TIMOTHY AND TITUS

BIBLE STUDY

A Verse-by-Verse Study



Guard the good deposit, preach the word,
be ready in season, out of season

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TRINFINITY
Enterprises

Timothy and Titus Bible Study

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Timothy and Titus Bible Study: A Verse-by-Verse Study

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Study

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this study direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

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Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to work through this verse-by-verse study of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. My purpose in writing this study guide is the same as it was for my study of Revelation: to bring you closer to our Creator and to give you a way to grow in your Christian walk.

I cannot name just one Paul in my life. Many people have come in and out of my life and taught me the faith along the way. These letters are from a mentor to younger leaders. I owe a lot to the people who mentored me.

These three short letters were written by Paul near the end of his life to two men he had trained, Timothy and Titus. They are full of plain, practical teaching about how a church should be led, what sound teaching is, and how a servant of God should live. I do not claim to be an authority on the Bible or on these letters. I am simply someone like you who wants to grow closer to God and understand what He has given us in His Son. Before you read any part of this book, or any part of Scripture, I ask that you pray, asking God:

- For the Holy Spirit to be present, to help open your eyes and your heart (Psalm 119:18, 119:105)
- For discernment and knowledge (Psalm 119:66, James 1:5)

2 Timothy 2:15 (SLB)

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker not needing to be ashamed, cutting straight the word of truth."

The Bible is God's Word to us (2 Timothy 3:16), given for training in righteousness. If we cannot understand what it says, we cannot apply it to our lives or help build God's kingdom.

So how do we go about understanding God's Word?

The first rule is context. You may have heard the saying "Context is King," but what does that mean? Every word, sentence, and passage helps explain the ones around it. Before we read any passage, we should ask a few simple questions: Who wrote it? Who was it written to? What came right before it? Knowing the answers gives us a clearer picture of what God is saying, both in general and to each of us personally.

Context matters a great deal in these letters. They are real letters from an older man to younger men he loved, written to help them with real churches and real problems. Timothy was in Ephesus, where false teachers had crept into the church. Titus was on the island of Crete, where new churches needed leaders. 2 Timothy was written from a Roman prison, when Paul knew he was about to die. If we keep those settings in mind, the commands in these letters make sense, and we can see how they apply to our churches today.

Exegesis, Eisegesis, and Hermeneutics

People typically interpret the Bible using one of two methods, Exegesis or Eisegesis. Both are explained below, along with a third word, Hermeneutics. Sometimes people use both methods to "make their case" for the interpretation they want. These definitions are based on www.merriam-webster.com, with my own notes added.

Exegesis means explaining a text, especially a passage of Scripture. Exegesis is reading and interpreting the full text of a passage, and drawing out what it is actually saying.

Eisegesis means reading your own ideas into a text. This happens when we try to find something in the text that really isn't there. It can lead to many errors, especially when we bring assumptions to a passage that aren't actually in it. This method can be used to justify a behavior, position, or belief that goes against what the text originally meant.

Hermeneutics is the study of the principles used to interpret a text, such as the Bible. "Hermeneutics" and "Exegesis" are sometimes used to mean the same thing. The difference is that Exegesis is the work of explaining a passage, while Hermeneutics is the set of principles that guides that work. In Biblical Hermeneutics, the Bible should be read literally unless the text itself gives us a different meaning.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (SLB)

"16 Every Scripture ***is*** God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which ***is*** in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work."

This passage tells us plainly that the writers of Scripture were inspired by God. Every passage in the Bible came from God and was written down by man. These are not fairy tales or made-up stories. They are God's own breath, given to us so we can be equipped and ready to do good work.

Because every word was inspired and breathed by God, I believe we must let God's Word interpret itself. We must study the Bible using Exegesis, drawing out what the text says, guided by sound Biblical Hermeneutics.

We should study God's Word using the Golden Rule of Interpretation, as Dr. David L. Cooper stated it:

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

(http://www.biblicalresearch.info/page55.html)

I read the Bible as it is written. These letters teach plainly, and this study takes Paul at his word: God really did give His church a pattern for its leaders and its life together, and He really does expect His people to guard sound teaching and live godly lives until Jesus appears.

This study uses the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB) unless I note otherwise. To better understand the original Greek, I also used The Interlinear Bible (Jay P. Green Sr., ISBN 1-56563-977-4).

The Pastoral Letters

1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are often called the Pastoral Letters. The name was given to them by Bible teachers long ago, because these letters were written to men who were shepherding churches, and they deal with the work of a pastor: teaching, leading, guarding the flock, and setting an example. They belong together. All three were written by Paul in the last few years of his life, all three were sent to his trusted helpers, and all three share the same concern for sound teaching and godly living. That is why this study treats them in one volume, one letter after another, in the order they appear in our Bibles.

How This Study Is Laid Out

Each chapter of this study follows the same pattern as my study of Revelation:

- Scripture: the full text of the chapter, broken into sections, so you can read it straight through first.
- Preview: a short look at what the chapter covers.
- Study: the chapter again, verse by verse, with my notes on what each verse says and what it means for us.
- Summary: the main points of the chapter in a few lines.
- Study Questions: questions for personal study or a small group, from simple fact questions to questions about how we live. Some of them are personal. In a group, no one should ever have to answer one aloud, and what is shared in the group stays there.
- Old and New Testament links: after many verses you will find a short line in small type that lists the places where the other Testament quotes, fulfills, pictures, or echoes that passage. "Quoted" means the New Testament quotes the Old Testament words. "Fulfilled" means the New Testament tells us a prophecy or promise came true. "Pictured" means the New Testament itself points to an Old Testament person, event, or object as a picture of Christ. "Alluded to" means a clear echo in shared words or pictures. Every link is listed again in a table at the back of the book.

Each letter begins with a short Overview and Background, so you know who wrote it, who it was written to, and why, before you start the chapters.

Using This Study With a Group

This study works for one person or for a group. Here are two ways a group can pace it:

- One chapter a week: thirteen weeks, six for 1 Timothy, four for 2 Timothy, and three for Titus. If you like, add a meeting at the start of each letter to read its Overview and Background together.
- Half a chapter a week: about twenty-six weeks. The Scripture for each chapter is already printed in two parts, and the start of the second part is a natural place to stop.

For each meeting, I suggest reading the Scripture out loud together first, straight through, before anyone comments. Then walk through the Study section, stopping where the group has questions, and finish with the Study Questions and prayer. The first questions in each list can be answered from the text. The later ones are more personal, and no one should feel pressed to answer them aloud.

Some parts of these letters touch subjects where good believers disagree or where people carry hurt: the roles of women in the church (1 Timothy 2:8-15), the meaning of "husband of one wife" for those who have been divorced or widowed (1 Timothy 3:2, 3:12; Titus 1:6), caring for widows and aging parents (1 Timothy 5:3-16), church discipline and accusations against leaders (1 Timothy 5:19-22), money and debt (1 Timothy 6:6-10, 6:17-19), and facing death (2 Timothy 4:6-8). If you lead a group, read those sections ahead of time and be ready to listen. If someone shares something that puts them or another person in danger, help them get help right away.

I look forward to walking with you through these three letters. If you'd like to share feedback, please email me at andrew@trinfinityenterprises.com.

May God bless you and your time studying and getting to know Him better.

Overview of 1 Timothy

1 Timothy is the fifteenth book of the New Testament. It sits between 2 Thessalonians and 2 Timothy. It is the first of the three Pastoral Letters, written by Paul to guide the men he had left in charge of churches.

Paul tells us plainly why he wrote it. He hoped to come to Timothy soon, but in case he was delayed, he wanted Timothy to know how God's people ought to live together in the church. The church is God's household, and it holds up the truth for the world to see:

1 Timothy 3:15 (SLB)

"but if I delay, ***I write*** so that you may know how ***one*** must conduct oneself in ***the*** household of God, which is ***the*** church of ***the*** living God, ***the*** pillar and foundation of the truth."

Everything in the letter serves that goal. Paul warns against false teaching and calls Timothy to guard the gospel. He gives the order for public prayer and worship, the qualifications for overseers and deacons, and instructions for caring for widows, honoring elders, and handling money. All through it he speaks to Timothy himself: watch your life, watch your teaching, and fight the good fight of the faith.

1 Timothy has 6 chapters and 113 verses. Here is its structure:

Part One: Sound Teaching and the Church at Worship (chapters 1 to 3)

- 1 Timothy 1: Sound Teaching and the Mercy of God
- 1 Timothy 2: Prayer for All and Order in Worship
- 1 Timothy 3: Overseers and Deacons

Part Two: A Good Servant and the Household of God (chapters 4 to 6)

- 1 Timothy 4: Train Yourself for Godliness
- 1 Timothy 5: Caring for the Family of God
- 1 Timothy 6: Contentment and the Good Fight

Background of 1 Timothy

Author: The letter opens with "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). The early church accepted all three Pastoral Letters as Paul's. Many modern scholars believe a follower of Paul wrote them after his death. They point to words and a style that differ from Paul's other letters, a church order they think came later, and events that do not fit into the book of Acts. I take the letter at its word. It names Paul, speaks of his own past as a persecutor (1:12-16), names real people he dealt with (1:20), and gives personal advice no forger would think to add, like telling Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach (5:23). A change of subject and a change of readers explain a change of words. Paul is writing to a trusted helper about leading a church, not to a whole church about doctrine.

Who it was written to: Timothy was from Lystra, in the region of Galatia (Acts 16:1-3). His mother was a Jewish believer and his father was a Greek. His grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice taught him the Scriptures from childhood (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). Paul met him on his second missionary journey and took him along. From then on Timothy was one of Paul's closest helpers. Paul calls him "my genuine child in faith" (1:2). He was still fairly young when this letter was written (4:12), and he seems to have been a little timid and often sick (5:23; 2 Timothy 1:7).

The city of Ephesus: Paul left Timothy in Ephesus (1:3). Ephesus was a great city in the Roman province of Asia, on the west coast of what is now Turkey, and home to the famous temple of the goddess Artemis. Paul had spent about three years there (Acts 19:1-20; 20:31). When he said goodbye to the elders of Ephesus, he warned them that wolves would come in and men would rise up from among them speaking twisted things (Acts 20:29-30). By the time of this letter, that warning had come true.

When and where it was written: The book of Acts ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome for two years (Acts 28:30-31). Many Bible teachers, going back to the early church, believe Paul was released after that, traveled again, and was later arrested a second time and put to death in Rome. The travels named in the Pastoral Letters (1 Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:5; 3:12) fit best in that time between the two imprisonments. Paul wrote 1 Timothy after leaving Timothy in Ephesus and going on to Macedonia, most likely about A.D. 62 to 64.

Purpose: Paul wrote to stop false teachers in Ephesus (1:3-7), to give Timothy the pattern for worship and church leadership (chapters 2 and 3), to guide him in caring for the different groups in the church (chapter 5), and to strengthen Timothy himself to stay faithful (4:12-16; 6:11-14).

1 Timothy 1: Sound Teaching and the Mercy of God

Scripture

1:1-11 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ according to ***the*** command of God our Savior and ***the*** Lord Jesus Christ our hope, to Timothy, ***my*** genuine child in faith: Grace, mercy, peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. Just as I urged you to remain in Ephesus, ***as I was*** going into Macedonia, so that you might charge some not to teach different doctrine, nor to give heed to myths and endless genealogies, which bring about questionings rather than ***the*** building up of God which ***is*** in faith. Now the goal of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith, from which some, having missed the mark, have turned aside to empty talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they are saying nor about what things they confidently assert. Now we know that the law ***is*** good, if one uses it lawfully, knowing this, that law is not laid down for a righteous ***one***, but for ***the*** lawless and insubordinate, for ***the*** ungodly and sinners, for ***the*** unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for ***the*** sexually immoral, for men who lie with males, for enslavers, for liars, for perjurers, and if anything else is opposed to the sound teaching, according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.

1:12-20 And I have thanks for the One who strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that He considered me faithful, appointing ***me*** to ***the*** ministry, though formerly being a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man; but I was shown mercy, because being ignorant I did ***it*** in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord abounded beyond measure, with faith and love which ***are*** in Christ Jesus. Faithful ***is*** the word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost. But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, ***the*** foremost, Jesus Christ might display all ***His*** patience as a pattern for those who were going to believe on Him for eternal life. Now to the King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible, only wise God, ***be*** honor and glory to the ages of the ages. Amen. This charge I commit to you, child Timothy, according to the prophecies that went before concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having thrust away, have suffered shipwreck concerning the faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I handed over to Satan, so that they may be disciplined not to blaspheme.

Preview

Paul gets straight to business. He had left Timothy in Ephesus to stop certain men from teaching a different doctrine. These men loved myths and endless family trees, and they wanted to be teachers of the Law without understanding it. Paul reminds Timothy that the goal of all his instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. The Law is good when it is used the right way, to expose sin, and it points to the gospel Paul was given to preach.

Then Paul tells his own story. He had been a blasphemer and a persecutor, and yet Christ showed him mercy and put him into ministry. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and Paul calls himself the foremost of them. If God could save Paul, He can save anyone. The chapter ends

with a charge to Timothy to fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience, and with a warning about two men who wrecked their faith.

Study

1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ according to **the** command of God our Savior and **the** Lord Jesus Christ our hope,*

Paul calls himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ" An apostle is one who is sent, a messenger carrying the authority of the one who sent him. Paul was not a volunteer. He served "according to the command of God our Savior." Timothy knew Paul well, so why stress his authority? Because this letter would be read to the church in Ephesus, and some there were teaching against Paul's gospel. Timothy needed everyone to know that these instructions came from the Lord.

Notice the two titles. God is "our Savior," a title Paul uses often in these three letters. And Christ Jesus is "our hope." Our hope is not a feeling or a wish. It is a Person who is coming back for us.

1:2 *to Timothy, **my** genuine child in faith: Grace, mercy, peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Paul writes "to Timothy, my genuine child in faith." Timothy was not Paul's son by birth. He was his son in the faith. Paul had led him to the Lord or at least trained him from the start, and he loved him like a father (Philippians 2:22). The word "genuine" was used for a child born in a lawful marriage, as opposed to one of doubtful birth. Timothy's faith was the real thing.

Paul's usual greeting in his letters to churches is "grace to you and peace" (Romans 1:7). Here, and in 2 Timothy and Titus, he adds "mercy." A young pastor facing hard people in a hard city needs all three. Grace is God's favor we did not earn. Mercy is God not giving us the punishment we did earn. Peace is what follows when we have received both.

1:3 *Just as I urged you to remain in Ephesus, **as I was** going into Macedonia, so that you might charge some not to teach different doctrine,*

Paul had urged Timothy "to remain in Ephesus" while Paul went on to Macedonia. This trip is not in the book of Acts, which is one reason many believe Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome and traveled again before he was arrested a second time.

Timothy's job was to "charge some not to teach different doctrine." To charge means to give an order, like a commander to his soldiers. "Different doctrine" means teaching of a different kind from what the apostles taught. Paul does not name the false teachers here, but he calls them "some." They were in the church, and they may have been elders, just as Paul had warned (Acts 20:29-30). False teaching does not always come from outside. Often it starts on the inside.

1:4 *nor to give heed to myths and endless genealogies, which bring about questionings rather than* ***the*** *building up of God which* ***is*** *in faith.*

What were these men teaching? "Myths and endless genealogies." We don't know exactly what they were. Many think they were Jewish legends built on the family lists of the Old Testament, made up stories about the people named there (Titus 1:14 speaks of "Jewish myths"). Others think they were early forms of the ideas later called Gnosticism, which taught secret knowledge about spiritual beings. Either way, the problem was the same.

These things "bring about questionings rather than the building up of God which is in faith." They raised endless questions and arguments, but they did not build anyone up. Some teaching today does the same thing. It makes people curious, and it makes them argue, but it does not make them more like Jesus.

1:5 *Now the goal of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith,*

Here is the opposite of the false teaching. "The goal of the charge is love." Paul's whole purpose in giving orders was love. Sound teaching is not cold. It aims at changed hearts.

That love comes from three sources. A "pure heart" is a heart cleansed by God and set on Him alone (Matthew 5:8). A "good conscience" is an inner sense of right and wrong that is clean before God, because we are not hiding sin. "Sincere faith" means faith without a mask, faith that is not an act. When the teaching is right, the result is a church full of people who love God and love one another. When the result is arguing and pride, something is wrong with the teaching.

1:6 *from which some, having missed the mark, have turned aside to empty talk,*

"From which some, having missed the mark." The picture is of an archer whose arrow misses the target. These men aimed at something other than love, a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith, and they missed.

They "turned aside to empty talk." Their teaching sounded deep, but it was hollow. A lot of words with nothing in them. It is a warning to every teacher and preacher. If our teaching does not lead people toward love and a pure heart, we have turned aside too, no matter how clever it sounds.

1:7 *desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they are saying nor about what things they confidently assert.*

These men were "desiring to be teachers of the law." They wanted the title and the respect. The Law here is the Law of Moses, the commands God gave Israel through Moses in the first five books of the Bible.

But they were "understanding neither what they are saying nor about what things they confidently assert." They were sure of themselves, and they were wrong. It is possible to speak with great confidence about the Bible and not understand it at all. That should keep all of us humble. Confidence is not the same as truth. The test is whether what we say matches what God's Word plainly says.

1:8 *Now we know that the law **is** good, if one uses it lawfully,*

Paul does not want anyone to think he is against the Law. "Now we know that the law is good." The Law came from God, and it is holy, righteous and good (Romans 7:12).

The key is in the next words: "if one uses it lawfully." A tool used the wrong way can do harm. The false teachers were using the Law for endless speculation, or perhaps as a ladder to climb up to God. That is not what it was given for. Paul is about to tell us what it is for.

1:9-10 *knowing this, that law is not laid down for a righteous **one**, but for **the** lawless and insubordinate, for **the** ungodly and sinners, for **the** unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for **the** sexually immoral, for men who lie with males, for enslavers, for liars, for perjurers, and if anything else is opposed to the sound teaching,*

"Law is not laid down for a righteous one, but for the lawless." The Law was given to show sin for what it is and to hold back evil. A person made right with God through faith in Christ does not live under the Law as his way to God. The Law speaks most loudly to those who break it.

Paul's list follows the order of the Ten Commandments. The "lawless and insubordinate," the "ungodly and sinners," the "unholy and profane" sin against God, as in the first commands. Then come sins against people. Murderers of fathers and mothers break the command to honor parents. "Manslayers" break the command against murder. "The sexually immoral" and "men who lie with males" break the command against adultery. "Enslavers" are those who kidnapped people to sell them as slaves, a form of stealing a human being (Exodus 21:16). Liars and perjurers break the command against false witness.

Then Paul adds, "if anything else is opposed to the sound teaching." The word "sound" means healthy. Sound teaching is teaching that makes people spiritually healthy. Sin is spiritual sickness.

Old Testament links: Exodus 21:16 (alluded to)

1:11 *according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.*

This healthy teaching is "according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted." The Law shows us our sin, and the gospel shows us God's glory in saving sinners. The Law and the gospel work together. The Law shows us we need a Savior, and the gospel tells us who He is.

"Blessed" here means happy, full of joy in Himself. God is not a gloomy judge looking for a reason to punish. He is the blessed God whose glory shines in the good news of His Son.

Paul says he was "entrusted" with it. The gospel was not Paul's idea. It was handed to him like a treasure to guard, and that thought leads him to tell his own story.

1:12 *And I have thanks for the One who strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that He considered me faithful, appointing **me** to **the** ministry,*

"I have thanks for the One who strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul could never talk about his ministry without thanking Jesus for it. He did not give himself the strength to serve. Christ did.

"He considered me faithful, appointing me to the ministry." Jesus did not wait until Paul had earned it. He chose a man who was fighting against Him and made him a servant. Being "considered faithful" means Jesus trusted Paul with the work. That is grace. Every one of us who serves the Lord in any way does it because He put us there and strengthens us to do it.

1:13 *though formerly being a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man; but I was shown mercy, because being ignorant I did **it** in unbelief;*

Look at what Paul used to be. "A blasphemer," someone who spoke against God and His Christ. "A persecutor," someone who hunted down believers, put them in prison, and voted for their deaths (Acts 8:3; 26:9-11). "An insolent man," someone who was violent and proud, who enjoyed hurting others.

"But I was shown mercy, because being ignorant I did it in unbelief." Paul is not saying his ignorance made him innocent. He calls himself the foremost of sinners two verses later. He means that he sinned without understanding who Jesus really was. He was not like a man who knows the truth and then turns his back on it with open eyes. God had mercy on him in his blindness, just as Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34).

1:14 *and the grace of our Lord abounded beyond measure, with faith and love which **are** in Christ Jesus.*

"The grace of our Lord abounded beyond measure." Paul reaches for a word that means overflowing, more than enough, too much to measure. Paul's sin was great, but God's grace was greater (Romans 5:20).

With that grace came "faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." Before he met Jesus, Paul was full of unbelief and hatred toward the church. Grace turned both around. He now trusted the One he had rejected and loved the people he had hunted. That is what grace does. It does not only forgive us. It changes us.

1:15 *Faithful **is** the word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost.*

This is one of the best-known verses in the Bible. "Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptance." This is the first of five "faithful sayings" in the Pastoral Letters (1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8). They seem to have been short sayings the early church knew well, and Paul stamps each one as true.

Here is the saying: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." That is the whole gospel in a few words. Jesus "came into the world," which means He existed before He was born. He came from heaven. Why did He come? Not to be a good example or a wise teacher only. He came "to save sinners."

And Paul adds, "of whom I am foremost." Notice he says "I am," not "I was." Paul never got over the fact that God had saved him. The closer he walked with Jesus, the more he saw his own sin and the more he praised God's grace. Have you ever thought you were too far gone for God to save? Paul thought he was the worst of all, and Jesus saved him.

1:16 *But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, **the** foremost, Jesus Christ might display all **His** patience as a pattern for those who were going to believe on Him for eternal life.*

Why did God show Paul mercy? "That in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ might display all His patience as a pattern" Paul's life was a display case. God put His patience on show in the worst sinner, so that everyone after him would know there is hope.

The word for pattern means a sketch or an outline that an artist makes before the full painting. Paul's salvation was the first sketch of what God would do for countless others "who were going to believe on Him for eternal life." If you know someone you think could never come to Christ, remember Paul. God is patient, and no one is beyond His reach while they are still alive.

1:17 *Now to the King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible, only wise God, **be** honor and glory to the ages of the ages. Amen.*

Paul cannot keep going without breaking into praise. This is called a doxology, a short word of praise to God.

He is "the King of the ages." He rules over all of time, every age past and every age to come. He is "incorruptible," which means He cannot decay or die. He is "invisible," for no one has seen God in His full glory (John 1:18). And He is the "only wise God." There is no other God, and no other wisdom like His.

To Him belong "honor and glory to the ages of the ages. Amen." When we think about how God saved us, the right response is worship. Good doctrine should always lead us to praise.

1:18 *This charge I commit to you, child Timothy, according to the prophecies that went before concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,*

Paul now turns back to Timothy. "This charge I commit to you, child Timothy." The charge is the work Paul gave him in verse 3, to guard sound teaching in Ephesus.

Paul ties it to "the prophecies that went before concerning you." At some point, likely when Timothy was set apart for ministry, God had spoken through prophets in the church about Timothy and his work (4:14). Scripture doesn't tell us what those words were. But Paul reminds Timothy of them so he would remember that God had called him to this.

"That by them you may wage the good warfare." Ministry is a war. It is not against people, but against error, sin, and the devil (Ephesians 6:12). Timothy was to fight it as a soldier, with God's call in his memory.

1:19 *holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having thrust away, have suffered shipwreck concerning the faith,*

What does Timothy need for this fight? "Holding faith and a good conscience." Faith here likely means both his trust in Christ and the truth he believed. A good conscience means living what he believed, with nothing hidden.

These two go together. "Some, having thrust away" a good conscience, "have suffered shipwreck concerning the faith." Paul pictures a ship that hits the rocks and breaks apart. When a person keeps doing what he knows is wrong and pushes his conscience aside, it is not long before his beliefs start to drift as well. Many people who leave the faith did not start with doubts about the Bible. They started with sin they would not give up.

1:20 *among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I handed over to Satan, so that they may be disciplined not to blaspheme.*

Paul names two of the men who wrecked their faith: "Hymenaeus and Alexander." Hymenaeus shows up again in 2 Timothy 2:17-18, teaching that the resurrection had already happened. An Alexander also appears in 2 Timothy 4:14, though we cannot be sure it is the same man.

"Whom I handed over to Satan." This was a form of church discipline, putting someone out of the fellowship of the church and back into the world, where Satan rules (1 Corinthians 5:5). It sounds harsh, but look at the purpose: "so that they may be disciplined not to blaspheme." The goal was not to destroy them. The goal was to teach them, so that they would stop speaking against God and come back. Church discipline done the Bible's way is always aimed at bringing a person home.

