

DIGGING DEEPER
1 TIMOTHY



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~Missions Department, Fellowship Bible Church,
Winchester, Virginia

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY

The first line of this letter to Timothy names Paul as the author (1:1). Paul and Timothy probably met on Paul's first missionary journey (Timothy accompanied Paul on his second journey) when Paul preached at Lystra (**Acts 14:6–7**). Timothy's grandmother and mother had come to faith first and had been a great influence on him (**2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14–15**). Their faithful witness and instruction in the Scriptures prepared Timothy also to follow Christ. Paul calls Timothy his "child" or "son" (**1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Timothy 2:1**), implying a relationship as Timothy's spiritual father.

Beyond leading young Timothy to Christ, Paul became Timothy's mentor, bringing him along as a fellow missionary and appointing him to a leadership position in the church. Paul's letters to Timothy stand as a powerful witness to the close relationship these men enjoyed as Paul gave Timothy encouragement, guidance, and strong instruction.

1 Timothy 1

GREETINGS / 1:1–2

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy in A.D. 64 or 65, after Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (**Acts 28:16–31**). Apparently Paul had been out of prison for several years, and during that time he had revisited many churches in Asia and Macedonia. When Paul and Timothy returned to Ephesus, they found widespread false teaching in the church. Paul had warned the Ephesian elders to be on guard against the false teachers who inevitably would come after he had left (**Acts 20:17–31**). Paul assigned Timothy to remain in the Ephesian church while he moved on to Macedonia. From there Paul wrote this letter of encouragement and instruction to help Timothy deal with the difficult situation in the Ephesian church.

The more we know about Timothy, the more we can appreciate what Paul's letters must have meant to him. He was probably lonely and intimidated. How could he consider himself a capable replacement for Paul? As is the case with some churches, he undoubtedly had among his congregation those who did not hesitate to point out his inadequacies. Paul's letter was as welcome to Timothy as a guiding light penetrating the fog on a stormy night.

Effective delegators keep track of those they entrust with responsibilities. Paul knew he had given Timothy a challenging assignment. He also knew Timothy very well. Their travels together enabled Paul to understand how much pressure Timothy could handle. He also knew how much encouragement Timothy would need along the way. Paul kept in touch through his letters. From his opening words in this letter, Paul blended encouragement with direction for his "child in the faith" (1:2).

1:1 “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;”

- Although what follows is a personal letter to Timothy, Paul identified himself in a formal manner. Anyone else who would read this letter would recognize it as personal, but not private. Paul intended his words to be heard by a greater audience.
- Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, a young pastor. Paul wanted the believers in Ephesus to comply with his instructions through his representative, Timothy. Because Paul addressed the requirements of various roles within the local church, his directions continue to apply to church leaders today.
- **An apostle of Christ Jesus.** *Apostle* comes from the Greek word *apostolos*, meaning “one who is sent.” In a broad sense, all believers are apostles, for all are “sent” with the message of the Good News to unbelievers, and all are “sent” to represent their King, Jesus Christ.
- But New Testament usage of the title *apostle* was stricter. Paul was an apostle called personally by Jesus Christ himself. His commission to this position came directly from God on the road to Damascus (**1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8-10**). The title *apostle* was reserved for certain followers of Christ who had accompanied Jesus and had seen the risen Lord. Paul used this title in all of his letters except Philippians (co-written with Timothy, with the salutation

“Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus”), 1 and 2 Thessalonians (co-written with Silas and Timothy, who would not, in the strict sense, be designated as apostles), and Philemon (also co-written with Timothy, where Paul described himself as “a prisoner of Christ Jesus”). Paul presented this important credential of apostleship in most of his letters.

- **By the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope.** Although Paul was not one of the original twelve disciples, he did meet Jesus personally. Before his conversion, Paul, a devout Jew, had pursued and imprisoned Christians, sincerely believing that they were a threat to Judaism and should be destroyed. But he was sincerely wrong, and Jesus appeared to him on a road to Damascus and told him so. At that time, Paul was temporarily blinded and was led into Damascus to await God’s instructions (**Acts 9:1–9**).
- God chose Paul and gave to him a special ministry; “He is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel” (**Acts 9:15**). In Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul [Paul] for the work to which I have called them”. Paul did not seek this missionary apostleship, rather, God appointed him. By God’s *command*, Paul served as “one sent” with the gospel to the Gentiles. He was under direct orders from the King of kings.

- Paul calls God *our Savior*. Paul used the phrase “our Savior” six times in the letters to Timothy and Titus (**1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4**). Although Jesus Christ came to earth to die on the cross for our sins, God can also be called “Savior” because in His fullness (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) He authored salvation (**John 3:16**).
- Paul calls Christ Jesus *our hope*. The psalmist wrote, “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God ...” (**Psalms 43:5**). Paul wrote to the Colossians: “God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery ... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (**Colossians 1:27**).
- Our hope (confident expectation) rests in Jesus Christ. He is the object of our faith. When we place our hope in Christ, we are not pacified with vague “maybes,” rather we are given certainties. We “hope” for what we already know is ours.

1:2 “Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.”

- Paul addressed many of his letters to churches across the Roman Empire, and these letters were meant to be read aloud to all the believers. This letter, although addressed to Timothy, was also meant to be read to the church at

Ephesus (and beyond) (1:3). 1 & 2 Timothy as well as Titus have been called the “pastoral” epistles. All of Paul’s Letters express pastoral concerns, but these three relate specifically to local church issues.

- Timothy grew up in Lystra, a city in the province of Galatia. Paul and Barnabas visited Lystra on Paul’s first missionary journey (**Acts 14:8–21**). Paul met young Timothy and his mother, Eunice, and grandmother Lois (**2 Timothy 1:5**) on this journey.
- On Paul’s second missionary journey, he and Silas went to several cities that Paul had already visited, including Lystra. Timothy was a disciple and well spoken of by the believers in Lystra and Oconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him (**Acts 16:1-3**). Timothy became Paul’s assistant, traveling with him and sometimes for him.
- **My true son in the faith.** Paul and Timothy had developed a special bond, like father and son. Paul wrote of Timothy, “As a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel” (**Philippians 2:22**). This father/son language reflects the fact that Paul led Timothy to Christ during his first missionary journey while Paul was at Lystra.
- Timothy was an important leader in the early church and, like Paul, was imprisoned for his faith. The writer of Hebrews mentioned Timothy at the end of that letter: “I

want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you” (**Hebrews 13:23**).

- **Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.** Paul used *grace and peace* as a standard greeting in all of his letters. However, it is only in his letters to Timothy that he included mercy. “Mercy” carries with it the Old Testament picture of God’s loving-kindness, not giving us what we deserve (hell). Paul knew that Timothy was facing a difficult situation in Ephesus, so he added the word *mercy* to reassure Timothy of God’s forgiveness and loving-kindness.
- **God as our Father.** Many people come from fatherless homes or from dysfunctional families with an abusive father. Instead of seeing God as similar to pictures of our imperfect fathers, we can understand true fatherhood through knowing God the merciful and gracious author of salvation.
- By using the phrase *Jesus Christ our Lord*, Paul was recognizing the full deity of Jesus.

PAUL WARNS ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS / 1:3–11

After his brief greeting, Paul abruptly turned his attention to one of the immediate reasons for his letter; Timothy's struggle with false teachers.

Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus as a personal deterrent to those who were promoting their own brands of religion.

1:3–4 “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.”

- Paul wanted Timothy to remain in the important role he had been given. The same urgency that caused Paul to leave him in Ephesus was still Paul's concern. **Ephesus.** Paul first visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey (**Acts 18:19–21**). Later, on his third missionary journey, he stayed there for almost three years (Acts 19). Ephesus (along with Rome, Corinth, Antioch, and Alexandria) was a major city in the Roman Empire and was a center for commerce, politics, religions of Asia Minor, and the location of the temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis.
- **Remain ... so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies.** Paul gave Timothy a difficult task. It seems that the rather timid disciple may have been reluctant, for Paul gave strong instructions and loving encouragement to young Timothy

in this letter (4:11–16). Paul allowed Timothy to learn leadership by experience, directing him to be strong with the false teachers. Paul was confident that Timothy could handle the assignment (4:14). Timothy was to be unintimidated by those teachers (4:12) who taught a different doctrine than what was taught by Jesus, the apostles, and the Old Testament.

- But what did these *myths* and *genealogies* have to do with anything?
- The “myths and endless genealogies” only served to promote speculation and lead to discussion about ideas that did not come from Scripture but from the minds of the false teachers. This, in turn, took valuable time away from teaching the truth of Scripture and spreading the gospel. The believers got caught up in these false ideas and had no energy left to study the truth.
- Therefore, Paul urged Timothy to remain in Ephesus, instead of traveling on with him, in order to stifle the false teachers, who were motivated by their own interests rather than Christ’s.
- **These promote controversies rather than God’s work—which is by faith.** These false teachings caused the Ephesian church to be occupied with endless and irrelevant questions, controversies, and speculation.

Getting involved in controversies quickly becomes a substitute for the work that matters; work done by faith and that has eternal value. Christian work requires faith to carry it out, and these false teachers were basing their authority on the law (1:7).

1:5 “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:”

- The word *commandment* also mean *instruction*. Paul expanded his instructions to Timothy by reminding him that the correction of the false teachers was for their good.
- The false teachers were motivated by a desire to gain prestige as intellectuals. In contrast, genuine Christian teachers are motivated by biblical love. There are three sources of real love: (1) in **Matthew 5:8**, Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart.” The word heart refers to the soul (mind, will and emotions) and pure heart is one that is influenced and controlled by the Holy Spirit. A pure heart is occupied with God and free from guilt, corruption and deceit. (2) In order to love properly, our conscience must be clear so that guilt doesn’t hinder us. Also, our motives must be free from fleshly pride and personal gain. (3) When we attempt to love others without our faith sincerely based in Christ, our efforts to love become hollow and self-serving. Sincere faith enables us to love genuinely. True biblical love is selfless. There is nothing in love for me. It is focused on what I can do for the one

loved (**I Corinthians 13:4-7**). In **I Timothy 1:18-19** Paul sends Timothy out to battle with nothing more than faith and a good conscience which are interdependent on one another. When our conscience is unclear, our faith leaks away, but the walk of faith produces a good conscience.

- The commands/instructions in this letter to Timothy reveal Paul's desire to maintain the purest truth in all the church's teachings. As a mother nourishes her child with uncontaminated foods, so Paul nourished the infant church with pure teaching of truth which will produce faith and love.

1:6-7 "From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

- The false teachers at Ephesus had constructed vast speculative systems, and then they argued about the minor details of their imaginary ideas! They wandered away from the gospel, the truth, and love and slipped into meaningless nonsense that helped no one and, in fact, hurt the church.
- These men were unteachable types who made people feel inferior by intimidation, and who looked down on the simplicity of the truth as something for only "common" people. They wanted "to be teachers of the law" but did not understand what they were teaching. Not only were

they mistaken about God's Word, they were not even able to make their own teaching understandable.

1:8 "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;"

- The false teachers wanted to become famous as teachers of God's law, but they misunderstood the law's purpose. The law was not meant to give believers a list of commands for every occasion, but to reveal to unbelievers their sin and show them their need for a Savior. God's law is also important for believers. To use the law *legitimately* means understanding several facts about the law:
 - ❖ In Exodus 20, God shows his people the true function of his laws. God offered grace in chapter 18 but the people opted for law. Therefore God pulled away and basically left the people to obey the law in their own power. The outcome was that they continually failed. Therefore, the commandments were designed to show Israel their need for God and His grace.
 - ❖ **Galatians 2:11–21** shows us that God's law reveals man's need. Paul wrote in Romans 7:12, "The law is holy," but following the law can never make us acceptable to God.
 - ❖ The law still has an important role to play in the life of a Christian.
 - ❖ The law again reveals our sin while giving a basic standard for Christian living.
 - ❖ The law convicts us of sin, leaving us the opportunity turn back to God for His forgiveness.

- ❖ Our failure to heed the law drives us to trust in the sufficiency of Christ and the strength of the Holy Spirit.
- For more of what Paul taught about our relationship to law, **Romans 5:20–21; 7:7–16; 13:9–10; Galatians 3:24–29.**
- The preaching of the law does not make us more sinful, but reveals those sins unto us which before we discerned not; as the sun shining upon some filthy place does not make it so filthy, but only makes it manifest which was not seen in the dark. *George Downname*

1:9–11 “Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”

- The law exists not for the innocent (also translated “righteous”), but for lawbreakers; not for those who have recognized their sin and turned to Christ, but for those who continue in their sin. “The law is good” (1:8) because it reveals our sinfulness.

