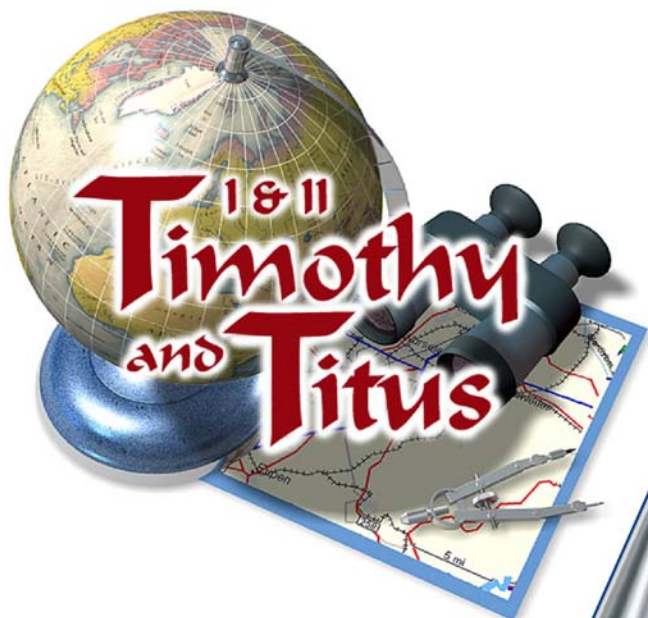


INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEADERS IN GOD'S CHURCH



"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

— II Timothy 2:2 NASB

R. H. "Tex" Williams

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The Epistles to Timothy and Titus

by Tex Williams
Former instructor in the
Sunset International Bible Institute

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1 & 2 Timothy and Titus

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articles and reviews, including translation.

This book is dedicated to

C. W. “Abe” Lincoln

a long time brother, friend,
and co-worker in the Lord’s Kingdom



Special Acknowledgment

A special “*thank you*” to
Rusty and Sue Russwurm and
their family
for making the printing of this book possible.

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Since 1962 Sunset International Bible Institute has been a leader in teaching God's Word, training local church leaders and preparing preachers and missionaries for effective ministry. Developed in the laboratory of preacher training and proven in the crucible of practical ministry, the Sunset curriculum has grown to forty core courses used both in our resident school and distance learning applications. In 1989 the Sunset Video Studio was inaugurated to record each course of study in a professional format. Those courses, each with a companion study guide, have been used to teach thousands of individual students and develop a world-wide network of video satellite schools in local congregations and mission fields.

Now in printed form that same library of trusted Bible study material is available through Sunset Institute Press for an even wider circle of Bible students, thanks to a benevolent God, an excellent editorial staff and a number of faithful supporters who believed in the project.

This book is the result of a multi-step process which began with a videotaped course. The voice track of the videotape was first transcribed then formatted and edited from spoken to written style. The goal of the editorial process has been to produce a readable document while protecting the course content and the style and personality of the teacher. We believe the goal has been achieved and that each of the forty books planned for the Sunset Bible Study Library will likewise achieve that goal.

Special gratitude must be expressed to Cline Paden and Truman Scott who began the video course series in 1989, to Bob Martin, who directed Sunset Video Studio, to Virgil Yocham and the staff of Sunset External Studies Division who wrote the study guides, and to the staff of Sunset Translation Center who edited the manuscripts and to each faculty member of Sunset International Bible Institute

who took extra time to prepare and present these courses in the studio.

In addition to the English version, this book and its companion volumes are being translated into the major languages of the world to produce a Bible study library which can be used on the mission fields of the world to mature Christians, train church leaders and grow churches that plant other churches.



A companion workbook on the study of the Epistles to Timothy and Titus by Tex Williams is available for purchase through Sunset International Bible Institute External Studies: 1(800) 687-2121.

Introduction

In the winter of 1972, January to be exact, me and my family moved from Phoenix, Arizona to Lubbock, Texas to attend the Sunset School of Preaching. My intentions and desire was to become a preacher of the Gospel, learning from men who I knew would lead me deep into God's holy Word. I was not disappointed! The Book was opened up to me far beyond my expectation, and sometimes, the assignments and homework went far beyond what I thought was appropriate. I became acquainted with God and His word in a depth I never thought possible. Needless to say, this in-depth study of God's word began to affect changes in me and continues to do so.

But, there were other "books" that were having an influence on my life – the lives of my teachers – the word was being lived out in the lives of men who exemplified everything I was being taught. Men like Tex Williams, the author of this book, and others of the instructors in the Sunset School of Preaching. I learned that the most powerful and long-lasting teaching is that of an example.

This is one of the powerful messages of these three epistles. The example of Paul is held up over and over again to both Timothy and Titus as encouragement to continue in the faith and practice of Christianity. Thus Paul would say to a struggling Timothy: *"And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also* (2 Timothy 2:2). And so elders, older men, younger men, both older and younger women along with preachers and teachers are exhorted and admonished to be active in propagating the healthy Christian teaching handed down/taught to us by godly men and

women who mentored us in our struggle to live the Christian life. Tex Williams has been, as Paul was, faithful in passing down his faith not only to us but to many others, and it is our responsibility to continue the fight. As you read this book, read it with the understanding we have a great heritage in Christ and a big part of that heritage is both the joy and privilege of influencing others in the cause of Christ. So Tex would echo the admonition of the apostle Paul. “Preach the word.” And be “urgent” in doing so!

Virgil Yocham
Dean, External Studies
Sunset International Bible Institute

Introduction and Salutation

Acts 19, 20:17–38; 1 Timothy 1:1–5

Descriptive Titles

These Books Are Usually Grouped Together

Welcome to this study of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. This study will be beneficial to every Christian in understanding things that are needed in the Christian walk in order to become pleasing to the Lord. These three books are usually linked together because they were written by the apostle Paul to Timothy and Titus, who were his fellow laborers.

Commonly Known As the “Pastoral Epistles”

These three letters are commonly known by the religious world as the “pastoral epistles.” The reason they are called the “pastoral epistles” may be erroneous in one respect yet genuine in another. The error is that in New Testament times people who preached the gospel were not known as “pastors.” Those who preached were simply known as evangelists or preachers. In these epistles, however, there is information for Timothy and Titus concerning those who serve as elders, or overseers, in a congregation. These people are also called “pastors” (cf. 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1). In that sense, these three letters could be called “pastoral epistles.”

Paul’s Letters to Two Evangelists:

Timothy and Titus

These letters are not “pastoral epistles” from the standpoint that they were addressed to men who were preaching the gospel

of Christ. The more correct title for these three letters actually might be “evangelistic epistles.” In reality, they are letters addressed to men who were gospel preachers rather than pastors. Paul was writing to Timothy and Titus to instruct them in the area of being an evangelist in a local congregation. Paul recorded a great deal of information from the Holy Spirit concerning how they should conduct themselves as they worked in this particular area. The best title for these three letters might be “Paul’s letters to the two evangelists, Timothy and Titus.”

The Author and the Recipient of First and Second Timothy

The Author — Paul, The Apostle

The letters written to Timothy were written by Paul while Timothy was living in the city of Ephesus. The letter to Titus was written by Paul while Titus was living on the island of Crete. Paul was a Jewish rabbi raised at the foot of Gamaliel and very knowledgeable of the Law of Moses. Because of this, Paul’s first stop in any city was at the Jewish synagogue, where he would preach the gospel of Christ to all those who listened. This was effective because the Jewish synagogue was a gathering place for the Jews, therefore Paul had a constant audience for his teaching. Synagogues probably began during the exile of the Jews, when they were carried away into captivity, with the purpose keeping God’s people informed about Him and His law.

Paul’s authorship is confirmed in the first verse, of the first chapter, of each one of these letters. Paul introduced himself as an apostle and a servant. He was also a leader and instructor for Timothy and Titus.

- *“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our savior and of Christ Jesus our hope . . .”* (1 Timothy 1:1).

- *“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus . . .”* (2 Timothy 1:1).
- *“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God’s elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness . . .”* (Titus 1:1).

The Recipient of The Letters — Timothy

Timothy was a young man whom Paul had probably converted on a visit to Lystra. His mother was Eunice, and his grandmother was Lois (2 Timothy 1:5). They were faithful to the Lord and had learned the Old Testament scriptures. Timothy, however, was a mixture of both Jew and Greek. His mother was a Jewess, and his father was Greek. The information that connects Paul to Timothy is found in the book of Acts. Paul visited Lystra, and it was during this time that he came in contact with Timothy, his mother, and grandmother (cf. Acts 16:1–5). When Paul decided to take Timothy with him, on his second missionary journey, he circumcised him so that the Jews, who knew that Timothy was part Greek, would accept him. Timothy traveled with Paul for some time and became one of his faithful companions. The apostle Paul loved him dearly and spoke a great deal about him in his correspondence. Paul considered Timothy a very capable person. He told the Philippians:

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me (Philippians 2:19–23).

The Church at Ephesus

The Church Established In Ephesus

The historical setting of 1 Timothy begins in Acts 18:8 when Paul first went to the city of Ephesus, stayed for a brief period of time and then left. When Paul went back, he met some disciples of John the Baptist and taught them about the baptism of Christ. As a result of those conversions the church had its beginning in Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:1–7).

Paul's audiences were made up of two types of people. The first type was the Jews who were very diligent in their faith in the Lord as far as the Old Testament was concerned. The faithful Jews always went to one of the synagogues that had been set up in certain cities. The other type of people were the Gentiles, who were probably tired of the religions of Rome, the philosophies of the Greeks, and the esoteric (meant for, or understood by, only a chosen few, Ed.) religions of the Orient that had crept into the Roman world at that time. The New Testament calls them the "... *God-fearing Gentiles* ..." (Acts 13:26). When Paul came, he reasoned with both audiences from the Old Testament scriptures concerning the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfillment of the prophecies in the Old Testament and the fact that He was the promised Messiah. As a result of Paul's preaching, there were always those who believed and those who did not. There were also those who accepted Paul and those who became jealous of him. Many people in these audiences in Ephesus became Christians. However, Paul was asked to leave the synagogue, so he took his disciples with him, and they began meeting in the school of Tyrannus where he taught on a daily basis (Acts 19:9–10). The Bible does not say what kind of school this was, but Paul used their facilities for two years to teach the people, "... *so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord*" (Acts 19:10).

Paul left Ephesus, and went down into Greece and other areas. As he journeyed back through Macedonia, he sailed into

Miletus, which is a little town twenty to thirty miles south of Ephesus. He sent for the elders from the church in Ephesus to meet him there so that he could visit with them.

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:28–30).

Paul was telling the elders of Ephesus that they were going to have trouble with false teachers and problems within the church at Ephesus. The elders were given the responsibility of seeing that these problems did not take place. What Paul prophesied did take place, and the church at Ephesus was in turmoil by the time he wrote to Timothy.

The Evangelistic Nature of the Church

At one time the church in Ephesus was an evangelistic congregation. When Luke recorded the events in the life of the apostle Paul in the book of Acts, he said, “. . . *all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord*” (Acts 19:10). The church in Ephesus was an outstanding new congregation. They did not even have a church building as we normally do today, but they preached the gospel of Christ throughout that region. Satan does not like for a congregation to preach the gospel and be evangelistic, so he always intervenes, causing problems and difficulties just as Paul prophesied (cf. Acts 20:28–30). Timothy was in Ephesus when Paul wrote 1 Timothy to help settle the problems that arose because of the false teachers.

Setting and Date of the Letters

Written After 62 A. D., Probably From Macedonia

Historically, there is not enough information to give a definite date for when 1 Timothy was written. Between 60–62 A. D. Paul was taken to Rome and placed under house arrest, and he was probably there for two years. Historically, there is information that he was released and may have gone on a fourth missionary journey traveling with Timothy and Titus. It is possible that they traveled to Ephesus in anticipation of helping the situation there. In closing his letter to the Romans, Paul said:

. . . I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. . . . So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way (Romans 15:23–24, 28).

Paul planned to visit Rome and Spain after he made the journey to Jerusalem with the contribution for the saints in that city. The Jewish historian, Eusebius, implies that Paul did travel to Spain after his first imprisonment in Rome. The Muratorian canon simply speaks of the fact that Paul did go to Spain. During this period of time, Paul traveled to Macedonia which is in northern Greece. This was where he wrote the first epistle to Timothy, telling him about the difficulties and problems in Ephesus and giving him instructions.

Paul's Introduction and Salutation

Paul's Authority — An Apostle

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (1 Timothy 1:1–2).

This is an important introduction that needs to be understood. Paul used the format of a Greek letter used in that time period. The Greek format for a letter was to tell who the letter was from first, and then to address the person to whom the letter was being written. That was why Paul began with “*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, . . .*” followed by “*to Timothy my true son in the faith: . . .*” (1 Timothy 1:1–2).

Paul was an apostle in a special sense. The word apostle comes from the Greek word “***apostello***.” It simply means “to send away.” An apostle is a messenger. It is someone who has been sent by someone else, so he is sent with authority. The term for apostle in the New Testament is both used in a general and in a more specific sense. The general term is used when Barnabas was called an apostle: “*But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, . . .*” (Acts 14:14). Another example of this general usage is when Epaphroditus was called a messenger: “*But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, . . . who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs*” (Philippians 2:25). The word “***apostello***” is used in this passage, showing that Epaphroditus was an apostle in the general sense because he was their **messenger** to Paul.

The word apostle is also used in a specific sense. This was the term Paul was using here referring to himself. Jesus chose and appointed twelve men to be His apostles (cf. Luke 6:13). Next Judas Iscariot lost his apostleship because he betrayed the Lord (cf. Luke 22:47–48). Matthias was chosen to take his place (cf. Acts 1:15–26). Then, Paul talked about the fact that he was also an apostle, in this sense, when he wrote to the Corinthians:

And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God (1 Corinthians 15:8–9, KJV).

An apostle in the specific sense was a man who held the office of an apostle. Paul was talking about this type of office when he wrote to the Corinthians and the Ephesians (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:28–29; Ephesians 4:11–12). He said that God appointed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, and third teachers. God gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers. Paul talked about the work of an apostle. He said, “*Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? . . .*” (1 Corinthians 9:1). Jesus chose His twelve, then Matthias was chosen and finally, Paul was chosen as an apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:7–8).

Paul called himself an apostle to bring out the idea that because he was chosen by God he held a special position in the church that was equal to the twelve apostles and Matthias. It is possible that when he said, “*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God . . .*” (1 Timothy 1:1), he was referring to his conversion on the road to Damascus. When he was stricken blind, the Lord spoke to him and said:

“Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me” (Acts 26:16–18).

Paul knew that he had been chosen “*by command of God*” to be an apostle. He knew that God had a specific purpose in mind for him to fulfill.

Paul’s Protégé — Timothy

Paul addressed his book “*To Timothy my true son in the faith: . . .*” (1 Timothy 1:2). The American Standard Version translates this as “. . . *my true child in the faith . . .*” This probably just refers to the fact that Timothy was converted to Christ by Paul on his journey back through Lystra. He was Paul’s son in the gospel. Paul often spoke of those whom he had converted as being his children in the gospel (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:14; Galatians 4:19; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11). The idea of a “true son” is very significant because it meant that Timothy was really converted to Christ. He was one who would take a stand for the Lord and live fully converted to Him.

First Timothy 1:2b says, “. . . Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” These are words of salutation that were used by the apostle Paul as he addressed those to whom he wrote his epistles. The word “grace” as it was used here is similar to a normal Greek expression that was used during that time period as a greeting when people would meet. The word “grace” as it is used here carries with it the very important idea of one who receives the blessing of God. When Christians in the New Testament would meet, they would give the salutation of “Grace!” which

conveyed the thought “The grace of the Lord be with you in every aspect of your being!”

The letters that Paul wrote to Timothy are the only two letters in which he used the word “*mercy*” in the salutation. There is no apparent significance known for this fact. Mercy is given when God sees man in a very difficult circumstance and situation. This world is a place of sin and tribulation that causes difficulties and problems. When God sees His children in difficult and problematic situations, He has special love for them. When He sees people in hard circumstances, He desires to assist them. He is a God of mercy.

Paul used the word “*peace*,” which is from the Greek word “**eirene**.” The Hebrew counterpart is the word “**shalom**,” which is used as a Hebrew form of greeting someone. Paul used the Greek form of greeting and the thought of God’s mercy and peace, which was also used as a Hebrew greeting. The word that Paul used for “*peace*” means a peace that comes from having a right relationship with God.

Paul’s Charge to Timothy

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God’s work — which is by faith (1 Timothy 1:3–4).

Paul started from the very beginning to show Timothy what his purpose was for being in Ephesus. Paul had probably been released from imprisonment in Rome (cf. Acts 28:16) and was now traveling again in Macedonia, which is in northern Greece. He urged Timothy to stay in Ephesus “. . . so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies” (1 Timothy 1:3–4). The King James Version

translates this verse, “. . . charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies .”

Two Areas To Be Corrected

It is important to know the situation in Ephesus and the application to make. Paul was telling Timothy, “The reason I left you in Ephesus was because there are false teachers there.” This goes back to what Paul told the elders from Ephesus when he cautioned them to —

. . . watch over yourselves and all the flock . . . I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw disciples after them” (Acts 20:28–30).

It is not clear whether the problem was going to come from the elders themselves or from the congregation, but there was a problem in Ephesus when Paul wrote to Timothy.

Paul gave Timothy the assignment to tell the false teachers that they could not teach false doctrines. They could not devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These teachers were probably Christians with a Jewish background, mixing the old Law of Moses and their Jewish traditions with Christianity. They had been converted to Christianity but were not converted in their understanding of the gospel. In reality, the “*myths and genealogies*” hint at a method employed by the Jewish rabbis. These rabbis would go back to Old Testament genealogies and pedigrees which meant a great deal to them (cf. Genesis 5:1–32; 10:1–32; 1 Chronicles 1:1–9:21; and many other places). The rabbis would develop stories from these genealogies and teach things that in reality were not the teachings of God. False teachers would come up with myths and genealogies that were related to both the ideas of Judaism and Christianity. This was one of the greatest problems of the false teachers. The principle for Christians today is that they must be careful of false

doctrines that come into the church. This is a principle to live by for all times.

Paul told Timothy that these problems promoted controversies rather than helping God's work. The problem was not when someone said, "I don't believe that." Not believing something is not misapplying the Scriptures even though unbelief may have been one of the problems. Anytime a false teacher or false doctrine comes into the church, controversies begin to happen among God's people. As a result of the controversy, the work of the Lord has no practical value. Paul gave Timothy a tough assignment.

It is difficult to be an evangelist like Timothy for the Lord, because an evangelist must face controversies and problems. An evangelist must understand that Satan is going to oppose him as long as he preaches and teaches the message of Christ. Sometimes preachers want to be in a congregation where they feel like everyone loves them, everything is lovely, all the teachings are sound, and everyone responds to what they have to say. That is not a normal situation, and everyone who preaches the gospel of Christ must understand this, or be very unhappy in his ministry when he has to face these kind of problems. As a gospel preacher, be prepared not to tolerate false doctrines, but to face the difficulties and problems and stand for the Lord. Anyone thinking about preaching must consider these facts carefully before he decides to preach the gospel of Christ. Paul's instructions to Timothy offer encouragement to all Christians, but especially to those who are preaching the gospel.

The Need for Sound Doctrine

I Timothy 1:5–20

Introduction

Continuing our study of Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, remember that chapter one covered the relationship of Timothy to Paul and the purpose for Paul's letters to him. Paul addressed the following issues: the problems of the church at Ephesus; Christians today need to be challenged to be aware of false doctrines; preachers need to be challenged to know that if they are going to preach the gospel of Christ, they are going to have to be prepared for false teachers and the difficulties and problems that come as a result of false doctrines; and Paul was trying to give instructions and encouragement to Timothy as he worked among the false teachers who were causing difficulties and problems in Ephesus.

The Foundation for Teaching Sound Doctrine

The Goal of Paul's Instruction

Paul's charge to Timothy was to tell the false teachers not to teach a different doctrine. He wrote in 1 Timothy 1:5, "*The goal of this command is love, which comes from a **pure heart** and a **good conscience** and a **sincere faith**.*" It is important to understand Paul's goal of love in the context of what he was writing. There were false teachers among the brethren at Ephesus, but that was not the only problem. Some of the brethren did not even like each other. There were all kinds of difficulties going on. The only way to heal those problems was

through love. Paul wanted Timothy to work with these people and create love among the members to help get rid of the false teachers. No church can preach the gospel adequately and work carefully and profitably unless they love one another. People, by nature, are difficult to get along with, but if they love one another the task of getting along becomes easier. Paul said, "Timothy, you have to create a spirit and attitude of love among the brethren."

There are three sources from which love comes. **First**, the goal of the command to charge the false teachers not to teach a different doctrine is love that comes from a **pure heart**. A pure heart is one that has been taught the gospel of Christ and the principles of Christian living. The heart Paul was talking about is "the seat of the mind." When the Bible talks about the heart, it is not the physical heart, but the mind and the will of a man. It is the totality of man's moral affections. It is important to understand that the heart produces what a person is in every aspect of his life. Getting the heart right is essential. The heart is fed by what a person hears and sees. What a person reads, hears, and sees goes into his heart, creates attitudes and dispositions, and then expresses itself in everything he does or says. If the heart is right, then every other aspect of life will be right. Timothy had to work on the hearts of the people in Ephesus with sound doctrine, so that they could work with one another. By changing the hearts of the people, he had a chance to rectify the problems. Proverbs 4:23 says, *"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."* If the Christian guards his heart, he will do and say what is right. Jesus said, *"You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks"* (Matthew 12:34). Jesus was talking to people who did not believe. At one time, Ephesus had been an evangelistic church, but false teaching destroyed them. Timothy needed to create a spirit of love. That spirit comes from a heart that is pure and right with God.

The **second** source of love is a **good conscience**. The conscience is actually a man's intuition. The conscience is a God-given inward thing that passes judgment on what man does, his emotions, his thoughts, and other aspects of his life. If a man's conscience is right, then he will exhibit love to his brethren. He must see the commandments of God, recognize that they need to be obeyed, and then, as a result of that, obey those commandments. When a man does not obey the commandments, his conscience bothers him. Paul said, ". . . *a good conscience* . . ." rather than just a conscience. The heart needs to be purified by the word of God, and the conscience is made **good** by the word of God. It is possible for a conscience to be wrong in its judgment. People do things in error and have no problem with it because they have not been taught right from wrong so that they could have a good conscience. Timothy must teach sound doctrine because only the guidance of God purifies the heart and makes a conscience good.

The **third** source of love is a **sincere faith**. A sincere faith is not a shallow faith but one that has a genuine belief in God and in the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. A sincere faith is having a genuine belief that God, in His mercy, has given His children the message of truth by which they can live and be pleasing to Him. First Timothy 1:5 is an excellent passage that tells what Timothy was going to have to accomplish. It is also what every local church needs to accomplish in working among its members. Paul was saying that a spirit and attitude of love toward one another needs to be a part of the Christian life. In another epistle, he wrote:

Love is patient, love is kind, It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hope, always perseveres (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

If there is not love within the local church, then that congregation cannot produce the results God wants it to. Teachers and preachers need to understand these three basic things that are essential to maintain unity, or gain unity, when disunity comes. Establish love by creating a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith among the brethren. These things are all possible through the word of the Lord.

