

# 1 Timothy

**WHAT'S THIS BOOK ABOUT?** Paul, the experienced missionary, counsels a young pastor on how to lead the church.

**WHO WROTE IT?** The apostle Paul.

**WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?** Around A.D. 63.

**WHERE DOES THIS BOOK FIT?** Paul wrote 1 Timothy from Macedonia, most likely after his first imprisonment in Rome.

## THE BREAKDOWN

- Chapter 1: The importance of sound teaching
- Chapter 2: Prayer and public worship
- Chapter 3: Choosing church leaders
- Chapter 4: Confronting false teachers
- Chapter 5: Relating to various groups in the church
- Chapter 6: Straight talk about money

## KEY CONCEPTS

- Teaching
- Prayer
- Elders and deacons
- Servants of Christ
- Guard

READING TIME	1:01	2:01	3:01	4:01	5:01	6:01
IN HOURS	0:01	1:01	2:01	3:01	4:01	5:01

## WHAT'S THE POINT OF

### 1 Timothy?

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Character is more important than talent.

## WORTH MEMORIZING

- 2:5 There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus.
- 4:8 Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.
- 4:12 Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.
- 6:6-10 True godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

## THE MASCULINE PERSPECTIVE

- **SERVICE.** Paul's criteria for elders (3:1-7) would make an interesting checklist for any man. Notice the emphasis on character, reputation, and relationships. God wants us to lead by example and service instead of by "talking charge" or trying to control people.

## INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY

### BACKGROUND

The apostle Paul is recognized as the author of the Pastoral Epistles—1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. Timothy and Titus exercised pastoral oversight over their respective churches. The events referred to in the Pastoral Epistles take place after those recounted in the book of Acts. Paul mentions Timothy in his letters more than anyone else. It seems Timothy became a believer under the ministry of Paul at the town of Lystra in modern-day Turkey (Acts 16:1-3) during his second missionary journey. Paul refers to Timothy as his son in several epistles (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2). Timothy was ordained to ministry (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6) and served as Paul's assistant in several cities, including during his house arrest in Rome.

### MESSAGE

This first of two epistles to Timothy

### OUTLINE

#### I. Instructions for Leadership

- A. Greetings
- B. Warnings about false teachers
- C. Worship instructions
- D. Standards for leaders
- II. Advice about Ministry
  - A. More warnings about false teachers
  - B. Helping various groups in the church
  - C. Living a godly life
- III. Final Instructions

reads as a checklist of advice from a mature and wise apostle to a younger disciple. Paul instructs his charge to be watchful of false teachers and those only seeking after profit. He reminds Timothy not to let his youth get in the way of his mission, and to conduct himself as a bearer of the gospel's truth. Timothy, ministering in Ephesus, has several challenges to deal with: exposing false doctrines, setting parameters for public worship, and recruiting good leaders. In all things, Paul reminds Timothy to put God's virtues first: righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

### TIME

After Paul was released from his prison in Rome (Acts 28:30), he likely wrote 1 Timothy at Philippi in Macedonia in A.D. 62 or 63 while Timothy ministered in Ephesus.

- 1:1-2
- 1:3-20
- 2:1-15
- 3:1-16
- 4:1-16
- 5:1-6:5
- 6:6-10
- 6:11-21

1 Timothy portrays believers as members of a single family, and discusses relationships within

the church. Units: Charge to Timothy, 1; Behavior in the church, 2-3:15; Guidelines for leadership, 3:16-6:2; False teachers, 6:3-18.



ost everything we buy comes with an owner's manual, but if you're like me, looking at those instructions is a last resort. We put it off as long as possible.

Well, the book of 1 Timothy is an instruction manual for the local church. We should read it often and heed it diligently. It's the first of three Pastoral Epistles, as we call them, written between A.D. 62 and 67; and it's addressed to Timothy, a young man we first meet in Acts 16, when he decided to join Paul in his travels. The two become close, and Paul called him, "My true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2).

Years later Timothy was placed in charge of the work in the city of Ephesus. That's when Paul wrote this letter, telling him how to manage certain problems he faced in the ministry—how to confront false teachers, how to order the church's worship, how to select leaders, and how to conduct himself in difficult situations.

The apostle tells us to stand up for the truth in public and to guard our own souls in private. He stressed the themes of doctrinal purity, worship, godliness, leadership, pastoral care, and contentment.

Church work isn't for the faint of heart, and the ministry can often be discouraging. But it always helps to read the manual. In 1 Timothy, the Lord tells us how to conduct ourselves in His house, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

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**KEY THOUGHT:**

God's Church should be led with excellence by leaders who possess wisdom and integrity.

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**KEY VERSE:**

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

1 Timothy 6:12

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**KEY ACTION:**

We must conduct ourselves wisely in the house of God, "which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (see 1 Timothy 4:15).

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**KEY PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, I pray for the leaders of my nation and for all in authority over me, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and reverence.

## BASIC SURVEY

### 1 TIMOTHY

**AUTHOR:** The apostle Paul (1:1).

**DATE:** Approximately AD 65.

#### IN TEN WORDS OR LESS

Pastors are taught how to conduct their lives and churches.

#### DETAILS, PLEASE

The first of three “pastoral epistles,” 1 Timothy contains the aging apostle Paul’s insights for a new generation of church leaders. Timothy had often worked alongside Paul, but was now pastoring in Ephesus (1:3). Paul warned him against legalism and false teaching (chapter 1), listed the qualifications for pastors and deacons (chapter 3), and described the behavior of a “good minister of Jesus Christ” (4:6 KJV) in the final three chapters.

#### QUOTABLE

- > Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (1:15 KJV).
- > Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task (3:1 NIV).

#### UNIQUE AND UNUSUAL

First Timothy seems to command good pay for pastors: “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor. . . . The labourer is worthy of his reward” (5:17–18 KJV).

#### SO WHAT?

Though it’s a letter to a pastor, Paul’s teaching “that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God” (3:15 NKJV) can speak to the rest of us, too.

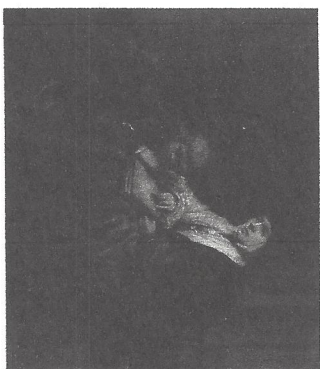
#### READ 1 TIMOTHY 1 AND PSALM 136.

