

## **1 & 2 Timothy Background**

- I. Introduction
  - A. This quarter we will be studying two of Paul's letters that are very different from most of the New Testament – 1 and 2 Timothy.
    - 1. Most of Paul's letters were written to churches.
    - 2. These are personal letters written to the young man Timothy.
    - 3. They present a side of Paul we do not as easily see in his other letters.
    - 4. I enjoy them, I suspect mainly for that reason.
  - B. In a few moments we shall be looking at some background information about these letters.
    - 1. Part of me feels the need to apologize for that, because background information may seem dry and uninteresting to some of you.
    - 2. It may help some that this is not dry to me. I find background studies very interesting. It's like detective work of a sort.
    - 3. I hope my enthusiasm will be contagious.
  - C. At any rate, I have never figured out how to teach a textual study without it.
    - 1. Before we can properly understand and apply what the Bible says to us today, we must know what it meant to those to whom it was first written.
    - 2. Without doing that, we increase the danger of not applying it properly and perhaps even erring in our doctrine.
    - 3. Therefore, we simply must take some time to understand something about these letters before we just jump into the text.
  - D. Before we do that, however, I want to make a general application about the overall theme of 1 & 2 Timothy.
- II. Pastoral Epistles. 1 & 2 Timothy along with Titus are often referred to as the Pastoral Epistles.
  - A. The name was first applied to 1 Timothy in 1274 by Thomas Aquinas, who said,  
This letter is as it were a pastoral rule which the apostle delivered to Timothy . . . in his second letter he deals with a pastoral care which should be so great that it will even accept martyrdom for the sake of the care of the flock.
  - B. The title really came in 1726 when a scholar named Paul Anton gave a series of lectures in which he referred to 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus as The Pastoral Epistles.
  - C. For convenience I will use this phrase when referring to these letters, because it has come to be widely accepted.

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- D. But we need to understand how that term applies to these letters, and indeed to us, as we study them.
- E. When the religious world at large uses the word “pastor,” to whom are they generally referring?
  - 1. Normally it is a minister or priest.
  - 2. A full-time paid position.
  - 3. And it is this person who is expected to do most of the work of the church.
  - 4. This is what the religious world refers to as clergy.
  - 5. In contrast to the clergy, the laity are simply the members at large.
  - 6. They are largely spectators, with less responsibility than the clergy.
- F. Does the New Testament recognize this kind of division?
  - 1. The answer seems kind of obvious.
  - 2. Nowhere does the New Testament outline such a distinction as clergy and laity..
- G. But I am concerned that maybe we have misunderstood the implications of that.
  - 1. 1 Peter 2:9. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
  - 2. Notice that Peter says we are a “royal priesthood.”
  - 3. I am afraid that many of us may think we have no clergy.
  - 4. I would suggest that we are all clergy, at least as the religious world uses that term.
    - a. We are all priests who have the responsibility of spreading the news of God’s love and grace to a lost world.
    - b. We are all ministers in a very real sense.
    - c. Jim, Lanny, and Terry have specific responsibilities.
    - d. The elders have their own role in the church.
    - e. The deacons fulfill specific jobs.
    - f. But every one of us is a minister of God’s word.
- H. It is in this light that I would like for us to view 1 & 2 Timothy.
  - 1. These letters have to do with ministry, and therefore they apply to each and every one of us.
  - 2. 1 Timothy is addressed to the young Timothy, and relates how he is to exercise his ministry to face the tasks and problems of the church at Ephesus.
  - 3. 2 Timothy gives us Paul’s final evaluation of his own ministry, as he looks back on his life from old age.
  - 4. Future ministry and past ministry – These letters can speak to each of

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us even today.

- I. Now let us consider something about the background of these letters.  
Who wrote these letters?
- J. The answer would seem to be obvious, but we need to spend a little bit of time with it.
- K. The first verse of each book claims that the apostle Paul wrote it.
  1. This is not always proof, however.
  2. There were known instances in which books were written by someone claiming to be an apostle.
    - a. Ex: *Gospel of Thomas*
      - (1) Early 2<sup>nd</sup> century.
      - (2) Gnostic account of the life of Christ.
- L. For 1800 years no one questioned the Pauline authorship of these letters.
  1. In 1804 a man named J. E. C. Schmidt first suggested that Paul did not write 1 Timothy.
  2. He was followed in 1807 by a scholar named F. Schleiermacher.
  3. Soon other scholars were rejecting Paul's authorship of all three of the Pastorals.
- M. I would like to say up front that I do believe that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles – and not just as a matter of faith.
  1. We as Christians should not be afraid of the truth.
  2. There are some difficulties that need to be faced.
  3. But there are explanations for these difficulties, and more than sufficient reason to believe that Paul was indeed the author.
  4. I hope to show you that in the next few minutes.
- N. First of all, let us consider some of the problems we need to address. Those who would deny Paul's authorship usually offer several reasons. Notice that every one of these objections have to do with internal aspects of the letters.
  1. The vocabulary, grammar, and style of these letters are different from the way Paul normally writes. I will agree that this is true. I will deal with that issue in a moment.
  2. The doctrinal issues that are discussed seem to reflect the church when it was more developed, and that would suggest that the letters were written at a later date.
  3. There is a specific heresy that is discussed which is probably Gnosticism, and Gnosticism was not fully developed until the second century.
  4. Perhaps the greatest difficulty with these letters is fitting them into the framework of the book of Acts. Again, we shall discuss this more fully when we talk about the date the letters were written.

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- O. Now let us consider the evidence favoring Paul's authorship of the Pastorals. Notice that this evidence is almost exclusively external.
  - 1. There are possible allusions by Christian writers to these letters very early.
    - a. Clement – A. D. 96. Probably referred to in the New Testament as someone Paul knew and who knew Paul.

Phil. 4:3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- b. Ignatius – A. D. 110-117
        - c. Polycarp – A. D. 115-135 definitely quotes 1 Timothy and probably 2 Timothy and Titus as well. This would mean they would had to have been written before that time.
      - 2. A number of early Christian writers tell us that Paul wrote these letters.
        - a. *Acts of Paul* – @ A. D. 160
        - b. Irenaeus – A. D. 185-189
        - c. Clement of Alexandria – A. D. 190-200
        - d. Tertullian – A. D. 150-200
        - e. The Muratorian Canon – A. D. 175-200
      - 3. The Syriac translation of the New Testament (A. D. 150-200) included these letters, again proving that they had been written earlier.
      - 4. Eusebius of Caesarea (A. D. 324) listed them as universally acknowledged to be genuine letters of Paul.
- III. If Paul's authorship is assumed, as the external evidence supports, how then can the internal problems which the skeptics list be explained?
  - A. First, as to vocabulary, grammar, and style.
    - 1. The Pastorals either quote or allude to a large number of external sources (ex: 1 Tim 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.)
    - 2. The rest of the vocabulary compares favorably with accepted Pauline writings.
    - 3. We should also note that these letters contain numerous references to people, places, and events which a forger would avoid for fear of being checked.
  - B. Doctrine
    - 1. Much of the doctrine appears in the quoted sections, so it would not necessarily reflect Paul's style.

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2. Paul's imprisonment in Rome may well have influenced his style.
    - a. Paul's use of the Greek word σωτήρ (savior) may reflect Paul's opposition to the emperor cult in Rome.
    - b. His use of ευσέβεια (godliness) is paralleled only in Roman writings where the Stoic philosophy had a strong influence.
  - C. Church Organization
    1. The use of such words as πρεσβύτερος to refer both to an older man (1 Tim. 5:1) as well as the office of an elder (1 Tim. 5:7) suggests a transition period such as we would find in the infant church of the second half of the first century.
    2. 1 Tim. 4:14 indicates that Timothy was selected through prophecy. This too indicates a very early situation.
  - D. A Gnostic Heresy
    1. While Gnosticism was not fully developed until the second century, elements of it were present in the first century.
    2. Paul has to deal with something like it in the book of Colossians – a book which virtually no one doubts was written by Paul.
    3. Although the heresy had some Gnostic elements in it, it involved Jewish views as well.
      - a. It included opposition to the mission to the Gentiles, certainly a first century problem.
      - b. There was also an element that questioned Paul's apostleship, which Paul has to defend (1 Tim. 1:1).<sup>10</sup>
  - E. The last question that relates to authorship is date. How can the pastorals be fitted into the church of the first century?
    1. I will admit there is considerable difficulty finding a place for them in the book of Acts.
    2. The question I would ask is, "What if they were written after the close of the book of Acts?"
    3. I would like for us to examine that possibility.
- ## IV. The Date of the Pastorals
- A. As we mentioned, the first thing that we have to do before we can determine a date for these letters is try to fit them into a chronology of the New Testament.
    1. Titus particularly offers us some clues.
    2. In Titus 1:5 we learn that Paul has conducted a mission to the island of Crete, where presumably Titus is working.
    3. In Titus 3:12 Paul indicates that he plans to spend a winter in Nicopolis, a peninsula in Greece, NW of Athens and Corinth.
    4. In contrast to that, when we turn to 2 Timothy, we find that Paul

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expects that he will be executed soon.

B. Compare this to the close of the book of Acts.

1. Paul is in prison in Rome.
2. But his situation does not appear particularly bad.

Acts 28:30. For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

3. He is essentially under house arrest, not in prison.
4. There is no indication that Paul anticipates that he will be executed.

C. Also, Col. 1:1 and the book of Philemon both state that Timothy was with Paul during this Roman imprisonment, so it is difficult to see how Paul could have written the letters to Timothy at this time.

D. Was Paul released from his first Roman imprisonment?

1. In other prison epistles, Paul indicates that he fully expected to be freed.
  - a. Phil 2:24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.
  - b. Philemon 22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.
2. We know that before his arrest, Paul planned a campaign in Spain (Romans 15:24, 28).
  - a. The church historian Eusebius @ A. D. 325 tells us that indeed Paul was released from this first imprisonment.  
[Read pp. 74-75]
  - b. Writing in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, two other Christian scholars, Chrysostom and Jerome both confirmed, not only Paul's release but his campaign to Spain and other parts of the west.
3. It also seems strange that since Luke recorded Paul's imprisonment in Rome, that he did not record his death, if that indeed occurred.
4. It seems the inescapable conclusion is that while Paul is in prison in Rome in 2 Timothy, it is not the same imprisonment as is recorded at the close of Acts.
5. This means that we are dealing with a period in Paul's life that occurred after Luke finished writing the book of Acts.
6. I would then offer the following chronology for the Pastorals.
  - a. 1 Timothy was written @ A. D. 65.
  - b. Titus around 1 year later (A. D. 66-67)
  - c. After this Paul is again arrested.

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- d. He writes 2 Timothy @ A. D. 67-68.
- e. Paul is executed shortly after finishing 2 Timothy.
- 7. All of this seems consistent both with what we find in the letters themselves, and also with the virtually universal opinion of ancient church scholars who had access to writings and traditions that we do not. Timothy
- E. Who was Timothy, and what do we know about him?
  - 1. Timothy is actually mentioned in 21 passages in the New Testament.
  - 2. Acts 16:1-5. Paul first meets Timothy during his second missionary journey at Lystra in Galatia.

<sup>1</sup>He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. <sup>2</sup>The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. <sup>3</sup>Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. <sup>4</sup>As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. <sup>5</sup>So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

- 3. 2 Tim. 1:5 indicates that Timothy came from a mixed racial and apparently religious background.
  - a. He had a Greek (and apparently pagan) father.
  - b. But he also had a Jewish mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois).
  - c. Timothy had apparently been raised with some Jewish values, but he had never been circumcised.
    - (1) In Acts 16:3 Paul wishes to take Timothy with him and has him circumcised because of the Jews.

Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

- (2) But in Gal. 2:3 Paul refuses to have Titus circumcised.

Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

- (3) Why did Paul respond to these two situations differently?
- (4) Timothy was at least half Jewish; Titus was not.
  - (a) Paul had no objection to a Jewish Christian being circumcised.
  - (b) But he would not allow it to be forced on a

Gentile, because of his insistence that Gentiles did not have to observe Jewish law or rituals to become Christians.

- F. Let us consider for a moment Timothy's role.
  - 1. This has to do with our previous discussion about the role of a minister.
  - 2. We have said that he was in Ephesus, and he was serving as a minister.
  - 3. But I believe we make a mistake if we envision Timothy as being in a role similar to that of Jim Shannon.
  - 4. Timothy had served in a similar capacity before.
    - a. To Corinth – 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10.
    - b. To Thessalonica – 1 Thess. 3:2, 6.
    - c. Paul planned to send Timothy to Philippi – Phil. 2:19-24.
  - 5. Apparently Timothy was serving as a special apostolic representative sent by Paul to counter a heresy that had arisen at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:1-4).
- G. 2 Tim. 4:5 refers to Timothy as an evangelist (εὐαγγελιστής)
  - 1. This is one of only three times this word is used in the New Testament.
  - 2. The others are Acts 21:8 and Eph. 4:11.
- H. 1 Tim. 4:14 indicates that Timothy received a special miraculous call to his ministry.
  - 1. Paul will remind him of it.
  - 2. Timothy's commission was given as the result of or supported by a prophetic message.
  - 3. The situation sounds similar to Paul's own call to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-4).
- I. So we should recognize that Timothy was given:
  - 1. A special call
  - 2. Special responsibilities
  - 3. And special authority
- J. For that reason we should be careful not to make too great an application for our day.



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### V. Purpose of 1 & 2 Timothy.

- A. Timothy's specific purpose apparently was to refute a dangerous heresy which had infected the church at Ephesus.
- B. While scholars disagree on some things, certain characteristics can be deduced from what Paul says to Timothy.
  - 1. 1 Tim. 1:4. It involved speculative intellectualism. It produced and doted on questions (1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23).
  - 2. 1 Tim. 6:4. It produced people who were puffed up with pride, but who Paul says were actually ignorant.
  - 3. This resulted in 2 opposite extremes.
    - a. 1 Tim. 4:3-5. Asceticism
      - (1) forbidding marriage
      - (2) enforcing special dietary restrictions
    - b. 2 Tim. 3:6. Actual immorality
  - 4. 1 Tim. 6:5. This movement also included people who were Christians just for personal benefit.
  - 5. 2 Tim. 2:18. These people apparently denied the resurrection of the body.
  - 6. 1 Tim. 1:7. It was a heresy that was in some way tied up with Jewish legalism. They wanted to be teachers of the Law.
- C. The one heresy that fits these characteristics most closely is the philosophy which would mature in the second century under the name of Gnosticism.
  - 1. Paul had dealt with a very similar heresy during his first Roman imprisonment, when he wrote the book of Colossians.
- D. Gnosticism combined with some form of Judaized Christianity would meet most of the characteristics of the heresy Paul describes.
  - 1. Although you may have heard this before, a few words about Gnosticism may be beneficial.
  - 2. Gnosticism was based on the Greek word γνῶσις which means "knowledge."
  - 3. These people believed that they possessed special knowledge.
    - a. Thus they were better than everyone else.
    - b. They were smarter than everyone else.
    - c. They were more spiritual than everyone else.
  - 4. The metaphysical basis of Gnosticism had to do with what are called "emanations."