Summary

Paul greets Timothy, his genuine child in the faith, and reminds him why he was left in Ephesus: to stop men teaching a different doctrine built on myths and endless genealogies. The goal of sound teaching is love out of a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. The Law is good when it is used to expose sin, and it points to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God. Paul thanks Christ for saving him, a former blasphemer and persecutor, and for putting him into ministry. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and Paul is the foremost, a pattern of God's patience for all who would believe. Paul praises the King of the ages, then charges Timothy to wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, and warns him of Hymenaeus and Alexander, who suffered shipwreck in the faith.

Study Questions

1. Why had Paul left Timothy in Ephesus? (1:3)

2. What is the goal of sound teaching, and where does it come from? (1:5)

3. What did the false teachers want to be, and what was their problem? (1:7)

4. According to Paul, who is the Law for? (1:9-10)

5. How does Paul describe his life before he met Jesus? (1:13)

6. Why did God show mercy to Paul, the foremost of sinners? (1:16)

7. What happens when a person pushes away a good conscience? (1:19)

8. What was the purpose of handing Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan? (1:20)

9. Have you ever thought someone was too far gone for God to save? How does Paul's story change that?

10. Is there anything in your life right now that is pushing against a good conscience? What would it take to deal with it?

1 Timothy 2: Prayer for All and Order in Worship

Scripture

2:1-7 I exhort, therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, ***and*** thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. For this ***is*** good and acceptable before God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to ***the*** full knowledge of ***the*** truth. For ***there is*** one God, and one mediator of God and men, ***the*** man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself ***as*** a ransom for all, the testimony in ***its*** own times, for which I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am speaking ***the*** truth in Christ, I am not lying), a teacher of ***the*** Gentiles in faith and truth.

2:8-15 I desire, therefore, the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without anger and disputing; likewise also the women to adorn themselves in respectable apparel with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is fitting for women professing reverence for God, through good works. Let a woman learn in quietness in all submission; but I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman, having been deceived, has come into transgression; but she will be saved through the childbearing, if they remain in faith and love and sanctification with self-control.

Preview

Paul now turns to the church at worship. "First of all," he says, the church must pray, and pray for everyone, including kings and rulers. Why? Because God our Savior desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth. There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all. Paul was appointed to carry that message to the Gentiles.

In the second half of the chapter Paul speaks to the men and the women of the church. The men are to pray without anger and arguing. The women are to dress with modesty and be known for good works. Then come some of the most debated verses in the New Testament: Paul does not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, and he points back to Adam and Eve. We will look at what the text plainly says and at the main ways godly teachers have understood it.

Study

2:1 *I exhort, therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions,* ***and*** *thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men,*

"I exhort, therefore, first of all." The word "therefore" ties this to chapter 1. Timothy is to fight the good fight against false teaching, and the first weapon in that fight is prayer. "First of all" can mean first in importance as well as first in order.

Paul uses four words for prayer. Petitions are requests that come from a sense of need. Prayers is the general word for talking to God. Intercessions are prayers made on behalf of someone else. Thanksgivings are prayers of gratitude. Paul is not giving us four steps to follow. He is saying the church should pray in every way it can.

And it should pray "on behalf of all men." Not only for ourselves, not only for our church, but for everyone. That may have been a correction in Ephesus, where the false teachers seem to have thought only a select few could know God.

2:2 *for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.*

Paul names one group in particular: "kings and all those who are in authority." When Paul wrote this, the emperor in Rome was most likely Nero, a cruel man who would later persecute Christians. Paul still says to pray for him.

Why? "So that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." A peaceful land gives the church room to live godly lives and to spread the gospel without being hunted down. Praying for our leaders is not the same as agreeing with everything they do. It is obeying God, asking Him to work through them for good. Do you pray for the people who lead your city and your country, even the ones you did not vote for?

2:3 *For this **is** good and acceptable before God our Savior,*

"For this is good and acceptable before God our Savior." Praying for all people, including rulers, pleases God. It is good, right in itself, and it is acceptable, welcome in His sight.

Paul calls God "our Savior" again. It is a reminder of why we pray for others. The God we pray to is a saving God. When we pray for lost people, we are asking God to do what He loves to do.

2:4 *who desires all men to be saved and to come to **the** full knowledge of **the** truth.*

God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth." This is one of the clearest statements in the Bible of God's heart toward the lost. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11), and He is patient, not wanting any to perish (2 Peter 3:9).

"Saved" and "the full knowledge of the truth" go together. Being saved means being rescued from sin and its penalty. Coming to the knowledge of the truth means knowing who God is and what He has done in Christ. No one is saved apart from the truth of the gospel.

Bible teachers who disagree about election read this verse in different ways. Some say it shows God's desire for every person without exception. Others say "all men" means all kinds of people, kings and common people, Jews and Gentiles, as the context speaks of kings and of Paul's mission to the Gentiles. Both agree that the church must pray for everyone and preach the gospel to everyone, because God is a saving God.

2:5 *For **there is** one God, and one mediator of God and men, **the** man Christ Jesus,*

"For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Here is why the gospel is for everyone. There is only one God, so He is the God of Jews and Gentiles alike (Romans 3:29-30).

And there is only one Mediator. A mediator is a go-between, someone who stands between two parties to bring them together. Sin had put a wall between God and man. Only one Person could stand between and bring us back: Jesus. He is fully God, so He can reach God. He became fully man, so He can reach us. Paul stresses "the man Christ Jesus." He was not an angel or a spirit who only looked human. He became one of us.

This means no priest, saint, angel, or church can stand between you and God. You do not need another go-between. Jesus is enough, and He is the only way (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

2:6 *who gave Himself **as** a ransom for all, the testimony in **its** own times,*

What did the Mediator do? He "gave Himself as a ransom for all." A ransom is a price paid to set a captive free. Jesus did not just pay money. He gave Himself. He took our place, and His death paid the price for our sin (Mark 10:45).

"For all" again shows the reach of His work. The ransom was paid on behalf of all people, and the offer of salvation goes out to all.

This is "the testimony in its own times." The death of Christ came at the very time God had planned (Galatians 4:4), and now the testimony about it is being carried to the world in God's timing. That is the message Timothy was guarding against the false teachers.

2:7 *for which I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am speaking **the** truth in Christ, I am not lying), a teacher of **the** Gentiles in faith and truth.*

"For which I was appointed a herald and an apostle." A herald was a man sent ahead of a king to announce his message in public. Paul was God's herald, sent to announce the ransom Jesus paid.

"I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying." Why would Paul need to say that to Timothy? Because the letter would be read in the church, and some there doubted Paul's calling. He wants everyone to know he was sent by God.

He was "a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth." The Gentiles are all the people who are not Jewish. Paul's special job was to bring the gospel to them (Galatians 2:7-9). The one Mediator gave Himself for all, so God sent a man to tell all.

2:8 *I desire, therefore, the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without anger and disputing;*

"I desire, therefore, the men to pray in every place." Paul now gives instructions for the men and the women when the church meets. "In every place" likely means every place where believers gather for worship, every house church in and around Ephesus.

They are to pray "lifting up holy hands." Lifting the hands was a common way to pray in Bible times (Psalm 28:2; 134:2). The point is not the position of the hands, but that the hands are "holy," the hands of men whose lives are clean before God.

And they are to pray "without anger and disputing." It seems the men in Ephesus were arguing, likely over the false teaching. Paul says you cannot lift holy hands to God while you are angry with your brother (Matthew 5:23-24). Before we pray, we need to deal with our quarrels.

2:9 *likewise also the women to adorn themselves in respectable apparel with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,*

"Likewise also the women to adorn themselves in respectable apparel with modesty and self-control." Paul turns to the women. Just as the men had a problem with anger, it seems some women were drawing attention to themselves in the meetings.

"Not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing." In the Roman world, wealthy women wore their hair piled high and woven with gold and jewels. It was a way to show off wealth and to draw the eye. Paul is not giving a list of forbidden hairstyles. He is saying that a believing woman should not dress in a way that puts her wealth or her body on display. Peter says the same thing (1 Peter 3:3-4). The heart of it is modesty, which means not calling attention to ourselves, and self-control.

2:10 *but, which is fitting for women professing reverence for God, through good works.*

Instead, women are to adorn themselves "through good works." This is the kind of beauty that is "fitting for women professing reverence for God." A woman who claims to worship God shows it best by the way she serves others.

This applies to all of us, men and women alike. What do people notice first about you? Is it what you wear and what you own, or is it how you treat people? Clothes wear out and jewelry gets lost. Good works done for the Lord last forever.

2:11 *Let a woman learn in quietness in all submission;*

"Let a woman learn in quietness in all submission." Here is what the text says. Paul commands that women learn. That was not a small thing. In much of the ancient world, women were not taught the Scriptures, and some rabbis would not teach them. Paul says they must learn.

How are they to learn? "In quietness," which means a quiet, settled spirit, not stirring up trouble. It is a different word from the one used for silence in 1 Corinthians 14:34, and it is the same root Paul used for the "quiet life" in verse 2. And "in all submission," which means under the order God has set in the church. Bible teachers agree that this verse lifts women up as learners. They disagree on how far the "quietness" reaches, as we will see in the next verse.

2:12 *but I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness.*

"But I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness." Here is what the text plainly says. Paul does not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man. She is to be in quietness. The word for "exercise authority" is a rare Greek word, authentein, found only here in the New Testament.

Godly Bible teachers have read this verse in several main ways. Many believe it applies to all churches in all times, and that the office of pastor or elder, and the teaching of the gathered church, belongs to qualified men, while women serve in many other ways, including teaching women and children (Titus 2:3-4). Some within that view draw the line only at the office of elder, and others draw it more widely. Others believe Paul was speaking to a local problem in Ephesus, where some women had been drawn in by the false teachers (5:13-15; 2 Timothy 3:6-7), and that the rare word authentein points to a domineering or seizing of authority, not all teaching. They believe that once that problem is gone, women may teach and lead.

What does everyone agree on? Women and men are equal in worth before God and share the same salvation (Galatians 3:28). Women are to learn God's Word. Women in the Bible prayed, prophesied, served and helped spread the gospel (Acts 18:26; Romans 16:1-3; Philippians 4:2-3). Each church must study this passage carefully, alongside 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, and apply it with a clear conscience.

2:13 *For Adam was formed first, then Eve;*

"For Adam was formed first, then Eve." Paul gives a reason for what he just said, and he does not point to the culture of Ephesus. He points back to creation in Genesis 2. God made Adam first, then made Eve from him (Genesis 2:7, 21-22).

Those who hold that verse 12 is for all times see this as the key. If Paul's reason comes from creation, before the fall and before any culture, then his command reaches beyond one city and one time. Those who see verse 12 as a local command reply that Paul uses the story of Adam and Eve as an example, to correct women in Ephesus who were being led astray, and that he does not mean it as a rule for every church. Paul also teaches elsewhere that in the Lord man and woman depend on each other (1 Corinthians 11:11-12).

Old Testament links: Genesis 2:7 (alluded to)

2:14 *and Adam was not deceived, but the woman, having been deceived, has come into transgression;*

"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, having been deceived, has come into transgression." Paul points to what happened in the garden. The serpent deceived Eve, and she ate (Genesis 3:1-6, 13). Adam was not tricked. He sinned with his eyes open. Elsewhere Paul lays the blame for sin entering the world on Adam (Romans 5:12).

Why mention this? Some teachers see it as showing what happens when God's order in creation is reversed: Eve took the lead, and Adam followed. Others see it as a picture of the women in Ephesus who were being deceived by false teachers. Either way, Paul is not saying women are less intelligent or more sinful than men. Adam's sin was just as real, and he sinned knowing full well what he was doing.

Old Testament links: Genesis 3:13 (alluded to); Genesis 3:6 (alluded to)

2:15 *but she will be saved through the childbearing, if they remain in faith and love and sanctification with self-control.*

"But she will be saved through the childbearing, if they remain in faith and love and sanctification with self-control." This is one of the hardest verses in Paul's letters. It cannot mean that a woman earns salvation by having children. Paul has just said Jesus is the only Mediator, and he teaches all through his letters that we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Many godly women never have children.

There are three main readings. Some believe "the childbearing" points to the birth of Christ, the promised Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), and that women, like all believers, are saved through Him. Others believe "saved" here means kept safe through childbirth, the very pain that came with the fall (Genesis 3:16). Others believe it means a woman works out her salvation in her God-given calling, with motherhood as the main example, rather than by grabbing a role God did not give her.

What is plain is the condition at the end: "if they remain in faith and love and sanctification with self-control." Sanctification means being set apart and made holy. Real faith keeps going. That is true for every believer, man or woman.

Old Testament links: Genesis 3:16 (alluded to)

Summary

Paul tells Timothy that the first work of the church is prayer for all people, including kings and those in authority, so that believers may live quiet and godly lives. This pleases God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, and Paul was appointed to preach that to the Gentiles. The men are to pray with holy hands, without anger or arguing. The women are to dress with modesty and be known for good works. Women are to learn in quietness and submission, and Paul does not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, pointing to the order of creation and to Eve's deception. Good believers read these verses in more than one way, but all agree that men and women are equal in worth before God and that real faith continues in love and holiness.

Study Questions

1. What four kinds of prayer does Paul name, and who are we to pray for? (2:1-2)

2. Why does Paul want the church to pray for kings and those in authority? (2:2)

3. What does God desire for all men? (2:4)

4. What is a mediator, and why is Jesus the only one? (2:5)

5. What did Jesus give as a ransom, and for whom? (2:6)

6. What did Paul tell the men to put away before they pray? (2:8)

7. What kind of adornment does Paul say is fitting for a woman who worships God? (2:9-10)

8. What reasons does Paul give in 2:13-14, and why do you think he points back to creation?

9. Who is one leader you find hard to pray for? What could you ask God for on their behalf this week?

10. Is there anger or a quarrel in your life that is getting in the way of your prayers? What step could you take to make it right?

1 Timothy 3: Overseers and Deacons

Scripture

3:1-7 Faithful ***is*** the word: if anyone aspires to ***the*** office of overseer, he desires a good work. Therefore the overseer must be above reproach, ***the*** husband of one wife, sober, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not a striker, not greedy for shameful gain, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, managing ***his*** own household well, having children in submission with all dignity (but if one does not know how to manage ***his*** own household, how will he take care of ***the*** church of God?), not a new convert, lest, having been puffed up, he fall into ***the*** judgment of the devil. And he must also have a good testimony from those outside, so that he may not fall into reproach and ***the*** snare of the devil.

3:8-16 Deacons likewise ***must be*** dignified, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for shameful gain, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. And let these also be tested first; then let them serve, being blameless. Women likewise ***must be*** dignified, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let deacons be husbands of one wife, managing ***their*** children and ***their*** own households well. For those who have served well acquire for themselves a good standing and great boldness in ***the*** faith which ***is*** in Christ Jesus. These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you sooner; but if I delay, ***I write*** so that you may know how ***one*** must conduct oneself in ***the*** household of God, which is ***the*** church of ***the*** living God, ***the*** pillar and foundation of the truth. And confessedly great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in flesh, was justified in spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among ***the*** Gentiles, was believed on in ***the*** world, was taken up in glory.

Preview

In this chapter Paul tells Timothy what kind of men should lead the church. First he gives the qualifications for an overseer, the man who shepherds and guards a local church. Most of the list is about character: above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, hospitable, able to teach, not a drinker, not violent, not a lover of money. He must manage his own home well, he must not be a new believer, and he must have a good name with outsiders.

Then Paul gives the qualifications for deacons, those who serve the church in practical ways, and for the women he names alongside them. He tells Timothy why he is writing all this: so that he will know how people ought to conduct themselves in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. The chapter ends with a short hymn about Jesus, the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in flesh.

Study

3:1 *Faithful **is** the word: if anyone aspires to **the** office of overseer, he desires a good work.*

"Faithful is the word." This is the second of the faithful sayings in these letters. Here it introduces a saying about church leaders: "if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a good work."

An overseer is a man who watches over a local church. The Greek word is episkopos, which some older Bibles translate "bishop." In the New Testament the same men are also called elders, which points to their maturity, and shepherds or pastors, which points to their work of caring for the flock (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

It is good to want this work. But notice Paul calls it "a good work," not a high position. It is a job, and a hard one. A man should want it because he wants to serve God's people, not because he wants a title.

3:2 *Therefore the overseer must be above reproach, **the** husband of one wife, sober, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,*

"Therefore the overseer must be above reproach." This is the heading over the whole list. "Above reproach" means there is nothing in his life that others can fairly point to as a reason he has no business leading a church. It does not mean he is sinless. It means his life is not marked by any open, ongoing sin.

"The husband of one wife." The Greek reads, word for word, a one-woman man. Bible teachers read this phrase in several ways. Some believe it means a man who has only one wife at a time, ruling out polygamy. Others believe it rules out any man who has been divorced and remarried. Others believe it means a man who is faithful to his wife, a one-woman man in heart and conduct, whatever his past before he came to Christ. A few believe it requires an overseer to be married. Most agree it at least means that a married overseer must be fully faithful to his wife. A church should study this carefully, with grace for those whose past includes hurt, and with a high standard for its leaders.

Sober means clear-headed and alert. Self-controlled means sensible, a man who thinks before he acts. Respectable means orderly, a man whose life is well put together. Hospitable means, word for word, a lover of strangers, a man whose home is open to others. "Able to teach" is the one item on the list that is a skill. An overseer must be able to explain God's Word and defend it (Titus 1:9).

3:3 *not given to wine, not a striker, not greedy for shameful gain, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money,*

Now Paul lists what an overseer must not be. "Not given to wine" means not a man who sits long at his wine, not a drinker. "Not a striker" means not a man who is quick with his fists or who bullies others. "Not greedy for shameful gain" means not a man who would use the ministry or any dishonest way to make money.

Instead he must be gentle, patient and fair, willing to yield. He must not be quarrelsome, a man who loves a fight. And he must be "not a lover of money." Paul will say more about money in chapter 6. A man who loves money will bend the truth to keep the giving up. A shepherd who is gentle and content can tell people the truth.

3:4-5 *managing **his** own household well, having children in submission with all dignity (but if one does not know how to manage **his** own household, how will he take care of **the** church of God?),*

"Managing his own household well, having children in submission with all dignity." A man's home is the testing ground for his leadership. If his children are out of control and he does nothing about it, that shows something about how he leads. The phrase "with all dignity" likely describes the way he leads them, with respect and not with harshness, as well as the respect they show him.

Verse 5 gives the reason: "If one does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?" The church is God's family. A man who has not learned to lead his own small family with love will not lead God's larger family well. Notice the words "take care of." It is the same word used of the Good Samaritan caring for the wounded man (Luke 10:34-35). Leading a church is caring for people.

3:6 *not a new convert, lest, having been puffed up, he fall into **the** judgment of the devil.*

"Not a new convert." The Greek word means, word for word, newly planted, a man who has only just come to faith. Why not? "Lest, having been puffed up, he fall into the judgment of the devil."

Pride is the special danger of a new believer who is given a high place too soon. Being puffed up is like a balloon full of hot air. "The judgment of the devil" most likely means the same judgment the devil fell into because of his pride. A gifted new believer may look ready, but character takes time to grow. Churches should be careful not to rush people into leadership just because they are talented or well known.

3:7 *And he must also have a good testimony from those outside, so that he may not fall into reproach and **the** snare of the devil.*

"And he must also have a good testimony from those outside." Those outside are the people who are not part of the church: neighbors, coworkers, business partners. What do they say about him? Does he pay his bills? Does he keep his word? Is he honest at work?

"So that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." If a church leader has a bad name in his town, the devil can use it to bring shame on Christ and the church. A snare is a trap. Satan loves to catch leaders in sin and use it to discredit the gospel. That is why the life a man lives outside the church matters just as much as what he does inside it.

3:8 *Deacons likewise **must be** dignified, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for shameful gain,*

Paul now turns to deacons. The word deacon means servant. In Acts 6:1-6, the apostles chose seven men to care for the widows so the apostles could focus on prayer and the Word. Many see that as the beginning of the deacon's work. Deacons serve the church in practical ways so that the elders can shepherd and teach.

Deacons "likewise must be dignified," men worthy of respect. "Not double-tongued," which means not saying one thing to one person and something else to another. A deacon visits many homes and hears many things, so he must be a man whose word is true. "Not given to much wine," and "not greedy for shameful gain." Deacons often handled the church's money and its gifts to the poor, so honesty with money was a must.

3:9 *holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.*

Deacons must be "holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience." A mystery in the Bible is a truth God once kept hidden and has now revealed. "The mystery of the faith" is the gospel, which Paul will sum up in verse 16.

A deacon does not need to be a preacher, but he must hold firmly to sound doctrine. And he must hold it "with a pure conscience." That means his life matches what he believes. A man who believes the right things but lives a double life is not fit to serve, no matter how practical his gifts are.

3:10 *And let these also be tested first; then let them serve, being blameless.*

"And let these also be tested first; then let them serve, being blameless." The word "also" shows that overseers were tested as well. A church should not put just anyone into service. It should watch a man's life for a while.

This is not a formal exam, though it might include questions. It is a time of watching to see if his character is real. If, after that time, no one can point to anything that would disqualify him, then he may serve. "Blameless" here means much the same as "above reproach" in verse 2. Good churches take their time when they choose leaders.

3:11 *Women likewise **must be** dignified, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.*

"Women likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." The Greek word here simply means women, and it can also mean wives. Bible teachers read this verse in two main ways. Some believe Paul is speaking of the wives of deacons, since their wives would often work alongside them and see much of what they saw. Others believe Paul is speaking of women who served as deacons themselves, pointing to Phoebe, whom Paul calls a servant (the same word, diakonos) of the church at Cenchrea (Romans 16:1), and to the word "likewise," which Paul also used to begin the deacons' list in verse 8.

Whichever reading is right, the qualities are clear. They must be "dignified," worthy of respect. "Not slanderers," which is the Greek word diabolos, the same word used for the devil, the great slanderer. Gossip is the devil's work. They must be sober, which means clear-headed, and "faithful in all things," trustworthy in every part of life.

3:12 *Let deacons be husbands of one wife, managing **their** children and **their** own households well.*

"Let deacons be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own households well." The same standards for home and marriage that apply to overseers apply to deacons. The same range of readings for "husband of one wife" that we saw in verse 2 applies here too.

The church is a family, and the leaders of that family must first be faithful in their own families. Whether a man leads by teaching or by serving, his home tells the truth about him. It is not that a man must have a perfect family, for every family has its struggles. It is that he must be faithful and caring in the home God has given him.

3:13 *For those who have served well acquire for themselves a good standing and great boldness in **the** faith which **is** in Christ Jesus.*

Here is the reward for serving well. "Those who have served well acquire for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

"A good standing" likely means respect in the church and approval before God. Faithful service earns trust. "Great boldness" means confidence, both in speaking to others about the faith and in drawing near to God. When a person serves faithfully in small things, their faith grows stronger. Being a deacon may not look important to the world, but God sees it and honors it (Matthew 25:21). Many of the most faithful saints you will ever meet serve quietly behind the scenes.

3:14 *These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you sooner;*

"These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you sooner." Paul planned to come back to Ephesus soon. He was not writing because he never expected to see Timothy again.

But he wanted the instructions in writing. Timothy would need them to show the church that these orders came from Paul. And as it turns out, these words were not only for Timothy. God has kept them in Scripture for every church in every age. When Paul wrote down his instructions for Timothy, he was writing them down for us.

3:15 *but if I delay, **I write** so that you may know how **one** must conduct oneself in **the** household of God, which is **the** church of **the** living God, **the** pillar and foundation of the truth.*

"But if I delay, I write so that you may know how one must conduct oneself in the household of God." This is the key verse of the whole letter. Everything Paul says about prayer, worship, leaders, widows and money is about how God's family should live.

Paul gives the church three names. It is "the household of God," God's own family. It is "the church of the living God." A church is not a building or a club. It belongs to the God who lives. And it is "the pillar and foundation of the truth." A pillar holds something up for all to see, and a foundation keeps it steady. The church holds up the truth of the gospel before the world and keeps it from being moved. When a church stops teaching the truth, it stops doing the job God gave it.

3:16 *And confessedly great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in flesh, was justified in spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among* ***the*** *Gentiles, was believed on in* ***the*** *world, was taken up in glory.*

"And confessedly great is the mystery of godliness." "Confessedly" means beyond all doubt, something all believers agree on. The mystery of godliness is the truth about Jesus Christ, the truth that produces godly lives. Many believe the six lines that follow were an early Christian hymn.

"God was manifested in flesh." The eternal Son of God became a man (John 1:1, 14). "Was justified in spirit." Jesus was shown to be righteous by the Holy Spirit, above all in His resurrection (Romans 1:4). "Was seen by angels." Angels watched over His birth, His temptation, His suffering, His resurrection and His ascension. "Was proclaimed among the Gentiles." The gospel went out to the nations. "Was believed on in the world." People everywhere put their trust in Him. "Was taken up in glory." He ascended to heaven, where He reigns now (Acts 1:9-11).

