of individuals to those in authority.<sup>112</sup> In another passage, *hypotagē* implies obedience to the gospel (2 Cor 9:13), So, by Paul’s command for women to learn, he supposed that they were part of the worship gathering and part of receiving biblical education. They need to seek education on matters of faith.

However, such learning should be “in in all submissiveness. This attitude of submissiveness is towards religious leaders responsible for imparting knowledge.<sup>113</sup> This submission was wise and does not prohibit women active learning process. So, the command let a woman learn in all quietness [and] in all submission)”in context rather than prohibits should encourages women to desire and receive biblical and theological education but under quite manner by paying keen interest to instructions received.<sup>114</sup>

This command for women to learn thus gives them the opportunity to learn together with men thereby constituting a new privilege for women and making them full participants in the process of seeking knowledge of the Gospel. This command and provision for a woman to learn is a significant shift from the Jewish culture that does not permit women to

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<sup>111</sup> William, 119. See also Galatians 2:5 where Paul speaks of his unwillingness to obey the false teachers and 1 Tim 3:4 where he lists the ability to have obedient or faithful children as one of the qualifications of a bishop.

<sup>112</sup> See, Mk 12:17; Lk 2:21; Rom 13:1-7; Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; 1Tim 3:4; 1Pt 3:1; Titus 3:1.

<sup>113</sup> Lea D. Thomas and Hayne P. Griffin, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, 1, 2, Timothy, Titus, vol 34 (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 98.

<sup>114</sup> Oden C. Thomas, *First and Second Timothy and Titus: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knoex, 1989), 96.

learn and study the Law,<sup>115</sup> a situation that the next section briefly discusses.

### **Jewish Perspectives on Women and Theological Education**

In the first-century Judaism, both boys and girls received teaching and training at home and in day to day life.<sup>116</sup> However, only the boy child moves beyond this training at home for he receives a more formal training while the girl child is expected to learn more from her mother or other women the significant tasks of proper management of the home.<sup>117</sup> Thus, only the boys were given formal education in the synagogue school where a rabbi teaches the Torah to them at different stages in life.<sup>118</sup> The women were not allowed to participate in important religious duties for that were primarily the tasks of men.<sup>119</sup> As such, women's participation in worship was restricted and they were not even permitted to read the scripture. Worse still, the rabbis saw them to be people not capable of learning about religious things.<sup>120</sup> In this vein, James quoted Rabbi Eliezer as saying that "it is better that the words of the law should be burned ... than they should be given to women; ... if a man gives her daughter knowledge of the law it is as though he taught her lechery."<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> The term "Law" is used here to refer to the Torah which consists of the revealed will of God

<sup>116</sup> Gladson, 38.

<sup>117</sup> Polaski Hack Sandra, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2005), 34.

<sup>118</sup> Ikechukwu Michael Oluikpe, "Jesus and Rabbinic Schools: Implications for Adventist Education," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry*, 11 (2015), 118.

<sup>119</sup> Madipoane Masenya, "The Dissolution of the Monarchy, the Collapse of the Temple and the "Elevation" of Women in the Post-Exilic Period: Any Relevance for African Women's Theologies?" in *Old Testament Essays* 26, 1 (2013): 143.

<sup>120</sup> Hurley B. James, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Eugene, Oregon: Wip and Stock Publishers, 2002) 45.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

However, Katherine states that “one first-century rabbi recommended that a father teach his daughter Torah, because [of] the merit she would thus acquire ....”<sup>122</sup> In this vein, the five daughters of Zelophehad (Num 26:33) showed that females were not prohibited from being educated in the Torah for their actions revealed that they were female expounders to the law.<sup>123</sup> Despite the fact that females had limited opportunities to be educated, it seems that some women, including some rabbis’ wives, acquired substantial knowledge of the Torah. Timothy’s mother and grandmother were knowledgeable in the scripture and they thus passed it on to Timothy which gave him a strong foundation in the Law.<sup>124</sup>

### **Women and Education in Greco-Roman Culture**

Women in the first century Gentile world received informal education until they reached marriageable age between 14-16 years while men were educated formally well into their 20s so as to become active members of the society.<sup>125</sup> Congruently, the Socratic teaching method in the Greco-Roman world showed that “learning is directed primarily by a balance of question and debate, the goal was to strengthen your position or understanding of an issue by engaging with people of other views and perspectives and only the advanced were allowed to ask questions and debate with the teacher.”<sup>126</sup> Hence, men were considered as the advanced students while the women were viewed as novices. This perception may have also

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<sup>122</sup> Katherine C. Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women: 100 Bible Studies on Woman’s Place in the Divine Economy* (Oxford University Press, 1943), 218, <https://www.biblicalresearch.gc.adventist.org>, (2021.04.1)

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, 218.

<sup>124</sup> Gladson, 50. It is also noteworthy that Paul commended the faith of Timothy’s grandmother and mother and this faithfulness in educating him.

<sup>125</sup> Hanegan Michael, *1 Corinthians 14 and the Silence of Women: Cultural and Historical Background*, <http://www.michaelhanegan.com/blog/1-corinthians-14-and-the-silence-of-women-cultural-and-histo.html> (2021.04.1).

<sup>126</sup> Michael, 6.

influenced Paul's command in 1Timothy 2:11. However, this paper has argued that the imperative *manthanetō*, "let her learn," in this passage is primarily a positive command. It also does not seem that a correct understanding of the manner or condition of learning in the prepositional phrases *en hēsychia*, "in quietness" and *en pasē hypotagē*, "in all submission," convey a probation for women not to seek biblical literacy and/or theological education.