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- a. Between God and man stretched a long series of emanations from God.
  - b. Each emanation had his own name and genealogy.
    - (1) So there were endless fables and endless genealogies.
    - (2) Paul will warn Timothy specifically about these.
  - c. According to Gnosticism a person had to have a special kind of knowledge to ascend this ladder of emanations to God.
  - d. It was therefore a kind of legalism that denied the atoning power of the cross of Christ.
5. Since matter (and therefore the body) is evil, Gnosticism resulted in either:
- a. Asceticism – to punish the evil body.
  - b. Or immorality – because what the body did, since it was evil anyway, did not matter.
6. And if the body is evil, then there can surely be no such thing as the resurrection of this evil body.
- E. And so the letters to Timothy were written:
1. To encourage Timothy in fighting this heresy.
  2. And to help him in selecting leaders at Ephesus to assist him in providing for the ongoing spiritual welfare of the church at Ephesus.
  3. In the process we learn a great deal about Paul, Timothy, and the nature of our faith.
- F. Next week we will begin with the first chapter of 1 Timothy.

## 1 & 2 Timothy

### 1 Timothy 1

- I. 1:1-7 Love is the Answer to Legalism and Heresy
  - A. 1:1 Paul defends his apostleship.
    - 1. Since Paul was writing to Timothy, his “son in the faith,” (v. 2) why would he need to emphasize that he was an apostle?
      - a. He did that in a number of his letters (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus).
      - b. Yet in a few others (Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Philemon) Paul omits any reference to his being an apostle.
      - c. Because he was doing more than just writing to Timothy.
      - d. He was not defending his authority to Timothy, but to the Christians at Ephesus who might question it, as well as Timothy’s authority.
      - e. Paul had given Timothy a difficult assignment, and he knew Timothy needed help.
      - f. Timothy was a young man, and there are indications that he may have been hesitant to assert his authority.
      - g. This is one of the indications that these letters were meant to be read to the church.
        - (1) Paul wanted to emphasize that he was writing with the authority of an apostle.
        - (2) He also wanted to let the church at Ephesus know that Timothy was acting under specific authority that the apostle had given him.
        - (3) Later he will relate how Timothy’s commission came as a result of a miraculous prophetic event.
      - h. All of this was meant to make Timothy’s job easier.
    - 2. The very words Paul uses reinforce what he is saying.
      - a. He refers to God as Savior (σωτήρ)
      - b. If you remember, last week we talked about how some scholars questioned Paul’s authorship because of the vocabulary in these letters.
      - c. None of Paul’s other letters contain this title.
      - d. I suspect it came out of Paul’s experience in Rome.
      - e. The practice of worshiping the Roman emperor and using this title to refer to him was growing at that time.

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- f. Paul wants to emphasize that we have only one Savior, and it isn't the emperor or any human being.
- B. 1:2. To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
  - 1. Grace (χάρις). A traditional Greek greeting.
  - 2. Mercy (ἔλεος).
  - 3. Peace (εἰρήνη). The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "shalom," which still is the traditional Hebrew greeting. One commentator (Wuest) says this word means literally, "that which has been bound together after having been separated."
  - 4. I hope think we can see how that applies to Christians.
    - a. We have been bound together with one another and with God.
    - b. After having been separated by sin.
    - c. And so now we truly can be at peace, because that relationship has been restored.
  - 5. Paul commonly begins his letters with grace and peace.
  - 6. The word mercy is only found here and in 2 Timothy.
- C. 1:3-4. From the very beginning, Paul gets right into the problem that Timothy has to face in the church.

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

- 1. Here we see that Timothy is at Ephesus.
- 2. Paul seems to have to persuade Timothy to stay there.
  - a. He reminds Timothy that he urged him to do so earlier while Paul was in Macedonia.
  - b. It would appear that Timothy may have become discouraged, because of the strife and false doctrine that he had to deal with.
  - c. At least part of the reason Paul is writing is to encourage Timothy not to lose heart.
  - d. I believe there is a principle here that we all could put into practice.
    - (1) Those who have spent many years growing in the faith have a unique ability to help younger Christians.
    - (2) Younger Christians may begin the Christian life very dedicated and zealous.

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- (3) But they may never have encountered serious problems or tragedy in their lives.
  - (4) When difficulties arise, it may just be one of you that God could use to encourage those younger Christians, when depression has set in and their faith may be at a low point.
  - (5) How easy it is to criticize; how much better and more effective to encourage – just as Paul does Timothy here.
  - (6) And I would encourage us especially as we interact with our young people to keep that in mind.
3. Paul warns Timothy about those obsessed with “endless genealogies.”
- a. This could be the Gnostic teachings we talked about last week.
  - b. Also, some Jewish writers liked to take the genealogies of the Old Testament and compose ever more detailed supposed “biographies” around them. This task could truly be endless.
  - c. But more importantly, the practice served no useful purpose.
  - d. There are many things about which the Bible says little. We may wish to know more.
  - e. But what is important has been revealed and revealed clearly.
  - f. For us to go off into flights of fantasy about things not revealed is pointless.
  - g. And it may be dangerous, because we may lose the ability to separate true Scripture from our imaginative interpretation of it.
4. Timothy is certainly faced with a dangerous problem here, a heresy that could destroy the church.
- a. There are two types of false teaching that need to be distinguished.
  - b. One is based on sincere lack of understanding, such as Paul before his conversion.
  - c. The other is driven by a desire for novelty.
    - (1) This person exalts the mind at the expense of the heart.
      - (a) Speculation rather than experience.
      - (b) There is a place for the mind in Christianity, but it is the intellect that recognizes its own limitations and the true Source of knowledge.
    - (2) The person Paul describes deals in argument rather

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than action.

- (a) He can tell you everything about a person that is wrong, but never reaches out to show that person the truth.
  - (b) He can provide a hundred reasons why something will not work, and so he does nothing.
  - (3) This kind of person is moved by arrogance rather than humility.
    - (a) He wants to teach, but is never willing to learn.
    - (b) We are concerned about being doctrinally correct, and rightly so.
    - (c) We want to be active in the expression of our faith.
    - (d) But through it all, the world needs to see in us the humility that recognizes, that as someone has said, “We are only beggars showing other beggars where we have found bread.”
    - (e) 1 Cor. 13:3 (ASV) And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.
- D. 1:5-7. In contrast to the false teachers at Ephesus, what does Paul say should characterize the true Christian?
- 1. Paul emphasizes that the purpose of his command to Timothy is to restore the love that should characterize God’s people.
    - a. His condemnation of the heresy in Ephesus may have sounded harsh.
    - b. But Paul insists that his motive is not to be critical, but to ensure that those who have become caught up in these obscure doctrines understand the true significance of their Christian faith.
  - 2. In verse 5 Paul indicates that this love is based on three qualities. [List them on the board]
    - a. A pure heart
    - b. A good conscience
    - c. A sincere faith.
    - d. These qualities are those we need if we are to live lives that are consistent with our faith.
    - e. Let’s look at each one of these qualities for a moment.
  - 3. A pure heart.

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- a. The term sounds almost old-fashioned, perhaps because the quality itself is so rare.
  - b. A pure heart is first of all the total opposite of hypocrisy.
  - c. It describes the person whose motives are not mixed.
  - d. This is the person who sees the best in people.
    - (1) Have you ever known someone who always expects the worst?
    - (2) Most of the time this person actually hopes for the worst, especially from others.
    - (3) Have we ever heard a rumor about someone, and perhaps been a bit disappointed when it turned out not to be true?
    - (4) Such an attitude does not describe a pure heart.
4. There are two elements that comprise a good conscience.
- a. We must begin with the blood of Christ.
    - (1) None of us is good by our own effort.
    - (2) It begins and ends with the atoning blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to transform our lives.
    - (3) This means we do not carry around the guilt of what we once were.
    - (4) All of that has been done away with.
  - b. At the same time our lives must really be transformed.
    - (1) We have a good conscience because we do try to live lives worthy of our calling.
    - (2) We should feel good about ourselves (sin and all), because we can see God working in our lives.
    - (3) As James reminds us, if our faith does not affect the way we live our lives, it really isn't faith.
5. A sincere faith
- a. Faith includes an intellectual element.
    - (1) We should know what we believe and why.
    - (2) This will prevent heresies such as the one Timothy was fighting from taking root.
  - b. But this faith must also be sincere.
  - c. Once again, no trace of hypocrisy can be part of our faith.
  - d. And I would suggest that if this faith is based on love, it not argumentative.
    - (1) We are not trying to win arguments.
    - (2) We are trying to win souls.
6. These qualities should be the motivating power for all of us, and they

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will produce the love that Paul talked about and the unity that should characterize the church.

### II. 1:8-11. The Place of Law.

A. I suspect we have ambivalent feelings about law, especially as Christians.

1. On the one hand, there are obvious dangers when we give in to a strict legalism.
2. At the same time, we feel a deep-seated need for justice, the recognition that certain things just are not right.

B. According to Paul is law good?

1. V. 8. Law is good if it is used properly.
2. Would you like to be able to do whatever you want?
  - a. At first that might sound attractive, but there is a catch.
  - b. If I can do whatever I want, then someone else can do whatever he wants.
  - c. And what if he wants to steal my possessions or kill me?
  - d. When we consider the matter from that standpoint, I doubt that any of us really want to live in a country where there is no law.
3. And so, as Paul says, law is good.
  - a. Good if it is used “properly,” or “lawfully” as the Greek word implies.
  - b. Law exists to control evil men.
  - c. Good people do not need the constraints of law, because their behavior is controlled by a different motivation.

C. Paul then goes on to provide a list of lawless people, for whom laws are made.

1. This list has often been compared to the Ten Commandments.
2. At least 8 of the 10 can be identified on this list.
  - a. 1 – have no other gods before me – unholy and irreligious
  - b. 2 – no images?
  - c. 3 – take the Lord’s name in vain – unholy and irreligious
  - d. 4 – remember the Sabbath day – unholy and irreligious
  - e. 5 – honor your father and mother – kill their fathers or mothers
  - f. 6 – do not kill (murder) – kill their fathers or mothers, manslaughter
  - g. 7 – do not commit adultery – adulterers and perverts (homosexuals)
  - h. 8 – do not steal – slave traders



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- i. 9 – do not bear false witness – liars, perjurers
      - j. 10 – do not covet
    - 3. If we seek for the most exalted example of law, we find it in the Ten Commandments.
    - 4. It is by far the best that law can do.
    - 5. But there is I suggest a better way.
  - D. Matt. 5. The Sermon on the Mount
    - 1. Over and over in this section, Jesus uses the formula, “You have heard that it was said . . .”
    - 2. Then Jesus quotes one of the Ten Commandments.
    - 3. He then goes on to say, “but I tell you . . .”
    - 4. Followed by a more strict interpretation that concerns not just actions, but motivation – the heart, if you will.
    - 5. So in one sense the Christian life is more restrictive than that prescribed by the Law of Moses.
      - a. The Law says, “Do not murder.” Jesus says, “Control your emotions.”
      - b. The Law says, “Do not commit adultery.” Jesus says, “Control your very thoughts.
    - 6. Matt. 5:20. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.
      - a. One way our righteousness exceeds theirs is the recognition that we are under grace, not under law. Our faith is reckoned as righteousness.
      - b. Another is that we aim at attitudes, not just actions.
  - E. In summary, law sets limits on our actions; grace defines goals for our hearts to reach.
  - F. It is a matter of perspective.
  - G. But grace calls us to a higher standard than law.
- III. 1:12-17. Paul – A Witness to God’s Grace to sinners.
  - A. Paul uses his own conversion experience to demonstrate the power of the gospel.
    - 1. I find it difficult to imagine what it must have been like for Paul.

## 1 Timothy 1 - 8

2. Perhaps that was one reason he was sent to the Gentiles.
  3. Even so, how many times must he have come face to face with someone who had been imprisoned or had a family member killed at Paul's hand?
- B. I wonder how the intellectual speculators at Ephesus viewed Paul's former life?
1. How do we see other Christians?
  2. How do we see ourselves?
  3. Paul writes far more about grace than any other New Testament writer.
  4. I suspect it is because he knew how much he had been forgiven.
  5. I also believe that this is the attitude that will make us most effective in our attempts to reach out to the world with the gospel.
  6. If we approach people in a self-righteous manner, we will most likely turn them off.
  7. But if we show ourselves to be sinners whose lives have been transformed by the power of God, then we will truly have something to offer the world.
- C. In verse 13 Paul says he received mercy because he acted in ignorance. Is ignorance an excuse?
1. We have all heard the phrase, "Ignorance of the law is no excuse."
  2. In law I believe that is appropriate, because law is concerned only with our actions.
  3. But God can see beyond ignorance, if that is all it is.
    - a. There are those who I believe choose to be ignorant.
    - b. This is not simple misunderstanding, but a deliberate darkening of the soul.
      - (1) Perhaps because of hurt or pain.
      - (2) Perhaps because we want to live a certain lifestyle and the truth interferes with that.
      - (3) This is somewhat like Pharaoh's hardened heart.
    - c. But others like Paul, were honestly mistaken.
      - (1) And a person like that God can reach.
      - (2) Paul had that:
        - (a) pure heart

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- (b) clear conscience
    - (c) sincere faith
  - (3) And God could use that to reveal the truth of Christ to him.
- D. 1:15. Paul never seems to have been able to forget his past life, nor fathom the depth of God's grace.
  - 1. Generally we encourage people not to harbor guilt over the past. Why do you think Paul constantly refers to his past, even calling himself the worst of sinners?
    - a. I do not believe Paul had a guilt that ate away at him.
    - b. I do think he never lost his wonder and gratitude at God's love and power to save even a mass murderer.
  - 2. Also, remembering what we once were is a good way to keep us from pride.
  - 3. Paul mirrored the Prodigal Son in his own life.
    - a. He would have been content to serve.
    - b. But God made him a son, as He does all of us.
    - c. Yet, although many of our translations do not show it, Paul consistently refers to himself as a slave (δοῦλος).
    - d. Remembering his past urged Paul on to greater effort.
    - e. He could never understand how some Christians could interpret God's grace as license to sin.
    - f. It is almost impossible for me to teach a class without some reference to grace, yet I too cannot understand how anyone can truly understand grace and use it as license to sin.
  - 4. Finally, Paul's past served as an encouragement to others.
    - a. For those coming out of the debasing sensuality of paganism.
    - b. For Jewish legalists who may not have understood how truly loving God really is.
    - c. And even for us today.
    - d. If you think you are too great a sinner for God to forgive, simply look at Paul's life.
    - e. You are not the greatest sinner.
      - (1) Paul already took that title.
      - (2) And look at how God used him.

