

Paul's First Letter to Timothy

HOW ONE OUGHT TO CONDUCT HIMSELF IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD!

1 Tim. 1:1-2 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.

The year is A.D. 64 or 65 and Paul has completed his first imprisonment in Rome. It has been a dozen years since he wrote his first letters to the Thessalonians. Paul had revisited many of the churches in Asia and Macedonia after his imprisonment. Upon his return to Ephesus with Timothy the two found widespread heresy in the teaching. By this time there had already been many strong warnings to the church about entertaining false teachers. Timothy was left in Ephesus to deal with the false teachings and teachers. Paul went on to Macedonia. There in Macedonia Paul penned this first letter to Timothy, recording for all time, and for all the church, instructions as to how to deal with some of the most difficult decisions in the church, mainly the selection of its leaders. Soon Paul will be arrested and sent to his second imprisonment in the Roman jail.

1 Tim. 1:3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order 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. **5**But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. **6**For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, **7**wanting 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.

We are not sure what the heresy in the Ephesian church may have been but it could be the same problem that was found in the Colossae church.

Col. 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Col. 2:18-19 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, **19**and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

Much like the false emerging theology of the young generation today, the Ephesians' church was embracing endless and irrelevant questions and controversies staying far from the truth. All sorts of concoctions were made up to aid in salvation and some of the false teachers were constructing mythical stories based on the Old Testament genealogies. What was the purpose of this? It was for the good of the false teachers and not Christ.

The young generations of this age are also entering into worthless and irrelevant discussions which crowd out message of the Lord. Religious speculation and pointless theological arguments must be avoided at all costs. They sidetrack the main message of Christ.

How can you recognize a false teaching?

- 1) Does the teacher demand allegiance?
- 2) Does their teaching promote controversies instead of helping people come to Jesus?
- 3) Does the teacher want to make a name for himself?
- 4) Are their teachings contrary to the true teaching of the Scriptures?

If you will learn what the Bible truly teaches and remain in your faith of Christ alone, you will quickly be aware of false teachers.

1 Tim. 1:8 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, **9** realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, 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 **10** and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurors, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, **11** according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

One might ask of this passage, "What Law is Paul speaking of?" The answer is very simple; it is the Old Testament Law. The Laws of the Old Testament were made so that unrighteousness could easily be recognized. The Old Testament is written to proclaim the characteristics of the ungodly. Here Paul lists a few of the characteristics of the ungodly and lawless. It does not matter what the laws of man state, the fact is the Bible records the Laws of God. Within the Church believers are not to exhibit these characteristics. Let's give a definition to each.

1. Lawless – *ignoring the law, lawless*
2. Rebellious – *insubordinate, disobedient, that is not put under, unruly.*
3. Ungodly – *irreverent, impious*
4. Sinners – *sinful*
5. Unholy – *wicked*
6. Profane – *heathenish*
7. Those who kill their fathers or mothers – *take the life*
8. Murderers – *manslayer*
9. Immoral men – *fornicator, whoremonger*
10. Homosexuals – *a sodomite, man in sexual relations with a man or a woman with a woman*
11. Kidnappers - *an enslaver or men-stealer*
12. Liars – *falsifier*
13. Perjurors – *a forswearer*
14. Whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted!

1 Tim. 1:12I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; **13**even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; **14**and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus.

Paul was once one of the false teachers who was steeped in the rules and regulations of the Temple and the Sanhedrin. It was through the grace of the Christ Jesus that Paul was put into the service of the Lord through the Lord's mercy. As sinful as Paul was, the grace of the Lord was abundant enough to cover all his sins.

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*. **16**And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order 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. **17**Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul makes five trustworthy statements in his letters. Four of them are in the letters to Timothy and one is in his letter to Titus. This is the first of Paul's trustworthy statements. It is a statement that deserves our full faith and acceptance. The essence of this statement is that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Paul was a detestable sinner and he was saved by the Lord for the purpose of showing just how patient the Lord is with all sinners.

1 Tim. 1:18This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, **19**keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. **20**Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

The command that Paul is going to entrust to Timothy will be stated in Chapter 2 verses 1 – 3. In the verses above Paul is explaining the reason he is giving the command to Timothy first and then he will state the command. What is the reason? Paul is entrusting the command so Timothy will "fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience." According to verses 19-20, there were some who had not kept the faith and fought the good fight with a good conscience. Paul mentions two that have failed by name. They are Hymenaeus and Alexander. We know very little about either of these men. Both will be mentioned again in Paul's second letter to Timothy. Hymenaeus is the heretic who will reappear in 2 Tim. 2:17. Alexander reappears in 2 Tim. 4:14, but he is not the Jew of the same name in Acts 19:33, unless he has become a Christian since then. These two are the chief "wreckers" of the faith in Ephesus and must be dealt with sternly. They are delivered to Satan. This was a severe discipline delivered by the apostle which was apparently more than just exclusion from the church congregation. However, the actual means of delivering to Satan is very obscure. In delivering them to Satan, they were to be taught not to blaspheme. Blaspheme was speaking ill of God. This was the lesson they needed to learn. Paul wanted Timothy or any other teacher of the gospel not to follow in the same footsteps of these two men.

