

The Book of 1 Timothy Prescription for a Healthy Church Introduction

One of the most difficult transitions for any organization to make is the transfer of power from the founders to a second generation of leadership. Countless entrepreneurs have brought disaster on their companies by refusing to release control to others who are younger and, in their view, less competent. And even where visionaries gladly hand over the reigns of authority to qualified successors, there is no guarantee of continued success.

That's one reason why 1 and 2 Timothy make for such interesting reading. They are letters about the transfer of leadership to a new generation. In writing them, Paul was passing the torch to his son in faith, Timothy, Pastor of the church at Ephesus. Paul knew that his own time was drawing to a close, and that his work would soon come to an end. Would the Ephesians continue in the faith? Would they hold to the truth of the gospel and practice Christ like love toward one another? Would young Timothy be faithful to his pastoral tasks? Would he teach the people sound doctrine, navigate through disputes and disappointments, and model a life style of faith?

As we read Paul's instruction in 1 and 2 Timothy we can feel his heart reaching out to the believers in Ephesus. Paul wanted the fellowship not merely to survive, but to thrive. So he wrote these two letters, which are among the earliest manuals we have for church organization. 1 Timothy covers the life of the fellowship and 2 Timothy dwells on the life of the pastor.

Why were such instructions needed? Perhaps it was because of the gospels success at Ephesus. No longer was the Christian community there just a small body of new believers enjoying intimate fellowship on a first name basis. The group had really grown over the years and was having an influence in cities throughout Asia Minor. It was a diverse church struggling internally with issues of unity and doctrinal purity and externally with pagan, sometimes hostile surroundings. Ephesus was in many ways the church as it was suppose to be. But it had grown to the point where it needed organizational structure.

Author and Setting

The two letters to Timothy bear the customary greeting of Paul, and the church down through history has generally agreed that Paul was the author of both. This view is supported by the close personal tone of these letters.

In 1 Timothy, Paul writes from Macedonia to young Timothy, pastor of the church at Ephesus. In the second letter, Paul writes from Rome where he is imprisoned and possibly waiting execution. The exact dates of the letters are unknown, but both are believed to be written late in Paul's life. It's possible that 2 Timothy was Paul's last written letter.

Key Verses in 1 Timothy

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever.” 1 Timothy 1:17

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ.” 1 Timothy 2:5

“For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”
1 Timothy 4:8

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” 1 Timothy 4:12

“For the Scripture says, you shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain, and, the laborer is worthy of his wages.” 1 Timothy 5:18

“For the love of money is the root to all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Timothy 6:10

The Book of 1 Timothy
Lesson 1 - 1 Timothy 1:1-11
Prescription for a Healthy Church
“Beware of False Teachers”

Timothy wanted to resign, and Paul’s first burden was to encourage him to stay on and finish the task. Almost every Christian worker has wanted to quit at one time or another. Paul encourages young Timothy in this chapter by reminding him of his position before God and of the fact that God would see him through to victory.

Timothy was not at Ephesus because Paul put him there. It was God who entrusted him with the ministry in that important city. Just as God had committed a ministry to Paul’s trust (1:11), He had given Timothy a special stewardship, and He expected him to be faithful. The false teachers at Ephesus were ministering their own program, not a stewardship that God had given them. There were false teachers at Ephesus who were trying to make a name for themselves as teachers of the Law but who did not know what they were talking about. They had turned away from the truth of the Word and were listening to fables and endless genealogies, raising more questions than they could answer. What a picture of some teachers today! Their ministries did not build up Christians or the local church, but instead promoted arguments and divisions. In vs. 5, Paul contrasts the false teachers and their ministry with that of the true steward of God’s grace. The object of God’s steward is to see people love one another with a love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. But these false teachers were promoting endless divisions and empty talk!

Paul explains to Timothy the significance of the Law. “God did not give the Law to save people,” he points out, “but to show people how much they need to be saved.”

God had entrusted Paul and Timothy with a glorious Gospel, not a system of laws. “Sound doctrine” literally means “healthy teaching,” that is, teaching that promotes spiritual health. Our word “hygiene” comes from this Greek word.

Read 1 Timothy 1:1-2 and answer the following questions.

1. As this letter opens, how does Paul describe himself? Why do you think he does this?

2. Who does Paul address this letter to? What is the importance of how Paul addresses this person?

3. What is important about each of the items mentioned?

4. How would you define:

A. Grace?

B. Mercy?

C. Peace?

Read 1 Timothy 1:3-5 and answer the following questions.

5. According to vs. 4-5 what is one way to determine if a teaching is valid and true? What is one way to determine if a teaching is false and harmful?

6. What does Paul say is his purpose in instruction for all Believers?

7. How would you define:

A. Pure heart?

B. Good conscience?

C. Sincere faith?

Read 1 Timothy 1:6-7 and answer the following questions.

8. Timothy is encouraged not to waste time speculating about fruitless topics. He is to focus on things that will further God's kingdom. In verse 6, what do you think Paul means by the words "*some have turned aside to idle talk or (useless arguing)*"?