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(3) I wonder what our excuse is?

IV. 1:18-20 Your Orders as a Good Soldier.

- A. Already in the first chapter Paul reminds Timothy that his calling was accompanied by some type of prophetic activity.
1. It will not be the last time Paul emphasizes this to Timothy.
  2. Had Timothy begun to have doubts, perhaps become discouraged?
  3. I find it encouraging that we see Biblical characters having to deal with the same problems we face.
  4. Their faith was not forged on a mountaintop, separated from the harsh realities of life.
  5. They suffered doubt, disappointment, and disillusionment – just as we all do at times.
  6. But they conquered it, and the message of Scripture is that, with God’s help, so can we.
- B. The phrase translated “fight the good fight” (στρατεύη ἐν ἀυταῖς τὴν καλὴν στρατείαν) is a military term. It really means to wage war.
1. Paul is fond of the military metaphor. He will use it again in 2 Timothy.
  2. It may have been particularly meaningful to Timothy.
  3. Perhaps his father had been a soldier.
  4. At least Paul felt Timothy would understand the symbolism.
- C. In verse 19 Timothy is told to take two weapons. What are they?
1. Faith
    - a. This is to be our motivation.
    - b. A soldier needs the assurance that the cause he is fighting for is just, and that he will ultimately be victorious.
      - (1) Remember the division and chaos that surrounded the Vietnam War.
      - (2) Eventually it became impossible to win in such circumstances.
      - (3) I do not know if any war can be said to be just, but I am convinced that a nation cannot win a war if its armies do not think it is just.
      - (4) And so it is with us. We cannot win the battle against Satan and his forces, unless we are convinced that we are right and that we will ultimately prevail.
  2. The other weapon Paul mentions is a good conscience.
    - a. Conscience is like basic training.

## 1 Timothy 1 - 11

- b. Basic Training teaches a soldier to act instinctively.
    - (1) You are trained to respond a certain way – over and over.
    - (2) Then when you actually find yourself in combat, the training overcomes your fear, and you do what you have been trained to do – without thinking about it.
    - (3) Often when temptation comes, there is no time to study or evaluate. We will respond instantly – one way or another.
    - (4) And conscience helps us to respond properly.
  - c. Should we ever go against our conscience?
    - (1) I think not.
    - (2) Certainly our conscience is not infallible, but it is the measure of our understanding and should never be violated.
    - (3) I must at all times do what I believe to be right.
  - 3. Another reason the soldier image is a good one is that it emphasizes that our comfort, even our safety is not the ultimate goal.
    - a. In war which is more important –
      - (1) avoiding casualties?
      - (2) accomplishing the mission?
      - (3) Obviously accomplishing the mission is the important thing.
    - b. What this means is that individual soldiers are expendable.
    - c. [Relate story of Eisenhower’s meeting with Airborne Troops just before D-Day. He expected 75% casualties.]
  - 4. How often do we hear Christians question why their lives are hard and full of temptation?
  - 5. It is simply part of the battle, and each of us should be prepared for it.
  - 6. God has not told us that we will not be part of the fight.
  - 7. He has not even said that we will not be a casualty.
  - 8. What He has promised is that ultimately we shall be victorious.
- V. 1:19b, 20. Shipwrecked Faith
- A. To emphasize the seriousness of his instructions, Paul gives two examples of men who lacked these qualities and, in his words, “shipwrecked their faith.”
    - 1. Hymanaeus – In 2 Timothy 2:17, 18 we learn that he was one of those who claimed that the resurrection was already past.
    - 2. Alexander – This may have been Alexander the coppersmith

## 1 Timothy 1 - 12

mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:14 who did Paul much harm.

### B. What does “handed over to Satan” mean?

1. Several explanations have been offered.
  - a. The equivalent of “excommunication,” that is banishing the person from the fellowship and spiritual protection of the church.
  - b. Casting a person out of the church into the world which was seen as Satan’s domain.
  - c. Praying for physical affliction to come upon the person.
2. 1 Cor. 5:5 contains another account of this phrase being used.

hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

3. The phrase “to be taught” (παιδευθῶσιν) means to learn through discipline or punishment.
4. It can even mean to whip or scourge.
5. What we learn from this incident.
  - a. Church discipline is a serious matter.
  - b. There are indications that it may have physical as well as spiritual consequences.
    - (1) Acts 5 – Ananias and Saphira.
    - (2) 1 Cor. 11:29-30 – Misuse of the Lord’s Supper.
  - c. In the first century constantly faced with death for their faith, the early church could not look upon spiritual mediocrity lightly.
  - d. The purpose of church discipline is always to restore the one who has fallen away.
  - e. It always is a demonstration of love.
    - (1) for the person disciplined.
    - (2) for the rest of the body who must be protected.

### C. Whether through the soldier imagery or that of church discipline, the unmistakable message of this chapter is that the Christian life is serious.

1. It is not a game.
2. It is not simply one aspect of our lives.
3. It defines who we are.
4. And it determines where we shall spend eternity.

## 1 & 2 Timothy

### 1 Timothy 2

I. 2:1-7. Paul begins this chapter with instructions regarding prayer.

2:1-2. I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — <sup>2</sup>for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness

- A. The four terms used here (requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving) merely indicate different aspects of how we approach God.
  - 1. All of them are legitimate.
  - 2. Some commentators distinguish among them.
  - 3. But the reality is that all of them should be a part of our prayer life.
  - 4. If we were to rank them, I suspect that Paul records them in pretty much the order we offer them.
    - a. Requests are first on our list.
    - b. Thanksgiving is last.
    - c. And somehow I feel that is just the reverse of what it ought to be.
- B. Prayers are to be offered for everyone.
  - 1. There is no person or group of people that we cannot take to God in prayer.
  - 2. Certainly our prayers alone cannot save the ungodly or rebellious person.
  - 3. But it is proper and comforting to know that when we have done all we can, we are invited to take our concern for that person before a loving God.
- C. Then Paul singles out one specific group that he indicates should regularly be in our prayers – kings and those in authority.
  - 1. Several things strike me about Paul's instruction.
    - a. He doesn't give any exceptions.
    - b. At this time Nero was probably the emperor of Rome.
      - (1) Nero was one of the most cruel men ever to serve as emperor.
      - (2) Paul may have suspected that eventually Nero might be the one to order his execution.
      - (3) Yet he still implies that even a Nero should be the object of our prayers.
    - c. Perhaps Paul is contrasting the respect we owe those in

## 1 Timothy 2 - 2

authority with the worship the emperors had begun to demand.

- (1) We should respect authority in any form.
  - (2) And that respect makes it natural for us to petition almighty God for their welfare.
  - (3) But that respect never intrudes to the level of worship.
  - (4) Our worship is reserved for God alone.
2. Paul then gives the reason for our praying for our leaders – “that we may live peaceful and quiet lives.”
- a. We are to pray for the welfare of the state, of our country.
  - b. “Peaceful” refers to the absence of outward conflict.
  - c. “Quiet” describes inner tranquility.
  - d. Knowing Paul, I hesitate to think that he would have us pray for peace for our own sake.
  - e. I suspect he would see the lack of persecution or conflict as an opportunity to spread the gospel, especially when we consider verse 4

<sup>4</sup>who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

D. In vv 5-6, Paul goes on to emphasize the uniqueness of Christ.

<sup>5</sup>For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup>who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.

1. I see this as a direct challenge to the Gnostic elements in Ephesus.
  - a. Paul specifically emphasizes both the humanity and deity of Christ.
  - b. He emphasizes this by referring to Him by his divine title – Christ, but also by His human name – Jesus.
  - c. And this is what makes Christ a perfect mediator.
  - d. He is both human and divine and so can bridge the gap between the two.
  - e. Paul also states the reality of the redemptive death of Christ.
    - (1) It was real, not just a mirage as the Gnostics would have us believe.
    - (2) And it really did in some way redeem us.



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### II. Verse 8 – A link between prayer and instructions in worship.

- A. Paul ends his discussion on prayer by talking about one form of it, but he is also using this as a transition to talk about order in the assembly.

<sup>8</sup>I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

- B. The word for “men” means specifically male, as opposed to the more general term for people.
- C. Although I cannot prove it, it seems likely that Paul has in mind specifically the public assembly of the church, not only here but throughout this chapter.
  - 1. Certainly he would not intend to indicate that women were forbidden to pray.
  - 2. Rather he is speaking of order in the assembly, a matter he will address further in a moment.
- D. Neither is Paul commanding a specific form of prayer.
  - 1. This was a cultural matter.
  - 2. Lifting the hands was simply the most common form of prayer in those days.
  - 3. Paul’s concern is not with the form of the one praying, but with the attitude.
- E. Today we customarily bow our heads when praying. Would it be wrong to adopt another form?
  - 1. There are a number of matters to consider.
  - 2. One is an orderly worship.
    - a. Worship should edify, not distract.
    - b. The danger is that since we do not normally use bowing the head, another form might be more distracting in the public assembly.
    - c. And we would need to examine our motives.
      - (1) Would we do it to honor God?
      - (2) Or to attract attention to ourselves?
  - 3. At the same time, we should recognize that forms and standards do change over time.
    - a. 100-150 years ago, kneeling in prayer was common.
    - b. And I can see a value in it.
  - 4. And certainly any of these forms would be appropriate in our private prayers.
- F. Most difficulties can be resolved if we remember the purpose of prayer and concentrate on that.

Next Paul turns to some issues that had apparently become problems in the public

## 1 Timothy 2 - 4

assembly at Ephesus.

- G. I would wish we could know exactly what prompted Paul to write.
  - 1. Ephesus was not the only church having problems with their public assembly.
    - a. You may remember that Paul addresses the church at Corinth in some detail in 1 Corinthians.
    - b. In that instance we know that he was responding to a letter that had been written, apparently detailing some of the problems, as well as asking for guidance in dealing with the situation.
  - 2. Whether through Timothy or someone else, Paul had become aware of some of the problems in the church, and he attempts to restore some order to what had apparently become a chaotic situation.
  - 3. Here we see two examples of issues that were apparently causing division in the church.
    - a. A Gnostic style heresy that threatened both the doctrine and the very morality of the Christians at Ephesus.
    - b. The assembly which should be a time of worship and mutual support had become chaotic and was causing division in the congregation.
  - 4. We need to keep that in mind as we consider Paul's instructions.
- H. 2:9-10. Paul's first concern has to do with modesty, specifically with women.

<sup>9</sup>I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, <sup>10</sup>but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

- 1. I would hope we would all agree that these principles apply to men just as well.
  - a. I think it likely that in the church at Ephesus the problem arose primarily with women.
  - b. This is the only reason Paul addresses them specifically. The principles apply to all of us just as well.
- 2. When we think of modesty, what usually comes to mind?
  - a. Normally it is clothing that is too revealing.
  - b. That is what modesty means in our society.
- 3. When Paul speaks of modesty, what examples does he give?
  - a. Braided hair
  - b. Gold or pearls

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- c. Expensive clothes
- 4. Does this mean we should not wear these things today?
  - a. It might in certain circumstances.
    - (1) We should always consider the effect of what we wear on other people.
    - (2) At the same time, we should recognize that within acceptable limits there will be variation.
  - b. All of the examples Paul mentions have to do with showing off wealth.
    - (1) In the ancient world wealth divided people.
    - (2) People were born into a certain economic class and virtually never interacted with other classes socially.
  - c. But the whole message of the gospel is that such things do not matter.
  - d. And yet it must have been very difficult for these people to overcome the values with which their society bombarded them.
- 5. In that context What does Paul say is appropriate attire for the Christian woman?
  - a. Good deeds
  - b. “appropriate for women who profess to worship God.”
  - c. Once again, we men should not think none of this applies to us.
  - d. The message is that Christians should be noticed for what we do, not what we wear.
    - (1) Our focus should not be on the earthly or material,
    - (2) but on the spiritual, especially in the assembly.
- 6. How should we apply all this today?
  - a. In the ancient world differences in dress would have been striking.
  - b. In our society it is less so.
  - c. I would suggest that asking a simple question would be appropriate. “Does this reflect my Christian image in a positive manner?”
    - (1) If the answer is yes, then there is likely no problem.
    - (2) If the answer is no, then perhaps we need to consider if

## 1 Timothy 2 - 6

something else might be more appropriate.

- d. I would also consider whether the principle applies to other things besides dress.
    - (1) Speech, especially gossip.
    - (2) Other forms of material things
      - (a) cell phones – Are they necessary in the assembly?
      - (b) Racial attitudes.
        - i) It is shameful that the church was slower than society as a whole to recognize the very Christian principle that all people are equal.
        - ii) Even the Bible was at times used to attempt to justify attitudes for which there simply is no justification.
7. In summary, the public assembly has at least two purposes.
- a. To glorify God.
  - b. To edify one another.
  - c. Anything that detracts from these two goals is not appropriate for the Christian.

- I. 2:11-12. Next Paul turns to problems having to do with women in the public assembly.

<sup>11</sup>A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. <sup>12</sup>I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

- 1. We certainly do not have time tonight to get into the role of women in the church.
  - a. That is a subject that would require bringing in a number of scriptures and examining the context of each one.
  - b. What I would like to do is take the principle Paul talks about here and see if we can apply it to our own lives.
- 2. However, I would like for us to put what Paul has to say in the context of the times, seeing what may have been going on in the church.
  - a. We have already talked about the fact that there were both Jewish and Gentile elements within the church in Ephesus.
  - b. Jewish women were generally not considered even a full person.

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- (1) They were forbidden to learn the Torah.
  - (2) Forbidden to teach even the youngest children.
  - (3) Women sat apart from men at the synagogue. Women came, not to learn, but to hear.
- c. Greek women were divided into two classes – respectable and unrespectable.
- (1) You may remember that Paul got into trouble with the authorities at Ephesus because of the city’s most famous temple – the temple to Diana or Artemis (Acts 19:28).

