

Translating ἀυθεντέω (*authentēō*) in 1 Timothy 2:12

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In the women-in-ministry debate, the verb *authentēō* in 1 Tim 2:12 has played a crucial role.¹ As a result, a plethora of scholarly efforts have aimed at uncovering what exactly the term meant during Paul's time and what it meant specifically in 1 Tim 2:12.² Despite such painstaking work, there remains considerable disagreement about what the term means. Both egalitarian and complementarian evangelicals claim the research is in their favor. To complicate matters, Bible translations continue to vary over the term and the verse's phrasing (sometimes newer versions of the same translation).³ All of this prompts scholars to step back and ask, what does the research actually show? And more importantly, how should Christians translate and understand the meaning of this term and verse as they regularly read their Bibles?⁴

What the reference works say

Students of the Bible naturally (and necessarily) turn to dictionaries and lexicons to find out what a particular word means. But, due to the limited nature of lexicography and human effort, simply glancing at a reference work can be deceiving. It is necessary at least to broaden the scope of one's resources in order to avoid error. Even examining multiple versions of the same kind of work (e.g., lexicons, dictionaries, etc.) can reveal significant differences and even inconsistencies. *Authentēō* is no exception, as demonstrated by the following entries, reproduced here as they appear in eight lexicons:

ἀυθεντέω (s. ἀυθέντης; Philod., Rhet. II p. 133, 14 Sudh.; Jo. Lydus, Mag. 3, 42; Moeris p. 54; cp. Phryn. 120 Lob.; Hesychius; Thom. Mag. p. 18, 8; schol. in Aeschyl., Eum. 42; BGU 1208, 38 [27 b.c.]; s. Lampe s.v.) to assume a stance of independent authority, give orders to, dictate to w. gen. of pers. (Ptolem., Apotel. 3, 14, 10 Boll-B.; Cat. Cod. Astr. VIII/1 p. 177, 7; B-D-F §177) ἀνδρός, w. διδάσκειν, 1 Ti 2:12 (practically = "tell a man what to do")⁵

ἀυθεντέω strictly, of one who acts on his own authority; hence have control over, domineer, lord it over (1T 2:12).⁶

37.21 ἀυθεντέω: to control in a domineering manner—"to control, to domineer." γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω . . . ἀυθεντεῖν ἀνδρός "I do not allow women . . . to dominate men" 1 Tm 2:12. "To control in a domineering manner" is often expressed idiomatically, for example, "to shout orders at," "to act like a chief toward," or "to bark at."⁷

883 ἀυθεντέω . . . vb.; . . . Str 831—LN 37.21 control, have authority over (1Ti 2:12+)⁸

ἀυθεντέω *domineer, have authority over*⁹

ἀυθεντέω, f., ἦσω, *to have full power over*, τινός N.T.¹⁰

831. ἀυθεντέω *authēntēō*, ὄw-then-teh'-o; from a comp. of 846 and an obsol. ἔντης *hēntēs* (a *worker*); to *act of oneself*, i.e. (fig.) *dominate*:—usurp authority over.¹¹

ἀυθεντέω *I domineer over* (a colloquial word, from ἀυθέντης, "master," "autocrat," = ἀυτός + root *sen*, "accomplish," in ἀνύω).¹²

Surveying these standard reference works, there appears to be a number of possible nuances, such as an aspect of self-oriented, personal action ("act of oneself," "assume a stance of independent authority"), power ("dominate," "have full power/authority over"),¹³ or negativity ("domineer," "lord over"). Potential common denominators include some notion of authority or active wielding of power. However, none of these works define the term as a generic exercise of authority without some additional shade of meaning.

Why is there such variation? One reason is that *authentēō* is a *hapax legomenon*, a word used only once in a corpus. In our case, *authentēō* is never used anywhere else in the NT, nor even in the Greek OT. This sometimes makes discerning the meaning of a word challenging since there is nothing to directly and internally compare.¹⁴ Moreover, *authentēō* is rare *outside* of biblical literature. While many NT *hapaxes* can be discerned by their occasional or numerous uses in contemporary Greek literature, we are not as fortunate in finding such references for *authentēō*. In fact, over the past half-century, scholars have only been able to find about three to four additional occurrences *within Paul's lifetime*—and those are the ones that matter most. Occurrences centuries before and after the writing of 1 Timothy carry little weight since the meaning of words can (and does) change over time.¹⁵

This paucity is one reason it is baffling to see authors bring attention to studies of *authentēō* (or any other word) that examine "dozens," "hundreds," or "thousands" of occurrences.¹⁶ Whether a study examines a million or a hundred occurrences is not in and of itself significant—just as the common criticism of NT manuscripts having 400,000 textual variants is not in and of itself "statistically" significant.¹⁷ In the case of discerning the meaning of *authentēō* in 1 Timothy, most weight should be given to those occurrences that surround the time of 1 Timothy itself. When one actually does this kind of analysis—along with compiling the data from other major studies—the debate surrounding *authentēō* comes into clearer focus.

Contemporary occurrences of *authentēō*

Table 1 chronologically summarizes occurrences of *authentēō* around Paul's time along with the judgments of leading voices on the topic.¹⁸ Keep in mind that each column should not be given equal weight since many are not actual studies. For example, Wayne Grudem's appendix is a mirror image of H. Scott Baldwin's research. Similarly, Thomas Schreiner's work (overtly) relies on Baldwin's study (hence the consolidation). In

Table 1: Contemporary occurrences of *authentēō*

Text using <i>authentēō</i>	Baldwin /Schreiner	Grudem	Payne	Belleville
Philodemus in <i>Rhetorica</i> 2.133 (110-35 BC)	to rule, to reign sovereignly	to rule, to reign sovereignly; “those in authority”	“murders” or “those who murder”	“powerful lords”
“The Letter from Tryphon,” BGU 1208.38 (27 BC)	to compel, to influence; “I compelled him”	to compel, to influence someone/something; “I exercised authority over him”	assume authority; “I assumed authority against him”	“I had my way with him” or “I took a firm stand with him”
Aristonicus Alexandrinus in <i>De signis Iliadis</i> 9.694 (27 BC-AD 37)	to be primarily responsible for, to do, or to instigate; “the one doing the speech”	-	“the one self-accomplishing the speech”	“the author of the message”
1 Timothy 2:12 (60s AD)	“ ‘assume authority over’ . . . could be appropriate” (Baldwin); “exercise authority over” (Schreiner)	“exercise authority over”	“to assume authority,” or possibly “to dominate”	teaching that tries to get the upper hand; “to teach with the intent to dominate a man”
Ptolemy in <i>Tetrabiblos</i> 3.13.10 (AD 127-148)	to control, to dominate	to control, to dominate; “dominates”	to dominate	to dominate; “dominates”
Moeris Atticista, <i>Lexicon Atticum</i> (2 nd cent. AD)	to exercise one’s own jurisdiction	to exercise one’s own jurisdiction; “to have independent jurisdiction”	-	-

any case, the quotations identify each scholar’s translation of the term in the context of its occurrence.

Is there any consensus about these contemporary usages? Yes, at least to a point. There is agreement that the usage by Ptolemy means “to dominate.” Another general agreement is that the English term “authority” can be used in translating 1 Tim 2:12. The self-oriented nuance of *authentēō* also has a strong presence, although it is debatable whether this is agreed by all.

