

# 1 Timothy

## 1. Holding fast to sound doctrine

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Many people think that being a pastor of a church is a simple job. Show up on Sunday morning and teach from the Bible for a half hour or so, shake hands with people and take the rest of the days off until the midweek service and do the same thing.

If only the people realize that their pastor has to study. They think that the pastor goes into some mystical place where heavenly background music softly plays and there is absolutely no interruption and God starts to speak to the pastor directly in an audible voice and he writes down what the Lord says.

If you know any pastor who has it made like that, please introduce him to me. I sure would love to know his secret. Actually, there is far more behind what the average people know and see in pastor's life, the ministries he is involved and maintaining a church.

In my case, the Lord has blessed me with an extremely understanding wife who puts up with my long hour of studies and work, the elders who come along side of me to lift me up in their prayers and work, and numerous volunteers who colabor with me for the Kingdom of God.

### A. AUTHOR

The Book of 1 Timothy is the first of the three pastoral epistles – 2 Timothy and Titus – that were written by apostle Paul to the young pastors Timothy and Titus.

### B. TIMELINE

It was written around A.D. 62 while Paul was in Macedonia. When he wrote this letter to his spiritual son Timothy, Paul already established the church in Ephesus and left Timothy there to oversee it.

### C. TIMOTHY - ONE OF THE YOUNG PASTORS

Timothy, who had a Greek father and Jewish mother, was very devoted to the Lord from an early age. He came to know the Lord Jesus through the ministry of the apostle. The aging apostle graciously took this young protege under his wing when he was recommended by his local church and helped him grow in the Lord. Timothy became Paul's missionary staff. The young man was faithful to the Lord and had a deep concern for God's people.

But in spite of his calling, his close association with Paul, and his spiritual gifts, Timothy was easily discouraged. The last time Paul had been with Timothy, he had encouraged him to stay on at Ephesus and finish his work. Apparently Timothy had physical problems as well as periods of more discouragement. We get the impression that some of the church members were not giving their pastor the proper respect as God's servant as we are going to find out in chapter 4.

## **D. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK**

This Book is written to Timothy to warn about false teachers, to instruct him about ministry duties and to encourage him to feed the congregation with good spiritual food.

I am sure that some of you are thinking, "If this is a pastoral book for the preacher, you study it. Why should we do this Book?" Obviously, the Lord knows that all of us need it. This Book also teaches us about the conduct of the congregation toward one another and how we should handle ministry difficulties.

## **E. THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS**

Ephesus would not be the easiest place to pastor a church. The city was devoted to the worship of Diana, the goddess of the sexual instinct. Her images helped promote sexual immorality of all kinds.

Paul had done a great work in Ephesus during his three year ministry, so all they which dwelt in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus. It was not easy for Timothy to fill Paul's shoes. To make the matter more difficult, satan had his workers in the city to add ample satanic obstacles.

## **F. GREETINGS**

*1 Timothy 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, 2 To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

I just love the way apostle Paul writes his greetings at the top of each letter. It is packed with genuine concern, care and love for the readers and to remind them that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ. Yes, he is showing his authority to tell them what needs to be done.

This letter does not come from the hallowed halls of academia or the stale study of some theologian who was tucked away from the mainstream. The apostle Paul's pen writes, not only with the ink of sound doctrine, but also with the blood, sweat and tears of an experienced minister who can tell any one of us "been-there and done-that."

What an encouragement this letter must have been to Timothy! Paul's letter reassured Timothy that, though he may have felt overwhelmed at times, he wasn't alone. His heavenly Father, as well as his "spiritual father," were there to provide comfort and strength.

## **G. DON'T QUIT**

*1 Timothy 1:3-4 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia--remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.*

False teachers have always plagued the church, from its earliest days right on down to the present day. So if we want to learn about standing firm against false teaching, we should become students of the Book of 1 Timothy.

Time to time, you hear me talking about false doctrines or teachings within the body of Jesus Christ which is the church. You also hear me talking about the cults. Some of you might wonder why I need to identify them and call them out. It is a part of my job description as a pastor and teacher to warn you about them.

Let me put it this way. Let's say you have little children in my class and I am their teacher. Do you want me to teach them how they should not follow dangerous people who tempt them with a few sweet candy bars or should I tell them everybody is good and just follow whoever comes along?

I already know your answer. Now put yourselves in those little children's shoes. Not everyone of you are well versed with the Bible and know about every single cult and false doctrines. As your Bible teacher, I must tell you that there are people who bring false doctrines to you with all the right lingo and smiles and dangle enticing words like sweet candy bars to harm you and to take you away from the truth.