- The list Paul includes follows the order of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. The first set of sinners corresponds to the first four commandments (**Exodus 20:1–11**). These sins have been committed directly against God: **lawbreakers and rebels** who cannot be taught or disciplined; the **godless and sinful** show no reverence for God, and indeed oppose him because they are **unholy and profane**.
- The second set represents violations of the next six commandments (**Exodus 20:12–16**): **Those who kill their father or mother**, the ultimate act of dishonoring parents; **for murderers**, clearly breaking the command not to murder; **adulterers and perverts, or homosexuals**, dealing not just with adultery, but with all sexual sin.
- **Men stealers**. Also translated “kidnappers”. Kidnapping is the worst form of theft. **Liars, perjurers** are those who violate the commandment not to bear false witness.
- **And for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God**. In case anything might be missed, Paul’s final statement includes any other behavior contradicting *sound doctrine* or teaching. Here Paul stressed the importance of moral Christian conduct coming from understanding and believing the finished work of Christ.

- **Which he entrusted to me.** Paul had been entrusted with this Good News (**Acts 9:15–19; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; Titus 1:3**). This call became Paul’s life mission as he preached the gospel across the Roman Empire, including Ephesus, where this letter was directed (**Acts 20:17–27**). It’s interesting to consider that all who hear, believe, and accept this “sound doctrine” have also been *entrusted* with it.

GOD’S MERCY ON PAUL / 1:12–17

If the law fulfills its purpose by convincing people they are sinners; mercy fulfills its purpose by convincing people they can be saved! As Paul proceeded to compare himself with the false teachers, he did not want to point out how he was different from them, but to make it clear that he was just like them. In fact, Paul claimed, in the category of sinners, “I am the greatest” (1:15).

Paul was convinced that if God could save him, then God could save anyone, including the false teachers.

1:12 “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;”

- His list of sins may have reminded Paul of his own sin (he called himself the worst of sinners, 1:15), and caused him to overflow with gratefulness that God had chosen and enabled him to serve in spreading the Good News of salvation to his fellow Jews and to the Gentiles (**Acts 9:15; 11:25-26; 13:1-3**). The key point in this verse is not that

God counted Paul faithful, but rather that by God's grace, God enabled Paul to be faithful.

- Paul's gratefulness extended to three specific areas:
 - (1) God enabled Paul. Paul considered any power that he might have to have originated in God.
 - (2) God counted Paul faithful. Paul did not think he had earned God's favor, but that being considered faithful was itself part of God's grace. (**I Corinthians 4:2**)
 - (3) God appointed Paul for service. Paul saw himself as a channel through whom God could work.

1:13 "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

- Paul did not exaggerate his past performance. Scripture first reveals Paul as an archenemy of Christians:
 - ❖ As Stephen was being stoned to death for believing in Jesus, "Saul was there, giving approval to his death" (**Acts 8:1**).
 - ❖ "Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison" (**Acts 8:3**).
 - ❖ "Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples" (**Acts 9:1**).

- Paul also testified against himself:
 - ❖ “Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have [the Christians] punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme” (**Acts 26:11**).
 - ❖ “I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison” (**Acts 22:4**).
 - ❖ “I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (**Acts 26:9**).
 - ❖ “I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it” (**Galatians 1:13**).

- **I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief.** Paul persecuted Christians because he sincerely believed that he was serving God by stamping out this distortion of his beloved Jewish faith. Despite all of his knowledge as a learned Pharisee (**Acts 23:6**), Paul remained in ignorance about Jesus’ true identity and stubbornly remained in unbelief, even after seeing the unwavering faith of Stephen and the other Christians whom he persecuted and perhaps even killed. Paul had the chance to believe, but missed it. Yet God came to Paul even as he set out to capture more Christians, offering grace, mercy, and a new start. Paul knew from personal experience the words he wrote to the Romans: “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (**Romans 5:8**).

1:14 “And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

- Paul had blasphemed Jesus Christ, denied the Christian faith, and hated Christians; but God’s grace had overcome it all, filling Paul with the conviction of the “sound doctrine” of the Christian faith and with love for believers and unbelievers alike. God supplied what Paul lacked, and not only supplied it but gave it to him in exceeding abundance. God’s undeserved favor (grace) toward us is always greater than any words we may use to describe it.
- Grace comes to us through our relationship with Jesus Christ (**2 Timothy 2:1**). We find grace nowhere else. It is not based on anything we have done, but on God’s love and mercy (**2 Timothy 1:9**).

1:15 “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

- “This is a faithful saying;” nowhere outside the pastoral letters does Paul use this phrase. It also occurs in **1 Timothy 3:1 4:9**; and **Titus 3:8**.
- In Paul’s writing, a *faithful saying* confronts us with nonnegotiable truth. We are not asked to consider, but to fully accept. We are invited to submit rather than question. Pride demands full understanding before there is

acceptance; humility bows before the God who has made Himself known in Jesus.

- **That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.** Paul summarized and personalized the Good News: Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and no sinner is beyond his saving power. Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (**Luke 5:32; Luke 19:10; John 1:9–12**). Jesus didn’t come merely to show us how to live a better life or to challenge us to be better people. He came to offer us salvation that leads to eternal life. No matter how wretched our sin, Christ can save us.
- **Of whom I am the worst.** Although Paul was a deeply religious Jew, zealous for his faith, he realized that in his ignorance, unbelief, and desire to destroy the Christian faith, he was indeed “the worst” of sinners. We think of Paul as a great hero of the faith, but Paul never saw himself that way because he remembered his life before he met Christ. If Paul meant to emphasize the present tense “I am the worst,” it would mean the more Paul understood God’s grace, the more he became aware of his own sinfulness (**1 Corinthians 15:9–10; Ephesians 3:8**).

1:16 “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.”

- Jesus came to this zealous persecutor, not striking him with judgment (as some might expect), but offering him mercy. Looking back, Paul realized Jesus' great patience in dealing with him; and what an example of mercy Paul gave to us! Jesus offers us mercy; we too can come to him and not get what we deserve (hell), but rather we receive forgiveness and eternal life.

1:17 “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

- Reflecting on how good God has been to him, who was a blasphemer and persecutor, caused Paul to praise God. This verse is a typical doxology given by Paul as a natural, emotional response to these reflections about the mercy of God. When Paul realized all that God had done for him, he was left with no other words than praise. God, our King, is *eternal* and *immortal*; that is, he can never cease to exist. He is *invisible*; we cannot see him or touch him; he is Spirit. He is not just the only wise God, but *the only God*; not one of many, but “the only.”

CLING TIGHTLY TO THE FAITH / 1:18–20

From the high point of praise to God, Paul turned his attention back to Timothy. The young disciple faced a difficult situation in the church at Ephesus, but Paul knew he could handle the challenge. What Timothy needed in the meantime was encouragement and helpful instructions. Paul put an imaginary

arm around Timothy's shoulders and passed on a few last-minute instructions.

1:18 “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;”

- “*This charge*” refers to the work Timothy was sent to do in Ephesus, that is, quieting the false teachers. Paul was expressing again his confidence in entrusting Timothy with an important ministry.
- **Son Timothy.** Paul kept in mind the relationship he shared with Timothy and assured young Timothy that the elder's instructions were based on his love for him.
- **In accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you.** Paul made it clear, however, that his choice of Timothy was not made solely on the basis of their friendship or his feelings about Timothy's abilities. Other believers had noted qualities in Timothy that Paul was happy to affirm.
- It seems likely that the “prophecies” refer to Timothy's ordination. Timothy had been set apart for ministry when elders laid hands on him (4:14). This was probably a

“commissioning” for missionary activity rather than an ordination into a church office. Apparently at Timothy’s “commissioning,” several believers had prophesied/shared some things regarding his gifts and strengths. We can only guess who gave the prophecies and what they said; in any case, Paul reminded Timothy of these statements to encourage him.

- **So that by following them you may fight the good fight.** Timothy had two immediate sources of reinforcement as he carried out his tasks: Paul’s instructions and the encouraging words from other believers. Paul employed a military metaphor to describe Timothy’s work in Ephesus; it would indeed be a fight, but victory would achieve the good of the believers and the church; it was the worthwhile fight of faith. We are reminded of Paul’s words to Timothy as Paul neared death, “I have fought the good fight” (**2 Timothy 4:7**). Paul often used military language to refer to our spiritual struggle (**Ephesians 6:11–16; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; 2 Timothy 2:3**).

1:19 “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:”

- One’s faith and one’s morals cannot be separated. To hold tightly to the Christian faith, and live by it, results in a good (peaceful) conscience. Faith and a good conscience are interdependent upon one another. Guilt weakens faith and makes a shipwreck of our conscience. But a walk of faith produces a good or clear conscience.

- Paul is sending Timothy out to battle with nothing more than faith and a good conscience.

1:20 “Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

- We don’t know who Alexander was; he may have been an associate of Hymenaeus, or the coppersmith mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:14 who hurt Paul. But he was not the Alexander mentioned in the riot at Ephesus (**Acts 19:33**). Hymenaeus’s error is explained in **2 Timothy 2:17–18**. He weakened people’s faith by teaching that the resurrection had already occurred.
- **Whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.** To be *delivered to Satan* means that Paul removed these men from the fellowship of the church and back into the world; Satan’s domain. Paul did this so that they would see their error and repent. The ultimate purpose of this punishment was correction. (**1 Corinthians 5:1–5; 2 Corinthians 2:5–8; 4:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15.**) Condemnation, suspicion, withholding of forgiveness, or permanent exile should not be a part of church discipline.

1 Timothy 2

The next two chapters cover Paul's thinking on the expected character and behavior of believers when they are functioning as a church. Included are some significant principles for worship. Key leadership roles are discussed, but the emphasis is clearly on the kind of people who should be chosen for certain roles, rather than what the roles themselves involve.

2:1 "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;"

- Paul echoed his original mission for Timothy (1:3). False teaching had to be challenged, and Christian conduct must be reinforced. Paul placed primary importance on prayer; thus he addressed this issue *first of all*.
- The words used here for prayer, focus not so much on different types of prayer, but on the scope of prayer; that we can come to God with requests, needs, and desires for ourselves and for others. But often we forget the last word, *thanksgivings (eucharistias)*. In practice as well as in teaching, Paul insisted that prayer should always include thanksgiving (**Romans 1:8-10; Ephesians 1:15-16; Philippians 1:3-6; 4:6**).
- This verse highlights the words "*for all men*". Readers often miss the inclusiveness of the word and focus instead

on the examples that Paul gave (government leaders). Paul's purpose, however, was most likely to broaden the possibilities for prayer rather than narrowing them. Paul's examples may well have caused Timothy to think of the false teachers. False teachers were people in authority (2:2) who were promoting error and creating controversies in the Ephesian church. Yet Paul urged Timothy to pray for everyone, including false teachers..

- In situations of personal conflict, one of the ways that reveals maturity is whether or not we can honestly pray for those with whom we disagree. Jesus was quite clear – “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (**Matthew 5:44**).

2:2 “For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

- Paul's command to pray for kings was remarkable considering that Nero, a notoriously cruel ruler, was the current emperor (A.D. 54–68). When Paul wrote this letter, persecution was a growing threat to believers. Later, when Nero needed a scapegoat for the great fire that destroyed much of Rome in A.D. 64, he blamed the Roman Christians so as to take the focus off himself. That triggered severe persecution throughout the Roman Empire. Not only were Christians denied certain privileges in society; some were even publicly butchered, burned, or fed to lions. In spite of all this, believers are taught to support and respect the government (**Romans 13:1–6; 1 Peter 2:13–25**).

- **So that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.** Paul did not explain *what* to pray, but his list in verse 1 was broad enough to include whatever prayer might be appropriate to any situation. He also gave the purpose behind his command to pray.
- God sets up and removes all rulers; he is ultimately in control (Psalm 2). Praying for the salvation of the rulers in Rome would help restore the *quiet and peaceable life* the Christians had enjoyed prior to the persecution (**1 Peter 2:12; 3:9**).
- Even in nations where Christians do not face persecution, we still need to be praying for leaders. Every day decisions are made in the halls of government that shape the policies, the future, even the morality of the nation. God asks us to pray and trust Him. To keep the nation “quiet and peaceable” so believers can continue with the work of spreading the gospel in all godliness and dignity. Godliness means God-likeness (the Holy Spirit reproducing Christ in us). Dignity means serious purpose, moral earnestness.