A word about the first line. The SLB follows the Received Greek Text, which reads "God was manifested in flesh." Most older Greek copies have the word for who in place of the word God, and many modern Bibles print it that way: He who was manifested, meaning Christ. Either reading is speaking about Jesus, and no teaching rests on this verse alone. The truth that Jesus is God is taught plainly elsewhere (John 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13).

Summary

Paul gives Timothy the qualifications for church leaders. An overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable and able to teach. He must not be a drinker, violent, quarrelsome or a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, he must not be a new convert, and he must have a good name with outsiders. Deacons must be dignified, honest, sober, and free from greed, holding the faith with a pure conscience, and they must be tested before they serve. The women named with them, whether deacons' wives or women deacons, must be dignified, not slanderers, sober and faithful. Paul writes so that Timothy will know how to conduct himself in the household of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. The mystery of godliness is Jesus Christ: God manifested in flesh, justified in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory.

Study Questions

1. What other names does the New Testament use for an overseer, and what does each tell us about the work? (3:1; Acts 20:17, 28)

2. Which item in the list for overseers is a skill rather than a matter of character? (3:2)

3. Why does Paul say an overseer must manage his own household well? (3:4-5)

4. What danger does a new convert face if he is put into leadership too soon? (3:6)

5. Why does it matter what people outside the church think of a leader? (3:7)

6. What does it mean that deacons must be tested first? (3:10)

7. What three names does Paul give the church in 3:15, and what does each one mean?

8. Which of the six lines about Jesus in 3:16 means the most to you right now, and why?

9. Most of these qualifications are not only for leaders. Which one do you most need God to grow in you?

10. How do you think a church should choose its leaders? What would you look for, based on this chapter?

1 Timothy 4: Train Yourself for Godliness

Scripture

4:1-5 But the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons, in ***the*** hypocrisy of liars, having been seared in their own conscience, forbidding to marry, ***and commanding*** to abstain from foods which God created for receiving with thanksgiving by those who are faithful and have come to know the truth. For every creature of God ***is*** good, and nothing ***is*** to be rejected, being received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through ***the*** word of God and prayer.

4:6-16 Laying these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, being nourished in the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed. But refuse the profane and old-womanish myths, and train yourself for godliness; for bodily training is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, holding promise of the life that ***is*** now and of that which is coming. Faithful ***is*** the word and worthy of all acceptance. For toward this we also toil and are reproached, because we have hoped in ***the*** living God, who is ***the*** Savior of all men, especially of believers. Command these things and teach ***them***. Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern for the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Until I come, give heed to the reading, to the exhortation, to the teaching. Do not neglect the gift in you, which was given to you through prophecy with ***the*** laying on of the hands of the council of elders. Ponder these things; be in them, so that your progress may be evident in all. Give heed to yourself and to the teaching; continue in them; for doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Preview

Paul has just praised the mystery of godliness. Now he warns that in later times some will leave the faith, led by deceiving spirits and teachings of demons. These teachers look holy. They forbid marriage and command people to stay away from certain foods. Paul answers that everything God created is good and is to be received with thanksgiving, because it is set apart by the Word of God and prayer.

Then Paul speaks to Timothy as a coach to his athlete. A good servant of Christ feeds on the words of the faith and refuses silly myths. He trains himself for godliness, which is worth far more than bodily training. Timothy is young, but he is to let no one look down on him. He is to be an example to the believers, to give himself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching, and to use the gift God gave him. If he watches his life and his teaching closely, he will save both himself and those who hear him.

Study

4:1 *But the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons,*

"But the Spirit expressly says." The Holy Spirit had spoken plainly about this, whether through Old Testament prophets, through Jesus (Matthew 24:10-12), or through prophets in the church like Paul himself (Acts 20:29-30). There is nothing vague about it.

What does the Spirit say? "That in later times some will depart from the faith." The later times began with Christ's first coming and run until He comes again (Hebrews 1:2). Paul could already see it happening in Ephesus, and the New Testament tells us it will grow worse as the end draws near (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Notice the source of the false teaching. These people are "giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons." Behind false teaching is a real spiritual enemy. The devil does not only tempt people to sin. He also feeds them lies dressed up as religion (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

4:2 *in* ***the*** *hypocrisy of liars, having been seared in their own conscience,*

These demonic teachings come "in the hypocrisy of liars." The teachers looked godly on the outside, but they were acting a part. A hypocrite in the Greek world was an actor on a stage wearing a mask.

They have "been seared in their own conscience." The picture is of a hot iron pressed into the skin. Searing can mean two things. A brand marks a slave as belonging to his master, so these men are marked as belonging to the devil. And burned skin goes numb, so their conscience no longer feels anything. Both ideas fit. When a person keeps saying no to the truth, his conscience grows hard, and in time he can tell lies without feeling a thing. That is why we should listen to our conscience while it is still tender.

4:3 *forbidding to marry,* ***and commanding*** *to abstain from foods which God created for receiving with thanksgiving by those who are faithful and have come to know the truth.*

What did these teachers command? They were "forbidding to marry." They taught that sex and marriage were unholy, and that the truly spiritual person would stay single. And they commanded people "to abstain from foods." They set up rules about what a godly person may or may not eat.

These rules looked very spiritual. But Paul says they come from demons. Why? Because they treat God's good gifts as if they were evil. God created marriage (Genesis 2:24), and Jesus blessed it (John 2:1-11). God created food "for receiving with thanksgiving by those who are faithful and have come to know the truth." Believers who know the truth know that the food laws of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Christ (Mark 7:19; Colossians 2:16-17).

4:4 *For every creature of God **is** good, and nothing **is** to be rejected, being received with thanksgiving;*

"For every creature of God is good." This goes back to the very first chapter of the Bible, where God looked at everything He had made and said it was very good (Genesis 1:31). Sin has spoiled the world, but it has not turned God's good gifts into evil things.

"Nothing is to be rejected, being received with thanksgiving." The key is thanksgiving. When we receive food, marriage, and the other good things God gives with a thankful heart, they honor Him. Some believers choose not to eat certain things or to stay single for the Lord's sake, and that is fine (1 Corinthians 7:7; Romans 14:6). The error is making that choice into a rule for everyone and calling it holiness.

Old Testament links: Genesis 1:31 (alluded to)

4:5 *for it is sanctified through **the** word of God and prayer.*

"For it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer." To sanctify means to set apart for God. God's Word declares His gifts good, and our prayer of thanks receives them from His hand.

This is one good reason to pray before meals. We are not making the food holy by magic words. We are thanking God for His gift and confessing that it comes from Him. The false teachers taught that the way to God was saying no to His creation. Paul teaches that the way to honor God is to receive His gifts with thanks and use them for His glory.

4:6 *Laying these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, being nourished in the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.*

"Laying these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ," Timothy's job was to put these truths in front of the church, the way a man lays out a meal before his family. The word "servant" here is the same word as deacon in chapter 3. Timothy, too, is a servant.

To feed others well, he must first feed himself: "being nourished in the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed." A pastor who is not being fed by God's Word will soon have nothing to give. That is true for every parent, teacher and small group leader. We cannot pass on what we have not first received.

4:7 *But refuse the profane and old-womanish myths, and train yourself for godliness;*

"But refuse the profane and old-womanish myths." Profane here means common, empty of anything holy. "Old-womanish" was a common saying in that day for silly tales told by old women to children, the kind of stories no thinking adult takes seriously. Paul is not insulting older women. He is saying the false teaching was childish nonsense.

Instead: "train yourself for godliness." The word for train gives us our word gymnasium. Greek athletes trained hard, stripped of everything that would hold them back. Godliness is not something that falls on us by accident. It takes discipline: time in the Word, prayer, worship, serving, saying no to sin. Grace saves us, and grace also trains us (Titus 2:11-12).

4:8 *for bodily training is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, holding promise of the life that **is** now and of that which is coming.*

"For bodily training is profitable for a little." Paul is not against exercise. Taking care of our bodies has some value. But it is limited. It helps for this life only, and even then only for a while.

"But godliness is profitable for all things, holding promise of the life that is now and of that which is coming." Godliness helps in every part of life. It makes us better husbands, wives, parents, workers and friends now. And it lasts into eternity. Think about how much time many of us spend on our bodies, on our looks, on our health, on our hobbies. How much time do we spend training ourselves for godliness? One kind of training lasts a few years. The other lasts forever.

4:9 *Faithful **is** the word and worthy of all acceptance.*

"Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptance." This is the third faithful saying in these letters. The same words introduced the great saying of 1:15.

Bible teachers disagree on whether this phrase points back to verse 8, the saying about godliness being profitable for this life and the next, or forward to verse 10. Either way, Paul is stamping what he says with his seal: this is true and every believer should receive it. When God's Word tells us something is trustworthy, we can build our lives on it.

4:10 *For toward this we also toil and are reproached, because we have hoped in **the** living God, who is **the** Savior of all men, especially of believers.*

"For toward this we also toil and are reproached." The word toil means to work until you are worn out. Paul and Timothy labored hard and were spoken against for it. Why did they keep going? "Because we have hoped in the living God."

He is "the Savior of all men, especially of believers." What does that mean? It cannot mean that every person will be saved in the end, since the Bible plainly teaches that those who reject Christ are lost (John 3:36). Bible teachers give a few readings. Some say God is the Savior of all in that He preserves and cares for every life, and He is the Savior of believers in the full sense of eternal salvation. Others say Christ's death is enough to save all and is offered to all, but it saves only those who believe. Either way, the verse gives us a reason to toil: God is a saving God, and the gospel is for everyone.

4:11 *Command these things and teach **them**.*

"Command these things and teach them." Timothy was not to offer these truths as suggestions. He was to command them, with the authority of the apostle who sent him, and to teach them, explaining them so that people understood.

A good leader in the church does both. Some things in Scripture are not up for debate, and a pastor must say so plainly. But he must also take the time to explain, so that people obey from the heart and not just because they were told to. Commands without teaching can feel harsh. Teaching without commands can become a discussion that goes nowhere.

4:12 *Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern for the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

"Let no one despise your youth." Scripture does not give Timothy's age. He had been serving with Paul for well over ten years (Acts 16:1-3), so many think he was in his thirties at this time. That was young for a leader in that world, especially one who had to correct older men. Some might look down on him.

How should he answer that? Not by arguing, but by living. "Be a pattern for the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." In word means in what he says. In conduct means in how he lives. In love means in how he treats people. In spirit means in his inner attitude and zeal for God. In faith means in faithfulness and trust in God. In purity means in moral cleanness, especially toward women (5:2). Young believers, take heart. You do not have to wait until you are older to be an example. The way you live can show older believers what faith looks like.

4:13 *Until I come, give heed to the reading, to the exhortation, to the teaching.*

"Until I come, give heed to the reading, to the exhortation, to the teaching." Here are the three main parts of a church meeting in Paul's day, and they still matter in ours.

"The reading" means the public reading of Scripture, just as was done in the synagogue, the Jewish place of worship and teaching. In a day when few people owned a copy of the Bible, hearing it read aloud was how most believers learned it. "The exhortation" means preaching that calls people to act on what was read. "The teaching" means explaining what the Scripture means. A church that reads the Word, urges people to obey it, and teaches it clearly is doing what God asks.

4:14 *Do not neglect the gift in you, which was given to you through prophecy with **the** laying on of the hands of the council of elders.*

"Do not neglect the gift in you." God had given Timothy a spiritual gift for his ministry, likely the gift of preaching and teaching. Like any gift, it could be neglected and left to grow weak.

It "was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the council of elders." When Timothy was set apart for ministry, God spoke through prophets about him (1:18), and the elders laid their hands on him. The laying on of hands was a way of showing that the church recognized God's call and stood behind him. In 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul says his own hands were laid on Timothy too. Your gifts came from God for a reason. Use them.

4:15 *Ponder these things; be in them, so that your progress may be evident in all.*

"Ponder these things; be in them." To ponder means to think deeply about something, to care for it and practice it. To "be in them" means to give yourself to them completely, to be wrapped up in them. Timothy was to live and breathe his calling.

Why? "So that your progress may be evident in all." The word progress was used of an army cutting a path forward. Timothy did not have to be perfect, but the church should be able to see

him growing. That is a good word for all of us. No one expects you to have arrived. But are you growing in your walk with God? Can others see it?

4:16 *Give heed to yourself and to the teaching; continue in them; for doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*

"Give heed to yourself and to the teaching." Here is the whole job in one line. A pastor must keep a close watch on two things: his own life and his doctrine. Many leaders have fallen because they watched one and ignored the other. Some guarded their doctrine and let their hearts go cold. Others cared about their walk with God and let false teaching creep in.

"Continue in them; for doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." Paul does not mean that Timothy saves himself by his works. He means that by keeping on in the truth, Timothy would persevere to the end, and God would use his faithful teaching to bring others to salvation and keep them in it. Faithful teaching is one of the ways God saves people.

Summary

The Spirit plainly warns that in later times some will depart from the faith, listening to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons, spoken by liars whose consciences have been seared. They forbid marriage and command people to stay away from foods God created to be received with thanks. Everything God made is good and set apart by His Word and prayer. Timothy is to be a good servant of Christ, nourished by sound teaching and refusing silly myths. He is to train himself for godliness, which is profitable for this life and the next, because his hope is in the living God, the Savior of all men, especially of believers. He is not to let anyone despise his youth, but to be an example in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith and purity. He must give himself to the reading of Scripture, exhortation and teaching, use the gift God gave him, let his progress be seen, and keep a close watch on his life and his teaching.

If I made a training plan for godliness this month, reading God's Word would be at the top. Paul says godliness takes training. I cannot grow without time in the Word.

Study Questions

1. According to 4:1, where does false teaching ultimately come from?

2. What two things did the false teachers forbid, and why does Paul say they were wrong? (4:3-4)

3. How is food set apart for God, according to 4:5?

4. What is the difference between bodily training and training for godliness? (4:7-8)

5. What does it mean that God is "the Savior of all men, especially of believers"? (4:10)

6. In what six areas was Timothy to be an example? (4:12)

7. What three things was Timothy to give himself to in the church meetings? (4:13)

8. What two things did Paul tell Timothy to watch closely, and why both? (4:16)

9. If you made a training plan for godliness, what would be on it this month?

10. What spiritual gift has God given you, and are you using it or neglecting it?

1 Timothy 5: Caring for the Family of God

Scripture

5:1-16 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort ***him*** as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. Honor widows who are truly widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show godliness ***toward*** their own household and to give recompense to ***their*** parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. Now she who ***is*** truly a widow and left alone has hoped in God and continues in the petitions and the prayers night and day; but she who lives in self-indulgence has died while living. And command these things, so that they may be above reproach. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for ***those of his*** household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Let a widow be enrolled ***who is*** not less than sixty years ***old***, having been ***the*** wife of one husband, being borne witness to for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed ***the*** feet of saints, if she has relieved those being afflicted, if she has followed after every good work. But refuse younger widows; for when they grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having judgment, because they have set aside ***their*** first faith. And at the same time they also learn ***to be*** idle, going around the houses; and not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies, speaking the things ***they*** ought not. I desire, therefore, younger ***women*** to marry, to bear children, to manage the household, to give no occasion to the one who opposes ***us*** for reviling; for already some have turned aside after Satan. If any believing man or believing woman has widows, let ***that one*** relieve them, and let the church not be burdened, so that it may relieve those who ***are*** truly widows.

5:17-25 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who toil in word and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing," and, "The worker ***is*** worthy of his wages." Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on ***the evidence of*** two or three witnesses. Rebuke those who sin before all, so that the rest also may have fear. I solemnly testify before God and ***the*** Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that you keep these things without prejudice, doing nothing out of partiality. Lay hands on no one quickly, nor share in sins of others; keep yourself pure. No longer drink water ***only***, but use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent ailments. The sins of some men are evident beforehand, going before ***them*** to judgment; but for some they also follow after. Likewise also the good works are evident beforehand, and those that are otherwise are not able to be concealed.

Preview

The church is the household of God, and in this chapter Paul shows Timothy how to treat each member of that family. Older men are to be treated like fathers, younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, and younger women like sisters, in all purity. Then Paul gives long instructions about widows. The church is to honor and care for widows who are truly alone and who hope in God. But families must care for their own first, and anyone who will not provide for his own household has denied the faith. Paul also explains which widows should be put on the church's list and why younger widows should marry again.

In the second half Paul turns to elders. Those who lead well, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching, deserve double honor, including fair pay. An accusation against an elder must be backed by two or three witnesses, and elders who keep on sinning must be rebuked in front of all. Timothy must judge without favoritism, must not rush to set men apart for leadership, and must keep himself pure. Paul even adds a personal word about Timothy's health. In the end, both sins and good works come to light.

Study

5:1-2 *Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort **him** as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.*

"Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father." Timothy was young, and he had to correct people older than himself. Paul does not say he should never correct an older man. He says to do it the way a godly son would speak to his father: with respect, gently, appealing to him rather than scolding. The word "exhort" means to come alongside and urge.

"Younger men as brothers." With men his own age, Timothy was to speak as an equal, not as a boss. "Older women as mothers," with honor and tenderness. "Younger women as sisters, in all purity." A young pastor must guard himself here. He is to treat young women the way a good brother treats his sister: with care, with respect, and with no hint of anything improper.

This is a picture of the church. It is not a company or a club. It is a family, and we should treat one another that way.

5:3 *Honor widows who are truly widows.*

"Honor widows who are truly widows." In Paul's day a widow could be in serious trouble. There was no government help and often no way for a woman alone to earn a living. The Old Testament commanded God's people to care for widows (Deuteronomy 14:28-29), and the early church did this from the start (Acts 6:1).

To honor here includes more than respect. It includes support, giving them what they need to live. But Paul says "truly widows." Not every woman who had lost her husband needed the church's help. Paul is about to explain who does.

5:4 *But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show godliness **toward** their own household and to give recompense to **their** parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.*

"But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show godliness toward their own household." Caring for an aging parent is not just a nice thing to do. Paul calls it "godliness." It is part of living out our faith.

"And to give recompense to their parents." Our parents cared for us when we could not care for ourselves. When they grow old and need help, it is our turn. This is how we keep the fifth commandment, to honor our father and mother. "For this is good and acceptable before God." The

church should not have to do what a family is able to do. Are your parents or grandparents in need? Caring for them is service to God.

5:5 *Now she who **is** truly a widow and left alone has hoped in God and continues in the petitions and the prayers night and day;*

"Now she who is truly a widow and left alone has hoped in God." This is the widow the church should support. She is "left alone," with no family to help her. And she "has hoped in God." With no one else to lean on, she has put her trust in the Lord.

She "continues in the petitions and the prayers night and day." Think of Anna in the temple, a widow who served God with fasting and prayers night and day (Luke 2:36-37). A godly widow can have a great ministry of prayer. The church should never think of such women as a burden. They are often the prayer warriors who hold a church up.

5:6 *but she who lives in self-indulgence has died while living.*

"But she who lives in self-indulgence has died while living." Here is a different kind of widow. She has turned to pleasure and spending. The word means living for luxury and ease.

Paul says she is dead even while she is alive. She is breathing, but she is spiritually dead, cut off from the life of God. A woman like this should not be supported by the church, because the church's gifts would only feed her self-indulgence. The words apply to anyone, man or woman. A life spent chasing pleasure looks full on the outside, but it is empty inside.

5:7 *And command these things, so that they may be above reproach.*

"And command these things, so that they may be above reproach." Timothy was to teach these rules plainly to the church so that no one could point a finger at the widows, their families or the church.

"Above reproach" is the same idea Paul used for overseers in 3:2. The way a church handles money and care for the needy is watched by people outside. If families neglected their parents, or if the church's gifts went to women living for pleasure, the name of Christ would be dragged through the mud. Good order in caring for people protects the church's witness.

5:8 *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for **those of his** household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

"But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." These are some of the strongest words in the letter. A man who will not care for his own family is acting as if he does not believe at all.

Why "worse than an unbeliever"? Because even many unbelievers take care of their families. They know it is right. A professing Christian who neglects his parents, wife or children is falling below the standard of the people around him. Faith is not only something we say on Sunday. It shows up in the way we care for the people God put closest to us.

5:9-10 *Let a widow be enrolled **who is** not less than sixty years **old**, having been **the** wife of one husband, being borne witness to for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed **the** feet of saints, if she has relieved those being afflicted, if she has followed after every good work.*

"Let a widow be enrolled who is not less than sixty years old." It seems the church in Ephesus kept a list of widows it supported. Many believe these women also served the church in some way, praying, visiting and helping, since they were likely to remain single.

To be put on the list, a widow had to be at least sixty, past the age when most women of that time would marry again. She had to be "the wife of one husband," which most take to mean a faithful wife. And she had to be known "for good works." Paul gives examples: she brought up children, showed hospitality to strangers, "washed the feet of saints," which was the humble work of a servant, helped those who were suffering, and "followed after every good work." A woman who had served others all her life was to be served by the church when she was alone.

5:11-12 *But refuse younger widows; for when they grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having judgment, because they have set aside **their** first faith.*

"But refuse younger widows." This sounds harsh, but Paul explains. He is not saying they should get no help. He is saying they should not be put on the list, which seems to have included a pledge to serve Christ without marrying again.

"For when they grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry." A young widow might make that pledge in her grief, but later, as is natural, she would want a husband again. Then she would be "having judgment, because they have set aside their first faith." Bible teachers read that first faith as a promise she had made to Christ when she was put on the list. Breaking it would bring blame on her. Paul does not want to put young women in a spot where they make a vow they will likely break.

5:13 *And at the same time they also learn **to be** idle, going around the houses; and not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies, speaking the things **they** ought not.*

There was another danger. "And at the same time they also learn to be idle, going around the houses." A young widow supported by the church, with no work to do, might go from house to house with nothing but time on her hands.

"And not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies, speaking the things they ought not." Idleness opens the door to gossip. A busybody is someone who meddles in other people's business. Paul is not picking on women here. He says the same about idle men in 2 Thessalonians 3:11. When we have too much free time and no purpose, our mouths often get us into trouble. Good, honest work is a gift from God.

5:14 *I desire, therefore, younger **women** to marry, to bear children, to manage the household, to give no occasion to the one who opposes **us** for reviling;*

"I desire, therefore, younger women to marry." In Paul's day, this was the normal path for a young widow, and it gave her a home, a family and a place to serve. Paul names three parts of that life: "to bear children, to manage the household."

The word for "manage the household" means to be the ruler of the house. A wife and mother had real authority and real work in her home. All of this would "give no occasion to the one who opposes us for reviling." The opposer may be an enemy of the church who would love to say Christians live loose lives, or it may be Satan himself, as the next verse suggests. A godly home shuts the mouth of the critic.

5:15 *for already some have turned aside after Satan.*

"For already some have turned aside after Satan." This was not only a danger in theory. It had already happened. Some younger widows in Ephesus had left the path and followed the enemy, perhaps by falling in with the false teachers (2 Timothy 3:6) or by falling into immoral lives.

This is a sad verse, and a sobering one. Paul gives these instructions not because he is unkind to widows, but because he cares about them. He has seen what happens when good people are left without purpose or protection. Rules in the church that look strict are often there because someone got hurt before.

5:16 *If any believing man or believing woman has widows, let **that one** relieve them, and let the church not be burdened, so that it may relieve those who **are** truly widows.*

"If any believing man or believing woman has widows, let that one relieve them." Paul repeats his main point. Believers who have widows in their families should care for them themselves.

Why? "Let the church not be burdened, so that it may relieve those who are truly widows." A church only has so much money. If families did their part, the church could do much more for widows who had no one. It is a simple lesson in good stewardship. When we take care of our own, we free the church to care for those who have nobody else.

5:17 *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who toil in word and teaching.*

Paul now turns to elders. "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor." The elders lead and oversee the church. Those who do it well deserve "double honor." Many believe this means both respect and pay. The next verse shows that money is in view.

"Especially those who toil in word and teaching." Some elders spent much of their time preaching and teaching. Paul says they especially deserve support. The word toil means hard work until you are tired. Good preaching and teaching takes hours of study and prayer. A church should not expect its pastor to give all his time to the Word and then leave him struggling to feed his family.

5:18 *For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing," and, "The worker **is** worthy of his wages."*

Paul writes, "For the Scripture says," and then quotes, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing." This comes from Deuteronomy 25:4. An ox that walked around the threshing floor treading out grain was not to be muzzled. It was allowed to eat some of the grain it was working on. Paul used the same verse in 1 Corinthians 9:9 to make the same point: those who work for the church should be supported by it.

Then he adds a second saying: "The worker is worthy of his wages." These are the words of Jesus in Luke 10:7. Notice what Paul does. Many Bible teachers believe he is calling both the verse from Deuteronomy and the words of Jesus recorded by Luke "the Scripture." If so, already in Paul's day the teaching of Jesus was being placed alongside the Old Testament as God's Word.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 25:4 (quoted)

5:19 *Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on **the evidence of** two or three witnesses.*

"Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses." This goes back to the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 19:15), and Jesus taught the same (Matthew 18:16).