9. Who is Paul describing in vs.7? What does he tell us about them?

10. Have you ever come across someone who fits this mold? If so, describe them. How did you deal with the situation?

Read 1 Timothy 1:8-11 and answer the following questions.

11. How do we know that the law is good? How do we use it properly? How can it be used improperly?

12. What does Paul mean in vs. 11 by, “*according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God*”? Describe this “*glorious gospel*” in your own words.

13. No believer plans to stray or drift away from the truth, but it does happen. What can you do to ensure that you won’t wonder away from the truth? Do you have a plan to make sure you won’t find yourself miles away from where you want to be spiritually? Share your thoughts.

The following five questions can help you apply God’s Word to your life. When you study a passage ask yourself:

- Is there a sin for me to avoid?
- Is there a promise for me to trust?
- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a command for me to obey?
- How can this passage increase my knowledge of God?

The Book of 1 Timothy
Lesson 2 – 1 Timothy 1:12-17
Prescription for a Healthy Church
“It’s all About Grace”

Paul refers to himself as an example of one whom God enabled, by grace, to serve effectively. The word “ministry” in vs. 12 is *diakonia* in the Greek from which we get our English word “deacon,” meaning “a servant.”

Timothy was disturbed because he thought he was too young and lacked the necessary qualifications for the ministry. “Look at me!” says the apostle. “I was a blasphemer and murderer before God saved me! If the grace of God can make a missionary out of a murderer, then it can make a success out of you!” Paul was always careful to give God the glory for his life and ministry. Anyone who serves the Lord (and all believers ought to be servants) needs to depend on the grace of God. We are saved by grace, but we also serve through grace (Rom. 12:3–6). In vs. 14, Paul lists the three motivating forces in his life: grace, faith, and love. His love for Christ and for lost sinners compelled him to labor; his faith in Christ empowered him, and the grace of God worked in his life, enabling him to serve God.

Paul considered his salvation a pattern of what God would do for lost sinners, especially his beloved Israel. Unbelievers today are not saved in just the fashion Paul was, that is, by seeing a light and hearing a voice; but we are saved by grace, through faith, in spite of our sins. The people of Israel will be saved one day in the future as Paul was saved on the Damascus road: they will see Christ, repent, believe, and be changed. In vs. 15, we have the first of several “faithful sayings” that Paul quotes. These are thought to be sayings of the New Testament prophets in the early church that summarized important teachings. Early Christians had no written Bible to refer to; they quoted these “sayings” as authoritative statements of the faith.

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-13 and answer the following questions.

Paul never got over the fact that at one time he had been determined to destroy God’s church. Yet to him, the memory was not an occasion to revisit guilt, but one of great thankfulness to the merciful God who transformed him from a persecutor of Christ’s body to an apostle of the church.

The apostle knew very well that his experience was not a solitary one. God flooded His divine mercy and grace upon him in order to demonstrate what he longed to do for others. Perhaps one reason Paul wrote of his own experience at the beginning of this letter was to remind Timothy that the same grace and power God used to transform Paul was also available to him.

1. Note that Paul calls Jesus “our Lord” in 1:12. What does he mean by this?
2. What was Paul’s condition prior to receiving Christ? What kind of people in today’s world would be comparable to Paul?
3. Do you consciously depend on God’s strength to make it through your day? If so, how? If not, why not? What strategies do you use to consciously depend on God’s strength and not your own?

Read 1 Timothy 1:14-15 and answer the following questions.

4. Paul says three things were “poured out” on him in Christ Jesus. What are these three things, and what significance does each have?
5. “Faith” and “Love” are often paired together in the New Testament, as they are in 1 Timothy 1:14. Why do you suppose this is so? How are they related?
6. Why did Paul say that he was the “chief of sinners”?

7. Do you think this was true, that his sins really were worse than that of others? Why or Why not?

Read 1 Timothy 1:16-17 and answer the following questions.

8. What reason did Paul give in verse 16 why Jesus saved him? What does Paul want us to learn from this?

9. How did Jesus display His “longsuffering” in Paul’s life? In what way do we see the message of the Gospel in 1:16?

10. What does each of the following words found in 1:17 add to your understanding of God?

King

Eternal

Immortal

Invisible

Who Alone is Wise

11. What does it mean to give God “*honor and glory*” forever and ever? Since He already has these things, how can we give them to Him?

Great Insight from Jon Courson

The closer Paul drew to the Lord, the more he understood the extent of his sin. But the Good News is that sinners are the very people Jesus came to seek and to save. Ever the Good Shepherd, Jesus specializes in finding the one in the back row, on the fringe, out to lunch, off the wall. This gives me great comfort and real hope. I must accept acceptance courageously. I must accept grace graciously. Jesus Christ came to save guys like me—and to keep saving me daily!

Definition of God's "GRACE"

God's Riches At Christ's Expense

Grace (from the Greek New Testament word *charis*) is God's unmerited favor. It is kindness from God that we don't deserve. There is nothing we have done, or can do to earn this favor. It is a gift from God. Grace is divine assistance given to humans.