2:3 “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;”

- It may at times seem difficult to pray for the salvation of civil leaders, but these prayers are *good and acceptable* to God, who alone is *Savior* (**Philippians 1:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 Timothy 1:1**). The context here in 1 Timothy included the conflict within the church with the false teachers. But even in this confrontation, the goal was to bring about their salvation as well as peace and unity in the church. The recent mention of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1:20) illustrates the importance of redemptive church discipline. While these men had been “turned over to Satan” (1:20) and were therefore outside the church, the door of repentance still would have been open to them (**1 Corinthians 5:3–5 and 2 Corinthians 2:5–11**). In the meantime, they were among the subjects for prayer by the gathered church.

2:4 “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

- Both Peter and Paul wrote that God wants everyone to be saved (**2 Peter 3:9**). “Everyone” does not mean that all will be saved; the Bible affirms that many people will not believe in Christ (**Matthew 25:31–46; John 12:44–50; Hebrews 10:26–29**). But God’s desire is that all people would be saved, and he has provided in Christ the way of salvation. **1 Timothy 4:10** shows that the guarantee of salvation applies only to those who believe.

- The gospel message (here called *the knowledge of the truth*) has a universal scope; it is not directed only to people of one race, one sex, or one national background. Because God loves the whole world, he sent his Son to offer salvation to everyone. No one is outside God's mercy or beyond the reach of his offer of salvation.

2:5–6 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

For there is one God.

- Judaism and Christianity shared the common belief that there is only *one God*. The foundation for this teaching is **Deuteronomy 6:4–9 (1 Corinthians 8:4)**. There is only one God, who “desires everyone to be saved” (2:4).

And one mediator between God and men, the man, Jesus Christ.

- The Christians understand that there is one God and *one mediator ... Christ Jesus*. Christ Jesus is our mediator because he is God and because he came from God, became fully human, experienced the trials, temptations, and tragedy of humanity (death), and now lives to intercede for us with the Father (**Hebrews 4:14–16; 7:23–8:2; 9:15**).
- As the second Adam, Jesus was the prototype of the new creations we are to be (**Romans 5:12–21; 1 Corinthians 15:21**). As both God and man, he could be the perfect link between the eternal God and sinful people.

Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

- Jesus also said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (**Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28**). God is holy, sinless, morally perfect. People are, by nature, sinners. A holy God cannot embrace sinners any more than light can embrace darkness. For hundreds of years, the Jews sacrificed animals to God in order to maintain a right relationship with him. The sacrifices reminded them that sin has consequences and that only spilled blood would be enough to cover the people’s sins. Yet, even that wasn’t God’s complete plan, for *in due time* he sent his Son to become the final sacrifice, to pay for the sins of all people (past, present, and future) with his own blood.
- What is the “due time”? The phrase is literally, “The testimony in his own times,” and reflects God’s timing in this process.
- God’s moral nature could not allow him to just overlook our sins and forgive them; the penalty for sins had to be paid. But “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (**John 3:16**). Because Christ paid the price, the *ransom*, he mediates between us and God. “Ransom” (*antilutron*) refers to the exchange price for freeing a slave or redeeming a prisoner of war. It illustrates that Christ exchanged his life for ours.

2:7 “Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.”

Paul had been given the special privilege of being a teacher of the true faith; the gospel, to the Gentiles. Paul emphasized his role as a teacher to Timothy, who was lax in his teaching duties.

- **I am telling the truth, I am not lying.** Obviously Timothy did not need reassurance of the truthfulness of Paul’s words. Paul wrote this not for Timothy’s sake, but for the church in Ephesus.

2:8 “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

- The word, “*therefore*” connects verses 1–7 with the next section. Continuing the theme of prayer (begun in 2:1).
- The lifting up of hands and the prayers offered by men was the accepted way of prayer among Jews and the earliest Christians. In Old Testament times, prayers were made with the face pointed toward heaven and palms turned upward with hands outstretched.
- But these men who prayed needed holy hands; in other words, they had to be “clean” before God. According to the context here, the outward forms of prayer needed to be authenticated by the absence of anger or unbelief.

- Paul's desire that men alone should pray seems to contradict **1 Corinthians 11:5**, where he stated that women who prayed or prophesied should do so with their heads covered. Some scholars think this problem of women leading in prayer and teaching applied specifically to the Corinthian and Ephesian churches. In these churches, recently converted and emancipated women tended to interrupt the service with improper questions. Therefore, Paul urged them to defer to the men. But he was not generally refusing to let women participate in public prayer.
- The phrase, "*holy hands*" implies that one is walking in the Spirit.

2:9–10 "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

- As the men were to show their Godliness (God-likeness) with "*holy hands*," so the women in the Ephesian congregation were to show their holy attitudes with a modest outward appearance. Paul emphasized that their internal character was far more important than their outward adornment. Women who worshiped in the Christian church should not be given to ostentation, costly attire, and excessive adornment. Neither was seductive or

sexually suggestive clothing appropriate. They were not to detract from the worship by drawing attention to themselves.

- Christian women in Ephesus were not to dress **with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing**.
- While there is nothing wrong with Christian women wanting to look nice, each woman must examine her own motives.
- **With good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God.** A carefully groomed and well-decorated exterior is artificial and cold without inner beauty. Scripture does not prohibit a woman from wanting to be attractive. Beauty, however, begins inside a person. A gentle, modest, loving character gives a light to the face that cannot be duplicated by the best cosmetics and jewelry in the world. Christian women are not to try to be unattractive; instead, Paul called them to reject the world's standard for attractiveness. A Christian's adornment comes not from what she puts on, but from modeling the Christ-life (dead to self and alive to God).
- Believers must accept God's standard for appearance: "For the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (**1 Samuel 16:7**).

2:11 “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.”

- To understand these verses, we must understand the situation in which Paul and Timothy worked. In first-century Jewish culture, women were not allowed to study. Jews and Gentiles regarded it disgraceful for women to discuss issues with men in public.
- When Paul said that women should *learn* in quietness and full submission, he was affirming their recognition as teachable members of the church and that Christian women were given “equal rights” with men when it came to studying the Holy Scriptures. This was an amazing freedom for many of the Jewish and Gentile women who had become Christians.
- Paul’s prohibition was not against women in general. In several places Paul wrote about women in the church who were coworkers; helping him (**Romans 16:1–3**) and contending beside him for the faith (**Philippians 4:2–3**). Paul understood that women were coheirs of the image of God in Christ, that they were members of the body of Christ, and that they shared in the responsibilities and gifts of living out the Christ-life..

- Women's learning was to be in quietness or in silence. The Greek word used here (*hesuchia*) and in verses 2 and 12 means "settledness, calmness, implying voluntary restraint."
- The special gift and ability of each creature defines its special limitations. And as the bird easily comes to terms with the necessity of bearing wings when it finds that it is, in fact, the wings that bear the bird ... so the woman who accepts the limitations of womanhood finds in those very limitations her gifts, her special callings; wings, in fact, which bear her up into perfect freedom, into the will of God. *Elisabeth Elliot*

2:12 "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

- Some interpret this passage to mean that women should never teach in the assembled church; however, other passages point out that Paul allowed women to teach. Paul's commended coworkers, Aquila and Priscilla, taught Apollos, the great preacher (**Acts 18:24–26**). In addition, Paul frequently mentioned other women who held positions of responsibility in the church. Phoebe worked in the church (Romans 16:1). Mary, Tryphena, and Tryphosa were the Lord's workers (**Romans 16:6, 12**), as were Euodia and Syntyche (**Philippians 4:2**).
- The Ephesian church had a particular problem with false teachers. Both Timothy's presence and Paul's letters were

efforts to correct the problem. Evidently the women were especially susceptible to the false teachings (**2 Timothy 3:1–9**).

- The women were not to *have authority over* the men (**1 Corinthians 11:3**).
- Paul’s instruction to the women of Ephesus displayed his missionary strategy. Man and woman were created in God’s image; equal in essence but different in roles. Paul is teaching that gender roles glorify God.
- The women who became Christians may have thought that their Christian freedom and equality with men before God gave them the right to question or “lord it over” men in public worship. This disrupted worship and could have caused dissension in the church. Remember that equality of worth between the sexes was a completely foreign concept in both Hebrew and Roman cultures. It was not expected nor was it offered. The equality given by Christ was radical (**Galatians 3:26–28**).

2:13 “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.”

- In previous letters Paul had discussed male/female roles in marriage (**Ephesians 5:21–33**; **Colossians 3:18–19**). Here

he talks about male/female roles within the church. Some scholars see these verses about Adam and Eve as an illustration of what was happening in the Ephesian church. Just as Eve had been deceived in the Garden of Eden, so the women in the church were being deceived by false teachers. Just as Adam was the first human created by God, so the men in the church in Ephesus should be the first to speak and teach. Eve should have turned to Adam for advice about Satan's words to her.

- The principles Paul points out are based on God's design for his created order; God established these roles to maintain harmony in both the family and the church (**Genesis 2:18**). God assigned roles and responsibilities in order for his created world to function smoothly. Although there must be lines of authority, even in marriage, there should *not* be lines of superiority. God created men and women with unique and complementary characteristics. One sex is not better than the other. In designating Eve as "a helper suitable" for Adam (**Genesis 2:18**), the words imply another perfectly fit for him. We must not let the issue of authority and submission become a wedge to destroy what can be excellent working relationships, with men and women using their varied gifts, abilities and roles to accomplish God's will.

2:14 "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

- Paul was not excusing Adam for his part in the Fall (**Genesis 3:6–7, 17–19**). On the contrary, in his letter to the Romans, Paul placed the primary blame for humanity’s sinful nature on Adam (**Romans 5:12–21**). Eve had not been told directly by God about the trees; Adam had instructed her. In turn, God instructed Adam about the trees before Eve was created. For Eve, the struggle was over whether to submit to Adam’s command or to the serpent’s words that seemed to offer her knowledge and understanding. But when Adam ate of the fruit, he directly disobeyed God. He was not deceived; he willingly rebelled.

2:15 “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

- The phrase “*saved through childbearing*” has been misunderstood. It appears that Paul is referring to women who fulfill their God-given roles of childbearing and child rearing. One of the most important roles for a wife is to bear children and to care for her family. This seems to be the most legitimate interpretation in light of the reference (5:3-15). The women in Ephesus were abandoning their God-given purpose because of the false teachers. So Paul was telling them that caring for their families was one way for them to live lives worthy of their calling (**Ephesians 4:1**). By means of bearing children, raising them, and fulfilling their God-given design, women would be saved from the evils of Ephesian society and maintain a pure testimony to the faithfulness of Christ.

- **Provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.** This expresses the spiritual role that Paul placed before the women of Ephesus. Women are called to, by grace through faith, carry out their role as “childbearers” while resting in their position “in Christ,” walking and trusting the Spirit to produce the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness and self-control) in and through their lives.

1 Timothy 3

STANDARDS FOR CHURCH LEADERS /

3:1–16

The list of qualifications for church leaders is not a judgment list for disqualifying certain people. Rather, it serves as a barometer for spiritual maturity. Those who aspire to a church office must realize that living a “blameless” life requires spiritual maturity. We could boil down the 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 qualifications to the following four categories: 1) Christ-like character; 2) Righteous reputation; 3) Healthy homes; and 4) Soundness in the scriptures.

3:1 “This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”

- Keep in mind that we Christians often have fleshly motives for desiring to be involved in ministry. What Paul is saying here is that if a man has a God-given, spiritual desire to be an elder, this is a good thing. However, if a man has a fleshly, self-centered desire to be an elder, this is not a good thing (**Romans 7:18a**).
- SOME THOUGHTS REGARDING ELDERS: These local church leaders are identified in Scripture with two primary titles:
 - a. The term “elder” is used to describe the leaders in the churches that were primarily populated with Jewish believers. This term “elder” comes from the Jewish community, going back as far as the time of Moses.

