

## *Ask the Pastor*

Topic: 1 Timothy 3:2 and women's ordination

Question:

Does 1 Timothy 3:2 support women's ordination, only declaring that it is not permissible for a bishop (Pastor) to have more than spouse, while not distinguishing between a male/female pastorate?

Answer:

When looking at Holy Scripture, we do not deny the rules of grammar, syntax, word order, structure, and the like. With any written work (also with regard to what is spoken), it is necessary to use reason and logic to determine what is said. And only if there is an indication that something else might be meant, the words are to be taken as they are.

Here, as in other places, the rules of grammar do not support an interpretation that is different than what the words say. 1 Timothy 3:2 in the New King James reads, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach." The phrase in question is, 'the husband of one wife'.

As to the first part of the question, whether or not this text supports monogamy (one spouse at a time) only and not polygamy (more than one spouse at a time) is quite clear. Literally, from the Greek, the text here reads, 'a one woman man'. In other words, a man who is a bishop/pastor and who is married is to have only one wife (at a time).

This text also has much to say concerning the union of man and woman in marriage, not man and man or woman and woman, with reference to the Office of the Holy Ministry in particular. God's institution of Holy Matrimony is to be that of man and woman. St. Paul not only assumes this to be so, but indicates no other order for marriage. To say otherwise is not to argue from the Holy Scriptures, but from somewhere else. Scripture in general and in particular (including here), does not support homosexual unions. Neither does the Bible support practicing homosexuals serving in the Office of pastor, whether male or female.

As to the second part of the question, whether or not this text supports or doesn't support 'male only' clergy, the rules of grammar still apply. In the Greek, the phrase in study is, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα (Literally, 'a one woman(wife) man(husband)'). The words 'one woman' are both significantly in the <sup>1</sup>genitive case. This means that the 'one woman' is not the object; the 'man' is, for 'man' is in the <sup>2</sup>accusative case. This indicates a translation, not of 'a one man woman',

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<sup>1</sup> Genitive case: A noun or pronoun which denotes possession. (I.e. the boy's hair, John's aunt) [[English Grammar for Language Students](#), Braun]

<sup>2</sup> Accusative case: A noun or pronoun used as the direct object of a transitive verb. (I.e. He gave it to him.) [[English Grammar for Language Students](#), Braun]

but the other way around, 'a one woman man'. Therefore, St. Paul is not making reference to women clergy (this is not supported in the Bible), but to men clergy.

The words γυναικὸς (genitive) and ἄνδρα (accusative), both indicate gender, woman/wife and man/husband, respectively. To suggest that St. Paul in 1 Timothy 3:2 is saying or even proposing that women clergy are permissible is to go against the text and to discard the established rules of grammar. Doing so demonstrates not only a faithlessness to the correct usage of language, but the dismissal of God's established order and the placing of one's own reading upon the text.

If God had not written what He had meant, then how could anyone know according to the written Word what it is that He wishes to reveal to us? God has not given the Scriptures in code. The plain sense is what He gives. Through the Word, God speaks. Our own interpretation we are not to follow. Rather is it that of the text given, even according to the grammar and rules of language.