Paul identified the false teaching as "fables and endless genealogies". Titus faced the same kind of false teaching in Crete. The false teachers were using the Old Testament Law, and especially the genealogies, to manufacture all kinds of novelties. These new doctrines were leading people astray. Instead of producing love, purity, a good conscience and sincere faith, these so-called novel doctrines were causing division, hypocrisy and all sorts of problems.

You may say, "Nobody talks about endless genealogies nowadays." Yes, we may not talk about genealogies, but many times the teachings from the pulpit in present days are filled with pop-psychology rather than the truth of God from the Bible. God knows far more about people's minds than all the psychologists in the world put together.

It is extremely important for us to embrace the truth of the Bible all the time, nothing else. Truth is absolute, not negotiable, nor is it relative. No matter what happens, God's truth stands.

That reminds me a joke:

A reporter wanted to see how the people see the truth according to their vocations. So he invited three people with different jobs. He first asked a mathematician what  $2+2$  is. The mathematician promptly answered that it is 4. The reporter thanked him and allowed the mathematician to leave the room.

He asked an architect to come in and asked the same question. The architect answered him, "It would be 4. But there are numerous ways to become 4, for examples, you can add  $1+3$ , or  $3+1$ , or  $2.5+1.5$  and you get the same result." Again, the report thanked him and allowed him to leave the room.

The last person who came into the room was a lawyer. He was asked the same question. Without a word, the lawyer got up and went around the room to check everything and opened the door and made sure that there was no one behind the door who might listen to their conversation. Then he came back to his seat and pulled it up close to the reporter and said this in low voice, "How much do you want it to be?"

I know, lawyers are the brunt of many jokes. If anyone of you are a lawyer, relax, it is a joke. Don't sue me.

## **H. THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMANDMENT**

*1 Timothy 1:5-7 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, 6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.*

The purpose of the law is found in its inward work upon the heart, not in mere outward observance. Without this understanding, it is easy to become shallow legalists, who are only concerned with how things look on the outside. The OT law was not meant to give believers a list of commands for every occasion, but to show unbelievers their sin and make them realize that they need God.

Conscience is the inner judge that accuses us when we have done wrong and approves when we have done right.

*Romans 2:14-15 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)*

But it is possible to sin against the conscience so that it becomes defiled. Repeated sinning hardens the conscience so that it becomes seared like scar tissue and no longer can tell the difference between good and evil.

*1 Timothy 4:1-2 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron*

It is tragic when professed Christians get off course because they refuse the sound doctrine that comes from the Bible only. It is unfortunate today that we hear much idle talk in teaching and preaching from the pulpit across America.

## **I. THE LAW AND THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL**

*1 Timothy 1:8-11 But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for (1) the lawless and (2) insubordinate, for (3) the ungodly and for (4) sinners, for (5) the unholy and (6) profane, for (7) murderers of fathers and (8) murderers of mothers, for (9) manslayers, 10 for (10) fornicators, for (11) sodomites, for (12) kidnappers, for (13) liars, for (14) perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, 11 according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.*

Paul listed fourteen kinds of people who were condemned by the Law. We can find his other lists from the other letters he wrote. The lawful use of the Law is to expose, restrain and convict these kind of lawless. The Law cannot save lost sinners. It can only reveal their need for the Savior. When a sinner believes on Jesus Christ, he is freed from the curse of the Law. The righteous demands of the Law are met by the indwelling Holy Spirit as a believer yields to God.

It is the "glorious Gospel" that saves lost sinners. Law and Gospel go together, because the Law without the Gospel is diagnosis without remedy. But the Gospel without Law is only the Good News of salvation for people who don't believe they need it because they have never heard the bad news of judgment through the Law.

Many people will condemn anyone with standards – especially higher standards like the ones the Bible demands – as being a legalist. Having standards and keeping them does not make us legalists and obedience doesn't make us legalists. We are legalists when we think what we do is what makes us right before God and putting others into our own standards.

## **J. CHALLENGES**

Can you spot false teachings?

Could you explain the differences between Christianity and the New Age philosophy?

Or Mormonism?

Or Jehovah's Witness?

Or the Prosperity Gospel?

Or the Seeker sensitive Gospel?

If somebody wants to talk to you about one of these, would you feel secure enough to dialogue with that person about Jesus Christ, the Bible, the depravity of mankind and God's grace?

If you've been coming to our church for sometime and listening to the teaching from this pulpit and go home do your own studies, you should be able to talk to anyone of these false doctrine people.

If you say, "That is not my job, but yours," I beg you the difference. According to what our Lord Jesus told us in that Great Commission, we all are responsible in knowing the Gospel and spreading it with accuracy.

*Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

If you feel that you are lacking in this area, it is God who is speaking to you now that you need to be prepared with the sound doctrines in your heart.

## **K. APPLICATIONS**

1) Seek God through the Bible.

2) Commune with Him through prayers.

3) Wait upon the Holy Spirit to open the door to spread the grace and love of God through you.