

Commentary on the Book of 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,

2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul identifies himself as an apostle (a sent one of God who had seen the risen Christ) of Christ because it was Christ Who ordained his coming to faith and Who commissioned him as a missionary to the Gentiles. Paul has no other hope than Christ, but Christ is a sufficient hope for all things, including life, godliness, and eternal life. He writes to Timothy who he describes as his true child in the faith, given that he has had great opportunity to disciple him and send him out to further the work which he himself had begun. He wishes him grace, mercy, and peace from the Lord as Timothy will need all three to continue to stand for sound doctrine and live a life of godliness.

3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,

4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

Paul wanted Timothy to continue ministering and shepherding the church at Ephesus, particularly for the purpose of instructing them in sound doctrine and correcting those who taught incorrect doctrine. Some were getting caught up with myths and endless genealogies rather than the truth of the Scriptures. Perhaps they were inventing things and coming up with fanciful, fictitious interpretations of elements of the Old Testament. Perhaps they were trying to discern some hidden mystery from the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul wanted Timothy to simply preach the Word and not get carried away with mere speculations which lead to division and strife rather than maturity and peace. The purpose of sound teaching is to further the rule and dominion of God Who defines and personifies the truth. As sound doctrine is received, understood, believed, and obeyed, God's kingdom moves forward. Getting caught up with and distracted by myths and theories about Biblical ideas does not advance the kingdom.

5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

The goal of the minister of God is to be involved in sound instruction according to the truth. The truth will work to enable people to love, to have a pure heart, and to have a sincere faith. The truth reveals our true motives and enables us to actually believe and obey the truth we claim to believe.

6 For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,

7wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

There were and are those who stray from the basics of sound doctrine, love, truth, purity, and sincerity, choosing rather to be involved in fruitless discussion. They might wax eloquent and present a lot of worldly wisdom, even attempting to draw from the principles of the Scriptures, but they will fail at advancing the kingdom because their doctrine is wrong. They don't understand what they are talking about because they don't understand the Bible. They speak confidently as if they know that they are right and as if they do understand the Bible, but they get off course and lead others astray. There is no true and lasting spiritual fruit from poor doctrine but only from the truth.

**8But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,
9realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers
10and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,
11according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.**

The Law was given to show man his sinfulness and his inability to keep the holy standards and commandments of God. It is a tutor which leads us to the grace of the gospel of Christ (Galatians 3:24). No one is saved by living the perfect life but by believing in Christ Who alone fulfilled the righteous requirements of the Law (Romans 8:1-4). The only lawful use of the Law is to use it to help increase the sensitivity of a person's heart to their own sin against a holy God. The Law was not made for the righteous who are saved by grace and therefore no longer under law but under grace (Romans 6:14). Rather, it was made to show those who are sinners the reality of their sin and to expose the reality of the futility of any self-righteous efforts. The Law shows us that none of us can possibly self-justify or rationalize our perfection, for we all have fallen short of God's glorious standards (Romans 3:23). Examples of sin include those who fail to keep the law, who rebel against God, who are ungodly, who are unholy, who are profane, who kill, who commit sexual immorality, who kidnap, who lie, and who do anything else contrary to the truth of the Scripture. Any who believe or teach a false gospel will be judged on the basis of their evil deeds, while those who place their trust in Christ to forgive them will be saved.

**12I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,
13even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;
14and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.**

Paul recognized that he had much to be thankful for, for Christ had strengthened him and enabled him to see the truth and to live faithfully in service to Christ. Formerly, he had been one who blasphemed against Christ, denying the true gospel and advancing false doctrine with great fervor. He imprisoned those who did believe in Christ and had many killed. God showed him mercy because he repented of his sin and believed in Christ after Christ came to him and revealed Himself to him. Paul realized that he had acted in ignorance, having been deceived into believing that justification was through keeping the Law. God's grace would not hold him accountable for all of the evil that he did before he came to know Christ. Such is the abundant love and mercy of our God when we put our faith in the true gospel and the true Savior.

15It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

16Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

Paul is adamant and certain that Christ came into the world to save sinners, and he viewed himself as the foremost of all, given all that he had done against Christ and the church. Yet God had a plan in all of this. If God could turn Paul's life around and show him mercy, surely He could change the heart of any sinner who would believe in His name. God was patient with Paul, not wanting him to perish despite all of his evil deeds. He wanted him redeemed, and Paul did eventually come to repent. His life serves as a great example of God's mercy and patience as He desires all to come to repentance (1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9, Ezekiel 18:32).

17Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul can't help but pause and praise God for His wonderful and gracious sovereign plan and that God would choose to save someone like him. He praises God for having no beginning and no end (Exodus 3:14), for being invisible (even though we can't see Him, He still is at work all around us), and for being the only God. God is indeed deserving of all honor and glory.

18This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, 19keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

20Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

Paul desires that Timothy fight the good fight, meaning that he remains faithful to Christ and to sound doctrine and that he stays pure in his own life and testimony. Evidently, there had been prophecies concerning Timothy regarding how he was to live and what he was to teach. He is to act according to God's revealed will to him according to those

prophecies. We, having the completed Word, no longer need prophecies, for the will of God for us is in the finished, written Scriptures. To reject a clear conscience is to indulge the flesh and risk being led away and enticed by evil desire after evil desire. This led Hymenaeus and Alexander to make shipwreck of their faith. These didn't lose their salvation, for Paul turned them over to Satan to teach them not to blaspheme. They were to live apart from the benefits of church family and sound teaching, having to rely only on the strength of their own flesh and having only the diminishing pleasures of sin, which leads to destruction. Paul desired that these would see the error of their ways and then repent (1 Corinthians 5:5). Their souls were still going to make it to heaven, but their testimony had been ruined and their fruitbearing compromised. Paul didn't want Timothy to make a similar mistake, and thus he reminds him to guard his conscience and walk in holiness. This is indeed a daily fight but a good fight. Sinners are not the enemies of the Christian, but our battle is against sin, the flesh, and the devil (Ephesians 6:12, Romans 13:14). We must fight for truth, for purity, and for preaching the gospel.