- One-Month Course: your next reading is on page 247. →
- Three-Month Course: your next reading is on page 247. →
- Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 245. →

## CLOSER LOOK

### TIMOTHY—PAUL’S HELPER

About AD 50, Paul and Silas were traveling through Galatia (in southeast Turkey), and when they came to the city of Lystra, they met a young man named Timothy (*timo-theos*—“honoring God”). Timothy’s grandmother



Rembrandt (1605–1669) painted a young Timothy at the feet of his grandmother in the painting *Timothy and his grandmother*.

was a believing Jewess named Lois, and her daughter, Eunice, had married a Greek (2 Timothy 1:5). Thus, although he was Jewish, Timothy had never been circumcised.

Timothy became a Christian and was well respected by the believers. He was naturally shy, but was very pleasant and faithful, so Paul decided to take him on his missionary journeys as a personal aide. Because they’d be often preaching to Jews, Paul circum-

cised Timothy (Acts 16:1–3). Paul and the elders of the church laid hands on Timothy, bestowing a spiritual gift on him (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). Paul became like a father to Timothy and called him “a true son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2 NKJV).

Paul still referred to him as a “youth” fifteen years later (1 Timothy 4:12 NKJV). Timothy persevered, despite his shyness and frequent stomach problems (1 Timothy 5:23), so that Paul said with great admiration, “Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel” (Philippians 2:22 NIV). Paul frequently sent Timothy to churches to check up on them and to encourage and strengthen them. For most of his life, Timothy was not a leader, but a faithful follower. However, Paul later made him the overseer of all the churches of Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3).

#### READ 1 TIMOTHY 2-3.

- Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 247. →

HIDDEN TREASURE

## DOCTRINES AND HERESIES

Paul warned Timothy that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but . . . shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3 KJV). Even some believers would end up following “doctrines of demons.” For this reason, Paul urged Timothy to be “constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following” (1 Timothy 4:1, 6 NASB). While it’s important not to be stuck only on the basic milk of the Word, but to progress to a mature understanding of Christian doctrine (Hebrews 5:12–14), we should “not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace” (Hebrews 13:9 NIV).

READ 1 TIMOTHY 4 AND HEBREWS 13.

HIDDEN TREASURE

## COMMANDS TO THE RICH



*Christ and the Rich Young Ruler* was painted by Heinrich Hoffmann (1824–1911). Christians are commanded to freely give our riches to people in need.

Paul wrote, “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God. . . . Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share” (1 Timothy 6:17–18 NIV). One way that rich people can prove that they “hope in God” is to be generous with money—sharing with the needy and giving to worthy causes. They should do this even when they long to hold on to it with a tighter fist. They can do this only if they’re trusting God most of all. A related verse says, “If riches increase, set not your heart upon them” (Psalm 62:10 KJV).

READ 1 TIMOTHY 5–6.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO  
TIMOTHY

PAUL, THE AGED AND EXPERIENCED apostle, writes to the young pastor Timothy who is facing a heavy burden of responsibility in the church at Ephesus. The task is challenging: false doctrine must be erased, public worship safeguarded, and mature leadership developed. In addition to the conduct of the church, Paul talks pointedly about the conduct of the minister. Timothy must be on his guard lest his youthfulness become a liability, rather than an asset, to the gospel. He must be careful to avoid false teachers and greedy motives, pursuing instead righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and the gentleness that befits a man of God.

The Greek title for this letter is *Pros Timotheon A*, the “First to Timothy.” *Timothy* means “honoring God” or “honored by God,” and probably was given to him by his mother Eunice.

## WATCH WORDS

- be sound (be healthy or correct in doctrine)—1:10
- intercession (the act of petitioning God or praying on behalf of another person or group)—2:1
- eldership (the body of elders or the ruling council of a church)—4:14
- master (absolute ruler or lord)—6:1 (also 6:2)

## 2:1 intercession

(Gr. *entuexis*) (1 Tim. 4:5) G1783: Intercession is the act of petitioning God or praying on behalf of another person or group. The sinful nature of this world separates human beings from God. It has always been necessary, therefore, for righteous individuals to go before God to seek reconciliation between Him and His fallen creation. The sacrifices and prayers of Old Testament priests (Ex. 29:42; 30:7) were acts of intercession that point forward to the work of Christ. Christ is, of course, the greatest intercessor. He prayed on behalf of Peter (Luke 22:32) and His disciples (John 17). Then in the most selfless intercession of all, He petitioned God on behalf of those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34). In heaven He intercedes for His church (Heb. 7:25). Finally, because of their unique relationship to God through Christ, Christians are urged to intercede for all people (1 Tim. 2:1).

2:3 Savior ▶ see *Titus* 2:10.  
2:5 Mediator ▶ see *Heb.* 12:24.

## 1:6 idle talk

(Gr. *matulogia*) G3150: From *matulos* (G3152), “devoid of force; useless” and *logos* (G3056), “word.” This word means “an idle talker, one who utters empty, senseless things.” It is only used here in Scripture. Senseless babble and empty prattle characterize false teachers. They talk more for the purpose of hearing themselves talk than to edify those who listen.

## 2:6 ransom

(Gr. *antilutron*) G0487: Used only here, the word *ransom* in Greek is *antilutron* made up of *anti* (signifying substitution) and *lutron* (the word used for the ransom of a slave or prisoner). The *antilutron* is a payment given instead of a slave or prisoner—that is, in substitution for him. The person holding the slave accepts the payment as a substitute. According to Galatians 3:13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. The law held us captive in its condemnation, and no one but Christ could pay the price to release us from this bondage.

# 1 Timothy

First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus were letters to pastors. Different from other letters, these three reminders were written to those in charge of large, important churches and not to the churchgoers themselves. But there's still plenty included to challenge believers.

Paul had mentored Timothy and Titus. Timothy had traveled with Paul and learned from him. Paul needed a leader to go to the church in Ephesus where trouble was brewing—and he sent Timothy. Problems were also cropping up in Crete, and he sent Titus there. The point is, Paul knew he wouldn't be around forever and he needed to invest in younger men who could continue the work of spreading the gospel and strengthening the churches. These young men proved to be worthy students.

Paul gave Timothy advice about running a church. The young man must have faith and a good conscience (1Tim 1:19). Paul wisely advised the pastor to make "petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings . . . for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Tim 2:1-4). Paul gave instructions on how to choose church leaders (1Tim 3), warnings about the prevalence and insidiousness of false teaching (1Tim 4, 6), and basic instructions for dealing with the varied needs within the church itself (1Tim 5).