Why this rule for elders? Because leaders are easy targets. Anyone with a grudge can make a claim. A pastor who has to correct people will make enemies. If every rumor were treated as true, no leader could last. Paul protects elders from false charges. But this verse is not a shield for real sin. When the charge is backed by witnesses, it must be dealt with, as the next verse shows. Churches must take real reports seriously, especially reports of abuse, and they must also protect leaders from gossip and lies.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 19:15 (alluded to)

5:20 *Rebuke those who sin before all, so that the rest also may have fear.*

"Rebuke those who sin before all, so that the rest also may have fear." This most likely refers to elders who have been shown by witnesses to be sinning and who keep on in it. The word "sin" here points to an ongoing practice, not one stumble.

They were to be rebuked "before all," in front of the church. Why so public? A leader's sin hurts the whole church, so it must be dealt with openly. "So that the rest also may have fear." Other leaders would see it and take sin seriously. A church that hides its leaders' sins to protect its name ends up losing both its name and its people.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 19:20 (alluded to)

5:21 *I solemnly testify before God and **the** Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that you keep these things without prejudice, doing nothing out of partiality.*

"I solemnly testify before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels," Paul calls on heaven as his witness. This is how serious it is.

"The elect angels" are the angels who did not fall with Satan, the holy angels God chose to serve Him. They watch the church (1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 3:10).

What is the charge? "That you keep these things without prejudice, doing nothing out of partiality." Prejudice means judging before the facts are in. Partiality means favoring someone because of who they are. Timothy must not go easy on an elder because he was a friend or a big giver, and he must not come down hard on one he did not like. Every church needs leaders who judge fairly.

5:22 *Lay hands on no one quickly, nor share in sins of others; keep yourself pure.*

"Lay hands on no one quickly." Laying on of hands was how elders were set apart for their work (4:14). Paul warns Timothy not to rush it. Take time to watch a man's life, just as Paul said for deacons in 3:10.

"Nor share in sins of others." If Timothy put an unfit man into leadership, and that man later fell into sin, Timothy would share some of the blame. "Keep yourself pure." This applies first to Timothy's own life, and then to the way he chooses leaders. The best way to prevent a scandal is to be careful who is put in charge in the first place.

5:23 *No longer drink water **only**, but use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent ailments.*

"No longer drink water only, but use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent ailments." This is a very personal note in the middle of instructions about elders. It is one of the marks of a real letter. It seems Timothy had been drinking only water, perhaps to keep himself pure and set an example (5:22; 3:3). But water in that day often made people sick, and Timothy had stomach trouble.

Paul tells him a little wine would help. Notice the word "a little." This is not permission to drink a lot. Some believers today choose not to drink at all, and that is a good and wise choice for many, especially those who have struggled with alcohol. The point is that keeping yourself pure does not mean neglecting your health. Taking care of your body is not unspiritual.

5:24-25 *The sins of some men are evident beforehand, going before **them** to judgment; but for some they also follow after. Likewise also the good works are evident beforehand, and those that are otherwise are not able to be concealed.*

Paul ends with a word about judging people, which ties back to choosing elders. "The sins of some men are evident beforehand, going before them to judgment." Some people's sins are out in the

open, and it is easy to see they are not fit to lead. "But for some they also follow after." Other people's sins are hidden and only come to light later.

"Likewise also the good works are evident beforehand." Some people's good works are plain to see. "And those that are otherwise are not able to be concealed." Even good works done quietly will come out in time. The lesson for Timothy was patience. Take time, and the truth about a person will come out. The lesson for us is that nothing is hidden from God. One day all sin and every good deed will be made known (1 Corinthians 4:5).

Summary

Paul teaches Timothy to treat the church as a family: older men as fathers, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters in all purity. The church is to honor and support widows who are truly alone and who hope in God, but families must care for their own first, and anyone who will not provide for his household has denied the faith. Widows put on the church's list must be at least sixty and known for good works. Younger widows should marry, raise families and manage their homes, so that the enemy has no reason to speak against the church. Elders who lead well deserve double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching, for the worker deserves his wages. An accusation against an elder needs two or three witnesses, and elders who keep sinning must be rebuked publicly. Timothy must judge without partiality, must not rush to set men apart, and must keep himself pure. Both sins and good works will come to light in time.

Study Questions

1. How does Paul tell Timothy to treat older men, younger men, older women and younger women? (5:1-2)

2. Who has the first responsibility to care for a widow? (5:4, 5:16)

3. How does Paul describe a widow who is "truly a widow"? (5:5)

4. Why does Paul say a man who will not provide for his family is "worse than an unbeliever"? (5:8)

5. What two Scriptures does Paul use to show that elders should be paid? (5:18)

6. Why must an accusation against an elder be backed by two or three witnesses? (5:19)

7. Why should Timothy not lay hands on anyone quickly? (5:22)

8. What does 5:24-25 teach about sins and good works that are hidden?

9. Is there an older family member God may be calling you to care for, and what would that look like?

10. How could you treat the people in your church more like family this week?

1 Timothy 6: Contentment and the Good Fight

Scripture

6:1-10 Let as many as are slaves under a yoke regard ***their*** own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise ***them*** because they are brothers, but rather let them serve ***them***, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things. If anyone teaches different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the teaching according to godliness, he has been puffed up, understanding nothing, but being sick about controversies and disputes about words, out of which come envy, strife, blasphemies, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men corrupted in mind and deprived of the truth, supposing godliness to be a means of gain. Withdraw from such. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, ***and it is*** evident that neither are we able to carry anything out. But having sustenance and coverings, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all the evils, which some, stretching after ***it***, have been led astray from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pains.

6:11-21 But you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold of eternal life, to which you were also called, and you confessed the good confession before many witnesses. I charge you before God, who gives life to all things, and Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain, above reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will display in ***His*** own times, the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of those who reign as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no one of men has seen or is able to see, to whom ***be*** honor and eternal dominion. Amen. Charge those who are rich in the present age not to be high-minded nor to have set ***their*** hope on ***the*** uncertainty of riches, but in the living God, who provides us all things richly for enjoyment, to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may lay hold of eternal life. O Timothy, guard the deposit, turning aside from the profane empty babblings and contradictions of the falsely called knowledge, which some, professing, have missed the mark concerning the faith. The grace ***be*** with you. Amen.

Preview

Paul begins the last chapter with a word to slaves in the church. They are to honor their masters so that God's name and the gospel are not spoken against, and those with believing masters are to serve them all the better. Then Paul goes back to the false teachers one last time. They are proud, they love arguments about words, and they think godliness is a way to get rich. Paul answers with one of the most important teachings about money in the Bible: godliness with contentment is great gain. We brought nothing into the world and we will take nothing out. Those who want to be rich fall into a trap, for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

Then Paul turns to Timothy, the man of God. Flee these things, pursue righteousness, and fight the good fight of the faith. Paul charges him before God and Christ to keep the commandment until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he breaks out in praise of the King of kings and Lord of lords. He gives a word for the rich: do not trust in riches, but in God, and be rich in good works. Finally he pleads with Timothy to guard what was entrusted to him.

Study

6:1 *Let as many as are slaves under a yoke regard their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed.*

"Let as many as are slaves under a yoke regard their own masters worthy of all honor." In Paul's day a large part of the people in the Roman Empire were slaves, and many of them were in the church. Roman slavery was not the same as the race-based slavery in American history. People became slaves through war, debt or birth, and some worked as teachers, doctors and managers. But it was still a system where one person owned another, and it was often cruel. A yoke was the wooden bar put on the neck of an ox. Paul does not pretend slavery was easy.

Why should a slave honor his master? "So that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed." If Christian slaves were known as lazy or rebellious, people would say the gospel made people worse. Paul wants their lives to make the gospel look good.

We should be honest that these verses were later misused in America to defend slavery. Many other Christians, reading the same Bible, saw that every person is made in God's image and fought to end it. Paul's words were never a blessing on slavery. Paul himself listed "enslavers" among the lawless in 1:10, and he told slaves to take their freedom if they could (1 Corinthians 7:21). These were instructions for believers caught in a system they did not create.

6:2 *And those who have believing masters, let them not despise **them** because they are brothers, but rather let them serve **them**, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.*

"And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brothers." A Christian slave with a Christian master might be tempted to think that since they were now equals in Christ, he did not have to work as hard. Paul says no. "Rather let them serve them, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved." Their good work blesses a brother in Christ, someone God loves.

Today these verses apply to anyone who works for someone else. If you work for a Christian boss, that is not a reason to slack off. It is a reason to work even harder. And whoever your boss is, you are serving Christ (Ephesians 6:7). "Teach and exhort these things." Timothy was to make sure the church heard this plainly.

6:3 *If anyone teaches different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the teaching according to godliness,*

Paul returns to the false teachers. "If anyone teaches different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ." There it is again: "sound," healthy words. And notice where those words come from. They are the words of Jesus Himself. The test of any teaching is whether it agrees with what Jesus and His apostles taught.

Sound teaching is also "the teaching according to godliness." True doctrine always leads to a godly life. If a teaching makes people proud, greedy or quarrelsome, it is not from God, no matter how spiritual it sounds.

6:4-5 *he has been puffed up, understanding nothing, but being sick about controversies and disputes about words, out of which come envy, strife, blasphemies, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men corrupted in mind and deprived of the truth, supposing godliness to be a means of gain. Withdraw from such.*

Here is Paul's description of the false teacher. "He has been puffed up, understanding nothing." Proud, and yet he knows nothing. "But being sick about controversies and disputes about words." Sound teaching is healthy, and this man is sick. He has an unhealthy craving for arguments.

Look at what comes out of it: "envy, strife, blasphemies, evil suspicions, useless wranglings." That is the fruit of false teaching. A church full of arguing and suspicion is a sign that something has gone wrong.

These men are "corrupted in mind and deprived of the truth, supposing godliness to be a means of gain." They used religion to make money. Sadly, that is still with us. Some teachers today promise health and wealth to anyone who gives enough. Paul's answer is short: "Withdraw from such." Get away from them.

6:6 *But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

"But godliness with contentment is great gain." Paul turns the false teachers' words around. They thought godliness was a way to get rich. Paul says godliness is great gain, but not in the way they meant.

Godliness is living a life that honors God. Contentment means being satisfied with what God has given, not always wanting more. The word was used by Greek thinkers for a man who has enough within himself. For the believer, contentment comes from having Christ. Paul learned to be content in every situation, whether he had plenty or nothing, because Christ gave him strength (Philippians 4:11-13). A person with a godly life and a content heart is richer than any millionaire who always wants more.

6:7 *For we brought nothing into the world, **and it is** evident that neither are we able to carry anything out.*

"For we brought nothing into the world, and it is evident that neither are we able to carry anything out." This is one of the plainest truths in the Bible. Every person comes into the world with empty hands, and every person leaves the same way (Job 1:21; Ecclesiastes 5:15).

No matter how much you gather in this life, you will not take any of it with you. The richest man and the poorest man leave everything behind. Why then would we give our lives to chasing things we cannot keep? The only treasures we can carry into eternity are the ones we store up in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21).

Old Testament links: Job 1:21 (alluded to); Ecclesiastes 5:15 (alluded to)

6:8 *But having sustenance and coverings, with these we will be content.*

"But having sustenance and coverings, with these we will be content." Sustenance means food. Coverings means clothing, and it may include shelter too. Paul says these are enough. If we have what we need to live, we can be content.

This is not a rule that Christians must be poor. God gives some people more, and Paul will speak to the rich in verses 17-19. But it is a call to measure our lives by what we need, not by what we want or by what others have. Most of us have far more than food and clothing. Do we thank God for it, or do we keep looking at what we don't have?

6:9 *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare." Notice that the problem is not having money. It is wanting to be rich, setting your heart on it. That desire leads to "temptation," the pull to do wrong to get more, and to "a snare," a trap that catches you before you know it.

It leads to "many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction." The picture is of a man pulled under water and drowned. Many people have lost their marriages, their health, their honesty and even their faith in the chase for money. The desire to be rich promises everything and delivers ruin.

6:10 *For the love of money is a root of all the evils, which some, stretching after **it**, have been led astray from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pains.*

"For the love of money is a root of all the evils." Paul does not say money is evil. He says the love of money is a root of evils. Money is a tool. Loving it is the problem. And it is "a root" of many kinds of evil, not the only root of every sin. Lies, theft, fraud, murder, broken families and broken friendships have all grown from this root.

"Which some, stretching after it, have been led astray from the faith." The picture is of a man reaching out to grab something. While he stretches for money, he wanders from the faith. And they "have pierced themselves with many pains." They did it to themselves. The love of money

wounds the very people who chase it. Ask yourself honestly: does money have too much of a hold on my heart?

6:11 *But you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness.*

"But you, O man of God, flee these things." Timothy is called "man of God," a title used in the Old Testament for Moses, Elijah and other prophets. It means a man who belongs to God and speaks for Him. A man of God does not chase money. He runs from it.

But Paul does not only say what to run from. He says what to run toward. "Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness." Righteousness is doing what is right. Godliness is a life that honors God. Faith is trust in Him. Love is caring for others. Endurance is staying strong under pressure. Meekness is strength under control. The Christian life is always running from sin and running toward Christ.

6:12 *Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold of eternal life, to which you were also called, and you confessed the good confession before many witnesses.*

"Fight the good fight of the faith." The word fight gives us our word agony. It was used for the hard struggle of an athlete in a contest. The Christian life is not a stroll. It takes effort, struggle and endurance.

"Lay hold of eternal life, to which you were also called." Timothy already had eternal life. Paul tells him to grab hold of it, to live in it every day, to let it shape everything.

"And you confessed the good confession before many witnesses." This most likely points to Timothy's baptism or his setting apart for ministry, when he stood before others and confessed that Jesus is Lord. Remember the day you first confessed Christ. Live up to it.

6:13 *I charge you before God, who gives life to all things, and Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,*

"I charge you before God, who gives life to all things, and Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate." Paul again calls on heaven as witness. God gives life to all things, so Timothy has no reason to fear death.

And Christ Jesus made "the good confession before Pontius Pilate." Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea who sentenced Jesus to death. Standing before him, knowing what was coming, Jesus did not back down. He said He was a king and had come to testify to the truth (John 18:36-37). Timothy had made his good confession. Jesus made His at the cost of His life. That is the example Timothy is to follow when the pressure comes.

6:14 *that you keep the commandment without stain, above reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

"That you keep the commandment without stain, above reproach." The commandment most likely means the whole charge Paul has given Timothy in this letter, the gospel and the life that fits it. Timothy was to keep it clean, with nothing to be ashamed of.

For how long? "Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul keeps Christ's coming before Timothy's eyes. Our faithfulness has an end point. One day Jesus will come for His church (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), and every believer will stand before Him to give an account of how we served (2 Corinthians 5:10). Live today with that day in view.

6:15 *which He will display in **His** own times, the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of those who reign as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords,*

"Which He will display in His own times." God has set the day of Christ's appearing, and He will show it when He chooses. We do not know when, but God does (Acts 1:7).

Then Paul breaks into praise. God is "the blessed and only Sovereign." A sovereign is a ruler with all power. There is only one. He is "the King of those who reign as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords." Every king and ruler on earth is under Him. Revelation gives Jesus the same title when He returns to the earth to reign (Revelation 19:16). The emperors of Rome claimed to be lords and even gods. Paul says there is only one Sovereign, and they answer to Him.

6:16 *who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no one of men has seen or is able to see, to whom **be** honor and eternal dominion. Amen.*

"Who alone has immortality." Only God has life in Himself, life that never began and can never end. Every other living thing gets its life from Him. "Dwelling in unapproachable light." God's holiness and glory are so bright that no sinful person could come near Him and live (Exodus 33:20).

"Whom no one of men has seen or is able to see." No one has seen God in His full glory. We know Him through His Son, who has made Him known (John 1:18). "To whom be honor and eternal dominion. Amen." When we see how great God is, our problems, our fears and even our money look very small.

Old Testament links: Exodus 33:20 (alluded to)

6:17 *Charge those who are rich in the present age not to be high-minded nor to have set **their** hope on **the** uncertainty of riches, but in the living God, who provides us all things richly for enjoyment,*

Paul adds a word for those who are already rich. "Charge those who are rich in the present age." Notice that riches belong to "the present age." They do not last into the next one.

The rich are "not to be high-minded," not to think they are better than others because they have more. They are not to set "their hope on the uncertainty of riches." Money can be gone in a day. Instead, their hope must be "in the living God, who provides us all things richly for enjoyment."

God is not against enjoying His gifts. He gives them to us to enjoy. But He wants us to trust the Giver, not the gifts. If you live in a country like ours, by the standards of most of the world, you are one of the rich.

6:18 *to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share,*

What should the rich do? "To do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share." Paul plays on the word rich. Be rich in money if God gives it, but be even richer in good works.

"Generous" means giving freely. "Ready to share" means having a heart that is open to others, one that is quick to see a need and meet it. God blesses some people with more so they can bless others with it. Money in the hands of a generous believer becomes a tool for God's kingdom.

6:19 *storing up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may lay hold of eternal life.*

"Storing up for themselves a good foundation for the future." This is the opposite of trusting in riches. By giving away what they have, the rich store up treasure in heaven, a foundation that will not crumble (Matthew 6:20).

"So that they may lay hold of eternal life." This does not mean they buy eternal life with their giving. Salvation is a free gift. It means they grab hold of the life that really is life, the life that lasts. A person who gives freely shows that their heart is set on eternity, and they live in that eternal life now.

6:20 *O Timothy, guard the deposit, turning aside from the profane empty babblings and contradictions of the falsely called knowledge,*

"O Timothy, guard the deposit." You can hear Paul's heart in these words. A deposit was something valuable left with someone for safekeeping, like money left with a bank. The deposit here is the gospel, the truth God gave Paul and Paul gave Timothy. Timothy was not to change it, add to it or lose it.

He was to be "turning aside from the profane empty babblings and contradictions of the falsely called knowledge." The false teachers claimed to have special knowledge. The Greek word for knowledge is gnosis, and a little later a whole movement called Gnosticism grew up claiming secret knowledge that only a few could have. Paul says it is knowledge falsely so called. It is empty noise.

6:21 *which some, professing, have missed the mark concerning the faith. The grace **be** with you. Amen.*

"Which some, professing, have missed the mark concerning the faith." Paul ends where he began (1:6). Some people had made a show of this special knowledge and wandered away from the truth. It is a final warning.

"The grace be with you." In the Received Greek Text, which the SLB follows, this "you" is singular, a last word to Timothy himself. Many older Greek copies have the plural, a blessing on the whole church that would hear the letter. Either way, his last word is grace. That is fitting. Everything Timothy had to do, he could only do by God's grace. The same is true for us.

Summary

Paul tells slaves to honor their masters so that God's name is not spoken against, and to serve believing masters all the more. He describes the false teachers as proud men who love arguments and think godliness is a way to get rich. Godliness with contentment is great gain. We brought nothing into the world and can take nothing out, so with food and clothing we will be content. Those who desire to be rich fall into a snare, for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Timothy, the man of God, must flee these things, pursue righteousness, fight the good fight of the faith, and keep the commandment until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality. The rich must not trust in riches, but in God, and be rich in good works. Timothy must guard what was entrusted to him and turn away from knowledge falsely so called.

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul tell slaves to honor their masters? (6:1)

2. How does Paul describe the false teachers, and what did they think godliness was for? (6:4-5)

3. What does Paul say is "great gain"? (6:6)

4. Is money itself evil, according to 6:10? What is the problem?

5. What is the man of God to flee from, and what is he to pursue? (6:11)

6. What titles does Paul give God in 6:15-16?

7. What four things does Paul tell the rich to do? (6:17-18)

8. What was the "deposit" Timothy was to guard? (6:20)

9. Where do you struggle most with contentment? What would it look like to be content with what God has given you?

10. What is one way you could be "rich in good works" this week?

Overview of 2 Timothy

2 Timothy is the sixteenth book of the New Testament. It sits between 1 Timothy and Titus. It is the second of the three Pastoral Letters, and most Bible teachers believe it is the last letter Paul ever wrote.

This is a different kind of letter from 1 Timothy. It is not mainly about how to run a church. It is a father's last words to his son. Paul is in chains in Rome, most of his friends have left him, and he knows he will soon be put to death. He wants Timothy to stay strong, to suffer for the gospel without shame, to hold on to the Scriptures, and to keep preaching the Word when people no longer want to hear it. Near the end Paul looks back on his own life and ahead to his reward:

2 Timothy 4:7 (SLB)

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

2 Timothy has 4 chapters and 83 verses. Here is its structure:

Part One: Strength for the Struggle (chapters 1 and 2)

- 2 Timothy 1: Do Not Be Ashamed
- 2 Timothy 2: A Good Soldier and a Worker Approved

Part Two: Faithful to the End (chapters 3 and 4)

- 2 Timothy 3: Difficult Times and God-Breathed Scripture
- 2 Timothy 4: Preach the Word and Finish the Race

Background of 2 Timothy

Author: The letter opens with "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). As with 1 Timothy, the early church received it as Paul's, and many modern scholars doubt it for the same reasons of style and setting. I take the letter at its word. It is the most personal of all Paul's letters. It is full of names, memories, tears and small requests: bring my cloak, bring the books, come before winter (4:13, 21). Those are the marks of a real man writing in a real prison.

Who it was written to: Timothy, Paul's "beloved child" (1:2), was likely still leading the church in Ephesus or nearby. Paul reminds him of the faith of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (1:5), of the day Paul laid hands on him (1:6), and of the persecutions Timothy saw Paul endure in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra (3:11). Timothy seems to have been timid at times, and Paul writes to stir him up and strengthen him.

Paul's second imprisonment: Many Bible teachers, going back to the early church, believe Paul was released from the house arrest described at the end of Acts, traveled and preached for a few more years, and was then arrested again. This second imprisonment was very different from the first. In Acts 28 Paul lived in his own rented house and welcomed visitors. Now he is chained like a criminal (1:16; 2:9), friends had to search hard to find him (1:17), and he has already had a first hearing in court where no one stood with him (4:16). He expects to die (4:6).

When and where it was written: Paul wrote from Rome (1:17). The early church remembered that Paul was put to death in Rome under the emperor Nero, who persecuted Christians after the great fire of Rome in A.D. 64. Most who hold that Paul wrote it date the letter about A.D. 66 to 67, shortly before his death.

Purpose: Paul wrote to call Timothy to come to him quickly (4:9, 21), and to pass the torch. He urges Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel, to suffer hardship as a good soldier, to hand the truth on to faithful men, to stand firm against false teachers in difficult times, to hold to the Scriptures, and to preach the Word until the end.

2 Timothy 1: Do Not Be Ashamed

Scripture

1:1-7 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through ***the*** will of God, according to ***the*** promise of life which ***is*** in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, ***my*** beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace from God ***the*** Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I have thanks to God, whom I serve from ***my*** forefathers with a pure conscience, as I have unceasing remembrance of you in my petitions night and day, longing to see you, having remembered your tears, so that I may be filled with joy, taking remembrance of the sincere faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I have been persuaded that ***it is*** also in you. For which reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of self-control.

1:8-18 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but suffer hardship together for the gospel according to ***the*** power of God, who saved us and called ***us*** with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to ***His*** own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal times, but has now been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher of ***the*** Gentiles. For which reason I also suffer these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I have been persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit for that day. Hold the pattern of sound words which you heard from me, in faith and love which ***are*** in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit through ***the*** Holy Spirit who dwells in us. You know this, that all those in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain, but having been in Rome, he sought me very diligently and found ***me***. May the Lord grant to him to find mercy from ***the*** Lord in that day. And how much he served in Ephesus, you know very well.

Preview

Paul writes from a Roman prison to his beloved child Timothy. He thanks God for him, remembers his tears, and longs to see him. He recalls the sincere faith that lived first in Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, and now lives in Timothy. Then he urges Timothy to stir up the gift of God that is in him, for God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power, love and self-control.

The theme of the chapter is shame. Paul tells Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord or of Paul, His prisoner, but to suffer for the gospel by God's power. God saved us by His own purpose and grace, and Christ has abolished death and brought life to light. Paul is not ashamed, because he knows whom he has believed. He tells Timothy to hold on to sound words and guard the good deposit by the Holy Spirit. The chapter ends with two pictures: the believers in Asia who turned away from Paul, and Onesiphorus, who was not ashamed of his chain and searched Rome until he found him.

Study

1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through **the** will of God, according to **the** promise of life which **is** in Christ Jesus,*

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God," Paul is in chains and about to die, but he does not doubt his calling. He did not choose to be an apostle. God chose him. A prison cell could not change that.