- b. The word “bishop” was used to describe spiritual leaders in churches that were populated primarily with Gentile converts. This term “bishop” comes from the Greek and Roman world and was used to refer to a commissioner who oversaw a new colony of people. These two terms were used interchangeably, particularly by the Apostle Paul. Titus 1:5 & 7; I Timothy 3:1-2; I Timothy 5:17, 19.
- Eldership is not a power position, but a service position. Thus, it is totally different than the leadership positions of the world which center on power. **(Mark 10:42-45)** Christ and the apostles who followed Him made clear that the manner in which church leaders were to serve was radically different than the manner of leadership they had seen modeled in their culture. Specifically, they were to be radically different in two ways; as selfless servants and excellent examples.
 - a. **Selfless Servants** Christ’s goal was to create a new kind of leader, the selfless servant, who was a giver rather than a taker, as the following verses clearly show: **Mark 9:35; 10:42-45; Luke 22:24; Acts 20:35.**
 - b. **Excellent Examples** Leadership by service does not draw its authority from the use of power, but from a Christ-like example, **John 13:12; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:1-2.**
 - New Testament churches had more than one elder, who jointly governed the local church and functioned as under-shepherds of Christ, **I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:17; 15:23.**

- Some of these leaders were to be paid for their ministry, I **Timothy 5:17-18**. When a man gives a large portion of time to the ministry and because of it, is not able to work a regular job in order to provide for his family; and if the body of believers encourages and accepts his ministry, then they are responsible to provide financial assistance for him.
- Elders are restricted to male members of the congregation, I **Timothy 3:1**.
- The elders oversee, lead and shepherd the local church of God, and nowhere does the Bible suggest that the elders are under the authority of the congregation, but rather that the congregation is to submit to the guidance, protection and care of these under-shepherds of Christ, **Hebrews 13:7**.

3:2 “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;”

- Paul lists various qualifications for a church leader. **Blameless, above reproach**, or we could say it this way: **having a righteous reputation**. An elder is not only distinguished by his internal character, but also his

reputation. Elders are recognized as godly by those with whom they have relationships. Elders are the type of men who are exemplary church members, neighbors, employers and employees. (**Titus 1:6; I Timothy 3:7**)

- **“The husband of one wife”** literally means a one woman man. Not a flirtatious man, but one who is content with and faithful to his wife.
- Elders are to stand against the immoral standards present in the pagan cultures in which we live. The Bible rejects marriage as convenience and encourages faithful, loyal participation in the one flesh created by the husband and wife union (**Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:22-33**).
- The term **vigilant** refers to being alert to danger, wary, cautious, and watchful.
- The next characteristic of a Godly leader is **“sober”** or **“temperate”** which means that his life should be marked by moderation, not extreme or excessive, but self controlled. We could use the term, “balanced.”
- The phrase, **“good behavior”** implies living out the Christ-life. An elder is one who best exemplifies the character of Jesus Christ in all areas of his life, being loyal to moral and

ethical values, showing good judgment and common sense, and one who is patient and considerate of others.

- **Hospitality** was widely emphasized in Middle Eastern cultures and in the Old Testament (**Exodus 22:21**). Believers are commanded to be hospitable (**Hebrews 5:10; 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9; 3 John 5**), so the leaders should show the way. The word actually means, “to be welcoming, receptive, kind and helpful.” (**Titus 1:8**).
- Christian leaders must be **able to teach**. Elders are those who give evidence of having a deep understanding and knowledge of the Scriptures. With regard to God’s truth in the Bible, there are four specific Scriptures to ponder: **ABLE TO TEACH (1 Timothy 3:2)**: having the ability to instruct in Biblical truth; **HOLDING FAST THE WORD OF TRUTH (Titus 1:9)**: standing firm in Biblical truth and not compromising Scripture; **EXHORT WITH SOUND DOCTRINE” (Titus 1:9)**: encouraging believers by means of Biblical truth; **REFUTING THOSE WHO CONTRADICT (Titus 1:9)**: standing against false teaching.

3:3 “Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;”

- Paul now lists some characteristics that elders must not have: “**Not addicted to wine**” (**Titus 1:7**): not abusing or addicted to substances, and in particular, wine; “**Not a**

striker/not a brawler (Titus 1:7): not having a violent temper; not a fighter; “Not greedy of filthy lucre” (Titus 1:7; I Peter 5:2): free from the love of money; not greedy for personal gain.

- In contrast to drunkenness, violence and greed, Paul notes the value of patience or most Bible translators use the word *gentleness*. A gentle, patient person is free from harshness or sternness. The Greek word for *gentle* (*epieike*) is used elsewhere in the New Testament. Paul exhorted the Philippian believers to “let [their] gentle spirit be known to everyone” (Philippians 4:5). James explained that “the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits (James 3:17).

3:4 “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;”

- Scriptures are very clear in stating that there is a direct relationship between a man’s qualifications to be a leader in Christ’s Church and the character qualities necessary to lead his family. ***“If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s Church.” (I Timothy 3:3)*** Thus, if we are to look for God’s choices for an elder we must ask, “Is he a servant leader to his wife and family? Does he show signs of maturity and Godly wisdom in his dealings with his children?” The Scriptures give us four areas in evaluating the family life of an elder.

1. **HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE** (literally “a one-woman-man) (**I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6**); not a flirtatious man, but one who is content with and faithful to his wife.
2. **MANAGES HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD WELL** (**I Timothy 3:4**); being a servant and shepherd to his own family.
3. **CHILDREN UNDER CONTROL WITH DIGNITY** (**I Timothy 3:4**); having children who obey with honor and respect.
4. **CHILDREN WHO BELIEVE, NOT ACCUSED OF DISSIPATION”** (**Titus 1:6**); having children who display faith, who are not living recklessly, who are not rebellious.

3:5 “(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)”

- A good way to see a person’s ability to handle a large responsibility is to see how he or she does with a small one. The ability to oversee his family forms a training ground for a man’s ability to oversee the family of God in a local congregation. The same spiritual maturity, love, compassion, steadfast loyalty, firmness, and mercy are needed for both.

3:6 “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

- God’s plan for leadership in His Church, is that it is led by mature men who have gained knowledge of the truth coupled

with experience and manifest Christ-likeness. New believers should become secure and strong in the faith before taking leadership roles in the church. Too often, when desperate for workers, the church places new believers in positions of responsibility prematurely. New faith needs time to mature. New believers should have a part in God's service, but they should not be put into leadership positions until they are firmly grounded in their faith, with a solid Christian life-style and a knowledge of the Word of God.

- A person can be so inflated with self importance/ pride that he can't get a true picture of himself (6:4).
- The condemnation of the devil refers to the same way Satan fell because of pride; therein waits the danger of pride to new believers who are given responsibility before they are ready. New believers who are too quickly promoted can be easy targets for the devil's powerful temptation: pride. Pride and conceit were the devil's downfall, and through the flesh he uses pride to trap believers. For more on Satan's downfall, (**2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6**). The amplified version of the Bible translates this verse as follows: *"He must not be a new convert or he may develop a clouded and stupid state of mind and as a result of pride, be blinded by conceit and fall into the condemnation that the devil once did."*

3:7 "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

- Leaders must have a good reputation with people outside the church (that includes nonbelievers in the community). This gives the church at large a good reputation in the community (**2 Corinthians 8:21**). Christian leaders who follow Paul's advice keep their church from facing unnecessary abuse. Otherwise, they fall into disgrace with both believers and nonbelievers, and into the devil's trap. This trap may include pride as mentioned in verse 6, moral failure, as well as the trap of condemnation and guilt.

3:8 “Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;”

- A deacon is “one who serves.” The first mention of this leadership position was in **Acts 6:1-6** and the purpose was to care for the physical needs of the congregation and the Jerusalem church. Deacons qualification resemble those of elders; yet their roles are quite different as they carry out some of the more practical tasks of running and maintaining the church.
- Paul's explanation of these roles within the church emphasized the point that the name or title was to be given to someone who was already living out these character qualities.
- Deacons, as recognized leaders in the church, also had a high profile and thus were required to be “grave” or men of dignity. Deacons were to be respectable men who take their responsibilities seriously.

- The *sincere* quality of deacons referred to honesty without hypocrisy. Sometimes translated, “not double-tongued.”
- Finally, like elders/bishops, deacons ought not to be addicted to wine or to money (3:3). As they walk in the Spirit and grow into Christ-likeness, they will just naturally lose interest in such pursuits.
- In some churches today, the office of deacon has lost its importance. New Christians are often asked to serve in this position, but that is not the New Testament pattern. Paul stated that potential deacons should be proven before they are asked to serve (3:10).

3:9 “Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”

- Deacons must be spiritual men. The seven men chosen to help the apostles in the early church were “known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom” (**Acts 6:3**). While Luke never called Stephen and his companions “deacons,” they have traditionally been held up as early models of that role. They were men whose outward actions demonstrated that the gospel had taken deep root in their lives. The “mystery of the faith” refers to the plan of salvation now fully known in Christ (**Romans 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:7; 4:1; Ephesians 3:3-9; Colossians 1:26**). Originally unknown to

humanity, this plan became crystal clear when Jesus rose from the dead.

- The *faith* refers to sound doctrine and teaching (4:1, 6; 5:8; 6:10).
- Deacons must not only know God's truth, they must live it, resulting in *a clear conscience* (1:5). Their life-styles must be consistent with their beliefs.

3:10 “And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.”

- This refers not to some formal testing but rather to observation by those elders who appoint deacons. The candidate will have shown the required moral character and approved doctrine (3:9) consistently in everyday life as well as in the ordinary activities of church membership. A man who has proven his character over time can then serve as a deacon. Deacons should not be appointed without consideration of their doctrine as well as their Christian life.

3:11 “Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.”

- Paul expected the behavior of prominent women in the church to be just as responsible and blameless as that of prominent men.
- Christian women are to be dignified, worthy of respect. They must not be slanders/gossipers.
- Like the overseers, women are called to be *temperate* (3:2), marked by moderation and limits, not extreme or excessive, with an absence of extravagance. Being *faithful in all things* is an important requirement for anyone who would fulfill any role in the church.
- Although the women in the church at Ephesus were not allowed to teach in the formal sense, they were still expected to model all the character qualities of mature believers.

3:12 “Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.”

- This requirement matches the requirement for elders/bishops spelled out in verses 2, 4–5, and is included for deacons for the same reasons.

3:13 “For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree [standing], and great boldness [confidence] in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

- Deacons are required to have the same high standards as elders for a position that, to many, might seem very unattractive and menial. But God doesn't see it that way. Those who fulfill their servant roles faithfully gain a good standing with fellow believers who recognize and appreciate their service, and great boldness or confidence in the faith. The faithful servant is able to boldly walk by faith and serve confidently, assured that what he or she does is valued by the Lord Jesus Christ.

3:14–15 “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

- Paul hoped to arrive in Ephesus and see Timothy within a short time of this letter's arrival. In case Paul arrived later than planned, he wrote these instructions to Timothy and the Ephesian church. This letter included instructions about governing the church. Its arrival prior to Paul's visit would have bolstered Timothy's authority in the church and encouraged him to continue to lead the church according to these instructions and to counteract the false teachers.

- Again, in opposition to the false teachers who were full of hypocrisy and false beliefs, Paul aimed at truthful behavior within the church. Actions speak louder than words; Paul also knew that if these Ephesian Christians were living out the Christ-life, the noise of the false teachers would be drowned out.
- **Which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.** Lest there be any doubt, Paul identified the “household of God” as *the church of the living God* (**1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:20–22**). The “church” does not refer to a physical building; rather, the “church” is the collection of all believers in Ephesus and, by extension, around the world. These believers, each growing into Christ-likeness and worshiping in their individual churches, are the pillar and foundation of truth in their communities. The church is not the source of this truth; rather, it functions as the custodian of and the proclaimer of truth in the community.

3:16 “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

- Paul clearly states here that godliness (God-likeness) is a mystery; something that is beyond our human intellect. Godliness is not man imitating God, but rather God

reproducing Himself in a man. And this all began with Jesus (**I Corinthians 2:7-14; Colossians 1:27**).

- Every phrase of the verse is a “mystery” beyond our comprehension yet available for us to believe.
- **God was manifest in the flesh.** God in the person of “[Jesus] made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death” (**Philippians 2:7–8; Romans 1:3**).
- **Justified in the Spirit.** Jesus’ resurrection showed that the Holy Spirit was in him. **Acts 2:32-33** reads in this way: “This Jesus, God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.”
- **Seen by angels .** Jesus is divine and exalted. “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name” (**Philippians 2:9; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 1:6**). Presumably, the entire drama of the Incarnation was a spectacle for the angels; they were witnesses.