Webster defines Grace this way: "The unmerited love and favor of God toward human beings, divine influence acting in a person to make the person pure, morally strong, the condition of a person brought to God's favor through this influence, a special virtue, gift, or help given to a person by God."

Examples of God's Grace from the Word

"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"
John 1:16-17

"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"
Romans 3:23-24

"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace" Romans 6:14

"For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is a gift from God" Ephesians 2:8

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"
Titus 2:11

The Book of 1 Timothy
Lesson 3 - 1 Timothy 1:18-2:15
Prescription for a Healthy Church
“How the Church Works”

Paul named two men in Ephesus who might give Timothy trouble: Hymenaeus and Alexander. These two men had been a part of the Ephesian church, and Paul had disciplined them because of their blasphemy, probably teaching false doctrine. It was not easy for young Timothy to face these men with God’s truth, but he had to do so to preserve the purity and power of the church. There would be less false doctrine today if Christians had withstood false teachers yesterday. The Christian life is not a playground; it is a battleground. Timothy had been enlisted by God as a Christian soldier. Paul reminds the young pastor of his ordination years ago. Apparently some of the prophets in the local church had been instructed by the Spirit to single Timothy out and ordain him for special service. “God would not call you without first equipping you!” encourages Paul. The fact that His Spirit set His seal upon you is proof that God will see you through the battles ahead.

It is not enough, however, to have correct doctrine, the Christian soldier must also have correct living. It is possible for a believer to maintain orthodox doctrine while living in hidden sin, and this is the way to spiritual shipwreck.

In chapter 2 Paul discusses the public ministry of the church and the roles that different members ought to play. Chapter 1 deals with the ministry of the Word, and in this chapter the emphasis is on prayer. The two main ministries of the pastor are the Word of God and prayer (Acts 6:4). It is sad to see churches robbing their pastors of these important ministries by keeping them “busy” promoting a program, pleasing people, and practicing church politics. If the churches would simplify their organization and purify their motives, the pastors would be able to do a spiritual work for the glory of the Lord. It is important that the church have a balanced ministry of the Word of God and prayer. The Word instructs the church, prayer inspires the church to obey the Word. The church that has an abundance of Bible teaching but little prayer will have “much light, but no heat.” It will be orthodox but frozen! The other extreme is the church that has much prayer and religious enthusiasm, but little teaching from the Word. This may produce a group of people with zeal but no knowledge.

Read 1 Timothy 1:18-20 and answer the following questions.

After briefly alerting Timothy to the nature of the letter he is receiving and reminding him of the history of its author, Paul quickly moves on to offer a number of instructions and advisories about how best to direct the affairs of the church. Before he gets to the meat of his instructions, the apostle thinks it wise to say a few words about Timothy's own spiritual background. How he had been specially chosen and prepared for the difficult task that lay ahead of him.

1. How does 1 Timothy 1:18-20 instruct Timothy to “*wage the good warfare*”?
2. What is this fight and why does Paul call it a fight?
3. A “*good conscience*” is mentioned in 1:5, 19, 3:9. What does it mean to have a good and clean conscience?
4. How did Hymenaeus and Alexander “blaspheme”? What was the result?
5. Is it possible to blaspheme God without words? If so, how?

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-7 and answer the following questions.

6. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 gives instruction on prayer in four areas. What are they?

7. Do you have a balance among the different kinds of prayer: **requests** for yourself, **praise** for God, **intercession** for others, and **thanksgiving**? In which of these areas would you like to grow?

8. Why is a quiet peaceful life desirable for believers?

9. God's desire is that everyone be saved, and come to the knowledge of His truth. Why is it that not everyone is saved?

10. What is Paul's special task according to 2:7?

Read 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and answer the following questions.

11. Read Matt. 5:21-24. How does this verse relate to 1 Timothy 2:8? Which attitudes are condemned and which are praised? Why?

12. What is the main point of 2:9-10? Is Paul primarily interested in what women wear, or in something else? Explain.

FYI

It is crucial to read individual commands in light of the whole passage, the entire book, and the rest of Scripture. The command "*She must be silent*" (1 Timothy 2:12) is a good example. Elsewhere, Paul talks about women

“*praying*” and even “*prophesying*” (1 Corinthians 11:5), and mentions that his relative “Junias” (a female name) was “*outstanding among the apostles*” (Romans 16:7). He also speaks approvingly of the godly teaching Timothy received from his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5, 3:14-15). Therefore we must understand the command “*be silent*” in light of the larger purpose of 1 Timothy and in light of Paul’s other instructions concerning women in the church. His primary concern here appears to be that church services should be conducted in an orderly and controlled fashion, chaos is to be avoided. He is not opposed to women making a sound in the church, but rather he wants to lay down certain rules for services that will lead to order. He lays out his further thinking on the issue in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16. The key concept to remember is that we should avoid taking a verse out of context in order to impose a restriction that the text does not tend to make. While we may not be able to completely understand what the apostle meant in an admittedly difficult passage, such as 2 Timothy 2:11-15, we can be sure of what he didn’t mean.