Another major insight is that, contrary to traditional complementarianism, “exercise authority over” or “have authority over” is not the obvious or regular meaning of the term during Paul’s day. This insight is ironic since the above table implements complementarian data as well as that of others.¹⁹

What is also insightful is that there are several possible meanings of the term. As Andreas Köstenberger has rightly put it, “Word studies of the term ἀυθεντείν [*authentēin*] . . . in extrabiblical literature . . . are able to supply a range of possible meanings. As one considers the term’s meaning in its specific context in 1 Tim 2:12, one should seek to determine the *probable* meaning of ἀυθεντείν [*authentēin*] with the help of contextual and syntactical studies.”²⁰ If this is the case, however, how can another author simply say, “The recent studies of H. Scott Baldwin and Al Wolters show the term signifies a *positive use* of authority?”²¹ No study has actually shown this.

The table also reveals that it is erroneous to shrink all possible meanings into a single generic concept so that any additional

nuance is immediately discounted. This is the error of Grudem, who wrote, “Whenever we have seen this verb occur, it takes a neutral sense, ‘have authority’ or ‘exercise authority’ . . .”²² Six years later, Grudem revised this conclusion, saying the word’s sense is “*primarily positive* or neutral.”²³ Of course, neither of these conclusions is accurate. As the above table demonstrates, few, if any occurrences denote or connote a “positive” use of authority,²⁴ and a “neutral” use of authority also does not clearly appear to be “primary.”

Finally, it is an error to write, “What we can say with certainty is that we have no instances of a pejorative use of the verb before the fourth century AD.”²⁵ It can easily be argued that all of the instances above, with the possible exceptions of Atticista and Aristonicus, are pejorative (or negative) uses.²⁶ If even *one* of these cases was possibly pejorative, surely it is a stretch to declare a state of “certainty” regarding *all* of them!

At the very least, all of this shows that complementarians are noticeably confused about what complementarian studies (among others) of *authentēō* have shown. While Baldwin’s study remains a standard resource for many scholars, there is no consensus on the specific conclusions it supports.²⁷ Thus, Baldwin’s study is said by complementarians to show that the term has a “positive” sense (Schreiner), “neutral” sense (Grudem A), and a “positive or neutral sense” (Grudem B). The reason for such confusion is not that Baldwin’s study has been poorly conducted; rather, confusion has resulted from applying

Baldwin's research to questions it is not equipped to answer. As the *Table 1* comparison shows,

No matter which set of data one appeals to, *there is no scholarly basis for asserting that comparative literature demonstrates that αὐθεντέω [authentēō] in the first-century meant, as a whole, a "neutral" or "positive" exercise of authority.* To assert otherwise is to ignore the collective results of the most exhaustive and relevant research produced on this matter.²⁸

Etymology: Cognates and morphology

Having outlined some indicators of what *authentēō* did not mean, it is appropriate to ask just what it *did* mean.

The most important and obvious place to answer this question is the immediate context, and that means reading 1 Tim 2. But before turning to that epistle, there is another area of research that should be addressed: etymology.

Etymology is a somewhat "clumsy tool for discerning meaning."²⁹ It is useful, however, "especially in attempts to understand the meanings of *hapax legomena*."³⁰ One field of etymological study is the study of cognates. For example, the verbal and adjectival cognates of the noun "friend" are "befriend" and "friendly," respectively. It makes sense that if one wants to know the meaning of one word, one can consult its verbal, nominal, or adjectival cognates for help. If I knew only the meaning of "friend" and wanted to know the meaning of "friendly," I would be right to infer that it means something to the effect of "being or behaving as a friend." Of course, some cognates do not share related meanings, but many (perhaps most) do. That is one of the chief reasons exegetical commentaries contain numerous studies of cognates.

As it turns out, the verb *authentēō* has a nominal cognate, *authentēs*. What did *authentēs* mean around Paul's time? According to Albert Wolters's definitive study on the word, it meant "murderer," "master," or "doer."³¹ This is unsurprising, since both the lexical survey and *Table 1* indicate that *authentēō* had a negative, power/controlling, or self-oriented nuance.³² Does this suggest that (the infinitive of) *authentēō* might mean "to murder," "to master," or "to do"? Possibly, although one cannot always directly convert the meaning of cognates into an equivalent for the related word in question. Indeed, some options are more plausible than others, especially given the context of 1 Tim 2 and the parallel uses of the term (see *Table 1*). Nevertheless, the meanings of *authentēs* do shed some light, and it would be a "mistake to assert that, due to the lack of full and direct correspondence, the pejorative connotations often associated with αὐθέντης [*authentēs*] cannot correspond to pejorative connotations in its verbal cognate αὐθεντέω [*authentēō*]."³³ That is, the correspondence between *authentēō* and *authentēs* may be loose, but correspondence exists and must be taken into account.

Another field of etymology is morphology, the study of morphemes (e.g., prefixes, roots, stems, endings, suffixes). When one studies the morphology of *authentēō*, taking notice of the initial morpheme, a striking pattern among similar NT words emerges:

authadēs = "self-satisfied"
authairetos = "of one's own accord"

automatos = "by itself"
autarkeia = "self-sufficiency"
autarkēs = "self-sufficient"
autokatakritos = "self-condemned"
autocheir = "with one's own hand"

Furthermore, the third person pronoun *autos* often functions as what grammarians call an "adjectival intensive,"³⁴ which focuses on the self (translated in the singular as "himself," "herself," or "itself"). The verbs *aucheō* ("I boast") and *auxanō* ("I cause") similarly direct attention to one's self. Thus, a significant number of NT words beginning with *au-* focus on the self. Is this mere coincidence (and thus irrelevant)? Possibly. But it is more likely that Paul may have been "morphologically motivated"³⁵ to use *authentēō* in 1 Tim 2:12 for its self-oriented nuance. Combined with the scholarly consensus that *authentēō* in 1 Tim 2:12 involves a root concept of "authority,"³⁶ it is reasonable to infer that *authentēō* may have been used to describe a kind of authority that is self-initiating or self-asserting.

Independent research has concluded as much. One scholar describes it as "the active wielding of influence (with respect to a person) or the initiation of an action."³⁷ Several lexicons contain similar definitions, such as, "of one who acts on his [or her] own authority,"³⁸ "to assume a stance of independent authority,"³⁹ and "to *act of oneself*."⁴⁰ Translators as well have gone this route, such as the NIV ("assume authority"), KJV ("usurp authority"), CEB ("control her husband"), MSG ("take over and tell the men what to do"), VOICE ("teach in a way that wrenches authority from a man"), and others.

Therefore, there is good reason to believe that *authentēō* around Paul's time carried some notion of self-oriented authority, exercise of power, or action. The final question that must be asked, however, is if any of this fits the original context of 1 Tim 2:12.

1 Timothy 2:12 and the immediate context

The preceding verse, v. 11, says, "Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness." This is noticeably the *very opposite* of self-assertion or initiation. Since v. 11 is directly connected to v. 12 by the conjunction *de* (unfortunately excluded by almost all translations), it makes sense that the author is continuing the flow of thought initiated earlier in the context. In fact, in v. 9, Paul encourages women to dress "with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire"—all of which draw attention toward themselves. Finally, in vv. 13-14, Paul continues to humble certain Ephesian women by pointing to the humble origins of all women; how ironic that these domineering, self-asserting women of the Ephesian church, who had trouble sitting under the teaching of men,⁴¹ would forget that it is man from whom they (existentially) initially originated! Paul is not calling for decontextualized universal "gender roles,"⁴² but for immediate humility and a stop to inappropriate behavior (see *Figure 1*).