1 Timothy 2

**1First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,
2for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.**

Prayer from a righteous heart in belief and according to the will of God does accomplish much. Paul wants Timothy and the believers at Ephesus to pray for all people, particularly those who are in government and positions of authority. These may not believe in Christ, but they need Christ. Ultimately, God is sovereign over who is in authority and what they do and don't do (Proverbs 21:1), though He will hold them responsible. We should find some positive things to thank God for as we pray for people, and we should also petition God to work to change things and people. It just might be that God will answer our prayers for those in authority such that we can experience peace and quiet and be able to live our lives of godliness. Even if the environment around us remains hostile to Christ and us, we can have the peace of God and live in a godly way, thereby being tranquil of soul. If we carry all of the burdens of the world on our shoulders, we will get weighed down, but if we let Christ carry our burdens as we offer our petitions to Him with thanksgiving, we can have peace (1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6-7).

**3This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
4who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

It is right and good that we pray for all people, particularly that those who do not know Christ would come to know Him. God cares for all people, and He takes no delight in seeing any perish. He wants all to repent, and He is patient (Ezekiel 18:23, 18:32, 33:11). The free gift of salvation is extended to all people, if only they would receive it by faith.

**5For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,
6who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.**

Christ's death and resurrection was at the God-ordained time. He died as a ransom for all, paying the penalty of our sin to satisfy the wrath of God. Christ thereby became the mediator of a new covenant between man and God (Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, 12:24). Christ is the only way that man can approach God and find eternal life. Since He is the mediator, He is the only way (John 14:6).

**7For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
8Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.**

Paul was appointed by God to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher, particularly to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-16). His ministry was characterized by a message of salvation by faith alone and by defending the truth of the gospel against all errors and attacks. Because Paul wanted to see sinners come to Christ, he wanted the church to pray to God for sinners to be saved. But it was important that the church be able to pray to God from a clean heart. The normal prayer posture was to lift up hands toward heaven, and this symbolic gesture was meaningless and powerless unless the heart of the one praying was free from unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18). Men in particular tend to be more combative and prone to anger and arguing than women, though certainly we all are vulnerable to these vices. Paul seems to be emphasizing that he wants the men in particular to be praying rather than trying to advance the kingdom by willpower and cleverness alone. He wants them to embrace faith, purity, and humility, and He wants them to pray. Though this command is directed to the men, it certainly applies to women as well.

**9Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,
10but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.**

Having just addressed the men, Paul now turns to the women with a similar burden of holiness and godliness. He desires that the women dress modestly and not in a showy or revealing way as to draw attention to themselves in a way that would be self-glorying or which would tempt a man to lust. There is nothing inherently wrong with jewelry, doing fancy things with hair, or wearing fashionable clothes (c.f. Ezekiel 16:10-13). Paul's issue is when fashion and appearance becomes more of a focus and goal than godliness, particularly if how women dress is revealing and sensual. The true measure of a woman who claims to be godly is how they live and whether or not they do good and walk in holiness.

11A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.

12But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

Verses 11 and 12 help interpret one another. Paul is not saying that women cannot speak whatsoever in the gathering of believers. His point is that they are to remain quiet in a specific way, which is by not teaching or exercising authority over a man (c.f. 1 Corinthians 14:34 which is in the context of prophesying). This would involve ordering men around in the church, unduly taking charge of a church gathering where men are present, holding a position of authority over them, usurping God's design for men being the elders, or having the formal teaching and preaching role in the church. There are times when a woman can be asked to teach a group of men and women. In such cases, the elders are still in authority, and the woman hasn't usurped their God-given role. The issue that Paul is primarily concerned with is full and complete submission. He wants the men to serve in the way that God has designed them, and He wants women to honor that by being willing to subject themselves to this authority structure in the church. It is not that women must always be subject to all men, for they are only commanded to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:24) who are to love them as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). Women must, however, honor the God-given authority of the leadership of men in the church.

13For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.

14And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

Paul's reasoning for God's design to have men be in leadership in the church is based, first, on the order of creation and, second, on the order of the first sin. Adam was made first, and Eve was made from Adam and as a suitable helper (Genesis 2:18) for Adam. Thus, God's design for male headship and female submission within the marriage relationship was evident even from the beginning because of the order of creation. The inference that Paul is drawing is that it makes sense that men would also lead in the church just as they must lead in the home. As far as the order of sin, it was Eve who took of the fruit first and then gave to Adam. Eve ate in deception and Adam in rebellion. Adam, Eve's head, was supposed to be looking out for her, but he let her be led astray. Thus, Adam is ultimately accountable for bringing sin into the world, not Eve (1 Corinthians 15:22). Thus, even how the first sin took place points to male headship and God putting ultimate responsibility on the man for how a home is led and for how the church is led.

15But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Paul calls women to keep the characteristics he has been emphasizing thus far in this letter to Timothy: faith, love, purity, and keeping a clear conscience. If they do this, they will keep from being deceived and getting led astray. They are not to be like their predecessor, Eve, and get led away and enticed by lust into being deceived and sinning. They are to exercise self-restraint, maintain sound doctrine, and demonstrate love and

holiness. If they live as godly women, they can be those who fight the good fight of faith in the church, even though they are not in a position of authority. Women carry great influence in terms of how they affect their husbands and how they train their children. Their godly lifestyle can go a long way to impacting their husbands to obey (1 Peter 3:1-2) and passing on a legacy of godliness (1 Corinthians 7:14). As women raise up godly offspring, some of which will grow up to be future husbands and even leaders in the church, they will impact the course of the church in terms of its faithfulness and doctrinal purity. Rather than try to usurp authority in the church and get nowhere fast, women are better off trusting in God's design and letting faithfulness in these places move people to change. Men can make life much easier on the women if they take the time to listen to them, to answer questions (1 Corinthians 14:35), and to encourage them and honor them for their faithfulness in their God-given roles.

1 Timothy 3

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.