- **Preached among the Gentiles.** *Gentiles (ethnesin)* can also be translated “nations,” pointing to the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. “This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant” (**Colossians 1:23**).
- **Believed on in the world.** Christ is not only preached among all nations, but he also is believed on across the world. This points to a continual fulfillment today as Christ is still preached in nations and he is still being *believed on in the world*.
- **Received up in glory.** This refers to the Ascension: “He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things” (**Ephesians 4:10**).

1 Timothy 4

PAUL GIVES GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING / 4:1–16

Paul ended chapter 3 explaining that “the church of the living God [is] the pillar and foundation of the truth” (3:15). Paul’s original letter, of course, had no chapter divisions, so the thought beginning chapter 4 continued Paul’s line of thinking. His mind turned from the exalted role of the church in the plan of God to the obstacles that were preventing the Ephesian believers from being totally effective.

Paul warned the church of the tactics and teachings of its enemies. False teachers were (and still) a threat to the church. Paul knew that their teachings, if left unchecked, would greatly distort Christian truth. This critical danger would come from within the church.

4:1 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;”

- Paul now addresses the immediate problems at hand. The false teaching in Ephesus was no surprise. The betrayal of the gospel had been foreseen. Paul’s phrase, *the Spirit expressly says*, most likely refers to warnings repeatedly given by Jesus and the apostles against the dangers of false teaching. But Paul’s direct concern here was not just about the teachers themselves as much as for those who

would be deceived by them. The teachers are referred to as “liars” in verse 2.

- The *later times* began with Christ’s resurrection and will continue until his return, when he will set up his kingdom. Jesus and the apostles forewarned us that during that interim, including the time period we live in, false teachers will abound; loving money and attention, distorting the truth, dividing believers, and causing many to go astray as they follow *deceitful spirits and teachings of demons* (**Matthew 24:5; Romans 16:18; James 3:15; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 3:7–9**). These participants in the church are influenced and controlled by the flesh and may *renounce the faith*, even though they may appear to be faithful believers. Keep in mind that these false teachers could be believers who are deceived by the flesh into believing that “law living” is for the church and therefore many could be led astray in the life of bondage living under the law. (**Acts 15:1-11; Romans 6:14**)
- Paul had no patience for false teaching and no soft words for false teachers. He never said that the false teachers misunderstood the gospel or that they simply taught in error. Rather, Paul knew that false teaching comes from Satan himself working through the flesh. False teaching is one of Satan’s many tactics to lead believers astray and to divide the church. Paul wrote to the believers in this church in Ephesus: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (**Ephesians 6:12**).

4:2 “Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;”

- After pointing out the tragedy of deception, Paul began to identify the means by which the deception was achieved. The “deceitful spirits” mentioned in verse 1 look for those who are walking in the flesh and who are hypocritical liars because such people do not know that they are walking in darkness (**1 John 1:6 & 8**). They are both deceived and deceivers who are bent on appearing to be teachers of the truth while they are, in fact, serving the evil purposes of Satan.
- **Whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.** These false teachers’ consciences are past feeling (**Ephesians 4:19**). They have also become insensitive to the truth. The false teachers have themselves been so thoroughly deceived that they can no longer recognize how far they have drifted from God. “For such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. Their end will match their deeds” (**2 Corinthians 11:13–15**).

4:3 “Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”

- The evil trinity (world, flesh, devil) deceives people by offering a clever imitation of the real thing. The false teachers, perhaps under Jewish influence, gave specific rules forbidding marriage and demanding abstinence from certain foods. Later, these teachings became part of what we know as Gnosticism; a belief that the spiritual realm is good, but the physical world is evil. Thus anything done for the body's pleasure or to fulfill its needs (such as sex or eating) was evil. To be “good” and to achieve a higher spiritual state, a person must deny all evil, including natural physical desires.
- The demands of the false teachers appear self-disciplined and righteous. They established clear standards for their followers. But their rules violated God's principles and disturbed God's patterns for relationships and diet. Their strict disciplines for the body could not remove sin: *If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”? All these regulations are simply human commands and teachings. These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in stopping self-indulgence. (Colossians 2:20–23)*

- Paul had explained the Christian understanding of marriage in 1 Corinthians 7 and **Ephesians 5:21–33**. Although Paul advised against marriage in some situations, he always upheld marriage as ordained by God and as an illustration of Christ’s relationship to his church. But he denied the false teaching that marriage (and the sexual relationship between a man and wife) is evil and must be avoided in order for a person to be “good.”
- In the same way, a certain amount of abstinence from all food some of the time (fasting) and from some kinds of food all the time is basic to good health. But abstaining from food does not make a person righteous or bring him or her closer to God. Error can be taught under the guise of devotion.
- The false teaching was wrong in its conclusions: the physical world is *not* inherently evil. The physical world **which God created** should **be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth**. All foods are acceptable by those who regard God as their Provider and thank him for it (**Romans 14:6; 1 Corinthians 10:30**). The Lord pronounced all foods clean (**Mark 7:19; Acts 10:15**).
- Instead of abiding by strict rules that deny the goodness of any pleasures, Christians are to thankfully receive all that God has given.

4:4 “For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:”

- In opposition to the false teachers, Paul affirmed that everything God created is good, as God himself had said repeatedly in Genesis 1. The Greek word for *rejected/refused* (*apobletos*) means “to be thrown away” or even “to regard as taboo.” This doesn’t mean that it is alright to abuse what God has made and given for our pleasure. For example, food can be eaten and enjoyed, but gluttony abuses God’s gift. Sex can be enjoyed within God’s guidelines of marriage, but lust and adultery abuse God’s gift. We should enjoy God’s creation by using his gifts to us to serve and honor him, remembering to receive with thanksgiving.
- **Acts 10:9–16** recounts a vision Peter saw in Joppa. While waiting for food to be prepared, he fell into a trance. In the dream, God directed him to eat foods that Jews regarded as unclean (Leviticus 11). God used the vision to impress upon Peter the importance of taking the gospel to the Gentiles. The voice during the trance said, “What God has made clean, you must not call profane” (**Acts 10:15; Mark 7:19**).

4:5 “For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”

- As we recognize God's hand in all the pleasures of his creation and as we offer him thanks, we take what is ordinary and we sanctify it, or "set it apart for God's use," by making it a reason to praise and honor God.
- We could paraphrase the verse: "Everything ... is set aside for God's possession and use because of God's Word to which we add our thankful prayer."

4:6 "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."

- Here Paul directed some personal instructions for Timothy to take to the Ephesian church. The aging apostle desired for his disciple both an effective ministry and a spiritually healthy life.
- A *good servant* or "good minister" faithfully teaches the truth to those in his care. In his final letter to Timothy, Paul wrote, "And what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others as well" (**2 Timothy 2:2**). If he would carry out Paul's directive, Timothy himself would be nourished in the process.

4:7 “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.”

- Paul emphasized the absurdity of the false teachings by calling them *godless myths and old wives’ tales* (1:3–4). *Have nothing to do with these things*. There can be no compromise between the truth and false teaching. Timothy may well have remembered the counsel that he and Paul had given to the Christians in Colosse: “Let your manner of life be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (**Colossians 4:6**).
- **Train/exercise yourself unto godliness.** Paul often borrowed athletic words to emphasize the need for spiritual training (**I Corinthians 9:24; Galatians 2:2; 5:7; 2 Timothy 4:7**). The word, “training” emphasizes the point that spiritual development does not happen quickly by chance.
- As we mentioned in our commentary on 3:16, Godliness is God-likeness and it is developed in a man or woman by God reproducing Himself in that person. What Paul means here by exercising or training oneself unto Godliness, is a spiritual exercise and the key ingredient is faith. As we by faith rest in our new position in Christ (co-crucified, dead, buried and raised to newness of life in Christ), the Holy Spirit will begin to work out our position in our condition. In other words, He will mold us into Christ-likeness; God-likeness.

- Paul was urging Timothy to model an alternative training program in Ephesus. The false teachers were promoting their system, which included controversy, heresy, legalism, and general rebellion against God. The freedom that we have through Jesus Christ does not give us license to live any way we want. Rather, it frees us from futile attempts to earn God's favor and encourages us to walk by faith in the finished work of Christ. (**Titus 2:11-12**)

4:8 “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

- Physical exercise, while benefiting the body, has no eternal benefit. However, Godliness affects everything. It benefits both in this life and for eternity.
- Paul is not devaluing physical exercise. He believed his readers would agree with the importance of physical training, so he could use it as an illustration. However, some folks spend ten to fifteen hours a week in physical exercise, but spend little or no time in Bible study and prayer.

4:9 “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.”

- It appears that this statement refers back to verses 7 and 8. Paul had twice before used a similar statement (1:15; 3:1).
- That “godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (4:8) is a true saying. Believers who are maturing into Godliness (God-likeness) really do have the best of both worlds; they receive immediate and eternal benefits, and they benefit others as they instruct and model the Christian life.

4:10 “For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe”

- Referring back to verses 8 and 9, the toil and struggle of the growth process into Godliness has a goal; life in Christ lived in the Spirit by grace through faith. The “toil and struggle” do not assure us of anything, rather we are already assured that in Christ, He has given us everything pertaining to life and Godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**), because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. The Christ-life is not just hope for a possible occurrence, it is hope set on a certainty; it is hope set on the living God; not on a philosophy, a human being, a material possession, or a standard of behavior (**Colossians 1:29; Philippians 2:13**).

- As elsewhere (**1:1; 2:3; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4**), Paul attached the role of Savior to God. God in his fullness; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, was active in carrying out the plan of salvation. Christ is the *Savior of all people* in the sense that his work on the cross was sufficient to provide salvation for everyone (2:6). God desires that all people be saved (1:15); but not all people are saved. Paul was referring to God's offer of salvation to everyone.
- The phrase *especially of those who believe* stresses that God's salvation actually becomes effective only for those who put their trust in Him. The offer of salvation has a universal range but does not impose itself on those who will not respond.

4:11 "These things command and teach."

- Timothy may have been somewhat less assertive than the fiery Paul (**1 Corinthians 16:10–11**). Paul encouraged Timothy to take charge as he told Timothy to *command and teach*. The first word referred to the role of confrontation; the second, to the role of instruction. Timothy should teach "*these things*," referring to all the matters in this letter.

4:12 “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

- By this time, Timothy was probably in his thirties. Although he was not a youth, he may have been considerably younger than some believers in his congregation. After serving under Paul, they may have looked down on this younger man who was put in charge of their church. Timothy could not control anyone’s prejudice about his age, but he was not to be intimidated.
- **But set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.** This is good advice from a wise church planter and leader. Paul knew firsthand the potential for problems in any church where fleshly people with a variety of religious backgrounds, cultures, and ages come together. Timothy’s character, and not his age, would determine his authority to lead. Paul called Timothy’s specific role *an example*; meaning he was to be a pattern or model.
- Rather than offering general motivation to be an example, the old apostle issued a checklist:
 - ❖ *Speech*: Timothy was to speak with gentle authority while avoiding useless or argumentative conversation (5:1; 6:3–4, 20). What we desire to say hopefully will be so important that we find the best way to

say it. Otherwise, our tongue may ruin our best intentions (**James 3:1–12; Colossians 4:5–6**).

- ❖ *Life*: Timothy was to live out the Christ-life even in the details of daily living (6:6–10). Unfortunately, when actions loudly contradict words, the truth can hardly be heard (**Ephesians 4:22–28; 1 Peter 2:12**).
- ❖ *Love*: When we say the right words and I do the right thing, but lack love it profits nothing (**1 Corinthians 13:1-7**). After words and actions have had their say, love makes the message ring true or false.
- ❖ *Faith*: Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (**Hebrews 11:1**). Sooner or later, people around us will need to understand what motivates our speech, life, and love. A genuine life lived abiding in Jesus Christ will present to others a life style many have never seen or experienced, filled with faith and hope (**Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 3:15-16**). Faith finally speaks clearly when speech, life, and love have created a hearing.
- ❖ *Purity*: Paul ended this list with a rarely used term for virtue and chastity. The word implies integrity and loyalty. Perhaps Paul even had the idea of transparency in mind. By God's grace, the above Christ-like qualities were to be reproduced intimately, not just for public display, but as the inner texture of Timothy's life.