### **Women and Education in Nigeria**

Women constitute more than 50 percent of Nigeria's population, yet their level of participation in educational programs is quite low.<sup>127</sup> In Nigeria and as with many other parts of African society, education mainly focused on the male gender.<sup>128</sup> In the past, the birth of a baby girl does not bring delight to a home as with a boy child.<sup>129</sup> It was believed that the males would help to spread and continue the family name while females would eventually end up in their husbands' house or in the kitchen. Thus, educating males was not a waste but in the case of females, it was seen as a waste of time, effort, and resources.<sup>130</sup> Oduyoye buttressed this point by saying that "women were educated to believe that being a female means that they are naturally inferior thus due to this low self-esteem women underestimate themselves."<sup>131</sup> Similarly, Olumuyiwa states that "Africa's traditional society was unfair to women because they were often exploited, oppressed, degraded and handled like personal property of men who do not need training..."<sup>132</sup> As a result, their status

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<sup>127</sup> J. Omoruyi and R. A. Omofonmwan, "Women Education in Nigeria: Problems, Prospects, and its Effects on National Development," *Academic Forum* 9/3 (2005), 9477.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, 9477.

<sup>129</sup> Adetunji, 106.

<sup>130</sup> Omoruyi and Omofonmwan, 9477.

<sup>131</sup> Oduyoye Amba Mercy, "Theological Education for Women in Africa," Mercy Amba Oduyoye, ed. *Transforming Power: Women in the Household of God*, ed. (Accra: Sam Wood, 1997), 65.

<sup>132</sup> Olumuyiwa, 310.

has being a major concern to female scholars generally. However, the situation of women with respect to education is changing in Nigeria with the exception of some core Northern states.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, the status of women on theological biblical and/theological education, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is not very encouraging. Hence, the need to seek the relevance of Paul's command in 1 Timothy 2:11 for this context.

### **Relevance of 1Timothy 2:11 for Theological Education of Seventh-day Adventist Women in Nigeria**

It has been observed that women make up the largest percent of church membership than the males.<sup>134</sup> This, obviously includes the Seventh-day Adventist. However, majority of them have limited biblical literacy and/or education. This disadvantage in deeper knowledge and interpretation of the Scriptures does affect personal Christian discipleship and mission. Therefore, the imperative of discipleship and inclusiveness of the mission mandate makes germane the command for women to learn in 1Timothy 2:11.

First, this command is a divine provision for women to seek and value opportunities that could enhance their understanding and interpretation of scriptures. For women who may be able to obtain formal theological education, obedience to Scriptural command that women should learn, will expose them to a wide range of literature that could expand their knowledge and challenge their thinking and understanding; thus, equipping them to think biblically and develop a Christian worldview.

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<sup>133</sup> Omoruyi and Omofonmwan, 9477.

<sup>134</sup> T. Aluko, "Women and Church Growth in Yorubaland: An Examination of their Contributions," *Journal of Arabic and Religious Studies*, 10 (1993), 58.

Further, when women respond to this command to learn, they not only profit personally but could also make significant contributions to biblical discourse in church worship. Correspondingly, appropriate response to this command will equip women for ministry service, in discipling others, and to manage and resolve conflict (see Titus 2:2-5).

Additionally, since God's mission commission to the church involves all including women, their appropriate theological training or biblical literacy will empower them for witnessing and mission in a changing world. Such competencies could ignite a passion for mission and evangelism and thus of great value to the church. Their obedience to this command will also contribute to church growth. Paul in Romans 16:1-16 gives accounts of women who made significant contributions to church growth. One of such was Priscilla whose knowledge of scriptures enabled her to instruct and deepen the Scriptural/biblical knowledge of the skilled teacher and great Orator Apollos (Acts 18:26). Therefore, women who possess biblical literacy and/or theological education will not only contribute significantly to the church in Nigeria but will add to the pull of biblical knowledge in furtherance of Christ's Coming.

Women's obedience to the instruction by Paul will also reflect the complete creation of God. The church stands to gain from making use of the great potentials in women and their involvement with males in the learning process will thus demonstrates the perfect work of God's creation (Gen 1:31). Thus, when women are trained, they will combine their strength with their male counterparts in propagating the gospel message to the entire world thereby fulfilling the Great Commission Mandate as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 and they will be equipped to train/teach others.

Finally, 1 Timothy 2:11 challenges the Seventh-day Adventist church in Nigeria to promote and support biblical literacy for women in the local churches. This could be done through focused bible study groups and provision of resources that



could enhance this process. The positive command of women to learn in 1 Timothy 2:11 also challenges the Church to promote and support, through appropriate policies and platforms for women in theological training in order to properly contribute to the mission of the church which everyone disciple is called to participate.

## **Conclusion**

1 Timothy 2:11 gives Paul's command for women to learn in quietness and in all submissiveness. Although the text has been read by some from a prohibitive perspective, the agenda of this study was to argue that the passage significantly offers a positive command for women to seek biblical literacy and by extension even formal theological education. From a positive perspective, this command was a significant shift in a culture where women could not obtain public instruction in the Torah and perceived as intellectually weak. This text thus offers women an opportunity of learning but with teachable spirit in order for them to be well-learned in the Scriptures.

Also, Seventh-day Adventist women in particular and the Church in Nigerian in general should respond to Paul's command to seek the appropriate studying and interpretation of scriptures. This will help them to become relevant among Bible expounders and enhance their participation in the mission of the church.

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