Paul has just made it clear that women are not to be aspiring to the office of overseer (i.e. pastor, elder, primary teacher and preacher). There will be times where they will oversee others, teach others, and shepherd others, but the office of shepherd is only for the men. If any man desires to serve as an overseer, this is good and fine before the Lord as long as he meets the qualifications that Paul is about to give. A person does not become an overseer because he is popular or because the congregation voted him in. He either is overseer material, or he is not. If he meets the criteria, if God has placed the desire in his heart, and if he is in a place where a body of believers needs an elder, he qualifies. If elders are already leading the church, they can identify such a one and appoint him to the office of elder. If there are no other elders, which can happen as a group gathers initially, the body must be able to recognize who meets the list and who doesn't, and they must accept the results.

2An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

3not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

The elder is one who is above reproach. There is nothing that a person could charge him with that would stand, for his testimony is outstanding. He does nothing that makes a person question his integrity, faith, sound doctrine, or godliness. He must be the husband of one wife, being literally a one-woman man. He thus should not be given to lust, he cannot be engaging in any sexual immorality, and he must be faithfully loving his wife. If he is single, he must be above reproach in the area of sexual purity. Temperate implies that the overseer is sober in spirit and vigilant, not losing focus or getting carried away in emotion or in the pull of a moment (c.f. 1 Peter 1:13, 4:7, 5:8). Prudent implies thinking rightly and soundly and exercising self-control. Respectable means that a person is deserving of being trusted to lead and shepherd because of model behavior and integrity.

Hospitable involves being willing to open one's home to take in guests. This creates a chance for more intimate fellowship and for others to learn how a person operates outside of normal church functioning. In addition to these requirements of character, there is one important skill that must be possessed. The overseer must be able to teach the Word of God. Both his life and his words must be able to communicate the enduring Word of God. He must not be addicted to wine, being controlled by it rather than God (Ephesians 5:18). He must not be pugnacious, seeking to quarrel and given to fighting, verbally or physically. Rather, he is a man who does everything he can to be at peace with all people (Romans 12:18). He is to be gentle (c.f. Philippians 4:5) and peaceable, not a brawler. He cannot be greedy, loving money and selfish gain. The glory of God motivates the elder, not wealth (Luke 16:13).

4He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

5(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

6and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

7And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

It is important that the overseer is able to care for, manage, and maintain an orderly home with submissive, obedient children. He does his part as a loving father to not provoke his children to anger, and he trains them in righteousness and in the ways and Word of God (Ephesians 6:4). He is not afraid to discipline them, and it is clear that he is the authority and that they are not (Proverbs 22:6). His expectations and standards for His children are that they obey (Ephesians 6:1) and walk in purity. This is the only dignified way, and it is befitting an elder to have a home managed in such a way. If he cannot even manage the few people of his own home, particular his children, how could he possibly manage a church with adults and children, far more than in his own home? That a person can shepherd his own home well is a great (and Biblical) litmus test for his ability to shepherd the church. An overseer cannot have recently come to Christ. He must have had some significant time to learn the Word of God and to learn how to walk by the Spirit. To promote a person to leadership before he has had a chance to become anchored in his faith is to open the door for him to become proud and arrogant. The word for "conceited" is *tuphoo*, meaning literally to "raise a smoke, to wrap in a mist." The idea is that the person gets clouded, deceived, and led astray into foolishness and stupidity because he has never been grounded in sound doctrine. This is particularly dangerous if others are then led astray by the doctrinal errors. Thus, it is absolutely important that a person has walked with God for quite some time before he is placed in a position of leadership over God's people, lest he, and potentially they as well, get led into deception. A new convert might be very worldly-wise, mature, eloquent, or intelligent, but God must prepare his heart, which takes time (Galatians 1:16-18) and a lot of study (Psalm 119:99, 2 Timothy 2:15). He must also be well-thought of in terms of character and integrity outside of the church. Even unbelievers must not be able to bring an accusation against the man aspiring to leadership in the church. If a man is allowed to serve in the office of elder

before growing to maturity in Christ, it will be easy for Satan to deceive him and lead him into blind arrogance, thereby having to be held responsible for leading many souls astray. If he becomes an elder while carrying a bad reputation in the community, it will be easy for Satan to ensnare him and defeat him and possibly the church's testimony and ministry as well through reproach and scandal. Character and integrity at home, in the community, and in the church are paramount. The ability to effectively care for the people of God and teach them the Word of God is a must.

This is the Biblical basis for who should and can be an elder.

8Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

9but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

10These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

A deacon is understood to mean one who serves on behalf of the elders. He is not merely a "go-fer" for the elders, but he does the work of the ministry. There will be opportunities for him to teach and shepherd, even if only on an individual basis. His job is to do the highly effective and important work of tending to those in the flock when and where the elders are not able to. The elders are responsible to be praying and studying the Word of God so that they can teach it rightly and soundly (Acts 6:4). They are also to lead and shepherd the flock, but there will be times when the deacons will need to be there to do what they cannot. Thus, the deacons play an extremely important role of doing the actual work of the ministry which might be, for example, visiting homes, tending to the sick, distributing funds to the needy, encouraging those who need help, and doing whatever else the elders might need done.

Deacons must first be tested, which means that they will have been involved in a fellowship for some time during which they will have demonstrated consistent integrity and a willing and available heart to serve. Then, if they are completely above reproach, the church will trust them, and they can effectively serve in the office of deacon.

Deacons, just as elders, must be venerated as men of dignity and character. They must be consistent and fully honest and forthright in their words, so that there is no deception, lying, or uncertainty about where they stand or what they believe. What they commit to they must do, and what they say they believe, they must live. They cannot say one thing to one person and then change their position when speaking to another. They must be speakers and believers of truth at all times and in all situations. They must not be given to drunkenness, and they must not love money or be driven by greed and materialism.

Such is blatant idolatry. They must cling to and hold fast to sound doctrine and the fundamental teachings of the faith, and they must be walking in purity without any secret or unconfessed sin. If they have secret doubts about the purity of the Word or Christ, these must be dealt with prior to becoming a deacon. If they need to purify their hearts, this too must be done prior to becoming a deacon. Conviction about Christ, His Word, and the gospel are essential to effective ministry and leadership in the church, and so is character and integrity by the standards of God's Word.