Characteristics of These False Teachers

Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm (1 Timothy 1:6–7).

In his work as an evangelist, Paul had problems over and over again with Jewish teachers. They did not necessarily reject Christ, because they were Jews who had become Christians, but they wanted to keep parts of the Jewish Law and apply it to the Gentiles who had become Christians. Circumcision was one of the things that the Jewish Christians wanted to bring with them to Christianity. Paul discussed this with the Galatians and told them that they needed to leave the Law (cf. Galatians 3:1–25). Jewish Christians also wanted to keep the Sabbath day and other traditions of the Sabbath. Paul did not say exactly what parts of the old Law these Jewish teachers were teaching, but he said they did not even know the purpose of the Law.

Proper Use of the Law

The Proper and Improper Uses of the Law

Paul told Timothy that there was a proper use for the Law (cf. 1 Timothy 1:8–11). The Law was good if it was used profitably. The Law of Moses, or any law, has been given so that man profits as a result of the law, but it must be used lawfully. The Law was given by God to make it possible for

man to recognize what sin was in God's eyes. The Law was given so that man might understand that he was violating the divine principles of God as He looked upon man and how man was supposed to live. Many passages of scriptures talk about this. Paul told the Romans:

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. . . . So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. Did that which is good, then become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin (Romans 7:7, 12–14).

When God created man, He created him to live in accordance to His will. When sin came into the Garden of Eden, man drifted away from God. Man became so ungodly and unrighteous that God had to destroy him, and only Noah and his family were saved. God gave Laws because He wanted man to live in accordance to His design and desire. God made man. He knows what is best for man. Man did not know how to live because there was no Law to tell him what was right and wrong. When the Law came it taught man how to live and gave him a guideline to follow. When man broke the Law, then he realized he was sinful.

Problems These False Teachers Had Concerning the Law

It is important to understand the situation and the problems in Ephesus when Paul was talking to Timothy. He wrote in 1 Timothy 1:8–11:

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers — and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

These were people who did not live according to the design of God to bring happiness and peace. The Law was given not to save, and not to bind, but so that man might recognize what sin was. When the Law was given, and man saw his need for redemption and salvation, he also learned that grace and mercy came through Christ. Man's redemption and salvation were made possible by the grace of God. These people were using the Law in an unlawful way. They were trying to say, "If you do not keep the Law, then you are not righteous in the sight of God." When people bind things that should not be bound in the church, it always causes problems. As people try to make others become what the Law says, when in reality that is not the purpose of the law, there will always be difficulties. Salvation does not come because of law keeping, it comes because of grace and truth.

Paul said that whatever is taught needs to conform to sound doctrine, which is the gospel that God had entrusted to him. The gospel that comes from God is based upon the blood of Jesus Christ, and that is the gospel that must be followed. Salvation and redemption come only from this sound doctrine. Anything else is going to cause difficulty and problems, just as it did in the church in Ephesus.

Paul's Deep Gratitude for the Opportunity to Serve

A Thankful Apostle — Paul's Thankfulness That the Gospel Was Entrusted to Him

Paul finished telling Timothy about the problems in Ephesus and how to resolve them. He told him that he must create love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. Timothy must teach them the sound doctrine that comes from the gospel of Christ. Then, as is characteristic of Paul's writings, he must have said something and that caused him to go into detail about some other aspect of his life. In 1 Timothy 1:11 Paul said, "I was given the gospel of Christ." This was the "sound doctrine" that he was telling Timothy to teach. The words "sound doctrine" mean a teaching that brings about good spiritual health. Paul was so thankful that he had been entrusted with the "sound doctrine" that he was compelled to talk about how he had received it.

Paul was grateful for his salvation and the fact that he was a servant of God. He said, *"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service"* (1 Timothy 1:12). It is impossible to translate the fervor that the apostle Paul felt when he was telling Timothy this. Paul's strength came from God. He was able to fulfill these purposes because God made it possible for him to do so. Anyone who works for the Lord must understand that his strength comes from the power of God. Paul was grateful God considered him to be faithful. Faithfulness means that God knew that He could depend on Paul. God had chosen Paul to be used in very difficult situations, because God understood the hearts of people, and God knew the strength of Paul. Anyone who preaches or teaches the gospel needs to recognize that he can be strengthened by God. If God assigns him a particular work of preaching or teaching, God will give him strength in the area that He has appointed him. A preacher

or teacher is able to do his job, because God has given him that appointment.

Paul was grateful that God considered him faithful, because Paul knew his own negative side. He wrote:

Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus (1Timothy 1:13–14).

At one time, Paul talked against Christ, Christianity, and Christians. He was very vehement in what he had to say. Not only did he drag people out and put them in prison, he had some put to death because of their faith in Jesus Christ. He said that he was a violent man. This was probably tied to his actions as a persecutor. He flogged people, and had them put to death for their faith. He thought Christianity was a sect of the Jews that was going to destroy the power of the Jews and the Law. But, Paul said, “I received mercy, because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.” Paul’s heart was right in what he was doing. He was not knowledgeable of what Christianity was. He did not realize what God’s purposes were, so he did not believe. Paul was preaching the gospel of Christ, not because he was wealthy, good looking or better than anybody else. He was preaching the gospel of Christ because God had poured out His grace abundantly on him. He was receiving the love and faith that are in Christ Jesus, and all of that made it possible for him to preach the gospel of Christ. What a marvelous thing to know that the grace of God had been poured out on him abundantly.

A Trustworthy Statement

Paul talked about “trustworthy sayings” many times in his epistles. That was his way of saying that this is something that can be believed in. He said:

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life (1 Timothy 1:15–16).

If Paul could be saved, then anyone could. Paul told Timothy that he was the worst of sinners, and yet, he had received mercy as an example of Christ's unlimited patience. I would like to illustrate this with a personal story. I became really good friends with a man I grew up with. During World War II, we lost track of each other, because he was in the Army Air Corp. Several years later, while I was preaching the gospel, we met again. I began talking to him about his soul, because we were such good friends, and he had no religious affiliation. He was not interested in God or anything pertaining to God. As I talked to him, he was really stand-offish, and one day, he exploded with, "If you just knew how bad I have been." Then he went through the old cliches, "If I walked into the church building, the walls would fall down," or "If I walked into the church building, everyone would run out the back door," and "I am probably the worst sinner that has ever lived." When he said that, I said, "My good friend, I want you to know that you may be number two, but a man named Paul, who became one of the greatest servants of Jesus Christ, counted himself as being number one." The New International Version says, "... *sinners — of whom I am the worst*" (1 Timothy 1:15). The King James Version says, "... *sinners; of whom I am chief*." Paul said that he was chosen not only because he did things in ignorance, but because the Lord had work for him to do, and he was to be the prime example of a sinner saved. If God could save and use Paul, then God can save and use anyone. Paul praised God because of this.

Paul, a Praising Servant, Begins Praising God

Praise is a natural reaction if the Christian understands his redemption and salvation. When he knows how wicked he has been, and then, all of a sudden, he realizes that he not only has salvation, but that God is going to use him for His purpose, praise comes forth. Paul writes, *“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen”* (1 Timothy 1:17). This is what is normally called a “doxology” (a hymn of praise to God, Ed.). Paul’s response was to praise and adore God because he had been saved and was given the blessed privilege and opportunity of preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ. Paul was reminded of his blessings and marveled at his opportunity to work in the kingdom of God as he was writing to Timothy about the problems the Jewish teachers were causing.

Paul Renews His Exhortation

Paul’s Renewal of the Exhortation to Oppose Apostasy

In reality, Paul was writing a letter to Timothy, so he said:

Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to the faith and a good conscience (1 Timothy 1:18–19a).

Paul had been with Timothy in many circumstances and different places, and there was a lot of love in this letter. Paul’s instructions to Timothy were that he was to stay in Ephesus so that he might command certain men not to teach false doctrines. Paul said that he was giving Timothy these instructions “. . . *in keeping with the prophecies once made about you . . .*” (cf. 1 Timothy 1:18).

In Acts 13:1–3 Luke named some of the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul. Luke said:

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:2–3).

This passage relates a point in time when there were teachers and prophets gathered at one place, and God, through the Holy Spirit and the prophets, spoke to them to tell them about a special work that He had planned for Saul and Barnabas. It is possible that the Holy Spirit, through some parallel means, spoke the same type of prophecy concerning Timothy. Paul was telling Timothy, “I want you to know that you are teaching and preaching the gospel because you are divinely appointed.” This is true of anyone who works preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ. Their appointment may not come through prophets, because there are no living prophets in the church today, but by God’s providence, Christians are set aside and given the task and responsibility of preaching. One who preaches, preaches because he is divinely appointed and called to preach. A “calling” does not come by some small voice or some formation in the clouds but from reading and studying the scriptures. Perhaps, the “calling” comes from relating to other people in the church, hearing the scriptures preached, and being given the opportunity to understand God’s purpose in one’s life.

I feel this way personally. I have been trained to work in another area in my life to earn a living, but because of my relationship with my mother and father, some of my Bible class teachers, spending a summer preaching the gospel of Christ, and then leading singing for another gospel preacher, I decided God wanted me to work in His kingdom. I feel a deep

responsibility to preach the word, just as Paul was instructing Timothy. Before Timothy could be acceptable and used by God, he had to hold on to his faith in God and Jesus, to doing the assignment God had given him, and to operate with a good conscience that had been taught by the will of God.

Timothy's Opposition In Ephesus

Some have rejected these [their faith and good conscience] and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme (1Timothy 1:19b–20).

People who turn away from God are no longer used and need to be withdrawn from. They have not kept their faith and have violated their conscience. This happens to many who preach the gospel and many who serve in the kingdom.

In this first chapter of 1 Timothy, Paul told Timothy about his assignment and that fact that he was going to have to deal with difficult circumstances. He must continue to work and hold onto his faith. Paul told him not to become distracted through the hard times. He needed to remember his purpose and the assignment Paul had given him to develop love in that congregation so that God's name could be glorified. The gospel of Christ needed to be preached so that this fine congregation at Ephesus could return to its proper position of unified love and growth in Christ Jesus.

Teaching about Prayer

1 Timothy 2:1–15

Introduction

Chapter one of 1 Timothy contains the purpose for Timothy being in Ephesus, which was to straighten out some difficulties and problems there. Paul instructed Timothy to teach the brethren in the church, so they might become what God would have them to be. In chapter two, Paul began giving instructions for Timothy to pass on to the local congregation.

A Call to Prayer

Things of First Importance

The first seven verses of chapter two contain a call to prayer from Paul. Many congregations, then and now, do not see the importance of prayer. Paul emphasized that the church in Ephesus had to become a people of prayer if they wanted to become what God wanted them to be and get back to where God wanted them to be. Prayer is actually a manifestation of faith in God, which calls down the power of God to work in His children, so they can accomplish His purposes.

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a

knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying — and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles (1 Timothy 2:1–7).

Paul used the term “*I urge, then, **first of all** . . .*” because there were many problems within the church in Ephesus that needed to be dealt with. He placed the action of prayer the one which was most important.

Four Synonyms for Prayer

Paul used four synonyms that all refer to the idea of prayer. The expression “. . . *requests, prayers* . . .” are two terms that mean nearly the same thing. The word “*requests*,” which is translated “*entreaties*” in the New American Standard, is translated “*supplications*” in the King James and American Standard Versions. Looking at the context, Paul was probably referring to a particular situation in which a specific prayer needed to be offered rather than the next word “*prayers*.” For example, a person might pray for a friend who is sick and make “*requests*” for that particular person or a particular situation as an intercessor. The word “*prayers*” seems to be used more when the scriptures are referring to a general prayer rather than a request that is offered for a particular reason. There are instructions throughout the New Testament from Jesus and other inspired men concerning the things to pray for. It is possible that Paul was emphasizing the need to pray for specific things and also pray for everything.

The third word that Paul used was “*intercession*.” This word carries with it the idea that God grants His children the right to **plead** with Him. God, the Father, is the One who answers prayer. Just as a child has the right to plead with his father for whatever he wants, as God’s children, we are given

the right to plead with our Father. Many times children plead for things they want, but the father does not always grant their requests because of his wisdom. This word adds an extra dimension to prayer. God's children can plead for necessities, wants, and particular situations that reflect inner desires of the heart, but God does not always grant the pleas His children offer.

The last synonym Paul used for prayer was "*thanksgiving*." Everything comes from God, and His children ought to be filled with thanks for all that He has given. When Paul was talking to the heathens in Athens, he said, "*'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring' (Acts 17:28).*" The importance of prayer in the Christian's life cannot be stressed enough. Paul **urged** Timothy to pray.

Prayers Are to Be Made for All Men

Paul told Timothy to pray for everyone. Other versions, including the King James Version and the American Standard Version, say, "*. . . be made for all men.*" Paul said to pray for the leaders of the world so that there would be peace. It is hard to preach the gospel during war time. I once lived in what was called Southern Rhodesia (now called Zimbabwe). When the situation there was peaceful, the people were happy, the gospel was preached, and they were open to hearing the message of Christ. When war came, we could not even go out and preach because of the difficulties involved. Christians need to pray for peace all over the world, so they can lead peaceful, quiet lives and be able to live in godliness and holiness. Praying for peace wherever wars begin, or wherever difficulties and problems exist, should be an important part of prayer. Paul said, "*This is good, and pleases God our savior . . .*" (1 Timothy 2:3).

Paul's next phrase was very important for the church at Ephesus but also for churches everywhere today. God "*. . . wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth*" (1 Timothy 2:4). God's people have been left upon the

earth so that the gospel can be preached, and God's design and desire can be fulfilled. More than anything else, God wants the lost to be saved. He has chosen to have the gospel preached and the lost saved through the church. At one time, the church in Ephesus was known for having spread the gospel so that all of Asia had heard (Acts 19:10). When Paul wrote to Timothy, they were known for false teaching and discord. Prayers are important so that God's power can work among His children. Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, **according to his power that is at work within us**, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen* (Ephesians 3:20–21).

God wants the lost saved! He accomplishes this through Christians by His power working in them because of their prayers. Salvation is possible, but it is only made possible by the one God who desires all men to be saved. And, if salvation is going to be made possible, it is only through Jesus Christ, who mediates between God and man. Paul wrote, “. . . *for there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus . . .*” (1 Timothy 2:5). In the garden of Eden, man and God shared the glory of God, but they were separated because sin came between God and man. Paul told the Romans, “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .*” (Romans 3:23). But when Jesus came, He mediated the difference by His death on the cross and brought man and God back into a harmonious relationship. However, there is only one God who can give salvation. That is why Christians must pray to Him.

There is only one mediator, Jesus Christ. That is why men need to be taught about Christ. Peter said, “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given*

to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). If men are not saved by God, who made the universe that Paul speaks of, if they are not saved through the one mediator Jesus Christ, then there is no salvation. There is no other mediator between God and man except Jesus Christ, “. . . *who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time*” (1 Timothy 2:6). Man was sold into sin, but he was ransomed (redeemed) just like a slave who is redeemed out of his slavery because someone pays the price to buy him. Jesus, as the mediator for man, paid the price for man, and as a result, man is ransomed from sin.

This “ransom” Paul was talking about is “. . . *for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.*” The preaching of the gospel came to pass when God determined that it should. The record of this is seen in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and finally Acts, when the message of redemption and salvation is finally taught. Paul said this was the purpose for which he was specifically chosen (cf. Acts 9:1–31): “*And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying — and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles*” (1 Timothy 2:7). Paul used three words to describe himself: “*herald,*” “*apostle,*” and “*teacher.*” These were the tasks and responsibilities he had been given by God.

Prayer is a very important and necessary part of the Christian life. Paul said, “Pray for peace so that the gospel can be spread, because God desires that all men be saved and have a knowledge of the truth.” This was the assignment Paul had given Timothy in his work with the church in Ephesus. They needed to get back to a prayer life to help develop love among the brethren, so that the church could function properly. A church must function properly for God’s name to be glorified and lost souls brought to an understanding of the gospel of Christ.

The Need For Holiness

Public Prayers Are to Be Made By Men With Holy Hands

The next subject that Paul talked about needs to be looked at very carefully. Paul said, *“I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing”* (1 Timothy 2:8). The emphasis is not on **“holy hands.”** Paul was saying, **“We have to have holy people.”** Holy people are those who are pure, clean, godly and exercising themselves in righteousness. Some writers believe that Paul was talking about lifting holy hands during a worship service. I think Paul was covering a broader area than just the worship service. Paul was giving instructions to men and women wherever they were together. In this one verse, he was talking to men only. Paul used the Greek word **“aner,”** which means male, rather than using the Greek word **“anthropos,”** which means both male and female. Later in 1 Timothy 2:9 Paul used the Greek word **“gune,”** which means female only. Paul was giving instructions to both men and women in his epistle, but separately as individuals.

The context in this section is the idea of holiness that men and women must have to make an impact on this world. God’s children have been instructed to teach and preach the message of Christ so that all men can come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. God has given His children everything to make it possible to fulfill His purpose and their assignments, with the aid and assistance of God, by the commission of God. Every Christian and every congregation needs to understand that they have a divine purpose to preach the gospel to every creature (cf. Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–16). Before that can happen, each Christian must be the kind of person God can use.

Paul had talked about prayer, and now he was talking about holiness. **“Lifting up holy hands in prayer”** was a method used and referred to in the Old Testament (cf. Psalm 134:2). As the people prayed, they stood and lifted their hands

and eyes up to God. Paul was not talking about the **position** they were in as they prayed, he was talking about the **quality** of their lives as they prayed. He was saying they must have the right kind of lives which was a life that was holy. The type of life Paul was referring to is emphasized by the fact that he added, “. . . *without anger or disputing*” (1 Timothy 2:8). This addition referred to the situation in Ephesus. They were having disputes about words, because of the false doctrines, and as a result of those disputes, people became angry. Paul said that whenever men pray, and offer services to the Lord, they are to have holy lives. Those who can call upon God are those whose lives are holy. Holiness in life is important to be able to accomplish the purposes that God has in mind. Prayer that is offered from an unholy life can neutralize the life of a Christian. That was what had happened in Ephesus. They were not holy men, so God could not use them effectively in the kingdom.

Instructions to Women in the Church

In 1 Timothy 2:9–15 Paul gave instructions for the women as they related to men and as women related to others around them. There are some characteristics that women must have before God can use them. Paul stated:

I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God (1 Timothy 2:9–10).

Women are to have the kind of dress that manifests one who is a believer in God. The emphasis here is in overdressing with gold, pearls, and expensive clothes. Women need to have the quality of life that is seen in good deeds appropriate for women who profess to worship God. They are to dress in accordance with what would be acceptable in every society.

This passage does not bind on the woman the kind of clothes that she must wear as in “that skirt is too short,” “that dress is too long,” or “those sleeves are too short.” Paul was saying that women should dress according to their culture in such a way that people see them as modest women, who love and serve God, because of the way they dress. The way a woman dresses is important. They do not need to over or under dress but to dress modestly according to the standards of the time, considering what people will say. The result needs to say, “That is a good woman.”

Paul’s Instruction Regarding Woman’s Position With Respect to Man and God

Paul continued his instructions concerning women with:

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing — if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety (1 Timothy 2:11–15).

Paul was saying there is a role for women and a role for men in the church. The role of preaching and publicly teaching is for the man. Women have a place to fulfill in the work of the church, but it is not to be in situations where the man would be under the woman. Women are to learn in quietness as a study is made together concerning the message of God. There are other passages that talk about this, but when Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning public worship, he said:

As in all congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If

they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church (1 Corinthians 14:33b–35).

When Paul told women to remain silent in this passage, it was in a situation where they would have authority over a man. He was talking about the public worship when he gave these instructions. He was not saying that women cannot teach the gospel of Christ. Women are to teach other women (cf. Titus 2:3–4). Paul was saying that in any situation for public worship or where men and women are gathered, women are not to be given the assignment of teaching or occupying a position above the men.

In priority of creation, man was created first, and woman was created second. As a result of this order of creation, woman is to be in subjection to man. Once again, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he talked to them about the fact that “. . . the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man . . .” (1 Corinthians 11:3). This does not mean that women are any less intelligent than men. It does not mean they are to be less respected than men. It does not have anything to do with the different ways that a woman can serve God. In the economy (the orderly management system of a household, state, or organization, Ed.) of God, women have been placed under men, and they are to be in subjection.

In a public teaching situation, women are to be in subjection to men. Paul gave two reasons for this: the first was simply because Adam was created first, and then Eve; and the second was because in the garden of Eden, Eve, the woman, was deceived, and she sinned first. Satan came to the woman and said, “If you will eat this fruit, you will become like God.” Eve believed him, and, as a result of that belief, she sinned. Then, Adam sinned, in spite of the fact that he knew better. The scripture does not say that Adam was deceived, only that Eve was deceived (cf. Genesis 3:1–19). There is a divine order for

men and women. Man was created first and woman was created for man, so woman is in subjection to man. This subjection is true in the worship situation and in a teaching situation.

Paul continued, “*But women will be saved through childbearing — if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety*” (1 Timothy 2:15). Several meanings have been given to this verse. Some say that the “*childbearing*” is talking about Mary giving birth to Christ, and then salvation was made possible to all men. “*Childbearing*” may be used here as a symbol of woman, who she is, and what her place is in the world. A woman who continues in faith, love, holiness, good judgment, and propriety (conformity with accepted standards of behavior, Ed.) will be saved if she remembers she was created second to man, and that it was Eve who was deceived. It is important to recognize woman’s position in the work of the church and woman’s position as it relates to man. There is a work that women can do, but their work is not in public teaching or in having authority over men (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:2–16; 14:33–35).

Conclusion

In summary, prayers are important to the work of the church so that Christians might live in peace and as a result of that peace, the gospel can be taught, and God’s divine purpose fulfilled, because God desires that all men be saved and have a knowledge of the truth. The church needs to become a people of prayer for this to be accomplished. Christians need to be a people of prayer with prayers being directed to the one God. Salvation is only through that one God. God wants all men to be saved, and the only way man can be saved is through God. Christians have to bring other men to that one God and to Jesus Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man. Christians have the responsibility to work toward that end. The church must see its responsibility in working for God to bring redemption and salvation to man. This is an important assignment.

The church must recognize the need to plead with God in prayer to be able to use His power to succeed. Christians can control many things in the world through prayer. Praying for the leaders of this world can bring peace. Praying for those who are in authority can rectify difficulties and problems that take place in the communities where the church exists. The church must see this need. Christians cannot be the kind of people who come into a church building, worship for a period of time, and then leave. They must understand the task they have to fulfill as a part of the community. They are a part of the community, but they cannot be of the community. They must be a part of the community that has an influence on the community.

Paul discussed his own assignments as a herald, an apostle, and a teacher. He was appointed to these positions to fulfill God's purpose in His own life. In the same way, it is important for each Christian to fulfill God's purpose by living a holy life. Men and women are to lead holy lives so that God can use them. Men are to pray in public situations and must make sure their lives are pure when they pray. Women must make sure their lives are holy so that God can use them in the work of the kingdom in teaching the message of Christ. Purity is involved in the Christian life. Women are to occupy the position of subjection so that God's name can be glorified in all things. This includes their manner of dress, so that when people see them God will be glorified. Christians must walk in such a way that others know they desire to glorify God.