At the very least, then, Paul is trying to correct an ungodly attitude manifested by some Ephesian women. The whole of ch. 2 is filled with corrective measures for unacceptable conduct.

the immediate context . . . is generally "negative." In the chapter, Paul provides . . . numerous correctives to poor

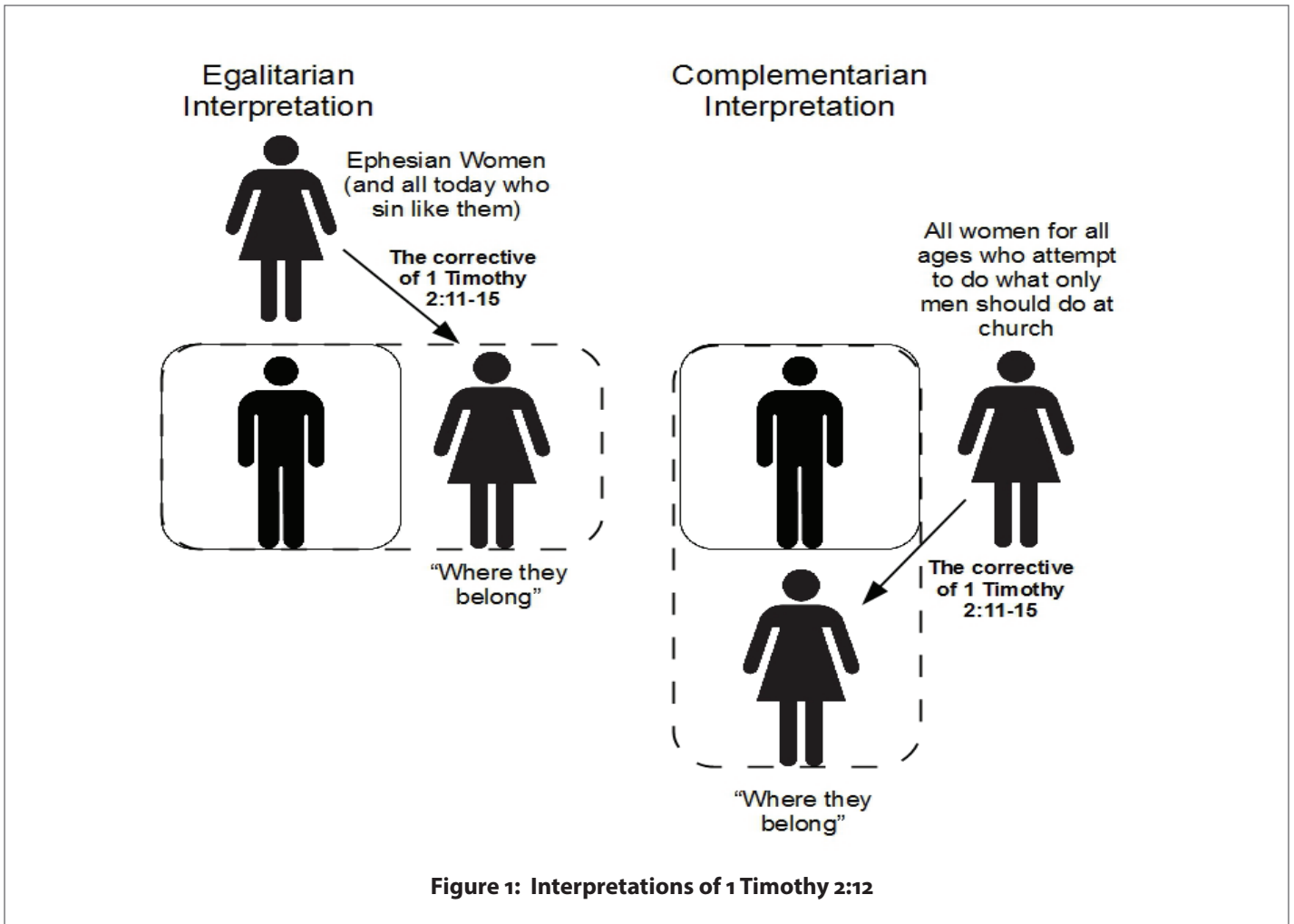


Figure 1: Interpretations of 1 Timothy 2:12

behaviors—some given in the form of grammatically negative commands (e.g., “without quarrelling,” “not with braided hair”). Verse 12 is another such prohibition of ungodly behavior. To put it bluntly, it is contrary to the immediate context to suggest that Paul is prohibiting a *good* behavior in 2:12.⁴³

Combined with contemporary usages (see Table 1 and Figure 1), it is almost certain that *authentēō* does not signify “a positive use of authority”⁴⁴ in 1 Tim 2:12.

Another contextual point is that Paul corrects the specific *manner* of behavior, not general activities: The entirety of 1 Tim 2 testifies to this fact—from the way that prayer is conducted (vv. 1-8), to proper dress (v. 9), to the manner of learning (vv. 11-12). There is consensus that the *how* question is Paul’s concern—including in v. 11. Schreiner says, “The focus of the command is not on women learning, but *the manner* and *mode* of their learning,”⁴⁵ and Moo, “For it is not the *fact* that they are to learn, but the *manner* in which they are to learn that concerns Paul . . . the stress falls not on the command to watch it, but on the manner in which it is to be done.”⁴⁶ This fact is crucial, since v. 12 cannot be separated from

v. 11. Not only are they syntactically connected by the conjunction *δὲ* [*de*],⁴⁷ but they also share the use of the term *ἡσυχία* [*hēsuchia*]⁴⁸—which is used to denote a particular manner of behavior in v. 11.⁴⁸ Therefore, the immediate context requires that Paul’s prohibition in v. 12 is addressing the way in which women learn, *not* Christian “ministries” and “activities”⁴⁹ in general.⁵⁰

As I. Howard Marshall remarks, “*αὐθεντεῖν* [*authentēin*] as a reference to ‘authority’ (leadership) unrelated to teaching would exceed the scope of the discussion initiated at vs. 11. It is, therefore, more likely that the verb characterizes the nature of the teaching rather than the role of women in church leadership in general.”⁵¹ Similarly, Rebecca Groothuis writes,

It seems forced and unreasonable to view 1 Timothy 2:12 as denying women the ordinary and appropriate exercise of authority. It appears far more likely that the prohibition refers to a negative and harmful use of authority—which, in principle, would be prohibited for men as well as for women. . . .⁵²

Indeed, “it is hard to imagine Paul disapproving of the extension of his commands here to both genders, as if women *could* pray while angry and divisive or men *could* flaunt extravagant clothing

and ignore righteous living!”⁵³ This observation highlights an important principle of hermeneutics: instruction given to one sex does not mean that it does not apply to the other sex. (In that case, the Israelite wives, for example, would be free to covet their neighbor’s husbands, since the Decalogue only prohibits men from coveting their neighbors’ wives!)⁵⁴

In summary, then, the context indicates that some Ephesian women were behaving in a particularly ungodly manner as they were taught by other (predominantly male) Christians. As many scholars have noted, the only imperative in these verses (and in vv. 5-15, in fact) is “let a woman learn” (*manthanetō*), which may give us a better picture of Paul’s focus.⁵⁵ The Ephesian women were disruptive (possibly in the same way as in 1 Cor 14:34-35) or overly-assertive instead of submissive students; “abandon worldliness, get off your high horse, and act more Christlike!” might be a loose way of summarizing Paul’s overarching communicative goal in 1 Tim 2:9-15.

The phrasing of 1 Timothy 2:12

Before going on to observe translations of 1 Tim 2:12, one final matter must be addressed, and that is the relationship between *authentēin* and *didaskein* (“to teach”), which Paul mentions in tandem in 1 Tim 2:12. Philip Payne (and others) contends that Paul was communicating *one* concept by the use of two words while Andreas Köstenberger (and others) contends that Paul was communicating *two* concepts by the use of two words.⁵⁶ This debate is visually summarized in Figure 2.