<sup>28</sup>When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

- (2) This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
  - (3) It employed hundreds of priestesses who were actually sacred prostitutes.
  - (4) Having sex with one of these priestesses was considered part of their worship.
- d. By contrast respectable Greek women took no part in any public assembly.
- e. Greek women normally stayed confined within their homes.
- f. So, for women to have assumed leading roles in the assembly would have been considered shocking by both Jewish and Greek society.
3. And yet it seems that this is precisely what had happened, both in Corinth and in Ephesus.
4. Given the circumstances it makes us wonder just what might have caused this to happen.
5. Paul is often accused of being a sexist by writers today, largely because of passages such as the one we have here, but is that true?
6. Did Paul really hate women?
- a. I do not see how anyone could read what Paul has to say about husbands and their responsibilities to their wives in Ephesians 5, and believe that Paul either hated women or even looked down on them.
  - b. Contrary to the contemporary culture of both Jewish and Gentile societies, Christianity actually liberated women in ways that no other movement had ever done.
  - c. And let us not forget that even Paul ultimately says that

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<sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28)

7. So, what had happened to cause such problems in Corinth and in Ephesus?
  - a. I would suggest that it arose because of a misunderstanding of the teachings of Christianity itself.
  - b. What the Christians had learned from Paul himself had liberated women, both from the licentious attitudes of the Greeks and the oppression of the Jews.
  - c. But just as they had misused Paul's teaching about grace and made it into a license to sin, so they had taken his teaching about the equality of women and turned into a scandal that would have made the church seem unrespectable to the community.
  - d. So Paul tries to restore a balance that:
    - (1) maintains the proper roles of authority and submission.
    - (2) doesn't allow women to be relegated to the subordinate position of their culture.
    - (3) prevents the church from gaining a reputation for disorder and licentiousness.
  - e. Paul is simply trying to put some order back into the assembly.
  - f. At least this seems consistent with what we read in Scripture.

### III. An application for our own time.

- A. I don't want us to leave this passage as simply a means of "putting women in their place."
- B. I believe there are principles here that apply to each one of us, and I would like to end this lesson by commenting briefly on what I perceive to be a real problem, not only with the world in general, but even in the church.
- C. I believe that our society as a whole has a real problem with roles. I would like us to consider that from a Christian perspective and see if we might learn some things that might help each one of us as we interact with one another.
  1. Don't each of us have several roles we assume? At any given time I am a:
    - a. Son
      - (1) That role has changed over the years.
      - (2) Originally my role in that relationship required simple

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- obedience.
- (3) Now, with my father gone and my mother almost 80 years old, that role requires that I take the lead and provide a degree of care that originally she provided for me.
- b. I am also a father
- (1) Although that relationship will never end, in a few years both my authority and my responsibilities will change.
- (2) The nature of that role will be different from what it is today.
- c. A husband.
- (1) That is the one role that never changes in principle.
- (2) Paul's instructions in Ephesians 5 will be just as binding 20 years from now as they are today.
- (3) Yet even then, the specific ways in which it is applied may vary as our lives together change.
- d. An employee.
- (1) As an employee, I am both in authority over some and in submission to others.
- e. An elder.
- (1) This implies responsibilities that I did not possess two years ago.
- (2) Some time in the future I may not be an elder, and then it might not be proper for me to do things that now are a responsibility.
- f. Right now I am a teacher.
- (1) As a teacher my role in this class involves certain responsibilities.
- (2) Next quarter I will not be a teacher, so my role in the class will be very different.
- (3) My role tonight is to guide the class as we study God's word.
- (4) My role next quarter is to support the teacher, and seek to learn myself.
2. Have you ever been given a responsibility, but not the authority necessary to fulfill it?
- a. I am convinced God does not operate that way.
- b. If I am to fulfill my God-given responsibilities as a husband, a father, or an elder, then I believe that God delegates to me the

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authority necessary to fulfill those functions.

c. The same applies to a woman as she seeks to be a proper wife and mother.

(1) Since she has responsibilities in this role, God gives here the authority to fulfill those responsibilities.

(2) 1 Tim. 5:14 demonstrates this.

<sup>14</sup>So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander.

(3) One Greek word translates the phrase “to manage their homes.”

(4) It is the word οἰκοδεσποτέω from which we get the word “despot.”

(5) A woman has authority in the home commensurate with her responsibilities.

(6) So do we all.

d. In the same way each of us has the responsibility to make it easier for others to fulfill the roles God has given them.

e. This seems to me to be nothing more than common sense, another quality that seems lacking in our culture.

3. The point I would have us understand is that roles affect our duties and our responsibilities.

a. They say nothing about our worth or value.

b. We simply cannot judge these things using worldly or human standards.

c. The fact that I am an elder says nothing about my worth relative to any one of you.

d. If anything it should imply that I have a servant mentality, not an authoritarian attitude.

4. The last idea I would leave you with is my conviction that God never intended His church to be a place in which His people competed with one another for power or prominence.

5. We are to compete with one another in love and good works.

6. And our goal is to honor God, not to exalt ourselves.

7. May each of us seek to exercise the gifts God has given us to His glory.

8. And I believe He will bless us if we do that.



## 1 & 2 Timothy

### 1 Timothy 3

I. The need for appointing elders at Ephesus.

1 Tim. 3:1 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.

A. Before we discuss elders in general, I think we need to consider why this was a concern at Ephesus.

1. We know that previously Ephesus did have elders.
  - a. In Acts 20:17, Paul sent for them to meet with him before his journey to Jerusalem where he was arrested.
  - b. So we know that Ephesus had elders.
  - c. Presumably they had been appointed by Paul himself.
2. Yet here Paul is instructing Timothy about appointing elders. What happened?
  - a. Many explanations are possible.
  - b. The previous elders may have died or been killed.
  - c. They may have fallen away.
3. However, if none of the previous elders remain (as seems apparent here), then I suspect this is one more evidence of how bitterly divisive the heresy at Ephesus had become.
  - a. As we saw earlier, the worship had become chaotic and even the cause for gossip.
  - b. False teaching was rampant.
  - c. And now we learn that the leadership of the church is no longer functioning.
  - d. The situation has truly become desperate.
4. This is the background from which we should view Paul's instructions to Timothy.

II. What is an elder?

A. This may seem like a simple question, but if we look at the religious world around us, we can find a multitude of answers to that question.

B. I think virtually every New Testament scholar (regardless of their religious background) would agree that in the New Testament the terms elder and bishop are used synonymously.

1. In Acts 20 when Paul met with the Ephesian elders we see these concepts presented.

a. In verse 17 they are referred to as elders.

From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.

b. Verse 28 refers to them as overseers or bishops (depending on your translation).

## Elders & Deacons – 2

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

c. At the same time this verse also emphasizes the shepherding role of this office.

2. In a separate passage Peter uses the same three terms to describe this office.

1 Peter 5:1-2 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup>Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

3. So we have three terms that are used in the New Testament to identify the same office.

- a. Elder
- b. Bishop or overseer
- c. Shepherd

III. 3:1-7 This brings us to the section we commonly refer to as qualifications of elders.

A. While I have no problem with the word qualifications, we should be aware that this term is not used in the text.

1. The word can imply a sense of corporate America that I feel does not fit into the way these verses describe the ideal elder.
2. For this reason I prefer the term characteristics to qualifications.
3. But I would not argue much about it either way.

B. First of all Paul says, "If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Does this sound too political for the church? Should we seek such an office?"

1. As we shall see in a moment, Paul is not viewing this office the way we too often do.
2. It is not so much an opportunity to control as to serve. In the church service is always to be the standard by which we measure success.

C. Should these verses be used as a check list?

1. This too is what we have traditionally done, but is it accurate?
2. Perhaps it might be helpful if we viewed these verses as a job description.
  - a. If a company places an ad for a position, they normally describe in that ad what they are looking for in a candidate, in

terms of –

- (1) Education
- (2) Skills
- (3) Experience

- b. Does this ad generally give minimum requirements?
  - (1) No, usually we describe the ideal candidate.
  - (2) We know that generally we will not get someone with every single characteristic we want, but we start by asking for the ideal.
  - (3) We then seek an applicant who comes closest to this ideal.

3. Also, if we compare these lists in Timothy and Titus, we shall see that in general they agree.

- a. We see common characteristics in both lists.
- b. A man who fit the description in Timothy, could expect to be qualified in Titus.
- c. At the same time, the lists are not identical.
- d. And this makes me reluctant to view them as check lists.

4. This is especially difficult when a congregation is seeking elders for the first time.

- a. I have known of congregations who viewed the qualifications so strictly, that no one could ever expect to be qualified.
  - (1) If we take these characteristics legalistically, they describe a perfect man.
  - (2) And I think I can say without fear of being contradicted by any of our present or previous elders, that not one of us is perfect.
- b. At the same time, the characteristics are important.
  - (1) They do mean something.
  - (2) And they should in general provide an accurate description of anyone serving as an elder in the church.

IV. Let us take some time now to consider just what Paul says an ideal elder would be like.

A. Look at the handout.

1. You will notice that the qualifications are not in the order they are listed in 1 Timothy.

2. The characteristics can be combined into at least three separate categories. For purposes of our study tonight, I wish to consider them as describing the elder in terms of:
  - a. Character
  - b. Personality
  - c. Family Considerations

B. Character

1. It is my view that those aspects that Paul uses to define character ought to be first on our list of considerations.
  - a. I am afraid that too often they tend to come last.
  - b. Perhaps because they are more subjective and thus harder to quantify.
2. The first characteristic Paul gives us perhaps signifies its importance. An elder must be above reproach.
  - a. As we mentioned before, this does not imply perfection.
  - b. It does, however, indicate that a man in this position must have a reputation that not only is he free from definite charges or even malicious gossip, but the very idea of scandal would seem foreign to such an individual.
  - c. To put it another way, this is a person for whom the Christian life is not just a set of rituals or practices.
  - d. Rather, he attempts to live by the highest principles outlined by our Lord.
  - e. And yes, I do feel uncomfortable as I compare my own life with this standard. Every time I read this passage I am reminded how far I have yet to go.
3. Respectable
  - a. The Greek word used here (κόσμιον) is related the word Paul used in chapter 2 to describe modesty.
  - b. Paul has more to say about the elder's reputation with outsiders.
  - c. This word applies to how he is perceived by both Christians and non-Christians alike.
  - d. This would not imply that an elder should not have a sense of humor.
  - e. Rather the emphasis is on his ability to respond to any

situation with dignity and seriousness.

4. Able to teach
  - a. This seems a Catch 22 qualification.
    - (1) An elder is supposed to teach.
    - (2) Then we give him a job that makes it difficult to find the time to prepare.
  - b. The implication though is that the elder will be a teacher.
    - (1) Not necessarily in a class setting such as this.
    - (2) but an elder needs to be able to:
      - (a) instruct the lost about the facts of the gospel.
      - (b) teach and encourage those whose faith is weak.
      - (c) counsel those who are encountering problems in their lives.
    - (3) There will be numerous occasions in which an elder needs an adequate knowledge of God's word to relate it to others.
5. Not given to drunkenness
  - a. If there is any characteristic that needs little comment this is it.
  - b. I would add that other things besides drunkenness perhaps should be considered.
  - c. An elder should be one who is not addicted to anything.
  - d. His life is not controlled by the material, but by the spiritual.
6. Not a lover of money
  - a. This implies a condition in which elders in the church were probably paid.
  - b. It could also refer to a situation in which a person might be bribed.
  - c. But once again, to me the emphasis is beyond these specific applications.
  - d. The elder is one whose prime responsibility is to shepherd the congregation, to point them constantly toward the spiritual.
  - e. An elder who is overly concerned with making money simply cannot do this.
  - f. It is again a matter of focus. What is important in this man's life?
7. Not be a recent convert
  - a. This is one quality which Paul did not give in his instructions to Titus perhaps one year later.
    - (1) One reason that has been suggested has to do with the

differences between the church in Ephesus where Timothy was and the church in Crete where Titus was serving.

- (a) Ephesus was an older, more established congregation.
- (b) The church in Crete was relatively new, so virtually all of the members would have of necessity been more recent converts than in Ephesus.
- (c) I do feel that Paul intended that virtually any congregation would after a certain number of years have men qualified to serve as elders.
- (d) As with all Scripture, common sense is to be applied.
- (e) A recent convert in one congregation may mean something different than in another.
  - i) We should not ignore the quality, because it is given for a reason.
  - ii) But neither should we be so legalistic about it that we never find men qualified to serve.

- b. I am not sure this characteristic exactly fits under character, but I have placed it here, because of Paul's reasoning for including it.
- c. The danger of conceit.
- d. The eldership is not a position for personal glory or prestige.
- e. No one, recent convert or not, who views the office in that light is really qualified for the position.

C. Personality

- 1. Once again the eldership is more than a job.
- 2. The spiritual welfare of the congregation is this person's responsibility.
- 3. The ideal shepherd must be emotionally fitted to the task.
- 4. Several of these characteristics say essentially the same thing about a person, and can be combined.
  - a. An elder is not to be dictatorial or have an authoritarian nature.
    - (1) Temperate
    - (2) Self-controlled
    - (3) Not violent, but gentle

- (4) Not quarrelsome
- b. I hope we can see that these qualities go against what America generally thinks of as leadership qualities.
  - (1) This is no accident.
  - (2) In Matthew 20:25-28 Jesus describes how leadership is to be exercised in His kingdom.

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup>Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup>and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—<sup>28</sup>just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- (a) Jesus recognized that things were no different in His day than in ours.
  - (b) The world defines leadership as prestige and authority.
  - (c) In contrast Jesus sees leadership in terms of service.
  - (d) And I hope we can see that the qualities Paul describes for the ideal elder fit exactly into what Jesus said about leadership in His kingdom.
5. Hospitable
- a. Hospitality was especially important to the ancient world.
  - b. I am concerned that we are losing that quality today.
    - (1) Too busy
    - (2) No free time
    - (3) The excuses are endless.
  - c. But fellowship requires more than a perfunctory greeting at the Sunday morning service.
  - d. Christians are to be involved with one another’s lives.
  - e. And the Christian leader is to set the example.
6. Have a good reputation with outsiders.
- a. Why is this characteristic important? After all, shouldn’t we question the world’s values?
  - b. Yes, but the world sometimes sees a side of us the church never does.
  - c. The implication I suspect is a warning against hypocrisy.