11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

Women, and particularly the wives of elders and deacons, must be equally respectable for their integrity and walk with Christ. They cannot be those who talk badly and with destructive intent about others. Rather, they must be those who use their speech to edify and speak wholesome things (Ephesians 4:29). They must be temperate, sober, of sound mind, and not mastered by things other than Christ. They must be faithful to Christ, to sound doctrine, and to their husbands if they are married.

12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Deacons, just as elders, must be committed to only one wife, unless, of course, they are single. They must be pure in the area of sexuality, and those who are married must honor and love their wives. Just as elders, they must manage their homes and children well such that there is reason to believe that they can care for and shepherd those in the church. Those who serve as deacons (as well as those who serve as elders- 1 Timothy 5:17) will be honored in eternity with a high standing and great confidence at the coming of Christ. This is confidence not merely because of a position held but because of what it takes to meet the qualifications of such a position. All believers should seek to have the integrity and servant's heart that deacons and elders must possess, so that we all can have confidence at Christ's coming (1 John 2:28). As deacons see God use them and minister through them, their faith will increase, and their joy and confidence in kingdom truths and priorities will grow stronger.

14 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;

15 but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

Paul hopes to come and visit Timothy in person, but in case he is delayed, there is truth that he wants to convey to Timothy before too much time passes. Thus he writes to him about how a person is to conduct himself in the church, which he has already done to a great extent in explaining how elders, deacons, men, and women should behave. The true church is the household of God Himself, for He dwells in us (1 Corinthians 6:19). The living God is alive in the hearts of those who have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). The church is not a building but the people of God, and it is the people of God as they come together in worship that constitutes a church (Hebrews 10:25). Since God is the truth (John 14:6) and since His ways and kingdom are advanced in and through the church (Matthew 16:18), it is the purity and growth of the church through the regenerating power of Christ that alone can advance the truth of Christ. Belief and submission to Christ is what upholds the truth, and there is no truth outside of Christ. The church is the support of the truth, propping it up so that the world can see it.

This is why Satan attacks the church, for he desires to cast truth to the ground (Daniel 8:12, John 8:44). If he can cast the church to the ground by leading it astray or by the church poorly conducting itself, then truth also tumbles. Fortunately, Christ never tumbles because He reigns, and He will continue to build the true church (Matthew 16:18).

16By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:

**He who was revealed in the flesh,
Was vindicated in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Proclaimed among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory.**

This is likely part of an early church hymn or confession. What the true church of Christ believes is the truth which it upholds which includes the following ideas: 1) Christ was made manifest and plainly recognized as having come to earth in the form of a man, though still being God (Philippians 2:5-11), 2) Christ was pronounced just and holy in the Spirit, having been raised from the dead (Romans 1:4), 3) the risen Christ was seen by angels at His resurrection (Matthew 28:2) and ascension into heaven (Acts 1:9-11), 4) Christ's death was a public display of His love for the world (Romans 3:25, Colossians 2:15), to which He commissioned the church to be a testimony (Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:19-20), 5) Christ was believed on by those who received Him (John 1:12-13, 3:16), and 6) Jesus was taken up into glory to be at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 3:1). These truths constitute the foundational truths about the gospel and the groundwork of the church. It is a revelation of the mystery of godliness, for the truths about the predicted Messiah from the Old Testament had come to be, and the transforming power of the gospel of Christ is now at work to make men godly.

1 Timothy 4

**1But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith,
paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,
2by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a
branding iron,
3men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has
created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.**

There were false doctrines challenging the church in Timothy's day, and as time has gone on, more and more deceptions have arisen (2 Timothy 3:13). There is no doubt from the Spirit-breathed Scripture that this will continue to happen. Many, including professing believers, will be led away from sound doctrine and truth, choosing rather to believe in the doctrines of demons and deceitful spirits. Anything that is not of Christ is based in a lie, which is from the father of lies, the devil (John 8:44). Thus, any doctrine or theology that is not true to the Bible or to Christ is of the devil. Sadly, some believers are captivated by these lies and are led astray into unfruitfulness, becoming useless for the

kingdom. Yet the Spirit can and will reveal truth to them if they will seek Him with all of their hearts (Jeremiah 29:13). They are captive only by the delusion in their mind (2 Corinthians 10:5). Then there are many who profess Christ who never knew Him (Matthew 7:23). All those who do not follow Christ are following the devil, and those who do not know Christ will receive the same condemnation as the devil in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). Even as Paul wrote this to Timothy, it was likely that some teachings of asceticism, which emphasized the spiritual and thought of the physical as sinful, were influencing the church at Ephesus where Timothy was. To forbid marriage or to restrain from certain foods (more likely an influence of Judaism), were not Biblical. These sorts of man-made, extra-Biblical, legalistic, merit-driven systems of human performance are indicative of all world religions besides true Christianity. God says that marriage is good and that all that God has created is good (1 Timothy 4:4). Those who believe and know the truth should be able to joyously marry and eat what God made. Those who lead astray and propagate the doctrines of demons, living out a life and ministry of false teaching, are hypocrites and liars to the core, having their consciences defiled and desensitized and having been branded by the devil and his ways (c.f. Ephesians 4:17-19). Unbelievers who follow in their teaching are likewise defiled and similarly branded (Titus 1:15).

4For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;

5for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

God created food and marriage and the other physical aspects of the world. If God doesn't condemn it, then we need to not condemn it either or restrain from it. Rather, we should receive God's good provision in finding a mate and in giving us food to eat with thanksgiving. Even if a piece of food had been sacrificed to idols, it could be sanctified by believing God's Word that it is good and by praying and asking God to restrain any evil influences (c.f. 1 Corinthians 8:4).

6In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

7But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;

8for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

9It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.

10For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

11Prescribe and teach these things.