The Book of 1 Timothy
Lesson 4 – 1 Timothy 3:1-13
Prescription for a Healthy Church
“Offices in the Church”

Though the church is an organism, a living and growing body united to Christ, the church is also an organization. In fact, every organism has to be organized or it will die. The human body is a living organism, but it is also a highly organized machine. If the local church is to do its task effectively, it must have leadership, with results in good organization.

The terms “pastor,” “elder,” and “bishop” refer to the same office. Elder is a word that simply means an older, mature person. In the early church, pastors were chosen from the mature men of the fellowship. Bishop means “overseer.” The local pastor, then, was an elder in terms of spiritual maturity, and an overseer in terms of ministry.

“Blameless” does not mean sinless; rather, it means “without reproach.” Since moral laziness was a serious problem in those days, the pastor was required to have but one wife; that is, there had to be no question as to his marriage standards. “Vigilant” means “temperate,” referring to sober judgment and action. “Sober” indicates seriousness of purpose and self-control. “Good behavior” should be translated “orderly”; it suggests a well-ordered life and testimony. The pastor must not be money-hungry; he must have patience toward the sheep; he must not be contentious and he must be free from greediness, putting Christ and the church first in his life. The pastor should be the head of the household, and he should have his children under control. He must not be a new convert; if he is, Satan may puff him up with pride and he will fall into sin. The pastor must have good testimony even among the unsaved.

“Likewise” indicates that God has equally important standards for the deacon, for he is to work with the pastor in guiding the affairs of the church. A “double-tongued” person is a tale-bearer, one who says one thing to one person and another thing to another person, trying to win the favor of both. Church leaders must be people who keep their word.

Some translate vs.11 as “deaconesses”; the word is probably “wives.” In any event, these standards applied also to the deacons wives. Note that both pastors and deacons are to be proved before given the office. The deacon’s office is to be used, not just filled. Church officers who are faithful will acquire a good standing before God and men, and are able to further the work of Christ.

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and answer the following questions.

No church can operate for long without a qualified leadership team. Paul here, sets down general guidelines for choosing people capable of doing the job. No one of course is perfect. But Paul laid out some fairly intense qualifications for those who would desire to become part of the church's leadership. If character has tended to count for less and less in secular leadership, it continues to count a great deal in those who would hold office in the church. It is certainly not for everybody, especially the calling to teach. As another author in Scripture reminds us: "*not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly*" (James 3:1).

1. Paul used the phrase "*faithful saying*" in 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, 4:9. What is the point of this phrase? How is it used each time it appears?

2. Paul used the following terms to establish qualifications for those who want to become overseers in the church: "*husband of one wife,*" "*temperate,*" "*self-controlled,*" "*respectable,*" "*hospitable,*" "*able to teach,*" "*not given to drunkenness,*" "*not violent but gentle,*" "*not quarrelsome,*" "*not a lover of money,*" "*manages his own family well,*" "*not a recent convert,*" "*has a good reputation with outsiders.*" How does each qualification help make a better leader?

3. Why would it be important for an overseer to "*having his children in submission with all reverence*"?

4. Paul's comment in 1 Timothy 3:5 is often ignored today, with unfortunate results. What do you think is the connection between managing a family and managing a church well? Why do you think this connection is so often ignored?

5. Why is it important for an overseer to have a “good reputation” with outsiders?

6. New converts become mature enough to serve in a leadership role by learning from more mature believers. A mature Christian must take a new convert under his wing and “show him the ropes.” (*The things which you have learned and received and heard and saw in me these do. And the God of peace will be with you. Phil. 4:9*) There are more new believers who desire such a relationship than there are mature believers willing to give of their time. What dangers could a young convert be exposed to if he were given a leadership role within the church?

Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and answer the following questions.

7. 1 Timothy 3:8-10 lists several qualifications for becoming a deacon. *Reverent* (worthy of respect), *Not double tongued*, *Not given to much wine*, *Not greedy for money*, *Holding the mystery of the faith*, *Pure conscience*, *Blameless*. Discuss and note the importance of each one.

8. 1 Timothy 3:11 lists several qualifications for the wives of deacons. *Reverent* (worthy of respect), *Not slanderers* (not backbiting talkers), *Temperate* (showing self-restraint), *Faithful* (in all things). Discuss and note the importance of each.