God wants to be able to use His holy people to bring others near to Him. He said, "*Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?*" declares the Sovereign LORD, '*Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?*'" (Ezekiel 18:23). God loves His people, but He also loves those who have never come in contact with Him and those who need to know the gospel of Christ. At one time, the church at Ephesus was a soul-saving church. They preached the gospel in such a way that all Asia heard the word. However, they had lost the designation of a soul-saving church, and Paul was trying to

restore them through Timothy and his instructions to Timothy. Paul's instructions include the quality of life that they ought to live, and how they ought to be seen by the community as being a people of God, walking with God and being the kind of people that God can use to glorify His name. The first two chapters of 1 Timothy are filled with important things that Christians need to know today. Preachers need to look at these things carefully and find out what kind of life they need to live.

Leadership in the Lord's Church

1 Timothy 3:1–8

Introduction

The previous three chapters covered the difficulties and problems in the church at Ephesus. Remember that Timothy was sent to Ephesus for the purpose of trying to rectify some of those problems and to help the church mature so that it could serve as God would have it to serve.

One of the problems in the church at Ephesus was the lack of good leadership. When Paul talked with the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20, he warned them about the problems that would come from false teachers. Undoubtedly, that group of men did not fulfill their responsibilities as elders over the flock. There is no record of what happened to those elders, or what qualifications they lacked, but beginning in 1 Timothy 3, Paul addressed the problem of the lack of leadership, with instructions to Timothy concerning the spiritual qualifications and appointment of men who were qualified to serve as leaders of the church.

Elders and Their Qualifications

Greek Terms for the Office of Elder

There are three Greek words that are used interchangeably in the scriptures for the word “**elder**.” All three words are used in Acts 20:13–38 to describe the leaders from the church at Ephesus. These terms are used to apply to a plurality of men who serve in the church for the purpose of feeding and taking

care of the congregation by spiritual teaching. There are five English words that are also used interchangeably to describe the office of an elder. The English and Greek words are:

elder — “*presbuteros*”

overseer or bishop — “*episkopos*”

bishop, shepherd, or pastor — “*poimen*.”

To be able to properly lead, guide, and counsel the people who came out of heathenism, as well as Judaism, and were combined together as God's people, these men needed to have certain qualifications. They needed to be qualified to help the church perform the purpose of preaching the gospel of Christ.

This study begins in Ephesus, when the church was in its infancy, when Paul called for the elders from Ephesus to meet him in Miletus so that he could talk to them (cf. Acts 20:17–38). Paul had landed at Miletus by ship, and Luke wrote, “*From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church*” (Acts 20:17). The Greek word “*presbuteroi*” used in this verse is translated as “elders,” referring to one who is older in age. This was a Jewish and Gentile custom. The Gentile religions had older men who were to lead and guide the people in their spiritual needs. The Jews also had elders, who were older men, knew the Law, and worked in overseeing the needs of the people.

As Paul talked to the men from Ephesus, he said, “*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers***” (Acts 20:28). In this verse, Paul used the Greek word “*episkopos*” which can be translated as “overseer” or “bishop.” The term “overseer” is not used as often as the modern day term of “bishop.” Different translations use different terms, but they all have the same basic meaning. Paul said the Holy Spirit made them “overseers,” and then, he told them to “. . . *Be shepherds of the church of God . . .*” (Acts 20:28). “*Be shepherds*” is actually from the Greek root word “*poimen*,” which is the word “shepherd” in the verb form. It

carries with it the idea of “one who pastors.” A pastor is one who oversees the flock rather than one who preaches the word. In New Testament terminology, the word “*poimen*” was applied to one who was an elder in the church. He was also called an overseer or a bishop. Every congregation that had elders had a plurality of men who served in this manner.

Qualifications of Elders

Paul began in 1 Timothy 3 to give the spiritual qualifications for elders. There are five “*trustworthy*” sayings in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 3:1: “*Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.*” The word “*overseer*” is translated “*bishop*” in other translations. Paul said that if a man has set his heart on this teaching and guiding responsibility, then he desires a noble task. The church needs young people, especially men, who set their desires on being, and make plans to become, leaders in the church. A congregation's spirituality and functioning powers are maintained by its members. Mature members within the church need to be willing to guide, help, teach, and work with other members to help them grow toward serving in the leadership capacity.

Paul began the list of qualifications for the noble task of being an elder by saying, “*Now the overseer must be . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:2). In the following verses (1 Timothy 3:2–7), he gave instructions concerning these spiritual qualifications. Each qualification will be discussed separately and briefly.

First, Paul said, “. . . *the overseer must be above reproach . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:2). The phrase “*above reproach*” does not mean that the elder must be absolutely sinless. People sometimes say that, in reality, no one is qualified to serve as an elder over a congregation, because no one is above reproach. Paul was saying that a person who is qualified as an elder could be one who has had problems but has rectified those problems, so that he is now spiritually qualified. This man is going to be a person who is striving to become what God wants him to be

and willing to serve in that capacity.

Second, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . the husband of but one wife . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:2). There are several ideas, or possibilities, that have been given regarding the actual meaning of this verse. Some have said that it means that the husband has not remarried after the death of his first wife. This idea developed during the second and third century in the history of the church when the idea first began that leaders of the church should be unmarried. I do not believe that Paul was talking about this at all.

Some have said that Paul was talking against polygamy. To begin with, polygamy is wrong for all Christians, but I do not think that was exactly what Paul was talking about either; though he could have had that in mind. A polygamous person definitely cannot be an elder.

Some say that Paul was talking against remarriage after divorce, especially if the divorce was for any reason other than fornication. I believe that a man who has been divorced for any other reason than fornication on the part of his wife cannot serve as an elder. But, I am not sure that was what Paul was talking about, although it would be included.

I believe that Paul was saying that a person who serves as an elder in any congregation **must** be married. It is a very simple qualification — he must be the husband of one wife. This can be literally translated “he must be a one woman man.” In conclusion, the person who serves a congregation as an elder must be married. This is the important aspect. If he is divorced, and remarried, then he must have had a legal and right divorce in accordance to the scripture. He must not be a polygamist.

Third, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . temperate . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:2). The word “temperate” has a number of different meanings in its original form. At one time, it carried with it the idea of one who was not a drinker. In this context, it means one who is sober or has sanity of mind. He is a person who is solid in his thinking, and one, who by his experience, study of the word, and living for the Lord has developed the kind of attitude

that makes it possible for him to make decisions based upon God's teachings, because he knows what the Lord expects of him.

Fourth, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . self-controlled . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:2). Self-control is similar to temperance because it means that the person can make decisions without his own feelings, desires, or designs entering into his decision. He can handle any situation with clarity of mind and purpose of heart. A person in leadership must have this ability, so that he can guide and direct a congregation.

Fifth, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . respectable . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:2). In other versions, the word “respectable” is translated as “prudent” or “orderly.” One who is prudent, orderly, or respectable is simply one who has learned to organize and order his own personal life in respect to his family, his business, and to the church. He is a person who does not do things haphazardly. He has the ability to function and operate properly in his own personal life and in his relationships to his parents, friends, and family.

Sixth, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . hospitable . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:2). Hospitality was especially meaningful in the period of time in which Paul was writing. It was a necessity because as people traveled they had to find a place to stay for the night. Normally, they stayed in the home of friends, so, especially for fellow Christians, it was important to show hospitality. Hospitality was commanded toward Christians and strangers. There were not a lot of people who would do this, but an elder needed to be known as someone who would open his door. This made it possible for people who were traveling, and especially Christians, to have a place to stay. This also opened the door of opportunity for Christians to teach.

Seventh, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . able to teach . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:2). The words “able to teach” refer to being able to teach the message of God. This does not mean that the elder has to be able to stand up and preach publicly, but he needs to have the ability to sit down with anyone who has a spiritual

need and instruct them. Elders need to be men who can lead and give counsel as is needed within the church. Later, Paul will talk about a group of elders who were given “*double honor*” because they did work in teaching and preaching publicly (cf. 1 Timothy 5:17), but not all elders have this ability.

Eighth, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . not given to drunkenness . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:3). One who is a child of God certainly should not be given to drunkenness. At the same time, one who is a leader should not be one who imbibes alcoholic beverages, and especially to the extent that he becomes drunk.

Ninth and tenth, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . not violent but gentle . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:3). This is a qualification that does not just apply to one who is an elder. This is a quality that anyone in the kingdom of the Lord needs to have. An elder has to be a person who does not respond violently in words or actions. Some individuals try to sever their relationship with others, or settle disputes, problems, and difficulties through violent words and actions. Note the contrast, “. . . *not violent but gentle . . .*” Gentleness is the nature an elder must have. In any kind of interpersonal relationships, there can be differences that must be handled with care and concern. This would certainly be the responsibility of someone who is a leader among the children of God.

Eleventh, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . not quarrelsome . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:3). This qualification is like the two before it — it does not just apply to one who is an elder. Some people are more prone to get into a fight than others, verbally and otherwise. Some people look for quarrels simply because that is their nature and they enjoy the challenge. This type of person would not be qualified to serve as an elder over God's people. An elder must be quiet in nature, temperate, and able to back off in a quarrelsome situation. He must not be one who challenges the situation for the joy of a debate. Quarreling never settles any kind of dispute.

Twelfth, “. . . *the overseer must be . . . not a lover of money*” (1 Timothy 3:3). This statement has a lot of implications that go with it. One who loves money could utilize the kingdom of God, and his position in the kingdom, to become wealthy by placing himself in situations that would be to his benefit. This qualification for an elder says that he must love spiritual things rather than money. This does not mean that he cannot make a good living and better his life by having a job that pays well. Paul does not mean that an elder must live in poverty. The desire for money, or the love of money, must not be the driving force in an elder's life, or it will detract him from his purpose to glorify God in the service that he renders to God.

The **thirteenth** qualification is in 1 Timothy 3:4–5:

He [the overseer] must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?).

An elder is a man who is given the responsibility of handling the family of God and all the people who are part of the family of God. To be able to handle such a responsibility an elder must prove himself able by handling his own family. This means that his relationship with his wife has to be a good relationship. He has to love her, be concerned about her, and run his family affairs well. His children have to be in subjection to him. They cannot be wild and ruthless (without compassion, Ed.), or else they are out of his control. If a person cannot handle his own family, then he certainly cannot handle the people of God.

Fourteenth, “*He [the overseer] must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil*” (1 Timothy 3: 6). An elder must not be a recent convert for two reasons: **first**, because he might become filled with pride, and **second**, as a recent convert, he may be ignorant of the message of God. In the New Testament,

when Paul went into a place and established the church by preaching, he came back after a very brief period of time and established elders in the church. During this time, the men who came into the church probably came out of Judaism, were well versed in the Scriptures, and were already committed to many things that Christianity taught. Many times this might be the case of people who are converted to the Lord if they have had a lifetime of Bible study and suddenly learn the truth of the gospel of Christ. However, a recent convert might not have the qualities of spirituality that are needed, so care must be taken. Such men need to be looked at, and concern given, before they are appointed to this important position. This can be a very difficult position for any new convert. Paul took this a step further by saying that an elder might fall under the same judgement as the devil. The judgment given to the devil is condemnation. A new convert has the potential of becoming filled with pride because of his position and might bring the wrath of the Lord upon himself because of his decisions or pride.

Fifteenth, *“He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap”* (1 Timothy 3:7). This is a very important qualification. The church is not **of** the community, but it is **in** the community. In dealing with people in the community, the church must try to lead them to an understanding of the gospel of Christ. The church itself must have a good reputation. Christians need to have the right kind of disposition, attitude, and manner of life so that they can have an impact on the community. A person who serves as an elder must be the kind of person who has a good reputation in the business world, in his relationship with his neighbors, and in every aspect of his life, so that God’s name can be glorified through him. That is why Paul says that he must have a good reputation with outsiders. Satan is trying to destroy the church in whatever way he can. In this particular situation, he will work through the leaders of the church to discredit the church. The leaders of the

church must have a good reputation in their business life, in their community life, in every area of their life. If they do not, then there will be a negative impact made upon the community.

These are the work and qualifications of the elder as Paul listed them for Timothy. There will be other things discussed in Paul's letter to Titus in relation to the qualifications of elders. Some people will say, "That is such a strict responsibility. Those qualifications are so difficult to meet, surely, no one meets them all." Look at each one of these qualifications carefully in relationship to all scripture. They are all qualifications, or characteristics of life, that every Christian ought to work toward and manifest in their communities with the exception of one. That is the qualification of ". . . *the husband of but one wife.*" These qualifications are laid down for the benefit of the church. They are reachable. One must work at them and give himself to them, and then, he will meet the qualifications.

Qualification of Deacons

The Office of a Deacon

In this next section of Paul's letter to Timothy, he used the Greek word "**diakonos**," which is translated "deacon." The term deacon can be used in a number of different ways. Basically, it carries with it the idea of "one who serves." The "**diakonos**" is one who is a servant. In this passage of scripture, Paul was talking about the office of a deacon. There were men who had responsibilities in local churches, and they were appointed to this office of deacon. When Paul wrote his letter to the church in Philippi, he addressed the Philippians, ". . . *To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons . . .*" (Philippians 1:1). That, plus the fact that he has given the qualifications of a deacon, implies that there were certain men who were given certain responsibilities to serve in this office. These men handled the affairs of the local

church. An example of this is seen in Acts 6:1–6 where the Grecian widows of the church were being neglected. Luke wrote:

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:2b–4).

The men who held the responsibility in teaching the word and in prayer gave the responsibility of "waiting tables" to other men so that they did not have to neglect their responsibilities. That conveys the idea of what a deacon does. The office of a deacon belongs to someone who can work in this way. Deacons are appointed for the purpose of handling everyday affairs in the functioning of the church, which allows the elders to be the spiritual leaders and guides in the church. This means that it is necessary to have men who serve within the spiritual means of a congregation to do spiritual teaching and counseling and to tend to the spiritual growth and progress of the congregation, while other men serve the congregation as servants who work to take care of other details. Responsibilities are divided in such a way that makes it possible for each one of these groups of men to serve in the offices that God has given them.

There are some things about the office of deacon that need to be understood to help appreciate the fact that these were special men who served. In the New Testament, the term deacon is used in a general way, so that everyone who belongs to the church is a deacon or a servant. There is also a specific office of deacon, with specific qualifications that are given to specific people to serve in specific ways. This is in addition to

the Christian who serves every day. I do not want to take away from the fact that everyone is a servant, because that is every Christian's responsibility. But, a lot of people will say, "We have elders to do that, and we have deacons who do this, and my responsibility is to attend worship services." The offices of these men, elders and deacons, do not in any way take away the responsibility that every Christian has to serve.

The qualifications of the deacon will be covered in the next chapter. Pray for wisdom to discern among those men who would serve in this capacity and for His blessings as we all serve in different capacities to the furthering of the work in His kingdom.

Deacons and the Mystery of Godliness

1 Timothy 3:8–16

Introduction

It was established in the previous chapter that the **office** of a deacon is a New Testament principle. One of the reasons this can be easily established is because there are specific qualifications given for a deacon. Paul's writings to Timothy and Titus are the source for these qualifications. Paul was very clear in his discussion of this matter.

Deacons — Servants Of The Church

Qualifications For Deacons

There are certain spiritual qualifications for the office of deacon, just as there are for the office of an elder. Paul expressed this thought by using the word "*likewise*" as he began talking about these qualifications:

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons (1 Timothy 3:8–10).

First, “*Deacons, likewise* [as in the case of an elder], *are to be men worthy of respect, . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:8). This phrase refers to the quality of the life a man must lead, so that he is recognized by the community and the church as one who deserves respect. The influence that a church has in the community is important, and the influence of the leaders of the church is also important. These men must have a life of service and purity and a willing attitude and disposition that make it possible for the church and the community to respect them.

Second, “*Deacons, likewise, are to be . . . sincere, . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:8). There is nothing that has a greater impact on people than someone who is sincere in whatever he is doing. The person may even be mistaken in what he is doing, but his sincerity is always seen as a good thing. Sincerity itself is not enough, however, because one who is sincerely wrong, is still wrong. Sincerity has a purpose. One who serves God, one who serves his fellow man and especially, one who serves as a leader in the church must be sincere in all that he does. Sincerity shows that he really believes in God, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He believes that the Word is the message of God, and he believes that what he is doing contributes to the welfare of himself, his family, the church, and the community where he lives.

Third, “*Deacons, likewise are . . . not indulging in much wine, . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:8). This is a qualification given for a number of different people in different positions. In New Testament days, drunkenness was a very common thing. It was looked down on by people who understood spiritual things and by those who had a relationship with God. Because it was, and still is, looked upon as such a negative thing, drunkenness should not be a part of a Christian’s life. A Christian should not indulge in much wine because it brings about drunkenness and many other things: it causes one’s senses to be out of communication with reality and causes one to lose good judgment and good influence on others.

Fourth, “*Deacons, likewise are . . . not pursuing dishonest gain*” (1 Timothy 3:8). Being dishonest will cause a person to lose his good influence in the community and to be more distracted with his own personal gain than anything else. I had a Christian friend who was in the business of repairing and selling typewriters. A man sent a typewriter to him for repairs. This Christian repairman saw that there was only a little screw that had come loose. He retrieved the screw, put it back, cleaned the typewriter, and sent it back to the man. The man called my friend and said, “You will never make it in a business if this is what you always do. I expected you to put the screw back, put on a part that I did not need, call it repair work, and then charge me for it. You simply put the screw back, cleaned it for me, and then sent it back to me without any charge. At this rate, you will go broke.” In reality, what the Christian did was right in the sight of God. He was honest in his business dealings. He did go broke, but because of his honesty, this Christian became a great leader in the church. In the business world, he was recognized as being one who could be trusted.

Fifth, “*Deacons, likewise . . . must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience*” (1 Timothy 3:9). The “*deep truths of the faith*” have to do with everyday life. The word of God, which contains the “*deep truths of the faith*,” has been given to His children to guide them, and to cause them to lead their lives in certain ways. When one lives **in** these deep truths, keeps hold of them and makes them a part of his life, then he is going to become the kind of individual who is sincere, because he fulfills his life with a clear conscience. One who never violates the conscience that he has developed through God’s word has no problem leading his life with a clear conscience. He realizes that he has a debt to pay to Christ and a way to live that makes it possible for him to glorify God. When he does this, he lives with a clear conscience.

Sixth, “*Deacons, likewise . . . must first be tested; and if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons*”

(1 Timothy 3:10). This verse says that a deacon must be tested. There are two ways to test a man before he serves in the office of deacon. **First**, he is tested by his reputation. Does he have the kind of reputation that says he is the kind of person who meets the qualifications that are discussed? Look at how he lives and compare it to how God says he should live. Look at his qualities and compare them to the qualities God says he must have. **Second**, there also needs to be a test of his actual performance as a servant and his willingness to be a servant of the church. So many times a person can be appointed as a servant, but he does not **serve**. Is this person already in service to the congregation? What kind of servant is he? Give him a task, give him some responsibility and see how he does before he is appointed as a deacon. Test him to make sure what kind a person he is. A man must be willing to serve to be a servant.

Wives of Deacons — Co-Workers

Paul deviated from the qualifications for the office of deacon at this point to say, *“In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything”* (1 Timothy 3:11). A deacon’s wife also has qualifications that she must fulfill. The Greek word **“gune,”** that is translated “wives” here, in reality, could be translated “women.” Some say that Paul was saying that there were women who also served in the office of deacon because of this word **“gune,”** and that there should be deaconesses in the church today. In reality, this is not the case, because he inserted these qualifications in the middle of the qualifications for a deacon. I believe the translation of “wives” is the best translation. A good woman can make a servant of the church an even better servant when they work as a team, because their influence together has greater value and will reach more people. We will look at the four qualifications Paul mentioned in detail.

First, Paul said deacons’ wives are “. . . *to be women worthy of respect*, . . .” (1 Timothy 3:11). Once again, this

phrase deals with the quality of the life they lead. There are many accounts in the New Testament of women who were servants. Earlier, in writing to Timothy, Paul instructed him concerning how women are to dress modestly and conduct themselves in such a way that they show their desire to glorify God in their dress and in the service they give. The wife of a deacon is to be a woman, who by her manner of life, the service she gives, and her purity of life, is worthy of the respect of the church and the community.

Second, the deacons' wives are "*. . . not malicious talkers . . .*" (1 Timothy 3:11). One who is a deacon's wife can talk, and be concerned about others, as long as it is not malicious talk. Malicious talk is talk that undermines someone or talk that says ugly and unkind things about people, even when they may be guilty. This context deals especially with a woman who may be a gossiping type of individual who likes to tell tales, causing difficulties and problems, and women who talk among themselves about others. This brings about problems, so a deacon's wife must be very careful in what she says and certainly, not be malicious in the way she talks about others.

Third, a deacon's wife is to be "*. . . temperate . . .*" (1 Timothy 3:11). This is a woman who is self-controlled. She has control of her life in every area. This would once again include the idea that she must not be one who is given to drunkenness. This word has many meanings that could all be applied here just as in the qualification of elders (see notes in chapter three).

Fourth, a deacon's wife is to be "*. . . trustworthy in everything*" (1 Timothy 3:11). This is so that in whatever assignment is given to the deacon and his wife, they can be trusted in every aspect of their life. So, however they live, however they conduct their family life, and in whatever way they are called to serve, they can be trusted with everything. This adds the responsibility of looking at the wife of any man who is being considered for the office of a deacon. It is important that she be the kind of woman that can serve beside him in an effective manner.

Qualification for Deacons Continued

At this point, Paul went back to the qualifications of the deacon and listed two more qualifications that deal with the idea of marriage.

Seventh, *“A deacon must be the husband of but one wife . . .”* (1 Timothy 3:12). This involves the same qualifications that were covered concerning the elder who must be the husband of but one wife (see notes in chapter three).

Eighth, *“A deacon . . . must manage his children and his household well”* (1 Timothy 3:12). This covers a number of things. A deacon must have good discipline where his children are concerned. His love and relationship with his wife must be good. The affairs of his family, whether it is in the keeping of his house, handling his money or other areas of his life, must be handled so that he has everything under control. The reason for this is because a deacon and his wife have an influence within the church and in the community that gives glory to God. God’s name must be glorified, and evil cannot be spoken against the deacon’s family as Christians.

Following these eight qualifications, Paul gave a motivation for those who serve as a deacon. He said, *“Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 3:13). If a deacon and his wife serve well in what they do, then they are elevated. This idea of position in the minds of people is important. If he serves well, then people will put him on a higher level. By serving well, he gains others’ respect. His influence in being able to glorify God before men is greater because of the respect of others. The things that he says and does will be more influential, not for his own gain, but for God’s. He will have a greater impact on the lives of those around him.

God’s church needs people who lead in such a way, because they recognize that it is not for their glory, but for the glory of God. Leaders in the church need to have an impact on the lives of others. They need to lead lives so that their spiritual

outreach and impact can be tremendous. The responsibilities of the leaders within the church, and their qualifications, are important because of the influence that a congregation has for God as its leaders serve Him.