This particular discussion is nuanced. For instance, the degree of specificity assigned to each word may not be so binarily

summarized. It is quite possible that both terms *contribute* to a single concept, meaning that the words retain some degree of distinctiveness while being semantically joined. English speakers do this frequently. I can say that the concert was “loud and obnoxious” (or “neither loud nor obnoxious”) to describe a single experience without absolutely collapsing the meanings of “loud” and “obnoxious.” The reason I add “obnoxious” is to add a shade of meaning (either denotively or connotatively) that is not captured by the word “loud” alone. At the same time, however, “loud” and “obnoxious” complement each other to describe a unified, singular experience without losing their distinctiveness. It is often the case that as more words are added, more shades of meaning are also added.⁵⁷ That is why languages have multiple words with similar, but not identical, definitions; words are like tools that fit some circumstances better than others. All of this suggests that the traditional dichotomy between “one concept or two” in 1 Tim 2:12 may be too simplistic. Figure 3 illustrates potential alternatives.⁵⁸

Discerning among these alternatives depends on the style of the author and intended precision. In the case of 1 Tim 2, Craig Blomberg notices something significant:

Paul seems to have a propensity to use pairs of largely synonymous words to say just about everything important twice (or, occasionally, four times)! Thus we find in verse 1 “petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving”; in verse 2a, “kings and all those in authority”; in verse 2b, “peaceful and quiet,” and “godliness and holiness”; in verse 3, “good and acceptable” (KJV; TNIV, “pleases God”); in verse