9. Paul says that deacons who serve well, “*obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith.*” Why do you think this is? Does this only apply to deacons, or to others as well? Explain

The Book of 1 Timothy
Lesson 5 - 1 Timothy 3:14-4:16
Prescription for a Healthy Church
A Word to Timothy

Much has been written about the “true church.” The concept being, that all believers belong to Christ and are one in Him. Christians were expected to unite with local assemblies and go to work for God. In these verses, Paul shows the importance of the local church and describes it as follows: **1. The house of God.** That is, the family or household of God on earth. All believers are children of God, and the church is His family. If the church is God’s family, then certainly it is more important than any other organization on earth. **2. The pillar and ground of truth.** This is construction language. The church is what holds up God’s truth in this world. The word “ground” means “foundation”; one translator defines it “basement.” As the local church is faithful to preserve, preach, and practice the truth, God’s work prospers on earth. The unfaithful Christian is weakening the very foundation of God’s truth in the world. **3. The body of Christ.** Verse 16 is perhaps an early Christian hymn, memorized by the saints for their worship services. The mystery of godliness is God’s hidden program to bring godliness into the world. The church is important to God and should be important to us.

1 Timothy 4

This chapter deals with the pastor’s spiritual life and labors. Paul hoped to be with Timothy soon after he wrote this letter, but he knew his plans often changed unexpectedly, whether by his own doing, by circumstance, or by God. So as a precaution Paul penned several instructions to Timothy that would help him get the church at Ephesus on the right track. Before he got the specifics, Paul thought it wise to remind Timothy of the glorious Lord they both served. He knew how easy it is to get discouraged when we take our eyes off the source of our strength and success. Yet he also knew how effective we can be when we remind ourselves of the glory of our great God and Savior. From this point on in his letter, Paul shares freely from problem to instruction to encouragement and back again. He rarely goes into great lengths in any of his instruction, for no doubt Timothy had already received solid instruction. Nevertheless, because of the difficult ministry in Ephesus, Paul considered it best to record for Timothy an outline of what it would take to get Ephesus up and running in a way that would honor and glorify God.

Read 1 Timothy 3:14-16 and answer the following questions.

1. Paul gives several names to the church in 1 Timothy 3:15. What does each term add to your understanding of the body of Christ? A. *house of God*, B. *church of the living God*, C. *the pillar and ground of the truth*.

2. 1 Timothy 3:16 is apparently an ancient hymn composed about Christ. What do the following verses of the hymn teach us about Christ?

a. *God was manifested in the flesh*

b. *Justified in the Spirit*

c. *Seen by angels*

d. *Preached among the Gentiles*

e. *Believed on in the world*

e. *Received up in glory*

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5 and answer the following questions.

3. Where did Paul get his knowledge of “*later times*”? How certain is this knowledge?

4. How did Paul describe the false teachers in 4:2? How did they know that what they were teaching is false?

5. What is the main point of 4:4-5?

Read 1 Timothy 4:6-11 and answer the following questions.

6. How was Timothy to respond to these false teachers?

7. What is Timothy to avoid in 4:7? What is he to pursue instead? What does this look like for today?

8. What comparison does Paul make between “*physical training*” and “*godly training*” in 4:8? In today’s world how do we keep that training in balance?

9. How is God “*the Savior to all men*”? What is special to “*those who believe*”?

Read 1 Timothy 4:12-16 and answer the following questions.

10. Paul notes five viewpoints of a believer’s conduct that are especially important in setting a good example for others. What does he mean by each, and what is important about each of them?
 - a. Speech

 - b. Life

 - c. Love

 - d. Faith

 - e. Purity

11. What was Timothy to devote himself to in Paul’s absence? (4:13-14)

12. What reason does Paul give in 4:15-16 for diligence in pursuing the ministry? What did Paul want to see happen? Why was this important?

Be an Example
1 Timothy 4:12
Jon Courson

I remember it as if it were yesterday. Tom McKee, my youth pastor, came to me, a freshman in high school, and said, “Jon, how would you like to preach this Monday night?” Honored, flattered, and excited, I said, “Yeah, okay!” And Tom went on to say he would be taking me with him on Monday night to the San Jose Rescue Mission. I had never been to a Rescue Mission before. I didn’t really even understand what they were about. I just knew it was an opportunity to preach.

For my preaching debut, I chose the story of Zacchaeus and wrote a fifteen-page manuscript in which I proposed that Zacchaeus represented the people of Israel and the sycamore tree he climbed represented the Gentile nations. I went on to propose that just as Jesus told Zacchaeus He would come to his house, Jesus would draw His people out from the Gentile nations to come and once again have fellowship with Him.

Monday night finally came. Dressed in suit and tie, I stood up to preach to a couple hundred of San Jose’s most down and out. Most were homeless, some just drunk and I realized as I began to teach that they weren’t listening to a word I was saying. I didn’t find out until later that the rule at the Rescue Mission was that those who wanted to eat had to first attend the service.

So there everyone was. Their stomachs were growling, and their mouths salivating as I went on and on and on, enlightening them concerning the eschatological nuances of Zacchaeus and the sycamore tree. At about page eight, I felt the blush of embarrassment rise to my face and proceed all the way to my red hair. Just then, a guy stood up in the back and yelled, “Sit down, you overgrown tomato!” I sat down on page nine. It’s hard to serve the Lord to any degree when you’re young because people have a tendency to look down on you. “Who are you, you overgrown tomato?” they jeer. “Who are you, you high-school junior?” “Who are you, you college freshman?” “Who are you, you twenty-five-year-old?” Paul takes this tendency to task when he tells Timothy, “*Let no man despise thy youth.*” If you choose to walk in humility, love, zeal, faith, and purity, you’ll increase in wisdom and stature. You’ll grow in favor with God and man. The choice is yours.