- d. Kenneth Wuest has this to say of this passage. “There is something blameworthy in a man’s character if the consensus of outside opinion be unfavorable to him, no matter how much he may be admired and respected by his own party.”
- e. If a man’s character is not recognized by the world, red flags should be raised.
- f. It implies a question about how strongly his Christian character is displayed outside the church building.

D. Family Considerations

- 1. The husband of but one wife (μῑς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα)
  - a. Perhaps none of the qualities Paul listed has caused as much controversy as this one.
  - b. Because of the variety of interpretations as well as the ambiguity of the Greek text, I think we should recognize that sincere people can disagree as to exactly what is meant.
  - c. Several interpretations have been given.
    - (1) An elder cannot be a polygamist.
      - (a) This interpretation can be dismissed rather easily.
      - (b) While polygamy was practiced in the Old Testament, neither Jewish, Greek, or Roman culture recognized the practice in Paul’s day.
      - (c) There would have been no need for Paul to prohibit it for elders when it would not have been practiced by anyone.
    - (2) Anyone married more than once cannot serve as an elder. This would include a widower.
    - (3) A divorced man cannot serve as an elder.
  - d. It would seem prudent to consider the reason for Paul concerning himself with a man’s family.
    - (1) Our family is the most intimate relationship we have.
    - (2) It provides the most direct example of how our faith impacts our daily lives.
    - (3) It also shows how our character and personality respond to specific situations.
    - (4) In a very real sense a man’s family life and history provide an outline of his character that cannot be seen anywhere else.



- e. In that light I would personally see no reason why a widower who has remarried is automatically disqualified from serving as an elder.
  - (1) This offers no reflection on his character.
  - (2) No reason to doubt his ability to serve.
- f. The concept of a divorced Christian presents a more difficult prospect, but I think it too should be considered in its overall context.
  - (1) On the one hand, the New Testament is adamant about preserving the sanctity of the home and family.
  - (2) At the same time, the gospel message itself teaches that God's grace is sufficient to cover any sin.
  - (3) And we know from 1 Corinthians 7 that the early church faced specific problems when one spouse became a Christian, and the other spouse refused to remain with the one converted.
- g. And that brings us to one other possible interpretation that just might help us in dealing with some of the situations we have already discussed.
  - (1) The Greek phrase Paul uses here can accurately be translated in an entirely different way.
  - (2) In Greek the words for husband and man, and the words for wife and woman are the same. Only the context determines which way the word should be translated.
  - (3) The phrase Paul uses is μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρῶν. Depending on one's interpretation, a literal translation would be either:
    - (a) "a one wife husband"
    - (b) "a one woman man"
  - (4) Don't we still use that phrase, "a one woman man" to describe someone who is absolutely faithful to his marriage bond.
  - (5) And isn't this in line with why Paul would give this qualification?
  - (6) This interpretation would certainly require that a divorced man come under greater scrutiny, yet not automatically disqualify him from serving.
  - (7) The issue remains, as Paul would I think have it, whether or not this man reflects the highest regard for

his wife, and whether he can be said to uphold the sanctity of marriage.

(8) There is no question that the ideal elder must demonstrate his regard for these qualities – whatever his personal background.

(9) Is there any further question or comment about this particular issue?

2. He must manage his own family well

a. Why is this qualification important?

b. Because the church too is a family.

c. Jim has mentioned before that if we look at how a man guides his family, we get a good indication of how he will act as an elder in the church.

d. If we look at how a man operates at home, can we say we want to have that man in a position of authority in the church?

e. All those other qualities of character and personality come into focus as we observe him with his family. It is there that we really see what he is.

f. I suspect there is another reason that it is important not only for the church, but for the man himself to consider his family.

(1) Paul knows the demands on an elder, and he wants to be certain the man's family can take it.

(2) A man is not to serve the church and lose his family in the process.

3. See that his children obey him with proper respect

a. We all know that there are no guarantees that our children will always reflect our own faith in their lives.

b. Yet the parent/child relationship is perhaps the best at illustrating how a man will serve as a shepherd in the church.

c. Do his children obey him?

d. Do they reflect the faith that we see demonstrated by the man himself?

e. Do they obey out of a proper sense of respect?

f. Because this man, this father, shows himself worthy of respect.

E. I would like to summarize our discussion of elders with some final observations.

1. The eldership, like all positions in the church, is to be primarily one of service.

a. It is to be used for service to the church.

- b. Not lording it over the church.
  2. We should look carefully at men we would consider for this position.
    - a. Do they reflect the highest ideals of our faith?
    - b. Do we respect them?
    - c. Do we trust them?
    - d. Do we even like them?
    - e. Ideally, our feelings for our leaders should not be awe or fear.
    - f. It should be genuine Christian affection.
  3. And if we as your shepherds ever fail to live up to those high standards, we should welcome your willingness to point that out.
  4. We are far from perfect.
  5. We seek to guide the congregation, relying on God's help to overcome our own weakness.
  6. When we say we solicit your prayers, we mean it.
  7. Because each of us knows how important it is for God to be at work in our lives.
- V. 3:8-13. Deacons
  - A. Read the passage.
  - B. We shall not go into detail on the phrases Paul uses to describe deacons.
    1. I would make some observations, however.
    2. Some of the same qualities used to describe elders can be seen in these verses.
    3. Particularly those concerned with character and family experience.
    4. That is why we need not spend too much time listing the qualifications.
    5. They are similar to those of the elders.
    6. While we generally associate the office of deacon with serving in a particular ministry, there is an important spiritual dimension to their work that should not be overlooked.
    7. Everything we do in the church has a higher spiritual purpose.
      - a. This is true with the education or worship ministry.
      - b. It is equally true with those overseeing our building and grounds.
      - c. Relate story of someone who was impressed by the church because of how the grounds were kept. We do not know what God may use to touch someone's heart.
    8. So when we look to these men, we should be considering not only skills and training, but spiritual maturity.

C. Where did the office of deacon originate?

1. Many people think that Acts 6 provides the first example of deacons. Acts 6:1-6 <sup>1</sup>In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup>So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. <sup>3</sup>Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them <sup>4</sup>and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

<sup>5</sup>This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. <sup>6</sup>They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

2. It is important to note that the word deacon (διάκονος) is not used in this passage.
3. However, one cannot fail to see some parallels to what we consider the role of the deacon to be.
  - a. If deacons were to serve in the same capacity as that for which they were selected in Acts 6, what would we call it today? – Benevolence Ministry.
  - b. It is not hard to imagine that other needs developed which would require that people be selected to fill these roles.
  - c. I would suggest that the office of a deacon developed from just such situations as this.
  - d. Notice that in Acts the qualifications of these men were not so much skills as wisdom and spirituality.
  - e. This also agrees with what Paul says a deacon should be.

D. What do deacons do?

1. Using Acts 6 as a model, I think some principles can be derived.
2. Notice the dichotomy between the work of the apostles and the work of these men.
  - a. The apostles saw their duty as concentrating fully on spiritual affairs.
  - b. I would certainly not equate the eldership with the apostles.
    - (1) But at this very early stage of the church, perhaps some analogies can be legitimately made.
    - (2) There were no elders at this time.
    - (3) The apostles were doing work which would later fall to the elders.

- (4) And in this part of their work (as opposed to more specific apostolic duties), we can draw an analogy.
- c. The seven men selected were to administer to the specific needs of the church.
  - (1) Certainly their work had a spiritual dimension.
  - (2) But it concentrated on translating spiritual principles into meeting specific needs in the church.
- d. Let us never forget that the Greek word *διάκονος* from which we derive the word deacon means no more and no less than servant.
  - (1) If we consider what is appropriate for a deacon to do, it will help if we keep that in mind.
  - (2) In a real sense the church should have shepherds and servants.
  - (3) Titles and prestige have no place.
  - (4) And ultimately each one of us is also a servant.

## 1 & 2 Timothy

### 1 Timothy 4

I. 4:1-5 Paul refutes false asceticism.

- A. Paul now turns his attention to the specific nature of the false teaching and practices that were going on at Ephesus.
- B. In Acts 20 when Paul had met with the Ephesian elders earlier, he had prophesied this very situation.

Acts 20:29-31 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup>Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. <sup>31</sup>So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

- 1. That time seems to have come for the church at Ephesus.
- 2. 1 Tim. 1:1. While Paul indicates that the problem he describes will occur in “later times,” it is clear from the context that he is dealing with a situation that was going on at that time.
- 3. Can we say the church has ever been free from these types of attacks?
  - a. The form of attack may be different for different generations and different cultures.
  - b. But we can always count on Satan to perceive our weaknesses and exploit them.
    - (1) This is true for us as individuals.
    - (2) it also applies to us as a congregation.

C. What does the phrase “deceiving spirits and things taught by demons mean?”

- 1. If an early form of Gnosticism was the problem at Ephesus, it would be likely that those holding these views spent much time talking about evil spirits and demons.
- 2. A similar problem existed in Colosse, and we see it there.

Col. 2:8. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

- 3. If there is a lesson from this, perhaps it is to show what happens when we take our focus off of Christ.
  - a. We will serve someone, either God or Satan.
  - b. Our only choice is whom will we serve.

1 Timothy 4 - 2

4. And it may not start as something evil.
  - a. Many aspects of our faith may be true, even beneficial.
  - b. But the center must always be Christ.
  - c. No one or no thing must be allowed to take that spot.
5. Another possible interpretation of this phrase is that Satan has taken over the false teachers at Ephesus, so their teaching is demonic.
6. I wonder if we consider how much of our lives are influenced by spiritual forces, for good or for evil?
  - a. Remember the cartoons that show someone in a dilemma with an angel and a devil whispering to him?
  - b. While the cartoons make fun of it, I wonder if there may be more truth to that concept than we like to think.
  - c. Paul tells us in Eph. 6:12 that our battles are not really earthly, but spiritual.

Eph. 6:12. 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.

- d. I feel his language here is more literal than figurative.
- e. And we would do well to live our lives accordingly.
- f. What a terrible thought to consider that what I teach may be things taught by demons.
- g. Even worse to consider that our lives may be controlled by demonic forces.

D. In verse 2 Paul in a roundabout way asks the question, “Whose slave are you?”

1 Tim. 4:2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

1. Although Satan is at work in false teaching, Paul makes it clear that men may choose to serve him or not.
2. The phrase “whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron” (καυστηριάζω) translates one Greek word which means to burn with a hot iron.
  - a. The implication may be that they have gotten so used to sinning that their consciences have become deadened.
    - (1) Sin of course can do that.
    - (2) The more we do something wrong, the less it bothers us to do it.

1 Timothy 4 - 3

- (3) That is the limitation of conscience.
- (4) And it will ultimately get to the point that we no longer even know right from wrong.
- b. Another likely meaning of this phrase is that these false teachers have been figuratively branded with Satan's mark, because they have become his slaves.
  - (1) In ancient times, slaves were often branded on the forehead with a mark signifying the owner.
  - (2) Satan is often not so obvious.
  - (3) Far better to retain control, but be inconspicuous.
  - (4) And perhaps one of the places Satan wants his mark in our lives is the conscience.
  - (5) If he has seared our conscience, he can manipulate us into doing or approving almost anything.
  - (6) All we have to do is consider what American society as a whole considered wrong 30 years ago, and compare it to what has happened today.
  - (7) Today in many areas what was once thought to be wrong is accepted, and it is considered wrong to criticize it. This is particularly true in sexual matters.
    - (a) homosexuality
    - (b) abortion
    - (c) premarital sex
    - (d) sex without marriage.
    - (e) divorce
- c. In numerous instances Paul referred to himself as the slave of Christ.
  - (1) In Gal. 6:17 he said, "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."
  - (2) Perhaps the only real choice human beings have is to determine whose slave we shall be.
- E. In vv. 3-5 Paul attacks the false asceticism that was being promoted by some of the teachers at Ephesus.

They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

<sup>4</sup>For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, <sup>5</sup>because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

- 1. When we use the word asceticism we refer to the practice of denying oneself certain earthly pleasures or comforts in an attempt to become



## 1 Timothy 4 - 4

more spiritual.

2. In Ephesus it seems to have taken two forms.
  - a. Forbidding marriage
    - (1) There have been those who have sought to portray Paul as being opposed to marriage.
    - (2) But whenever the subject comes up, Paul consistently defends marriage and sexuality as a gift from God.
    - (3) The only instance in which he counseled not getting married is in 1 Cor. 7:26 ff. and is the result of particular, temporary circumstances.
    - (4) In chapter 3 of 1 Timothy Paul emphasizes the central role marriage plays in the life of an elder or a deacon.
    - (5) And in this passage he is emphatic that forbidding marriage is not a sign of spirituality.
  - b. Abstaining from certain foods
    - (1) For the Gnostic element the issue had to do with the material.
    - (2) Both food and the body itself were material and therefore evil.
    - (3) And so physical desires (food, sex, etc.) were also evil and therefore should be denied.
    - (4) Just to be clear, these verses have nothing to do with dieting to achieve better health. Being overweight was not much of a problem for the vast majority of people in the ancient world.
    - (5) The point Paul is making is the same as for the issue of marriage. Abstaining from certain foods also does not make us more spiritual.
3. What then are the barriers?
  - a. If, as Paul says, everything is created by God and is good,
  - b. If asceticism is a doctrine of Satan,
  - c. Then why shouldn't we indulge in anything we like?
    - (1) Vv. 4-5 answer this question.
    - (2) The Christian response to any of God's gifts should be two-fold.
      - (a) Thankfulness for the gift.

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- (b) A sense of stewardship that ensures that the gift is used properly.
  - 4. Putting all this together, there are I believe two things Paul is trying to teach us.
    - a. Denying ourselves is not the road to greater spirituality.
      - (1) At best it denies that which God has created.
      - (2) At worst it looks at what God pronounced good and calls it evil.
      - (3) Asceticism also can easily lead to pride and arrogance.
      - (4) We can see that clearly in the way Paul deals with the situation at Ephesus.
    - b. The second point is that God's true nature is seen in His creation.
      - (1) Far from being the evil thing the Gnostics perceived the world to be, God's creation is good and reflects His nature.
      - (2) Is your God a loving Father or a harsh Victorian who delights in denying us?
      - (3) Paul's verdict is that God and His creation are good.
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- II. 4:6-10 Paul encourages Timothy.
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1 Timothy 4 - 6

- c. Sometimes nothing else will.
- 4. At the same time, Paul wants to be sure that both Timothy and the Christians at Ephesus understand that the super strict ascetics were not showing the path to true spirituality.
- 5. It is a lesson the church has needed to learn over and over again throughout the centuries.