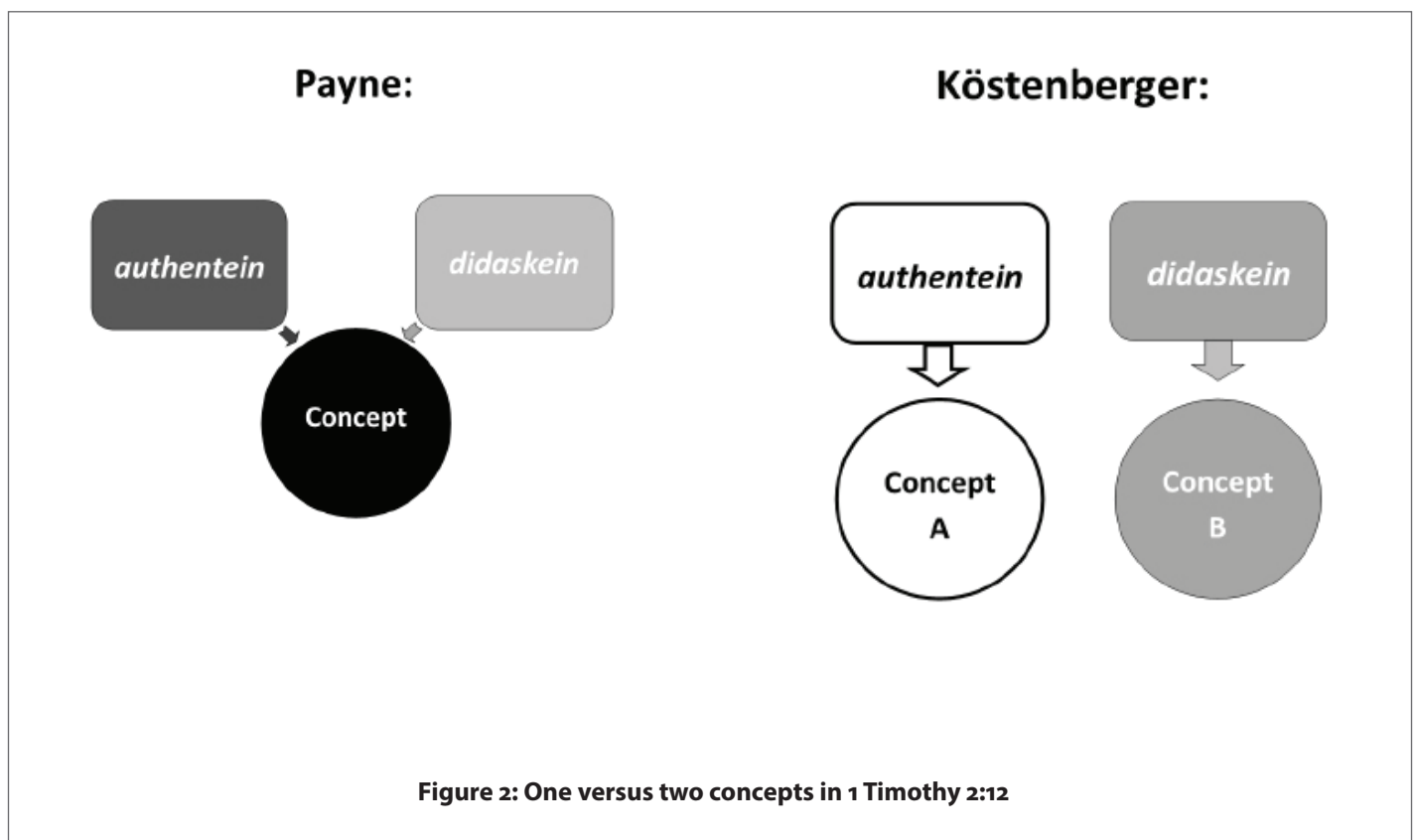


Figure 2: One versus two concepts in 1 Timothy 2:12

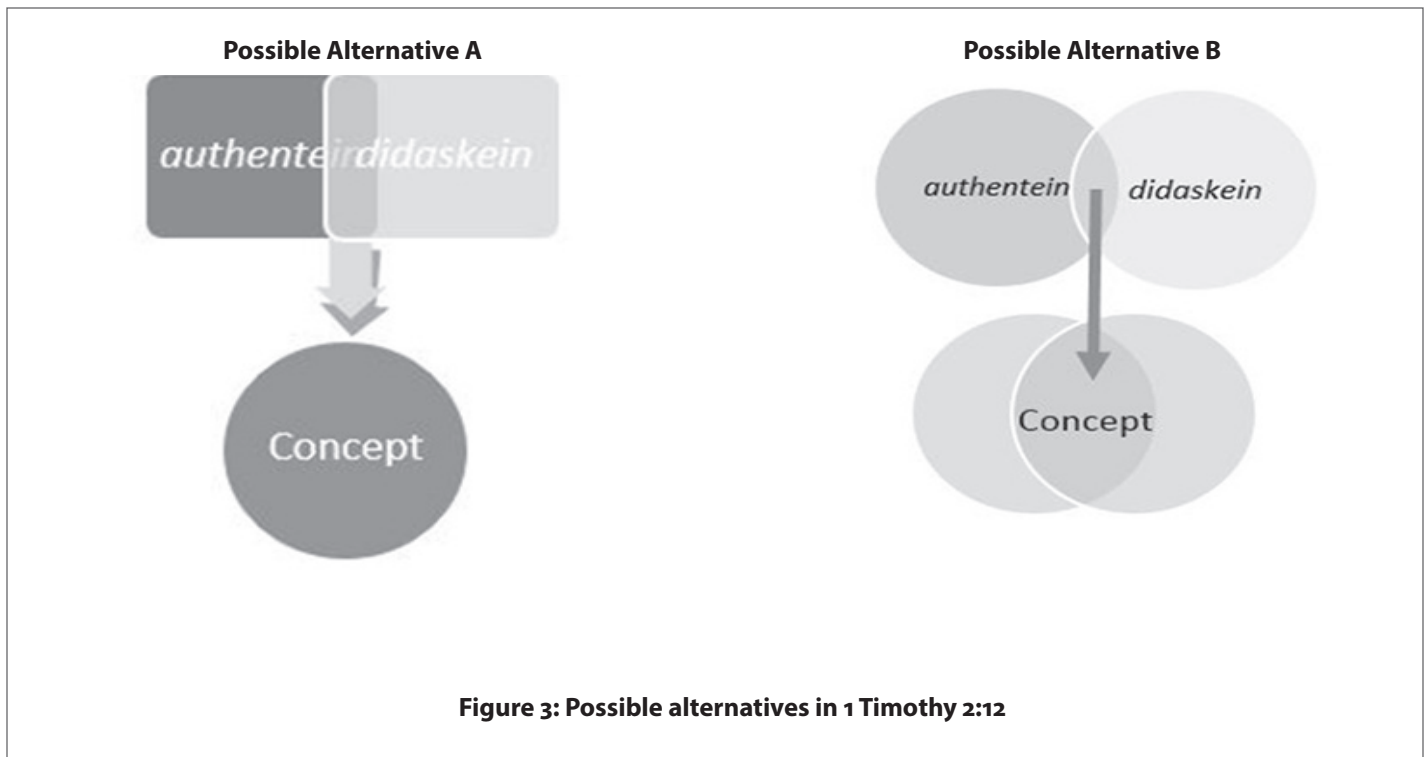


Figure 3: Possible alternatives in 1 Timothy 2:12

4, “to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth”; in verse 7a, “a herald and an apostle”; verse 7b, “I am telling the truth, I am not lying”; in verse 8, “without anger or disputing”; in verse 9, “decency and propriety”; and in verse 11, “quietness and full submission.” With this many examples of the pattern, we might well expect to find a similar pair in verse 12.⁵⁹

This does not mean that Paul was being entirely redundant in his language (as if *authentēin* was meaningless or devoid of nuance), but that the use of two words to describe one concept in v. 12 appears possible, indeed likely.

The tendency of translators is to avoid directly addressing this matter by aiming for a “word for word” correspondence, leaving it up to readers to decide just how closely related the two terms are (see *Table 2*). Other versions do intentionally separate (ASV, KJV, NEB, REB) or combine (ISV, MSG, VOICE) the two words.

Given the complexity of this issue, it is no wonder that there is little consensus. Nevertheless, given Blomberg’s observations, the arguments of Payne, and the fact that Paul seems to be addressing a larger experience of women who are learning in 1 Tim 2:11-12, it is more likely that, between the two poles of “one concept or two,” *authentēin* is used with *didaskein* “together to convey a single more specific idea.”⁶⁰

The quiet demeanor and recognition of authority which are to characterize the learner are contrasted with teaching in a manner which is heavy-handed and abuses authority. “αὐθεντεῖν [*authentēin*] as a reference to ‘authority’ (leadership) unrelated to teaching would exceed the scope of the discussion initiated at vs. 11. It is, therefore, more likely that the verb characterizes the

nature of the teaching rather than the role of women in church leadership in general.”⁶¹

Many complementarians (perhaps unwittingly) agree. D. A. Carson believes the verse addresses “a church-recognized teaching authority.”⁶² Similarly, Schreiner says “1 Timothy 2:11-15 prohibits only authoritative teaching.”⁶³ Whether Paul is addressing a “teaching authority” or “authoritative teaching,” it is clear that several complementarians⁶⁴ believe a single concept—with perhaps two distinctive aspects—is being addressed. Thus, the ASV, KJV, NEB, REB and similar translations establish too much separation in their renderings.

Translating *authentēō* in 1 Timothy 2:12

As observed previously, evidence strongly suggests that the use of *authentēō* in 1 Tim 2:12 is “pejorative” or “negative”—so much, in fact, that even the greatest critics of this position concede to its inherent possibility. For example, Wolters says, “There is a widespread lexicographical consensus that *authentēō* here means ‘have authority over’ and/or ‘domineer.’”⁶⁵ Similarly, Schreiner says, “Nonetheless, in context *authentēin* can have a negative meaning. We should not rule out the possibility that the context will incline us toward the meaning ‘domineer’ or ‘play the tyrant’ rather than ‘exercise authority.’”⁶⁶ It is therefore unsurprising that translations tend to bring out the negative sense of the verse (see *Table 3*).

Cindy Westfall’s recent study has made this possibility a near certainty. After one of the most thorough linguistic and lexicographical studies to date, she concludes:

The most important conclusion of this paper is that, according to the 60 samples in the database, when αὐθεντέω occurs with a personal/animate actor and a

Table 2: Phrasing 1 Timothy 2:12

Trans.	Two-Concept Leaning -----	-----	-----One-Concept Leaning
AMP		“to teach or to have authority”	
ASV	“to teach, nor to have dominion”		
CEB		“to teach or to control”	
CEV		“to teach or to tell men what to do”	
ESV		“to teach or to exercise authority”	
ISV		“in the area of teaching, I am not allowing a woman to instigate conflict”	
KJV	“to teach, nor to usurp authority”		
NASB		“to teach or exercise authority”	
NCV		“to teach or to have authority”	
NIV 1984		“to teach or to have authority”	
NIV 2011		“to teach or to assume authority”	
NEB	“to be a teacher, nor must woman domineer”		
NET		“to teach or exercise authority”	
NLT		“teach men or have authority over them”	
NRSV		“to teach or to have authority”	
MSG			“take over and tell the men what to do”
REB	“to teach, nor to usurp authority”		
TLB		“teach men or lord it over them”	
TNIV		“to teach or to assume authority”	
VOICE			“to teach in a way that wrenches authority”

personal/animate goal, a negative evaluation is given unless the actor has a divine or ultimate authority.⁶⁷

Note that *no* translation even attempts to bring out a positive rendering (e.g., “I do not permit women to teach the gospel authoritatively”; “I do not permit women to authoritatively teach truths at church”; “I do not permit women to teach the Bible or properly exercise authority”; “I do not permit women to properly teach, nor to properly exercise authority”). The reason for this is obvious: such translations are impossible to square with the context, have unchristian overtones, and border the theologically absurd.

But 1 Tim 2:12 is considered by many to be *the* biblical case against women pastors;⁶⁸ its traditional interpretation *must* be championed if men alone are to remain behind the pulpit. Otherwise, the case against women in ministry is jeopardized.⁶⁹ In an attempt to salvage this “big gun” against women pastors, many scholars have tried to undermine the very possibility that *authentēō* can be “negative” in 1 Tim 2:12. One such attempt is Köstenberger’s study of syntactic parallels in the book, *Women in the Church*. Briefly summarized, the study shows that, given the construction of 1 Tim 2:12, both *didaskein* (“to teach”) and *authentēin* should be “viewed either positively or negatively by the writer or speaker.”⁷⁰ And since *didaskō* is usually used in a

positive sense in the NT, Köstenberger deduces that *authentēō* must be positive as well.