The Book of 1 Timothy
Lesson 6 - 1 Timothy 5:1-6:2
Prescription for a Healthy Church
Various Instructions

To Older Saints

Being a young man, Timothy had to be careful in his relationship to the older believers in the church. The word “elders” here refers to age, not office. The pastor is not to rebuke older saints, but exhort and encourage them. “*Look upon them as you would your own parents,*” Paul advises (Titus 2:1–4). The church needs to recognize the needs and problems of the older believers and seek to help them. “Senior saints” are important to the church, and the younger people of the church need them more than they may realize (1 Peter 5:1–7).

To Widows

The early church cared for needy widows. Timothy had to be careful not to misuse the church funds by giving money to unworthy widows. In his day, as today, there were deceivers who preyed on people under the cover of religion. Such people usually visited churches because they knew that soft-hearted saints would give them a handout “for Jesus sake.” Note that vs. 4 says that the family has the first responsibility of caring for their needy. Too much of God’s money, given by faithful worshipers, has gone to waste because well-meaning Christians followed their emotions instead of God’s Word.

To Church Leaders

Apparently, Timothy was having trouble with some of his officers. Part of the problem may have been from the fact that he had chosen and ordained some of them too quickly. Another factor was that he had misjudged some of them and made some hasty decisions. Pastors make mistakes, even if their hearts are right! But then, officers make mistakes too. Church officers and leaders are important, because they help the pastor to carry the load. But the pastor must always be the shepherd of the flock. The best thing a church officer can do is to make it possible for the pastor to exercise his spiritual gifts and ministries without hindrance or distraction. Then the church will prosper.

To Slaves

Slavery was an integral part of ancient life; it is estimated that there were 6 million slaves in the Roman Empire. Many slaves found Christ, but their master often remained unbelievers. Paul urges them to be good testimonies to their unsaved masters that their masters might learn to respect the name of God and His Word.

Read 1 Timothy 5:1-2 and answer the following questions.

1. Paul instructs us how to treat those around us. How do these instructions differ from one another, and why do you think they differ?

a. Older men

b. Younger men

c. Older women

d. Younger women

2. Which group is easiest for you to relate with: Older men, Older women, Younger men, Younger women? Why do you think this is so?

Read 1 Timothy 5:3-16 and answer the following questions.

3. Paul's instruction about how to handle the needs of widows take up more verses than any other topic in this letter. Why do you think this issue was so important to him?

4. Why would Paul say that a widow with children or grandchildren was not “really in need”? Does our society live by that principle today? Explain

5. Even today, widows have unique needs that “slip through the cracks.” What needs if any have you seen go unmet? How could the church do better at meeting these needs?

6. What reason does Paul give for not putting younger widows on such a list? (5:11-13).

Read 1 Timothy 5:17-25 and answer the following questions.

7. What principle does Paul introduce in 5:17? How does he support this in 5:18?

8. Why do you think preaching and teaching are singled out for special attention?

9. What is the proper way to bring an accusation against an elder according to 5:19?

10. What words of wisdom and caution does Paul give Timothy in verse 5:22?

Read 1 Timothy 6:1-2 and answer the following questions.

11. What general principle does Paul lay out for slaves in 6:1-2?

12. Slaves were told to honor their masters. What does that look like for us today if practiced?

Effective Care for the Needy

Followers of Christ have the potential to be among the world's most effective agents for social service. They have the example of Christ to follow. They have the motivation of doing compassionate work in His name. They have the structure, community life, and pooled resources of their congregations. And they have the model of the early church, which provided standards for the systematic, ongoing care for the widows. We can learn a great deal about delivering services to the needy by carefully observing the principles that Paul set forth for Timothy and the believers at Ephesus.

The care described here was regular and ongoing for people who were "taken in the number" (5:9), that is, put on a list of continuing recipients of the church's support. It was assumed that the church was to give short term support to people who needed help until they could get back on their feet, but not to any able-bodied people who refused to work to support themselves. The care was for widows who were really widows. The Old Testament described a widow as a woman who had no one to support her and therefore depended on the protection of the community. If a widow had able-bodied children or grandchildren, she needed to depend on them for provision, not the church. A widow who was "taken into the number" incurred certain responsibilities in order to maintain her eligibility for the church's charity. For example, she needed to be frugal lest someone reproach her for living an extravagant lifestyle and the fellowship for supporting it. Likewise she needed to meet certain criteria related to her earlier life and character. The point was not to keep a widow out of the program, but to ensure that she served her fellow believers in every way she could if she was going to receive support.

Younger widows were expected to remarry and was common for the day, and bear children (who presumably would care for their parents in their old age). Again, the church needed to avoid offering long term support to someone who had other options. To do so might contribute to idleness, laziness and gossip.