C. In vv. 8-10 Paul leads Timothy from the fallacy of the false spirituality to an understanding of how we truly can develop our spiritual nature.

4:8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

- 1. This verse was apparently a statement of the Stoic or Cynic philosophers of that time about the value of religion.
- 2. Paul uses it to point out how foolish it is to believe that concentrating on the body or material things is the path to spirituality.
  - a. Disciplining the body can only improve the body.
  - b. If you wish to grow spiritually, you must exercise the spirit.
  - c. How do we exercise the spirit?
    - (1) We exercise the body by spending time and energy on the body.
    - (2) We exercise the spirit by spending time and energy on the spirit.
      - (a) study
      - (b) prayer
      - (c) meditation
      - (d) even fasting – not to deny the body, but to focus on the Spirit.
    - (3) v. 10 uses the illustration of how demanding true spiritual growth may be.

4:10 (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.

- (a) The word for labor implies working to the point of exhaustion.
  - (b) Strive was a word used to describe an athlete in the Olympic Games.
  - (c) Spiritual growth does not just happen, anymore than a strong and healthy body just happens.
  - (d) It requires proper nourishment and exercise.
- 3. How is Jesus “the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe?”

## 1 Timothy 4 - 7

- a. He is the potential savior of all men.
- b. He is the actual savior of those who believe.
- c. Far from being a limitation, this verse demonstrates God's love.
  - (1) Christ died for all people.
  - (2) All that is required is for us to accept the salvation He offers.
  - (3) In his book, *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis says "the doors of hell are locked on the inside."
  - (4) I suspect that is true. There is a real sense in which hell is our choice.

### III. 4:11-16 Paul charges Timothy.

- A. Paul's use of the word command in v. 11 is a strong one.
  1. It is the same word used in Acts 5:28. "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."
  2. It is similar to a superior officer giving an order to a subordinate.
  3. Paul is of course referring to the instruction he has given Timothy in the previous verses.
  4. However, this strong term is not meant to intimidate Timothy, but to strengthen him in his work.
    - a. If the false teachers at Ephesus accused Timothy of being inflexible, this part of Paul's letter would back him up.
- B. 4:12. The question of Timothy's youth has always been a matter of discussion.

4:12. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

1. Barclay says that the word for youth could refer to anyone of military age (up to age 40).
2. Many scholars feel Timothy was in his mid to late 30's.
3. More importantly it is possible that Timothy was not a naturally assertive person.
  - a. In 1 Cor. 16:10-11 Paul instructs the church at Corinth to put Timothy at ease and accept him as one who is "carrying on the work of the Lord."
4. Paul's admonition to Timothy is two-fold.
  - a. He is not to let his youth inhibit him
  - b. Rather he is to set an example in:

## 1 Timothy 4 - 8

- (1) how to act.
- (2) how to believe.
- (3) how to live.

C. 4:13 tells us much about the early church. It contains an overview of what Timothy's duties included.

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

1. The phrase "until I come" is an indication that Paul is either not in prison now or that he expects to be released soon.
2. Timothy's duties apparently involved three major areas.
  - a. Public reading of Scripture
    - (1) Why was the public reading of Scripture so important?
    - (2) Most of the Christians there would not have been able to read.
    - (3) Primarily what would have been read was the LXX.
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      - (a) The first collection of Paul's letters was probably made at Ephesus around the beginning of the second century.
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    - (1) The word here means literally to encourage, appeal to, console, or comfort.
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  - c. Teaching
    - (1) Teaching was probably instruction in the essential doctrines of the Christian faith.
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D. 4:14 refers to a spiritual gift given to Timothy, apparently when he was selected for this work.

## 1 Timothy 4 - 9

1 Tim. 4:14. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

1. Some prophetic activity selected Timothy for this task, just as Paul and Barnabas had been selected in Acts. 13:2-3.

Acts 13:2-3. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup>So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

2. Apparently Timothy was selected for his work under similar circumstances.
3. At this ceremony the elders and apparently Paul also (see 2 Tim. 1:6) laid their hands on Timothy.
4. Some type of supernatural aid was given to Timothy.
  - a. In some way it helped him in his work.
  - b. It may have involved helping him overcome his natural shyness so that he would be bold in fulfilling his commission.
5. Since Paul warns Timothy not to neglect this gift, we may assume it was possible for him to do so.
6. In fact the tense of the verb neglect (present imperative) implies that Timothy was doing just that. – stop neglecting
7. Paul is encouraging Timothy to remember both God's expectations of him as well as the power given him to fulfill those expectations.
8. While we may not have the supernatural gift to the extent Timothy did, we should remember that God's Spirit is at work in our lives.
9. We too should not limit ourselves to what we can accomplish on our own.
10. God's power is still there for us, if we ask Him.

E. 4:15-16 provide a summary of all Paul has said to Timothy

1 Tim. 4:15-16. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. <sup>16</sup>Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1. As we have seen, Paul makes no pretense that Timothy is perfect.
  - a. Our leaders should be examples, not of perfection, but of spiritual men, who are striving to become more spiritual.
  - b. SO SHOULD WE ALL!
2. In v. 16 Paul closes this chapter by encouraging Timothy to keep a balanced perspective.
  - a. Excessive attention to our faults can lead to emotional

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instability.

- b. Concern only for doctrine can produce a lack of compassion and intellectual arrogance.
- c. Both qualities are important, and both should characterize the life of a Christian.

## 1 & 2 Timothy

### 1 Timothy 4

I. 4:1-5 Paul refutes false asceticism.

- A. Paul now turns his attention to the specific nature of the false teaching and practices that were going on at Ephesus.
- B. In Acts 20 when Paul had met with the Ephesian elders earlier, he had prophesied this very situation.

Acts 20:29-31 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup>Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. <sup>31</sup>So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

- 1. That time seems to have come for the church at Ephesus.
- 2. 1 Tim. 1:1. While Paul indicates that the problem he describes will occur in “later times,” it is clear from the context that he is dealing with a situation that was going on at that time.
- 3. Can we say the church has ever been free from these types of attacks?
  - a. The form of attack may be different for different generations and different cultures.
  - b. But we can always count on Satan to perceive our weaknesses and exploit them.
    - (1) This is true for us as individuals.
    - (2) it also applies to us as a congregation.

C. What does the phrase “deceiving spirits and things taught by demons mean?”

- 1. If an early form of Gnosticism was the problem at Ephesus, it would be likely that those holding these views spent much time talking about evil spirits and demons.
- 2. A similar problem existed in Colosse, and we see it there.

Col. 2:8. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

- 3. If there is a lesson from this, perhaps it is to show what happens when we take our focus off of Christ.
  - a. We will serve someone, either God or Satan.
  - b. Our only choice is whom will we serve.



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4. And it may not start as something evil.
  - a. Many aspects of our faith may be true, even beneficial.
  - b. But the center must always be Christ.
  - c. No one or no thing must be allowed to take that spot.
5. Another possible interpretation of this phrase is that Satan has taken over the false teachers at Ephesus, so their teaching is demonic.
6. I wonder if we consider how much of our lives are influenced by spiritual forces, for good or for evil?
  - a. Remember the cartoons that show someone in a dilemma with an angel and a devil whispering to him?
  - b. While the cartoons make fun of it, I wonder if there may be more truth to that concept than we like to think.
  - c. Paul tells us in Eph. 6:12 that our battles are not really earthly, but spiritual.

Eph. 6:12. 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.

- d. I feel his language here is more literal than figurative.
- e. And we would do well to live our lives accordingly.
- f. What a terrible thought to consider that what I teach may be things taught by demons.
- g. Even worse to consider that our lives may be controlled by demonic forces.

D. In verse 2 Paul in a roundabout way asks the question, “Whose slave are you?”

1 Tim. 4:2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

1. Although Satan is at work in false teaching, Paul makes it clear that men may choose to serve him or not.
2. The phrase “whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron” (καυστηριάζω) translates one Greek word which means to burn with a hot iron.
  - a. The implication may be that they have gotten so used to sinning that their consciences have become deadened.
    - (1) Sin of course can do that.
    - (2) The more we do something wrong, the less it bothers us to do it.

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- (3) That is the limitation of conscience.
- (4) And it will ultimately get to the point that we no longer even know right from wrong.
- b. Another likely meaning of this phrase is that these false teachers have been figuratively branded with Satan's mark, because they have become his slaves.
  - (1) In ancient times, slaves were often branded on the forehead with a mark signifying the owner.
  - (2) Satan is often not so obvious.
  - (3) Far better to retain control, but be inconspicuous.
  - (4) And perhaps one of the places Satan wants his mark in our lives is the conscience.
  - (5) If he has seared our conscience, he can manipulate us into doing or approving almost anything.
  - (6) All we have to do is consider what American society as a whole considered wrong 30 years ago, and compare it to what has happened today.
  - (7) Today in many areas what was once thought to be wrong is accepted, and it is considered wrong to criticize it. This is particularly true in sexual matters.
    - (a) homosexuality
    - (b) abortion
    - (c) premarital sex
    - (d) sex without marriage.
    - (e) divorce
- c. In numerous instances Paul referred to himself as the slave of Christ.
  - (1) In Gal. 6:17 he said, "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."
  - (2) Perhaps the only real choice human beings have is to determine whose slave we shall be.
- E. In vv. 3-5 Paul attacks the false asceticism that was being promoted by some of the teachers at Ephesus.

They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

<sup>4</sup>For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, <sup>5</sup>because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

- 1. When we use the word asceticism we refer to the practice of denying oneself certain earthly pleasures or comforts in an attempt to become

## 1 Timothy 4 - 4

more spiritual.

2. In Ephesus it seems to have taken two forms.
  - a. Forbidding marriage
    - (1) There have been those who have sought to portray Paul as being opposed to marriage.
    - (2) But whenever the subject comes up, Paul consistently defends marriage and sexuality as a gift from God.
    - (3) The only instance in which he counseled not getting married is in 1 Cor. 7:26 ff. and is the result of particular, temporary circumstances.
    - (4) In chapter 3 of 1 Timothy Paul emphasizes the central role marriage plays in the life of an elder or a deacon.
    - (5) And in this passage he is emphatic that forbidding marriage is not a sign of spirituality.
  - b. Abstaining from certain foods
    - (1) For the Gnostic element the issue had to do with the material.
    - (2) Both food and the body itself were material and therefore evil.
    - (3) And so physical desires (food, sex, etc.) were also evil and therefore should be denied.
    - (4) Just to be clear, these verses have nothing to do with dieting to achieve better health. Being overweight was not much of a problem for the vast majority of people in the ancient world.
    - (5) The point Paul is making is the same as for the issue of marriage. Abstaining from certain foods also does not make us more spiritual.
3. What then are the barriers?
  - a. If, as Paul says, everything is created by God and is good,
  - b. If asceticism is a doctrine of Satan,
  - c. Then why shouldn't we indulge in anything we like?
    - (1) Vv. 4-5 answer this question.
    - (2) The Christian response to any of God's gifts should be two-fold.
      - (a) Thankfulness for the gift.

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- (b) A sense of stewardship that ensures that the gift is used properly.
  - 4. Putting all this together, there are I believe two things Paul is trying to teach us.
    - a. Denying ourselves is not the road to greater spirituality.
      - (1) At best it denies that which God has created.
      - (2) At worst it looks at what God pronounced good and calls it evil.
      - (3) Asceticism also can easily lead to pride and arrogance.
      - (4) We can see that clearly in the way Paul deals with the situation at Ephesus.
    - b. The second point is that God's true nature is seen in His creation.
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## 1 Timothy 4 - 7

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- b. Concern only for doctrine can produce a lack of compassion and intellectual arrogance.
- c. Both qualities are important, and both should characterize the life of a Christian.

## **1 & 2 Timothy**

### **1 Timothy 5**

I. 5:1-2. Conduct towards different people.

1 Tim 5:1-2. Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, <sup>2</sup>older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

- A. Do you think Paul is talking specifically to Timothy here, or are his instructions directed toward the whole church?
1. That is a difficult question to answer.
  2. I would compare it to the issue of how Acts 6 relates to deacons.
    - a. I suspect that Paul was specifically speaking to Timothy, because of his youth.
    - b. At the same time, the comments he relates here would have had value to anyone in the church at Ephesus.
  3. It is in this light that I would choose to consider these verses.
    - a. In chapter 4 Paul had admonished Timothy not to let anyone put him down because of his youth.
    - b. Now he is addressing the other side of that issue.
  4. In the course of fulfilling his duties, Timothy will be perhaps be required to come in conflict with various individuals and groups.
  5. Paul wants to be sure that he understands that there is a right way and a wrong way to interact with people.
  6. To this extent his instructions can have value to us today as well.
- B. The first group Paul considers is an “older man.”
1. The Greek word used here is πρεσβύτερος, the same word translated “elder” in other New Testament passages (Titus 1:5).
    - a. In this passage Paul is using the word simply to refer to an older man, not to an elder of the church.
    - b. This double use of the term (both an office and simply an older person) is another argument for an early date of writing for 1 Timothy.
    - c. Which would lend itself to confirming that Paul did in fact write this letter.
  2. In verse 1, what is the difference between “rebuke” and “exhort”?
    - a. Rebuke – The word used here means literally “to strike at” or “to treat harshly.”

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- b. Exhort means “to build up with encouraging correction.”
  - c. One is a negative approach, attempting to destroy that which is wrong.
  - d. The other is a positive approach, encouraging the erring brother to do what is right.
  - e. And which does Paul instruct Timothy to use?
    - (1) Obviously, Timothy is to be the one who builds up, not one who tears down.
    - (2) I think there are some fairly obvious lessons there.
    - (3) Particularly when we are dealing with people who are spiritually weak or even in error, we must always remember our goal.
    - (4) Our desire is to restore that person. That can usually best be accomplished through encouragement, not destructive criticism.
3. What then does Paul say Timothy’s approach to the older man is to be?
- a. He is to treat the elderly with respect.
  - b. In Paul’s words, “as if he were your father.”
- C. What does Paul tell Timothy about older women in verse 2?
- 1. He is to treat them as mothers.
  - 2. This statement directly corresponds to his instructions regarding older men.
  - 3. Timothy needs to recognize that the task of correcting an elder person who is erring is a delicate one.
    - a. The Bible is clear that we must respect and honor the elderly.
      - (1) For the contributions of their lives.
      - (2) For the wisdom that hopefully they have attained.
    - b. At the same time, as Paul’s representative, Timothy will have occasion when such a duty may be necessary.
      - (1) Timothy must not let his youth stop him.
      - (2) At the same time, he must curb his youthful zeal, and, even in correction, exhibit the respect due our elders.
- D. Paul also addresses how Timothy is to deal with his contemporaries.
- 1. Younger men are to be treated as brothers, younger women as sisters.
  - 2. Notice that in all his examples Timothy is to think in terms of family. The family metaphor, if properly applied, emphasizes two aspects that we normally take for granted in family life.
    - a. The limits of conduct as we relate to family members.
      - (1) We do not know if Timothy was married or not.