Aside from the fact that this argument assumes a stark (and therefore erroneous) separation between these terms,⁷¹ and aside from the fact that the conclusion of this argument runs contrary to virtually all other evidence (including context, which may be the most important evidence), there are other problems. Most notably, the significance of the “positive” sense of *didaskō* is overstated. There are several “negative” uses of the term that tend to go unnoticed, such as Matt 5:19a, Titus 1:11, Rev 2:14, 20.⁷² It is well within the range of NT Greek that *didaskein* (an infinitival form of *didaskō*) can be viewed negatively in 1 Tim 2:12. This does not necessarily mean *false* teaching is being addressed, especially since the focus of 1 Tim 2:11-12 is on behavior and the action of teaching, not the content of teaching. Köstenberger and Schreiner both err in assuming that “to teach” negatively automatically means “to teach error.”⁷³ There are obviously a number of ways one can teach in a negative, unacceptable manner without teaching error!⁷⁴

Furthermore, the purpose of the NT itself is to proclaim the *good* news of salvation; it is no surprise that “teach” in the NT is typically viewed positively. Whether the teaching (noun)

Table 3: Translating 1 Timothy 2:12

Trans	Positive	Neutral	Negative
AMP		“to teach or to have authority”	
ASV			“to teach, nor to have dominion”
CEB			“to teach or to control”
CEV			“to teach or to tell men what to do”
ESV		“to teach or to exercise authority”	
ISV		“in the area of teaching, I am not allowing a woman to instigate conflict”	
KJV			“to teach, nor to usurp authority”
NASB		“to teach or exercise authority”	
NCV		“to teach or to have authority”	
NIV 1984		“to teach or to have authority”	
NIV 2011			“to teach or to assume authority”
NEB			“to be a teacher, nor must woman domineer”
NET		“to teach or exercise authority”	
NLT		“teach men or have authority over them”	
NRSV		“to teach or to have authority”	
MSG			“take over and tell the men what to do”
REB			“to teach, nor to usurp authority”
TLB			“teach men or lord it over them”
TNIV			“to teach or to assume authority”
VOICE			“to teach in a way that wrenches authority”

behind *didaskō* (verb) in 1 Tim 2:12 is theology, biblical studies, cooking or otherwise is irrelevant since, as noted above, the focus is on the action and manner. Paul does not here seem to address specifically what is taught, but only how teaching occurs. (This is why it is baffling to see entire denominations and organizations forbid women from teaching biblical studies and theology—while allowing other subjects—on the basis of 1 Tim 2:12.⁷⁵ It is equally baffling to believe that Paul would have effectively *prohibited the proclamation of the gospel* in this way.)

Conclusion: Some historical and pastoral reflections

A balanced re-examination of 1 Tim 2:12 and studies about this passage suggests a remarkably unremarkable conclusion: today’s standard lexicons and Bible translations do well both in rendering the passage and in establishing the range of meaning for *authentēō*. The average Christian consulting Louw and Nida or BDAG and reading the immediate context in the NIV or KJV is adequately positioned to interpret the passage properly. (No “expert testimony” needed here!) This should come as a great relief to those intimidated by scholarship or who simply want to know “what the author is saying.”

What is remarkable is how far theological constituencies are willing to go in order to protect tradition, enforce patriarchy,

and retain control in the Christian community. This is especially true regarding 1 Tim 2:12, and the status quo is not helped. Internal studies conducted for no other purpose than to affirm the traditional interpretation are hailed as nails in the egalitarian coffin but remain dubious or self-rebutting. Cries for context only come home to roost and ultimately threaten to unshackle the sacred chains of “gender roles.” Hermeneutical stability ends up not so stable after all.⁷⁶

Historically, it is lamentable that the (patriarchal) lens of interpreters has led to a patriarchal reading of 1 Tim 2:12 in the first place. This is no surprise given the influence of traditional ideologies about gender and the tendency of fallen human beings to hold on to positions of power. But, one may wonder why in *this* age such an erroneous reading still exists—especially in churches dedicated to the Bible’s teaching? If today’s standard works and translations should lead one to the interpretation espoused in this essay, why have they not in many other spheres? Undoubtedly, there are a number of reasons—and they stretch beyond the scope of this essay. One, however, is worth mentioning here.

There may be nothing more influential to the spiritual and biblical thought-life of the believing community than the biblical texts themselves—that is, the default translations of Christians.⁷⁷ Sermons, readings, prayers, private study, classes,

etc., are saturated with biblical texts, and these texts—in the English words of particular translations—have a tremendous impact on how Christians construct theologies, make decisions, and view life.⁷⁸

One might have noticed a trend in the above observations about 1 Tim 2:12 and translations: three of the most influential English translations in the past half-century all contain the misleading rendering of “have authority” or “exercise authority” (NIV 1984, NRSV, and ESV). With the NIV (1984) as a global standard for English-speakers, the NRSV as the default “academic” translation used in the public university, and the ESV as a new standard for conservative evangelical circles and seminaries, it is no surprise that many (perhaps most) Christians today are puzzled when they realize “authority” in 1 Tim 2:12 is a word used nowhere else in their Bibles. This is simply the fruit of what has been sowed.

It is true that the KJV has not completely faded out of use, that the original NIV rendering of 1 Tim 2:12 has been positively revised in 2011 (and previously in the TNIV), and that numerous new translations capture the tone of the context. Nevertheless, Christian egalitarians are still working against the tide on this issue. And while it would be reasonable simply to spread the use of gender-neutral (or gender-inclusive) translations in our communities, churches, and families, two of the best (the NRSV and NLT) oddly contain “have authority,”⁷⁹ and therefore do little to serve in this regard.

Does the question at hand require the consultation of experts after all? Perhaps to a degree; proper use of the Greek and Hebrew OT/NT is always preferable, and that requires special education. *Someone* needs to make it clear that “exercise/have authority” in 1 Tim 2:12 is a misleading translation. But it is important for teachers not to claim a monopoly on theological truth when wading through these sensitive texts, nor to leave brothers and sisters in Christ in a hopeless position if they do not seek such specialized training. In the end, prayerful discernment is needed as much as sound, critical scholarship.

Notes

1. The verb is used as an infinitive (*authentēin*) in 1 Tim 2:12.
2. E.g., Armin Panning, “AYΘENTEIN—A Word Study,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 78 (1981): 185-91; Carroll Osburn, “AYΘENTEΩ (1 Timothy 2:12),” *ResQ* 25 (1982): 1-12; George Knight III, “AYΘENTEΩ in Reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *NTS* 30 (1984): 143-57; Catherine Clark Kroeger, “1 Timothy 2.12: A Classicist’s View,” in Alvera Mickelsen, ed., *Women, Authority and the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986), 225-44; Leland Wilshire, “The TLG Computer and Further Reference to *authentēo* in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *NTS* 34 (1988): 120-34; Paul W. Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry (1 Timothy 2:11-15),” *EvQ* 61 (1989): 225-38; Kevin Giles, “Response,” in A. Nichols, ed., *The Bible and Women’s Ministry* (Canberra: Acorn, 1990), 65-87; Timothy J. Harris, “Why Did Paul Mention Eve’s Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett’s Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2,” *EvQ* 62 (1990): 335-52; Gloria N. Redekop, “Let the Women Learn: 1 Timothy 2.8-15 Reconsidered,” *SR* 19 (1990): 235-45; D. P. Kuske, “An Exegetical Brief on 1 Timothy 2.12 (οὐδὲ ἀυθεντεῖν ἀνδρός),” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 88 (1991): 64-67; Leland Edward Wilshire, “1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited: A Reply to Paul W. Barnett and Timothy J. Harris,” *EvQ* 65 (1993): 43-55; Andrew C. Perriman, “What Eve Did, What Women Shouldn’t Do: The Meaning of *authentēo* in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *TynBul* 44:1 (1993): 129-42; Albert Wolters, “A Semantic Study of ἀυθεντης and its Derivatives,” *JGRChJ* 1 (2000): 145-75; Robert

W. Wall, “1 Timothy 2.9-15 Reconsidered (Again),” *BBR* 14 (2004): 81-103; Albert Wolters, “Αυθεντης And Its Cognates In Biblical Greek,” *JETS* 52, no. 4 (2009): 719-29; Henry Baldwin, “An Important Word: ἀυθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12,” in Andreas Köstenberger and Thomas Schreiner, eds., *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 39-52; Leland Wilshire, *Insight into Two Biblical Passages: Anatomy of a Prohibition 1 Timothy 2:12, the TLG Computer, and the Christian Church* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2010); Cynthia Long Westfall, “The Meaning of ἀυθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *JGRChJ* 10 (2014): 138-73. Cf. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, Appendix 7, and Payne, *Man and Woman*, chs. 16-22. Please note that I wrote this article independently of Westfall’s recent *JGRChJ* publication (cited above); we apparently spent four years researching the same topic without being aware of it! I became aware of her article in the first week of March 2015 but had enough time to at least revise this footnote and cite Westfall’s article in a few key places below prior to publication in *Priscilla Papers*. More importantly, I am glad to know that Westfall’s independent study has only served to re-affirm the basic conclusions of this article.