He is an apostle "according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." What a thing to write from death row. Paul expects to be put to death soon, and yet the first thing he mentions is life. The life Jesus promises is not ended by an executioner. It is eternal, and it is found "in Christ Jesus." Whatever you are facing today, the promise of life in Christ is still true.

1:2 *to Timothy, **my** beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace from God **the** Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

"To Timothy, my beloved child." In 1 Timothy Paul called him "my genuine child in faith." Here he calls him "beloved." This letter is warmer and more personal. Paul is writing to the young man he loved like a son, knowing this may be the last time.

"Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul again gives the three-part greeting he used in 1 Timothy. Grace is God's favor. Mercy is His pity on us in our need. Peace is the rest that comes from both. Timothy would need all three for what lay ahead.

1:3 *I have thanks to God, whom I serve from **my** forefathers with a pure conscience, as I have unceasing remembrance of you in my petitions night and day,*

"I have thanks to God, whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience." Paul served the same God his Jewish ancestors served. He did not see his faith in Christ as a new religion. It was the fulfillment of the faith of Abraham, Moses and David (Acts 24:14).

He serves "with a pure conscience." Even in chains, condemned as a criminal, Paul knew he had nothing to hide before God. And he prayed. "I have unceasing remembrance of you in my petitions night and day." Paul could not visit churches or preach in the marketplace anymore. But he could pray, and he prayed for Timothy day and night. Who is praying for you like that? And who are you praying for?

1:4 *longing to see you, having remembered your tears, so that I may be filled with joy,*

"Longing to see you, having remembered your tears." Paul and Timothy had likely parted in tears, perhaps when Paul was arrested. Paul had not forgotten.

"So that I may be filled with joy." Here is the great apostle, the man who wrote much of the New Testament, admitting that he missed his friend and that seeing him would fill him with joy. Paul was not a cold man who only cared about doctrine. He loved people deeply. Godly men and

women can weep, can miss their friends, and can long for company. There is no shame in that. Even Jesus wanted His friends near Him in His hour of sorrow (Matthew 26:38).

1:5 *taking remembrance of the sincere faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I have been persuaded that* ***it is*** *also in you.*

"Taking remembrance of the sincere faith in you." The word "sincere" means without a mask, not an act. Timothy's faith was real.

Where did it come from? It "dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice." Timothy's father was a Greek and, as far as we know, not a believer (Acts 16:1). But his mother and grandmother were Jewish women who trusted God, and later trusted Christ. They taught Timothy the Scriptures from childhood (3:15).

Never underestimate what a faithful mother or grandmother can do. Lois and Eunice are not famous, but their faith shaped one of the great leaders of the early church. If you are raising children or grandchildren, or teaching them in church, your quiet faithfulness matters more than you know.

1:6 *For which reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

"For which reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God which is in you." The picture is of a fire that has burned low. The coals are still there, but they need to be stirred up and fanned back into a flame.

God had given Timothy a gift for ministry "through the laying on of my hands." In 1 Timothy 4:14 Paul said the elders laid hands on him too. Paul does not say Timothy had lost the gift. He says Timothy needed to stir it up. Hard times, criticism and fear can make us pull back. When that happens, we do not need a new gift. We need to use the one God already gave us.

1:7 *For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of self-control.*

"For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of self-control." Timothy seems to have been a timid man by nature (1 Corinthians 16:10). Paul says that fear does not come from God.

What God has given us, by His Holy Spirit, is power, the strength to do what He calls us to do. He has given love, which drives out fear (1 John 4:18) and makes us care for others more than ourselves. And He has given self-control, a sound and disciplined mind that thinks clearly under pressure. When fear rises up in you, remember what God has put in you. You are not left to face hard things in your own strength.

1:8 *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but suffer hardship together for the gospel according to* ***the*** *power of God,*

"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." The gospel is about a crucified Jew from Galilee. To the Romans, the cross was the most shameful death there was. It took courage to say that the One who died that way is Lord.

"Nor of me His prisoner." Paul was in chains as a criminal. It would have been easy for Timothy to keep his distance. Notice that Paul calls himself "His prisoner," Christ's prisoner, not Nero's. He was there because of Jesus and for Jesus.

"But suffer hardship together for the gospel according to the power of God." Paul does not ask Timothy to suffer in his own strength. He suffers "according to the power of God," the same power named in verse 7. We are not asked to be brave on our own.

1:9 *who saved us and called* ***us*** *with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to* ***His*** *own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal times,*

Paul now tells us what the gospel is that we must not be ashamed of. God "saved us and called us with a holy calling." Salvation and calling go together. God rescues us, and He calls us to a holy life.

"Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace." Here is the heart of the gospel. We are not saved because we were good enough or tried hard enough. We are saved because God purposed to save us and gave us grace we did not deserve (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

This grace "was given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal times." Before the world began, God planned to save His people through His Son. Our salvation was not an afterthought. It was God's plan from eternity.

1:10 *but has now been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel,*

"But has now been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ," What God planned before time began, He showed in time, when Jesus came. Paul uses the word "appearing" here for Christ's first coming. Elsewhere he uses it for His coming again (4:1, 8).

What did Jesus do? He "abolished death." He did not make it so believers never die. He broke its power. Death no longer has the last word (1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Hebrews 2:14-15). And He "brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel." Incorruptibility means a life that cannot decay or die. Paul, waiting for his execution, could write this with peace. Death could take his body, but it could not hold him.

1:11 *for which I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher of **the** Gentiles.*

"For which I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles." This is almost the same as 1 Timothy 2:7. A herald announced the king's message in public. An apostle was sent with authority. A teacher explained the truth so people could understand it.

Paul was appointed to all three for the sake of this gospel, the good news that God saves by grace and that Christ has abolished death. Every believer today has a part in passing that message on, whether in a pulpit, a classroom, a kitchen table or a workplace. We are not apostles, but we are all witnesses.

1:12 *For which reason I also suffer these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I have been persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit for that day.*

"For which reason I also suffer these things; but I am not ashamed." Paul's suffering was because of the gospel. And he was not ashamed of it.

Why not? "For I know whom I have believed." Not what, but whom. Paul's confidence was not in a set of ideas but in a Person he knew. "And I have been persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit for that day." A deposit is something valuable left with someone to keep safe. Bible teachers read this in two ways. Some say Paul had entrusted his life and soul to Christ, and Christ would keep it safe. Others say it is the gospel Christ had entrusted to Paul, and Christ would guard it even after Paul died. Both are true. "That day" is the day Christ comes and rewards His servants (4:8).

1:13 *Hold the pattern of sound words which you heard from me, in faith and love which **are** in Christ Jesus.*

"Hold the pattern of sound words which you heard from me." A pattern is a model, like an architect's drawing. Paul had given Timothy the outline of sound, healthy teaching. Timothy was to hold to it and not drift from it.

How? "In faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." Sound doctrine is not enough on its own. A man can hold the right words with a cold and bitter heart. Timothy was to hold the truth in faith, trusting the Lord, and in love, caring for the people he taught. Truth without love is harsh. Love without truth is empty. Jesus was full of both (John 1:14).

1:14 *Guard the good deposit through **the** Holy Spirit who dwells in us.*

"Guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us." In verse 12 Christ guards what is entrusted to Him. Here Timothy must guard what was entrusted to him, the gospel itself.

But he does not guard it alone. He guards it "through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us." The Spirit lives in every believer. He is the One who gives us understanding of the truth and the strength to stand for it. We do not keep the faith by our own cleverness or courage. We keep it by depending on the Spirit who lives in us.

1:15 *You know this, that all those in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.*

"You know this, that all those in Asia turned away from me." Asia here means the Roman province on the west coast of what is now Turkey, where Ephesus was. When Paul was arrested, the believers there seem to have pulled away from him, likely out of fear. "All" probably means the believers from Asia who could have helped him, not every Christian in the province.

Two are named: "Phygelus and Hermogenes." We know nothing else about them. That is a sad thing. Out of all the men of Asia, these two are remembered for one thing only, that they turned away when Paul needed them. How will you be remembered?

1:16-17 *May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain, but having been in Rome, he sought me very diligently and found **me**.*

Now Paul gives the opposite picture. "May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus." Here was a man who did not turn away. "He often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain." To refresh means to cool, to give someone fresh air. Onesiphorus brought new life into Paul's dark cell.

"But having been in Rome, he sought me very diligently and found me." Rome was a huge city, and Paul was a condemned prisoner. Finding him was not easy, and being seen with him was dangerous. Onesiphorus kept searching until he found him. That is what love looks like. Is there someone in your life who needs you to go looking for them, even when it costs you something?

1:18 *May the Lord grant to him to find mercy from **the** Lord in that day. And how much he served in Ephesus, you know very well.*

"May the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord in that day." Paul prays that just as Onesiphorus showed mercy to him, the Lord would show mercy to Onesiphorus on the day Christ judges and rewards His people.

Paul prays for "the household of Onesiphorus" in verse 16 and sends greetings to them in 4:19. Some think Onesiphorus had died by this time. Some groups have used this verse to support prayers for the dead. But the text does not say he had died, and that is too much weight to put on one verse. Scripture doesn't tell us where he was. "And how much he served in Ephesus, you know very well." His kindness to Paul in Rome was not something new. He had served faithfully back home too.

Summary

Paul writes from prison to Timothy, his beloved child, thanking God for him and longing to see him. He remembers the sincere faith that lived first in Lois and Eunice and now in Timothy. He urges Timothy to stir up the gift of God, for God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power, love and self-control. Timothy must not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord or of Paul, but must suffer for the gospel by God's power. God saved us and called us, not by our works

but by His own purpose and grace, given in Christ before time began and now shown through the appearing of Christ, who abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light. Paul is not ashamed, for he knows whom he has believed. Timothy is to hold the pattern of sound words and guard the good deposit by the Holy Spirit. Many in Asia turned away from Paul, but Onesiphorus was not ashamed of his chain and searched Rome until he found him.

Study Questions

1. What does Paul remember about Timothy, and how did Paul feel about him? (1:3-4)
2. Where did Timothy's faith first live, and what does that teach us about families? (1:5)
3. What has God not given us, and what has He given us? (1:7)
4. According to 1:9, why did God save us?
5. What did Christ do to death, and what did He bring to light? (1:10)
6. Why was Paul not ashamed, even in prison? (1:12)
7. How was Timothy to guard the good deposit? (1:14)
8. How was Onesiphorus different from those in Asia who turned away? (1:15-17)
9. Is there a part of your faith you are tempted to be quiet about or ashamed of? Why?
10. Who has been like Onesiphorus to you? Who could you refresh this week?

2 Timothy 2: A Good Soldier and a Worker Approved

Scripture

2:1-13 You therefore, my child, be strong in the grace which ***is*** in Christ Jesus, and the things which you heard from me through many witnesses, commit these to faithful men, who will be sufficient to teach others also. You therefore suffer hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one serving as a soldier entangles himself in the affairs of life, so that he may please the one who enlisted ***him***. And also if anyone competes, he is not crowned unless he competes lawfully. The farmer who toils must be first to partake of the fruits. Consider what I am saying; for may the Lord give you understanding in all things. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from ***the*** dead, of ***the*** seed of David, according to my gospel, in which I suffer hardship even to chains as an evildoer; but the word of God has not been bound. Because of this I endure all things for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation which ***is*** in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Faithful ***is*** the word: for if we died with ***Him***, we will also live with ***Him***; if we endure, we will also reign with ***Him***; if we deny ***Him***, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful; He is not able to deny Himself.

2:14-26 Remind ***them*** of these things, solemnly charging ***them*** before the Lord not to quarrel about words, ***which is*** profitable for nothing, to the ruin of those who hear. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker not needing to be ashamed, cutting straight the word of truth. But avoid the profane empty babblings; for they will advance to more ungodliness, and their word will spread like gangrene; among whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have missed the mark concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they are overturning the faith of some. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal: "***The*** Lord knew those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness." Now in a great house there are not only golden and silver vessels, but also wooden and earthen ***ones***, and some for honor and some for dishonor. If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. And flee youthful desires, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. And refuse foolish and uninstructed controversies, knowing that they breed quarrels. And a slave of ***the*** Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle toward all, able to teach, patient when wronged, in meekness disciplining those who oppose, if perhaps God may give them repentance to ***the*** full knowledge of ***the*** truth, and they may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil, having been captured by him for the will of that one.

Preview

Paul calls Timothy to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus and to pass on what he learned to faithful men who will teach others also. Then he gives three pictures of the Christian life: a soldier who does not get tangled up in civilian affairs, an athlete who competes by the rules, and a hard-working farmer who gets the first share of the crop. Timothy is to remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead. Paul is in chains, but the Word of God is not bound. Paul ends this part with

a faithful saying: if we died with Him we will live with Him, and if we are faithless, He remains faithful.

In the second half, Paul tells Timothy how to handle false teaching. He must be diligent to present himself approved to God, a worker who cuts straight the word of truth. He must avoid empty babblings like those of Hymenaeus and Philetus, who said the resurrection had already happened. God's foundation stands firm: the Lord knows those who are His. Timothy is to cleanse himself to be a vessel for honor, to flee youthful desires, to pursue righteousness, and to correct those who oppose him with gentleness, in the hope that God will grant them repentance.

Study

2:1 *You therefore, my child, be strong in the grace which **is** in Christ Jesus,*

"You therefore, my child, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." The word "therefore" points back to chapter 1. Many in Asia had turned away, but Onesiphorus stood firm. Timothy must stand firm too.

How? Not by gritting his teeth, but by being strong "in the grace." The Greek means to be made strong, to keep on being strengthened. Grace is not only how we are saved. It is also the power by which we live and serve. When we feel weak, God's grace is enough, for His power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Timothy's strength would come from the same source as Paul's: the grace that is in Christ.

2:2 *and the things which you heard from me through many witnesses, commit these to faithful men, who will be sufficient to teach others also.*

"And the things which you heard from me through many witnesses, commit these to faithful men, who will be sufficient to teach others also." Here is God's plan for passing on the faith. Paul taught Timothy. Timothy must teach faithful men. Those men must teach others. That is four generations in one verse.

Paul is about to die. He knows the gospel will not survive because of one great leader. It will spread as believers train other believers. The word commit is the same idea as the deposit in chapter 1. Timothy was to entrust the truth to men who were "faithful," trustworthy, and who would be able to teach it. Who taught you the faith? And who are you passing it on to?

2:3 *You therefore suffer hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

"You therefore suffer hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Paul now gives three pictures, and the first is a soldier. A Roman soldier knew hardship. He marched for miles, carried heavy gear, slept on the ground, and faced death in battle.

The Christian life is like that. Paul does not promise Timothy an easy road. He calls him to suffer hardship, and to do it as "a good soldier," one who does not complain or run when things get hard. If Christ our Commander suffered for us, we should not be surprised when serving Him costs us something.

2:4 *No one serving as a soldier entangles himself in the affairs of life, so that he may please the one who enlisted* ***him****.*

"No one serving as a soldier entangles himself in the affairs of life." A soldier on duty cannot run a business on the side or get caught up in the concerns of ordinary life. His whole focus is on his mission.

Why? "So that he may please the one who enlisted him." A soldier wants to please his commander. Paul is not saying believers cannot work jobs or have families. Paul himself made tents. He is saying we must not get so wrapped up in the things of this life that we forget whom we serve. What things in your life have become so tangled around you that they keep you from serving Christ?

2:5 *And also if anyone competes, he is not crowned unless he competes lawfully.*

The second picture is an athlete. "And also if anyone competes, he is not crowned unless he competes lawfully." In the Greek games, the winner was crowned with a wreath of leaves. But a runner who cut corners, or a wrestler who broke the rules, lost the prize no matter how fast or strong he was.

The Christian life has rules too. We serve God His way, not ours. We cannot take shortcuts around holiness or truth and expect to be rewarded. Notice the word "crowned." Paul will come back to this in 4:8, where he speaks of the crown of righteousness. Faithfulness on God's terms is what He rewards.

2:6 *The farmer who toils must be first to partake of the fruits.*

The third picture is a farmer. "The farmer who toils must be first to partake of the fruits." Farming is hard, slow work. You plow, plant, weed and wait. There is no quick harvest.

But the farmer who does the work gets the first share of the crop. This likely carries two lessons. Hard work in God's service will bear fruit, even if it takes a long time. And the one who labors in the Word should be supported by it, as Paul taught in 1 Timothy 5:17-18. A soldier must be focused, an athlete must be disciplined, and a farmer must be patient. Every believer needs all three.

2:7 *Consider what I am saying; for may the Lord give you understanding in all things.*

"Consider what I am saying." Paul does not explain the three pictures in detail. He wants Timothy to think them through. God's Word is not meant to be skimmed. It is meant to be pondered.

"For may the Lord give you understanding in all things." Notice how these two go together. Timothy must think hard, and the Lord must give understanding. We do our part by reading, studying and thinking. God does His part by opening our minds by His Spirit. Bible study is both work and prayer. That is why I asked you at the start of this study to pray before you read.

2:8 *Remember Jesus Christ, raised from **the** dead, of **the** seed of David, according to my gospel,*

"Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, of the seed of David." When ministry gets hard, Timothy is to remember Jesus. Two things in particular.

He was "raised from the dead." Jesus suffered and died, but He did not stay dead. That means suffering is not the end of the story for those who follow Him. And He is "of the seed of David." He was a real man, born in the royal line of David, the King God promised would reign forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Jesus is both the risen Lord and the promised King. "According to my gospel." This is the good news Paul preached and was suffering for.

2:9 *in which I suffer hardship even to chains as an evildoer; but the word of God has not been bound.*

"In which I suffer hardship even to chains as an evildoer." The word for "evildoer" was used for a criminal, the same word used for the criminals crucified with Jesus (Luke 23:32). Paul was being treated like the worst kind of lawbreaker.

"But the word of God has not been bound." Paul's hands were chained, but the gospel was not. Rome could lock up the preacher, but it could not lock up the message. Paul's letters from prison have been read for nearly two thousand years. Others were preaching in his place. Whatever limits you face today, illness, age, prison, or anything else, God's Word is not limited. He can still use you.

2:10 *Because of this I endure all things for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation which **is** in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

"Because of this I endure all things for the sake of the elect." The elect are God's chosen people. Paul suffered so that they would hear the gospel and believe.

"So that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Paul knew God would save His people, and that God uses means, the preaching of the gospel, to do it. So Paul was willing to suffer anything to get the message out. Bible teachers who disagree on how election works agree on this: God's choosing never makes evangelism unnecessary. It is what gives us confidence that our preaching will not be in vain.

2:11 *Faithful **is** the word: for if we died with **Him**, we will also live with **Him**;*

"Faithful is the word." This is the fourth faithful saying. Many believe verses 11-13 were part of an early Christian hymn or a saying believers knew by heart.

"For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him." When we put our faith in Christ, we were joined to Him in His death. Our old self died with Him (Romans 6:3-8). And if we died with Him, we will also share His resurrection life. For Paul, sitting in a cell waiting to be executed, this was not theory. Death would only bring him into life with Christ.

2:12 *if we endure, we will also reign with **Him**; if we deny **Him**, He also will deny us;*

"If we endure, we will also reign with Him." Those who keep going through suffering will share in Christ's reign. Jesus promised that His faithful followers will reign with Him when He sets up His kingdom on the earth (Revelation 20:4-6; 2:26-27).

"If we deny Him, He also will deny us." This is a hard line. Jesus said the same: whoever denies Him before men, He will deny before His Father (Matthew 10:33). Bible teachers read this warning in different ways. Some believe it describes people who were never truly saved, whose final denial shows their faith was never real. Others believe a true believer can turn away and be lost. Others believe it speaks of losing reward and the honor of reigning with Christ, not salvation. What is clear is that this is a serious warning to be taken to heart. Peter denied the Lord three times and was restored (John 21:15-19), so a moment of weakness is not the same as a settled denial.

2:13 *if we are faithless, He remains faithful; He is not able to deny Himself.*

"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He is not able to deny Himself." This line breaks the pattern. You would expect it to say, if we are faithless, He will be faithless too. But it doesn't. God's faithfulness does not depend on ours.

"Faithless" here may mean failing to trust Him, weak in faith. Even when our faith is weak, He stays true to His promises and to His own nature. "He is not able to deny Himself." God cannot lie (Titus 1:2) and He cannot go back on His word. That is a great comfort. Our hold on Him may be weak, but His hold on us rests on who He is.

2:14 *Remind **them** of these things, solemnly charging **them** before the Lord not to quarrel about words, **which is** profitable for nothing, to the ruin of those who hear.*

"Remind them of these things." Timothy was to keep putting these truths before the church. Then: "solemnly charging them before the Lord not to quarrel about words." The false teachers loved to argue over words and fine points that had nothing to do with godly living.

Such arguing is "profitable for nothing, to the ruin of those who hear." The word ruin gives us our word catastrophe. It means overturning. Word fights do not build anyone up. They tear people down. Some arguments about the Bible matter a great deal, but many are just people wanting to win. Before you jump into a debate, ask: will this help anyone love God more?

2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker not needing to be ashamed, cutting straight the word of truth.*

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God." This is the verse I placed at the start of this study, and it is a good motto for every student of the Bible. Diligent means eager, making every effort. Approved means tested and found genuine, like a coin weighed and found true.

"A worker not needing to be ashamed." A workman who does a sloppy job is ashamed when the boss inspects it. A good workman is not.

"Cutting straight the word of truth." The picture is of cutting a straight road, or a straight furrow in a field, or cutting a stone or a piece of leather straight. The Bible teacher must handle God's Word carefully and accurately, not twisting it to say what he wants. This is what exegesis means: drawing out what the text really says. Every one of us who reads the Bible should want God's approval for the way we handle it.

2:16 *But avoid the profane empty babblings; for they will advance to more ungodliness,*

"But avoid the profane empty babblings." Profane means common, empty of what is holy. Empty babblings are talk that sounds important but has nothing to it.

"For they will advance to more ungodliness." False teaching does not stay small. It grows. The false teachers liked to think they were making progress, going deeper. Paul says yes, they are advancing, but they are advancing into ungodliness. Wrong belief leads to wrong living. That is why Timothy must not give these ideas a platform.

2:17-18 *and their word will spread like gangrene; among whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have missed the mark concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they are overturning the faith of some.*

"And their word will spread like gangrene." Gangrene is rotting flesh that spreads through the body and kills healthy tissue. False teaching is like that. Left alone, it spreads through a church and destroys it.

Paul names two of these teachers: "Hymenaeus and Philetus." Hymenaeus was named in 1 Timothy 1:20. It seems he had not repented. They "have missed the mark concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place." They likely taught that the resurrection was only spiritual, something that already happened when a person believed, and that there would be no bodily resurrection. Paul says this is a deadly error. Christ rose bodily, and so will we (1 Corinthians 15:12-20). This teaching was "overturning the faith of some." False teaching does real harm to real people.

2:19 *Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal: "**The** Lord knew those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness."*

"Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands." False teachers come and go, and some people are led astray. But God's foundation is not shaken. That foundation is likely God's true church, built on Christ and His truth.

It has "this seal," like an inscription carved on a foundation stone, and it has two sides. The first: "The Lord knew those who are His." These words echo Numbers 16:5, when God showed who belonged to Him during Korah's rebellion. God knows His own, and no false teacher can snatch them away. The second: "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness." Those who belong to God show it by turning from sin. Both sides are true. God's knowing gives us security. Our turning from sin gives evidence that we belong to Him.

Old Testament links: Numbers 16:5 (quoted)

2:20 *Now in a great house there are not only golden and silver vessels, but also wooden and earthen* ***ones****, and some for honor and some for dishonor.*

"Now in a great house there are not only golden and silver vessels, but also wooden and earthen ones." A vessel is any container or dish. A wealthy home had fine dishes of gold and silver for guests and special meals, and plain dishes of wood and clay for everyday use, including the dirty work like carrying out trash.

"Some for honor and some for dishonor." The great house is likely the visible church, where true believers and false teachers are mixed together for a time. Some people in the church are vessels God uses for honor. Others, like Hymenaeus and Philetus, are vessels for dishonor.

2:21 *If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.*

"If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these." From what? Most likely from the dishonorable vessels in verse 20, the false teachers and their influence, and from the sin that goes with them.

Such a person "will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." God does not need gold vessels. He needs clean ones. Whatever your gifts or background, if you keep yourself clean, God can use you. "Useful to the Master" is one of the best things that could ever be said about a believer. Is your life clean enough for the Master to pick up and use?

2:22 *And flee youthful desires, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

"And flee youthful desires." Timothy was still a fairly young man. Youthful desires include sexual temptation, but also other things young people often struggle with: pride, impatience, love of arguments, wanting to be noticed. Paul says don't stand around and fight them. Flee. Joseph ran from Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:12).

"And pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace." Fleeing is not enough. We must also run toward what is good. And we do it "with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." We are not meant to fight temptation alone. We need other believers running alongside us.