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- (a) It is very possible he was not.
  - (b) But either way, his youth would present him with difficult situations, especially in dealing with:
    - i) older women
    - ii) younger women
  - (c) Paul is warning him of the need to keep both a proper respect and a proper distance in these situations.
- (2) Elder – meeting with a woman – prefer someone else be present.
- (a) May not always be possible.
  - (b) But it avoids the possibility of even the appearance of impropriety.
- (3) And (as we have already said) what is true for elders, is generally good advice for all of us.
- (4) Principle is clear. All of our relationships should reflect the purity that should characterize the life of a Christian.
- (5) What is not acceptable between a physical brother and sister is not proper for a Christian brother and sister.
- b. The second emphasis that comes from the family illustration is the closeness that should characterize family relations.
- (1) While family affection can be abused, family love is real and should be a genuine description of the relationship we have toward one another.
  - (2) If Northwest is a living example of Christ's body, then our relationship to one another should express the variety of feelings of any family.
    - (a) unity of purpose within the family
    - (b) disagreements about the specifics of that
    - (c) concern for the welfare of members, even those with whom we disagree
    - (d) support for those who need it
    - (e) pride in one another's accomplishments
    - (f) affection for one another
- c. The role of family should define us as a church. We must not abuse it, but we must also not neglect it.
- d. There is one difference between earthly families and spiritual families.

## 1 Timothy 5 - 4

- (1) In Christ, husband and wife are also brother and sister.
  - (2) If we forget that relationship with our mate, that marriage will not be all God wants it to be spiritually.
- II. 5:3-16. Paul follows with lengthy instructions on how widows in the church are to be cared for.
- A. Paul deals specifically with widows.
1. But I believe the principles he outlines can just as legitimately be applied to anyone in need.
  2. This entire section can be seen as helping us with a variety of benevolence concerns we may encounter in the church.
- B. Paul devotes more space to his discussion of widows than he does for elders and deacons combined. Why would there be so much concern for widows?
1. In the ancient world, life was hard, and long life was rare.
  2. Then, as now wives tended to outlive their husbands.
  3. In those times, opportunities for women to earn a living were extremely limited.
  4. If a woman's husband died, she could be in terrible straits.
  5. With increasing persecution, more and more families might be separated by the martyrdom of part of the family.
    - a. A widower could continue to support himself.
    - b. But a widow could not.
  6. So Paul provides Timothy with sound principles for dealing with a situation that was all too prevalent in the early church.
- C. 5:3-8. These verses tell us that the church first has a responsibility to determine if the situation is a real need in which the church should get involved.
1. In verse 3 the phrase "proper recognition" may be misleading.
    - a. The KJV and other translations substitute the word "honor," but that too may not catch the meaning.
    - b. I think Paul is indicating how Timothy should determine which widows are deserving of financial support from the church.
    - c. This is a legitimate meaning of the Greek word he uses (τίμα).
    - d. The rest of this passage seems to make that interpretation clear.
  2. Paul seems to refer to three classes of widows.
    - a. Vv. 4-8. Widows with living families
    - b. Vv. 9-10. Older widows

## 1 Timothy 5 - 5

### c. Vv. 11-16. Younger widows

#### D. Vv. 4-8. Widows with living families

1 Tim. 5:4-8. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. <sup>5</sup>The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. <sup>6</sup>But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. <sup>7</sup>Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. <sup>8</sup>If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1. The message in verse 4 is clear.
  - a. If a widow has family, they are to support her.
  - b. In such a case the church is not to be burdened.
2. Even with all the immorality in the ancient world, a child's responsibility to his parents was considered sacred.
3. Paul's attitude reminds me of how Jesus condemned the Jewish leaders for their attempts to get around this responsibility in Matthew 15.
4. Paul says in verse 4 that this is nothing more than "putting our religion into practice." What a disgrace it would be if Christians had lesser standards than the world.
5. This is one way of "honoring" or "paying back" our parents for the love and support they have given us.
6. One commentator (W. Hendriksen) quotes a Dutch proverb: "It is easier for one poor father to bring up 10 children, than 10 rich children to provide for one father."
7. But William Barclay also gives a dark word of warning to parents. [Read p. 125 - Last Paragraph]
8. However, as a means of illustrating how serious this subject is, Paul concludes in vv. 7-8 by saying that the failure to provide for one's own family totally negates any profession of Christianity.
  - a. One again the New Testament is clear that Christianity is not determined just by doctrine and theology.
  - b. If our faith does not direct our life, it means nothing.

#### E. 5:9-10. The next group of widows Paul considers is older widows.

1 Tim. 5:9-10. No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, <sup>10</sup>and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

1. These are the people Paul feels are most worthy of support by the church.

## 1 Timothy 5 - 6

2. Many people feel the early church had an official order of widows.
  - a. These elderly women were supported financially by the church.
  - b. In return for this they may have taken vows.
  - c. And they were set apart for specific duties.
3. He gives three basic qualifications.
  - a. Over 60 years of age.
    - (1) This was extremely old for the ancient world.
    - (2) The implication is that the support would likely not be needed for a long period of time.
  - b. The second qualification v. 9 has to do with her marriage.
    - (1) The NIV translates it as “faithful to her husband.”
    - (2) The KJV renders it as “having been the wife of one man.”
    - (3) Some commentators interpret this phrase to mean that the widow had never remarried after her husband’s death.
      - (a) This would seem strange, since in the next verses Paul is going to counsel younger widows to remarry.
      - (b) Would he have advised them doing something that would have meant they would not be eligible for help in their old age?
    - (4) Although the word order is of course reversed, the Greek phrase used here is exactly the same phrasing as Paul uses in 1 Tim. 3 to describe elders and deacons.
    - (5) The logical interpretation is that Paul is saying that an enrolled widow must have been completely faithful to her husband (or husbands).
  - c. Paul’s final qualification is that the enrolled widow should be “well known for her good deeds.”
    - (1) She has brought up children.
      - (a) her own or others.
      - (b) the early church had many orphans as well.
    - (2) Shown hospitality.
      - (a) Remember what was said of elders.
      - (b) It does apply to all of us.

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- (3) Washed the feet of the saints.
  - (a) This is a woman who is not above menial tasks.
  - (b) Once again the Bible tells us we are all to be servants.
- (4) Finally Paul sums up her character by saying the widow should be once who:
  - (a) Helped those in trouble and devoted herself to all kinds of good deeds.
  - (b) The person asking help from the church should be one who has a reputation for helping when she was able to do so.

F. 5:11-16. The final group of widows Paul addresses is younger widows.

1 Tim. 5:11-16. As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. <sup>12</sup>Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. <sup>13</sup>Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. <sup>14</sup>So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. <sup>15</sup>Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

<sup>16</sup>If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

- 1. Why does Paul advise younger widows to marry (v. 14)?
  - a. Because they are not near the end of their lives as the older widows were.
    - (1) Right now they might be interested in money.
    - (2) Later on, they will want all of the things that go with a home and family.
  - b. In the meantime, idleness can lead to a number of vices.
    - (1) gossip
    - (2) being a busybody
    - (3) Apparently visitation was one of the duties of widows.
      - (a) We can see how a younger widow going into another woman's home, might cause problems.
      - (b) At the same time confidential things might be learned that younger women might be tempted to reveal.
    - (4) In this kind of situation these young widows might even get caught up in the web of the false teachers at Ephesus.



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2. So Paul's advice to them makes sense.
  - a. They are to marry.
  - b. Raise a family.
  - c. And begin a new life.
3. Once again, when the subject comes up, for Paul, marriage is always honorable.

### III. 5:17-25. The final verses in this chapter have to do with church administration and discipline.

#### A. 5:17-20. Matters having to do with elders.

1 Tim. 5:17-20. The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup>For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." <sup>19</sup>Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. <sup>20</sup>Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

1. The phrase "double honor" (διπλῆς τιμῆς) in verse 17 has given rise to a variety of interpretations.
  - a. At the very least Paul is saying that these men deserve to be recognized for the work they do.
    - (1) Remember that apparently something had happened to cause the leadership at Ephesus to break down.
    - (2) Now Timothy is going to be appointing new elders.
    - (3) Paul surely wants the church to appreciate these men for the work they do.
  - b. There is also a strong indication that under certain circumstances it is appropriate for elders to be paid.
    - (1) The Greek word translated "honor" is used in the New Testament to refer to money.
      - (a) Matt. 27:6. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money."
      - (b) 1 Cor. 6:20. you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.
      - (c) The analogy of the ox treading out the grain in verse 18 reinforces the view that some type of payment is referred to here.
    - (2) So what do you think Paul is saying in these verses?
      - (a) Paul goes on to explain that he refers to those involved in preaching and teaching.
      - (b) I have trouble believing that Paul meant that

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some elders should get twice the salary of others because they were more competent.

- (c) Would Paul have sanctioned two types of elders?
    - i) Those who ruled well.
    - ii) And those who didn't.
  - (3) What may be intended is that some elders have gotten so involved in preaching and teaching that they have no time to hold down a full time job.
  - (4) The church should support such men.
  - (5) And in fact at Northwest we do support one of our elders who is also engaged in full time preaching and teaching.
  - (6) I believe this is a good example of what Paul has in mind.
2. 5:19, 20. Instructions regarding bringing charges against an elder.
- a. What does Paul indicate should be the criteria for bringing a charge against an elder?
    - (1) Two or three witnesses.
      - (a) This corresponds with Jewish law.
      - (b) Deut. 19:15. One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.
    - (2) Several principles apply here.
      - (a) We have seen how in chapter 3, the character of the men selected is such that normally charges would be unthinkable.
      - (b) However, Paul recognizes that any human being is fallible.
      - (c) And elders are to be held accountable. No one is above bearing responsibility in the church.
      - (d) One's position cannot be used as an excuse to abuse power or trust.
      - (e) There is no such thing as Executive Privilege in God's kingdom.
    - (3) But witnesses are required to prevent:
      - (a) petty disputes.
      - (b) personality quarrels.

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- (4) The abuse must be real, not imagined.
- b. But if an elder is found to be guilty, what does Paul say is to be done?
  - (1) v. 20. He is to be “rebuked publicly.”
  - (2) The ASV reads “in the sight of all.”
  - (3) Two interpretations have normally been given for this phrase.
    - (a) the other elders.
    - (b) the entire church.
  - (4) I believe the latter is implied, especially since part of the reason Paul gives is “so that the others may take warning.”
  - (5) By seeing sin within the eldership rebuked before the whole congregation, the other elders would be more apt to take their responsibilities seriously.
  - (6) Also, for the young man Timothy, rebuking an elder would have been an extremely difficult situation.
  - (7) The presence and support of the entire eldership would have been beneficial.
- B. 5:21, 22. Paul’s charge to Timothy.
  - 1. “I charge” has the classical meaning of “to call gods and men to witness.” (Wuest).
  - 2. The severity of this charge indicates the seriousness with which Paul is trying to impress Timothy.
  - 3. V. 21. Under no circumstances is Timothy to show partiality.
  - 4. Paul is probably referring to his previous instruction regarding both widows and elders.
    - a. Remember the first church dispute recorded in Acts 6 resulted from charges of partiality in caring for widows.
    - b. In the church partiality has no place.
    - c. Every member of the body must feel that he or she is:
      - (1) treated fairly
      - (2) valued
      - (3) supported
      - (4) and ultimately loved
    - d. The reference to “laying on of hands” in v. 22 probably refers

## 1 Timothy 5 - 11

to the ordination of elders and perhaps deacons.

(1) If Timothy were to make unwise choices, it would reflect on him.

(2) The church must have the best.

C. 5:23. "Use a little wine."

1. Certainly a controversial passage.
2. Timothy apparently had decided on total abstinence.
3. But because of his medical condition, apparently this was an unwise decision.
4. Perhaps also the ascetic element at Ephesus would latch onto that and misinterpret it.
5. At the same time Paul's written instructions would support Timothy.
  - a. If this group were to use Paul's instructions in vv. 19-20 to bring charges against Timothy, this verse would support him.
  - b. Just as a church leader today might have to defend himself if he were in a similar circumstance.

D. 5:24-25. Paul's final encouragement to Timothy.

1. We have seen evidence that Timothy may have felt overwhelmed by his responsibilities.
2. Some men live lives of obvious immorality.
3. Some appear righteous, but in reality are not.
4. A few receive praise and appreciation for their goodness even in this life.
5. Many, however, spend their lives in service to God and are not fully recognized or rewarded.
6. But God is faithful.
7. In the end, the God who sees and knows everything will reveal everything.
  - a. A frightening thought for some.
  - b. A comforting thought for others.

IV. One final thought regarding v. 18.

A. This phrase is based on Deut. 25:4.

Deut. 25:4. Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.

B. Paul quotes the same verse regarding himself and his work in 1 Cor. 9:9.

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C. In verse 18, Paul also uses the phrase, “the worker deserves his wages.”

1. Luke 10:7 gives this as a saying of Jesus.

Luke 10:7. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages.

2. At this time Luke may have been Paul’s secretary.

3. Is it possible that already the gospel of Luke was considered to be Scripture?

4. While we cannot say for certain, it is an intriguing possibility.

## 1 & 2 Timothy

### 1 Timothy 6

#### I. 6:1-10. Challenges to Contentment

##### A. Vv. 1-2. When a slave becomes a Christian.

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

1. Paul seeming abruptly changes direction, and begins chapter 6 with a word to slaves.
  - a. Actually this type of moving from subject to subject is typical of Paul's writing, so provides one more evidence that Paul did in fact write 1 Timothy.
  - b. As Paul closes out his letter, I suspect he is responding to specific concerns that Timothy may have raised.
    - (1) The problem of slaves and masters has come up before in Paul's writings.
    - (2) Apparently it had become an issue at Ephesus.
  - c. While Paul does not specifically say so, verse 1 seems to be directed primarily at slaves with unbelieving masters.
  - d. In verse 2 Paul gives instructions to slaves who have believing masters.
2. In verse 1 Paul says a slave should treat his master as "worthy of full respect."
  - a. He goes on to provide a reason – "so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered."
  - b. What do you think Paul means by that?
    - (1) I interpret this as an evangelistic statement.
      - (a) Paul has consistently demonstrated that the only thing he considered worthy of his attention was the advancement of the gospel.
      - (b) Even his own life was, by comparison, of no value to him.
    - (2) Paul was also a realist. To have instigated a rebellion against slavery would likely have:
      - (a) Diverted the church from its primary purpose of saving souls.