Paul wants Timothy to emphasize and teach sound doctrine and to point out the errors of theology which pose a danger to the church. Persevering in sound doctrine and defending it against error will demonstrate that Timothy is indeed a good servant of God and one who is conforming his mind to learn and commit to sound doctrine and the word

of Christ (Romans 10:17). As believers learn, believe, study, and obey God's Word, they are more ready, able, and equipped to know and defend the truth against error. Timothy is to have nothing to do with the abundant variety of false teaching that tends to infiltrate the church. This false and worldly wisdom is nothing but old wives' tales, myths, and fables. They purport to be true and even might seem to be indicative of godliness, but they are not. Only that which aligns with God's Word can be considered godly. Disciplining the body against certain behaviors, foods, desires, and so on can be beneficial, but only to a limited point, for such willpower is not beneficial if the discipline is for purposes not intended in God's Word. There is a place for self-control, but it must be spiritual in nature rather than of the flesh. There is no godliness in beating the body or in setting up legalistic laws as a means of sanctification. Sanctification is by faith, and self-control is a fruit of yielding to the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Godliness, on the other hand, is not about selfish gain or becoming righteous on our own merit (1 Timothy 6:5, Ephesians 2:8-9). Godliness is yielding to the commands of God in the Bible by the Spirit's filling and empowering. Godliness that is of the heart and not mere external ritual and exercise is profitable and beneficial to the utmost, for it is the best way to live in this life and it holds great rewards for the life to come. True godliness with contentment is great gain, and this is a very important reality that believers must understand and to which they must commit (1 Timothy 6:6). Those who are in a position of authority and instruction must strive and labor to get the truths about true godliness across to all men. Salvation through faith in Christ is what makes a person godly, and their sanctification in this life by the work of the indwelling Spirit is to daily be the goal of the believer. Believers must fix their hope on God (Hebrews 12:2) and eternity (1 Peter 1:13) with Him each day so that they will desire and live for godliness. God is man's only hope of salvation because man cannot get himself out of his sinful state. Fortunately, God in great love sent His only begotten Son to die for the sins of the world. He has thus made Himself the Savior of all men, should they receive Him. Only those who respond in faith to the free gift available only in Christ will be saved. Paul again exhorts Timothy to instruct and exhort others to pursue godliness, sound doctrine, and faith in Christ. The ascetics could discipline their bodies all they wanted, but it was an internal regeneration and heart change that they needed by faith in Christ. This alone leads to salvation, true godliness, and the ability to by faith actually walk in uprightness and integrity.

12Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

Timothy was younger than many of those whom he was given charge over. Thus, some might have been prone to refuse to listen to his admonitions and instruction because of his age. Paul's admonition to him is not to flaunt his position or pull rank but to show himself an example in all that he says and does so that he demonstrates to all that he knows the Word and obeys it. God will look after Timothy's ministry, and Timothy needs to take care of his heart and mind. He needs to walk after Christ in his speech, behavior, love, faith, and purity. As his life is holy and indicative of God at work in and through Him, those who respect God will respect him as their shepherd.

13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

God's Word has power in and of itself to judge our thoughts and motives (Hebrews 4:12), to generate faith (Romans 1:16, 10:17), and to edify and equip the believer for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16). Therefore, it is important that we as believers hear the Word of God read publicly as we assemble ourselves together. Those who are in a position of authority in the church as Timothy was must devote themselves to and give themselves to the reading of the Word. The command to "give attention" could literally mean "be addicted to." The idea is that the Word of God is so important and powerful that we need to hear it. If we hear it regularly, we will be more likely to respect its authority, we will grow in grace and knowledge of Christ, and we will learn to love it. Timothy is also to teach and preach the Word of God, exhorting, admonishing, persuading, and instructing the church according to sound doctrine and in the ways of godliness.

14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

Before the Bible was completed, God revealed truth through prophetic utterances as a regular, normal pattern of learning His ways while the saints were assembled together (1 Corinthians 14:1, 29-40). Evidently, some of the elders recognized Timothy's qualifications for being an elder, and they appointed him to be an elder as they laid their hands on him. This symbolic gesture demonstrated their confidence and trust in him as a shepherd as they dedicated his ministry to the Lord. We don't need other believers to bestow gifts upon us, but it is important that those who are elders recognize future elders (Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23). Timothy was gifted to teach the Word of God to the church, and he needed to labor over the Word of God and be intentional about teaching sound doctrine and having the Word of God publicly read. His own study should lead to his own growth which would be noticeable by all, leading to further respect of his calling as elder. Timothy must pay close attention to accurately teaching the Bible and not carelessly saying something that was not true. He must devote himself to accurately presenting the truth, and he must persevere in this task. If he does so, then he will be sure that all hear and understand the gospel and can either be sure of their salvation (1 John 5:13) or have reason to doubt at which point they can repent and be saved (2 Corinthians 13:5). If a clear gospel is not preached, then those who are not saved might remain in darkness and those who are in the light might wander or begin to doubt their own salvation.

1 Timothy 5

**1Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers,
2the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.**

Timothy, a young man, would inevitably have to confront men who were older than he was as well as older women and younger women. Paul's instruction was that he approach the older men as fathers, giving them proper respect and taking a tone of grace, gentleness, and reverence. He still must say the truth, but his manner must convey that he respects their age. This will make the older men far more likely to listen to him and respond graciously to him. He is to treat the younger men as brothers, not approaching them as if he is on a power trip, flaunting his position of authority. He is to approach them as brothers in Christ, giving them respect as equals and the type of kindness that would be due a family member. The older women are to be treated as mothers, given the proper respect and tenderness. He is to treat the younger women as sisters in all purity, not putting himself in a vulnerable position while doing ministry.

**3Honor widows who are widows indeed;
4but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.**

The church which Timothy oversees is to honor widows who fall within certain categories, which Paul is going to describe. If a widow has children or grandchildren, these are to be responsible for caring for the widows, making a return of love to them given that they had raised them and cared for them as they grew up. The family is not to pass on responsibility for caring for a widow as if they can turn her over to the church as a sort of welfare system. Honoring parents and family involves caring for widows as family, and this is honoring to God. The church is not to enable family betraying family.