4:13 “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

- Paul hoped to visit Timothy and the believers in Ephesus soon (3:14-15). Besides his private life, Timothy was also to give consideration to his public ministry in three main areas.
- **Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, exhortation or preaching and to doctrine or teaching.**
- The *Scripture* that Paul mentioned is the Old Testament (although as the Gospels and letters were written and circulated, these were also read in the congregation). Timothy was to regularly do *public reading of Scripture* in his congregation, a practice begun in Old Testament times (**Exodus 24:7; Deuteronomy 31:11; Joshua 8:35; 2 Kings 23:2–3; Nehemiah 8:1–18**) and continued in the synagogues (**Luke 4:16; Acts 15:21; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27**).
- *Preaching* could also be translated “exhortation.” In addition to reading the Scripture, Timothy was to exhort, that is, to warn, advise, and encourage his listeners regarding the words of Scripture, helping them apply those truths to their daily lives.

- Teaching refers to training in Christian doctrine. The people needed to know, understand, and constantly be reminded of the great truths of the Christian faith.

4:14 “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”

- Paul reminded Timothy that he had been gifted by God to do the work in Ephesus. Though Paul did not define the gift specifically, he was concerned that Timothy might fail to acknowledge or use it. When we acknowledge that all abilities, whether they be ministerial, spiritual, relational, or technical, are gifts from God, we will be in a better position to see his hand at work.
- **Which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders.** ^{NRSV} Timothy’s commission as a church leader was confirmed by prophecy (1:18) (by Christian leaders who recognized how the Lord had gifted him and intended to use him in the ministry) and by the laying on of hands by the elders of the church. Timothy’s gift had been publicly recognized. Timothy could do the task because God had called him to do it, had equipped him to do it, and would be with him through it.
- Paul himself had been set apart for ministry through prophecy by the elders in Antioch. **Acts 13:1–3** describes the process. In the context of worship, God’s Spirit

impressed on the gathered believers that Paul and Barnabas were to be sent out as representatives of Christ. Timothy may have been identified in this way before he left Lystra with Paul (**Acts 16:1–5**), or the laying on of hands may have occurred in Ephesus itself before Paul left him there.

- The *laying on of hands* usually signified being set apart for leadership (**Numbers 27:18-23; Deuteronomy 34:9; Acts 6:6; 13:1-3; 8:18; Hebrews 6:2**). In the early history of Christianity, the “laying on of hands” became a traditional gesture of ordination; here the elders were acting as vehicles for the Spirit to reveal and confirm his plans for Timothy’s life.

4:15 “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.”

- Paul told Timothy to be diligent in carrying out the instructions included in this letter. If Timothy were able to give himself wholly to Paul’s instructions, progress would be seen by others, both in his personal life and in the church, and this would end any questioning about Timothy’s maturity or credibility.
- Paul began this chapter pointing out that the Spirit had predicted the falling away of believers into error. Timothy’s task was to correct those who had gone astray

and to provide an example for all the believers of what it means to grow spiritually, walk by faith, and abide in Christ.

4:16 “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

- In conclusion, Paul advised Timothy to *pay close attention* to his private life and his public ministry to the church according to Paul’s instructions.
- **Continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.** *Continue* means “to persevere, to make progress.” *Save yourself* (keep in mind that salvation has a past, present and future tense) refers to the spiritual growth of Timothy and the daily living out of his faith. Paul’s words focus on the role of spiritual leaders. By paying prayerful consideration of his spiritual life, Timothy would work/live out his own salvation (in the sense described in **Philippians 2:12**), and by prayerfully considering his public ministry, he would help others do the same.

1 Timothy 5:1-6:2

CARING FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS IN THE CHURCH / 5:1–6:2

Beginning with 4:6, Paul focused on Timothy's personal life. He included wide-ranging instructions designed to keep his youthful appointee on track. In Ephesus, men and women of all ages were under Timothy's care. Paul thought of the groups within the congregation needing special attention. He wanted Timothy to practice pastoral care and also to deal with some specific people needs. Paul chose the treatment of widows and elders as prime examples, as well as believing slaves.

5:1 “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;”

- Paul had instructed Timothy to “set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (4:12). The wise apostle knew that for this young minister to remain above reproach in dealing with the variety of people in his church, he would have to treat them as family. The word “rebuke” refers to speaking harshly, possibly even disrespectful. If correction became necessary, Timothy should not speak harshly; but rather, he should appeal to the older man with kind exhortation, as if he were speaking to his father. Even correction or rebuke was to be phrased with encouraging words.

- In the same way, Timothy was to speak kindly to younger men, as if they were brothers, leading them gently.

5:2 “The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.”

- Paul also explained to Timothy how to treat his sisters in the faith. The most effective method for remaining above reproach would be to treat church members as family.
- Paul perceived even within pagan cultures an awareness of the respect required for families to survive. Healthy relationships between sons, fathers, daughters, and mothers were appropriate analogies for how to interact with others.
- Men in ministry can avoid improper attitudes toward women by following Paul’s advice. Men who see women as fellow members in God’s family will treat them *with all purity*, respecting, protecting, and helping them grow spiritually.

5:3 “Honor widows that are widows indeed.”

- The helpless, especially widows and orphans, always have received God’s special care and concern. Paul’s insistence

rested on the numerous Old Testament passages where God had made known his will in these specific matters.

❖ **Deuteronomy 10:17–18**

❖ **Deuteronomy 14:28–29**

❖ **Deuteronomy 24:17, 19–22; Exodus 22:22–24; Proverbs 15:25; Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 7:6; Zechariah 7:8–10; Malachi 3:5; James 1:27.**

- The believers in the early church pooled their resources to help those in need (**Acts 2:44–47**); they gave generously to help disaster-ridden churches (**1 Corinthians 16:1–4**); they took care of a large number of widows (**Acts 6:1–6**). These widows, in turn, gave valuable service to the church. Paul mentioned some of these acts of service in verse 10.
- Because there were no pensions, no Social Security, no life insurance, and few honorable jobs for women, widows were usually unable to support themselves. But the care of widows was apparently becoming a major burden to the congregation in Ephesus and called for clarification as to who was really a widow qualifying for support (a widow indeed). Paul advised Timothy to identify those widows who were widows and help them. The responsibility for caring for the helpless naturally falls first on their families. Paul stressed the importance of families caring for the needs of widows and not leaving it for the church to do, so that the church can care for widows “who are widows indeed”; those who have no families. A widow who had no children or other family members to support her was

doomed to poverty. The church should *honor* such widows (“give them proper recognition,”), meaning both respectful care and material support. Their value to the body of Christ was to be demonstrated in every way possible.

5:4 “But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.”

- A widow who had children or grandchildren should look to them for support. By caring for their widowed mother or grandmother, these children would be living out their faith (**James 1:18**). Paul pointed to the cycle of life as an opportunity to manifest the love of Christ and show appreciation to parents for earlier care. Our parents watched over us when we were helpless. We ought to do no less when the roles are reversed.
- **For this is good and acceptable before God.** God is pleased when we trust Him to enable us to care for our family members’ needs. **Ephesians 6:2** states, “Honor thy mother and father.” Honor certainly involves more than providing care in old age, but the loving and caring treatment of the elderly is part of God’s plan.

5:5 “Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.”

- The *real* widow (5:3) is left destitute, with no one to turn to for help. However, a Christian widow can turn to the church, all the while setting her hope on God. The widows that the church should support are described as women who hope in God and dedicate themselves to Him, with a constant attitude of *supplications and prayers*. Anna, the prophetess, fit this description: “This woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (Luke 2:37).
- This verse sets up a spiritual contrast regarding the lives of two kinds of widows. The “real widow” here in verse 5, lives trusting God and ministering to others. She is not wrapped up in self-pity, but finds a place of effective service, beginning with prayer for others. Meanwhile, the other widow in verse 6 is lost to a self-centered life-style that Paul described as death.

5:6 “But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.”

- Unlike their obligation to the widows indeed described in verse 5, the church was *not* to support widows who used their widowhood to live for pleasure or resorted to immoral means of supporting themselves (possibly a reference to prostitution; practically the only “job” a woman could find in New Testament times). A widow who lived her life chasing after pleasure was *dead even while*

she lived (John 11:25;). Indeed, those who choose to live for pleasure alone will inevitably experience such profound spiritual emptiness that they are actually dead even as they live (**Ecclesiastes 2:1–11**). Such widows should not be supported by the church.

5:7 “And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.”

- Paul told Timothy to give these instructions (regarding the church’s responsibility to widows, family members’ responsibility to widows and the widows’ life-style) to the people. If the instructions would be followed, no one could be blamed.

5:8 “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

- To fail in providing for the basic care and support of a family member is the same as denying the faith, for no one can claim that they are abiding in Christ and at the same time neglect his or her family (**Matthew 5:46-47**). To do so makes a person worse than an unbeliever, for even unbelieving idol-worshippers understood the responsibility of caring for family needs. John provided a scathing rebuke to any believer who would dare to claim affection for God while blatantly ignoring the needs of others: “If anyone

has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?” (1 John 3:17). For an illustration from the Old Testament, John referred to the failure of Cain to care for his brother Abel (1 John 3:11–20; Genesis 4:1–12). Believers who neglect the most basic human responsibilities have, for all practical purposes, *denied the faith*.

5:9 “Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man.”

- Paul spelled out the qualifications for those referred to as widows indeed (5:3).
- In order to be included on this list, a widow had to meet three qualifications:
- First, she had to be at least sixty years old. (Paul’s reasons for keeping younger widows off the list for the church’s support are explained in verses 11–15.) This was probably not so much a strictly observed age as it was a generally accepted stage beyond which a person’s prospects for remarriage were doubtful. Second, she must have been faithful to her husband. This phrase is also translated, “married only once”. This qualification is the same as that given for church leaders and deacons (3:2, 12) The third qualification is described in the next verse.

5:10 “Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.”

- The third qualification required is that these widows be well known for their kind deeds. The examples that Paul cited include her good reputation in the home, the community, and the church. To *wash the saints' feet* means to help and serve other believers with humility, following the example of Jesus who washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper (**John 13:1–17; 1 Samuel 25:41**). A woman who has raised children, practiced hospitality, helped those in need, established a good reputation by her kindness, and rendered service to the church would be qualified to be a widow indeed.
- Paul listed character qualities that were to be evident about these widows. Many of the actions described would have been done while their husbands were still alive.

5:11 “But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;”

- Widows younger than sixty were not to be put on the list of widows (5:9). Most likely, this did not mean that

younger widows were refused assistance by the church; rather, younger widows were not to take a pledge of service to the church, which may have included not remarrying. Paul understood that younger women might face normal *sensual desires* and want to remarry. For instance, according to verse 4, a young widow would not even be a candidate for the list if she had children, because until a certain age she would be busy caring for them, and later, they would be caring for her. While for a widow to remarry was perfectly acceptable in most instances, it would be unacceptable if the woman had taken a pledge to the church. To remarry would then necessitate breaking that vow. Vows of this kind were not required nor demanded, but when made, they were considered as binding as marriage itself.

- The context of this passage reveals two certain concerns of Paul: (1) Some young widows did not qualify for inclusion among the widows under long-term care by the church (5:9–11), and (2) those young widows not under the care of the church should marry and raise a family in a manner honoring to Christ (5:14).

5:12 “Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.”

- A broken pledge is not God’s will (**Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21; Acts 5:1-10; Psalm 66:13-14**). Paul preferred that a young widow not put herself in the position of vowing to live a life of chaste widowhood and

then wishing she hadn't; instead, she should be free to remarry. In fact, as Paul goes on to point out, a young widow needed to have direction, since merely submitting to her own desires might well lead to a denial of the faith through marriage with an unbeliever or to a life-style dishonoring to Christ.

5:13 “And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.”

- Another reason for not allowing younger widows to be put on the list and receive full support from the church was that these younger energetic women, with too much time on their hands, were more susceptible to distractions. With no family to care for and the full support of the church, their lack of wisdom that comes with age might lead them to be *idlers*, doing visitation for purposes of catching up on and sharing gossip . While this may sound like an extremely negative comment about these women, we ought to note the context and take into account that anyone with too much free time may be tempted by many things. Paul's answer was clear. If they will not give themselves to ministry, then the next best choice is marriage.

5:14 “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”

- Paul's advice to younger widows was to remarry (if that became an option), raise their families, and run their homes. As any mother knows, that is more than enough to keep her busy.
- Paul had much more in mind here than merely providing a way to keep young widows from becoming idle. He placed before them a high calling. Note the two specific roles that he envisioned for these women within marriage. They were to *bear* children (giving them life and then bearing with them along their road to adulthood). But they were also to *manage their households*. In Christ, women have worth and worthwhile roles. One of those roles is the immeasurable importance of training the next generation.
- **So as to give the adversary no occasion to revile us.** The adversary probably refers to man's three enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. Obviously young women supported by the church who became local busybodies would not give the church a good name in the community and would provide nonbelievers occasion to revile the church and Christians.