Ultimately, Paul's words come down to this: pray for others and live a life that leads them to Jesus. Timothy apparently felt young and not up to the task, but Paul encouraged him: "Let no one despise your youth; instead, you should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1Tim 4:12).

You may be young, but you can still be an example to others.

The book of 2 Timothy, written later after Paul had been imprisoned in Rome for the last time, provides further details to the young minister about how to live an honorable life. Paul knew he was soon going to die, and so instructed his young protégé to "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth. But avoid irreverent, empty speech, for this will produce an even greater measure of godlessness" (2Tim 2:15-16).

Finally, to Titus ministering on the island of Crete, Paul wrote to encourage Titus in organizing the churches on the island. He gave him standards for choosing leaders (Tit 1) and how to give sound teaching (Tit 2). The believers on Crete needed to also watch out for false teaching and remember the foundations of their faith (Tit 3).

Paul could have been writing about our time when he said, "Difficult times will come in the last days. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money . . . holding to the form of godliness but denying its power" (2Tim 3:1-2, 5). It seems that Paul understood that false teaching would plague the church for as long as it would exist. And indeed, there's no lack of it in our day. We would do well to follow Paul's advice: "continue in what you have learned and firmly believed" (2Tim 3:14).

**Author:** Paul (Saul of Tarsus)

**Date:** Written around A.D. 60–64 from either Rome or Macedonia

**What in the world is going on?**

A.D. 26–30 Years of Jesus' ministry

A.D. 33 Saul of Tarsus converts and is later known as Paul

A.D. 47–48 Paul and Barnabas visit Galatia during their first missionary journey

ca A.D. 49–52 Paul has a vision of a man from Macedonia and visits there for the first time during his second missionary journey; Timothy travels with Paul and Silas

A.D. 57 Paul writes the letter to the Romans from Corinth on his third missionary journey

ca A.D. 57–59 Paul is imprisoned in Caesarea

ca A.D. 60–64 Paul is free from Roman prison and writes letters to Timothy and Titus

A.D. 61 Suetonius Paulinus, the governor appointed by Rome, invades the island of Anglesey in a campaign against the Druids

ca A.D. 62 Roman author Pliny the Younger is born

ca A.D. 62 According to historian Josephus, the Sanhedrin orders James (Jesus' half-brother) to be stoned to death

# 1 TIMOTHY

- A. A CALL TO SOUND DOCTRINE (1:1–20)
- B. A CALL TO ORDER AMONG THE BELIEVERS (2:1—4:16)
- C. A CALL TO PROPER RELATIONSHIPS (5:1—6:2)
- D. A CALL TO SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT (6:3–21)

## THE BIG PICTURE

Paul and Timothy enjoyed a special relationship. Timothy probably came to faith in Christ as a result of Paul's ministry. He quickly joined the apostle's traveling team (see Acts 16:1–4). The two became as close as a father and son as they traveled and ministered together. Timothy matured in his faith, and Paul sent him to lead the church in Ephesus. As a young minister, Timothy faced many challenges. Paul wrote this letter to counsel and encourage his young protégé.

Although this letter is personal in nature, Paul included in it a wealth of advice about dealing with problems in the church. He also painted a clear picture of the characteristics of a strong Christian church. Every church, for example, should have sound spiritual teaching, faithful worship, strong leadership, dedication to God's Word and caring ministries. These characteristics make church communities places of redemption and healing.

Spiritual renewal is a long-term process. In our search for fulfillment we need a safe, nurturing environment that allows us to surrender bad habits and build new lives. A friend or accountability group is limited in this respect. We need to find a more permanent context for long-term care and mutual accountability.

The ideal context for mutual accountability is a healthy church community. A healthy church can provide a context for loving accountability, like the ideal church described in this letter. A good church is a hospital for the hurting, a place where our old wounds can heal and our lives can be rebuilt and encouraged. God's Word is taught and upheld in a healthy church as the standard of conduct for all, and God's grace is employed to protect all from shame. We all need a healthy church family to help us in the long-term process of spiritual growth.

## SPIRITUAL RENEWAL THEMES

### THE TRUTH BRINGS HEALING AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Paul urged Timothy to preserve the Christian faith and to speak only the truth. Timothy opposed false teachers who were trying to undermine his work. The only weapons Timothy possessed were the truth about Christ and his own godly lifestyle, which supported everything he taught. Paul realized that only the truth about God in Jesus Christ could bring healing and spiritual renewal to broken people. He wanted Timothy to be convinced of that as well. Only Jesus Christ can offer us the freedom we seek. We can share this

message of God's healing power through belief in Christ by speaking the truth about God's power and by backing up our words with transformed lives.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE

Paul urged Timothy to discipline himself. Self-discipline does not negate our need for God's power, nor does God's gracious help negate our need for self-discipline. Both are necessary. We must reflect honestly on our lives, confessing the wrongs we uncover, accepting responsibility and trusting God to redeem our lives and redirect our course. We can preserve our spiritual gains through prayer, meditation on God's Word and ongoing accountability to others who practice these keys to spiritual renewal too. These disciplines will encourage our spiritual growth and keep us on track.

### GOD WORKS THROUGH PEOPLE

An important part of spiritual renewal involves our relationships with other people. Paul instructed Timothy about his relationships with the people in his church. Paul's advice relates to our relationships as well, especially as we carry the message of hope to others. Caring for each other will demonstrate God's power at work within us and will remind us of how far God has brought us in our quest for spiritual renewal.

### TAKING INVENTORY LEADS TO WISE CONDUCT

Spiritual renewal always takes place in the context of relationships. Seeing the truth about our lives in the spiritual renewal process leads us to improve the way we relate to others. We may not be in positions of leadership, but we are examples to our co-workers, friends and family. When we honestly reflect on our spiritual condition on a regular basis, everyone wins. We grow and others are encouraged.

## Essential Facts

### PURPOSE:

To encourage Timothy, a young pastor, during some difficult circumstances.

### AUTHOR:

The apostle Paul.

### AUDIENCE:

Timothy, a young pastor.

### DATE WRITTEN:

Around AD 64, just before Paul was imprisoned in Rome.

### SETTING:

Timothy was one of Paul's closest friends. Paul had sent him to help the church at Ephesus and was now writing to offer Timothy practical advice on handling some difficult problems in the church.