**5Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.
6But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.
7Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach.
8But 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.**

The widows who have no family to care for them should keep their hope fixed on God and spending time in prayer day and night. Like the single person, the widow has extra time to serve the Lord. She is not to give herself to empty pleasure, for this is to be dead while she lives, bearing no fruit and accomplishing nothing of value for the kingdom. The widow is not to check out on life, but she is to view this time of life as an opportunity for service and to find love and family in the people of God. She must keep her focus on God and others, rather than self and her situation. And, as Paul will explain, the church will take care of her needs. Timothy is to teach and exhort widows to view this time of life as ministry rather than as boredom and time for fleshly, wasteful

pleasure. In a society where the women had few rights as compared to the men, it was imperative that the men see to it that the needs of their families were met, particularly in the event of their own death. To not look forward to the future and do what they could to see that their surviving family members would be alright was utterly irresponsible and so bad and reprehensible that it was as if they were pagans and not even saved. Since even the unsaved would be likely to take measures to look after their own households, the Christian certainly must keep these expectations. Again, Paul's teaching is that the family is responsible for taking care of widows, and only if they fail or are somehow unable, can a widow be considered for the widow's list.

9A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man,

10having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.

In order to be on the list, a widow must be at least sixty years old. She must have been the wife of only one man, and she must have been known among the church as one who did good to others. She must have raised children if at all possible, she must have been a hospital person even to strangers, she must have been willing to be a servant (feet-washing was normal practice given that walking was standard transportation and sandals standard footwear, but it was a humble task nonetheless), she must have helped those in need as she was able, and she must have been active in good works and service in her fellowship and community. The bottom line is that the church doesn't need widows being supported from the money given to God if it is not going to help women whose lives have been characterized by the work of God and which will presumably continue to be such.

11But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married,

12thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge.

13At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.

14Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach;

15for some have already turned aside to follow Satan.

Younger widows (those under sixty) were not supposed to be on the list. If they were to join the list, they would, in effect, be making a pledge to be servants of God to the church and community. They were not to be lazy and go around as gossips, now that their needs were taken care of. But if for some reason they were on the list and then decided to get married, they would have broken this understanding that they were serving the church on support from the church. Typically, these younger women who still have a lot of life and energy in them and who feel strong sensual desires and long to get married, too often end up just being busybodies (meddlers) and gossips, rather than doing the ministry which

they were supposed to be doing. Thus, Paul sets the age limit at sixty. It is not as if he is abandoning them to the street. If getting work was possible, they could do some work to avoid the idleness, but Paul's desire was that they get married. Their husbands would be the primary breadwinners so that they could bear children and maintain a home. Children and keeping house will keep anybody busy and less likely to be lazy and fall into sin. Thus, the best thing for a younger woman was to get married again and bring up children, thereby giving Satan no free and easy opportunity to lead these young women astray. As it was, some were getting a free ride from the church, and they had already turned aside to follow the devil, being lazy, gossiping, and speaking of evil things. Thus, it was important that Timothy refuse to put them on the list and encourage them to work (if such was possible) or get married (the better option in Paul's estimation- 1 Corinthians 7:9).

16If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

Some women (perhaps widowed, perhaps not) would have been in a position of wealth, and they could have supported some of the widows so that the church would not have to be burdened. If somebody with means could support some of the widows, this would save the church resources that could be used elsewhere, particularly for those who were widowed who had none to take them on as dependents.

17The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

18For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

Elders who lead and shepherd the church well should be given great respect from the fellowship, and they need to be paid in proportion to their service. They should certainly get paid more than those who only help with the church part-time. Those who do the study and labor for the preaching and teaching responsibilities should be particularly honored because of the importance of the task of exhorting and teaching sound doctrine. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 25:4 to emphasize that those who do the work of the ministry should be compensated for it so that they are not trying to work a full job and minister full time. They should not have to be muzzled by the worries and strenuous efforts required to pay the bills. Rather, they should be able to put all of their energy into preaching, teaching, and shepherding. They should be confident that they will be able to get paid such that they can take care of their families and not be "worse than an unbeliever" (5:8). Paul also quotes Luke 10:7 to explain that those who labor in the Lord's work should get paid for it. This is interesting because it affirms that even as the New Testament was being completed, the writings that were in hand were considered inspired and the very Word of God.

19Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

20Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.

21I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.

Timothy as an elder was not to take action regarding an accusation brought against a serving elder unless that person could bring another witness or two. Then the matter should be investigated. If the person is indeed found to be in sin, then Timothy must confront him of his sin. If he still does not repent, then he must be cut off from fellowship, being rebuked publicly in front of the entire assembly (Matthew 18:15-17). The purpose for this is so that all will take sin seriously and be afraid of the consequences of sinning. This also is what the sinning brother needs so that his flesh can be destroyed all the while preserving his soul (1 Corinthians 5:5). Paul adamantly exhorts Timothy to be impartial in his decision making when it comes to church discipline. He needs to be sure of the facts, and he must not let his feelings or bias get in the way. It would be tragic to let a person get away with sin and to overlook it, and it would be likewise tragic to rebuke a person who was truly innocent.

22Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

This process of church discipline, particularly in the case of elders, must be done thoroughly, without partiality, and with patience. There is no need to move too hastily when something so serious is on the line. An entire fellowship and even community can reel to see a pastor or elder accused of sin. Things must be done rightly, gently, and with the goal of pursuing the truth and the restoration of the sinning brother, if he has indeed sinned. If Timothy was to rebuke a brother too hastily and be wrong in the process, he would be guilty of wrong judgment and false witness. For Timothy's reputation and testimony, it is essential that he stay free from sinning, this included.

23No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

Timothy apparently had some stomach problems and other ailments, perhaps related. Though it is wise for those in leadership not to drink lest a weaker brother could be stumbled (Romans 14:21, 1 Corinthians 8:13), this was a case of medical necessity. It was more important for Timothy to take some wine for the sake of his health and ministry than to concern himself about stumbling a weaker brother. Others could come to understand his medical needs and therefore why he chose to drink wine. He was not to use the wine to escape reality and get drunk, but he was to use it as a clean alternative to the less sterile water.

24The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after.