2:23 *And refuse foolish and uninstructed controversies, knowing that they breed quarrels.*

"And refuse foolish and uninstructed controversies, knowing that they breed quarrels." Paul repeats his warning from verse 14. "Foolish" means senseless. "Uninstructed" means ignorant, the kind of debates people get into when they don't know what they are talking about.

Such controversies "breed quarrels." They give birth to fights. A wise leader learns to tell the difference between a real question that deserves an answer and a debate that will only cause trouble. Sometimes the most godly thing you can do is to refuse to take the bait.

2:24 *And a slave of **the** Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle toward all, able to teach, patient when wronged,*

"And a slave of the Lord must not quarrel." Timothy is called the Lord's slave. A slave does what his master wants, and the Master does not want him fighting.

Instead he must "be gentle toward all, able to teach, patient when wronged." Gentle means kind, mild. Able to teach is the same quality Paul listed for overseers (1 Timothy 3:2). Patient when wronged means bearing up under bad treatment without becoming bitter. A servant of God will be wronged, by false teachers and even by fellow believers. He must not answer in kind. These are the marks of a man who has been with Jesus.

2:25-26 *in meekness disciplining those who oppose, if perhaps God may give them repentance to **the** full knowledge of **the** truth, and they may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil, having been captured by him for the will of that one.*

"In meekness disciplining those who oppose." Timothy still had to correct those who opposed the truth. But he was to do it with meekness, strength under control, not with anger or pride.

Why? "If perhaps God may give them repentance to the full knowledge of the truth." Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of life. Paul says it is something God gives. Our job is to speak the truth with gentleness. God's job is to change hearts.

"And they may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil." The picture is of a man who is drunk and caught in a trap. The devil had captured these people "for the will of that one." They thought they were free thinkers, but they were really doing the devil's will. Our goal with those who oppose the truth is not to win an argument. It is to see them set free.

Summary

Paul calls Timothy to be strong in the grace that is in Christ and to entrust the truth to faithful men who will teach others also. Like a good soldier, Timothy must suffer hardship and not get tangled in the affairs of life. Like an athlete, he must compete by the rules to be crowned. Like a farmer, he must work hard before he shares the crop. He is to remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead and of the seed of David. Paul is chained, but the Word of God is not bound, and he endures all things for the sake of the elect. If we die with Christ we will live with Him, if we endure we will reign with Him, and even if we are faithless He remains faithful. Timothy must be diligent to present himself approved to God, a worker who cuts straight the word of truth, and avoid the empty talk of men like Hymenaeus and Philetus. God's firm foundation stands. Timothy must cleanse himself to be a vessel for honor, flee youthful desires, pursue righteousness, and correct opponents gently, hoping God will grant them repentance.

Study Questions

1. What four generations of teaching do you see in 2:2?
2. What three pictures does Paul use in 2:3-6, and what does each one teach?
3. What two things about Jesus was Timothy to remember? (2:8)
4. Paul was in chains. What was not bound? (2:9)
5. What does 2:13 teach about God's faithfulness when ours is weak?
6. What does it mean to be "cutting straight the word of truth"? (2:15)
7. What did Hymenaeus and Philetus teach, and why was it so dangerous? (2:17-18)
8. How should a servant of the Lord treat those who oppose the truth? (2:24-25)
9. What "affairs of life" are most likely to tangle you up and pull your focus off Christ?
10. Who is one person you could begin to teach or disciple, as Paul did with Timothy?

2 Timothy 3: Difficult Times and God-Breathed Scripture

Scripture

3:1-9 But know this, that in ***the*** last days difficult times will be present. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, without love of good, traitors, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but having denied its power. And turn away from these. For out of these are those who sneak into the households and take captive the weak women burdened with sins, being led away by various desires, always learning and never being able to come to a knowledge of ***the*** truth. Now in the way that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these oppose the truth, men depraved in mind, disqualified concerning the faith. But they will not advance further; for their folly will be plain to all, as that of those ***two*** also became.

3:10-17 But you have closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings, such as happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra. What persecutions I endured! And out of ***them*** all the Lord delivered me. And indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will advance to the worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you, abide in the things which you learned and were assured of, knowing from whom you learned ***them***, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which ***is*** in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture ***is*** God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which ***is*** in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

Preview

Paul warns Timothy that in the last days difficult times will come. He gives a long list of what people will be like: lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, ungrateful, unholy, without love, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Worst of all, they will have a form of godliness while denying its power. Some of them worm their way into homes and lead weak people astray. They oppose the truth the way Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, but their folly will be made plain.

Then Paul turns to Timothy. You have followed my teaching and my life, and you have seen my sufferings. Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, and evil men will go from bad to worse. But Timothy is to remain in what he has learned, the sacred writings he has known from childhood, which are able to make him wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

Study

3:1 *But know this, that in **the** last days difficult times will be present.*

"But know this, that in the last days difficult times will be present." The last days in the New Testament began with Christ's first coming and the pouring out of the Spirit (Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:2). We have been living in the last days ever since. But the New Testament also teaches that the end of this age will see a great falling away (2 Thessalonians 2:3), and things will grow worse as His coming draws near.

"Difficult times" means hard, dangerous seasons. The same word was used for two fierce demon-possessed men in Matthew 8:28. These times are not only hard to live through. They are dangerous for the soul. Paul tells Timothy this not to scare him, but so he would not be surprised. Notice that Paul expects Timothy to face these men himself (3:5). The last days were already underway.

3:2 *For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,*

"For men will be lovers of self." This is where the list begins, and it may be the root of all the rest. When people love themselves first, everything else follows. "Lovers of money" comes right after. Love of self and love of money go hand in hand.

"Boastful, arrogant." Boastful people brag with their mouths. Arrogant people look down on others in their hearts. Blasphemers, people who speak against God and against others. "Disobedient to parents," a sign of a society that has lost respect for authority. Ungrateful, people who take everything and thank no one. Unholy, people who have no sense of what is sacred. Does this sound familiar? Paul could have been describing our own day.

3:3 *unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, without love of good,*

Unloving. This word means without natural affection, the kind of love that family members naturally have for each other. When parents abandon children and children abandon parents, this verse is being fulfilled.

Irreconcilable means people who will not make peace or keep their word. Slanderers translates the Greek word diabolos, the same word used for the devil. "Without self-control," people who are ruled by their appetites. Savage means fierce and untamed, like wild animals. "Without love of good," people who not only do evil but hate what is good. This is a picture of what people become when they turn away from God (Romans 1:28-32).

3:4 *traitors, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,*

Traitors, people who betray others, even their friends. Reckless, people who rush ahead without thinking, driven by their passions. Puffed up, swollen with pride, like the false teachers in 1 Timothy 6:4.

And then the line that sums up so much of the list: "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." The list began with lovers of self and lovers of money. Here it comes back to love. What we love most is what rules us. God is not against pleasure. He gives us all things richly to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17). The problem comes when pleasure takes the place of God. What do you love most? Be honest. Your calendar and your bank account will tell you.

3:5 *having a form of godliness, but having denied its power. And turn away from these.*

"Having a form of godliness, but having denied its power." This is the most surprising part of the list. These people are religious. They go through the motions. They may attend church, use the right words and take part in worship. But it is only an outward shape, a shell.

They have "denied its power." Real godliness has power to change a life. It breaks the hold of sin and makes people more like Jesus. These people have the look of faith without the life of it. Jesus said the same of the religious leaders of His day: they honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him (Matthew 15:8). "And turn away from these." Timothy was not to be fooled by a religious look. He was to avoid such people.

3:6 *For out of these are those who sneak into the households and take captive the weak women burdened with sins, being led away by various desires,*

"For out of these are those who sneak into the households." The false teachers did not come in the front door. They crept in quietly, like a thief.

They "take captive the weak women burdened with sins, being led away by various desires." Paul is not saying all women are weak or easily fooled. He is describing certain women in Ephesus who were burdened with guilt and pulled by their own desires, which made them easy targets. A person carrying a load of unconfessed sin looks for relief, and false teachers offer it in all the wrong places. The cure is not a new teacher but real forgiveness in Christ.

3:7 *always learning and never being able to come to a knowledge of **the** truth.*

"Always learning and never being able to come to a knowledge of the truth." These people were always taking in something new. They loved the next idea, the next teacher, the next secret. But they never came to the truth.

How can a person keep learning and never arrive? When the goal is curiosity and not obedience. When a person wants information but does not want to be changed. This is a danger for any of us who love to study. Bible knowledge that does not lead us to know and obey Christ only puffs us up. The purpose of learning is to come to the truth and to live it.

3:8 *Now in the way that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these oppose the truth, men depraved in mind, disqualified concerning the faith.*

"Now in the way that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these oppose the truth." The Old Testament does not give us these names. Exodus 7:11 and 7:22 tell us that Pharaoh's magicians copied some of Moses' signs. Jewish tradition named two of them Jannes and Jambres, and Paul

uses those names. By including them, Paul, writing under the Holy Spirit, shows that these were the names of real men.

Like those magicians, the false teachers could imitate God's work for a while. But they are "men depraved in mind, disqualified concerning the faith." Depraved means corrupted and ruined. Disqualified means tested and found worthless, like a coin that fails the test. They looked like teachers, but they did not pass God's test.

Old Testament links: Exodus 7:11 (alluded to)

3:9 *But they will not advance further; for their folly will be plain to all, as that of those **two** also became.*

"But they will not advance further." These men would go only so far. God would set a limit on them.

"For their folly will be plain to all, as that of those two also became." Pharaoh's magicians copied the first few signs, but when it came to the gnats, they could not do it. They told Pharaoh it was the finger of God (Exodus 8:18-19). Later they could not even stand before Moses because of the boils (Exodus 9:11). In the same way, false teachers may seem successful for a time, but God will expose them. Truth outlasts error. We don't need to panic when false teaching seems to be winning. God is still on His throne.

Old Testament links: Exodus 9:11 (alluded to); Exodus 8:18 (alluded to)

3:10 *But you have closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance,*

"But you have closely followed my teaching." Paul now turns from the false teachers to Timothy. The words "but you" set Timothy apart. He had walked with Paul for years and had seen his life up close.

Paul lists nine things Timothy had followed: "my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance," and in the next verse, persecutions and sufferings. Notice that teaching is first, but it is not alone. Timothy had seen Paul's conduct, the way he lived. He had seen his purpose, what drove him. He had seen his faith, patience, love and endurance. The false teachers had words without a life to match. Paul had both. That is the kind of teacher worth following.

3:11 *persecutions, sufferings, such as happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra. What persecutions I endured! And out of **them** all the Lord delivered me.*

"Persecutions, sufferings, such as happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra." Why name these three cities? Because they were in Timothy's home region. Lystra was Timothy's hometown (Acts 16:1-2). On his first missionary journey, Paul was driven out of Antioch, threatened with stoning in Iconium, and stoned and left for dead in Lystra (Acts 13:50; 14:5-6, 19). Timothy may have seen it happen or heard about it as a young believer.

"What persecutions I endured! And out of them all the Lord delivered me." Paul did not escape suffering, but God brought him through it every time. God's deliverance does not always mean we avoid pain. It means He carries us through it, and in the end brings us safely home (4:18).

Old Testament links: Psalm 34:19 (alluded to)

3:12 *And indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

"And indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." This is a promise most of us would rather not claim. But Jesus said the same: if they persecuted Him, they will persecute us (John 15:20).

Notice the word "all." This is not only for apostles and missionaries. It is for every believer who wants to live a godly life. Persecution looks different in different places. For some believers today it means prison or death. For others it means being mocked, left out, or passed over at work. If you live for Christ, you will face opposition of some kind. When it comes, don't think something strange is happening (1 Peter 4:12). It is part of following Jesus.

3:13 *But evil men and impostors will advance to the worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

"But evil men and impostors will advance to the worse." An impostor is a fake, a con man, someone who pretends to be what he is not. The word was used for sorcerers who used tricks to deceive people.

They will "advance to the worse." They think they are making progress, but they are going downhill. "Deceiving and being deceived." That is how deception works. The deceiver becomes deceived himself. A man who tells lies long enough starts to believe them. This is one reason the world does not simply get better and better on its own. Without God, people go from bad to worse.

3:14 *But you, abide in the things which you learned and were assured of, knowing from whom you learned* ***them****,*

"But you, abide in the things which you learned and were assured of." Again Paul says "but you." While others drift from bad to worse, Timothy must stay put. Abide means remain, stay where you are. He did not need new teaching. He needed to keep holding to what he had already learned.

"Knowing from whom you learned them." Timothy knew who had taught him: his grandmother Lois, his mother Eunice, and Paul. He had seen their lives. He knew they were faithful. That gave him confidence in what they taught. The character of those who taught us the faith is one of God's gifts to us.

3:15 *and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which* ***is*** *in Christ Jesus.*

"And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings." The sacred writings are the Old Testament Scriptures. Timothy learned them as a small child at the knee of his mother and grandmother.

These writings "are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The Old Testament points to Christ (Luke 24:27). It shows us our sin, God's holiness, and His promise of a Savior. When those Scriptures are read with faith in Jesus, they make a person wise for salvation. Parents and grandparents, read the Bible to your children. Even when they are small, God's Word is planting seeds that can lead them to Christ.

3:16 *Every Scripture **is** God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which **is** in righteousness,*

"Every Scripture is God-breathed." This is one of the most important verses in the Bible about the Bible itself, and it is the verse I quoted in the Introduction to this study. The word for "God-breathed" is theopneustos. It means Scripture came out of God's own mouth. God did not just bless what men wrote. He breathed it out. The writers wrote in their own words and styles, but the Holy Spirit carried them along so that what they wrote was exactly what God wanted (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Because it is God-breathed, it is "profitable." Paul names four uses. "For teaching," showing us what is true. "For reproof," showing us where we have gone wrong. "For correction," showing us how to get back on track. And "for training which is in righteousness," showing us how to keep walking in the right way. Think of it as a road: teaching shows us the road, reproof tells us when we have left it, correction gets us back on it, and training keeps us on it.

3:17 *so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.*

"So that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work." Here is the goal of Scripture. "Complete" means able to do what you are called to do. "Fully equipped" was used of a ship fitted out for a voyage, with everything it needs.

Notice that Scripture equips us "for every good work." Not some good works, but every good work. That means the Bible is enough. We do not need new revelations or secret knowledge, like the false teachers offered. Everything we need for a godly life is in God's Word. That is why this study, and every Bible study, matters. If we want to be ready for what God calls us to do, we must be in His Word.

Summary

Paul warns that in the last days difficult times will come. People will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, ungrateful, unloving and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness while denying its power. False teachers creep into homes and lead people astray, always learning and never coming to the truth. Like Jannes and Jambres, who opposed Moses, they oppose the truth, but their folly will be made plain. Timothy had followed Paul's teaching and life and had seen his sufferings, and the Lord delivered Paul out of them all. All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, and evil men will go from bad to worse. Timothy must remain in what he learned, the sacred writings he has known from childhood, which make him wise for salvation through faith in Christ. Every Scripture is God-breathed and

profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

Study Questions

1. When did the "last days" begin, according to the New Testament? (3:1; Hebrews 1:2)
2. Which items in Paul's list in 3:2-4 do you see most often in the world today?
3. What does it mean to have "a form of godliness" but deny its power? (3:5)
4. How can someone be "always learning" and never come to the truth? (3:7)
5. What did Timothy see in Paul besides his teaching? (3:10-11)
6. What does Paul promise to all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus? (3:12)
7. What does "God-breathed" mean, and what four things is Scripture profitable for? (3:16)
8. What does 3:17 teach about whether the Bible is enough for the Christian life?
9. Which item in Paul's list in 3:2-4 do you need to watch for in your own heart?
10. Who taught you the faith, and how can you pass the Scriptures on to someone younger?

2 Timothy 4: Preach the Word and Finish the Race

Scripture

4:1-8 I solemnly testify therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is about to judge ***the*** living and ***the*** dead, according to His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all patience and instruction. For there will be a time when they will not endure sound teaching, but according to ***their*** own desires they will heap up teachers for themselves, being tickled ***in*** the hearing; and they will on the one hand turn away the hearing from the truth, but will be turned aside to the myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do ***the*** work of an evangelist, fully carry out your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on ***there*** is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me in that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.

4:9-22 Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has deserted me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Take Mark and bring ***him*** with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left in Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith showed me much evil; may the Lord repay him according to his deeds. You also beware of him, for he has exceedingly opposed our words. At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me; may it not be charged to them. But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully carried out, and all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of ***the*** mouth of a lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and will save ***me*** into His heavenly kingdom; to whom ***be*** the glory to the ages of the ages. Amen. Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained in Corinth, but Trophimus I left in Miletus sick. Be diligent to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers. The Lord Jesus Christ ***be*** with your spirit. Grace ***be*** with you. Amen.

Preview

These are Paul's last recorded words. He gives Timothy a solemn charge before God and Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead: preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke and exhort with all patience. A time is coming when people will not put up with sound teaching. They will gather teachers who tell them what they want to hear and turn aside to myths. Timothy must stay sober, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist and fulfill his ministry.

Then Paul looks at his own life. He is being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of his departure has come. He has fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith. The crown of righteousness is waiting for him, and not only for him, but for all who have loved Christ's appearing. The letter closes with personal news. Demas has deserted him, others have gone, and only Luke is with him. Paul asks for Mark, his cloak, and his books. At his first defense no one

stood with him, but the Lord stood by him and strengthened him, and Paul is sure the Lord will bring him safely into His heavenly kingdom.

Study

4:1 *I solemnly testify therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is about to judge* ***the*** *living and* ***the*** *dead, according to His appearing and His kingdom:*

"I solemnly testify therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ," Paul is about to give his final charge, and he gives it as if in a courtroom, with God and Christ as witnesses.

Christ Jesus "is about to judge the living and the dead." Every person who has ever lived will one day stand before Him (John 5:22; Acts 10:42). And Paul ties this charge to "His appearing and His kingdom." Jesus will appear. For His church, that appearing is the blessed hope, when He comes for His own (Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). After the Tribulation He will return visibly to the earth and set up His kingdom, reigning for a thousand years (Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6). Timothy was to serve with that future in front of him. So should we.

4:2 *preach the word; be ready in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all patience and instruction.*

"Preach the word." This is the heart of the charge. Not opinions, not stories, not self-help. The word, God's Word. To preach means to announce publicly, like a herald.

"Be ready in season, out of season." In other words, preach when it is welcome and when it is not, when it is convenient and when it is not. A preacher must always be ready.

"Reprove, rebuke, exhort." To reprove means to show people their error and convince them of it. To rebuke means to warn them sharply. To exhort means to encourage and urge them on. A faithful pastor does all three. And he does it "with all patience and instruction." Patience, because people change slowly. Instruction, because they need teaching, not just scolding.

4:3 *For there will be a time when they will not endure sound teaching, but according to their own desires they will heap up teachers for themselves, being tickled* ***in*** *the hearing;*

"For there will be a time when they will not endure sound teaching." Paul warns that people in the church will reach a point where they cannot stand healthy doctrine. It will feel too hard, too narrow, too old-fashioned.

What will they do instead? "According to their own desires they will heap up teachers for themselves." They will gather a pile of teachers who say what they want to hear. "Being tickled in the hearing." Their ears itch for something pleasing. They don't want to hear about sin, judgment or repentance. They want to feel good. Notice who is driving this: the hearers. When people want comfortable lies, they will always find someone willing to sell them. We have more teachers available today than any generation in history. It has never been more important to test what we hear by God's Word.

4:4 *and they will on the one hand turn away the hearing from the truth, but will be turned aside to the myths.*

"And they will on the one hand turn away the hearing from the truth." They will deliberately turn their ears away from the truth, like a person who covers his ears when he doesn't want to listen.

"But will be turned aside to the myths." Notice the change. First they turn away from the truth by choice. Then they are turned aside. Once a person rejects the truth, he does not stay neutral. He gets carried off into error. The myths may be old legends like the ones in Ephesus, or modern ideas that promise what the gospel does not. Either way, when people stop listening to God, they will believe almost anything.

4:5 *But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do* ***the*** *work of an evangelist, fully carry out your ministry.*

"But you, be sober in all things." There is that "but you" again (3:10, 14). Whatever others do, Timothy must stay clear-headed and alert, not swept up in the latest thing.

"Endure hardship." Faithful ministry will cost him. "Do the work of an evangelist." An evangelist is someone who tells the good news to those who have not heard it. Even as a pastor guarding a church, Timothy must keep reaching the lost. "Fully carry out your ministry." Finish the job God gave you. Don't quit halfway. That charge is for every one of us. Whatever God has called you to do, in your home, your church or your work, fully carry it out.

4:6 *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.*

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering." Here is why Paul gives this charge so urgently. He is about to die. In the Old Testament, a drink offering of wine was poured out on the altar along with the sacrifices (Numbers 15:1-10). Paul sees his own death as an offering poured out to God. He used the same picture in Philippians 2:17.

"And the time of my departure has come." The word for departure was used for a ship pulling up its anchor and setting sail, or a soldier taking down his tent to move on. Paul does not see death as the end. He sees it as leaving one place for another. For the believer, to be away from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).

4:7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." These are some of the most moving words in the Bible. Paul looks back on about thirty years of ministry.

"The good fight." Like a wrestler or a boxer, Paul had struggled hard. He had been beaten, stoned, shipwrecked and imprisoned (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). "The race." Like a runner, he had kept going to the end, not dropping out when it got hard (Acts 20:24). "The faith." Like a guard keeping a treasure, he had held on to the gospel and handed it on unchanged. Could you say these words if your life ended today? It is not too late to start living so that you can.

4:8 *From now on **there** is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me in that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

"From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness." The crown was the wreath of leaves given to the winner in the Greek games. Paul's crown is "the crown of righteousness." Bible teachers read this as either a crown that rewards a righteous life, or a crown that is righteousness itself, made perfect in the end.

"Which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me in that day." Paul had been judged unfairly by Rome. But the Lord is a righteous Judge. He will reward His servants at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). That judgment is not about whether believers are saved. It is about rewards for faithful service. "In that day" is the day Christ comes for His own.

"And not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing." This crown is not only for apostles. It is for every believer who longs for Jesus to come. Do you love His appearing? Do you look forward to it? People who really long for Christ's coming live differently today (1 John 3:2-3).

4:9 *Be diligent to come to me quickly;*

"Be diligent to come to me quickly." Now the letter turns personal. Paul is alone, and he wants his son in the faith with him. He will say it again in verse 21: "Be diligent to come before winter."

The apostle who had faced mobs and storms did not want to face death alone. That is not weakness. It is being human. We don't know whether Timothy made it to Rome before Paul died. But Paul's request reminds us to be there for people at the end. A visit, a call, a letter to someone who is dying or lonely can mean more than we know.

4:10 *for Demas has deserted me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*

"For Demas has deserted me, having loved the present age." Demas had been one of Paul's fellow workers. He was with Paul during his first imprisonment (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24). But now he had left. Why? He "loved the present age." He loved this world and its comfort and safety more than he loved Christ's appearing (compare 4:8).

That is a warning to all of us. Demas did not leave because of a false teacher. He left because he loved the world. "Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia." These men had not deserted Paul. They had gone on missions. Dalmatia was a region on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. Paul is just telling Timothy who was still around.

4:11 *Luke alone is with me. Take Mark and bring **him** with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.*

"Luke alone is with me." Luke, the doctor who wrote the Gospel of Luke and Acts, stayed to the end. He had traveled with Paul for years. He was faithful when others were gone.

"Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry." This is a beautiful line. Years before, John Mark had left Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, and Paul refused to take him on the next one. Paul and Barnabas argued so sharply about it that they split up (Acts 13:13; 15:37-39). But now Paul says Mark is useful to him. Mark had grown, and Paul had forgiven. This is the same Mark who wrote the Gospel that bears his name. If you have failed in the past, God is not done with you.

4:12 *But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.*

"But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus." Tychicus was a trusted helper who carried letters for Paul. He carried the letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians (Ephesians 6:21-22; Colossians 4:7-8).

Paul may have sent him to Ephesus to take Timothy's place while Timothy traveled to Rome, and possibly to carry this very letter. Even in prison, near death, Paul was still thinking about the churches and making sure they were cared for. A good leader plans for the work to go on without him.

4:13 *When you come, bring the cloak that I left in Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.*

"When you come, bring the cloak that I left in Troas with Carpus." Winter was coming, and Paul's cell would be cold. This is a very human request. The great apostle needed a coat.

"And the books, especially the parchments." The books were likely scrolls, and the parchments were writings on animal skin, which was more costly and lasted longer. Many think the parchments were copies of the Old Testament Scriptures, though we can't be sure. Even facing death, Paul wanted to keep reading and studying. If Paul, who had seen the risen Christ, still wanted his books, how much more do we need to keep studying God's Word?