### KEY VERSES:

"Fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith" (1:18–19).

### KEY PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS:

Paul with Timothy.

**1:18-20** Paul commanded Timothy to fight God's battles well. In one sense this continued his earlier thoughts about upholding God's truth against false teachers. Yet the real battle is not just in the realm of sound teaching; it includes acting in obedience to God and in keeping with his plan for our lives. Paul told Timothy to cling to his faith and to keep his conscience clear. He was to live in ways that showed God's power. Our beliefs are important, but we must go beyond just thinking the right things to doing the right things.

**2:1-2** Here Paul shows why prayer is essential for establishing a peaceful context for spiritual growth. Through prayer, both public and private, order and peace are promoted and strengthened. Prayer involves thanksgiving for God's blessings and intercession for others. It is one of the assets we may overlook. We can easily become so focused on our own activities that we forget to turn to God for help. Prayer is a primary means for seeing the truth and developing our relationship with God.

**2:3-5** God wants everyone to be saved! That is encouraging news! No matter how bad we have been or how good, no matter how badly others have treated us or how badly we have treated others, God wants everyone to come to him. All of us are separated from God by sin until we surrender our lives to Christ, the one who bridges the gulf between people and God. This is the beginning of true spiritual renewal for everyone who longs to come to God. There may be many ways that promise to bring spiritual renewal, but there is no other bridge that spans the gulf caused by sin.

# 1 Timothy

BOOK INTRODUCTION

After being freed from house arrest in Rome, Paul wrote his final three letters—his Pastoral Epistles—in a period approximately between AD 62 and 67. He likely wrote 1 Timothy and Titus in Macedonia, possibly Philippi (1:3), and he penned 2 Timothy, his last letter, from a prison in Rome (2 Tim. 4:6–8). It is fitting that Paul's final letters were written to young pastors who would tend the flame of faith long after his death.

One of Paul's final instructions to Timothy was to find faithful men and entrust to them what had been entrusted to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul had spent years doing exactly that with Timothy and others—but especially with Timothy. Paul calls Timothy his "true son in the faith" (1:2), no doubt because Paul had led Timothy to Christ. This conversion almost certainly happened on Paul's first missionary journey into Asia Minor. One of the cities Paul and Barnabas visited was Lystra, where "a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed," one of whom must have been Timothy (Acts 14:1).

When Paul and Silas returned to Lystra on the second missionary journey, "a certain disciple was there, named Timothy" (Acts 16:1). Because Timothy was already a Christian, we can deduce that he had become a believer in Christ during Paul's previous preaching visit. In the short time since Paul's first visit to Lystra, Timothy had earned the respect and confidence of the other Christians in the area (Acts 16:2) and would ultimately become Paul's constant companion, traveling with him throughout Asia, Macedonia, and Greece. He was also in Rome for part or all of the apostle's two-year house arrest—and is named as one of the senders in the letters Paul wrote from Rome to the Philippian, Colossian, and Philemon (as well as 2 Corinthians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians).

In a ceremony that serves as the basis for modern-day ordination of ministers of the gospel, Paul and an "eldership" (group of church elders, or leaders) had laid hands on Timothy to set him apart for God's service (1:18; 4:14). It must have been to a position of leadership, because Paul uses that ordination as a basis for writing his letter to Timothy—leader-to-leader—about the church in Ephesus. And in his second letter to the young pastor, Paul exhorts Timothy to "stir up the [spiritual] gift of God" that he received at his ordination (2 Tim. 1:6).

Though not an apostle called by Christ, Timothy was the next best thing: a devoted, gifted, Spirit-filled, apostolically trained young

leader who was prepared to devote his life to the cause of Christ (Heb. 13:23). And now, Timothy was Paul's choice to oversee a troubled church.

### WHAT IT SAYS: *Guard the Faith; Guard Your Heart*

When he wrote this first letter to Timothy, it had been as much as eight years since Paul had ministered for any length of time in Ephesus, the base of his outreach in Asia Minor (Acts 19:1–20:1). Even though the church had been taught and established well, problems had arisen, mostly because certain false teachers had infiltrated the fellowship of believers.

Paul had undoubtedly done what he could to set things right in his last visit there before moving on to Macedonia (1:3). He also tried to help the situation in two additional ways: First, he left his most trusted protégé, Timothy, in Ephesus to oversee the necessary corrections in the church. And second, once he arrived in Macedonia, Paul wrote Timothy a detailed letter of encouragement and instruction so Timothy would have the wisdom of an experienced leader when he addressed the various problems the church faced.

In his letter, Paul tells Timothy how to confront false teachers, how to order the church's worship, how to select church leaders, and how to conduct himself as a young leader in a difficult situation. Speaking as a father to a son, the apostle urges Timothy not only to stand up for the truth in public but also to guard his own soul from the errors all around him (6:20, 21).

### WHAT IT MEANS: *Bringing Back Truth, Order, and Peace*

Though Paul never calls Timothy a pastor in this letter, the apostle did appoint Timothy to a pastoral role, overseeing the church in Ephesus, with a focus on its needs:

- **Doctrinal Purity:** The first issue Paul raises in the letter to Timothy is the problem of false teachers and their heretical doctrines. Timothy is to "charge" (command) them to stop! Instead of edifying the church, false teachers create disputes within it; instead of unity, they produce division (1:3–11).
- **Worship:** There was discord and disorder in the worship services in Ephesus, probably caused by the false teachers. Paul reminds Timothy of the necessity of prayer and the roles of men and women in the meetings of the church (2:1–15).
- **Godliness:** Only in the three Pastoral Epistles does Paul use the terms "godly" and "godliness"—eight times alone in 1 Timothy and once each in 2 Timothy (3:5) and Titus (1:1). With these words, Paul implies that a Spirit-ordered church will reflect the God it professes to worship, something apparently *not* true of the church in Ephesus (2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11).
- **Church Leaders:** At the end of Paul's apostolic ministry, he can provide Timothy and Titus with standards that should apply to church leaders—elders, deacons, and deaconesses (3:1–13). The health of the church is measured by the quality of its leadership.
- **Pastoral Care:** Paul gives lengthy instructions to Timothy on the care of widows in the church, how elders should be supported in their ministry, and how Christian slaves and masters should respect one another (5:1–6:2).
- **Contentment:** Paul's instructions about contentment conclude with the principle that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (6:3–10). Material possessions are temporary and will not survive beyond this life. But contentment is a mark of true godliness, which lasts for eternity (4:8).

### WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU: *Fight the Good Fight*

There are times when it is right to make a strategic retreat and to blend quietly into the background. But there are also times when the Lord calls us to step forward and "wage the good warfare" (1:18).

Paul knew that Timothy must not dodge this battle against false teachers in the Ephesian church. Using strong, bold language—including plenty of terminology from battle and physical fitness—Paul calls on his protégé to stand up for truth, oppose error, set a visible example, and use his gifts in a positive way for Christ to set the church back on the right course and defend the gospel. We cannot be sure whether Timothy was a reluctant warrior or not. But the Lord does sometimes appoint the normally quiet, peace-loving individual to speak wisdom into a confusing situation.

No matter what personality a person has, pastoral ministry is not for the faint of heart. It is filled with perils and problems. Since churches are made of people, ministry can be wearying and discouraging and even require painful decisions. But of this we can be sure: when the Lord prompts us to speak or to take action, He mightily uses those who step forward in faith.

## Picture This

### Understanding the Mystery • 3:16

When Paul uses the term “mystery of godliness,” he does not refer to something that is strange or incomprehensible. Instead, the phrase refers to what God has now revealed to His people in Christ. In explaining the mystery, he outlines several key truths about Christ that possibly were part of a hymn or doxology used in the worship of the early church:

- He was “manifested in the flesh.” Christ was both fully divine and fully human. As God incarnate, he was made of flesh, muscle, sinew, bone, organ, nerve, and blood.
- He was “justified in the Spirit.” This refers to Christ’s resurrection through the life-giving Spirit, which was His vindication or justification (Rom. 1:4; Eph. 1:20, 21; 1 Pet. 3:18).
- He was “seen by angels.” Angels, unlike God, do not know all things. Yet all the angelic beings witnessed Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation (Phil. 2:9, 10). For the fallen angels, this was a proclamation of judgment (Eph. 1:21; Col. 2:15).
- He was “preached among the Gentiles.” What was preached was the person of Christ—not just the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, a creed, or a theological statement.
- He was “believed on in the world.” Christ was preached not just to Jews or to those in Palestine, but to people from all nations. People from different cultures and from different nations all came to believe (and continue to believe) in the one true gospel. This is illustrated in the Book of Acts.
- He was “received up in glory.” He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9).

In his summary of this “mystery of godliness,” Paul progresses from the local to the universal and from the earthly to the eternal. It is about God and His glory first, then humanity and our needs. This is the mystery that the church is to guard.

1 TIMOTHY 5:5

## TVI Members of God’s Family • 5:1, 2

To belong to the church is to belong to a family. Paul provides clear principles for the way members of God’s family should treat each other. Christian relationships are to be characterized by these qualities:

- **Respect:** We should treat those who are older with patience: not flogging out at them, but exhorting them when necessary and encouraging them always.
- **Restraint:** We should treat members of the opposite sex with purity—in our thoughts, words, and actions.
- **Responsibility:** We should care for our families—parents and children (Ex. 20:12), grandparents and grandchildren, and extended family members. We should also care for those who are vulnerable, such as widows and orphans in the church (James 1:27).
- **Repentance:** We should humbly acknowledge our failures and seek forgiveness and reconciliation when we fall short in our relationships or our obligations.

## Timothy

When we find a good friend, we have found a treasure. We need people who are faithful and willing to persevere with us through the hard times. We need the love and acceptance that only a true friend can offer. The friendship between young Timothy and the apostle Paul brought significant support and encouragement to both men.

Paul described Timothy as a faithful brother with a solid reputation. Timothy was devoted to Paul and shared many of his triumphant victories in the ministry. But Timothy also persevered with Paul during the difficult times of imprisonment, torture and mockery. Their years of shared ministry grew into a lifelong friendship.

Paul referred to Timothy with admiration in many of his letters. He called him “my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 4:17) and “my co-worker” (Romans 16:21). In his letter to the Philippians, Paul referred to Timothy with the highest praise and then added that Timothy had acted “as a son with his father” as he helped Paul preach the Good News (Philippians 2:22). In his letters to Timothy, Paul expressed great affection for him. Paul’s personal involvement in Timothy’s ministry was shown when Paul reminded him “to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2 Timothy 1:6).

Timothy does not appear to have been a charismatic or strong leader. He might have even been somewhat timid and afraid to confront people, especially the older men. But Timothy was faithful and persevered in his ministry despite his fears and trials. Paul also supported Timothy in his ministry, realizing that God had called this young man into special service for Christ. Despite Timothy’s weaknesses, God used him to build the church and encourage his co-worker Paul.

Our continued spiritual growth requires that we have relationships with people for both support and accountability. We need to ask God for a “Timothy”—someone with integrity, who can be trusted and who will support us in both the good and bad times.

### STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Timothy possessed an excellent reputation for his faithfulness.

He was a special friend to the apostle Paul.

Even in the most difficult circumstance, Timothy supported Paul.

Timothy was a faithful minister of the Good News.

### WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

Timothy sometimes allowed his youth and timidity to cause difficulty in his ministry.

### LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE:

Our fears and inadequacies need not stop us from serving God.

Good friendships are extremely valuable, especially for continued spiritual growth.

### KEY VERSES:

“So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God’s service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials” (1 Thessalonians 3:1–3).

Timothy is first named in Acts 16:1–5 and is mentioned at various other points in the book. He is the recipient of Paul’s letters 1 and 2 Timothy. He is also mentioned in Romans 16:21; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10–11; 2 Corinthians 1:1, 19; Philippians 1:1; 2:19–23; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10; 3:2–6; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; Philémon 1 and Hebrews 13:23.



someone you  
should know.

## Timothy

### Timid but Fruitful

TOO MANY OF US shrink back from ministry involvement because we tell ourselves we just don't have the right temperament. We hear of the fiery fisherman Peter or the bold apostle Paul and think, *Hey, I'm nothing like that! I could never get up in front of three people to speak, let alone a crowd. I'll leave ministry to the professionals.*

Yet God doesn't think this way. Consider Timothy "Exhibit A."

Timothy grew up in a mixed home. While his Jewish mother became a Christian, his Greek father apparently never came to faith. It appears that both Timothy and his mother accepted Christ during Paul's first missionary journey when the apostle visited their hometown, Lystra. On Paul's second trip through the area, he took note of Timothy, a young man "well thought of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium" (Acts 16:2). Paul and Timothy developed a close bond, and the apostle became the younger man's spiritual mentor.