Paul makes the point to Timothy that he needs to be wise, patient, and discerning, seeking the Lord for wisdom. There will be instances where sin is obvious and plain for all to

see. It is not difficult to know how to proceed in such a case. What is more difficult to deal with are situations where sin is secret and a person is slow to confess. For some people, they are able to conceal a sin until the judgment. But whether sin is obvious before judgment or only upon judgment, there will be a reckoning for our deeds, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). We as believers won't face God's wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9), but we may lose rewards (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Unbelievers, on the other hand, store up increasing wrath and judgment as their lives go on (Revelation 21:8).

25 Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

Good deeds are more obvious and evident because they are generally done publicly toward others. Yet there are times when good is done secretly such that only God hears and knows, and there are times and places for this (Matthew 6:1-6). At all times and in all things, we are not to do good to appear self-righteous before men but to honor God. These secret good works will be revealed when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and there we will be recompensed.

1 Timothy 6

1 All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against.

2 Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.

In the case of a master-slave (i.e. household servant, attendant) relationship, a slave was to give his master all honor. They were to be subject, well-pleasing, and not argumentative (Titus 2:9). This subjection was for the purpose of keeping the name of God honored and for preserving sound doctrine. There would be no way to share the gospel as a slave if he had ruined his testimony by being unruly and disrespectful. A master might not have been the greatest, but as long as he wasn't abusive, a slave needed to give him honor. In some cases, the master was a believer, and he should have shown his slave great kindness and fairness (Colossians 4:1, Ephesians 6:9). A believing slave certainly needed to be respectful to a believing master, and he was to serve him even more readily and faithfully because he was a brother in Christ. Timothy was to teach and preach these principles so that proper behavior would be lived out such that God's name would be honored and a pure testimony would be maintained.

**3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,
4 he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,**

5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

Paul has continually reminded Timothy to preach the truth and stand for sound doctrine and godliness. He will inevitably run into those who hold to erroneous doctrine, doctrines which differ from the pure gospel of Jesus Christ and from the Word of God. These false teachers will be identifiable by the fruit which their lives produce (Matthew 7:17, 12:33). Their lives won't be indicative of godliness because their theology will lead them into wrong thinking and behavior. They won't agree with sound thinking and reasoning or the Word of God, but they will be conceited. Their own arrogance will darken their minds such that they go deeper into deception. They will think they possess great wisdom, but they truly understand nothing. They will have a sickly mind when it comes to learning, teaching, and communicating because they will be drawn almost compulsively to meaningless debate, controversy, and questioning. Rather than seeking to know the truth, walking in humility and contrition, and trembling before the Word of God, they will enjoy raising silly, pointless questions for the sake of creating doubt and sounding intelligent, as if they are above the Word or have superior insight than the rest. They will enjoy debating and arguing about matters of no real importance just for the sake of creating all kinds of evil and division including envy, abusive language, and evil suspicions. Their fruit is to self-promote, thereby angering others and provoking them to react harshly. Believers shouldn't react in anger, but they should confront the sin in a Biblical manner (Matthew 18:15-17). The church as a whole needs to work to identify this wickedness and false teaching, and the ungodly need to be identified as such. The ungodly will create friction and frustration between themselves and others who are ungodly, depraved in their minds, and devoid of the truth of Christ and sound doctrine. All of these fall for the lie that godliness (not true godliness but a mere appearance and form of godliness in which they deny the true power of Christ- 2 Timothy 3:5) is something that can be used for selfish gain. They are interested in what ministry and religion can do for them as far as influence, pride, recognition, self-advancement, and money. They are using God to create worshippers of themselves, and in the end, they will be judged. (c.f. 1 Timothy 4:1-3)

6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

True spiritual godliness which is formed by Christ in us and out of love for Christ is a great gain when accompanied by contentment. Christ is the acquisition of greatest value, and to rest in Him is perfect joy and rest (Isaiah 26:3). The ungodly seek what they cannot have because they refuse to worship Christ. True worshippers of Christ who rest in what He has given can have the fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11) and experience the true abundant life (John 10:10). We didn't bring anything into the world, and we can't take anything with us that the ungodly would like to take. Our rewards are eternal and not of this world. These will endure along with Christ and His Word, but the things of this world will fade away (1 John 2:17). Thus, we as believers ought to be content with the

basics of life such as food and clothing. God knows our needs, and He will supply them as He knows best (Philippians 4:19).

9But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

10For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

A temptation that too many fall for is the desire and longing to become rich. In life, some are rich and some are poor, and both need to be content with their lot. It is easy for those who want to get rich to make money their god, and then they will be prone to disobey God in order to get money. The love of money is a snare and a trap, for it leads to destruction and ruin, perhaps materially and certainly from a spiritual perspective. Money itself is not evil, but it is when contentment and godliness are abandoned in exchange for servitude to money that money can become a problem. This lust for riches has been a trap of the devil to lead Christians and merely professing Christians astray into sin and deception. Both will experience many sorrows and griefs, for the road that they have taken will not satisfy. The true Christians will lose confidence in his faith, and he will have to deal with a state of double-mindedness and the internal agony that accompanies it (Psalm 32:3-4). He will have to grieve all the time and energy that he has wasted, and he will be accountable for his lack of faithfulness.

11But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

12Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Timothy, on the other hand, is to flee from the love of money and any other form of corruption and ungodliness. He is to pursue righteousness, godliness, steadfast faith in sound doctrine, love, enduring obedience, and gentleness. His life is not to lead to angry outbursts and attacks, but it is to lead to peace and restoration. It is not to lead to corruption and error, but it is to lead to freedom, life, and truth. This will be a battle, and Timothy must fight for faith, truth, and love. He must remember that he is destined for eternal life because of his confession of faith in Christ, and he must hold that closely, calling it to mind so that he does not become callous, careless, or corrupt. This confession was something others could remember because it was done publicly. Thus, he bears the responsibility of a public testimony and witness, and his present position as elder in Ephesus only furthers that responsibility. Temptation will surely come, and he must be willing to fight and resist. Trials will come, and he must be willing to persevere and keep the faith. Attacks from false teachers will arise, and he must be willing to fight in gentleness and in declaring the truth. Faith must be contended for, truth must be upheld, and personal integrity must be guarded. The Christian life is not easy, and personal holiness requires a fight.