- (b) Resulted in wholesale slaughter of Christians
    - i) Christians already had to deal with persecution.
    - ii) They were being accused of abominable practices.
      - a) Cannibalism – Lord’s Supper
      - b) Licentiousness – Christian love
      - c) Atheism – No pagan gods.
    - iii) Remember the rebellion of Spartacus.
  - (c) The condemnation of slavery would have discredited Christianity in the eyes of the world and perhaps most Christians.
  - (d) Christianity might not have been able to survive it.
3. How should we view what the New Testament says regarding slavery?
- a. Several other passages refer to slavery.
    - (1) Eph. 6:5-9
    - (2) Col. 3:22-4:1
    - (3) Titus 2:9-10
    - (4) 1 Peter 2:18-25
  - b. All of these passages are consistent in instructing slaves to be obedient and respectful to their masters.
  - c. I do not know what Paul personally thought of slavery.
    - (1) Like all of us, I am sure Paul was to some degree a man who reflected his age and culture.
    - (2) Being an apostle does not mean Paul was perfect.
    - (3) Paul never says that he believes slavery to be wrong.
    - (4) Similarly Abraham Lincoln never believed in or advocated the equality of blacks and whites.
    - (5) But Paul did set down a rule that slaves were to be treated, not as property, but as people.

Eph. 6:9. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

- (a) Consciously or subconsciously, this rule severed

slavery from its philosophical base.

- i) Accept this principle, and slavery in time must wither and die.
  - ii) But whether Paul was aware of this or not, I cannot say.
4. Verse 2 is directed toward slaves who have believing masters.
- a. They have a special problem.
  - b. Consider a man who in all legal respects is defined as property, but in the church is treated as a person.
    - (1) Such a person may even have been an elder or deacon.
    - (2) In this culture many slaves were well educated.
    - (3) Would such a slave be more likely to take advantage of his master?
      - (a) Expect leniency?
      - (b) Special favors?
  - c. Paul's instructions to such a slave are clear.
    - (1) A Christian slave should serve a Christian master even more.
    - (2) Because a brother is getting the benefit, not a pagan.
    - (3) However, he should also serve an unbelieving master well, to try to convert him by his example.
5. How does all this relate to the employer-employee relationship?
- a. How should we treat a non-Christian boss?
    - (1) Working hard.
    - (2) Showing by example that he or she can expect more from me than non-Christian employees
      - (a) Productivity
      - (b) Attitude
  - b. How about a non-Christian subordinate?
    - (1) The Christian boss must treat the subordinate as a person, with real needs. He is more than a tool to get the job done.
    - (2) If that employee must be disciplined, he or she should be able to see Christ in that discipline.
      - (a) Admittedly this may be difficult.
      - (b) But it is necessary nonetheless.
  - c. Above all, everyone with whom we associate in the world, should see that our faith affects our life in positive ways.
    - (1) our work habits
    - (2) our outlook on life



- (3) our behavior toward others
- (4) Once again, the principle holds. Our faith must determine how we live every day of our lives.
- d. I would suggest that this principle should not be extended to one area.
  - (1) A Christian should not expect special favors from another Christian in the work situation.
    - (a) [Relate story of Christian brothers who wanted me to buy from them at Emory.]
      - i) We may have an obligation to our employer.
      - ii) Our family
      - iii) Stewardship can come into play.
    - (b) The same is true in any area.
      - i) Selecting a doctor
      - ii) Buying insurance.
    - (c) Other things being equal, I had rather deal with a Christian.
      - i) But I must still make sound business and financial decisions.
      - ii) And no Christian should make another Christian feel guilty about doing that.

B. Vv. 3-5. Characteristics of false teachers.

1 Tim. 6:3-5. If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, <sup>4</sup>he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions <sup>5</sup>and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

- 1. Once again, Paul feels compelled to address the serious problem of the false teachers at Ephesus.
- 2. In previous verses Paul has shown how destructive the false teaching itself has been.
- 3. Here he focuses his attention on the lack of character of these teachers.
- 4. According to Paul, false teachers generally possess three qualities that are harmful to the church.
  - a. They are conceited.
    - (1) The false teacher desires to elevate himself, not Christ.
    - (2) While humility does not by itself prove that one's

doctrine is sound, the lack of it strongly suggests that the person does not possess even the most basic understanding of the nature of the Christian faith.

- (3) Perhaps the worst vice we can have is the one that perhaps all of us possess to some degree – pride.
    - (a) Pride is the ultimate form of rebellion against God.
    - (b) And it almost can be said to define sin.
    - (c) I have been unable to think of a single sin it is possible to commit that does not involve pride in some way.
  - (4) We would do well, especially in the church, to listen not just to the words, but also to the tone of a person's speech.
  - (5) If the conceit is obvious, we should perhaps be a little more careful about accepting the message.
- b. These false teachers are also ignorant.
- (1) This was an especially hard criticism of the false teachers at Ephesus.
  - (2) Their whole emphasis was on their special knowledge and advanced intellectual doctrines and philosophical speculations.
    - (a) These may have been brilliant people, very smart men.
    - (b) But we have all seen examples of how destructive intellect can be when it is combined with arrogance.
  - (3) These men set themselves up to be teachers, but Paul says they are actually ignorant.
    - (a) Because their pride has darkened their ability to learn.
    - (b) It is a warning to any of us who would presume to stand before others and attempt to teach God's word.
    - (c) Teaching born of arrogance is usually ignorance.
- c. Finally, these false teachers have unhealthy interests.
- (1) In Ephesus those interests tended toward:
    - (a) controversies
    - (b) quarrels about words

- (2) Have you ever met someone who seemed to enjoy controversy for its own sake?
    - (a) It gives them an opportunity to show off their knowledge and intellect.
  - (3) Make no mistake, there may be times when a Christian must face controversy and controversial teaching.
    - (a) But it should only be to preserve the truth and purity of the gospel message.
    - (b) Not to advance that person or a personal agenda.
  - (4) The false teacher is often a disturber of the peace, and three elements can usually be discerned.
    - (a) Any disagreement is taken as a personal insult.
      - i) This is an indication of pride.
      - ii) If we are all sincerely seeking truth, there is no need to get defensive.
      - iii) If I make a statement with which you disagree, I have no reason to get offended.
    - (b) But for the false teacher, often winning an argument is more important than winning a soul.
    - (c) Barclay – “In any argument the accent of his voice is bitterness and not love.”
5. Finally, Paul says in verse 5 that the ultimate sin of the false teachers is seeing godliness as a means of making money.
- a. I do not know what form this took at Ephesus, and Paul does not choose to comment on it.
  - b. But he does recognize that the allure of gain was as strong in his time as it is in ours.
  - c. In the following verses he addresses the subject more fully.

C. Vv. 6-10. The pursuit of money can be an obstacle to contentment. 1 Tim. 6:6-10. But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup>For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. <sup>8</sup>But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. <sup>9</sup>People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

- 1. Some scholars feel that the church at Ephesus had been influenced

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by the Stoic philosophers who tried to achieve contentment.

- a. The philosopher Epicurus when asked the secret of happiness said, “Add not to a man’s possessions, but take away from his desires.”
- b. Paul seems to say that godliness was the true path to both the gain the false teachers sought and the contentment which they taught.

2. 6:10. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

- a. Certainly a familiar passage.
- b. In what ways can it be said that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil”?
  - (1) As it has often been pointed out, it is the love of money that is the problem, not money itself.
  - (2) But I suspect Paul is looking at something that may have happened at Ephesus.
    - (a) Somehow the false teachers had used their teaching for profit.
    - (b) Haven’t all of us seen how the lure of wealth can cause people to:
      - i) compromise their principles.
      - ii) ignore their conscience.
      - iii) forget their friends.
      - iv) abandon their faith.
  - (3) And this is not simply a malady of the rich.
  - (4) Whether it is the rich who rely on it or the poor who see it as the answer to all their problems, the siren call of wealth all too often is destructive.
    - (a) It tends to be a thirst that is insatiable [1900's tycoon – How much is enough? “Just a little more.”]
    - (b) It is founded on an illusion – that it can bring security.
    - (c) It tends to make a person selfish.
    - (d) It too often generates worry and anxiety.
    - (e) And it may also lead to pain, regret and remorse.
    - (f) Hardly an advertisement for contentment.
- c. The reality is that it is never in the power of money to bring happiness.
  - (1) So many actors, sports figures.

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- (2) Howard Hughes
- d. Dedicating our lives to the pursuit of money is making a bad deal.
  - (1) It will all come to nothing in the end. [Howard Hughes – How much did he leave? All of it.]
  - (2) Instead our lives should concentrate on those things which will go on after this earthly life is over.
    - (a) Ourselves – our eternal soul.
    - (b) Our relationship with God.
  - (3) Mark 8:34-35. Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.  
<sup>35</sup>For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.
- e. Money is not evil, but it will not last. Our lives should be dedicated to something that does last.

## II. 6:11-21. Guarding God’s Deposit.

### A. Vv. 11-16. Paul’s Charge to Timothy.

1 Tim. 6:11-16. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you <sup>14</sup>to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup>which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, <sup>16</sup>who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

1. Paul has concluded his dealings with the problems of the Ephesian church.
2. In these last verses, he concentrates on encouraging Timothy in the struggle that he faces.
3. In verse 11 Paul instructs Timothy that his life and character must be the opposite of the false teachers he has just described.
4. He provides Timothy with a list of virtues, which sound much like the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23.
5. Just as when Paul was talking about elders, deacons, and widows, character is seen to be all important.
6. I truly feel that if we could learn that lesson, the church would be

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unstoppable.

a. But remember character is not just for our leaders.

b. It must describe each and every Christian.

7. What do you think Paul means in verse 12 when he tells Timothy to, “Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called”?

a. How do you take hold of eternal life?

b. While the ultimate fulfillment of eternal life, lies in the future, that life is a present reality.

(1) It is already accomplished.

(2) And it forever changes the nature even of our life on earth.

(3) We are different, not because of what we believe, but because of what God has done for us.

(4) But it is certain that once we experience the reality of that new life, we will be different.

8. 6:12-13 contain a confession of faith that all of us should be able to make.

a. Many scholars believe Paul is quoting an ancient formula which was given when a person was baptized.

b. Perhaps it was pronounced when Timothy was baptized, and Paul was reminding him of the commitment he made.

c. And one of the benefits of baptism is that it serves as a witness.

(1) When the pressure of the world tempts us to deny the reality of our commitment, remembering our baptism anchors our faith in a real moment in time.

(2) We can remember the fervor of our faith at that time, and it helps us get through the troubles of the present.

(3) Just as the concrete act of partaking of the Lord’s Supper reminds us of the reality of the atoning death of Christ.

(4) That is only one reason why baptism is better than a hastily said prayer offered alone during the emotion of the moment.

(5) You see, God’s instructions are given for a reason. He knows what we need.

9. 6:15-16. Paul’s Doxology

a. [Begin reading from verse 13 to get the context.]

1 Tim. 6:13-16. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you <sup>14</sup>to keep this command

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without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup>which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, <sup>16</sup>who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

- b. Once more I would like to point out that this habit of breaking off into a doxology of praise is a characteristic of Paul's writing.
  - (1) Ephesians 3:14-21.
  - (2) And one more evidence of his being the author of 1 Timothy.
- c. The very mention of Christ's return gives the aged apostle a magnificent vision of the majesty of:
  - (1) the King of kings and Lord of lords,
  - (2) who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light.
- d. I cannot but wonder if we have made God too familiar.
  - (1) We use the term "awesome" to refer to God, but I sometimes suspect we truly do not take the time to consider just how accurate that term describes Him.
  - (2) Can God be both Father and Lord?
  - (3) cf. *Inherit the Wind*. "God made man in his own image, and man, being a gentleman, returned the compliment."
- e. It is a sarcastic way of saying that we have reinvented God for our own purposes.
- f. Yes, God invites us to call Him Father, but let us not pretend that we can ever even begin to understand the truly awesome Being that is God.
- g. Our proper attitude toward God should reflect some combination of:
  - (1) gratitude
  - (2) love
  - (3) praise
  - (4) reverence
  - (5) awe

### B. Vv. 17-19. Paul's Advice to the Rich.

1 Tim. 6:17-19. Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. <sup>18</sup>Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to

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be generous and willing to share. <sup>19</sup>In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

1. Characteristically, Paul returns now to a former topic.
2. Perhaps he was concerned that his previous instructions might be misunderstood.
3. Would the ascetics say, “See, Paul agrees with us that material things are evil and should be avoided.”?
4. So Paul merely emphasizes what he had said earlier.
  - a. Wealth is not a sin, but those who possess it do have a responsibility.
  - b. And Paul warns them:
    - (1) not to be arrogant.
    - (2) not to put their security in wealth.
  - c. Instead they are to use their wealth to:
    - (1) do good
    - (2) be generous
    - (3) and (in a play on words), to be as rich in good deeds as they are in money.
  - d. And he closes with the reminder that, by doing so, we will be laying up eternal treasure where it really counts.

C. Vv. 20-21 contain Paul’s Last Words to Timothy.

1 Tim. 6:20-21. Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, <sup>21</sup>which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.

Grace be with you.

1. In closing, Paul directly speaks to Timothy by name.
2. The very name Timothy means “one who honors God.”
  - a. **τιμῶ**
  - b. **θεός**
3. In closing Paul encourages Timothy to live up to his name.
4. Perhaps a fitting goal for any Christian.
5. One final time Paul warns Timothy to avoid the false intellectualism of the Gnostic element at Ephesus.
6. Then he closes with a characteristic Pauline ending.
  - a. “Grace be with you.”
    - (1) Ἡ χάρις μεθ’ ὑμῶν.
    - (2) While not apparent in our English translations, the



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word “you” is plural in the Greek.

- (3) Certainly Paul was probably bestowing his benediction on the Ephesian church as the letter was read publicly.
  - (4) But is it stretching the point too much to consider the possibility that the blessing includes us as well?
- b. May God’s grace truly be with us all as we seek to walk in His steps.