Timothy  
struggled  
with fear and  
hesitation,  
so Paul  
admonished  
him to be bold  
for Christ.

From that time on, Timothy often accompanied Paul on his journeys, sometimes staying behind and sometimes working with others in "advance teams," paving the way for Paul's arrival (Acts 17:14; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4). Paul grew to love this young man as if he were his own flesh and blood. He counted him a "fellow worker" (Romans 16:21) and "brother" (2 Corinthians 1:1); but more than that, he thought of Timothy as "my dear son" (2 Timothy 1:2), "my beloved and faithful child in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 4:17) and "my true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2). And he could say, "I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. . . . Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News" (Philippians 2:20, 22).

Yet Timothy was not a mirror of Paul's strengths. Timothy struggled with fear and hesitation. So Paul admonished his timid protégé: "God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News" (2 Timothy 1:7-8). The apostle instructed those who might be his hosts, "When Timothy comes, don't intimidate him. . . . Don't let anyone treat him with contempt" (1 Corinthians 16:10-11).

Timothy proves that God can and does use all kinds of temperaments in ministry. The big question for each of us is this: Do I want him to use me?

**THE POINT: Effectiveness for God depends on divine power, not human temperament.**

+++ Men, Women, & God

## Men, Women, and Worship

1 Timothy 2:8-15

THINGS WEREN'T ALWAYS HAPPY for Timothy and the church he pastored in Ephesus. Here Paul lends him a hand by providing some wisdom and guidance for recurring problems.

Both men and women have problems that can interfere with their ability to worship. Paul instructs men who have indulged in anger and controversy to "pray with holy hands lifted up," indicating a posture of love and submission. Women who have become preoccupied with their external appearance are told to dress more modestly.

When it comes to relations between women and men, Paul returns to the "preeminence" argument he made in 1 Corinthians 11. Apparently the women in Ephesus were causing problems not only with their dress but also with their behavior. Paul's remedy was clear: Women should "listen quietly" to church teaching rather than try to wield authority over men.

Many in the church today are divided over these instructions. Are these guidelines meant for all churches in all times, or only for the Ephesian context? Whatever your view, the overriding tone of this passage is that worship is supposed to be free of gender-based tension and distraction; we gather to focus on God alone.

+++ Men, Women, & God

## The Not-So-Private Lives of Elders

1 Timothy 3:1-13

WHAT DOES IT TAKE to be a leader in God's church? How demanding should the expectations be?

Paul starts off his list of qualifications with a sobering requirement: "An elder must be a man whose life is above reproach" (1 Timothy 3:2). He then goes straight to a person's private home and family life. Paul's ideal elder sounds like the kind of person we would all like to know: self-controlled and wise, hospitable, not prone to drunkenness or fights. He is faithful to his wife; his children are respectful and well-mannered. He is gentle, not quarrelsome, and not caught up in greed and materialism.

In fact, many of Paul's requirements don't seem to have anything to do with how elders might run the business of the church. They have everything to do with how they run their households and their lives. Paul explains why such things matter: "If a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?" (3:5).

Apparently, there's no place for playacting in church leadership. This work belongs to people of integrity who have already passed life's most demanding test, the one closest to home.

During the release of the three prequels for the *Star Wars* series, George Lucas was asked if the movies had any religious meaning. He said, "I remember when I was 10 years old, I asked my mother, 'if there's only one God, why are there so many religions?' I've been pondering that question ever since, and the conclusion I've come to is that all religions are true" (*Time*, April 26, 1999). According to Lucas, and many Americans today, all religions are basically the same.

While this perspective is often driven by a noble desire for common ground, the profound differences between religions suggest otherwise. This becomes clear when we consider how various religions view the nature of God, the identity of Jesus, and the means of salvation.

#### God

Christians believe that God is a Trinity—one God eternally coexisting in three persons. Muslims believe in a Unitarian God (Allah). Some versions of Buddhism are atheistic. Hindus believe in thousands of gods. New Agers believe that all reality is divine. Religious Naturalism holds that the world is the body of God, a view called *pantheism*.

#### Jesus

World religions also differ radically on the identity of Jesus. Christians consider Jesus the Messiah, the divine Savior of the world (1 Tm 1:15-17). While Muslims consider Jesus a holy man, they vehemently deny His divinity. Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah and consider Jehovah the one true God (Dt 6:4). They especially object to the doctrines of Trinity or Incarnation. Hindus believe Jesus is one God among many. Buddhists consider Jesus an enlightened guru.

#### Salvation

The religions of the world also differ drastically on the means of salvation. Christians believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone (Eph 2:8-9). To the Jew, salvation is tied to keeping the commandments in the Law. Muslims try to tip the scale of judgment in their favor by following the Five Pillars of Faith. The afterlife for Hindus involves a karmic process of paying off debt with the purpose of becoming one with the impersonal Brahman. And to New Agers, salvation is found through the recognition of oneness with the God, humanity, and the universe.

World religions also hold opposing views about which books are Scripture, the nature of human beings, creation, and the afterlife. These are not minor points, but the claims that stem from the heart of each religion. While most religions agree on the Golden Rule, their core doctrines are simply beyond reconciliation. While all religions could be wrong, they can't all be right. This leaves us two options for the religions of the world: either they are all wrong or only one of them is right.

So, how do we know which one is right? Examine the evidence. This is where Jesus stands apart from other religious figures. Jesus not only claimed to reveal knowledge about God, He claimed to be God in human flesh. And He confirmed this claim by fulfilling prophecy, living a sinless life, doing miracles, and rising from the dead

...  
(Rm 1:4).  
...

## Widows Revisited

1 Timothy 5:1-16

THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT, God often sized up a society by the way it treated widows. A king may have thought he had a strong army and a growing economy. But if his kingdom didn't protect its neediest and most vulnerable citizens, God gave it a failing grade.

The same holds true in the church today.

The first line of support for widows is their own family. But in cases where widows have no family members to care for them, or where families refuse to do so, the church must step in and provide.

Paul also tells Timothy to treat older men with consideration. "Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father" (1 Timothy 5:1).

This passage makes some important points for our day. Age is to be respected. Older people don't always know better than young people, but they often do. Their accumulated wisdom can and should play an important role in the life of the church—if we will listen to what they have to say.