13I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

14that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul's command to Timothy in the presence of God and Christ is to walk in holiness and godliness, not giving into sin or deception. He is to keep the commands of God to the utmost with the goal of complete sanctification, which ultimately God will complete. Timothy's part, like ours, was to walk in faith and believe that God was able and willing to provide escape routes from all temptations which would come his way (1 Corinthians 10:13). Paul's admonition is similar to Peter's in 1 Peter 4:1-2 when he says, "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God." The Scriptural standard and goal is to live as Christ in this life. We won't do it perfectly, but we should be getting increasingly close. Never is there an excuse to lack faith or give into sin. We must always believe that God has given us all that we need in Christ to walk faithfully and in obedience (2 Peter 1:3). That Christians, and especially elders, keep a pure testimony is essential to honor Christ and maintain a credible witness. Christ remained faithful even before Pilate and while on the cross, and out of gratitude for His dying in our place, we should honor Him (1 Corinthians 6:20). He was and is God, and we must honor Him as God even when we are under fire from the devil (Ephesians 6:16).

15which He will bring about at the proper time--He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

16who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

Christ will return for His church and appear in the sky such that all can see (Matthew 24:27). This time will be the right time which God has ordained, and only God the Father knows when it is (Matthew 24:36). Jesus Christ is blessed, the Lord of all, the King of all, and the Sovereign One. He is deserving of all praise and glory, and all will bow before Him (Philippians 2:9-11). He alone is from everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 90:2). Believers will live with Christ forever, but we had a beginning. Christ never had a beginning, for He was, and is, and is to come (Revelation 1:8). He has always been and always will be. His dwelling place is full of light because He is Light, and the light is indicative of His glory, majesty, perfect knowledge, purity, and power (2 Corinthians 4:6). He will be the light in lieu of the sun in eternity (Revelation 21:23). Only those pure in heart who have been washed in the blood of Christ will be able to approach Christ and enjoy His presence forever. One day we will see Christ face to face (1 Corinthians 13:12), but, in the meantime, we must accept the fact that we cannot see the "face" of God the Father, Who is Spirit (John 4:24), and live. Moses, the most humble man on the earth (Numbers 12:3), could talk "face to face" with God, but he could not literally and actually see the face of God, lest he would die (Exodus 33:20). No mortal man can behold God's full glory in seeing His face and live. The glory would be too much for us to handle, being still in a sinful, corrupt body. Thus, the light that signifies the very presence of God the Father in all His glory and splendor is unapproachable by man, but we can take heart that we will see Christ's face, in whom the fullness of deity dwells

(Colossians 2:9). Those who have seen Jesus have seen the Father (John 14:9), so at least in that sense, we will see the Father as well when we go to be with Christ in heaven. As Paul speaks of Christ's power, glory, and wonder, he bursts into praise, ascribing honor and glory to Christ and speaking of how he desires His eternal rule. The world doesn't want to submit to Christ's dominion, but Christians want it to come quickly (Revelation 22:20). Amen can mean "So be it," "May it be done," "Truly," or "Sure." Paul is putting His full delight and confidence that what He is saying, believing, and living is absolutely true, firm, and sure.

17Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

18Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

19storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

There are those who are rich, and those who are poor. In an unjust world and in a world of varying opportunities, some will have and some will have not. Those who have much must not become arrogant as if they deserve to be wealthy in this life, but they must thank God as the Giver of all things. They must recognize that He owns all things (Psalm 50:10). They must not put their hope or confidence in their money but in God alone. God can give and take away at His prerogative (Job 1:21), and so we must continually acknowledge Him as God and sovereign over all that we have, whether much or little. If we have anything that we can enjoy in godliness, it is from the hand of God, Who gives every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). The rich shouldn't feel guilty for being rich, but they should thank God and recognize that there are those in need materially and financially. They can enjoy what they have as long as they honor Christ, but they must be generous and eager to share with others. It needs to be on their minds that they have means and others don't. Therefore, they have a duty and responsibility before God to wisely and cheerfully use what they have to meet the needs of others, especially those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10, Acts 2:44, 4:32). Wealth is not to be hoarded but shared. In light of eternity and eternal rewards, those who are rich need to be rich in good works such that they store up treasure that lasts. Their financial riches won't enter the next life, but their faithful stewardship will hold value in the next life. Timothy is to instruct those in his fellowship who are rich to be sure to be generous and not arrogant, for such is certainly a temptation. They must reject these fleshly attitudes and find the abundant life in obedience to Christ and in sharing with those in need.

20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"--

21which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith Grace be with you.

Paul closes his first letter to Timothy with a plea from the heart, which effectively summarizes his entire letter. He exhorts Timothy to guard, watch over, and care for those

in his church, the gifts given to him by the Spirit of God, the position entrusted to him, and the truth and body of sound doctrine of Christ. He must stand for truth and sound theology, instructing those who veer off course and encouraging all in the way they should go. He is to fight the good fight of faith as he stands for truth and godliness, not wasting his time or getting sidetracked with those who simply like to argue and talk about meaningless things. Some go through life without truly seeking truth or wanting to change, and Timothy must not get caught up pouring his life into those who want to steal his time and energy from the sheep which really need his shepherding care. There are teachings propagated that many take as true and Biblical, but they are not. There are lies that people think are knowledge, but they are devoid of spiritual wisdom and the knowledge of Christ because they run counter to the Bible. It is not that Timothy is not to present the truth, for he is to reason and instruct in sound doctrine. But Paul doesn't want him to get led astray into believing the lies that are circulating through the community and even in the professing church. He must guard and stand firm on the truth of the Bible. To adhere to a false body of knowledge and give into doctrinal error is to veer from the truth about Christ and the gospel. Deception is capable of leading believers into sin and keeping unbelievers in darkness. Timothy must maintain godliness and truth. If he can fight for truth, then he can protect the church in Ephesus from ravenous wolves (Matthew 7:15). Such would be fulfilling his calling as a shepherd. Paul wishes him grace to do these things.

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