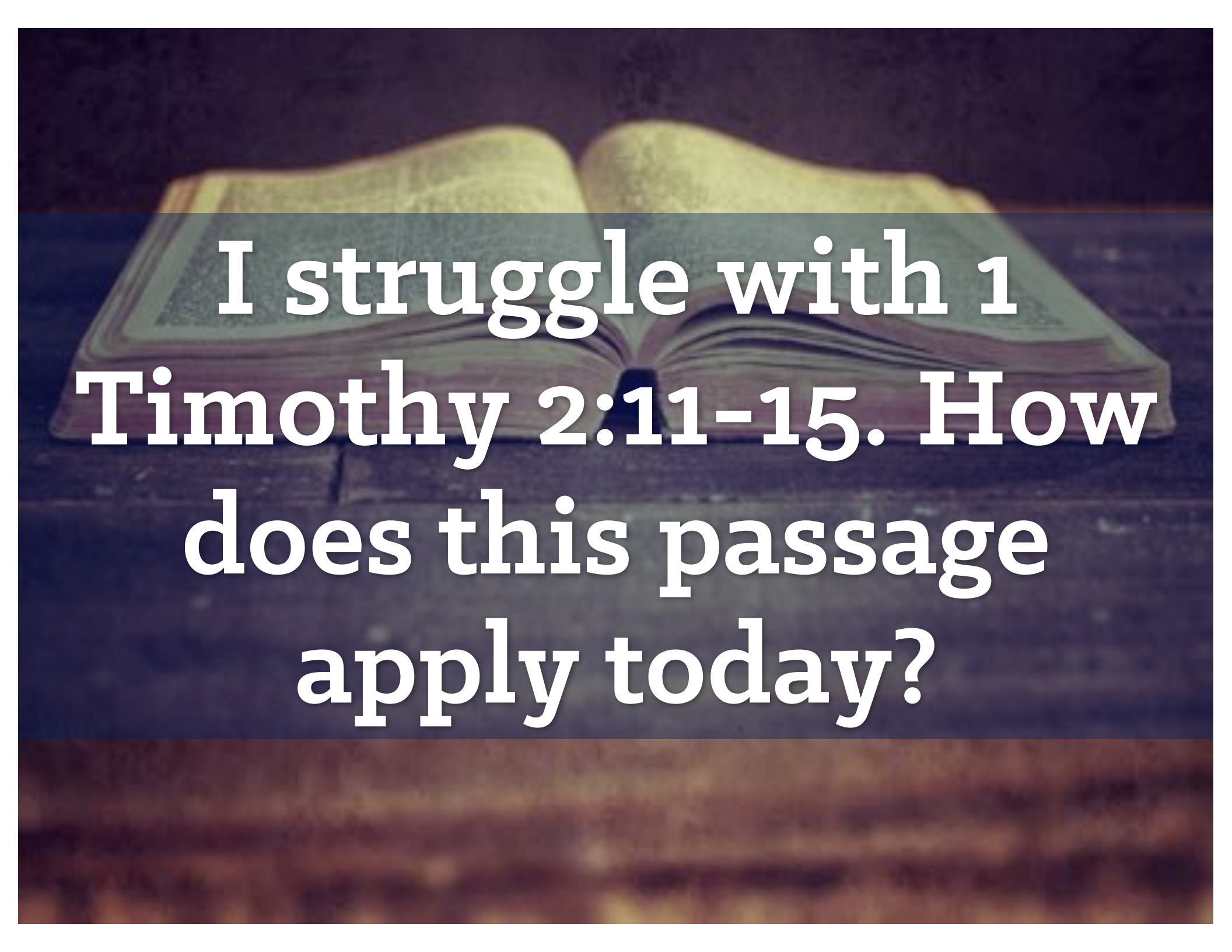




# ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

Answering your questions about  
life, the Bible, and God

An open book with aged, yellowed pages is shown from a top-down perspective. The book is open to a page with a decorative border. The background is dark and textured. Overlaid on the book is a semi-transparent dark blue rectangular area containing white text.

**I struggle with 1  
Timothy 2:11-15. How  
does this passage  
apply today?**

# FIRST, WHAT THE SCRIPTURE DOES NOT SAY...

- That women cannot contribute to the Kingdom, or that they are inferior in any way (Gal. 3:28).
- That women must be absolutely silent, since there is a context for women praying (1 Cor. 11:5) and congregational singing infers full participation (Col. 3:16, Eph. 5:19, Heb. 13:15).
- That women cannot teach ever (Acts 18:26, Titus 2:3, Prov. 1:8). In fact, “wisdom” is personified as a woman in Proverbs (Prov. 8:1ff, 9:1ff, etc.).
- That women cannot exercise authority in any other context (executive, politician, police officer, etc.). Roles within the church reflect the order of creation, not of importance or hierarchy.