The Correct Behavior In The Church

Paul's Reason For Writing

Remember this was a personal letter from Paul to Timothy to instruct him in the work at Ephesus as he guided and instructed the church. Paul said:

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Timothy 3:14–15).

Paul was writing from Macedonia, because he had left Timothy in Ephesus to “. . . command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer . . .” (1 Timothy 1:3). Undoubtedly, Paul wanted to return to Ephesus. He loved the church in Ephesus and probably stayed there longer than he did in any other place. Paul was disturbed because of the problems and difficulties at Ephesus, but he was delayed in returning. He wanted to be there to help the church, so he wrote to Timothy to give him guidance and help in trying to correct the situation there. He wanted to make sure that Timothy knew exactly how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household. Timothy was a part of the people, but he had the responsibility of showing the elders how to conduct themselves. He was to let the deacons and their wives know how they ought to act. In the book of 1 Timothy, Paul covered every age group. He was trying to get the church at Ephesus to return to the point where they can serve effectively in the work of preaching the gospel of Christ.

Instructions On Right Behavior

Paul used the term “. . . God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). In the New Testament, God's people are given several different designations (designation is a name given to something, Ed.). I am a man, so that means I am a male. I am also a person who is a gospel preacher. I am a father, because I have children. I am a husband, because I have a wife. I am blond or bald, fat or thin, and many other things that describe me. These are all different designations.

In the same way, there are different designations that describe the church. In the New Testament, God has given about fifty different designations to His people. The church are those people who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Three of God's designations for His people were mentioned here by Paul.

First, he said, “. . . *God's household . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:15) — the household of God is the family of God. Those who are in the church make up the family of God. They call one another “brothers” and “sisters” in Christ. God is their Father. This shows the family relationship that God's people ought to have. Just as I love my physical family, so also, I am to love my spiritual family.

Second, Paul said the household of God “. . . *is the church of the living God . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:15). The people who make up the family of God are also the “called out” of God, those who have been called out of sin into the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ. The “*living God*” is a way to distinguish God from the multiplicity of gods that were worshiped during Paul's day. Paul distinguished the living God of Christianity from the dead gods of pagan worship. The God that the church worships is a living God.

Third, not only are God's people a part of His household, they are “. . . *the pillar and foundation of the truth*” (1 Timothy 3:15). This shows the responsibility of the church as the household and family of God. The idea of a pillar is something

that **supports** a roof or gives support to different things. A foundation is something that establishes or **sustains** something else. God's people are the **support** and the **sustainers** of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "*Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*" (John 8:32), and "*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth*" (John 17:17). One of the responsibilities of the church is to take the Word of God and defend it, maintain it, uphold it, and assure that the Word of God is preached properly so that the truth of the gospel is made known. They must tell the world that the Word of God saves through Jesus Christ. Paul used these descriptions to put a picture in the minds of the church. Whether one calls it "the church that belongs to Christ," "the church of Christ," "the family of God," "the church of the living God," or "the pillar and foundation of the truth," as Paul called it here, it all means the same thing. These people who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ are in the household of God. They are in the church of the living God. They are all the family of God.

The Mystery Of Godliness

The Great Truth Stated

Paul added a new topic in 1 Timothy 3:16. He said:

*Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:
He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels, was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*

The phrase "*Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great . . .*" was probably brought to Paul's mind when he talked about "*the pillar and foundation of **the truth***" (1 Timothy 3:15). The **truth** is also referred to as "*. . . the mystery of godliness . . .*" in this verse. The truth involves salvation,

God's love for man, the message concerning Jesus Christ, and God's word which guides His children.

The term "*mystery of godliness*" is very meaningful. The word "godliness" can have several meanings as it is used here in scripture. It can mean religion or piety, or it can refer to the quality of a person's life. A godly person lives the kind of life that is in accordance with the scriptures. When Paul talked about the "*mystery of godliness*," he was talking about the whole teaching of God relative to redemption, salvation, and how people are brought to godliness, righteousness, and forgiveness of sins. All of this is the total religion of Christianity. It is the total redemptive story and the total scheme of redemption.

The **mystery** of this total picture is not seen as something strange or something that cannot be explained. The mystery is seen in the fact that at one time the total picture was a secret, but now it has all been revealed. In the Old Testament, going back to the beginning in Genesis, when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, man was separated from God because of his sinfulness. God told the woman that from her seed would come the One who would crush the head of Satan (cf. Genesis 3:15). At that point, God's plan for the salvation of mankind began to unfold. All through the Old Testament the unfolding of His plan took place, but not everybody understood it. Even Abraham did not understand the plan when he was told that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (cf. Genesis 18:18). He did not understand that the coming of Jesus Christ would be the fulfillment of God's plan. In the beginning, man's redemption was simply something in the mind of God that had to be unfolded. It was something that was held in secret to be eventually revealed. That **mystery** has since been revealed to God's children (cf. Ephesians 1:9).

The Great Truth Explained

Paul explained **the truth** by describing it in great detail. He began with, "*Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness*

is great: . . .” (1 Timothy 3:16). The mystery of godliness is a marvelous thing that is wrapped up in Jesus Christ. **First**, Jesus, God incarnate, “*appeared in a body*,” (1 Timothy 3:16). The word “incarnate” means “clothed in flesh.” The only way that God could bring redemption to mankind was through the sacrifice of a sinless person. **God came down!** That is the amazing thing about this godliness. That is the great story of redemption, that at one time was not understood but is now known. Jesus came to earth clothed in flesh (cf. John 1:14) and became the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (cf. John 1:29–36). When Paul said “*. . . He appeared in a body . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:16), he was talking about God coming to earth in the flesh as Jesus Christ, the Son.

It is amazing to read throughout the Old Testament just how much God loves man. He always wanted to come to earth. Genesis 3:8 says that God was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Scripture does not say if this was a one time incident or if this was something that God did on a regular basis, but God’s greatest love is man. God shows a great concern for man throughout His Word. When the children of Israel were led out of Egyptian bondage, in essence, God came down and appeared to them in a cloud to guide them by day and a pillar of fire at night (cf. Exodus 13:21–22). When the tabernacle was built, God came and took His seat in the tabernacle. He said, “This is where I am going to dwell.” The children of Israel could always look at the tabernacle and see God’s presence among them by the cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night (cf. Exodus 40: 34–38). The greatest love God has ever shown was when He came down in the form of Jesus, lived in the flesh, died a fleshly death without sin, so that His children could have redemption. This is the godliness Paul was talking about (cf. Romans 3:24–26; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:1–11; Colossians 1:13–14; Hebrews 4:15).

Second, Paul said, “*He . . . was vindicated by the Spirit . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:16). People accused Jesus of not being what He promised to be, but the Holy Spirit came and proved that

Jesus was the promised Messiah and Savior. John told the people that he had seen the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove (cf. John 1:29–34). The Spirit proclaimed that Jesus was indeed the Son of God (cf. Matthew 3:16–17; Mark 1:10–11; Luke 3:22). The Spirit also vindicated Christ’s claim to be the Son of God by the marvelous miracles Jesus performed. He healed the sick, raised the dead, and drove out demons by the power of the Spirit (cf. Matthew 12:28). He was resurrected by the Spirit of God to prove the claims that He was the Son of God and the Savior of the world (cf. Romans 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).

Third, Paul confirmed, “*He . . . was seen by angels . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:16). When Jesus was resurrected, there were angels at the tomb (cf. Matthew 28:2). Angels were present when He ascended back to heaven (cf. Acts 1:10). The angelic host played a part in this mystery that was revealed through Jesus Christ.

Fourth, “. . . *He . . . was preached among the nations . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:16). After Jesus ascended, the responsibility of preaching was given to the apostles, the disciples, and finally to God’s children today (Acts 2:1–47). The mystery of godliness has been revealed, and the message of salvation is being preached today as a result of that. This is the total sum of this **truth** that Paul was writing about when he described it as the pillar and foundation.

Fifth, “*He . . . was believed on in the world . . .*” (1 Timothy 3:16). The mystery of godliness in Jesus was preached in the world, and those who heard Him, believed Him, obeyed His commands, and followed the message that was revealed. Not everyone who heard believed and obeyed. Those whose hearts were honest heard, believed, and obeyed, and as a result of those who obeyed, Jesus is still preached today. People still hear, believe, obey, and follow Him, but there are also people who hear the word today and still do not believe.

Sixth, Paul said, “. . . *He . . . was taken up in glory*” (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus was taken up in glory because He, himself, obeyed God. He lived as a sinless man, served the

purpose God had in mind, and was carried back to heaven (cf. Acts 1:2–10). Jesus ascended to the Father in glory because of His obedience and the fulfillment of the plan, carried out over centuries of time, for the redemption of mankind. Paul told the marvelous story of the love of God in this one verse. Many times in Paul's writings he spontaneously brought these things to mind. May God help His children to marvel at the story of the mystery of godliness.

Instructions to the Man of God

1 Timothy 4:1–16

Introduction

As this study proceeds to 1 Timothy 4 it is important to remember that the chapter divisions in the Bible were not originally there. In the latter part of 1 Timothy 3, Paul talked about the mystery of godliness and Jesus' fulfillment of God's plan. Paul said Jesus *"... appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory"* (1 Timothy 3:16). This probably brought another problem to Paul's mind that was beginning to take place in Ephesus. In reality, Paul was continuing his letter to Timothy, as he moved from one subject to the next. One of the characteristics of Paul's writings is that he was easily distracted by things he had said. This distraction would lead him to make comments about something else before he had finished his original topic, but he always returned to and finished the first topic.

Coming Apostasy Predicted And Identified

Apostasy Revealed By God

Paul moved from talking about the mystery of godliness to talking about apostasy (an abandoning of what one believes, Ed.). Paul began in 1 Timothy 4:1: *"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."* Before Jesus ascended

into heaven, He promised the apostles He would send the Spirit of truth and “*. . . when he . . . comes, he will guide you into all truth*” (John 16:13). This same Spirit was now revealing through Paul the message that “*. . . in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.*”

There are several things in this verse that need to be considered. **First**, there would be an apostasy in the future. Paul said this would happen “*in later times.*” When will this take place, and what did he mean by “*later times*”? In the context, Paul seems to be saying that the problems are already beginning. Pure Christianity, as it was revealed by the Holy Spirit, was something that was believed and taught by the apostles as they received divine inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Whenever, and wherever Christianity was preached, people believed, but Satan’s influence was seen immediately, and people who once believed began to deviate from pure Christianity. Sometimes this happened simply because of their own warped thinking, but it also happened for their own personal gain.

Paul was warning Timothy that there was going to be a departure from the mystery of godliness and the system of faith, and people were going to teach other things. Some would abandon their faith, and instead of following the truth, they would follow deceiving spirits and doctrines taught by demons. It is important to understand that there is an evil spirit world in existence, and that this spirit world is tuned into Satan and influences men to do evil. When Paul talked about deceiving spirits, he was referring to men who preach a doctrine that was contrary to the sound faith that Paul had revealed. When he talked about the things taught by demons, he was talking about things taught that are not in accordance with the will of the Lord. He was talking about men who have been led astray.

In 2 Timothy 3:13 Paul said, “*While evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*” Satan influences men with false doctrines through

the demonic spirit world, and they, in turn, influence others as deceiving spirits so that they become worse and worse. The apostle John also warned of this happening. He said, *“Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist”* (2 John 7). Paul had already talked about the fact that Jesus was born in the flesh, becoming the incarnation of God, was vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, preached to the nations, believed on in the world, and finally, taken up in glory. John said there will come a time when men will say that Jesus was not who He claimed to be, and His death on the cross did not atone for the sin of man. When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he said, *“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming”* (Ephesians 4:14). Satan uses men to deceive other men away from the simple truth of the gospel of Christ. He uses men to say that redemption and salvation did not come through Jesus Christ. The doctrines of demons are being taught by those who are deceiving spirits in the form of men. Paul warned that this is already a problem, and that it was going to get worse.

The Heresy Being Taught

Many of the false teachers during Paul’s time were probably Jewish, but he did not give enough details to decide whether they were the same kind of Law keepers that he wrote about in Galatians (cf. Galatians 3:1–25). The problem at this particular time in history was called Gnosticism. The term comes from the Greek word *“gnostic,”* which means knowledge. The Gnostics did not become a mature group until the second and third centuries, but they did have an influence at this time. There were several characteristics or false teachings of the Gnostics.

First, the Gnostics believed that God, who is a spirit, was good, so anything in the spirit was good. But, they taught that

all matter, or anything that was physical, was evil. So, the physical body, which is matter, was evil. The spirit and all matter were both eternal, but since the spirit was good, and all matter was evil, then everything that makes up the earth and the human body was looked upon as evil. As a result of this teaching, the body was not considered important.

The **second** thing the Gnostics taught was that salvation came when the spirit of man was released from the physical body that was evil and acted as a prison for the spirit. The **third** teaching dealt with the fact that they believed Christ was human, and it was His humanity that they chose to focus on and teach about. With their beliefs regarding the human body and the spirit, the result was false teaching in two areas that Timothy would have to confront: licentiousness and asceticism.

Licentiousness is the total disregard for accepted rules and standards. It is a life lived morally unrestrained, especially in sexual activities. Asceticism is the religious teaching that one can reach a higher spiritual state by rigorous self-discipline, self-denial and abstinence. The Gnostics believed that since the body, as eternal **matter**, is already evil, then it does not make any difference what the body does. There is not a problem if one does whatever the body craves, just as long as the inward spiritual man is right. Man can do whatever he wants, and essentially wear the body out, because the spirit is the important thing. That is licentiousness. The other side is asceticism, which said that since the body is evil it must be strictly controlled. The body must be treated harshly, and any desires or cravings must be choked out.

These are the false doctrines being taught by deceiving spirits and demons. Paul said:

Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to

abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth (1 Timothy 4:2–3).

Paul described these false teachers as ones who had no feelings anymore because their consciences had been seared. False teachers will teach the false doctrine of forbidding marriage and certain foods, and it will not bother their conscience in any way. When Paul was writing to Timothy most of this was just beginning, but Gnosticism was influencing both Judaism and Christianity and literally turning them both upside down by the second and third centuries.

Paul told Timothy these doctrines were being taught by hypocritical liars. They were teaching people that they could not eat meat, or marry, because if they did they were subscribing to ungodliness and to the wickedness of the flesh. Paul told Timothy that these restrictions were not necessary. Often Christianity is the victim of false teaching because the people teaching are liars who are looking for something for their own gratification or personal gain. They make the gospel something that it is not and lead the church into apostasy. Paul said these restrictive doctrines were not true, because God created all things: *“For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer”* (1 Timothy 4:4–5).

God created all things to be eaten. I have traveled in many nations around the world and have eaten things in other nations that would never be eaten in the United States. I have also eaten things in the United States that people in other places would not eat. For instance, when I worked among the Zulu tribe in Africa, there was a little ant with wings that lived in the ground. But when it rained, they would come out, shed their wings, find a mate and go back into the ground. The Africans would pick them up and eat them. The ants contained a lot of protein, which was good for the African people. I never got to the point

that I could eat these ants raw, but I learned to enjoy them braised (to brown over live coals, Ed.) on a piece of iron over the fire. These ants were something good created by God and given to man to eat with thanksgiving. Food and other things in the world have been created by God, whether everyone likes them or not. God's word says all of these things are good (cf. 1 Timothy 4:4). They were created by God to be received by man with thanksgiving. Gratefulness is important. God provides, man gives thanks through prayer, and the things provided are consecrated. All this is confirmed in God's word as part of His plan.

Personal Instructions For Timothy

Qualities of a Good Servant of Jesus Christ

Paul gave Timothy some special instructions about teaching the brethren: *"If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed"* (1 Timothy 4:6). Paul used the Greek word **"diakonos"** in talking to Timothy, not because Timothy was serving in the office of a "deacon," but because he was a servant and minister of the Word. When the apostles gathered the disciples together in Jerusalem to choose seven men to act as "deacons," they said, *"It would not be right for us to neglect the **ministry of the word of God** in order to wait on tables"* (Acts 6:2). This is the same responsibility that Paul gave Timothy. He wanted Timothy to be a good minister, or preacher, of the Word in which he had been instructed.

A good preacher is one who works with a congregation in the same capacity as Timothy by teaching the things that God has given him. His preaching is not to be from his own wisdom but from God's. By his instructions to Timothy, this was what Paul was giving Timothy through the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Timothy needed to take these divinely inspired teachings and serve as a minister of the word of God, and he

was to minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation by giving these truths to the people. If a preacher has the word of God and he does not give it to others, then he is not doing what God has planned for him to do. He is not serving God in the capacity that God wants him to.

Paul continued, *“Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly”* (1 Timothy 4:7). Earlier, Paul told Timothy not to have anything to do with *“myths and endless genealogies”* because these things do not help the people, and they cause controversy (cf. 1 Timothy 1:4). Paul was emphasizing this point again. The things that were being taught by false teachers, such as taking myths, making stories out of them, and then trying to make a spiritual principle out of them were things that Timothy needed to ignore. A preacher will find all of these kind of things today that he has to make sure he does not follow, or pay any attention to, as he serves in a congregation.

Paul told Timothy it was good to stay physically fit, but that was not the most important thing. Paul said, *“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding **promise for both the present life and the life to come**”* (1 Timothy 4:8). It is important for all Christians to take good care of themselves, but this does not need to become a distraction from what is most important, the focus on the spiritual condition of one’s life. Later Paul talked to Timothy about his stomach (cf. 1 Timothy 5:23), so Timothy may have had some kind of physical ailment, but Paul did not want this to take away from his ministry of the Word. Godliness has a value in all things. Being spiritually right, and teaching that to others, carries a promise for this present life and the life to come.

First Timothy 4:9–10 contains another one of Paul’s trustworthy sayings:

This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we

have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.

Paul added a parenthetical saying to tell Timothy that the promise of life and the life to come is the reason to strive in this life. His trustworthy saying was, “*We have put our hope in the living God who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.*” Paul was telling Timothy to spend time developing his spirituality. He needed to spend time listening to the words that Paul had written. He needed to develop a godly spirit and attitude, pray fervently, listen to and read the Word, talk about spiritual matters, and concentrate on God because the job he had was a tremendous responsibility. Paul was saying that the only way he was going to be a good minister was if he told the brethren about the false teachers that were going to come and the difficulties that were going to arise as a result of false teachings. Paul was telling Timothy to prepare himself for what was ahead. Anyone who wants to serve as a minister of the Word, whether he serves as Timothy did, or serves as a member who wants to help people from a spiritual point of view, must dwell on these things and develop himself.

I grew up in a fine congregation which had a good preacher. I had a godly mother and father, but I remember a little lady who taught me in Bible class when I was nine, ten and eleven years old. She was very spiritual, and studied the Word. She understood that as I grew into my teen years, and older, I would be confronted with difficulties and problems. She prepared herself to teach those in her class to develop the ability to stand for the Lord by prayer, by the things she did and taught, and by the things she studied. She knew the importance of being prepared, and taught us the same principles that Paul was talking to Timothy about.

Duties of a Good Servant of God

Paul said *“Command and teach these things. Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, . . .”* (1 Timothy 4:11–12). This is a strong statement! Paul was telling Timothy that he must stand firm in the Lord and earnestly preach the message of God. At this time, Timothy was probably between 35 and 40 years old. During this time, the Jews and the Gentiles did not consider a person capable of teaching until he was at least 40 years old. People would not listen to a younger man simply because of his age. Timothy had important things to say, and Paul did not want people to ignore him because of his age.

Paul gave Timothy the following instructions to overcome problems that might be caused by his youth:

. . . but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers (1 Timothy 4:12–16).

Paul was telling Timothy he could overcome people looking down on him by the quality of life that he lived. Paul told him to speak directly and carefully, to make sure his speech was right, to be careful what he said, and to make sure it was the truth. Paul urged Timothy to live a life that was exemplary. He needed to love people fervently, in spite of who and what they were, and in spite of how they treated him. He needed to manifest a deep faith and be pure in his existence. Some of these things overlap, but any preacher, and especially

a young preacher, can have a greater affect if he has these qualities in his life.

In that day and time, churches did not have the Scriptures in every home as is common today. Printing was not a common thing, and the Bible was very expensive. So, much of what the Christians in Ephesus received, as far as learning from the Scriptures, came from public readings. Timothy had a copy of the Scriptures that he could read aloud. This would have included the Old Testament Scriptures and anything that Paul had written and sent to him. Paul told him to give attention to this, and to make sure that he did it faithfully. Timothy was to read, teach, and preach. He had the responsibility to carry out the program of work that was needed to make sure the congregation in Ephesus grew.

Paul urged Timothy not to neglect the gift which was given to him through the prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on him. This probably took place in Lystra. I think the gift Paul was talking about was the assignment to preach the gospel rather than some miraculous gift. In that day, miraculous gifts were given by the laying on of hands, but not the laying on of hands from the elders. Paul was saying Timothy had been appointed to be a preacher of the gospel, and undoubtedly some elders recognized Timothy as such. The laying on of hands was not necessarily the importation of a spiritual, miraculous gift but an appointment. So Timothy was appointed to the work of preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ by men who were elders in the church.

Finally, Paul told Timothy to be diligent, do a good job in his personal development and in the responsibilities that God had given to him. He needed to be diligent in these matters, give himself wholly to them, so that everyone could see his progress. If Timothy was going to leave an impact and make a difference in the congregation, he was going to have to really devote himself to it. Paul repeated himself when he told Timothy to watch his life and the doctrine closely. He was reminding Timothy that he must watch closely everything he

taught and practiced.

Preaching the gospel is a tremendous responsibility. Anyone who accepts the responsibility needs to be sure that when they speak, they do so according to the pure doctrine of Christ. They need to progress in their knowledge and service as they serve in a congregation. Paul told Timothy to watch what he preached and how he lived, and he must persevere in those areas. Even in spite of difficulties, Paul urged Timothy to be strong because if he did, he would save himself and those he was teaching. This is the ultimate end for everyone who serves in the capacity of teaching and preaching the gospel of Christ. 1 Timothy 4:6–16 is one of the most important series of instructions given by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul, concerning how young men ought to conduct themselves as preachers so that the name of God might be glorified through them. These are good exhortations for anyone in God's family. May God help us to glorify His name in all things.

Instructions on Relationships in the Church

1 Timothy 5:1–25

Introduction

Paul continued his instructions to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5. Keep in mind that Paul was telling Timothy how to instruct people, so they would know how to behave themselves in the church of the living God. In the Old and New Testaments, as God's family worked together, they were usually divided by God into two age groups, the older and the younger. Paul gave Timothy instructions for dealing with each group.

Attitudes and Actions Toward Different Age Groups

Toward Men

In ancient times, Timothy would have been considered a young man at the age of 35 to 40. He had to deal with men his own age and those who were older than him. Timothy needed to develop the right kind of spirit and attitude toward these men. So, Paul began this portion of Timothy's instructions with, "*Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father*" (1 Timothy 5:1a). The word "*rebuke*," as used in this context, means a verbal chastisement. Timothy was not to speak harshly to an older man. Instead, he was to exhort him as if he were his own father. This may be hard to understand in this present time, but in this context, the

commandments of God concerning how children were to obey, respect, and love their parents were strictly followed. There were stringent teachings in the Old Testament regarding children and their attitudes toward their parents. Some of the false teachers that Timothy was confronting about the difficulties and problems in the church at Ephesus may have been older men. Paul was telling him not to rebuke them harshly, but to treat them as he would his father. This would involve the respect that was commanded for children to give to their parents (cf. Exodus 20:12). Using the proper respect, Timothy ought to be able to handle any difficult situation.