The church isn't some kind of otherworldly group. It is a community made up of real people that must make its spiritual values concrete in the real world. Caring for widows is one test of this commitment.

### SPOTLIGHT

### JOB QUALIFICATIONS

If you're thinking of becoming an elder or a deacon, here are the requirements from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Notice: not much about skills, but a lot about character.

#### ELDERS

- A life too good to criticize
- Faithful to his wife
- Self-controlled; disciplined
- Live wisely
- Good reputation, especially among non-Christians
- Enjoy having guests at home
- Able to teach
- No drinking problems
- Not violent
- Gentler, not arrogant
- Not quarrelsome
- Not money-hungry
- Good manager of family, kids
- Children must be believers, too
- A track record in the faith
- Sense of justice
- Strong belief in the gospel
- Respected
- Have integrity
- No drinking problems
- Not money-hungry
- Committed to Christian doctrine
- A clear conscience
- Tested beforehand
- Faithful to his wife
- Good manager of family, kids

#### DEACONS

## TURNING WEALTH INTO A GOOD THING

1 Timothy 6:6–10, 17–19

Spiritual growth comes when we turn our attention from our own desires and invest our resources in God's priorities. The Bible consistently reminds us that the human heart is wicked and constantly tempted to replace the worship of God with idolatry or the worship of things (see Jeremiah 17:9). The Bible also warns us that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). One of the ways to guard against this temptation and loosen the world's grip on us is to consistently set aside a portion of our wealth for God's use. In this way we help turn a potential source of evil into a means for spiritual growth and renewal.

When we set aside money for God's use, we:

- Demonstrate our loyalty to and dependence on God. Our use of money is one of the most tangible evidences of our priorities. We may be able to impress others with our words, but the sincerity of our faith is truly tested when our finances are challenged. When we give to God's work, we remind ourselves that our goal is to give glory to God and advance his kingdom. It also reminds us that all we possess comes from him.
- Participate in God's work here on earth. Whether we are able to give small or large amounts, our money can be used to reach out to others directly and through those who serve in ways and places that we cannot.
- Prepare for greater responsibilities. The faithful servants who were each entrusted with a portion of money were rewarded according to their stewardship (see Luke 19:11–27). The way we handle our money reveals much about how we handle our lives, preparing us for greater service to God.

Above all, we need to remind ourselves that the use of money is limited. Money will have no place in the world to come. Contentment is a sure defense against the love of money and the corrosive power of greed.

### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Review the various ways money can be used for good—both for you and for others. Which of these seem most significant to you at this time? How content are you? Do you own your wealth, or does your wealth own you?

For more on stewardship, turn to Deuteronomy 8.

**4:11–16** Timothy was admonished to share the Good News of life in Christ in both word and deed. We sometimes forget that the most effective way we can share our faith is to live it out in front of other people. Our words can never witness as forcefully to God's power as the changes that people see in our lives. Some people will always question the legitimacy of our words, but no one can question the fact of a transformed life. When we surrender our lives to God, we can experience the new life promised in Jesus Christ. And the best way to share the news of God's transforming power is to live it—in both word and deed.

**5:1–2** Paul advised Timothy to treat all people with respect. By respecting others, we remind ourselves of the importance of healthy relationships in the Christian community. Sound doctrine, proper worship

and godly leadership are all important. Yet we need to understand these principles with love and respect for each other. The godly courtesy and affection that Paul requested can make the Christian community a place where healing takes place and lives are renewed.

**5:3–10** Paul made it clear that the Christian community should show special attention to its widows. Paul's directions here reflect God's Biblical concern for the helpless and rejected in society. God wants us to be concerned for all of his people; there is a place for everyone in his church. No matter who we are, what we have done or our position in society, God accepts us only on the basis of our faith in Jesus Christ. God reaches out to us all and calls us to be a part of his family.

## The Benefits of Reading Scripture Aloud

Read: 1 Timothy 4:13 | Habit: Engaging Scripture

Paul told Timothy to "devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching." (1Ti 4:13) "That's a passage about preaching," notes author Tim Challies, "but it's also a passage about just plain reading the Bible out loud."<sup>4</sup> Here are a number of practical reasons why reading the Bible aloud is a beneficial habit to adopt:

Here are a number of practical reasons why reading the Bible aloud is a beneficial habit to adopt.

- ▶ *Reading aloud is multisensory*—Outside worship services, our engagement with Scripture tends to involve only one of our five senses—sight. When we add hearing to seeing, we stimulate different areas of our brain, providing a multisensory experience that can help us have a more meaningful experience with the Word of God.
- ▶ *Reading aloud improves retention*—When we read aloud, the words we speak are translated into speech, giving us two types of memories—the knowledge of producing the spoken word as well as the memory of hearing them. This makes our memory for the spoken word more distinct from the verses we read silently.<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ *Reading aloud slows us down*—Our eyes and brains are faster than our mouths. When we read silently we see and process the words rapidly. Reading aloud forces us to read more slowly, which gives us more time to process what we're reading and broadens our opportunity to hear God speak through Scripture.

It is also valuable to read aloud to several individuals and groups. Here are some tips for making reading aloud part of your routine.

- ▶ *You and your family*—It might feel odd at first, but try reading aloud to yourself regularly during your individual Bible reading sessions. Or add reading aloud to your family night or family devotional time.
- ▶ *Your church and small group*—Most churches and small groups already include corporate Scripture reading into their services or meetings. If yours does not, talk to your worship or small group leader about adding regular readings to the program.
- ▶ *The young and the old*—Offer to read to children who might only hear about God during Sunday school class. Or perhaps volunteer to read to the elderly, who because of infirmity or advanced age might no longer be able to read the Bible for themselves. Every believer, whether young or old, benefits from being frequently engaged with Scripture.

**PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY:** Reading Scripture aloud can help us—as individuals and as a community—to better hear and connect with God's Word.

# What Is Evangelism?

Read: 1 Timothy 1:15 | Habit: Evangelism

“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance,” wrote Paul. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst” (v. 15). Paul notes that he was once a “blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man” (v. 13) yet he was chose to share the good news so that “Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life” (v. 16).

Like Paul, all of us who have believed in Christ and received eternal life have the privilege of sharing this Good News with others. Evangelism is the verbal proclamation of this good news of salvation in Christ, a call for unbelievers to repent and give God the glory for regeneration and conversion. Here are a few things we should know about evangelism:

Like Paul, all of us who have believed in Christ and received eternal life have the privilege of sharing this Good News with others.