3. I’m primarily thinking of the NIV, which read “exercise authority” in 1973, 1978, and 1984 and changed to “assume authority” in the 2005 TNIV and 2011 NIV.

4. When necessary, I will reference my own forthcoming essay, “Revisiting ἀυθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12: What Does the Extant Data Really Show?” *The Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2015). Though that article is significantly longer and more technical, the present article gives more focus to the practical outworking of NT translation and includes a substantial amount of distinct material.

5. BDAG.

6. Barb Friberg, Neva Mille, and Timothy Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Bloomington: Tafford, 2005), 81.

7. J. P. Louw and Eugene Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1.473-4.

8. James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997).

9. Barclay Newman, *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993), 28.

10. Henry Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1996), 132.

11. James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham: Logos Research Systems, 2009), 17.

12. Mark House and Maurice Robinson, eds., *An Analytical Lexicon of New Testament Greek* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2012), 54.

13. Cf. Westfall, “The Meaning of ἀυθεντέω,” 171: “A basic semantic concept that accounts for the occurrences of ἀυθεντέω in the data base of 60 verbs is: the autonomous use or possession of unrestricted force.”

14. To be sure, there are over 1,600 *hapaxes* in the NT (1,672 in NA²⁸/UBS⁵), so one must not exaggerate the significance of such a term based solely on its infrequency.

15. Cf. Craig Blomberg and Jennifer Markley, *Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 119.

16. E.g., H. Scott Baldwin, “Complete List of Eighty-Two Examples of *Authentēo* (“to exercise authority”) in Ancient Greek Literature,” Appendix 7 in Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*. Grudem is equally misleading in his essays and essay titles, such as “Does *kephalē* (‘head’) Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples,” in George Knight III, *The Role Relationships of Men and Women: The New Testament Teaching* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), republished in *TJ* 6 (1985): 38-59; cf. “The Meaning of ‘Head’ in the Bible,” *JBMW* 1, no. 3 (June 1996): 8.

17. This has been a staple phrase by Bart Ehrman and some other Bible critics in the past twenty years and, despite having been refuted by numerous textual and biblical scholars (e.g., Stanley Porter, Dan Wallace, James White, et al.), the statistic (and its complementary statistic, “3 variants per word”) continues to be abused in countless publications.

18. The table data comes from Baldwin, “An Important Word”; Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15,” in *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* (ed. Andreas Köstenberger and Thomas Schreiner; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005); Belleville, “An Egalitarian Perspective,” in *Two Views of Women in Ministry* (ed. James R. Beck; 2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 96-7, and idem, “Teaching and Usurping Authority,” 214-15; Payne, *Man and Woman*, ch. 20; Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, Appendix 7.

19. Strikingly, Baldwin does not even list “exercise authority” or “have authority” as options in his study (“An Important Word,” 51). See “Revisiting ἀθεντέω,” footnote 76; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 373.

20. Andreas J. Köstenberger, “Gender Passages in the NT: Hermeneutical Fallacies Critiqued,” *WTJ* 56, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 259-83.

21. Schreiner, “A Response to Linda Belleville,” in *Two Views*, 108, emphasis mine.

22. Wayne Grudem, “An Open Letter to Egalitarians,” *JBMW* 3, no. 1 (March 1998): 3.

23. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 317, emphasis mine.

24. Contrast both of Grudem’s positions with that of William Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 126: “Most agree that its basic meaning is either the neutral ‘to exercise authority’ or the negative ‘to domineer’ in the sense of exerting authority in a coercive manner.”

25. Baldwin, “An Important Word,” 49; See also Wolters, “Semantic Study,” 155, and idem, “Αυθεντης and Its Cognates,” 727.

26. I generally use “pejorative” and “negatively” interchangeably. “Pejorative” typically means “deprecatory” or “slighting.” “Negative” is sometimes used more broadly. Many articles on *authentēō* do not define “pejorative” and “negatively” in strict, technical definitions because the terms are rarely so exact.

27. This should probably not even be the case, given the methodological problems of Baldwin’s study. See Westfall, “The Meaning of ἀθεντέω.”

28. Hübner, “Revisiting ἀθεντέω.”

29. D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 33.

30. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 33.

31. Wolters, “A Semantic Study,” 145-75; see also idem, “Αυθεντης and Its Cognates,” 719-29.

32. What is surprising is that Wolters misinterprets the data produced by his own study. See the section “Etymology: Cognates and Wolters’ Research” in Hübner, “Revisiting ἀθεντέω.”

33. Hübner, “Revisiting ἀθεντέω.”

34. See, for example, Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 348-49; Jamin Hübner, *A Concise Greek Grammar* (forthcoming).

35. See Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 48.

36. Cf. Baldwin, “An Important Word,” 51: “The root meaning involves the concept of authority.”

37. Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 138.

38. Friberg et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 81.

39. BDAG.

40. Strong, *A Concise Dictionary*, 17.

41. Teaching appears to be the immediate context of 1 Tim 2:11-12. And the above statement assumes—upon evidence (note, for example, the assumption that elders are men in Titus 1 and 1 Tim 3)—that

first-century teachers in the church were typically male (though not exhaustively male—note, e.g., Prisca in 2 Tim 4:19, and cf. Rebecca Groothuis, *Good News for Women* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997], 215).

42. Even if Paul was addressing “gender roles,” and even if Paul was appealing to the “creation order” to substantiate them, the appeal to “the creation order” does nothing to establish universality. All ethical commands and instruction, regardless of scope and temporality, can (and must) be grounded in creation in some way to be legitimate. For it is God’s permanent establishment of creation and all of its laws, regularities, and natures that allows people to administer any kind of ethical judgment, from the most circumstantial and temporary to the most eternal and binding. Cf. James DeYoung, *Women in Ministry: Neither Egalitarian Nor Complementary* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 65: “an author may cite a universal to support a non-universal—something historically and temporally limited.” I would go further and suggest that this is the norm rather than the exception in NT theology.

43. Hübner, “Revisiting ἀθεντέω.” This conclusion is particularly favorable since, as Payne remarks in *Man and Woman*, 379, “Either ‘to assume authority’ or ‘to dominate’ makes a better contrast with ‘quietness’ in 1 Tim 2:12 than ‘to exercise authority’ or ‘to have authority.’ Furthermore, either ‘to assume authority’ or ‘to dominate’ makes a better contrast with ‘to be in full submission.’” Cf. Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 224.

44. Schreiner, “A Response to Linda Belleville,” in *Two Views*, 108. Cf. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 317; Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence Structure in 1 Timothy 2:12,” in *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* (ed. Andreas Köstenberger and Thomas Schreiner; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 96-98.

45. Schreiner, “An Interpretation,” 97.

46. Douglas J. Moo, “What Does it Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men?” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Wheaton: Crossway, 2006), 183. Cf. Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 77; James Hurlley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 200-1; Stanley Grenz and Denise Kjesbo, *Women in the Church* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 127-8; Payne, *Man and Woman*, ch. 20.

47. Whether the term functions contrastively (“but” in NET, NASB, and KJV) or connectively (“and”) is irrelevant at this point.