Paul continued by telling Timothy to “*Treat younger men as brothers, . . .*” (1 Timothy 5:1b). In a family situation, family members love and appreciate each other and show a special kind of respect to one another. Brothers show each other love and respect. They want one another to succeed, and they show a special pride in the accomplishments of each other.

Toward Women

Next, Paul said, “*Older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity*” (1 Timothy 5:2). Once again this refers to God’s commandments concerning how children should respect their parents. Timothy was instructed to treat the older women with the same respect he would show his mother. He was to give the younger women the same love and concern he would show to his sister. All ministers of the Word need to be aware of these guidelines when dealing with the different age groups, and especially when they are dealing with problems in the congregation. Talk to the older men and women with care, concern, the right spirit and attitude, and give them the respect they deserve. Talk to the younger men and women in such a way that they see the concern being shown for their spiritual welfare.

Paul added the phrase “*with absolute purity,*” after all these instructions. I believe this phrase needs to be applied to anyone that a young preacher deals with. Timothy had to

approach the older men and women, and the younger men and women, with absolute purity. Some commentators say that this phrase applies only to the younger women, because Timothy was not married and he needed to be especially careful in relating to the younger women. Any preacher needs to have this kind of purity of mind, life, relationship, and doctrine in every aspect of his life. This principle should be used by everyone in every congregation.

Instructions Concerning Widows

Paul's Exhortation Concerning Widows

The next problem that Paul addressed concerned the widows in the church. Remember, in Acts 6:1–7 the disciples of the church in Jerusalem chose seven men from among them to help in the daily distribution of food because the Grecian widows were being overlooked. The church in Jerusalem probably consisted of more Jews than Greeks. The Jewish widows would have been better known and naturally would have received more attention. The apostles knew that this was not right, so they appointed men who had the responsibility of seeing that all the widows were taken care of. The church as a whole does have a responsibility toward its widows. First Timothy 5:3–15 contains specific instructions concerning how to manage these responsibilities.

*Give proper recognition to those widow who are **really in need**. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. The widow who is **really in need** and **left all alone** puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask*

God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives (1 Timothy 5:3–6).

The idea of “widow” is one who has been left alone without any means of making a living or supporting herself. During the time Paul was writing, if a woman’s husband died, her means of welfare and living were taken away. **If** the widow needed to be taken care of, it was the church’s responsibility to be there for her. At this time, women were totally cared for by their husbands. When the husband died, the phrase “*left all alone*” would apply if she had no children or grandchildren to care for her. This phrase still applies in many areas of the world today, but in the United States and other western world countries, women have social security and retirement systems if they have ever worked. In Africa and Asia, the problem of a woman being left alone after her husband dies is much more prominent. Discretion needs to be used in assessing the position of each widow according to her circumstances.

Description of the Widow Indeed

When Paul said, “*Give proper recognition to those widows who are **really in need***” (1 Timothy 5:3), he meant that the widow must be looked at in regard to her needs. Was she a widow that was “*all alone*”? What kind of situation was she in? The church has the responsibility to help the widows who are “**really in need.**” In other words, there are going to be some widows who are not “**really in need.**” This is especially true of widows who may have been left plenty of money through retirement or insurance policies. If a widow has children who can take care of her, then that is their responsibility. They must learn to put their religion into practice by caring for their mother or grandmother. This is pleasing to God, and it is a chance for children to repay all that has been done for them by their mother or grandmother. In these cases, the church should not be responsible for such a widow. I do not believe Paul is saying this

applies to a widow who may have non-believing children who will not take care of her.

Even if a widow is ***“really in need,”*** there are still some restrictions that need to be considered. She must first meet certain qualifications before it becomes the church’s responsibility to care for her. Even though she has been *“left all alone,”* she still must be the kind of woman who *“... puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and ask God for help”* (1 Timothy 5:5). A woman who has been left all alone must depend on others, so she puts her hope in God knowing that God’s people will take care of her. She must be the kind of woman who prays continually (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17). She must be the kind of woman who trusts God for help. Paul says that the widow who lives for pleasure is already dead even though she is still alive. He is talking about a widow who lives for pleasure instead of living for the glory of God. The American Standard Version describes this as *“wanton pleasure.”* She is dead spiritually because of the way she is living her life. She may be a widow in need, but if she does not depend on God, then Paul says she is already dead, and she does not deserve the support of the church. A widow who follows the way of the world is spiritually dead just as Paul told the church in Ephesus:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient (Ephesians 2:1–2).

Remember Paul was writing to Timothy personally. He said:

Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family,

he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:7–8).

Part of Timothy's assignment was to convey these instructions to the people in Ephesus, but to do so in such a way that no one be open to blame. He needed to convince the church that it was right to care for the widows; it was right for children to care for their parents and grandparents; it was right to take care of their relatives; and if anyone did not do these things, then part of Timothy's responsibilities included talking to them about it. Even today, if someone does not take care of his own family, then “. . . *he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever*” (1 Timothy 5:8).

Enrolled Widows

Paul continued his instructions concerning widows with some verses that are harder to understand possibly because the situation in the church at Ephesus is not known. It is hard to know for sure what he was talking about. He said:

*No widow may be put on **the list** of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. As for the younger widows, do not put them on such a list.* (1 Timothy 5:9–11a).

“**The list**” Paul was talking about does not seem to be a list of widows who can be taken care of. It is more likely that the New Testament church had a group of widows who performed certain jobs in the church. They were listed as servants of the church. This list was to contain only the names of the widows who met the following qualifications: over sixty, faithful to her husband, well known for good deeds, which includes bringing up her children, hospitality and washing the feet of the saints

(this is part of hospitality), helping those in trouble, and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. She would be put on a list as someone with spiritual qualities and characteristics who could be useful to the church in different areas. A widow who is not over sixty might need the support and help of the church, and deserve to receive “*proper recognition*,” even though she would not appear on the “over sixty” list. This might be something the church should practice more today than it does.

Instructions Regarding Younger Widows

Paul continued talking about widows by giving instructions to Timothy and counseling the younger widows themselves. He said:

As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan (1 Timothy 5:11–15).

Paul was still talking about the widows on a list, but he distinguished between the older and the younger widows. He advised that the younger widows should not be on the list of widows who have chosen to dedicate their lives in service to the church because at some point their sensual desires might overcome their dedication to Christ. In the beginning, a younger widow might say, “I loved my husband so much that I know I

can never love another man, and I want to just be true to his memory, so I am going to live my life in devotion as a servant to the church.” Paul advises that the younger widow not be allowed to do this because her sensual desires are natural. Whether it is the desire for sex, to have a relationship with another man, or even the desire for social involvement, if she has dedicated herself to the church and the Lord, and then breaks that vow of commitment she has made to Christ, she brings judgment on herself when she breaks her pledge.

Paul said that it would be better for the younger widows to marry, which was more likely to happen to a younger woman. She should not be put on the list of widows to be given support because she might get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. The younger women would be more inclined to become idlers, gossips and busybodies. Paul advised that the younger widows should not be used as servants of the church unless they are over sixty. He counseled these women to marry, have children, and manage their homes so that they would not give any opportunity for slander. Another problem Paul mentioned with putting the younger widow on such a list dealt with her serving the church, but as time goes on she decides she wants to marry, and then people will talk about her to say that she did not stay with her original dedication to the Lord. As a result of this talk, the church is spoken evil of as well. Paul said that some had already turned away to follow Satan.

First Timothy 5:16 covers another problem with the widows that must have been taking place in Ephesus. Paul said:

If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

Normally the woman is responsible for the care and upkeep of the home and the family. Paul addresses the women who

were in charge of their homes to tell them that if they have a widow within their own family that they can care for, then this should be the first option in taking care of the widows in the church. It is not right for the church to have to take care of these women if their families are able to do it. This is so that if there are widows who do not have anyone to care for them, the church is able to respond easily without the burden of too many widows.

Paul's Instructions Regarding Elders

Elders Worthy of Double Honor

Paul totally changed the subject in this letter once again to talk to Timothy about elders. His instructions were:

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that others may take warning (1 Timothy 5:17–20).

In these verses, Paul said the elders were to direct the spiritual affairs of the church, but elders who also preach and teach were worthy of double honor. The double honor not only included respect that was due any elder, but it was possible for an elder to be paid for the added responsibilities that he took on by preaching the Word. This is implied when Paul talked about not muzzling the ox that is treading the grain. In that day, men would bring the grain in and put it on the threshing floor so that the oxen could walk over it to knock all the grain loose. As the oxen were treading the grain, they were allowed to reach down

and eat the grain. Paul said, "*The worker deserves his wages*" (1 Timothy 5:18).

Anytime there are leaders in any organization, it is common for people to make accusations against them. This is especially true in the church when there are immature Christians. Paul knew people would come to Timothy to tell them about the problems they might have with an elder because of his influence. Paul admonished Timothy not to accept the accusations until they had been made by several witnesses. Then, Timothy was to talk to the elder, and if the accusations were true, the elder was to be rebuked publicly in the presence of other elders. **First**, Paul said to make sure the charges were correct before anyone was accused. **Second**, when anyone rebuked an elder, it was to be done publicly so that others might take warning.

Once again, Paul reminded Timothy how important his responsibility was by saying, "*I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism*" (1 Timothy 5:21). Timothy needed to remember that he was responsible to God for all that he did. He could not allow his personal feelings to become involved when he was carrying out these instructions. Timothy might have to deal with an elder who was wealthy, one who had shown Timothy special concern and care, or even someone whom he dearly loved. In all of his dealings, Timothy could not show favoritism.

Paul counseled Timothy by telling him, "*Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure*" (1 Timothy 5:22). Paul told Timothy that he needed to be careful before he accused anyone and before he appointed someone by laying his hands on them. He must not sin, or be influenced by the sin of others. Paul urged him to keep himself pure.

In 1 Timothy 5:23 Paul talked even more personally when he said, "*Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.*" Paul

knew Timothy well enough to know that he had stomach problems and frequent illnesses, and that he only drank water. They did not have medicines in those days to take care of their ailments, but there was non-intoxicating medicinal wine that helped to settle the stomach. Paul urged Timothy to drink a little wine to help his stomach. Paul said:

The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden (1 Timothy 5:24–25).

These are men who should not even be considered for the position of an elder. Sometimes a man's sins are not as obvious, but their sins cannot be hidden. Sin leaves a trail of proof behind those who are sinning. Timothy must be very cautious in appointing men to the position of elder and accusing any elders. In the same way that sins are obvious, so are the good deeds of a man. A good man is known by his good deeds. These are the kind of men that Timothy will know are deserving of the eldership.

Timothy received a number of teachings from Paul in this chapter. Paul was the kind of writer who covers a lot of material by jumping from one subject to the other and then back again. He gave some excellent teachings regarding how Timothy should conduct himself in regard to all ages, in regard to the leaders of the church, both in appointment and accusations, and in regard to dealings with all areas concerning the widows in the church. Timothy is the one Paul is writing to, but anyone who is a minister of the Word and works in a local congregation must work carefully and commit himself to this message.

Instruction to Certain Groups on How to Keep the Faith

1 Timothy 6:1–21

Introduction

First Timothy 6 is the last chapter Paul wrote in this first letter to Timothy. Paul covered a great deal of material in this chapter, switching back and forth from one topic to another as was his practice.

The Slave's Spirit of Service

The Christian Slaves' Attitude of Service

Paul began this chapter by talking about two different groups of people who had become Christians during the time when slavery was acceptable. He addressed the slaves by saying,

All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them (1 Timothy 6:1–2).

In the Roman Empire, at the time Paul was writing, it was estimated that one third of the population was made up of slaves. These slaves all came from a number of different backgrounds. Many of them were prisoners of war brought back by the Roman legions who fought and won. Others were condemned men who were given the choice of being put to death or serving as a slave. Others were men serving as slaves because they could not pay their debts. Others were kidnaped and put into slavery. Finally, parents in extreme poverty would sell their children into slavery. There were numerous reasons that a person might become a slave. Many slaves were intelligent people. Some were teachers, men of medicine or other professions, who had been conquered during war and brought to the Roman empire to serve as slaves. There were also very poor people who had been placed into slavery. There were as many different characteristics in the slaves as there were reasons for becoming one.

Christianity was preached and, therefore, naturally spread to slaves and masters of slaves alike. The fact that Paul talked about slavery does not mean that Christianity teaches that slavery is right. Christianity works with people in whatever position they hold in life. It does not try to altar or change political circumstances. Eventually, in most places, slavery was removed by God in His time when He saw fit.

The Christian Slave's Relationship to His Christian Master

History tells us that there were so many slaves that some gospel preachers during this time actually sold themselves into slavery so that they might teach the gospel of Christ to the slaves. They felt that, as slaves themselves, they had a better opportunity to teach and preach to those in slavery. When Paul addressed those *"who are under the yoke of slavery,"* he was talking to a large group of people. Among the slaves, there developed an attitude and disposition of, "I am going to cheat

my master as much as I possibly can, because I should not be a slave. He mistreats me, so I am just going to get everything out of him I possibly can.” Paul said when one became a Christian, they were going to have to change that attitude. Paul told them that they must serve their masters even better than they did before they became a Christian, so that the name of God and His teachings will not be slandered. As a slave, he was to treat his master with respect and avoid the attitude of taking advantage of his master even if that master was not a Christian. If the master was a Christian, then the slave must work even harder because he wanted his brother to be blessed. It did not make any difference how the slave was treated, he must act as a Christian in all circumstances. When a person becomes a Christian, people should be able to see a different quality of life and an attitude that would reach others for Christ.

In Colossians 4:1 Paul said, “*Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.*” Paul urged the masters to treat their slaves fairly because the laws of the Roman Empire were against treating slaves with fairness. The master had the right to beat a slave or even put one to death, without any fear of being convicted. Christianity reached out and changed the lives of two groups of people, slave and master. Whatever was done needs to be done so that God’s name is glorified and God’s word can be preached.

This same principle applies today to anyone who works for someone else in a job. The employee and employer relationship is the same as the slave and master relationship if a Christian is involved. The Christian must not do anything that will bring reproach upon his employer or his employee. The Christian will work fairly and treat others fairly because he does not want to bring reproach upon the name of God. He wants God’s name to be glorified and God’s word preached to all men.

The True Value of Christian Living

Contrast: “A Different Doctrine” With “Sound Doctrine”

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain (1 Timothy 6:3–5).

The problem of false teachers was one that Paul dealt with in the first chapter, but now he returns to talk about those who teach false doctrines and do not agree with “*the **sound instruction** of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” “*Sound instruction*” is the truth of the gospel, the mystery of godliness. False teachers were the ones who would not listen to the inspired word and teaching. These false teachers had problems of their own, besides the fact that they were false teachers. **Number one**, they were conceited. **Number two**, they understood nothing; in other words, they were stupid. A person who rejects the wisdom of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ is a person who is essentially saying, “I am smarter than God, the men of God, and the Word of God.” These two problems can be put into the category of pride. Pride is a major problem in anyone’s life. Paul said this kind of person had an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words. This could be translated to say that this kind of person is sick. There are these kind of people everywhere, even in the church. They like to fuss and fight. They want to disagree with just about anything that comes up. They are people who know the blessing of being a child of God, but their attitude is sick.

Christianity does not make everybody righteous. From the beginning of time until now, Satan has been battling those people who serve as ministers of the gospel on a daily basis as they try to relate the gospel of Christ to their neighbors. Timothy was battling the false teachers in the first century. Ministers of the gospel are still battling false doctrines today in the twenty-first century, and they will be battling Satan until this world ends. The result of having false teachers in the church is **envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions** and **constant friction** between men of corrupt minds. These men have been robbed of the truth, and they think that godliness is a means to financial gain. This is what happened to the church in Ephesus. At one time they were a solid, evangelistic group of men who did a marvelous job (cf. Acts 19: 1–20). Now, because of false teachers, the church is dealing with all kinds of problems.

Envy is a sickness of being discontent and having ill will over another person's advantages. It is when one person desires what another might have. **Strife** means fighting among each other. **Malicious talk** is hurtful talk against fellow Christians. **Evil suspicions** is thinking evil thoughts about someone, supposing that they are not living the Christian life. **Constant friction** is a constant disagreement between the brethren because of differences of opinions. Satan had robbed these false teachers of the truth. At one time they knew how a person ought to live and conduct their lives as a Christian. But a sick mental attitude and disposition took over, and they began to think that godliness was only a means of financial gain.

Sober Warnings To The Rich

After saying that false teachers see godliness as a means to financial gain, Paul immediately told Timothy, *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that"* (1 Timothy 6:6–8). Paul was saying that great gain may not be financial gain, but

there is a lot to gain by being a Christian. Thinking there is **gain in godliness** is right, but it is **godliness with contentment** that produces the greatest gain. As a child of God, the Christian is a citizen of Heaven, and anticipates the coming of Christ. Paul told the Philippians that “. . . *our citizenship is in heaven*” (Philippians 3:20). Jesus said:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:19–20).

Anyone who is a child of God has his mind set on spiritual matters and his goal is Heaven above. Therefore, he is content with what he has in this life. He does not continually strive after **things** in this life. That does not mean that he does not try to better his education and his life, but these **things** are not foremost in his life. Man needs to be content with what God gives him, and as a result of this, he will be blessed richly, if not in this world, then in the world to come.

Paul said, “*For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it*” (1 Timothy 6:7). When a baby comes into this world, he has nothing, and when a man dies, he is not able to take anything with him either. If he is content with whatever he has in this world, then he is going to be blessed richly. A man who is content will not lose his contentment if everything is taken away from him, because his hope is in heaven. A Christian can be content just to have food and clothing because God has promised to take care of His children. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the people that the heavenly Father cares for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. The heavenly Father knows what His children need, and they are far more important to Him (cf. Matthew 6:25–34).

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs (1 Timothy 6:9–10).

Man must not place his hope in money, or the desire to get rich, because that can destroy him. The desire to get rich sometimes causes a man to run over other men in his foolish ambitions. The Christian must exercise care and use balance in the desire to improve himself in material ways. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. People have wandered from the faith and caused themselves numerous griefs because of their desire to become wealthy.

Closing Exhortations To Timothy

In the final portion of Paul's first letter to Timothy, he talked personally to Timothy again, saying, "*But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness*" (1 Timothy 6:11). Paul must have realized that anyone who is a leader has opportunities to better himself financially and faces the challenge of becoming haughty because of his popularity. It is possible that Paul faced these same problems himself even though in scripture he is an exceptional person.

"Flee From All This and Pursue . . ."

Paul wanted Timothy to **flee** from the love of money and the contentious spirit that some have. He urges Timothy to get away from these things, and to pursue "*. . . righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness*" (1 Timothy 6:11). Because Timothy's sins have been forgiven in the blood of Christ, God has pronounced him righteous. Timothy must

pursue righteousness and godliness, which is found in the right kind of living. He must defend the faith by being faithful to his belief in God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. He must follow his love for God and the brethren. He must pursue endurance and gentleness. All men should flee evil and pursue the same things that Paul admonished Timothy to do.

***“Fight The Good Fight of Faith.
Take Hold of the Eternal Life . . .”***

Paul continued, *“Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses”* (1 Timothy 6:12). Defend what you are by defending the faith and making sure to hold onto eternal life, in contrast to a wealthy life on this earth. Timothy already had this life, but Paul was urging him to hold onto it. When Paul wrote about *“your good confession,”* he was referring to Timothy’s confession of the name of Christ before many witnesses. This confession was a way of telling others that he was going to follow Jesus and saying, “I believe that Jesus is the son of God. I believe He is my Savior.”

“Keep the Commandment Without Stain or Reproach”

Just as Timothy made the good confession before witnesses, Jesus made a confession that He was the King of the Jews before Pontius Pilate (cf. 1 Timothy 6:13; Mark 14:61–62; John 18:36–37). Paul tells Timothy,

In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time — God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable

light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen (1 Timothy 6:13–16).

Through his confession, Timothy said that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, the King and Savior of all. Timothy made his confession because he was convicted of the fact that Jesus was all of these things. Paul charges Timothy not to give up that belief.

Paul Briefly Discusses The Second Coming Of Christ

Paul charged Timothy, *“To keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time . . .”* (1 Timothy 6:14–15). When the time is right, God will bring about the second coming of Christ. This second coming is something that Christians anticipate because it will be the time when they get to be with God and gain their reward. Paul described God as *“. . . the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see”* (1 Timothy 6:15–16). I do not know exactly what *“unapproachable light”* means, but when Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus at the time of his conversion — *“. . . suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him . . . Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing . . . For three days he was blind . . .”* (Acts 9:3, 8–9). Light was the way God manifested Himself to men, but God Himself is One that no man has ever seen. Paul ended this brief personal charge to Timothy with, *“To him be honor and might forever. Amen”* (1 Timothy 6:16). The love and respect Paul had for God and Christ seems to overflow in his writings. It is as though he could not contain it all.

A Final Exhortation To The Rich

Before Paul closed his letter to Timothy, he returned to the problem of wealth again. He said:

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life (1 Timothy 6:17–19).

Those Christians who are rich must not become arrogant because of their worldly wealth. They must not put their hope in their worldly wealth because that kind of wealth is uncertain. There is nothing wrong with being rich if the person has the proper attitude about his wealth. Those who are rich are to be generous in their good deeds and willing to share the wealth they have with others. The wealthy person must realize that God has made it possible for him to be rich, but that person also has a special challenge in not relying on his wealth.

The world is filled with wealthy people. The people who live in the Americas are the most wealthy people in the world. The people who live in North America are in the upper two percent of the income of the people of the world. Forty-one percent of the people in the world have an average annual per capita income of \$200 or less. That is \$200 per person to live on for one year. Two percent of the population of the world live on \$1500 or more per year. The people in Third World countries may not be faced with the problem of wealth, but many Christians must face the same command that Paul tells Timothy to give the rich in the first century.

A rich young man came to Jesus and asked Him what he needed to do to gain eternal life. Jesus told him to keep the Law of Moses, but the young man said he had kept these laws. The young man asked, “What do I still lack?”

Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:21–24).

Jesus was using a hyperbole (an exaggeration used for effect, not meant to be taken literally, Ed.) when He talked about a camel going through the eye of a needle. A camel cannot possibly go through the eye of a needle, and Jesus was comparing this to the difficulty that a rich man has in pleasing God and being able to enter heaven. Any wealth that a Christian has is because of the blessings they have received from God. It is important to be liberal and generous in the division of the wealth that God gives.

A Final Exhortation To Timothy

Paul closed his letter to Timothy with a final charge and a benediction:

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you (1 Timothy 6:20).

It was the gospel of Christ, and the preaching and teaching of the message of redemption, that had been entrusted to Timothy. Paul urged him to guard it by using this gift as he should. He needed to turn away from the problems of godless chatter and the opposing ideas of knowledge. These were the

problems present in Ephesus that Timothy faced. The Gnostic teachers were beginning to come in and influence the church. Some had followed these new ideas just as happens in every generation. The Gnostic said that salvation was not dependent upon Jesus Christ but on the amount of knowledge that one had. Those who followed this new idea wandered away from the faith. Paul wanted Timothy to guard against this happening to himself.