1 Timothy 5 specifically addresses the care of widows, but its principles apply to a much broader range of human need. By using this and other biblical texts to develop social programs, believers can effectively care in a way that honors the name of Christ and provides real help to needy people.

The Book of 1 Timothy
Lesson 7 – 1 Timothy 6:3-10, 17-19
Prescription for a Healthy Church
The Love of Money

“Don’t worry about doctrine,” some modern preachers say; “the important thing is spiritual unity.” Those who were teaching false doctrine and who would not agree to Paul’s teachings were to be noted and dealt with.

The apostle clearly marks these people who cause trouble in the church. They are proud; they want to be “important people” in the church. Yet they are ignorant, “knowing nothing.” Having rejected sound doctrine, they have made themselves spiritually sick. Instead of feeding on the truths of God’s Word, they feed on empty questions and the meanings of words.

The thought of “gain” in v. 5 leads Paul into a discussion of the Christian and wealth. Using godliness to try to secure gain will never bring contentment; but a godly life, which is a contented life, is certainly great gain to a person. It is easy to misinterpret vs. 9 and 10. In v. 9, Paul is warning those who will to be rich, that is, who set their whole attention on securing wealth. This kind of person is bound to fall into temptations and snares and will eventually sink into destruction. Think of all that Lot lost when he set his eyes on the rich plains of Sodom!

Verse 10 does not teach that money is the root of all evil, but that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Money itself is not neutral; it is basically defiled. Jesus called money “unrighteous mammon,” and Paul called it “filthy lucre.” Money can be invested for eternity by bringing Christ to lost people, or it can send a man to hell by becoming his god.

Paul then injects a warning to Timothy because Christian leaders can be led astray by false values and a desire for material gain. Sometimes the best thing the Christian soldier can do is run. In 2 Timothy 2:22, Paul commands him to “*Flee youthful lusts.*”

In Verses 17-19 we see instruction to the rich, telling them how to use their riches for God’s glory. Note that he calls them “*rich in this present age.*” It is possible to be rich in this world but not rich toward God. First, these people must be humble, accepting their wealth as a stewardship from God. They should keep their eyes on the Giver and not put their trust in the gifts. God wants His own to enjoy the blessings of life; the word “enjoy” is in the Bible! Money should be used for good works. It should be invested in things eternal, laying a good foundation for the time to come. “*Treasures in heaven*” is the way Jesus put it in Matthew 6.

Read 1 Timothy 6:3-5 and answer the following questions.

1. How does Paul illustrate someone who teaches false doctrines and who does not agree to sound instruction? List the three characteristics he names in verse 4. Discuss the importance of each.

2. What is the result of the kind of behavior discussed in question 1? List the 5 results that Paul names in verses 4-5 and discuss the importance of each.

3. Note the criticism Paul points out that the very person who is consumed with financial gain have been robbed of the truth (6:5). If it is better to be rich in truth rather than material possessions why are so many people tempted to put finances above truth?

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and answer the following questions.

Money is a power force in our lives. It has the power to help people and to do good, but if used unwisely, money can cause great harm. In this section Paul instructs Timothy on its proper uses.

4. If godliness is not a means to financial gain, what kind of gain does godliness bring (6:6)? What does this verse mean to you?

5. In verse 7 Paul gives a reason for his statement in 6:6. What is that reason? How would remembering his words in verse 7 help to keep us from being robbed of the truth?

6. You may have heard it said, “You can’t take it with you” or “there will be No U-Hauls in Heaven.” How is this basically the same message as 1 Timothy 6:7? How should that affect how we live?

7. How many people do you know that would be content with the provisions listed in 6:8? Would you be content with these alone? Explain

8. What warning is given by Paul in 6:9-10? Who is the warning given to? What is often the result of ignoring this warning?

9. According to 6:10, what two things often happen to people who eagerly seek after wealth? Of the two, which do you think is worse? Which do you think people fear most?

Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19 and answer the following questions.

10. According to 6:17, why is putting your hope in God is the only way to “richly” enjoy life? What does the last part of this verse teach you about God’s love and desire for you?

11. Why do you think Paul would spend so much time in a personal letter to his young friend, instructing him on money and the proper use of it? What does money have to do with the growth (or lack of it) in a local body of believers?

12. What part of Paul's teaching about money in this section encourages you the most. What part of it surprises you the most? What part might of it convicted you the most?

Here's Some Great Scriptures

"The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
1 Timothy 6:10

"He who trusts in his riches will fall. But the righteous will flourish like foliage."
Proverbs 11:28

"Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away like an eagle toward heaven." Proverbs 23:5

"A faithful man will abound with blessing, but he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished." Proverbs 28:20

The Book of 1 Timothy
Lesson 8 - Timothy 6:11-16, 20-21
Prescription for a Healthy Church
Final Charge

Paul now, gives a warning to Timothy, because Christian leaders can be led astray by false values and a desire for material gain. Demas forsook Paul because he loved the world, Judas sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Note that Paul called this youthful pastor a “man of God.” What an encouragement! Note the following three exhortations: flee, follow, and fight. Flee these things: pride, covetousness, false teachings. Sometimes the finest thing the Christian soldier can do is run. In 2 Timothy 2:22, Paul commands him to “*Flee youthful lusts.*” This is what Joseph did when Potiphar’s wife tempted him. But it is not enough to flee. We must also follow, and we must also fight. Paul points to the example of Christ when He made His courageous witness before Pilate. “*We serve the King of kings!*” writes Paul. “Be faithful until He comes. When He comes, He will honor you for your good work.”

