

Paul's First Letter to Timothy

Lesson 2

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

In Chapters 1 – 3 instruction was given concerning how to conduct business within the church in the following areas:

1. Dealing with False Teachers
2. Selection of the Pastors
3. Selection of the Deacons
4. The Role of Men
5. The Role of Women

As we begin this chapter Paul indicates what the Holy Spirit is explicitly saying to him. Paul will quickly present 25 more instructions that are to be followed in the organization and structure of the conduct within the church both by the membership and by Timothy.

4:1 *But 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. 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.*

6. Future False Teachings - Sometime in the future the teaching of the church will turn away from the elementary principles of the faith and begin to teach two false teachings. First, they will teach the need to pay attention to deceitful spirits and the doctrines of the demons. What does this mean? It means that instead of focusing solely on the Lord, teachers will begin to focus on demonology within the church. What are the doctrines of the demons? This simply means the teachings of what demon worshipers believe and hold to as true. The Bible does not teach these doctrines anywhere within its pages yet in today's churches, especially those who call themselves "charismatic," have begun teaching the faith and practices of satanic worship. It is one sign that we are in the later times of the ages. These teachers focus more on Satan and the demons than they focus on the Lord. They speak to Satan more than they speak to the Lord. They do this in a religious context for seemingly righteous purposes, yet they call Satan's name more than they call the name of the Lord and thus achieve the desire of Satan by proclaiming his name more than the Lord's.

Second, by means of deception and lies these teachers will forbid marriage and begin to advocate the practice of fasting. Both marriage and food are good yet these teachers will call for a departure of the sanctity of marriage and the

purpose of food as fuel for the body. Closeness to God will be determined by your marital status and your willingness to fast to find God's will and desires. They are signs that the church has entered into the later times of the church age. While the Jews of Israel fast, this was never an instruction for the church and has mistakenly become a practice of many well meaning Christians.

4:6 In 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.

Even in the later times we are to point out that the doctrines of demons and deceitful spirits as well as the teaching forbidding marriage and eating food are simply not sound teachings. We are to nourish on the words of faith and sound doctrine.

Timothy is the leader of the church and specific instructions are now given to Timothy as how to conduct himself within the church. In so doing Paul has transcribe for all ministers how they should conduct themselves in the church too.

7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for 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.

7. Worldly Fables vs. Discipline - The Kings James Version uses the term "Old Wives' Tale" meaning silly sayings and beliefs that have little basis of truth and effectiveness. Timothy, as the pastor, is not to take part in those things that are not factual and are not effective. Timothy is to discipline himself not to fall into these ungodly and useless doings. Timothy is to be godly which is always profitable in every circumstance and under all conditions.

9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. 10 For 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. 11 Prescribe and teach these things.

8. Fix our Hope on the Living God – Here is the third trustworthy statement that is deserving of full acceptance and that is that we are to fix our hope on the Living God. This is the teaching that Timothy as pastor is to prescribe, hold to, and teach to everyone.

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

9. Show Yourselves as Examples – Timothy is probably approaching what we would call middle age, yet he is still young compared to Paul and many other people. When we take the time to notice the age of people in the scripture, most lived past the age of 70. And so it is down through the centuries even today. The expected life span today is 74. We have all heard in earlier centuries that

the life span was in the 40's. This was because of the high rate of infant deaths. In those days, those who reached adulthood would likely live into their 70's except in times of war and pestilent. And such was the case in Timothy's day, Timothy was middle aged yet there were many who were much older in the church. Timothy's charge was to make sure his speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity were stark examples to the membership.

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

10. Give Attention to Public Reading of Scripture – Timothy was instructed to give attention to three things. The first was the public reading of the scripture. It was paramount to the church. The worship services were to include the public reading of the scripture. This was more than just one or two verses; this was entire passages and letters such as this letter to Timothy.
11. Give Attention to Exhortation – The word exhortation actually means to "console or bring comfort to." After the reading of the scripture we are to speak words of comfort in accordance with the passage.
12. Give Attention to Teaching – Teaching in this passage actually means "doctrines." We are to teach the doctrines of the faith, the true doctrines in accordance with the true faith in the Lord.

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

13. Do not neglect the Spiritual Gift – The spiritual gift mentioned here is the gift of being a "Pastor teacher." This is an office of the church and the way a person obtains this office is through the laying on of hands by the ministers. It is a spiritual gift to be the pastor teacher of the church. The prophetic utterance is the public proclamation which is the stamp of approval on the pastor by the ordaining counsel. Timothy was not to neglect that gift and neither should anyone who has had hands laid on them, setting them aside for the work in the church.

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

14. Take Pains with these Instructions - Paul also says to be absorbed in these things, the work bestowed on Timothy through the laying on of hands. As Timothy progressed in the work, it should be seen by all. For the older members of the congregation they should be able to say to their minister "You have come a long way since you began many years ago." This statement is one of the greatest complements a minister can receive from a member.

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

15. Persevere in these Instructions – Timothy is to stick to the teaching and instructions of the true doctrines of the faith and he is to do this carefully within the structure of the church. The structure of the church is to be filled with conduct becoming of the church of God. When this is done, salvation is insured for those who hear and believe.

5:1 Do 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.

16. How to Treat People within the Church – This passage is plain! Old men who need correcting, must be corrected with great respect and a careful speech, with the honor that you should speak to your father. Younger men must be corrected like a brother that you love and would give your life for. Older women are to be treated like mothers, younger women like sister. In other words, all people are to be treated like family, a family who loves each other so much and intentionally brings honor to each other.

3Honor widows who are widows indeed; 4but if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them 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. 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.

17. Widows in the Church – In regard to widows in the church, they are to be taken care of by their children. These widows are not to be taken care of by the church unless they do not have children or their children are incapable of caring for them. Children who do not care for their widowed mothers are worse than unbelievers. It is the duty of the believing children to care for their widowed mothers. If the widow is a widow indeed, if she is above reproach and not rambunctious and needy for the unnecessary things of the world, and their children do not care for them, then the church is to step to the task.

9Let a widow 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.

18. Older Widows – Older women who meet the criteria above who are at least 60 years of age may be put on the list to be cared for by the church, but she must be devoted to good work for the Lord.

11But refuse to put younger widows *on the list*, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, **12**thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. **13**And at 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. **14**Therefore, I want younger *widows* to get married, bear children, keep house, *and give the enemy no occasion for reproach*; **15**for some have already turned aside to follow Satan.

19. Younger Widows – Women less than 60 years of age are not to be put on the list. The church is to wait until she is of the age of 60 and to see how she handles herself through the years leading up to that time. Many times these women still have the desire for a mate and begin to focus on that thought. It is better for them to marry than to allow the burning desire to lead to a sin. Verse 12 must be carefully understood. The intent of this passage is that a faithful wife who has become a widow, and she burns with passion and falls into a sin with another man out of marriage, she is putting aside her previous pledge to her original husband. It is better for her to marry another and continue to serve the Lord without reproach.

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

20. Women with widows in the family – Just so no one would misunderstand, if a woman has a mother who is a widow, that woman is to care and assist that widow so she will not be a burden to the church. This also means that a young widow daughter is to still care for her older widow mother.