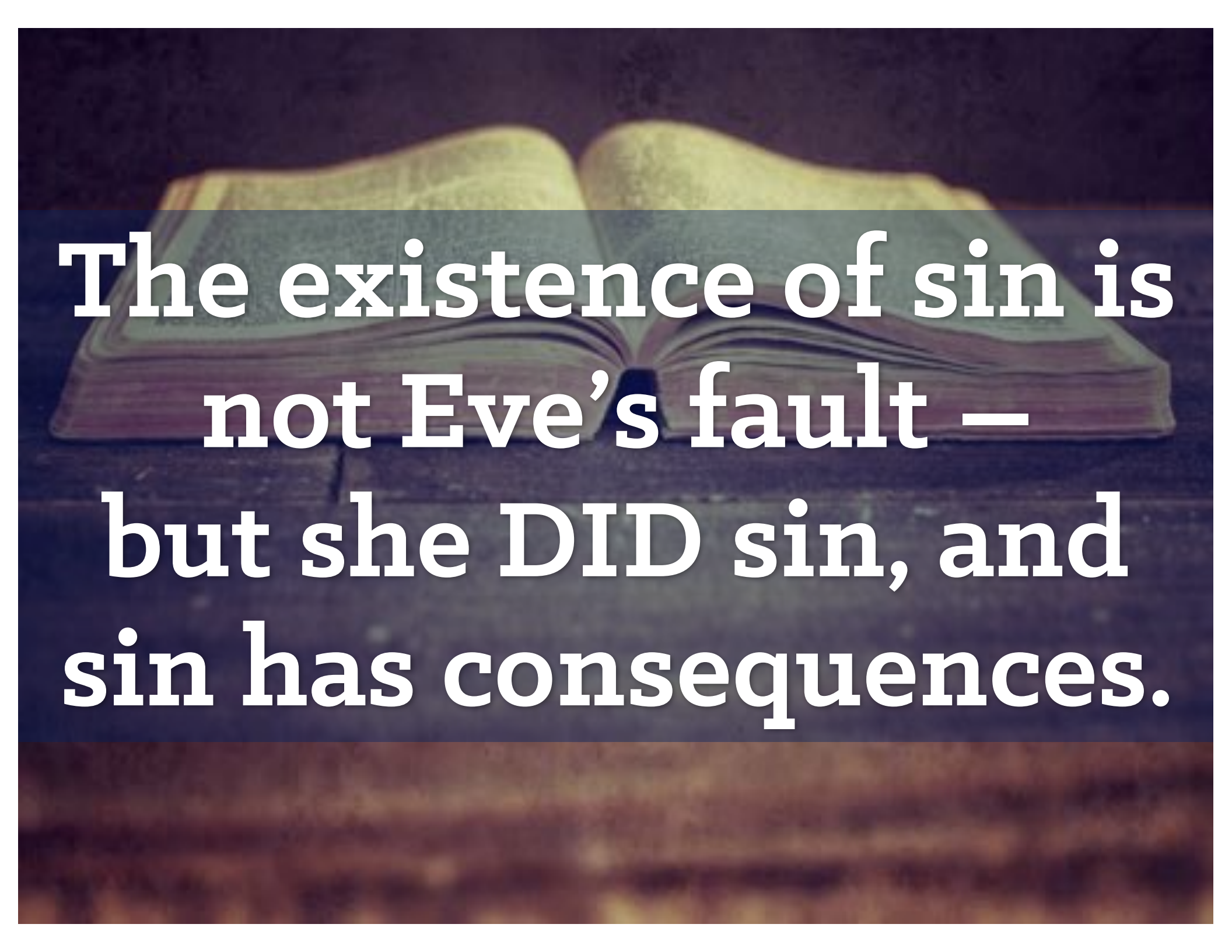
Preconceived ideas aside, one would be hard-pressed to show that any NT writer was misogynistic, or that Christianity is inherently anti-woman. In fact, it is quite the opposite, especially when its cultural context is considered. Women are free moral agents (1 Cor. 7:15, John 4:7ff, Ac. 16:14f). They are spiritually equal to men (Gal. 3:28). They are valuable workers and witnesses for Christ (Ac. 1:14, Rom. 16:1-2). Women flocked to the faith and were some of the most eager, zealous, and committed disciples (Matt. 26:6-13, 27:55-56, Lk. 7:36ff, Ac. 8:12, 9:36ff, 17:4, 17:12).

# SO, WHY DOES PAUL DRAW SUCH A HARD LINE?

- Coupled with 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, today's text is unapologetically firm. This is because of the stigma surrounding Eve's fall in Genesis 3. Paul draws from this story to explain why women are not called to serve in an overtly authoritative role.
- As an aside, it should be remembered that God calls all of us to various roles, and one is not more important than another. For example, a man might be unqualified to serve as an elder. It is what it is. But that does not make him less useful or inferior to a man who is qualified. We are all given talents to serve, so let us serve as we are – not what we envy.

# BEARING EVE'S STIGMA?

- Again, let us keep in mind what this scripture does not say – that Eve was the only one who sinned! Paul simply points out that Eve's sin was foolishly listening to the words of the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Her daughters now bear her reproach, just as Adam's sons bear his reproach.
- Why is it sexist to point out Eve's failure? Paul actually has much, much more to say in other places about Adam's sins, but nobody considers that to be sexist against men! Eve was deceived, and sinned, but the responsibility is placed on Adam in Romans 5:12ff. Death came about because of Adam (1 Cor. 15:20ff).



**The existence of sin is  
not Eve's fault –  
but she DID sin, and  
sin has consequences.**

- Paul's conclusion is that child bearing somehow preserves female integrity – that the stigma surrounding Eve's transgression is lessened through motherhood.
- Does this mean a woman MUST have children to be saved? Obviously not. Some are incapable. Others do not have desire or opportunity. So Paul's statement is a generalization, not specific to any *individual* woman. The fact that women bear children endears them to all humanity (we all come from a woman).
- The very thing that is most closely associated with Eve's curse (pain in childbirth) is what redeems her and removes her stigma. Just as Adam is redeemed because Jesus came as a man (1 Cor. 15:21-22), so Eve is redeemed because Jesus was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4).