Paul closed his letter by telling Timothy that he hoped God's grace was going to be with him. May God bless you as you continue in this study. Glorify His name by staying strong in what you believe and teach. Glorify His name by the way you live and work.

Paul's Thanksgiving and Exhortations for Timothy

2 Timothy 1:1–2:7

Introduction

This chapter will begin the study of 2 Timothy. Historically, 2 Timothy takes place after the books of 1 Timothy and Titus had been written. Remember, 1 Timothy was probably written after Paul had been released from imprisonment at the end of the book of Acts (cf. Acts 28:16). This imprisonment was a house arrest in which he lived in his own house under guard. It is during this time of house arrest that Paul wrote the four epistles that are known as “The Prison Epistles”: Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon. After his release, he traveled to Rome, Spain and Macedonia. During these travels, he left Timothy in Ephesus to resolve the problems there, and he left Titus in Crete. Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus from Macedonia. When Paul was traveling to the different places he had previously preached, it is believed that he was picked up and placed in prison a second time in Rome (during the time of Nero’s persecution). It was during Paul’s second imprisonment in Rome that he wrote the letter of 2 Timothy. This imprisonment was not a “house arrest,” because he was placed in a cold dungeon. Paul was truly in prison this time, and did not expect to be released. The dates of this imprisonment were probably between 64 and 67 A.D.

Advice To A Young Preacher

Paul's Salutation

Paul gave some special admonitions to Timothy as a young gospel preacher under difficult and adverse circumstances in 2 Timothy 1 and 2. These admonitions can be utilized by anyone who is going to preach the gospel of Christ. The salutation is like the one that was in 1 Timothy. There may be some instructions in this book that apply only to Timothy, because of things that were occurring in Ephesus, but the principle behind the instructions will be good for all the followers of Christ. Paul began with:

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (1Timothy 1:1–2).

Paul's Authority

Paul was appointed by God, through Jesus Christ, on the road to Damascus, which made him an apostle in the strictest sense of the term. He was one of the apostles that Jesus utilized in spreading the gospel of Christ. He was an apostle “according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.” Paul’s purpose was to preach the principles of Christianity and salvation to those who were lost. Once again, Paul addressed Timothy as his son. In 1 Timothy chapter 1 he talked about “Timothy, my true son in the gospel,” and here it is “my dear son.” Paul used the same three words of greeting in this epistle: “grace, mercy and peace.” He used the words grace and peace, which are both Gentile and Jewish salutations, in other epistles, but the only time Paul used the word “mercy” is when he wrote to Timothy.

An Apostle's Heart

Paul's Constant Prayerful Thanks For Timothy

Paul had worked closely with Timothy, and undoubtedly, they had developed a close relationship. Paul began this second letter to Timothy by expressing his thanks for Timothy. He said:

I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also (2Timothy 1:3–5).

Paul wanted Timothy to know that he was thanking the same God that he had always served with a clear conscience. He was serving the same God that his forefathers served. Some accused Paul of changing his commitment to God since he was once a Jewish rabbi, and now he was a Christian. Paul was telling Timothy that he had not changed gods. Paul told the Jews in his trial before Felix:

However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man (Acts 24:14–16).

The Jews had accused Paul of bringing in a new religion and a new thought. But Paul told them the same thing he was

telling Timothy: "I am not serving a new God. I am serving the same God, and I am doing it with a clear conscience. I have a new understanding through Jesus Christ."

Paul's Remembrance of Timothy

Paul had a special love and affinity for Timothy. He also knew the quality of the life Timothy was now living. Timothy had suffered many difficulties for preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ. He had endured many problems because of his faith and love for God. Paul not only loved Timothy, but he also remembered Timothy's tears. Paul was in prison and had those who ministered to him, but he longed to see Timothy so that he might be filled with joy.

Paul remembered Timothy as a young man with a sincere faith. Paul could recall their work together and remembered Timothy's faithfulness and endurance through suffering and persecution. He continued to believe in God despite the difficulties. This faith had its beginning in his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois. It is possible that on Paul's first missionary journey, as he traveled through Lystra, Derbe and Iconium, he may have converted this family. Paul had great admiration for these Jewish women who had believed in the Old Testament scriptures and prophecies and finally came to believe in Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the promised Messiah.

Paul's Exhortation To Timothy

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline (2Timothy 1:6-7).

The gift Paul mentioned could be one of two things. It could be a miraculous gift, because the apostles could impart miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of

their hands. There are examples of this when Paul laid his hands on some disciples in Ephesus, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:1–7). But I believe Paul was talking about the gift of the responsibility and opportunity to preach and teach the message of God.

This is a time of persecution for Christians, and Timothy's relationship to Paul might endanger his own life because Nero was sweeping across the Roman world, and the area where Timothy was, detaining everyone who was a leader in Christianity at that time. Nero was imprisoning, persecuting, and putting Christians to death in many different ways. Paul told Timothy that he must take hold of his responsibility by accepting the gift that he was given to preach the gospel of Christ by the laying on of hands. In Acts 13:1–3 Paul and Barnabas were sent by the Holy Spirit “. . . *for the work to which I have called them . . .*” by the laying on of hands. The Holy Spirit assigned Paul and Barnabas a particular task, and undoubtedly, Timothy had received the same thing. Paul wanted Timothy to always be mindful of his responsibility, so he urged him to “*fan into flame the gift of God.*”

Timothy may have had some problems being timid and becoming easily upset when he ran into difficulties. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul mentioned taking some wine for his stomach (cf. 1 Timothy 5:23), and he told Timothy that God did not give him a spirit of timidity (cf. 2 Timothy 1:7). During this time of persecution, Paul was reminding Timothy to work with an extra fervor in preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ. Paul urged him to push himself because God works through His children to accomplish things on this earth. God did not give Timothy a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of love, power and self-discipline, as he presented the gospel to the lost. From what we can get in our study of Timothy, he may have had some problems of being somewhat reserved or timid and so Paul constantly tells him, “Keep this thing operating and moving.” These same concepts apply to any gospel preacher no matter what persecution or difficulties he might encounter.

Special Exhortation to Timothy in View of Coming Hardships

Timothy Is Not to Be Ashamed of Two Things

Paul continued by telling Timothy two things that he cannot be ashamed of: *“So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, . . .”* (2 Timothy 1:8). **First**, Paul told Timothy not to be ashamed to testify about the Lord. **Second**, Paul told Timothy not to be ashamed of him as a prisoner. During this time of persecution, if Timothy had said, “I am a follower of Jesus Christ,” it might mean death or imprisonment. And, if Timothy had ministered to Paul in prison, it might have meant that Timothy would be put in prison as well. But, Paul called for Timothy not to be ashamed to testify for the Lord, or for Paul himself, under difficult circumstances, even though it might cause more difficulties. They had both been called to suffer for the gospel of Christ.

Paul Discussed God

. . . But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time . . . (2 Timothy 1:8–9).

God leads, guides and protects His children, wherever He sees it is necessary, but they are called to suffer by the power of God. God also saves His children and calls them to live a holy life. They are saved because of God's own purpose and grace, not because of anything that they have done. They must endure difficulties and problems, but they have the power of God in any suffering for the gospel.

God's children were saved by His grace in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. God planned man's redemption and salvation by grace through the blood of Jesus Christ even before man sinned and before the world came into existence. Paul says, "*But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*" (2 Timothy 1:10). First of all, the plan was in the mind of God, and then, salvation through Christ by God's grace was unfolded in the Old Testament. It reached completion in the coming of Jesus, through His death on the cross, and His resurrection. He died, was buried and resurrected, and, as a result of His death, burial, and resurrection, redemption and salvation were made possible. When the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:1–41), the gospel was preached, and salvation was made possible. Salvation was made possible by the appearance of Jesus, ". . . *who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*" Through the gospel of Christ, the story of redemption is revealed and the hope of redemption is possible for all men. This is the gift that Timothy was to preach. He needed to fan it into flame to make it known. Paul did not want him to forget that he was the recipient of God's grace and needed to suffer and endure so that the gospel could be preached.

Paul's Relationship to the Gospel

Paul talked about his own appointment again by saying:

*And of this gospel I was appointed a herald, and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for **that day** (2 Timothy 1:11–12).*

Paul told Timothy to endure the suffering, but he wanted Timothy to know that he was suffering as well. Paul had given his life to preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus. “*That day*” is the day of judgment. Paul was not ashamed of believing in God, and he was convinced that God was able to bless him with salvation on “*that day*.” Paul had preached the gospel, so he said:

What you have heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us (2 Timothy 1:13–14).

Christianity is based upon a pattern of taught principles. Paul did not preach whatever he wanted to, but what was revealed by the Spirit. When Paul talks about the pattern, he is talking about a system of preaching and teaching the gospel which has been revealed in the Scriptures. Timothy had heard this pattern of the gospel preached by Paul. Paul wanted him to understand that it was important to keep that pattern of sound teaching which had been revealed with faith and love in Jesus. The gospel of Christ is the deposit Timothy must guard and the sound teaching that he must preach. Anyone who preaches the gospel must teach this pattern and defend it. There are boundaries within the teachings of God and Jesus that must be maintained. The teachings of Christianity are contained within certain parameters, and the pattern of sound teaching must not go outside of those parameters. The pattern of sound, healthy teaching is what leads men to salvation.

Paul's Experience in Asia

Paul's Prayer For The House of Onesiphorus

Paul continued his letter to Timothy with some personal information:

You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus (2 Timothy 1:15–18).

Paul believed that all those who should have been there to defend him had left him. This may not actually mean every individual, but it is sure that Paul believed that Phygelus and Hermogenes should have been by his side. Paul named Onesiphorus as one who did not leave his side, but searched for him in the Roman prison system. Onesiphorus searched for Paul until he found him, so that he could minister to him. He knew that Paul was in a difficult situation, and he was not ashamed that he was a Christian. It is likely that Timothy was still in Ephesus when Paul was writing to him. Onesiphorus had served Paul while he was in Ephesus, but now he was ministering to Paul in Rome also. Paul asks that God bless the household of Onesiphorus because he has brought light to Paul's darkness and refreshed him.

I made a trip to Rome several years ago, and a friend took me to the place where it is said that Paul wrote 2 Timothy. It was simply a big room below the floor. There was a huge stone that was made of concrete that could be lifted up out of the floor. People were dropped down into the hole in the floor, and the stone was put on top of it. There was a little window that opened out to the street. It would have been difficult to find Paul in this dungeon.

Paul Exhorts Timothy to Be Strong and Faithful

Timothy and Discipleship Timothy, the Instructor

Paul continued by urging Timothy to be strong. He said:

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others (2 Timothy 2:1–2).

Paul heard the gospel by divine inspiration and passed it on to men like Timothy. This is the method for carrying on the gospel of Christ. Timothy must teach reliable men who would teach others. Paul was saying, “What I have passed on to you, you must pass on to others.” If you drop a rock in a pond, you can watch the waves as they travel out from the rock. That is the way Christianity is. Someone teaches one person, and then that person teaches another person. Unfortunately, sometimes when one hears, he keeps the gospel to himself and does not pass it on. As a result of this, the gospel ceases to spread. Spreading the gospel is every Christian's responsibility.

Timothy, the Warrior

Paul said, “*Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs — he wants to please his commanding officer*” (2 Timothy 2:3-4). Timothy ought to exemplify himself as a worker of Christ. He needed to be a good soldier by trying to please his commanding officer. In the Roman army the man who was in charge would recruit people to become soldiers. A soldier had benefits because he served and did not get involved in other things. Paul was telling Timothy to concentrate on his

work. "Be loyal and do the work you were assigned to do, and as a result of that you can hope for a final victory."

Timothy, the Competitor and the Hard Working Farmer

Now, Paul used the example of an athlete, "*Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules*" (2 Timothy 2:5). Paul used the example of an athlete in many of his letters. An athlete must compete according to the rules. That means that he must follow the right kind of work and training. The lesson of the athlete is discipline and self-denial, and only after that is there a victory and the hope of a crown. The last example Paul used was that of a farmer. He says, "*The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.*" (2 Timothy 2:6). He was telling Timothy that he needed to be like the farmer who works hard, then he has the hope of the harvest.

It is important to see what Paul was saying to Timothy. **First**, he said, "Endure hardship like a good soldier. Consecrate yourself to the service of Jesus Christ. You have been recruited by Jesus to serve in His army. Don't get involved in other things. Remember, the lesson is consecrated service, loyalty to Jesus, and as a result of this, you have the hope of a final victory. A victory is what every soldier wants. Work as a good soldier. Fight as a good soldier. Consecrate yourself to Jesus and to the purposes that He has assigned to you."

Second, as an athlete, Timothy needed to be self-disciplined to succeed. An athlete works for a long time to become what he needs to be to win. I stayed in the room of a man named Jim Ryan a number of years ago. (Jim Ryan was the first man in the world to break the four-minute mile, Ed.) He had already left home, but on his walls were all kinds of trophies and things that he had won as a runner. When I asked his family to tell me about Jim and how he had become such a good athlete, they said, "He got up early in the morning and ran

for miles and miles. He was unable to have any kind of social life and had to study at off hours.” He denied himself and disciplined himself to be able to become a good runner. If an athlete follows the rules, there is the hope of a crown of glory. This is the point Paul was trying to make.

Third, Paul used the example of the farmer. No farmer can plow his land, and put the seed in, without doing the job properly. He must cultivate the land, plant the seed, and water at the right time. Then, he waits, and he has the hope of a harvest.

These are important illustrations. If the Christian wants to receive the final victory, he has to work as a good soldier. To receive the crown of victory, the Christian has to train as an athlete trains by denying self. The hope of any farmer is the harvest, and a Christian must become a worker in the kingdom to receive the hope of final victory with God. These illustrations can apply to any Christian, but especially to one who wants to become a preacher.

Paul closed by saying, *“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this”* (2 Timothy 2:7). Paul was telling Timothy that he needed to consider the things that he had said very carefully. He needed to think about things to be able to fulfill the purposes that God had given him. Every Christian will benefit from spending time on the things that Paul has admonished Timothy about.

God's Church Is Eternal

2 Timothy 2:8–3:9

Introduction

This chapter continues Paul's instructions to Timothy as a preacher of the gospel of Christ. He had exhorted him to exercise care in every aspect of his life, to fan into flame the gift that was given to him, to continue working to understand who he is, and to labor as a soldier, an athlete or as a farmer would.

Motivation for Persevering in Suffering

A Valuable Remembrance

The greatest example Paul gave to Timothy was in 2 Timothy 2:8–13. Paul began by saying:

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory (2 Timothy 2:8–10).

The best motivation for suffering and enduring is seen in the life of Jesus. Paul said, **“Remember Jesus Christ!”** He was descended from David and raised from the dead, and that is the gospel that Paul preached.

The writer of the book of Hebrews said:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1–2).

Paul was saying the same thing. “Remember Jesus — Fix your eyes on Jesus!” Jesus is the perfect example because He endured the cross and the shame, and now he is sitting at the right hand of God. Paul remembered what Christ had endured on the cross and the shame that he had suffered. This compelled him to preach the gospel of Christ.

As a result of his preaching, he was placed in chains, such as a criminal would be, but Paul said, “*God’s word is **not chained***” (2 Timothy 2:9b). And, because God’s word is not chained, Paul was enduring everything so that others may be saved. He said he was doing this, “*for the sake of the elect,*” those who will listen and obey the gospel of Christ. One who preaches the gospel serves so that the lost might have the opportunity of becoming the elect of God. One who serves God does it so that those whom God has chosen through the blood of Jesus Christ can hear the gospel and obey it. Paul was saying, “I am working for the salvation of the lost — those people who have good and honest hearts.”

This same example applies to every Christian today. There are people who are going to reject God. They will reject everything that Christianity stands for, but there are always those who have good hearts who can be led to an understanding of redemption and salvation through Jesus Christ. Multitudes may reject the message, but there are those who will always listen to the gospel. Paul says that this is the reason he is in

chains. God's word is not in chains, because it can go anywhere through Timothy and others who preach and teach. This is the purpose for Christians today. This is the reason Christians live. God has chosen them to preach the saving message of Christ. If the preaching of the gospel was not still needed, then all Christians would be in heaven with the Father. Just as Paul was sent as a herald and a teacher, so Christians today have the same responsibility to preach the gospel of Christ. Paul said that this is the reason Christians are here.

Paul gave Timothy another trustworthy saying about needing to be faithful to the things that God had commanded. He said:

Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself (2 Timothy 2:11–13).

Paul told Timothy to stay faithful, to keep his commitment, and fan it into flames. Now he said, "If you die with Him, you will also live with Him." It is not completely clear what Paul meant here. It may be that he was talking about dying to sin, becoming a child of God, and continuing in faith to the point of salvation. Or, it could mean that if Timothy died preaching the gospel of Christ, he would live with Him.

It really will not matter how a Christian dies; if he is faithful, he will one day live with Christ. I had a professor who made the statement that the coffin to the Christian is simply a cradle in another part of God's house. That was what Paul was talking about. Keep on enduring! Because the Christian endures, he will reign with God, but if he disowns God, then God will disown him. The Christian must remain faithful because his salvation is at stake. If the Christian is unfaithful,

Christ is still going to continue on in the purpose for which He came. Those who work for Him will be given the strength to carry on.

An Approved Workman

Paul continued his instructions to Timothy by saying, *“Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen”* (2 Timothy 2:14). Paul is still giving Timothy instructions for working with the people in Ephesus. Remember, Paul warned the elders of Ephesus that there were going to be false teachers in their midst (cf. Acts 20:28–31). In his first letter to Timothy, Paul told him that the reason he left him there was so that he could charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine (cf. 1 Timothy 1:3–4). Apparently, at the time of this second letter, they were quarreling about words. Paul did not explain exactly what he meant, but he told Timothy not to participate in it, because it would only ruin those who listened. When Christians fuss in the church about the meaning of words and other things, it has a negative effect rather than a positive one.

Paul urged Timothy to do his best, saying, *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). The false teachers were warping and changing the gospel of Christ, and tying it into the philosophies of men, as well as some of the teachings from the Old Testament that no longer applied. They were arguing about words, and Paul told Timothy that he must do his best to be the kind of workman who knew the message of God and used it to prevent quarrels in the church.

Apparently they were not only arguing about words but were also indulging in godless chatter. Paul told Timothy:

Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching

*will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the **truth**. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:16–18).*

Paul did not really explain “godless chatter,” but it may have been philosophies or things that had nothing to do with the salvation of the lost. He said those who indulge in this kind of talk become more and more ungodly. Paul told Timothy that if he allowed this to continue it would spread like gangrene (the decay of body tissue when the blood supply is obstructed, Ed.). Gangrene causes things to become putrid (rotten and foul smelling, Ed.), and once it takes hold, it becomes very difficult to fight and destroy. Once gangrene gets into a part of the body, it takes over the whole body. Today there are medicines to fight it in the physical body. However, for the church body, it is very difficult to get rid of. Paul named the men who had wandered from the truth. Hymenaeus and Philetus had destroyed the faith of some by saying that the resurrection had already taken place.

Paul was talking about the pattern of sound doctrine when he talked about the **truth**. There are parameters around the truth of the gospel of Christ, and when man begins to move away from those parameters, then he causes discord, problems, and division to take place within the church. Paul said these two false teachers were teaching the doctrine that the resurrection had already taken place. There are no details to explain what Paul meant. It may be that they believed that once you were baptized and raised from the watery grave, that was the last resurrection. They may have been teaching that man would not be resurrected to another life. Whatever they were teaching, it was a false doctrine that had already caused some to wander from the faith.

Paul encouraged Timothy saying:

Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those

who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness” (2 Timothy 2:19).

Paul was telling Timothy that the church was always going to exist. There may be those who go to the right and the left as far as teaching the gospel is concerned, but there will always be those who stay right beside God and His teachings. God's solid foundation of the church will always stand firm. I think that the solid foundation Paul was talking about was the Christian who would not be moved by false teaching. He would not drift away because he would remain steadfast and firm. Jesus was telling Peter that the church was always going to be there, when Peter confessed:

*. . . “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon . . . And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and **the gates of Hades will not overcome it**” (Matthew 16:16–18).*

In the same way, Paul was saying that the church is always going to be there. Timothy, and all Christians, have this assurance because the church is owned and protected by God — it has been sealed with the inscription that tells them that God knows His own. The word **“sealed”** means that something is owned and protected by the one who seals it. In that day, the king, or whoever was in authority, would **seal** a letter so that it could not be opened. The **seal** protected the letter. God has put His **seal** on His people — the church. God knows who is faithful. He knows who is following the truth. The first **seal** says, “God knows those who are following Him.” The second **seal** says that the church must stay away from wickedness. God is going to claim His children regardless of what the false teachers say. God says, “The church is My people! I know My children. They are those who confess the name of the Lord and

turn away from wickedness!" That is a marvelous thing to know and understand!

Vessels in the House of God

In Every House There Are a Wide Variety of Vessels

Paul illustrated the church by telling Timothy:

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work (2 Timothy 2:20–21).

In a house there are all kinds of vessels. Some are clean and some are not. Sometimes God's people face conflict and difficulties. That is the way it is because of humanity and Satan trying to destroy the church. In the church some people are faithful to the Lord, and some are not. There are good and bad vessels. Paul was comparing members of the church to different kinds of vessels.

We Are to Strive to Become Vessels of Honor

A man can cleanse himself from being an ignoble vessel and change, so that he can become an instrument that is used for noble purposes. He can become one who is made holy and useful to the Master. He can be prepared to do any good work. This is a lesson for all Christians. If they are going to be God's children, protected and owned by God, they must purge wickedness from their lives. Purging that wickedness and ungodliness is the responsibility of each individual Christian. That is the only way a Christian can become the kind of vessel that God can use in His work. When Paul was writing to the Romans, he said:

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:12–13).

God protects and provides for His children, but the responsibility of purging their lives from sin is up to them. They must make themselves useful to God. That is the principle that Paul is emphasizing.

In Relation to Youthful Sins

Paul returned to two things that he had covered in his first letter to Timothy: “***Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart***” (2 Timothy 2:22). Once again, Paul told Timothy to flee and pursue. These are two principles that all Christians must contend for in order to be good servants. There are things that must be avoided. This ties in with becoming a vessel of honor and purging oneself from the sin in his life. Purge the sin, get rid of it, and fill your life with righteousness, faith, love, and peace. This is the knowledge that is gained in the message of truth.

Paul had written to Timothy earlier about not letting people look down upon him because of his youth (cf. 1 Timothy 4:12), but also told Timothy to flee the evil desires of youth and to pursue righteousness, that was to pursue a pure life. To do that, Timothy needed to deepen his faith and pursue love and peace. He needed to do this with others who call on the Lord because they had a pure heart. This is a good lesson for every Christian. Work with others who can give strength. Work with others who are also in pursuit of peace, love, faith and righteousness.

In Relation to the Foolish and Ignorant Speculations and to Personal Character

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:23–26).