4:14 *Alexander the coppersmith showed me much evil; may the Lord repay him according to his deeds.*

"Alexander the coppersmith showed me much evil." A coppersmith was a metalworker. We don't know if this is the same Alexander named in 1 Timothy 1:20, but it may be. He did Paul great harm, perhaps by testifying against him or helping to have him arrested.

"May the Lord repay him according to his deeds." Paul is not taking revenge. He is leaving it with God, who judges rightly (Romans 12:19; Psalm 62:12). When someone has deeply wronged us, we do not have to pretend it didn't happen. But we can hand it over to the Lord and let Him deal with it.

Old Testament links: 2 Samuel 3:39 (alluded to); Psalm 62:12 (alluded to)

4:15 *You also beware of him, for he has exceedingly opposed our words.*

"You also beware of him, for he has exceedingly opposed our words." Alexander was still a danger. Paul warns Timothy to watch out for him.

Notice what Alexander opposed: "our words," the gospel message Paul and his team preached. His hostility was not just personal. It was against the truth. Leaving vengeance to God does not mean being naive. We can forgive someone and still be careful around them, especially when they are still doing harm. Paul both trusts God with Alexander's judgment and warns Timothy to protect himself.

4:16 *At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me; may it not be charged to them.*

"At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me." Many Bible teachers believe this was a first hearing in Paul's trial, since a Roman case could be heard more than once before a verdict was given. At that hearing, no one came to speak for him. Not one friend stood by his side.

"May it not be charged to them." Look at Paul's heart. He does not curse them. He prays for them, just as Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34) and Stephen prayed for those who stoned him (Acts 7:60). Paul had once stood by and watched Stephen die. Now he speaks like Stephen. That is what grace does to a man over a lifetime.

4:17 *But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully carried out, and all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of **the** mouth of a lion.*

"But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me." When everyone else left, the Lord did not. Jesus promised He would never leave us (Hebrews 13:5). Paul found it true in a Roman courtroom.

"So that through me the proclamation might be fully carried out, and all the Gentiles might hear." Even at his trial, Paul preached. Standing before Roman officials, he told them the gospel. In that courtroom, the message reached the center of the Gentile world.

"And I was delivered out of the mouth of a lion." This may be a picture of great danger, as in Psalm 22:21. Some believe it means he was spared from being thrown to the lions, others that he escaped death at that hearing, and others that it points to Nero or to Satan. Whichever it means, God rescued him for a time.

Old Testament links: Psalm 22:21 (alluded to)

4:18 *And the Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and will save **me** into His heavenly kingdom; to whom **be** the glory to the ages of the ages. Amen.*

"And the Lord will deliver me from every evil deed." Paul knows he will die soon (4:6). So what does he mean? He means God will keep him from every evil that could destroy his soul or turn him away from Christ. The Lord might not save him from the executioner, but He would save him through death.

"And will save me into His heavenly kingdom." Death would not be defeat. It would be the door into the Lord's presence. "To whom be the glory to the ages of the ages. Amen." Facing death, Paul praises God. The man who could say this from a Roman dungeon had found something worth more than his life.

4:19 *Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus.*

"Greet Prisca and Aquila." Prisca is the short form of Priscilla. She and her husband Aquila were tentmakers, like Paul. He had worked with them in Corinth, and they had risked their lives for him (Acts 18:1-3; Romans 16:3-4). They taught Apollos the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:26). After all these years, they were still faithful.

"And the house of Onesiphorus." Paul sends greetings to the family of the man who searched Rome to find him (1:16-18). Paul never forgot those who stood with him.

4:20 *Erastus remained in Corinth, but Trophimus I left in Miletus sick.*

"Erastus remained in Corinth." Erastus had traveled with Paul and Timothy before (Acts 19:22). An Erastus is also named as the city treasurer of Corinth in Romans 16:23, though we cannot be sure it is the same man.

"But Trophimus I left in Miletus sick." Trophimus was from Ephesus and had traveled with Paul (Acts 20:4; 21:29). Here is something interesting. Paul had healed many people (Acts 19:11-12; 28:8-9). But he left Trophimus sick. Healing was not something Paul could do whenever he wanted. God does not always heal in this life, even for faithful people. That does not mean they lack faith. It means God has His own purposes.

4:21 *Be diligent to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.*

"Be diligent to come before winter." Most ships stopped sailing the Mediterranean in winter because the storms were too dangerous (Acts 27:9-12). If Timothy did not leave soon, he would not be able to come until spring, and by then it might be too late.

"Eubulus greets you, and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers." These were believers in Rome who still cared for Paul, even if they could not stand with him in court. Some early writers name a Linus as an early leader of the church in Rome, but we cannot be certain it is the same man. These are names we know little about, but God knows them all.

4:22 *The Lord Jesus Christ **be** with your spirit. Grace **be** with you. Amen.*

"The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." This is Paul's blessing on Timothy personally. As far as we know, these are the last words Paul wrote. They are a prayer that Jesus would be with his son in the faith.

"Grace be with you." Here "you" is plural in Greek, a blessing on the whole church with Timothy. Paul's life began in hatred for Christ and ended with grace on his lips. Tradition tells us he was beheaded in Rome not long after. The race was over, and the crown was waiting. His last word to the church is the same word he always came back to: grace.

Summary

Paul gives Timothy a solemn charge before God and Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, and reprove, rebuke and exhort with all patience. A time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but will gather teachers to tell them what they want to hear and turn aside to myths. Timothy must be sober, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist and fulfill his ministry. Paul is being poured out as a drink offering. He has fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith, and the crown of righteousness is laid up for him and for all who have loved Christ's appearing. Demas has deserted him for love of this world, and only Luke is with him. He asks for Mark, his cloak and his books, warns of Alexander, and tells how no one stood with him at his first defense, but the Lord stood by him. Paul is sure the Lord will bring him safely into His heavenly kingdom. He ends with greetings and with grace.

Study Questions

1. In whose presence does Paul give his final charge, and why does that matter? (4:1)

2. What five things does Paul tell Timothy to do in 4:2?

3. Why will people heap up teachers for themselves, according to 4:3-4?

4. What picture does Paul use for his death in 4:6, and what does "departure" mean?

5. What three things could Paul say about his life in 4:7?

6. Who will receive the crown of righteousness? (4:8)

7. Why did Demas desert Paul, and what happened between Paul and Mark over the years? (4:10-11)

8. How did Paul respond to those who deserted him at his first defense? (4:16-17)

9. Are you one of those who have "loved His appearing"? (4:8) How would loving Christ's coming change how you live this week?

10. If your life ended today, what would you want to be able to say about how you ran your race?

Overview of Titus

Titus is the seventeenth book of the New Testament. It sits between 2 Timothy and Philemon. It is the third of the Pastoral Letters, and it is very close in subject to 1 Timothy.

Titus is a short letter with one big idea: true teaching produces a godly life. Paul tells Titus to appoint faithful elders, to silence false teachers, and to teach every group in the church how to live in a way that makes the gospel look beautiful. Twice Paul stops to explain the gospel itself, and these two passages are among the clearest in the Bible. God's grace has appeared, it trains us to live godly lives now, and it teaches us to wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. God saved us, not by our works, but by His mercy:

Titus 3:5 (SLB)

"not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy He saved us, through ***the*** washing of regeneration and renewal of ***the*** Holy Spirit,"

Titus has 3 chapters and 46 verses. Here is its structure:

Part One: Leaders for the Church (chapter 1)

- Titus 1: Elders for Every Town

Part Two: Sound Teaching and Good Works (chapters 2 and 3)

- Titus 2: Sound Teaching for Every Age
- Titus 3: Saved by His Mercy to Do Good Works

Background of Titus

Author: The letter opens with "Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). As with the letters to Timothy, the early church received it as Paul's, and some modern scholars doubt it for the same reasons. I take the letter at its word. It names Paul, it names real coworkers and real travel plans (3:12-13), and it fits well with what we know of Paul's work with Titus.

Who it was written to: Titus was a Greek, a Gentile believer, and one of Paul's most trusted helpers. Paul calls him "my true child according to our common faith" (1:4), which may mean Paul led him to Christ. Titus went with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, where the apostles did not make him be circumcised (Galatians 2:1-3). Later Paul sent him to Corinth to deal with problems there, and Titus came back with good news that comforted Paul (2 Corinthians 7:6-7, 13-15; 8:16-17). Titus is not named in the book of Acts. By the time of 2 Timothy he had gone to Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10).

The island of Crete: Crete is a large island in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Greece. Paul's ship passed along its coast on the way to Rome (Acts 27:7-13), but there is no record of Paul preaching there in Acts. Some people from Crete were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11), and they may have carried the gospel home. Cretans had a bad name in the ancient world, and Paul quotes one of their own writers who called them liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons (1:12).

When and where it was written: Paul and Titus had worked together on Crete, and Paul left Titus there to finish the work (1:5). This fits best in the time after Paul's release from his first imprisonment in Rome. Paul planned to spend the winter in Nicopolis, a city on the west coast of Greece (3:12). Most who hold that Paul wrote it date it about A.D. 62 to 64, around the same time as 1 Timothy.

Purpose: Paul wrote to tell Titus to set the churches of Crete in order by appointing elders in every city (1:5), to silence false teachers, especially "those of the circumcision" (1:10), to teach sound doctrine to each group in the church (chapter 2), and to remind believers that God saved them by His mercy so that they would devote themselves to good works (chapter 3).

Titus 1: Elders for Every Town

Scripture

1:1-9 Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to ***the*** faith of God's elect and ***the*** knowledge of ***the*** truth which ***is*** according to godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before eternal times, but in ***His*** own seasons He revealed His word in ***the*** proclamation with which I was entrusted according to ***the*** command of God our Savior; to Titus, ***my*** true child according to ***our*** common faith: Grace, mercy, peace from God ***the*** Father and ***the*** Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. For this reason I left you in Crete, so that you might set in order the things lacking and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you: if anyone is blameless, a husband of one wife, having faithful children not under accusation of debauchery or insubordinate. For the overseer must be blameless as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not a striker, not greedy for shameful gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled, holding firmly to the faithful word according to the instruction, so that he may be able both to exhort in the sound teaching and to reprove those who contradict.

1:10-16 For there are many and insubordinate empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whom it is necessary to silence, who overturn whole households, teaching things which ***they*** ought not, for the sake of shameful gain. One of them, their own prophet, said, "Cretans ***are*** always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies." This testimony is true. For which reason reprove them severely, so that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. All things indeed ***are*** pure to the pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing ***is*** pure, but both their mind and conscience have been defiled. They profess to know God, but by ***their*** works they deny ***Him***, being detestable and disobedient and disqualified for every good work.

Preview

Paul opens his letter to Titus with one of his longest greetings. He is a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to bring God's chosen people to faith and to the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, all in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began. Then he reminds Titus why he left him on Crete: to set things in order and to appoint elders in every city. Paul lists what those elders must be. They must be blameless in their homes and in their character, and they must hold firmly to the faithful word, so that they can both encourage with sound teaching and correct those who oppose it.

Then Paul explains why such elders were so badly needed. Crete was full of insubordinate empty talkers and deceivers, especially from among the Jewish believers who wanted to bring back the Law. They were upsetting whole families for the sake of money. Even a Cretan prophet had said that Cretans were always liars. Titus must rebuke them sharply so that they would be sound in the faith. These men claimed to know God, but their works denied Him.

Study

1:1 *Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to **the** faith of God's elect and **the** knowledge of **the** truth which **is** according to godliness,*

"Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ." This is the only place where Paul calls himself "a slave of God." A slave belongs completely to his master. Paul did not see himself as a great leader. He saw himself as God's property, there to do God's will. And he was an apostle, sent with Christ's authority.

His work was "according to the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness." Paul's job was to bring God's chosen people to faith and to help them know the truth. And that truth is "according to godliness." True doctrine always leads to a godly life. That is the theme of the whole letter.

1:2 *in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before eternal times,*

"In hope of eternal life." Paul's whole ministry rested on this hope. In the Bible hope is not a wish. It is a certainty that has not yet arrived.

Why is it certain? Because "God, who cannot lie, promised" it. Think about that phrase. Cretans were known as liars (1:12). But God cannot lie. It is not only that He doesn't. He cannot, because it would go against His very nature (Hebrews 6:18). When God makes a promise, it is as good as done.

And He made this promise "before eternal times," before the world began. Eternal life for God's people was not a backup plan. It was God's purpose from eternity (2 Timothy 1:9).

1:3 *but in **His** own seasons He revealed His word in **the** proclamation with which I was entrusted according to **the** command of God our Savior;*

"But in His own seasons He revealed His word in the proclamation." God promised eternal life before time began, and at the right time He made that promise known. He did it through preaching. The gospel did not come through a secret vision to a few people. It came through public proclamation, men like Paul announcing it openly.

"With which I was entrusted according to the command of God our Savior." Paul again says he did not choose this work. It was entrusted to him by God's command. Notice that Paul calls God "our Savior" here, and in verse 4 he calls Christ Jesus "our Savior." He does this all through Titus. The Father and the Son are both our Savior, because they are one God.

1:4 *to Titus, **my** true child according to **our** common faith: Grace, mercy, peace from God **the** Father and **the** Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.*

"To Titus, my true child according to our common faith." Titus was a Greek, a Gentile. Paul was a Jew. But they shared a "common faith." In Christ, the old wall between Jew and Gentile had come down (Ephesians 2:14).

Paul calls him "my true child." As with Timothy, this likely means Paul led him to Christ and trained him. It also shows how Paul loved the men he worked with. "Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior." The same blessing Paul gave Timothy, Titus needed too. Crete was a hard place to serve.

1:5 *For this reason I left you in Crete, so that you might set in order the things lacking and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:*

"For this reason I left you in Crete, so that you might set in order the things lacking." The phrase "set in order" means to straighten out, to set right what is still crooked or missing. The churches on Crete were young, and some things were not yet in place.

The biggest thing lacking was leadership: Titus was to "appoint elders in every city." Elders are mature men who lead and shepherd a local church. Notice the plural. Each church was to have more than one elder. And notice that Titus was to appoint them "as I directed you." This was not Titus's own plan. He was carrying out what the apostle had told him. A church without godly leaders is missing something it needs. It must be set right before it can grow strong.

1:6 *if anyone is blameless, a husband of one wife, having faithful children not under accusation of debauchery or insubordinate.*

What kind of man could be an elder? "If anyone is blameless." Blameless means there is no charge that can be fairly brought against him. It does not mean sinless, but it means there is no open, ongoing sin in his life.

"A husband of one wife." As we saw in 1 Timothy 3:2, Bible teachers read this in several ways: no polygamy, no divorce and remarriage, a man faithful to his wife whatever his past, or a man who must be married. All agree that a married elder must be fully faithful to his wife.

"Having faithful children not under accusation of debauchery or insubordinate." Some read "faithful" as believing, so that an elder's children must be Christians. Others read it as trustworthy, well-behaved, not wild or rebellious. Either way, an elder's home should show that he leads well.

1:7 *For the overseer must be blameless as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not a striker, not greedy for shameful gain,*

"For the overseer must be blameless as God's steward." Notice that Paul uses the word elder in verse 5 and overseer here for the same man. They are two names for one office. Elder points to his maturity. Overseer points to his work of watching over the church.

He is "God's steward." A steward managed a household for its owner. The church does not belong to the elder. It belongs to God, and the elder will answer to God for how he cares for it. That is why he must be blameless.

Then come five things he must not be. "Not self-willed," not stubborn, always insisting on his own way. "Not quick-tempered," not a man with a short fuse. "Not given to wine," not a drinker. "Not a striker," not violent. "Not greedy for shameful gain," not in it for the money.

1:8 *but hospitable, a lover of good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled,*

Now what he must be. "But hospitable," a lover of strangers, with an open home. "A lover of good," a man who loves what is good, good people and good things. "Sensible," a man who thinks clearly and acts wisely.

Righteous, a man who treats others fairly and does what is right. Holy, a man devoted to God, set apart for Him. Self-controlled, a man who rules his desires instead of letting them rule him. This list is very much like the one in 1 Timothy 3. Notice how much of it is about everyday character, not great gifts. God is more interested in what kind of man an elder is than in how well he speaks.

1:9 *holding firmly to the faithful word according to the instruction, so that he may be able both to exhort in the sound teaching and to reprove those who contradict.*

"Holding firmly to the faithful word according to the instruction." An elder must hold on tight to the trustworthy message of the gospel, as it was taught by the apostles. He must not let go of it under pressure.

Why? "So that he may be able both to exhort in the sound teaching and to reprove those who contradict." An elder has two jobs with the Word. First, to exhort, to encourage and build up the church with healthy teaching. Second, to reprove, to correct and refute those who speak against the truth. A shepherd feeds the sheep and drives off the wolves. He cannot do either one if he does not know the Word well.

1:10 *For there are many and insubordinate empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,*

"For there are many and insubordinate empty talkers and deceivers." Here is why Crete needed strong elders. There were many false teachers. They were "insubordinate," refusing to submit to authority. They were "empty talkers," full of words with nothing in them. And they were "deceivers," leading people astray.

"Especially those of the circumcision." These were likely Jewish believers, or people who claimed to be believers, who taught that Gentile Christians had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be right with God. Paul fought this teaching all his life (Galatians 2:3-5; 5:2-4; Acts 15:1-2). Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, not by keeping the Law.

1:11 *whom it is necessary to silence, who overturn whole households, teaching things which* ***they*** *ought not, for the sake of shameful gain.*

"Whom it is necessary to silence." The word means to stop the mouth, like putting a muzzle on an animal. Titus and the elders were to stop these men from teaching in the church. This does not mean using force. It means refusing them a platform and answering them with the truth.

Why so strong? Because they "overturn whole households, teaching things which they ought not." The church on Crete met in homes, and these men were ruining whole families. And they did it "for the sake of shameful gain." Money was behind it. False teachers have often been in it for the money, and they still are today (1 Timothy 6:5).

1:12 *One of them, their own prophet, said, "Cretans **are** always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies."*

"One of them, their own prophet, said," and here Paul quotes him: "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies." Many believe this quote comes from Epimenides, a poet and wise man from Crete who lived several hundred years before Paul. The Cretans themselves looked on him as a kind of prophet.

"Always liars." The Greeks even made a verb from the name of Crete that meant to lie. "Evil beasts," wild and dangerous. "Lazy bellies," lazy gluttons who only cared about their stomachs. Paul is not insulting every person on Crete. He is quoting what their own writer said to show the kind of culture Titus was working in. The gospel can change any people, no matter how bad their reputation.

1:13 *This testimony is true. For which reason reprove them severely, so that they may be sound in the faith,*

"This testimony is true." Paul agrees. The false teachers on Crete were showing these very traits. They lied, they were wild, and they were greedy.

"For which reason reprove them severely." Titus could not be soft with them. He must rebuke them sharply. But look at the goal: "so that they may be sound in the faith." The aim of a hard rebuke is not to crush people. It is to heal them, to bring them back to healthy faith. Even the harshest correction in the church should aim at restoring someone. Sometimes love has to speak strongly.

1:14 *not giving heed to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.*

"Not giving heed to Jewish myths and commandments of men." These false teachers taught myths, perhaps legends built on Old Testament stories (1 Timothy 1:4), and rules made up by men.

"Commandments of men who turn away from the truth." These were not God's commands, but man-made rules about food, washing and the like. Jesus warned against the same thing in His day. The Pharisees, a strict Jewish religious group, taught the commands of men as if they were God's teaching (Mark 7:7-8). Whenever people add their own rules to God's Word and call them holiness, they are turning away from the truth.

1:15 *All things indeed **are** pure to the pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing **is** pure, but both their mind and conscience have been defiled.*

"All things indeed are pure to the pure." The false teachers were making rules about what was clean and unclean. Paul says that for the person whose heart has been made pure by Christ, God's

good gifts are pure. Jesus taught that it is not what goes into a man that makes him unclean, but what comes out of his heart (Mark 7:15, 19).

"But to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but both their mind and conscience have been defiled." The problem is not in the food or in the things. It is in the heart. A person with a dirty mind can make anything dirty. These false teachers obeyed their rules carefully, but inside, their minds and consciences were stained.

1:16 *They profess to know God, but by **their** works they deny **Him**, being detestable and disobedient and disqualified for every good work.*

"They profess to know God, but by their works they deny Him." This is the heart of the problem. They said the right things. They claimed to know God. But the way they lived said the opposite. Talk is cheap. Our lives show whether we really know God (1 John 2:4).

Paul calls them "detestable," disgusting to God, "and disobedient and disqualified for every good work." Disqualified means tested and found worthless, like a coin that fails the test. These men could not do any real good, because their hearts were not right. This verse sets up chapters 2 and 3, where Paul shows that real faith shows up in good works. What do your works say about whether you know God?

Summary

Paul greets Titus as a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to bring God's elect to faith and to the truth that leads to godliness, in hope of the eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began. He left Titus on Crete to set things in order and appoint elders in every city. An elder, also called an overseer, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, with faithful children. As God's steward he must not be self-willed, quick-tempered, a drinker, violent or greedy. He must be hospitable, a lover of good, sensible, righteous, holy and self-controlled, holding firmly to the faithful word so he can encourage with sound teaching and correct those who contradict it. Many empty talkers and deceivers, especially of the circumcision, were upsetting whole households for money. Even their own prophet said Cretans were always liars. Titus must rebuke them sharply so that they may be sound in the faith. To the pure all things are pure, but these men claim to know God while denying Him by their works.

Study Questions

1. How does Paul describe himself in 1:1, and what does it mean to be "a slave of God"?

2. Why can we be sure of the hope of eternal life? (1:2)

3. Why did Paul leave Titus on Crete? (1:5)

4. What two names does Paul use for the same church leader in 1:5-7, and what does each mean?

5. What two things must an elder be able to do with the Word? (1:9)

6. Who were "those of the circumcision," and what were they teaching? (1:10)

7. What was the goal of rebuking the false teachers sharply? (1:13)

8. What does 1:16 say about people who claim to know God but deny Him by their works?

9. If someone watched your life for a week, what would your works say about whether you know God?

10. Elders hold firmly to the faithful word. How can you hold more firmly to God's Word in your own life?

Titus 2: Sound Teaching for Every Age

Scripture

2:1-10 But you, speak the things which are fitting for sound teaching: older men ***are*** to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in the faith, in the love, in the endurance; older women likewise ***are to be*** reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not enslaved to much wine, teachers of good, so that they may train the young women to be lovers of ***their*** husbands, lovers of ***their*** children, sensible, pure, keepers at home, good, being subject to ***their*** own husbands, so that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise exhort the younger men to be sensible, in all things presenting yourself ***as*** a pattern of good works; in the teaching, uncorruptness, dignity, incorruption, sound speech beyond reproach, so that the one from the opposing ***side*** may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say concerning you. Slaves ***are*** to be subject to ***their*** own masters, to be well-pleasing in all things, not contradicting, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior in all things.

2:11-15 For the grace of God has appeared, which brings salvation to all men, training us that, having denied ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live sensibly and righteously and godly in the present age, awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for Himself a special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Preview

The false teachers on Crete claimed to know God but denied Him by their works. Titus must do the opposite: speak the things that fit sound teaching. Paul goes through the church group by group. Older men are to be sober, dignified and sound in faith, love and endurance. Older women are to be reverent and to teach the younger women to love their husbands and children and to live pure lives. Younger men are to be sensible, and Titus himself must be an example of good works. Slaves are to serve their masters honestly. The reason for all of it is the same: so that the Word of God is not spoken against, and so that believers adorn the teaching of God our Savior.

Then Paul gives the reason behind the reason. The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men. That grace trains us to say no to ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. He gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to make us His own people, zealous for good works. Titus must teach these things with all authority.

Study

2:1 *But you, speak the things which are fitting for sound teaching:*

"But you, speak the things which are fitting for sound teaching." The word "but" sets Titus against the false teachers of chapter 1. They taught myths and the commands of men. Titus must teach what fits healthy doctrine.

Notice that Paul does not only tell Titus to teach sound doctrine. He says, teach "the things which are fitting" for it, the kind of life that matches it. Sound doctrine is not only a list of truths to believe. It is a way of life. Right belief and right living belong together. What follows in this chapter is what that looks like for every age and every station in life.

2:2 *older men **are** to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in the faith, in the love, in the endurance;*

Paul starts with the older men. They are "to be temperate," sober and clear-headed, not given to too much wine. "Dignified," worthy of respect because of the way they carry themselves. "Sensible," wise and self-controlled.

And they are to be "sound in the faith, in the love, in the endurance." Healthy in their trust in God, healthy in their love for others, and healthy in their ability to keep going when life gets hard. As men grow older, they can grow bitter, grumpy or set in their ways. Paul calls them to grow in faith, love and endurance instead. Older men in the church have a great opportunity to show the younger ones what a lifetime of following Christ looks like.

2:3 *older women likewise **are to be** reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not enslaved to much wine, teachers of good,*

"Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior." Their whole way of life should show reverence for God, as if they were serving in His temple.