5:15 **"For some are already turned aside after Satan."**

- *Turned aside after Satan* explains the great concern that Paul had for widows throughout this passage. Some of the widows from the church had already returned to a life of fleshly living. These women were pursuing a sensually oriented life-style leading to idleness, gossip, and at times false teaching. Their loss bothered Paul, so he wanted to help Timothy prevent further losses.

5:16 “If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.”

- Notice the phrase, “if any man or woman”. A believing woman bore the same responsibility of care for widows in her family as any man would. Presumably, this role was part of guiding the household (5:14) that was expected of married women. In this way, those in need received assistance from their families; those without families could then receive assistance from the church, and the church, in turn, could help and *not be burdened* in the process.

5:17 “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

- These particular leader-elders carried significant responsibilities in overseeing the congregation. Those who excelled should receive *double honor*. The Greek word for

honor is the same word used in verse 3, where it refers to respect and financial support. Both their age and their abilities were worthy of respect. Paul singled out those elders who carried the twin responsibilities of *preaching and teaching* as particularly worthy of “double honor” (**Matthew 10:5–16; Luke 10:1–12; 1 Corinthians 9:3–14**). Double honor means both respect and remuneration.

- A preaching and teaching role carried added importance because the New Testament was not yet available in written form. Elders who worked hard in the church by adding to their responsibilities preaching and teaching should be paid a wage.

5:18 “For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.”

- Paul supported his instruction that the elders may receive financial remuneration by quoting first the Old Testament (**Deuteronomy 25:4**) and then the words of Jesus himself (**Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7**). This double reference shows that both the Old Testament and the Gospels were considered “the Scripture” by Paul.
- The reference to the ox is very appropriate. Often oxen were used to tread out the grain on a threshing floor. Muzzling the ox would prevent it from eating while it was

working. Paul used this illustration to argue that productive Christian workers should receive financial support.

- At the same time, Paul's instruction does not free a minister from financial accountability. Whereas the ox could dip into the corn, the minister may not dip into the church's funds.
- While those who devote time and energy to serving the congregation are not to be doing so for the money (like the false teachers may have been doing), they ought to receive fair payment for their services. Although Paul made it a point not to receive a financial help from any of the churches he served (**1 Corinthians 9:15–23; 1 Thessalonians 2:9**), he clearly believed that each congregation should offer adequate support to its leaders (**1 Corinthians 9:4–10; Galatians 6:6**).

5:19 “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.”

- Paul called upon the Old Testament stipulation that accusations should not even be heard unless two or three witnesses confirmed them (**Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Matthew 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Corinthians 13:1**). But just because there were two or three witnesses doesn't mean the accused was automatically guilty. A thorough

investigation of charges was still required. Elders needed to have the respect and confidence of their congregation, but by their very presence and accessibility at the head of a church they would be the first targets for malicious accusations. Paul wisely instructed that accusations should not be considered proven until they were confirmed by *two or three witnesses*.

- When Paul instructed Timothy “receive not” an accusation against an elder, he was not suggesting that he ignore individual charges. The expression “receive not” conveys more the sense of caution rather than rejection. Any and all accusations should be treated seriously. Corroboration or contradiction should be pursued. Failure to correctly handle these matters has led to disunity in the church.

5:20 **“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”**

- If an accusation was confirmed, however, discipline was in order. Then if the church leader persisted in that sin, Timothy was to publicly expose his sins and rebuke him. The rebuke must be administered lovingly for the purpose of restoration, and should cause all who see it to consider their own fleshly, sinful lives. Timothy could not be lax in dealing with elders who persisted in sin. The witness and reputation of the church to the outside world, as well as its own inner purity, depended on Holy Spirit directed shepherding of the flock.

5:21 “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.”

- Perhaps Timothy had avoided difficult confrontations in the past or had shown partiality or favoritism in dealing with sin. Whatever the case, Paul gave Timothy this charge in the sight of God, Christ Jesus, and the elect angels (i.e., the angels who did not rebel against God) (**Matthew 25:31–46; Luke 15:10; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 14:7; 20:1–3**). Any needed discipline or rebuke must be administered without regard to Timothy’s personal inclinations, as if Timothy were pronouncing judgment before God, Christ, and the elect angels. For the sake of the church, Timothy needed to be impartial and show no favoritism.

5:22 “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.”

- One way to avoid the problem of disciplining an elder is to be very careful about *who* is placed in that important position. *Ordain* translates the expression “laying hands on,” which described one public way to identify and authorize a leader. Paul was saying that Timothy should never be hasty in choosing leaders in the church because he might overlook major problems or sins. Choosing church leaders is a serious responsibility. They must have

strong faith and the qualities described in **3:1-13** and **Titus 1:5-9**.

- Not everyone who wants to be a church leader is ready spiritually or qualified. Timothy needed to be certain of an applicant's character and qualifications before asking him to take a leadership position. The reason is explained in the next phrase.
- **Do not participate in the sins of others.** In 3:6, Paul had instructed that an elder should not be a recent convert, but that he should have time to grow in the faith and prove his ability to handle responsibilities in the church. Anyone who took part in ordaining an elder who later proved to be unfit for the position shared in the blame. If Timothy ordained a man who became a problem because of his persistent sinful life, and if Timothy allowed that man to remain in the office, Timothy would actually participate in those sins.
- **Keep yourself pure.** By staying pure (without blame), Timothy would be able to clearly evaluate those capable of serving the church as elders.

5:23 “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.”

- Paul's counsel here was to make use of wine for its medicinal value. It has been proven that grape juice and wine are good for stomach ailments, and apparently Timothy had some stomach problems. It's interesting that in **Acts 19:11-12** Paul clearly possessed the sign-gift of healing. Now, some six or seven years later, it would appear that he no longer had that gift. Some Scriptures to ponder: **2 Corinthians 12:8-9; Galatians 4:12-14; Philippians 2:25-30; 2 Timothy 5:23; 2 Timothy 4:20.** Notice as we progress through the Bible, the gift of healing fades away.

5:24 “Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.”

- Picking up directly from verse 22, Paul revealed the key difficulty in the task of choosing good leaders in the church. Some people's sins are conspicuous (easy to spot), while others pass by us before their sins become apparent. A person must be known well before deciding whether he is qualified to serve the church in a leadership position. Paul was warning Timothy and us about the importance of not judging by immediate appearances. Sometimes fleshly strongholds are easy to see, but other times they remain hidden for quite a while.

5:25 “Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.”

- In the same way, some people's good works may be *conspicuous*, while others' good works, though perhaps done behind the scenes, *cannot remain hidden* and will eventually reveal the true character of the doer. Many of the leadership qualities that Paul listed in 3:2–7 fit in this category. Some, like hospitality and gentleness, create immediate and visible results, while others, like household management often becomes apparent over a period of time.
- Both verses 24 and 25 explain why Paul instructed Timothy to choose church leaders carefully. Hasty assessment of men for leadership positions could mean overlooking sins or good qualities; then unqualified men might be chosen and qualified men set aside. The hard fact is that in time, a man's true personality is revealed, for better or for worse. It is far better for the church when leaders are carefully and prayerfully selected.

6:1 “Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.”

- In the Roman culture of Paul's day, slavery was a deeply rooted institution. It was also widespread, since estimates place the number of slaves at 60 million, or half the population of the empire.

- Slavery was economic rather than racially motivated. People usually became slaves as a result of war or poverty.
- A great social and legal gulf separated masters and slaves. Most slaves were treated no better than cattle, than mere property. But when a master and his slave became Christians, they became spiritual equals, brothers (and sisters) in Christ Jesus (**Galatians 3:28**). In some instances, a slave who had been a Christian for some years might even be an elder in a church and thus “over” a newly converted master. Equality in the church but separation at home obviously made for interesting interpersonal relations in and out of the church. Both Paul and Peter gave instructions about master/slave relations (**1 Corinthians 7:20–24; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 6:5–9; Colossians 3:22–25; Titus 2:9–10; the book of Philemon; 1 Peter 2:13–25**). While not speaking against the institution of slavery, they gave guidelines for Christian slaves and Christian masters.
- Paul wrote specifically to slaves here, explaining that their attitude toward even their unbelieving masters should be *full respect*; the same word used for “honor” in 5:3, 17. This appeared to be an obvious instruction if the master were a Christian. Yet even that itself caused some problems, as noted in verse 2. However, Paul instructed that even if the master (employer) were an unbeliever, the Christian slave (employee) should still treat him or her with full respect. By so doing they would maintain a good reputation among nonbelievers so *God’s name may not be slandered*.

6:2 “And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.”

- It might be easy for a slave to justify slacking off in his or her work, thinking that a believing master would understand or would not be able to reprimand him since they both belonged to the church.
- **Instead, they are to serve them even more, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them.** Those slaves fortunate enough to have believing masters should not reduce but increase their efforts to serve well. The reason is obvious; the person benefiting from the slave's service is a brother or sister in Christ.
- **Teach and exhort these things.** Once again Paul repeated the command for Timothy to teach what Paul had instructed.

1 Timothy 6:3-21

AVOID WORTHLESS ARGUMENTS AND THE LONGING TO BE RICH / 6:3–10

In this closing section of his letter, Paul returned to discussing how Timothy should handle the false teachers in Ephesus (1:3-11). After all, they were one of the reasons for this letter. Repeatedly, Paul told Timothy to stay away from those who are in the ministry for money, and from those in the church who stray from the sound teachings of the gospel into controversial arguments. Paul revealed the greedy motives behind the efforts of the false teachers. They were pursuing prestige and power to satisfy their intense desire for money. Paul wanted these men stopped, and he wanted to make sure that Timothy was not also deceived.

6:3 “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;”

- The older apostle wanted to make sure Timothy understood that *anyone* was capable of leading others astray. Paul identified three characteristics of false teachers by the content of their teaching:
- First, they “taught false doctrines.” In 1:3–4, Paul had written, “Instruct certain people not to teach any different

doctrine, and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies”.

- Second, they did not *agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ*. In 1:10–11, Paul described such teaching as “contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (NIV). Any teaching different from the sound instruction of the gospel of Christ is false teaching.
- Paul’s concern here was that the false teachers disagreed with what Jesus Christ had taught and demonstrated. They erred in contradicting and discounting Jesus.
- Third, the false teachers did not agree to *godly teaching*. False teaching is ungodly teaching; it cannot result in righteous living.
- These false teachers were not merely mistaken in their doctrine; their evil went deeper. Or rather, it originated in deeper problems. They were not well-intentioned teachers who had made unfortunate mistakes. Their basic motivations were evil.

6:4 “He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,”

- Paul revealed the real character of the false teachers. These are not very flattering words for a group of teachers who apparently thought very highly of themselves. Note the contrast with Paul’s words to Timothy; “love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith” (1:5).
- The false teachers do not agree with “sound” (or “healthy”) instruction (6:3), but instead have a *morbid craving* (literally, are “diseased with”) *controversy and ... disputes*. Paul again referred to his comments from chapter 1 that the false teachers were caught up in “myths and endless genealogies” (1:4) and “meaningless talk” (1:6) that promoted speculation and led to arguments about ideas that came, not from Scripture, but from the minds of the false teachers. The controversial ideas and the disputes about words (Greek *logomaxias*, “word wars”) fed the “morbid craving” of the false teachers, but they had a devastating effect in the church.
- **That result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions.** When the truth and application of God’s word is replaced by meaningless conversation and lies, believers are walking in the flesh and the results are deeds of the flesh. With the believers embroiled in fleshly arguments over

meaningless theories and false doctrine, relationships deteriorate.

- Jesus warned his followers about false teachers: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits” (**Matthew 7:15–16**).

6:5 “Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”

- Here are more characteristics of false teachers: even among themselves there were disputes because they all had *corrupt* (depraved, tainted) minds. Not only did they understand nothing (6:4), but their minds were so corrupt that *the truth* (God’s truth) was completely absent. They were motivated by money. Their ultimate goal was to enrich themselves. How completely opposite this is from Old Testament (**Deuteronomy 8:3; Jeremiah 9:23-24**), from the teaching of the Lord Jesus and from the apostles (**Acts 3:4; James 5:4-5**), and from the generous and caring attitude of the early church (**Acts 4:32-35**).
- While Paul instructed the church about a Christian leader’s right to be paid for his services, he made it clear that he/they should not be “greedy for money” (3:3, 8).