The letter to Timothy would be preserved and handed down to all teachers of the gospel for all time, recording Paul's instructions.

2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, **2** for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. **3** This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **4** who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **5** For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *borne* at the proper time. **7** And for 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.

Here is the command, “I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, **2** for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” All men, including kings and people in authority are to be prayed for, entreated for, with petitions and thanksgivings. The command is us to be interested in not only your next door neighbor but all who were in politics and positions of authority. Why are these to be done? The answer is simple, “So you can lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” This is what is we do because Christ gave His life as a ransom for these same men and kings. Just as Paul was appointed a teacher for these men, so too we are to pray for these men so that in time we can give our testimony and it will be accepted by them.

2:8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. **9** Likewise, *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; **10** but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness. **11** Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. **12** But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. **13** For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. **14** And *it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. **15** But *women* shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Because Paul wanted men to pray for all men, he now will give some specific orders or commands to be followed by all churches and leaders. They are:

1. I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. By saying this Paul is instructing men to be pure in all their actions, at work and at home, in public and in private. When they come to present their hands in worship they are to be pure.
2. *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but

rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness. Here Paul directs his instruction to women. Women are to dress appropriately and adorn themselves with acts of goodness. These are not to be random acts but intentional acts of godliness.

3. Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. Here it is clear that Paul is instructing women not to exercise authority over a man within the church in its administration or in teaching. This is not to say that a woman is not to have a place of authority. In some cases the male leadership may delegate authority to a woman for a specific task. That woman is doing her job under the authority of a man who has been placed over all the men and women in the church. This is all well and fine. However, if the woman is the head of the ministry, the highest authority in the ministry, the leader and teacher in the ministry, that woman is clearly out of the will of God and in defiance of this scriptural instruction. This includes para-church organizations. Why? Paul gives two reasons.
 - For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. And *it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression.
 - But *women* shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

3:1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.

Here is Paul's second trustworthy statement. The office of overseer is a fine work to desire. An overseer is the bishop or pastor of the church. He is the superintendent of the congregation. He is the inspector of all that transpires in the church. This is not to be a woman at any time or in any situation. The following passage lists the requirements for this overseer or bishop.

3:2 An 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, uncontentious, free from the love of money. ⁴*He 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?); ⁶*and* not a new convert, lest he 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 may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Let's break this down into a simple list of 16 qualities.

1. Must be above reproach,
2. The husband of one wife,
3. Temperate,
4. Prudent,
5. Respectable,

6. Hospitable,
7. Able to teach,
8. Not addicted to wine
9. Not pugnacious,
10. Gentle,
11. Uncontentious,
12. Free from the love of money.
13. One who manages his own household well,
14. One 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?);
15. Not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.
16. Must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

3:8 Deacons 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. ¹⁰And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. ¹¹Women *must* likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹²Let deacons be husbands of *only* one wife, *and* good managers of *their* children and their own households. ¹³For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

A Deacon is an attendant. He is one who waits upon others, ministering to and serving their needs, looking after them when struggles come.

According to Paul there twelve qualities that they must pass, including qualities of their wives, before becoming a deacon. They are to be:

1. Men of dignity,
2. Not double-tongued,
3. Not addicted to much wine
4. Not fond of sordid gain,
5. Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.
6. And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.
7. Women, the wives of the deacons *must* likewise be dignified,
8. Women, the wives of the deacons *must* not be malicious gossips,
9. Women, the wives of the deacons *must* temperate,
10. Women, the wives of the deacons *must* faithful in all things.
11. The deacon must be the husbands of *only* one wife,
12. The deacon must be good managers of *their* children and their own households.

Paul then declares the reward of the deacon who serves well. "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."

3:14 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 may 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. **16** And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

Here we see the purpose of Paul writing this letter to Timothy. Paul wanted to go to Ephesus to see Timothy, but just in case he did not make it, the Lord directed Paul to write Timothy, giving specific instructions how the people of the church ought to conduct themselves in the household of God, the church, the pillar and support of the sole truth in this world. The truth is the message about Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Within these first three chapters Paul addresses the problem of false teachers in the church and the criteria for selecting the earthly leadership of the church. The organization of powers is briefly covered and the place of men and women in the church is clearly presented. Now Paul will address the heresy and apostasy that is going to plague the church in the later times.