Paul said the Lord's servant must not quarrel. Sometimes Christians use a debating attitude when they are teaching. In teaching others the gospel, a Christian must **not** show a quarrelsome spirit. Paul further instructed Timothy to be kind to everyone and not be resentful. This is the best way to handle any problem or disagreement. This is the best way to purge false doctrine and to have an influence on those Christians who may have a harder time seeing the right side of things. These were difficult situations that Timothy had to contend with in his own personal life so that he could be of service to the Lord. These are situations that all Christians need to be ready to face. Be kind to everyone and never be resentful. Have nothing to do with foolish and stupid arguments.

As a gospel preacher, Timothy was surely going to face those who would oppose what he was teaching. He needed to gently instruct them hoping that God would grant them repentance and lead them to a knowledge of the truth. Timothy needed to be ready to gently teach those who opposed him, so that he could save their souls. He must not try to defeat the false teachers, but he must bring them to repentance. This must be done with gentleness so that others who might be weak in the faith would remain faithful. In doing this, Timothy would

be able to help the false teachers to escape the trap of the devil. Take note of who is causing the problems of discord in the church — it is Satan. Satan is always at work among God's people trying to take them captive to do his will rather than God's. Everyone who is a Christian must understand that Satan constantly opposes the church.

Final Indictment of the False Teachers

The Coming Apostasy

In 2 Timothy 3 Paul warned Timothy of the days ahead. He said, *“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days”* (2 Timothy 3:1). What does Paul mean by *“in the last days?”* I think that he meant the **“the last days”** of the Christian era. The time during the Old Testament is called the patriarchal days because God spoke through the patriarchs. He chose such men as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. He gave His commandment to them, particularly for their families. In the Jewish age, God spoke through Moses to the children of Israel and gave the Law of Moses. In this present age, the Law of Moses has passed, and God speaks to us through His son Jesus Christ (cf. Hebrews 1:1). It is called the Christian age. There will be no other way in which God will communicate with man. This is **the last day**. These are **the last times**. God will communicate to His children, and the people of the world, through Jesus Christ. And, at the end of this age, Jesus will return and judgment will be passed. The Christian age is **“the last days.”** This present moment in time is **“the last days.”** And Paul said that it was going to be a terrible time because:

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of

pleasure rather than lovers of God — having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them (2 Timothy 3:2–5).

This is a list of characteristics that can be seen today. Paul said later that this was already happening, and it was something that was happening all over the world today in every nation. These kinds of people are being influenced by Satan, and his influence continues to grow. People love themselves. They want things that will bring them joy and satisfy their own lust and desires. They love money. They cause difficulty and problems in the lives of other people as a result of this. They are disobedient to parents. (How characteristic of our time!) They are ungrateful for what God has done, ungrateful for what parents have done and ungrateful for anything that is done for them. Look at how many times schools are torn up by schoolchildren because they are ungrateful for the opportunity of an education.

These people are without love and forgiveness. They are slanderous. They talk about other people. They are without self-control so they do whatever the body desires. They are brutal. They do not love good, so they are treacherous toward each other. The word treacherous means that they will betray others just so that they can better themselves. They are rash, which means they go into things without thinking. They are conceited so they believe they are smarter than God and others. They are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. They have a form of godliness. In other words, he is saying that their godliness is only a **form**. They are people who are in the church, and people who profess to be Christians. They may go to a church service somewhere and sing. They may listen to sermons. They may even have the appearance of being righteous. That is a **form** of godliness. But the fact that they sing praises to God does not mean that their heart is right, or that their lives are right.

Every Christian needs to understand that he must be genuine and develop the characteristics that profess that he is

a follower of God. Christians today also can have a **form** of religion. Going to church every Sunday, saying a few prayers, singing a few songs, dropping in a dollar, and listening to the sermons is a **form** of religion. Then, that kind of Christian says, "The rest of my life belongs to me." This is really a **form** of ungodliness. Paul told Timothy to have nothing to do with these kind of people. He did not mean that Timothy should not try to teach them. He was saying that he must be careful in the way that he related to them. He must not participate in their ungodliness. Sometimes people live such ungrateful, ungodly, unholy lives that they cannot be touched with the gospel of Christ.

Paul had been talking about terrible times that **would come**, but then he changed to the present tense and talked about the people that were in Ephesus at that present time when he was writing. He said:

*They **are** the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth" (2 Timothy 3:6–7).*

Undoubtedly, the teachers in Ephesus were spreading their doctrine by going to certain women after their husbands had gone to work and getting them all stirred up. They picked the kind of women who were weak. This does not mean that he was saying that all women are weak in any sense at all. There were those who were weak, and they would cause difficulty and problems as a result of the fact that they were swayed by the false teachers and their evil desires. They wanted to learn new things, but they never really came to a knowledge of the truth.

Once again Paul named the men who had caused problems:

Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth — men of depraved minds,

who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone (2Timothy 3:8–9).

Jannes and Jambres are never mentioned any other time in scripture, but Jewish history tells that they were magicians who opposed Moses in the household of Pharaoh when Moses went to get Pharaoh to free the people so they could leave as God had intended for them to do. Paul said these same kind of people oppose the truth, and when they oppose the truth, then they oppose God. The reason they do this is because they have depraved minds. And, “*as far as the faith is concerned,*” they are rejected. The faith Paul was talking about is that pattern of sound doctrine that is the truth of the gospel which must be preached. The faith that Paul and Timothy preached rejected these men, because they were outside the boundaries of sound doctrine. Paul even said that they would not get very far because their folly would be clear to everyone. Eventually, someone like Timothy would stand up with sound doctrine, teaching, and defending the truth, and the message of truth will be made clear. Whenever false teachers and difficult persons come in and cause problems, they will not prevail.

This is the promise for all Christians. There is no reason why a church should go into ungodliness, unrighteousness, and false teaching. God will provide a way so that the folly of ungodliness and false teaching can become clear to everyone. The false teachers will be rejected, and the gospel of Christ can remain true. The gates of hell will not prevail against the church. Satan will fight, but the church will endure when it will sustain herself in the gospel.

Faithful Service Will Be Rewarded

2 Timothy 3:10–4:22

Introduction

Paul continued throughout his second letter to give Timothy instructions on defending the faith, handling those who are false teachers, and working with those who cause discord and difficulties in a congregation. Paul had given Timothy different examples to consider, and now, in 2 Timothy 3:10–11, Paul used himself as a demonstration of the principles that Timothy needed to use. Paul was not a proud man, but he had much to share because he had experienced so many things. He knew that Timothy saw him as an example and looked to him for counsel and guidance.

Another Appeal To Loyalty And Endurance

Paul's Defense of the Faith

You, however, know all about of my teachings, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings — what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them (2 Timothy 3:10–11).

Paul was encouraging Timothy with the fact that he knew

the teachings of Paul, which were inspired. Paul's teachings followed the parameters of sound doctrine. Timothy knew all that Paul had been through, how Paul lived, Paul's example, and his teachings. He was not asking Timothy to do anything that he himself had not already done. Timothy could look back to the time when he was working with Paul and remember the things that he had seen in Paul to confirm and accomplish God's purpose in his life. When Paul first came to the area where Timothy lived, he was persecuted (cf. Acts 13:14, 44–50; 13:51–14:20). Timothy saw how Paul dealt with false teachers and persecution, and how he suffered through it all. Timothy knew that God had rescued Paul from many things.

Paul said, *“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, . . .”* (2 Timothy 3:12). Anyone who becomes a child of God must understand the fact that there are always those who do not believe in the principles taught by God. Many times, there are Christians who take a liberal attitude toward the world and human rights people who believe things contrary to the will of God, especially in the United States today. Paul was saying that whenever Christians take a stand for what is right and true, there will be persecution. It does not matter if the stand is taken by an individual, or by a group of people who are standing in accordance to the teachings of the Lord, there will be persecution. It may not be the same kind of persecution that Paul experienced, since he was put in prison, was beaten, and had many problems because of his Christianity and the kind of world in which he lived. In most areas of the world today, there will not be that kind of persecution for a Christian to face. There are parts of the world where Christians are suffering today in this way, but any time someone takes a stand for God and the principles of God, he is going to face difficulties, problems, and persecution in some way. He may lose friends. He may lose a job. He may lose money. He may lose his home. Whenever a Christian stands for Jesus Christ, the reality is that there will be problems and difficulties.

Paul told Timothy that Christians were being persecuted, “. . . *while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived*” (2 Timothy 3:13). He was telling Timothy that there will never be a time when the Christian can let his barrier down against the evil of this world. There is always going to be a battle with the world, and Christians need to realize this. Evil men and impostors are going to get worse and worse because Satan is the one who controls the minds of most people of the world. Paul was warning Timothy that it was going to get worse no matter how good it might look at the present time.

Paul personally addressed Timothy again:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:14–15).

Timothy could have confidence in himself, and in what he had learned, because he knew the Scriptures. He had learned from his mother, his grandmother, and from Paul himself the holy Scriptures that were able to make him wise for salvation through his faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul also wanted Timothy to have confidence in the Scripture and to know that **all Scripture** is important, so he said,

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

In most translations of the Bible, the word “*Scripture*” is

capitalized because it refers to anything that God has delivered to man through, and by, divine inspiration. All Scripture has been given by God and is useful for teaching. Not everything that is written is God-breathed, but everything that God has given to man by way of the Bible, the Scriptures, the Old Testament, and whatever Paul (and other men who were inspired) had written is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. Paul and Timothy were to serve in the capacity that they were in because there were so many who needed to be taught. How are they taught? By using the Scriptures. Paul and Timothy did not use the philosophies of men, they used the Bible. The inspired word of God is used for teaching and rebuking. Rebuking is what needs to be done when there are false teachers who are teaching things contrary to God's word. These people need to be rebuked. Or if somebody has been misled, they need to be corrected. They need to be taught in the light of what God has revealed to man. The man of God can be thoroughly equipped for every good work through the Scriptures.

The Charge To Preach The Word

The last words the apostle Paul ever wrote are contained in 2 Timothy 4. (Although historical records do not tell how Paul died, they do confirm that Paul died at the end of this imprisonment.) Paul continued his letter to Timothy, *"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: . . ."* (2 Timothy 4:1). Notice the importance Paul attached to the charge that he was about to give Timothy. He said, "I am giving you this command, in the presence of God and Christ Jesus with Them as my witnesses." He wanted Timothy to know how serious this charge was, so he used *" . . . God and of Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom,"* (2 Timothy 4:1). When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he talked to them about the fact that when Christ comes again, some will

be alive, and some will be dead, but all will be resurrected and judged (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26–58). It is Christ who will judge those who are living, and those who are in the grave, when He returns to this earth a second time. Paul said:

... in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction (2 Timothy 4:1–2).

When Paul said, “*Preach the Word*,” he was talking about the “**Scripture**” that was “... *God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ...*” (2 Timothy 3:16). Paul instructed Timothy to “*Preach the Word*,” which was that which would lead man to salvation, rather than the philosophies of men. There is no other doctrine that can be used. The sound doctrine from God is the only thing that can lead man to the assurance of salvation in Christ. Paul told Timothy that he must be prepared to preach the Word in season and out of season. When Timothy taught, rebuked and corrected the men in Ephesus, Paul emphasized that he needed to use “*the Word*” as the basis for all his work. Combine the words “*correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction*,” with the words “... *gently instruct* . . .” from 2 Timothy 2:25, and it is easy to see that Paul was emphasizing to Timothy that he must deal with people carefully and patiently as he corrected the false teachings of men in the lives of the people at Ephesus.

Paul gave Timothy the following warning:

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths (2 Timothy 4:3–5).

If people in the church have not been taught the Word of God and been grounded in the faith, they drift away from sound doctrine, and they want to hear “what they want to hear.” They make sure that the teachers they gather around them are saying the things that are pleasant to their ears. This is probably what had already happened to the church in Ephesus. Paul was telling Timothy that he needed to preach the truth, even though the people will not want to hear it. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn to myths instead. They will want to gather false teachers around them, and Timothy must not tolerate this. Satan is always going to try to cause discord, difficulty and problems, but no preacher should tolerate false teaching.

Paul continued to admonish Timothy: *“But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry”* (2 Timothy 4:5). An “evangelist” is not the pastor, elder, or overseer for the church. An evangelist is one who heralds the gospel. He has the duties of reproof, rebuking, and exhorting with the gospel. Paul’s advice to Timothy should be used by anyone who is involved in teaching. There are going to be some difficult situations that will require sound judgment. Exercise care and concern. Endure hardship.

In my training of young men to preach the gospel of Christ, many times I simply tell them, “If you are not willing to pay the price, to understand that you are going to be in constant battle with Satan and those who represent him in the world, if you are not prepared to walk in this kind of situation and endure this kind of life, then get out of it, because we do not need anyone who is a slacker or who believes that ministering in the gospel of Christ is an easy thing to do.” There may be some evangelists who work with strong elders, but even then, they still have to exercise a great deal of care.

Paul told Timothy “. . . *discharge all the duties of your ministry*” (2 Timothy 4:5). There is a ministry given to men like Timothy who are ministers of the word. During the early

days of the church when the Grecian Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the distribution of food, the Twelve said:

*It would not be right for us to neglect the **ministry of the word of God** in order to wait on tables. . . . We will turn this responsibility over to them and give our attention to **prayer and the ministry of the word** (Acts 6:2, 4).*

So, there are men in the church who need to understand that they must take the gospel of Christ and serve well according to the word. It is a ministry of the word, a ministry of prayer and a ministry of exhorting and teaching people.

The End of Paul's Life Is At Hand

Near the end of Paul's letter to Timothy, he talked about his own situation. He said, "*For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure*" (2 Timothy 4:6). A "*drink offering*" was offered to the LORD in the Old Testament by pouring an offering of wine onto the ground, not in waste, but as a sacrifice to God to say that its usefulness had been fulfilled. It was a way to show their respect and love for God, and it was done to honor and glorify Him. Paul said that he was a "*drink offering*" to God in that he had given his life to God, and since his life was about to end, he himself would be poured out. Paul, undoubtedly, recognized the fact that the end of his life was imminent. He said:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing (2 Timothy 4:7–8).

Paul was saying that he had finished the assignment that had been given to him. He used athletic illustrations many times as examples. When a person runs a race, he does not win if he drops out of the race before it is over. Paul said, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race"* (2 Timothy 4:7). What a wonderful way to end this life, to be able to make the statement, "I have remained steadfast and true. I have worked well. I have endured hardships, difficulties, and problems."

Paul said, *"... I have kept the faith"* (2 Timothy 4:7). Paul may have been talking about his own personal faith in God and Jesus Christ, or he may have been talking about the system of sound doctrine. He had kept that sound doctrine and never deviated from it. He believed in God, and he believed that salvation was only in Jesus Christ. Since he believed all of this to be true, he had endured until the end. Paul also believed he had a reward waiting for him, and he was ready to go. He said, *"Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness . . ."* (2 Timothy 4:8). Righteousness is expressed in two different ways in Scripture, and Paul could have been referring to both of them here. There is the righteousness that the Christian receives because he has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus which takes away all sin: resulting in God pronouncing His children righteous, and then there is the righteousness of living as the Christian walks with God daily (cf. Hebrews 9:11–10:10; Romans 2:13; 1 John 3:7). God is going to give His children a crown, not as a merit of salvation, but simply because they have walked worthily with Him in His sight.

Paul said that this righteousness was not just for him only, *"... but also to all who have longed for his appearing"* (2 Timothy 4:8). Paul was telling Timothy not to give up. He must continue to help the people he was preaching to, so that they would also receive salvation and the same crown of righteousness. He needed to rebuke and correct them and work with them in every way because this crown would be the result of the righteousness they lived and fulfilled by enduring to the

end. Everyone who endures and follows God can receive this crown.

Paul's Concluding Remarks And Benediction

Paul's concluding remarks were very personal in nature. He pleaded with Timothy, *"Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica"* (2 Timothy 4:9). Undoubtedly, Paul wanted Timothy to leave Ephesus and come to Rome to be with him during his last days. Paul did not give any details about Demas except that he had deserted him. Perhaps Demas was fearful of being put to death if he stayed with Paul any longer, or may be he chose the world over Christianity.

Paul mentioned a few co-workers in the next few verses:

***Crescens** has gone to Galatia, and **Titus** to Dalmatia. Only **Luke** is with me. Get **Mark** and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent **Tychicus** to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with **Carpus** at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments* (2 Timothy 4:10–13).

These were all men who were working on behalf of Christ and probably had worked with Paul. He mentioned their movements to tell Timothy where everybody was because they made up a company of people who were interested and concerned for each other and loved each other. Paul was also telling Timothy why it was so important that he come, because Luke was the only one with him.

Paul was in a dungeon, but his ministry was not dead. He was able to instruct these young men and then send them out to teach and preach. Paul was in chains, but the gospel was not, because he knew that through men like Timothy, Mark and Titus, the gospel would continue to be preached. It is possible that Paul had sent Tychicus to Ephesus, so that Timothy would

be able to leave. Paul asked Timothy to bring his cloak he had left at Troas. This would have been a heavy coat that Paul did not need during the summer months, but winter was on the way. Timothy was to get Mark and come by way of Troas as quickly as he could. Then Paul said, “*When you come, bring . . . my scrolls, especially the parchments*” (2 Timothy 4:13). These were probably some things that Paul had written or the old covenant that Paul carried with him. The “*parchments*” were what they wrote on during this time period. Paul may have wanted these to use while he was in prison to teach, or maybe just to occupy his time by reading them.

Paul issued another warning for Timothy:

Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message (2 Timothy 4:15).

Alexander was among the crowd in Ephesus when there was a riot by the silversmiths who made small silver goddesses in the form of Diana for the people to worship. When Paul preached the gospel, and the people began to worship the **true God**, the silversmith business suffered because of it (cf. Acts 19:23-41). Paul told Timothy that Alexander did him great harm, and that Timothy needed to be on his guard as well. The message that Paul and Timothy preached was the message of God, but it was also something that Alexander as a Jew and a silversmith strongly opposed.

At this point, Paul went back to what had happened to him earlier in Rome. He said:

At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be

fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen (2 Timothy 4:16–18).

Paul was tried in a Roman court and deserted by those who should have remained at his side, but he told Timothy that this should not be held against them. The Lord stood beside him and gave him strength to proclaim the message. Paul continued to proclaim the message forever through men like Timothy, Mark, Tychicus and others after them. Paul said that he was delivered from the lion's mouth, which may be a reference to the kind of death that Paul expected to die. It was a common practice for Christians to be thrown into the arena in the presence of lions, but Paul may not have meant this to be literal. He did believe that God was going to protect him from every evil attack and that one day he would be taken safely to His heavenly kingdom. Paul added, *"To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen"* (2 Timothy 4:18).

Paul closed this letter to Timothy with a final greeting:

Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you (2 Timothy 4:19–22).

Paul had already asked for his cloak, and now perhaps because of the difficulty in traveling during the winter months, he urged Timothy to come before winter.

These chapters contain some marvelous writing from Paul. I believe that everyone who preaches the gospel of Christ ought to read not only 1 Timothy, because of the hope that Paul gives in the writings there, but especially 2 Timothy, because Paul

brings before all of us who desire to preach the gospel of Christ an understanding of the difficulties, the problems and the opposition that Satan will always create.

First, it is a message of warnings about the difficulties, problems, and sufferings will be there for those who want to preach the gospel of Christ. **Second**, Paul warned that there will be those who will bring in false teachings and try to show that the Scriptures of God are in error or try to add to His word. Every Christian needs to understand that there will always be opposition from Satan through those who will try to decry the message of redemption.

Finally, in spite of all these things, Christians need to remain steadfast, true, and sure. They need to endure, so that the gospel can be preached. God will see His children through every difficulty on this earth. They can endure it all because this world is not home for the Christian. At the end of this time, God's children will receive a crown of righteousness if they serve God well and remain faithful and true to those things that He has taught them to endure and those things that He has taught them to accomplish. May God help us, especially if we are ministers of the gospel, to remain faithful to the things that Paul has taught us here in this great book.

Duties of Elders in Exposing False Teachers

Titus 1:1–2:3

Introduction and Background

The third book in the Pastoral/Evangelistic Epistles written by Paul is the book of Titus. Historically, this book was written immediately after, or at the same time as the book of 1 Timothy. This book was written after Paul was released from Roman imprisonment, while he was traveling, before the imprisonment that he is in during the writing of 2 Timothy. Titus was a traveling companion of Paul who is mentioned thirteen times in the New Testament, but never in the book of Acts, which records most of Paul's travels.

Each time Titus is mentioned in the New Testament it is by Paul in his letters. He is specifically mentioned when Paul wrote to the Galatians reminding them of the time when he had to travel to Jerusalem to defend the gospel, specifically the fact that Christians are saved by grace through faith. He had to prove that those who were Gentiles did not have to submit to fulfilling all the teachings of the Jewish law. In Galatians 2:1–3 Paul said:

Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did

this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

Remember Paul had Timothy circumcised before Timothy went to work with him on the missionary journeys, because Timothy was part Jew (cf. Acts 16:1-3). Paul wanted Timothy to be accepted by the Jews, but since Titus was a Gentile, Paul did not have him circumcised because he wanted to defend the truth of the gospel that it was not necessary for a Gentile to be circumcised. Paul called him “. . . *Titus, my true son in our common faith: . . .*” (Titus 1:4) probably because Paul was the one who converted him during one of his travels. They shared a common faith that they both believed, taught, and practiced. Undoubtedly, Paul traveled with Titus to the island of Crete after his imprisonment in Rome (cf. Acts 28:16) and left Titus there to work (cf. Titus 1:5).

Leadership and False Teachers

Paul's Salutation To Titus

The book of Titus begins in the same way that most of Paul's letters begin: “*Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness — . . .*” (Titus 1:1). Paul considered himself a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. Paul was an apostle chosen by God with a particular purpose established for him. Paul said, “*for the faith of God's elect.*” God's elect are the children of God who have chosen to believe in Jesus and obey the gospel of Christ. They were those who were specifically chosen by God because of their faith and obedience. Paul was chosen to preach the gospel to those who would be receptive and to encourage, strengthen, establish and build their faith. Once this happened, then Paul encouraged them in their Christian living to teach others.

Paul was also an apostle of “. . . *the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness* — . . .” (Titus 1:1). He had a special purpose to share the knowledge of the truth that would lead others to godliness. He was a servant of God, a chosen apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to teach the truth of the gospel of Christ Jesus, so that others might have the hope of eternal life. Paul said this “*godliness*” is —

a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior (Titus 1:2–3).

All men need to have the opportunity to be receptive to the gospel, so that they can have eternal life. This was the reason Paul did what he did. Paul’s purpose was to fulfill the command of God to teach and preach the message of godliness, so that people can have redemption, salvation and eternal life.

The Appointment and Qualifications of Elders

Paul began by telling Titus why he had left him on the island of Crete. He said, “*The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you*” (Titus 1:5). Paul and Titus had worked together on the island of Crete, but Paul had to leave some things unfinished. He left Titus to finish the work they had started and to appoint elders in every congregation. There are two New Testament perspectives concerning elders that need to be understood from this verse. **One**, those who acted as overseers or bishops in the church were leaders within their individual congregation only. Every congregation of God’s people individually has its own elders. **Two**, there is always a plurality of elders. These guidelines are essential to the church everywhere. Paul gave Titus many of the

same instructions concerning the qualifications of an elder as he did Timothy (cf. 1 Timothy 3:1–7). These instructions are for the same men and the same position, so the qualifications are the same. Since some of these have already been covered, this will be a brief listing of qualifications.