48. Schreiner, “An Interpretation,” 98; Hurlley, *Man and Woman*, 200; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 315; Linda Belleville, “Exegetical Fallacies in Interpreting 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” *Priscilla Papers* 17, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 4-10; Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 77-80.

49. Moo, “What Does it Mean,” 180.

50. Hübner, “Revisiting ἀθεντέω.”

51. I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 460.

52. Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 215.

53. Craig Blomberg, “Gender Roles in Marriage and Ministry,” in *Reconsidering Gender* (ed. Myk Habets and Beulah Wood; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 56. Cf. Thomas Geer Jr., “Admonitions to Women in 1 Timothy 2:8-15,” in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity* (ed. Carroll Osburn; Joplin: College, 1995), 1:294: “Paul is just as against men domineering as he is women (e.g., Eph. 5:21; 1 Cor. 11:11, 12). In Ephesus, he is facing the issue of domineering women”; I. Howard Marshall, “Women in Ministry,” in *Women, Ministry, and the Gospel* (ed. Mark Husbands and Timothy Larsen; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 77: “If it tells women not to domineer, the same lesson can equally be applied to men who may consciously or unconsciously also domineer over women. Similarly, if it tells men not to engage in anger and disputation, it also says the same to women.” See also, N. T. Wright, “The Biblical Basis for Women’s Service in the Church,” *Priscilla Papers* 20, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 9; Ronald Pierce, “Evangelicals and Gender Roles,” *JETS* 36, no. 3 (September 1993): 350.

54. This applies, of course, to all of the controversial “gender texts” in the NT, such as Eph 5; the call for women to “submit” in no way suggests that men should *not* submit to their wives (and I realize this is evident enough from 5:21, but it bears reiterating).

55. N. T. Wright goes as far as to say that this is “the key to understanding” v. 12; Wright, “The Biblical Basis for Women’s Service in the Church,” 9.

56. See Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence”; Philip Payne, “1 Tim 2:12 and the Use of οὐδέ to Combine Two Elements to Express a Single Idea,” *NTS* 54 (2008): 235-53; idem, *Man and Woman*, 337-60; Andreas Köstenberger, “The Syntax of 1 Timothy 2:12: A Rejoinder to Philip B. Payne,” *JBMW* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 37-9; Philip Payne and Andreas Köstenberger, “Discussion of 1 Timothy 2:12,” *JBMW* 15, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 27-31. “Οὐδέ Combining Two Elements to Convey a Single Idea and 1 Timothy 2:12: Further Insights,” pp. 24-34 in CBE’s 2014 special edition journal, *Missing Voices: Broadening the Discussion on Men, Women, and Ministry*, available at <http://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/ETS2014-web-1.pdf>

57. Of course, there is a point where adding more and more words does *not* contribute more and more to a concept; the addition of more words dilutes the meaning of each word, and the curve of the word-count/meaning graph levels off (just as the effect of drugs is strong at first, but then begins to have less and less effect; cf. the “law of diminishing returns” in economics). Paul seems to have walked this line in the Pastorals (cf. the Blomberg quotation below).

58. In the graphics, “Possible Alternative B” is the same as “Possible Alternative A” except that it highlights the multi-faceted nature of concepts. Concepts are rarely isolated, singular entities.

59. Craig Blomberg, “A Complementarian Perspective,” in *Two Views*, 169. Cf. Robert Saucy, “Paul’s Teaching on the Ministry of Women,” in *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective* (ed. Robert Saucy and Judy Tenelshof; Chicago: Moody, 2001), 306.

60. Payne, “1 Tim 2:12 and the Use of οὐδέ,” 240, emphasis mine. The full sentence containing this quotation is, “The fundamental function of οὐδέ in these cases is not to subordinate one expression to another, but simply to merge them together to convey a single more specific idea.” Cf. “Possible Alternative A” above.

61. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 460.

62. D. A. Carson, “Silent in the Churches,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 152.

63. Thomas Schreiner, “The Valuable Ministries of Women in the Context of Male Leadership,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 223.

64. See also Stephen Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (reprint; East Lansing: Tabor House, 2006), 139: “[1 Tim 2:12] reserves to men the kind of teaching which is an exercise of authority over men. . . .”

65. Wolters, “A Semantic Study,” 50.

66. Schreiner “An Interpretation,” 104.

67. Westfall, “The Meaning of ἀθεντέω,” 171.

68. Susan Foh, *Women and the Word of God: A Response to Biblical Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 238: “There is only one sufficient argument against women’s ordination: scriptural prohibition,” and that “prohibition against the ordination of women to the ministry is 1 Timothy 2:12.” Cf. Susan Foh in *Women in Ministry: Four Views* (ed. Robert Clouse and Bonnidell Clouse; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989), 91: “There is only one valid argument against women’s ordination to the ministry: scriptural prohibition. This prohibition is found in 1 Tim 2:12”; Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership* (Littleton: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 59: “First Timothy 2:11-14 should alone settle the question of women elders.” Cf. Schreiner’s attitude in “An Interpretation,” 86.

69. This is, in fact, what led me (and many others) out of aggressive complementarianism and into egalitarianism (and eventual membership with CBE). I, however, was fortunate not to have signed a legal contract at a seminary, college, church, or organization that

forbade me from changing my views on gender and ministry. One can only imagine how many secretive egalitarians would speak their minds if not for the threat of job termination, career loss, and alienation!

70. Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence,” 57.

71. See discussion in previous section.

72. Regarding one of these cases, Andreas Köstenberger says, in “‘Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1 Timothy 2:11-15’ (Ch. 12) by Linda L. Belleville,” *JBMW* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 43-54: “in Titus 1:11 the context clearly indicates a negative connotation by the qualifier ‘teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.’ No such negative qualifier is found in 1 Tim 2:12, however.” But, why are further qualifiers necessary in 1 Tim 2:12 than those already present? Consider that (a) the word is paired up with *authentēin* (which, as we have seen, has *anything but* a “positive sense” in the first century), (b) the immediate context is one of correcting ungodly behaviors, and (c) Paul and the original audience know far more about the specific situation and the Ephesian women than we do—and we *do* know that the Ephesian women had very specific problems (see 1 Tim 5:13; 2 Tim 3:6, etc.). So, Köstenberger is hardly in a position to be demanding “qualifiers” to know if *didaskō* in 1 Tim 2:12 is used “negatively”; such demands are artificial (cf. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 223-24).

73. See Schreiner, “An Interpretation,” 105; Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence,” 74. Cf. Köstenberger, “Gender Passages in the NT,” 266-67; Harold Hoehner, “Can a Woman Be a Pastor-Teacher?” *JETS* 50, no. 4 (December 2007): 770.

74. See Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 223-24.

75. E.g., the note at 1 Tim 2:12 by Ray Van Neste in *ESV Study Bible* (ed. Wayne Grudem and J. I. Packer; Wheaton: Crossway, 2008): “Women are not permitted to publicly teach scripture and/or Christian doctrine to men in church (the context implies these topics). . . .”

76. This article has not specifically addressed this issue. However, it will be addressed in a forthcoming article on the “clarity of scripture” and 1 Tim 2:12, where I examine multiple complementarian interpretations of 1 Tim 2:12—most of which are (supposedly) “clear” to the average reader. See also Jamin Hübner, “The Evolution of Complementarian Exegesis,” *Priscilla Papers* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 11-13.

77. I am not excluding the work of the Spirit in this assertion.

78. See John Goldingay, *Models for Scripture* (Toronto: Clements, 2004), 192ff.; Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009). Many post-modern authors (e.g., Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Michael White, Paul Ricoeur) have ably shown the power of language in human experience.

79. The NLT fortunately includes at least a marginal note saying “or . . . usurp authority.”

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