▶ *The message can be verbal or written*—The gospel can be communicated in verbal (see Lk 7:22; Ro 10:14–17) or written (see Lk 1:1–4) form. The only form it cannot take is non-verbal (i.e., mere action). “It’s simply impossible to preach the Gospel without words,” says Diane Liffitt. “The Gospel is inherently verbal, and preaching the Gospel is inherently verbal behavior.”<sup>1</sup>

▶ *Evangelism includes three parts*—To fully communicate the message of the gospel, we have to ensure that we include its three essential components:

1. A warning to people about sin and the consequences of sin (see Jn 16:8; Ac 24:25; Rev 20:11–15).
2. An explanation of God’s remedy for sin (see Ac 8:29–35; Ro 3:21–26; 2Co 5:21). (See also “10 Models for Explaining the Gospel” on page 1201 and “How to Explain the Gospel in Your Own Words” on page 1359.)
3. A clear call to repent (to turn from sin and to turn toward God) and believe the gospel, by faith (see Mk 1:15; Lk 13:1–5; Ac 17:29–31; Ro 1:17).<sup>2</sup>

▶ *Evangelism is about proclamation, not conversion*—Our role in evangelism is to proclaim the good news; the work of conversion is solely the responsibility of the Holy Spirit. “We don’t fall in our evangelism if we faithfully tell the gospel to someone who is not [then] converted,” says Mark Dever. “We fall only if we don’t faithfully tell the gospel at all.”<sup>3</sup>

**PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY:** By gaining a better understanding of what evangelism is, we become better equipped to carry the message to the world.

## PRESERVE SPIRITUAL GAINS

### A Living Testimony

1 Timothy 4:14–16

As we seek to preserve the spiritual gains we have made, we will find it helpful to share God’s life-changing message with others. Yet it’s not enough to simply talk about God if our lives do not bear testimony to God’s life-changing power. Only as we demonstrate our new way of life will people notice our spiritual progress. That will open the door for us to share verbally what God has done to change us.

The apostle Paul taught Timothy that in order to share his message of transformation, Timothy needed to put his beliefs into practice as well as tell others about them. Paul said, “Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Timothy 4:15–16).

God wants to rescue everyone. We can participate in sharing God’s message—a message that can save souls. Our lives can be used to reach those who have never surrendered to God and to draw back those who have strayed. We should continue our spiritual progress and preserve our spiritual gains so that others might have hope, repent and believe.

Turn to 2 Timothy 2.

## TEACHINGPOINTS

Follow the Compass of Truth 4:1

Paul warns us that false teachers will come. How do we know when teaching departs from the faith of the Bible? Use these truths as a compass:

1. Sovereignty of God
2. Lordship of Christ, evidenced in His death and resurrection
3. Necessity of repentance
4. Certainty, availability, and reality of grace
5. Preeminence of love—for both God and others
6. Authority of Scripture

If we hear or read anything that undermines any of these core truths, we can be sure that teaching departs from the true faith.

4:1–5 Notice that one of the errors Paul warned Timothy about was a religiously motivated self-denial. What is wrong with this? Isn’t it self-indulgence that gets most of us into trouble? Paul points out that the good pleasures offered by God should be enjoyed with thanksgiving and not rejected in the name of spirituality. We have probably heard of some spiritual leaders who call their followers to give up all forms of pleasure. Such deprivation leads us to a deeper hunger and can lead us to sin as we try to fill the need we created by depriving ourselves unnecessarily. God has given us many legitimate pleasures in this life, and we are free to enjoy them as he has ordained.

4:7–10 Here Paul warns young Timothy not to argue about insignificant issues and tells him to focus on taking the necessary steps to grow spiritually. Spiritual growth cannot be achieved by arguing about meaningless details of the faith. We can keep spiritually fit only by staying close to God in prayer and seeking to act on what we know from his Word.

# DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Timothy was a young disciple from Lystra. His mother was a Jewish believer, and his father was a Greek.
- ▶ At some point Timothy was also imprisoned (Hebrews 13:23).

**HOLY CURRICULUM**  
The first letter to Timothy is considered by many to be a ministry “training manual.”

## BY THE NUMBERS

**6** CHAPTERS  
**113** VERSES  
**2,432** WORDS

# 1 TIMOTHY

## KEY PASSAGE

“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue

righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (6:11–12).

## SIDE BY SIDE

Timothy traveled and preached with Paul and others in places such as Troas, Berea, Athens, Macedonia, Corinth, Greece, Philippi, Thessalonica and Ephesus. In many cases he was sent by Paul to teach and encourage believers when Paul himself could not go.

### 1 TIMOTHY IN REVIEW

#### ★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

1. What does Paul say he is the worst of?  
A. Sinners  
B. Speakers  
C. Procrastinators  
D. Checkers players

#### 🕒 TIME TRAVELER

2. Paul says to give proper recognition to you. What are you?

#### ★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

3. What does Paul say he wants men everywhere to do?

#### ❓ WHO SAID IT?

4. “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” Who originally said this?

#### ★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

5. Who does Paul say gains “an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith”?

- A. Those who pray without ceasing
- B. Those who serve well
- C. Those who fast for a week
- D. Those who rejoice in suffering

#### 🔥 HOT SEAT

6. Well, I tried to achieve my goal, but all I did was “fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires” that only served to plunge me into ruin and destruction. What was my goal?

### 2 TIMOTHY IN REVIEW

#### 🕒 TIME TRAVELER

1. Paul says that you often refreshed him and wasn’t ashamed of his chains. Who are you?

- A. Onidostrus
- B. Onesiphorus
- C. Phygelus
- D. Phygtree

#### ★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

2. What did Paul request Timothy join him in?

#### 🔥 HOT SEAT

3. I am the mother of Timothy. Who am I?

#### ★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

4. What does Paul say that Jesus can’t do?

#### 🕒 TIME TRAVELER

5. Paul used you and a friend of yours who opposed Moses as an example to illustrate those who oppose the truth. What are your names?

#### “?” CRYPTIC PHRASES

6. What was Trophimus?  
A. A fictional name not mentioned in the Bible

- B. The name of a Christian who Paul left in Miletus because he was sick

- C. The sacred stream from which they got holy water in those days

- D. Paul’s dog, who ate the first copy of the letter, forcing Paul to rewrite it