6:6 “But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

- Picking up the words *godliness* and *gain* from verse 5, Paul here presents the truth about both. The false teachers thought godliness would give them favor with God and produce financial gain; instead, godliness *is great gain* in itself, when accompanied by contentment. Godliness does not come and go with the uncertainties of material wealth; godliness, produces contentment, and *is* the wealth, independent of one’s possessions. The false teachers had it backward.
- He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. *Jim Elliot*
 - ❖ The benefits or profit that motivated the false teachers were neither lasting nor capable of bringing contentment. Their earthly profits would be left behind. What brings great gain has to do with eternal values. When material treasures become our focus, we’ve lost sight of eternity (**Matthew 6:19-24**).

6:7 “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”

- Paul followed up his statement about the true source of contentment by discounting any hope of ultimate contentment based merely on this life. The correct perspective on material possessions; money, houses, clothing, vehicles, jewels, land, etc; remains eternally the same. They cannot last forever, and we cannot take them with us when we die. **Job 1:21; Ecclesiastes 5:15; Luke 12:20-21**

6:8 “And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”

- We humans have basic needs. Believers and unbelievers alike require food, clothing and shelter for survival. The difference is that when believers' basic needs are met, they are satisfied and content if they are walking in the Spirit. In contrast, most unbelievers, as well as carnal Christians are driven by society's fleshly standards and desires; they cannot be content because the flesh will always influence us to strive for more.
- Paul lived what he preached: “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (**Philippians 4:11–12**). The writer of Hebrews offered this advice: “Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for [God] has said, ‘I will never leave you or forsake you’” (**Hebrews 13:5**).

6:9 “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

- Paul challenged the world’s view by showing the outcome of trying to gain contentment through the pursuit of wealth. The desire to be rich is, by its very nature, a desire that cannot be satisfied. Those who want to be rich cannot understand contentment because they can never have enough. The temptation of money eventually traps people into doing anything to get it; illegal; immoral; even hurtful to others and to themselves.

6:10 “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

- People often misquote this verse, saying, “Money is the root of all evil.” But it is the love of money that Paul speaks against. Money itself is not evil; in fact, money can do much good for the furthering of God’s purposes in this world.
- People who *love* money are controlled by a ruthless, insatiable master, for the love of money can never be satisfied. Greed is a root of *all kinds of evil*; marriage

problems, illegal acts, disunity in partnerships, envy, immorality, lying, ruthlessness, stealing, and a willingness to hurt others if it makes money. To master money instead of becoming its slave, we must go back to the cross and see ourselves as crucified with Christ and rest in our new position in Christ. Admittedly, this might seem rather difficult in a materialistic society; however **Galatians 6:14** states, *“I am crucified unto the world and the world is crucified unto me.”* In other words, *I have no desire for the world, and the world has not power over me.*

- **And in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.**
- The worst scenario, of course, is that money would actually lead a person *away from the faith*. It's tragic when money replaces God in a person's life. Apparently this had happened in Ephesus; the *some* who had wandered away probably had faces and names known to Paul and Timothy. These greedy people found themselves *pierced ... with many pains*. The picture is that they were being pierced by sharp objects that they continued to push against. Instead of God's way, they were on a path that was taking them deeper and deeper into a briar patch of trouble. Instead of the happiness they expected, money brought grief.
- It would be a mistake to conclude that Paul is teaching that we should not be concerned about money. However,

it is interesting that he was concerned about greed more than he was about money.

- Jesus understood the power of money, for he warned: “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (**Matthew 6:24**); and “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! ... It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (**Mark 10:23, 25**).

PAUL’S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS / 6:11–21

As with many preachers, Paul had a difficult time concluding his message. He encouraged, challenged, warned, and instructed right up to the last sentence of his letter.

6:11 “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”

- In contrast to the “some” of verse 10 who had wandered from the faith in their quest for riches, Paul addressed Timothy as a *man of God* who should run away from the temptation of money.

- **Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.** This list compares both with the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22–23**) and with the qualifications for church elders (3:1–3).
- *Righteousness* refers to actions that are morally upright and virtuous. Here Paul was not thinking of the positional righteousness that God, through Christ, freely gives us at salvation. That righteousness we receive by faith. Rather, this righteousness involves our conditional growth into the kind of people God has already declared we will be in eternity.
- *Faith* and *love* are fundamental to Christianity and basic to Paul’s teaching (**1 Corinthians 13:13**). The characteristics of faith and love are constantly under improvement by the work of God’s Spirit. Love comes from God, flows through man, and out to others and back to God, as we trust in Him.
- *Patience* (Greek *hupomone*, “endurance”) In persecution and trouble are vital for all believers; Timothy would need an extra measure of patience as he led a large congregation through difficult days.
- *Gentleness* seems an odd quality for Timothy to pursue; after all, he was already timid, and Paul had told him to deal firmly with false teaching. However, gentleness can reveal more power than roughness or harshness. Perhaps

by mentioning this Paul was affirming a positive quality that was already a part of Timothy's character.

6:12 “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

- Using the same word he used in 1:18 to describe Timothy's work in Ephesus, Paul described growing spiritually as a *fight*; but it is the *good fight of faith*. The verb tense in Greek implies that this fight is an ongoing, continual process. Timothy would continue a “fight” already begun by others. The Greek word for “fight” *agonizou*, has military overtones; it was also used to refer to athletic contests.
- **Lay hold on eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.** Paul said, “Lay hold,” when he wrote to the Philippians, “not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I follow after and lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me” (**Philippians 3:13-14**).
- Those who fight the good fight of the faith can already *take hold* of their prize. An important part of effective athletic competition involves identifying the goal to be reached. Here, as in Philippians, the identified goal

revolves around Jesus Christ: “Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (**Philippians 3:13–14**).

- *Eternal life* began for Timothy (as for all believers) at the moment of conversion (**John 5:24; 1 John 3:14; 5:13**). When a person confesses faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, eternal life begins. Their “goal” becomes clear. Timothy could hold on to that eternal life that became his when he confessed Christ as his Savior.

6:13 “I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;”

- Several times in this letter, Paul has charged, commanded, and urged Timothy toward various actions. Here again, Paul urged Timothy “to keep this command” (6:14) before several witnesses, including God, who, as the giver of earthly and eternal life, is an all-seeing and ever-present witness of Timothy’s service. As important as the witnessing role of other believers might be, the key witnesses to faithfulness are God himself and Jesus Christ.

- **And before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate.** Just as Timothy made a good confession before many witnesses, Christ had made the good confession before Pontius Pilate. No matter how difficult circumstances might become, Timothy always would have the example of Jesus who remained faithful in the face of death. Paul was setting before Timothy the same example noted in Hebrews: “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 12:2**).

6:14 “That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:”

- Paul urged (6:13) Timothy to keep “this command;” referring to Paul’s previous instruction for Timothy to continue in his pursuit of godly character without spot or blame until the return of Jesus Christ. The commands need only be followed until Jesus returns. At that time, the good fight will be over; the battle will be won.
- The ***appearing of our Lord Jesus***. However, Paul’s explanatory phrase about God’s timing clearly indicates a confidence, not a doubt, that Christ’s return will occur not one moment sooner or later than God himself intends.

6:15 “Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;”

- The “appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,” the Second Coming, will happen according to God’s timetable. Jesus had told his disciples, “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (**Matthew 24:36**). Paul’s early teachings and writings show that he believed this return would occur very soon. However, at the time of this letter to Timothy, Paul realized that this return might not occur before his death. It would occur in God’s own time. As Paul contemplated the glorious display of love and power that will be revealed when Christ returns, he acknowledged God’s awesome and transcendent nature.
- **He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.** Paul’s reference to God’s plan immediately filled his mind with a word-vision of the one he served with his life. Paul created a special parenthesis in this letter in order to describe God, and he used the most exalted language he had at his disposal.
- The word for *Sovereign* indicates chieftan or prince. Paul’s usage indicated that God was the independent, absolute, and unique possessor of power. The phrases *King of kings* and *Lord of lords* used together reveal that there is no other way to ascribe more power and authority than to God alone.

- As before in this letter (1:17), Paul needed no excuse to launch into an exuberant verbal picture of the awesome nature of God: Blessed and only Sovereign (Most High) King of kings, Lord of lords, Immortal, Unapproachable light, Unseen (invisible), Eternal dominion (Power).

6:16 “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”

- Having established some idea of an appropriate title for God, Paul now lists several of the notable characteristics of our divine ruler. God alone is eternal (*has immortality*) from everlasting to everlasting. God is the only one having immortality in himself. He is not subject to death.
- Because he is eternal, he gives us eternal life. The bright glory of God’s presence creates a barrier of light through which no human can approach. Even if the light were removed, God remains invisible, unseen by human eyes (**Exodus 33:17–23; John 1:18**). This does not mean God is unknowable.
- God’s sovereign position requires two responses from us: *honor* and submission.

6:17 “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;”

- After concluding his doxology with a decisive “Amen,” Paul returned to the matters at hand. Those most in danger of having an incorrect attitude toward God were the wealthy. In verses 3–10, Paul had instructed those who did not have wealth, but deeply desired it. Here he focused on those who already possessed wealth. Ephesus was a thriving city, and the Ephesian church probably had some prosperous members. Perhaps some of the false teachers had already succeeded in amassing a degree of wealth for themselves.
- Paul advised Timothy to deal with any potential problems by teaching that having riches carries great responsibility. The wealthy must not be *haughty* (high-minded or arrogant), as though they deserved their riches. Rather, they need to be generous. Even then, they must avoid feeling proud that they had a lot to give. Their perspective on their riches should copy Paul’s words in verse 7: “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out”.
- Clearly, Paul believed that as dangerous as it was to want to be wealthy, having riches was also risky for a person’s well-being (**Proverbs 23:4–5**).
- The wealthy were not to trust in their wealth but rather on God who richly provides us with all things. The rich need not be ashamed of their riches; riches are a gift from God, given to be enjoyed.

6:18 “That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;”

- Paul’s desire here is to encourage the rich to share their bounty with those in need.
- For “share,” Paul used a word related to “fellowship” (*koinonikous*, “those willing to share”). Believers experience a deep fellowship when they make their resources available to one another.

6:19 “Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

- Jesus talked about treasure in his Sermon on the Mount: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (**Matthew 6:19–21; Luke 12:33; 18:22**). Any unselfish giving to meet the needs of others, especially the poor, creates a deposit in eternity. The person without God who selfishly pursues wealth will lay up a different kind of treasure (**James 5:1–5**).

- Those who give are those who experience life as it is meant to be. In contrast to those seeking riches and ending in ruin and destruction (6:9), those generous folks find true life, both on earth and in eternity.

6:20 “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:”

- One last time, Paul exhorted, encouraged, and urged Timothy to *guard* or “keep” (5:21) the teachings and instructions given him. No matter how influential the false teachers would become, Timothy would remain guardian of the truth, teaching it without wavering and without compromise. Paul’s ministry on earth would eventually end with his death; Timothy was *entrusted* with the truth of the gospel so that he, in turn, would pass it along to others. The terms here come from the banking language and are consistent with the earlier instructions about being “rich in good works” and “storing up ... treasure” (6:18–19). Paul considered all that Timothy had learned to be a priceless deposit that needed to be preserved or guarded by carefully investing it in the lives of others.
- Paul would write in a later letter to Timothy: “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (**2 Timothy 2:2**).

- **Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge.** A guardian of the truth should not be involved in *godless chatter* or spend time talking about *opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge*.

6:21 “Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.”

- Those who followed the false teachers wandered from the faith. “Wandered” or “erred” does not imply a permanent condition, but a dangerous and fruitless one. True believers would not lose their salvation, but if they followed the false teachers, they would waste valuable time in nonsense; time that could have been spent learning about the deeper truths of God’s Word.
- **Grace be with you.** The closing benediction includes a plural *you* indicating that Paul expected this letter to be read to the congregation and to other churches. Paul began and ended with *grace*. For him, as it should be for us, grace was never a sociable courtesy but a costly gift from God. Having experienced the grace of God, Paul never tired of praying that others would also experience this grace.

- The book of 1 Timothy provides guiding principles for local churches, including rules for public worship and qualifications for overseers (elders, pastors), deacons, and special church workers (widows). Paul told the church leaders to correct incorrect doctrine and to deal lovingly and fairly with all people in the church. While studying these guidelines, don't lose sight of what is most important in the life of the church; knowing God, growing in grace, working together in harmony, and taking the finished work of Christ to the world.