"Not slanderers." Again we see the Greek word diabolos, the devil's own name. Gossip and slander are the devil's work, and they are a special danger when people have time on their hands (1 Timothy 5:13). "Not enslaved to much wine." On Crete, drunkenness seems to have been a real problem, and Paul says believers must not be slaves to it.

Instead they are to be "teachers of good." Older women have a teaching ministry. It may not be from a pulpit, but it is just as important. Their wisdom and experience are a gift to the church.

2:4-5 *so that they may train the young women to be lovers of **their** husbands, lovers of **their** children, sensible, pure, keepers at home, good, being subject to **their** own husbands, so that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*

What should the older women teach? "So that they may train the young women to be lovers of their husbands, lovers of their children." It may seem strange to teach a woman to love her husband and children. But real love is more than a feeling. It is a commitment that must be

learned, especially when marriage and parenting get hard. Who better to teach it than women who have walked that road?

They are also to be "sensible, pure, keepers at home, good, being subject to their own husbands." Here is what the text says. Younger wives are to be wise, morally pure, busy in caring for their homes, kind, and under their own husbands' leadership. In that culture, and on Crete in particular, these qualities would show the world that the gospel makes good families. This submission is to "their own husbands," not to all men, and it is a willing choice made as to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24). It never means a wife must accept abuse. Husbands, for their part, are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). Believers apply "keepers at home" in different ways today, but all agree that the home is a high calling and not a lesser one.

Why does it matter? "So that the word of God may not be blasphemed." When believers live this way, the gospel is honored. When they don't, people speak against God's Word.

2:6 *Likewise exhort the younger men to be sensible,*

"Likewise exhort the younger men to be sensible." Only one word for the young men, but it is a big one. The word means self-controlled, sound-minded, wise. Paul has used it for elders (1:8), for older men (2:2), and for younger women (2:5). Now he gives it to the young men all by itself.

Why this one? Because young men often struggle most with self-control: with their tempers, their desires, their tongues and their impulses. A young man who learns to master himself has learned one of the most important lessons in life. Self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23). It does not come by willpower alone. It grows as we walk with God.

2:7 *in all things presenting yourself **as** a pattern of good works; in the teaching, uncorruptness, dignity, incorruption,*

"In all things presenting yourself as a pattern of good works." Titus himself was likely a younger man. Paul tells him to be the example for the younger men. It is not enough to tell others to be self-controlled. Titus must show them how.

"In the teaching, uncorruptness, dignity, incorruption." His teaching must be pure, untainted by error or by mixed motives like money (1:11). It must be done with dignity, with seriousness, the kind of manner that makes people take God's Word seriously. A teacher's life and his message must match. People learn more from watching how we live than from listening to what we say.

2:8 *sound speech beyond reproach, so that the one from the opposing **side** may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say concerning you.*

"Sound speech beyond reproach." Titus's words had to be healthy and fair, so that no one could fairly criticize them. A teacher will be criticized, but he should not give people a good reason to do it.

"So that the one from the opposing side may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say concerning you." The enemies of the gospel were watching. If they looked for something to attack and found nothing, they would be ashamed. Peter says the same: live such good lives among unbelievers that, though they speak against you, they will see your good works and glorify God (1 Peter 2:12). Your life can answer critics better than any argument.

2:9 *Slaves **are** to be subject to **their** own masters, to be well-pleasing in all things, not contradicting,*

"Slaves are to be subject to their own masters." In Paul's day a large part of the people in the Roman Empire were slaves, and many of them were in the church. Roman slavery was not the same as the race-based slavery in American history. People became slaves through war, debt or birth, and some worked as teachers, doctors and managers. But it was still a system where one person owned another, and it was often cruel.

Paul tells believing slaves "to be well-pleasing in all things, not contradicting." They were not to talk back or argue with every instruction. We should be honest that verses like these were later misused in America to defend slavery. Many other Christians, reading the same Bible, saw that every person is made in God's image and fought to end it. Paul's words were never a blessing on slavery. Elsewhere he told slaves to take their freedom if they could (1 Corinthians 7:21), and he called the slave trade lawless (1 Timothy 1:10). These were instructions for believers caught in a system they did not create.

2:10 *not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior in all things.*

"Not pilfering, but showing all good faith." Pilfering means stealing small things on the side, a little here and a little there. Slaves who handled their masters' goods had many chances to do it. Believing slaves were to be completely trustworthy.

Why? "So that they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior in all things." To adorn means to decorate, to make beautiful, like setting a jewel. A slave had no power in society, yet by working honestly he could make the gospel beautiful to those around him. Today these verses apply to anyone who works for someone else. When you are honest, faithful and hard-working on the job, even when no one is watching, you make the gospel look beautiful.

2:11 *For the grace of God has appeared, which brings salvation to all men,*

"For the grace of God has appeared." Here is the reason behind everything Paul has said. Why should older men, older women, young people and slaves live godly lives? Because God's grace has appeared. It appeared in Jesus, in His birth, life, death and resurrection.

This grace "brings salvation to all men." Salvation is offered to every kind of person: old and young, men and women, slave and free, Jew and Gentile. It is not only for the rich or the powerful or the religious. Paul has just spoken to slaves, the lowest people in Roman society. The grace of God reaches them too. No one is outside the reach of God's grace.

2:12 *training us that, having denied ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live sensibly and righteously and godly in the present age,*

"Training us." Grace does not only save us. It trains us, like a parent raising a child or a coach training an athlete. Some people think grace means we can live however we want, since we are forgiven anyway. Paul says the opposite. Real grace teaches us to live differently.

First it teaches us to say no: "having denied ungodliness and worldly desires." Ungodliness is living as if God doesn't matter. Worldly desires are the cravings of a world that has turned away from God. Then it teaches us to say yes: "we should live sensibly and righteously and godly in the present age." Sensibly toward ourselves, with self-control. Righteously toward others, treating them right. Godly toward God, living for Him. And we do it "in the present age," right here and now, not someday.

2:13 *awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

"Awaiting the blessed hope." While we live godly lives now, we look ahead. Believers are people who are waiting. What are we waiting for? "The blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

The blessed hope is the coming of Jesus for His church. I believe that Christ will come for His church before the seven-year Tribulation, catching up living believers to meet Him in the air and raising the dead in Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). That is why it is a "blessed" hope. We are not waiting for the Tribulation or for the Antichrist. We are waiting for Jesus. After the Tribulation, He will return visibly to the earth in glory to reign (Revelation 19:11-16).

Notice also how Paul names Him: "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." Jesus is not only our Savior. He is our great God. This is one of the clearest statements in the Bible that Jesus is God.

2:14 *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for Himself a special people, zealous for good works.*

"Who gave Himself for us." Here is what Jesus did at His first coming. He did not just give us something. He gave Himself, His own life, on the cross.

Why? "That He might redeem us from all lawlessness." To redeem means to set free by paying a price. We were slaves to sin, and Jesus paid the price to set us free from all of it, not only its penalty but its power. "And purify for Himself a special people." The word "special" means His very own, a treasured possession. God said the same about Israel (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 14:2). Now He has a people from every nation who belong to Him. That does not mean the church has taken Israel's place. God still has a future for the nation of Israel (Romans 11:25-29).

And that people is "zealous for good works." Not lukewarm, not grudging, but eager to do good. We are not saved by good works, but we are saved for them (Ephesians 2:8-10). Are you eager to do good?

2:15 *Speak these things, and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one despise you.*

"Speak these things, and exhort and reprove with all authority." Titus was to teach what Paul had just written. He was to exhort, encouraging people to live it, and to reprove, correcting them when they did not. And he was to do it "with all authority," the authority of God's Word, not his own.

"Let no one despise you." Paul said nearly the same to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:12). Titus might be young, and the Cretans might be hard to deal with. But he did not need to back down. When a leader teaches what God's Word says, he speaks with God's authority. The way to keep others from despising you is to teach the truth and live it.

Summary

Paul tells Titus to teach the things that fit sound teaching. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, and sound in faith, love and endurance. Older women are to be reverent, not slanderers or drinkers, and teachers of good, training the young women to love their husbands and children and to be sensible, pure, keepers at home, good and subject to their own husbands. Younger men are to be sensible, and Titus must be a pattern of good works with sound, honest teaching. Slaves are to be subject to their masters, honest and faithful, so that they adorn the teaching of God our Savior. The reason is the grace of God, which has appeared, bringing salvation to all men. Grace trains us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. He gave Himself to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify a special people for Himself, zealous for good works.

Study Questions

1. What qualities should mark older men in the church? (2:2)

2. What are older women to teach the younger women? (2:3-5)

3. What one word does Paul use for younger men, and why is it so important? (2:6)

4. How was Titus to be an example in his teaching and speech? (2:7-8)

5. What does it mean for believers to "adorn the teaching of God our Savior"? (2:10)

6. What does God's grace train us to say no to, and what does it train us to say yes to? (2:12)

7. What is "the blessed hope," and what does 2:13 tell us about who Jesus is?

8. Why did Jesus give Himself for us, according to 2:14?

9. Who is an older believer who has taught you by their example? Who could you help in the same way?

10. Where in your daily work could you make the gospel look beautiful to those around you?

Titus 3: Saved by His Mercy to Do Good Works

Scripture

3:1-8 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to blaspheme no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all meekness toward all men. For we also were once foolish, disobedient, being deceived, being slaves to various desires and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness and the love for mankind of God our Savior appeared, not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy He saved us, through ***the*** washing of regeneration and renewal of ***the*** Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by the grace of that One, we might become heirs according to ***the*** hope of eternal life. Faithful ***is*** the word, and concerning these things I want you to affirm confidently, so that those who have believed God may take care to devote themselves to good works. These things are the good and profitable ***things*** for men.

3:9-15 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strifes and fights about ***the*** law; for they are unprofitable and futile. Reject a factious man after one and a second admonition, knowing that such a one has been perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to winter there. Diligently send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on ***their*** way, so that nothing may be lacking for them. And let our ***people*** also learn to devote themselves to good works for the necessary needs, so that they may not be unfruitful. All who ***are*** with me greet you. Greet those who love us in ***the*** faith. Grace ***be*** with you all. Amen.

Preview

In the last chapter of Titus, Paul turns from life inside the church to life in the world. Believers are to be subject to rulers, ready for every good work, speaking evil of no one, peaceable, gentle and meek toward all people. Why should we treat even hard people that way? Because we were once foolish, disobedient and enslaved to our desires too. Then Paul gives one of the richest summaries of the gospel in the Bible. When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not by works we had done, but by His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ. Being justified by His grace, we have become heirs of eternal life.

Paul wants Titus to stress these things so that believers will devote themselves to good works. At the same time, Titus must avoid foolish arguments about genealogies and the Law, and he must warn a divisive man once and twice and then have nothing more to do with him. The letter closes with travel plans, a request to help Zenas and Apollos on their way, one more call to good works, and greetings of grace.

Study

3:1 *Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,*

"Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey." The believers on Crete already knew this, but they needed reminding. Cretans had a reputation for being rebellious, and Crete was under Roman rule. Believers were to be good citizens. Paul taught the same in Romans 13:1-7, and Peter did too (1 Peter 2:13-17).

This does not mean believers must obey a ruler who commands them to sin. When the authorities told the apostles to stop preaching, they said they must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). But in everything else, Christians should be known as people who keep the law, pay their taxes and respect those in authority.

"To be ready for every good work." Believers should not only stay out of trouble. They should be eager to do good in their communities.

3:2 *to blaspheme no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all meekness toward all men.*

"To blaspheme no one." To blaspheme here means to speak evil of someone, to slander them. Believers should not tear down anyone with their words, not even rulers they disagree with or neighbors who mistreat them.

"To be peaceable, gentle, showing all meekness toward all men." Peaceable means not looking for a fight. Gentle means fair and reasonable, willing to yield. Meekness is strength under control. And notice the words "toward all men." Not only toward other believers, not only toward people we like, but toward everyone. Think about how you speak about people online, at work or at home. Would anyone describe you as gentle and meek toward all? This is how the world sees that Christ has changed us.

3:3 *For we also were once foolish, disobedient, being deceived, being slaves to various desires and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.*

"For we also were once foolish, disobedient, being deceived." Here is why we should be gentle with unbelievers. We used to be just like them. Paul includes himself: "we also." Before Christ, we did not understand spiritual things. We did not obey God. We were fooled by sin and by the devil.

"Being slaves to various desires and pleasures." We thought we were free, but we were slaves. "Living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." That is a hard picture, but it is honest. Without Christ, the human heart is full of ill will, jealousy and hatred. When we remember where we came from, we have no room for pride. The only difference between us and the worst sinner we know is the grace of God.

3:4 *But when the kindness and the love for mankind of God our Savior appeared,*

"But when the kindness and the love for mankind of God our Savior appeared." What a turn! Verse 3 shows us at our worst. Verse 4 shows God at His best. "But" is one of the most beautiful words in the Bible when it comes right after a description of our sin (Ephesians 2:4).

"Kindness" means God's goodness and generosity toward those who do not deserve it. "Love for mankind" is the Greek word philanthropia, which gives us our word philanthropy. God loves people. These "appeared" when Jesus came into the world. God did not wait for us to clean ourselves up. He came to us when we were still in our sin (Romans 5:8).

3:5 *not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy He saved us, through* ***the*** *washing of regeneration and renewal of* ***the*** *Holy Spirit,*

"Not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy He saved us." This is as clear as the Bible gets. We are not saved by our good deeds, not even the best ones. We are saved because God is merciful. Mercy means God does not give us the punishment we deserve. Salvation is all God's work.

How did He save us? "Through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." Regeneration means new birth, being born again (John 3:3-8). Renewal means being made new. Both are the work of the Holy Spirit. Bible teachers read "the washing of regeneration" in different ways. Many believe it is the inner cleansing the Spirit does when He gives us new birth, the washing of Ezekiel 36:25-27. Others believe it points to baptism as the outward picture of that inner cleansing. Some churches teach that baptism itself brings the new birth.

The Bible teaches plainly that we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), and this very verse says it is "not by works which we did." Repentance and faith come first. Baptism is the believer's obedient public step that follows, showing the washing God has already done inside.

3:6 *whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

"Whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior." The Holy Spirit was poured out. That is not a few drops. It is a flood. God did not give us a little of His Spirit. He gave Him "richly."

This happened first on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 2:17, 33). And it happens to every believer when they put their faith in Christ (Romans 8:9). The Spirit comes "through Jesus Christ our Savior." Jesus promised to send the Spirit (John 16:7), and He did. Notice the Trinity in verses 4-6: God our Savior, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ our Savior all work together in our salvation.

3:7 *so that, having been justified by the grace of that One, we might become heirs according to* ***the*** *hope of eternal life.*

"So that, having been justified by the grace of that One." To be justified means to be declared righteous by God, as a judge declares someone not guilty. We are justified "by the grace" of Christ,

not by anything we did. God credits Christ's righteousness to us when we trust Him (Romans 3:24; 4:5).

"We might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Not only are we forgiven. We are made heirs, God's children who will inherit everything He has promised (Romans 8:17). The letter began with "hope of eternal life" (1:2), and here it comes back again. Our past is forgiven, our present is filled with the Spirit, and our future is secure. That is the gospel.

3:8 *Faithful **is** the word, and concerning these things I want you to affirm confidently, so that those who have believed God may take care to devote themselves to good works. These things are the good and profitable **things** for men.*

"Faithful is the word." This is the fifth and last faithful saying in the Pastoral Letters. It points back to the gospel in verses 4-7.

"Concerning these things I want you to affirm confidently." Titus was to teach these truths with confidence, over and over. Why? "So that those who have believed God may take care to devote themselves to good works." Here is the pattern again. We are not saved by good works (3:5), but those who are saved will devote themselves to them. Grace is the root, and good works are the fruit.

"These things are the good and profitable things for men." The gospel and the good works it produces are good for people. They bless families, churches and towns. The false teachers' arguments helped no one, but a life changed by grace helps everyone around it.

3:9 *But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strifes and fights about **the** law; for they are unprofitable and futile.*

"But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strifes and fights about the law." Here is the contrast. Some things are profitable (3:8). These things are not. The false teachers on Crete, like those in Ephesus, loved to argue about family trees and fine points of the Law of Moses (1 Timothy 1:4, 7).

"For they are unprofitable and futile." They produce nothing good. Futile means empty, pointless. Bible study that leads to endless arguing instead of godly living has missed the point. There is a place to defend the truth (1:9), but there is no place for arguments that only stir up fights. Learn the difference, and save your energy for what builds people up.

3:10 *Reject a factious man after one and a second admonition,*

"Reject a factious man after one and a second admonition." A factious man is someone who causes divisions, who forms a party around himself or his ideas and splits the church. The Greek word is hairetikos, which gives us our word heretic, though here it means mainly a divisive person.

How should Titus handle him? Warn him once. Warn him a second time. If he still will not listen, "reject" him, which means have nothing more to do with him, refusing him a place in the

fellowship. This is like the steps Jesus gave in Matthew 18:15-17. The church should be patient, but not endlessly. A divisive person left alone can tear a church apart.

3:11 *knowing that such a one has been perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.*

"Knowing that such a one has been perverted." The word means twisted or turned inside out. After two warnings, a man who keeps causing division shows that something is twisted inside him.

He "is sinning, being self-condemned." He keeps on in his sin, and he has passed judgment on himself. He was warned and chose not to listen. When the church finally separates from him, it is not condemning him. He has condemned himself by his own choices. Even then, the hope is always that he will repent and return (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

3:12 *When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to winter there.*

"When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis." Paul planned to send one of these men to take Titus's place on Crete, so that Titus could come to him. We know nothing else about Artemas. Tychicus was one of Paul's most trusted helpers (2 Timothy 4:12).

"For I have decided to winter there." Nicopolis means city of victory. Several cities had that name, but most believe this was the one on the west coast of Greece. Most travel by sea stopped in winter, so Paul planned to spend the cold months there, likely preaching. Even in his last years, Paul kept making plans to serve.

3:13 *Diligently send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on **their** way, so that nothing may be lacking for them.*

"Diligently send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way." Zenas is called a lawyer. He may have been an expert in the Law of Moses, or a Roman lawyer. Apollos was a gifted preacher from Alexandria who had served in Ephesus and Corinth (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 3:6). These two may have been the ones carrying this letter to Titus.

"So that nothing may be lacking for them." Titus and the church on Crete were to supply them with what they needed for their journey: food, money, and anything else. Helping traveling servants of God is an important ministry (3 John 5-8). When you support missionaries and those who carry the gospel, you share in their work.

3:14 *And let our **people** also learn to devote themselves to good works for the necessary needs, so that they may not be unfruitful.*

"And let our people also learn to devote themselves to good works." This is the third time in this chapter that Paul calls for good works (3:1, 8, 14). Helping Zenas and Apollos was a good place to start.

"For the necessary needs, so that they may not be unfruitful." Believers should meet real needs: the needs of travelers, the poor, the sick, and their own families. Cretans were known as "lazy bellies" (1:12). Believers were to be the opposite, hard-working and generous. A life without good works is like a tree without fruit (Matthew 7:17-20). Where is God calling you to meet a need?

3:15 *All who **are** with me greet you. Greet those who love us in **the** faith. Grace **be** with you all. Amen.*

"All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith." Paul sends greetings from his fellow workers and asks Titus to pass on his love to the believers who love them "in the faith." Their bond was not based on family or nation. It was based on their shared faith in Christ.

"Grace be with you all. Amen." Paul ends with grace, just as he began (1:4). The word "you" is plural, a blessing on the whole church on Crete. This letter has called for leaders who are blameless, for every group in the church to live godly lives, and for believers to be devoted to good works. But none of that is possible without God's grace. Grace saves us, grace trains us, and grace will carry us until Jesus comes.

Summary

Paul tells Titus to remind the believers to be subject to rulers and authorities, ready for every good work, speaking evil of no one, peaceable, gentle and meek toward all people. We were once foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved to our desires. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not by works we had done, but by His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ. Being justified by His grace, we have become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus must stress these things so that believers will devote themselves to good works. He must avoid foolish arguments about genealogies and the Law, and he must warn a divisive man twice and then reject him. Paul closes with plans to meet Titus at Nicopolis, a request to help Zenas and Apollos, one more call to good works, and a blessing of grace on them all.

When I remember what I was like before Christ, I know I should treat people who do not know Him with more love and grace. Titus 3 reminds us we were once foolish too. God was kind to us first.

Study Questions

1. How are believers to act toward rulers and toward all people? (3:1-2)

2. How does Paul describe our lives before we came to Christ? (3:3)

3. What appeared, according to 3:4, and when did it appear?

4. What does 3:5 say about whether we are saved by our works? What are we saved by?

5. What do "regeneration" and "renewal" mean, and who does this work in us? (3:5-6)

6. What does it mean to be justified, and what do we become? (3:7)

7. How many times does Paul call for good works in this chapter, and why do you think he repeats it? (3:1, 8, 14)

8. How should a church handle a divisive person? (3:10-11)

9. Remembering what you were like before Christ, how should you treat people who don't know Him yet?

10. What is one "necessary need" in your church or town that you could help meet this month?

Conclusion

1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are short letters, but together they give us a full picture of a healthy church. Paul showed us how God's household should live: praying for all people, holding to sound teaching, choosing leaders whose lives are above reproach, caring for widows and honoring faithful elders, and refusing the love of money. He showed Titus how to set young churches in order and how sound teaching shapes every age and every station in life. And in 2 Timothy he showed us how to stay faithful to the end, when friends leave, when people turn away from the truth, and when following Christ costs everything.

As I said at the start of this study, the guiding principle throughout has been to read God's Word plainly, as it is written, and let Scripture explain Scripture. When we do that with these letters, one thing stands out again and again. Right belief and right living belong together. The false teachers in Ephesus and on Crete had words without godliness. Paul calls us to the opposite: the truth of the gospel, held with a pure heart and lived out in good works. That is why he could write that "Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). God's Word is not only something to know. It is something to live.

I hope this study has done what I set out to do: bring you closer to God, help you grow in your walk with Him, and encourage you to serve in His church. Maybe you are not an elder or a deacon, and maybe you never will be. But every one of us can pray for others, guard the truth, pass it on to someone younger, and devote ourselves to good works. Paul finished his race well. By God's grace, so can we.

Paul's message is the same for us today as it was for Timothy and Titus. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). He saved us "not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy" (Titus 3:5). And one day He will appear for His people, and we will see Him. The only thing required of us to spend eternity with God is to receive His Son, Jesus, as our Lord and Savior.

If you haven't yet entered into a relationship with Jesus, or if you want to deepen the one you already have with Him, I invite you to pray this prayer with me:

Lord Jesus, You are the Savior of the world, and You forgive all who come to You. I come before You to confess that I have sinned against You. I have rebelled against You and put myself first above You and all others. I want to have a deep, meaningful relationship with You where I can show others by my demeanor and character that You are first in my life. I am asking for Your forgiveness for all my sins. You died for me on the cross so that I could be forgiven and made right with God. Please help me not forget that You gave Your very life for me. I am asking that You take control of my life and make a new creature out of me and into the person You want me to be. I thank You, Lord, and I love You. Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, tell another believer, ask a pastor about being baptized, and find a church where you can grow and serve as part of the household of God (1 Timothy 3:15).

Old and New Testament Links in Timothy and Titus

This table lists every Old and New Testament link printed in this study, in verse order. I took the links from the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, with help from the OpenBible.info cross-references, and I checked each one by reading both passages in the Steadfast Literal Bible. Where I was not sure of a link, I left it out.

Verse in this study	Old Testament passage	Kind
1 Timothy 1:9-10	Exodus 21:16	alluded to
1 Timothy 2:13	Genesis 2:7	alluded to
1 Timothy 2:14	Genesis 3:13	alluded to
1 Timothy 2:14	Genesis 3:6	alluded to
1 Timothy 2:15	Genesis 3:16	alluded to
1 Timothy 4:4	Genesis 1:31	alluded to
1 Timothy 5:18	Deuteronomy 25:4	quoted
1 Timothy 5:19	Deuteronomy 19:15	alluded to
1 Timothy 5:20	Deuteronomy 19:20	alluded to
1 Timothy 6:7	Job 1:21	alluded to
1 Timothy 6:7	Ecclesiastes 5:15	alluded to
1 Timothy 6:16	Exodus 33:20	alluded to
2 Timothy 2:19	Numbers 16:5	quoted
2 Timothy 3:8	Exodus 7:11	alluded to
2 Timothy 3:9	Exodus 9:11	alluded to
2 Timothy 3:9	Exodus 8:18	alluded to
2 Timothy 3:11	Psalm 34:19	alluded to
2 Timothy 4:14	2 Samuel 3:39	alluded to
2 Timothy 4:14	Psalm 62:12	alluded to
2 Timothy 4:17	Psalm 22:21	alluded to

Bibliography

The following sources were consulted for this study. The commentary reflects my own study and convictions, and any direct quotation from an outside source is identified and cited at the point where it appears.

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Treasury of Scripture Knowledge. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, about 1830. Public domain.

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