First, he said, “*An elder must be blameless . . .*” (Titus 1:6). **Second**, “*An elder must be . . . the husband of but one wife . . .*” (Titus 1:6). **Third**, “*An elder must be . . . a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient*” (Titus 1:6). Not only must an elder have children, but Paul told Titus the children must be believers. In other words, Paul was saying that an elder’s children must be Christians who are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. An elder must have control of his household.

Fourth, “*Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless — not overbearing . . .*” (Titus 1:7). An elder does not have to be a sinless man, he simply needs to be a man who has repented of his sins, so that he cannot be blamed for sinning, or being unrepentant. He is not to be one who is overbearing. This word refers to the quality of life an elder lives. He must be a person who is flexible with a spirit of cooperation and a peaceful manner.

Fifth, an elder must not be “*. . . quick-tempered . . .*” (Titus 1:7). **Sixth**, an elder must not be “*. . . given to drunkenness . . .*” (Titus 1:7). **Seventh**, an elder must be “*. . . not pursuing dishonest gain*” (Titus 1:7). He must be an honest and upright man in all of his affairs. **Eighth**, “*Rather he must be hospitable . . .*” (Titus 1:8). Hospitality is one of the positive qualities that an elder must have. He must not be cheating in any aspect of his life in order to gain riches.

Ninth, an elder must be “*. . . one who loves what is good . . .*” (Titus 1:8). In all of his life an elder must have the desire to show, enlarge and live totally in accordance with the things which are good. The word “*good*” is mentioned a number of times in the book of Titus possibly because the island of Crete was **not** known for goodness. **Tenth**, an elder must be one

“... *who is self-controlled* . . .” (Titus 1:8).

Eleventh, an elder must be one who is “... *upright* . . .” (Titus 1:8). This means that every area of his life can be judged as that which is righteous and good. **Twelfth**, an elder must be one who is “*holy* . . .” (Titus 1:8). He must be spiritually clean. He must have a spiritual attitude and live a spiritual life.

Thirteenth, an elder must be one who is “*disciplined*” (Titus 1:8). He must be controlled in every area of his life. This covers more than just controlling his temper. He must control his relationships with others in his teaching and guidance.

Fourteenth, “*He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it*” (Titus 1:9). Paul may have added this last part because of the circumstances that Titus and the elders he would appoint were going to face on the island of Crete. An elder must hold firmly to the message of the gospel of Christ, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine. Sound doctrine is the truth of the gospel of Christ. It also refers to a doctrine that is healthy, one that will produce spiritual health for the person who listens to it. Not only will it produce good spiritual health, but it will also produce a healthy attitude and disposition.

There are two reasons an elder “... *must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught* . . .” (Titus 1:9). **First**, he needs to use the sound doctrine and the truth of the gospel to encourage others. **Second**, he must use this same doctrine to refute those who oppose him. Elders in the church must be taught well, and they must be able to present what they have been taught so that they can encourage others. They must also be taught well so that they can use the truth to defend the gospel against those false teachers who are speaking against it.

Paul's Opposition To The Cretans' False Teaching

Beginning in Titus 1:10, Paul told Titus the reason he needed to appoint elders in the cities in Crete. There are special circumstances in Crete that made it very important for an elder

to be able to encourage others with sound doctrine and refute those who did not teach the truth. He said:

For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach — and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets has said, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true (Titus 1:10–13a).

Paul always had problems with the Jews who had been converted to certain aspects of Christianity. They believed Jesus was the son of God and the promised Messiah, but they continued trying to convince others that they still had to practice some of the Jewish customs like circumcision and keeping the Sabbath day. They wanted the Gentile converts to convert to a portion of Judaism and Christianity at the same time. They were very difficult people. Wherever Paul went, they seemed to follow him, and they gave him more trouble by their false teaching than anyone else. He describes them as being rebellious. They would not listen to Paul, or to any others who had received the Holy Spirit, as they taught the message of truth.

There is a parallel today for elders who must deal with Christians who are rebellious. These Christians will not listen to anyone in authority. They will not subscribe to the word of God. They will not follow the true teachings of the gospel of Christ. They become contentious. Paul said that they were simply talkers. They did not have anything to say that was practical, worthwhile or in accordance to the sound doctrine of Christ. They were filled with pride and are deceivers. They tried to make their point by teaching things that were not true. In reality, they were false teachers.

The defense of the gospel and the purity of the church are tremendous responsibilities for the men who serve as elders in any congregation. Paul said there must be qualified men who will be able to silence false teachers. This is the responsibility of the elders. Paul said that they were ruining whole households with their false teachings. There is nothing wrong with teaching from house to house, but when a deceiver, or an empty talker, is the one who is doing the teaching, this cannot be tolerated. The elders must have the qualities and characteristics that will enable them to overcome false doctrine presented by false teachers.

Paul told Titus that these men were not only teaching false doctrine, but they were doing it for dishonest gain. They were teaching false doctrines to be popular so that they could gain control. They were willing to teach just to please others possibly even to become financially affluent. Even their own prophets do not have anything good to say about the Cretans. Paul quoted Epimenades when he said they were “. . . *liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons*” (Titus 1:12), and then Paul confirmed, “*This testimony is true.*” Paul was talking about the quality of people who lived on the island of Crete. The island of Crete is 158 miles long and 50 miles (wide at the widest point. It was a Roman province that had been settled by a few Gentiles and quite a few Jews who were very rebellious. They were known for being liars and evil brutes. They were such lazy gluttons that they would eat, and then put their finger down their throat to make themselves vomit, so that they could eat again.

Paul said, “. . . *Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth*” (Titus 1:13b–14). Paul was telling Timothy that this was part of his responsibility as well. It was not just the elders who would be involved in rebuking and correcting these false teachers. It was also the work of an evangelist to sharply rebuke these false teachers who were claiming to be Christians, but at the same

time they were following after Judaism. The reason they must be rebuked sharply is “*so that they will be sound in the faith*” and no longer pay any attention to myths and those who are rejecting the truth. Paul was talking about the things that needed to happen in the church there on Crete.

Paul continued by saying, “*To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted*” (Titus 1:15). There are several different things that are taught regarding this verse. The word “*pure*” that is used here has to do with meats and anything that God has given man to eat. This was a problem in Ephesus that Paul talked to Timothy about when false teachers were saying that certain meats could not be eaten (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1–4). This may be what Paul was talking about here. God has purified all meats and foods so that they can be eaten with gratitude.

It is also possible that he was talking about a person who is pure because everything he does and says is pure. Purity is a part of the quality of his life. Some people have used this passage to say that a child of God can do anything they wish and still remain pure. That is not what Paul was saying. Everything that God has cleansed is pure and acceptable. People who are corrupted by the world have corrupted minds and live corrupted lives because they are a product of what they think, see and hear when they allow the world and false teachers to influence them. Their minds and their consciences have become corrupted.

Paul said, “*They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good*” (Titus 1:16). They did not really know God, because they had denied Him by their actions. Paul said they were unfit for doing anything good. He had given Titus the responsibility of appointing elders to assist and work with him to keep these false teachers out of the church.

Sound Doctrine and Christian Living

Titus Is to Teach Sound Doctrine

Remember that the book of Titus is actually a letter that Paul was writing, so chapter two is just a continuation of chapter one, the chapter divisions having been put in by other men. Paul continued, “*You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine*” (Titus 2:1). Paul gave Titus instructions that will help him create righteous living among the Christians on Crete. Paul gave special admonitions concerning the different groups of people that he knew Titus was going to have to deal with.

Special Admonitions To Various Groups in the Church

Much of what Paul wrote to Titus was similar to the instructions he sent to Timothy. Paul began by saying, “*Teach the **older men** to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance*” (Titus 2:2). Older men should not be excessive in anything. They should live the kind of life that will cause them to be worthy of respect. They should lead a controlled life and follow the teachings of the Lord. They are to be sound in faith, as well as in love and endurance. Any Christian who has lived long enough should have these qualities in his life. If he has been a Christian long enough, his faith in God and his love for his fellow man should be established, and he should have the endurance that is necessary to handle anything that might try to prevent him from living his life for God, so that he will bring glory to God’s name.

The next group that Paul talked about was the “older women.” He said, “*Likewise, teach the **older women** to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women . . .*” (Titus 2:3-4a). Older women are to have a spiritual attitude and disposition. They are to be reverent in the way that they live so that they show respect to God, their

husbands, their children, and their neighbors. They are not to be gossips or talk negatively about anyone. They are not to be addicted to much wine. They are to be teachers of the things that are good. Paul said the older women are to teach the younger women.

Paul had specific instructions for Titus to carry out. These instructions to Titus really show the work of an evangelist. An evangelist's work is his teaching, guidance, and instruction. He is to be able to work with different age groups. Titus was considered a younger man, and he needed to be adaptable to work with older men. He needed to train the older men and women to have certain characteristics, so that they could secure their own salvation, but also so that they would live the kind of life that would make it possible for them to be influential in the work of the kingdom. It is important for an evangelist to understand these qualities and characteristics so that he can instruct others.

Final Exhortations and Warnings

Titus 2:4–3:15

Introduction

Titus 2 contains instructions for various groups. There are characteristics listed for the older men and women, and Titus is encouraged to speak to each age group to teach them the qualities they need to have to live the Christian life. The characteristics for the older women and their purpose overlap into the younger women because one of the purposes for each generation is to teach those who are younger.

The Christian Attitude Toward Each Other

Conduct of Older Women

*Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. **Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God** (Titus 2:3–5).*

The older women are given the responsibility of training the younger women. Paul gave Titus a list of the characteristics that the younger women needed to be taught.

First, he said younger women need to be trained “. . . to

love their husbands and children . . .” (Titus 2:3). In many cultures today, women no longer love their husbands and children. They no longer feel responsible for them, so they choose to abandon them. **Second**, younger women need to be trained “*to be self-controlled . . .*” (Titus 2:5). A young woman needs to learn self-control in every detail of her life.

Third, younger women need to be trained to be “. . . *pure . . .*” (Titus 2:5). This purity needs to be observed in her way of living, her speech, her morality, in every aspect of her life. **Fourth**, younger women need to be trained “. . . *to be busy at home . . .*” (Titus 2:5). **Fifth**, younger women need to be trained “. . . *to be kind . . .*” (Titus 2:5). **Sixth**, younger women need to be trained “. . . *to be subject to their husbands . . .*” (Titus 2:5).

Paul said that these characteristics were necessary “. . . *so that no one will malign the word of God*” (Titus 2:5). When a person becomes a child of God, their home is in heaven, but their purpose is to manifest God in their life on earth, so that people will not speak against the gospel of Christ. This applies to anyone who is older or younger, man or woman, for as long as God allows them to live. Their manner of life needs to be of a higher quality, so that the way they live will not cause anyone to look down upon Christianity. The Christian must lead a life that is righteous, pure and acceptable.

Conduct of Younger Men

Paul continued with the next age group by saying:

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us (Titus 2:6–8).

Paul had already covered the older men and women, and the younger women, so he began the admonitions for younger men by saying, “*Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.*” Every aspect of a young man’s life needs to be self-controlled. Titus was also a young man, so Paul simply told him he must set the example by doing what was good. The word “**good**” was used as a contrast to the kind of life that most of the people on the island of Crete lived. Paul stresses the idea of living a good life over and over again as opposed to living and doing evil.

Paul urged Titus, as an evangelist, to show integrity in his teaching. He needed to be honest and true in his life. That included preaching what he needs to preach, living how God would have him live and being able to defend the gospel of truth. Paul told him to be serious and sound in his speech so that what he said and did could not be condemned. There were going to be those who would oppose him, and they would be ashamed if they had nothing bad to say. In reality, every Christian ought to have a quality of life so that no evil can be spoken against the message of Christ or against God’s children. The way a Christian lives reflects upon all other Christians and upon the purpose of God for His children as they work in His kingdom.

Conduct of Slaves

Paul brought another group to Titus’ attention — he said:

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive (Titus 2:9–10).

Remember that in the Roman Empire at this time, one third of the population was enslaved. Many slaves were taught the

gospel of Christ, and they had to live the Christian life while they continued to be slaves. Christianity opposes slavery, but Paul did not directly oppose it, because he did not want the Christians to organize themselves to oppose slavery. Because of the teachings of Christians, and the quality of life of Christian slaves, slavery was eventually dissipated when the Roman Empire was defeated by God.

Paul said slaves were to be subject to their masters in everything. It was natural that some slaves would be rebellious. The Christian slave could show the qualities that portrayed a Christian toward his master by not talking back and not stealing from him. His actions could make the teachings of God attractive. Paul was telling Titus that the actions of a Christian were very important, because the quality of the life he led made an impact on others. How a Christian relates to others in honesty, self-control, uprightness, purity, and holiness will effect the people around them. This in turn will have a positive effect on their life and make it possible for the gospel to be preached. Slavery is almost a thing of the past, but there are still employer/employee relationships to which these same instructions apply.

The Theological Basis for the Christian Life

The Grace of God Constrains Christians to Live Godly Lives

There is a reason why every Christian ought to live a life of self-control, godliness, and purity. Paul said:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from

allwickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good (Titus 2:11–14).

It is God's plan that all men are to receive redemption and salvation through the grace of God. That is why teaching and living a life that is an example are so important. The grace of God teaches those who come to Him to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions. The quality of life demanded of one who is a Christian is so revolutionary that in the gospel of John, Jesus called it a brand new birth (John 3:1–21). Paul said that this was the quality of life that a Christian needed to live so that the grace of God could be extended to others by the influence of Christians around them. *"In this present age,"* applied to the time of Paul, but it also applies to every age. Christians live in a world that surrounds them with evil. It is important for each Christian to know that the grace of God brings his salvation, and his righteous living influences the unrighteousness and ungodliness around him.

The Christian must live *"in this present age,"* while he is waiting for the *"blessed hope"* that will come. Jesus said:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:19, 21).

Christians are waiting for *" . . . the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ . . . "* (Titus 2:13). This world is not home for the Christian. Paul told the Philippian Christians, *"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ . . . "* (Philippians 3:20). All Christians are waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ. At His coming all men will be judged,

and then those who are righteous will receive salvation. They will have a heavenly home with God.

Paul encouraged Titus to have and teach the qualities necessary for the Christian life by telling him about Jesus, *“Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good”* (Titus 2:14). Jesus came to bring redemption and salvation to those who obey Him. The people who obey God must also understand the importance of the position of being a Christian. They anxiously await His coming and are zealous to do good works.

Paul said, *“These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you”* (Titus 2:15). An evangelist has to teach the word of God, then encourage and rebuke. He has to do whatever it takes to help the people understand and obey the message of Christ. This needs to be done with humility and understanding, so that no one will despise him as he preaches the word of God.

The Christian and the World

Paul continued to instruct Titus in the work of an evangelist saying,

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men (Titus 3:1-2).

Titus needed to remind the people that they should respect the law and those who were in authority. He needed to encourage the people to be involved in work that was good. In other words, a Christian has the responsibility to live and work righteously in his community. This would be especially true of those people who lived on the island of Crete, because those

people were known for being rebellious. A child of God does not continue in a rebellious lifestyle, but listens to the authorities. God has placed men in positions of authority, and He will remove them if they are evil (cf. Romans 13:1–5).

Christians have the responsibility to be peaceable and considerate to others. They do not slander (telling lies that damage others, Ed.) or cause difficulties for others. A Christian needs to show true humility to all men. He does not think that he is better than others because he is a Christian. Every Christian has the responsibility to work toward developing these qualities in his life.

Theological Basis for Living With Non-Christians

Our Attitude Before Christianity

Paul told Titus: *“At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another”* (Titus 3:3). Paul wanted Titus to remember that at one time they had lived the same kind of life that non-Christians live, so they needed to be long-suffering. Those who are Christians need to be patient with those who are in the church but still struggling against the ways of the world. Christians struggling with sins from a worldly life are still covered by grace. Paul listed some of the characteristics everyone has before becoming a Christian. **First**, he said non-Christians were foolish, which means that they did not know the truth of the gospel. **Second**, they were disobedient because they did not know the law of God. **Third**, they were deceived because they did not know the gospel of truth. **Fourth**, they were enslaved by passions and pleasures. **Fifth**, they lived in malice, and **sixth**, they lived with envy.

This is exactly how the world lives. People who do not know God live in this kind of situation. They are envious of

each other. They have malice toward each other. Paul said that at one time, that is how he and Titus lived as well. Paul told the Ephesians:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world . . . But because of his great love for us, God . . . made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved (Ephesians 2:1, 2b, 4a, 5).

Those who once lived in sin have been made alive because of God's grace. Without God, everyone is in the same situation. Everyone follows after the ways of the world, but, for the Christian, God makes a difference.

Our Attitude Because Of Christianity

When a person becomes a Christian, Paul said something happens:

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4–7).

Christians are not saved because of anything that they have done. They are saved because of God's mercy. No one earns their own salvation and redemption. Jesus came, suffered, and died for all men. Paul was talking to Titus about the attitude that Christians need to have toward the world and the reason for such attitudes and actions. The former life of a Christian

was contrary to the will of God, but God's love and the love of Jesus appeared and brought salvation to all. Christians are saved not by their own righteousness, but by God's mercy because He saw their hopeless condition.

God saved His children by the washing of rebirth and the renewal by the Holy Spirit. This washing of water refers to water baptism. When the Jews asked, "What must we do?" on the day of Pentecost, they knew that the way they were living was contrary to the will of God. Peter told them:

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:38–39).

Paul told Titus, ". . . *He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*" There is a rebirth and a new life because the Holy Spirit was poured out generously through Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives instructions to all Christians concerning how they must live to please God. Salvation is by grace through the mercy of God.

Paul told the Ephesians, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast*" (Ephesians 2:8). So, man walked in ungodliness, but he heard the message of salvation, and through baptism in water, he rises to walk in newness of life (cf. Romans 6:4, NASB). Then, he has the blessing of walking justified with all his sins forgiven. This happens because of God's grace which He gives to all Christians in an unmerited way because of His love toward them. Paul concluded by saying, "*This is a trustworthy saying*" (Titus 3:8a).

Bold Preaching And Warnings

Boldness in Speaking and Boldness in Life

*And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is **good**. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone* (Titus 3:8b).

Paul wanted Titus to stress these things to help those who had trusted in God to devote themselves to doing what was good. Remember Titus was working on an island where there were many people living ungodly and unrighteous lives. Titus needed to stress the things that would help straighten out their lives. Paul was saying, “These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.”

Paul was talking about things that would change lives. These qualities of life, doing good and perfecting relationships with others, are all things that are so contrary to the normal thinking of the people who live on the island of Crete. These things are also contrary to the thinking of people today no matter where you live.

Final Warnings Concerning False Teachers

Relationship To the Factious Man

Paul warned Titus to “. . . *avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law* (This would be the Law of Moses.), *because these are unprofitable and useless*” (Titus 3:9). The Old Law had been taken out of the way, so Christians were no longer submissive to it. The Jewish false teachers were still trying to teach the Old Law, but Paul said these things were unprofitable. He continued:

Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned (Titus 3:10–11).

In the church those who are false teachers, and those who are divisive, need to be warned. Then, if they do not listen, warn them a second time, but after that, they need to be withdrawn from. Paul told Titus to have nothing to do with them because they hold the church back from doing what it ought to do and from being what it ought to be. This kind of person is warped and sinful and condemns himself by his actions. He becomes a detriment to the church. He rejects the grace, mercy and the law of God. He lives his own righteousness and does harm to the church and its work.

Personal Directions And Closing Salutations

Exhortation for Titus to Come and Join Paul at Nicopolis

This personal letter from Paul to Titus closes with some personal statements to Titus. Paul wanted Titus to meet him at Nicopolis for the winter months (cf. Titus 3:12). This might have been because Paul was an older man, and Nicopolis was a warm place on the coast.

A Reminder To Live Productive Lives

Paul also asked Titus to do everything he could to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way (cf. Titus 3:12). There is no record in the New Testament of a Zenas, but if he was a Jew, then the term lawyer would apply to one who had learned the Law of Moses. Paul wanted Titus to do all that he could to make sure they had everything they needed. These were probably men who were traveling on behalf of the Lord.

This is a message for the church wherever it is. When men who are workers in the kingdom must travel to help spread the

gospel of Christ, they should be supported with financial help, a place to stay, sustenance as they travel, and money for whatever they might need. The church is given the responsibility for helping men like this on their way.

Paul said, *“Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is **good**, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives”* (Titus 2:14). Once again, Paul used the word “good.” He was referring to the quality of the life they had lived and doing what was good by helping Zenas and Apollos. Undoubtedly, there were those who scrounged off others or who tried to get things from others rather than earning their own living. He said they needed to learn to live good quality lives and to be productive.

In closing his letter to Titus, Paul said: *“Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all”* (Titus 3:15). Titus was probably serving on the island of Crete by himself. He had the tremendous responsibility of carrying on the work of the kingdom there, preaching the gospel, defending the truth, dealing with people who were ungodly and unrighteous, and dealing with people in circumstances that were very difficult. The people who were with Paul, who were preachers and teachers of the gospel, wanted Titus to know that they were with him, in both what he was saying and doing.

Conclusion

The messages in these three letters apply to every Christian whether they are old or young. There are messages for those who are leaders in the church, and especially for men who teach and preach the gospel of Christ. There is also a message for mothers and their children. These messages bring out the marvelous doctrinal things concerning the redemption made possible through Jesus Christ. These letters were written by Paul to men in very difficult circumstances who needed encouragement at that particular time. But sin is the same wherever it is, and the principles contained in these epistles can

be used by every Christian no matter where they might live in the world.

Remember these words were written by men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to be used to teach the message of Christ.

R. H. "Tex" Williams

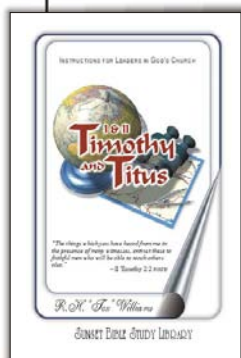


R. H. "Tex" Williams grew up in Waco, Texas. While attending Abilene Christian College, he began to preach. After graduation in 1950 he worked with the Boles Home where he met and later married Mary Jane, who had grown up in Boles Home. After their wedding in 1955 Tex and Mary Jane moved to Austin, Texas to work with the Northside church.

In 1957 they moved to South Africa, working first among the white population and later with the Zulu and Xhosa tribes. They helped establish churches in South Africa as well as Swaziland, Lesotho, and Botswana.

In 1971 Tex, Mary Jane, and their four children joined the Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock. Tex established the Sunset School of Missions and taught in the school. During this time Tex also completed his MA at Abilene Christian; he has been awarded an honorary doctorate from ACU.

The Williams family returned to Austin in 1986 to work with the growing World Bible School program. In 1989 Tex became the WBS Director with Mary Jane as a secretary. They continued to serve WBS until Tex's retirement in 2006. He has also served as an elder for the Westover Hills Church of Christ in Austin.



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