In vs. 20 we see the word “knowledge” mentioned but to Paul it was a false knowledge. He was no doubt referring to the Gnostics who claimed to have “full knowledge” about the universe, not too different from some of our philosophers today. These false teachers at Ephesus were disturbing young Timothy with their high-sounding theories and their questions about the Word of God; so Paul warned him not to get involved with this “*profane and vain babbling*”! The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

What is Timothy’s responsibility? To “guard the deposit” that God committed to him through Paul. God had given the Gospel message, the deposit of truth, to Paul who had in turn committed it to Timothy. Timothy was to guard it and pass it on to others (2 Timothy 2:2). This is the task of the church today; may we be faithful to guard the deposit and pass it on to others!

Read 1 Timothy 6:11-12 and answer the following questions.

1. Of all the titles Paul could have chosen to refer to his young friend, why do you suppose he picked “man of God”? How would this be a special encouragement to Timothy?

2. What does Paul say Timothy should pursue in 6:11?

3. For the second time in this letter Paul tells Timothy to “*fight the good fight*” of faith. Why is it especially appropriate for Paul to use this image to talk with Timothy about the Christian walk?

4. When you think of the Christian life as a “fight,” what comes to mind? What weapons do we have to fight with? What are we fighting for?

5. How can Timothy or any of us, “*lay hold of eternal life*”?

Read 1 Timothy 6:13-16 and answer the following questions.

6. What great event is foretold in 6:14? How does Paul use this event to motivate Timothy to godliness?

7. Paul describes seven characteristics of God in 6:15-16. List them and discuss the importance of each.

8. The idea of a positive “confession” is a common and important biblical theme (6:13-14). Note these following verses: 2 Chron. 6:24-26, John 1:20, 12:42, Rom. 10:9-10, 14:11, Phil. 2:11, Heb. 3:1, 13:15. What does the word confession mean to you?

9. What is accredited to God at the end of 6:16? Why do you think Paul would focus on these two points?

Read 1 Timothy 6:20-21 and answer the following questions.

10. What does Paul instruct Timothy to do at the beginning of 6:20? How is this a good summary of everything that has been written in this letter?

11. What negative command does Paul give in 6:20? Do you believe such commands are necessary for today? Why or why not?

12. What is the significance of Paul’s last sentence, “*Grace be with you*”? Paul both began this letter and finished it with the word Grace. Why do you think this is?

A Great Final Word from Jon Courson

As a sophomore in high school, I listened as Mr. Flanner, my science teacher, give us reason after reason why evolution is so certain. This intrigued me because at the beginning of the semester, he had taught us that all of science is built upon the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which says that everything goes from order to disorder, that everything is winding down. We know this to be so. Every second of every minute, the sun loses 1,200,000 tons of mass. As a result, scientists tell us that eventually the sun will burn out. This means that if we go back fifteen million years the length of time required by the evolutionary process to bring life as we know it to our planet the sun would be substantially larger than it is now, causing the average temperature on earth to exceed three hundred degrees which would kill the very life forms that were supposedly evolving into men. It just doesn't add up! And scientists are increasingly coming to this conclusion.

“Because there is no God; because we came from slime, we can act like slime,” says the unbeliever. And *that's* the issue, gang. The issue is not scientific, academic, or intellectual. The issue is moral. People innately know there is a divine design to the universe. They know it in their hearts. They see it in the sky. It rings true in their souls. But because the so-called intellectuals don't want to be accountable to a Creator, they simply remove God from the picture.

Guns, rape, and profane behavior of every type have replaced chewing gum, untucked shirts, and talking in class as the prevalent problems in our high schools. And educators are stymied. “What's wrong with the culture?” they ask. They give lectures and bring in motivational speakers to try to instill values in their students all the while blind to the obvious fact that if kids are taught they came from animals, they're bound to act like animals. Understanding what they innately know to be true that they were created by God would affect the way students would view life, one another, and themselves. But take away that underpinning and we are currently reaping the result. And if you are one who says, “I know God created the earth and everything in it,” my question to you is this: Do you live as though that were true? God created you for one reason: To bring Him pleasure. Therefore, if you please God this week, you will fulfill the very reason for your existence. It is in bringing joy and pleasure to the heart of God through worship, Bible study, family devotions, personal contemplation, prayer, meditation, and submission that we disarm Darwin, expose evolution, and silence the skeptic. Mr. Flanner had a Master's Degree, but I, a lowly sophomore, understood the Decree of the Master, and that made all the difference.