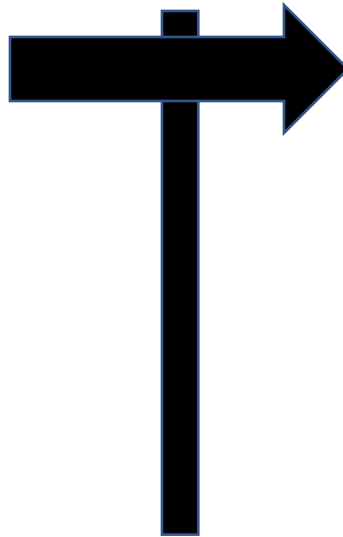


PAUL'S ADVICE FOR PASTORS

1 & 2 Timothy, Titus



These things happened as examples and
were written down for us.” 1 Corinthians
10:11

Rev. Dr. Jerry Schmoyer
Jerry@ChristianTrainingOrganization.org
ChristianTrainingOrganization.org
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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Rev. Dr. Jerry Schmoyer is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary where he received his ThM in 1975 and DMin in 2006. He served as a church pastor in the USA for 35 years until 2016. He is founder of Christian Training Organization where he leads marriage, family, and youth conferences, and is active in counseling and mentoring pastors. He has ministered to pastors in India since 2006.

He has been married to Nancy, a nurse, since 1979. They enjoy their very large family and many grandchildren.

He can be reached at Jerry@ChristianTrainingOrganization.org

BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

(These can be found at <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/>)

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Biblical Counseling

Biblical Prophecy

Duties of a Pastor

Leadership Lessons

Marriage & Ministry

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1 & 2 Timothy, Titus

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible contains instruction and guidance for God's people. Without it, how would we know how to live and serve Him? Christians find principles and teachings about how to live for Jesus. There is advice husbands, wives, parents and government leaders. There is also advice for pastors. This is given by one of the greatest pastors of all time: the apostle Paul.

As a pastor, I would have loved the opportunity to sit with Paul and listen to the advice he would give me. That isn't possible, but we can do the next best thing: we can sit in on his discussions with Timothy and Titus and hear what he had to say to them. That's because he wrote it down in 3 books in the Bible: 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. By studying them we can learn and apply his advice to us today. That's why God kept them as part of His inspired Word. In these books Paul gives specific, in-depth, detailed directions and commands for God's shepherds. He tells Timothy and Titus what they should and shouldn't do as they lead a church.

Pastoring a church is never easy, especially if you want to do a good job of it. People can be very difficult to lead and work with, as Timothy and Titus found out. The church in Ephesus, where Paul sent Timothy, had several conflicts and challenges. Paul gives godly advice from his experience as how to minister in difficult times and circumstances.

You'll learn lessons about leadership, pastoring, handling fear, confronting false teachers and reclaiming those who stray. You'll know how to better minister to those who follow Jesus as well as work with those who don't. We'll look in detail at God's requirements for a leader. There's even a section on managing conflict between people. The book contains many principles and important truths you'll want to learn and apply.

This book looks at the lives of Paul, Timothy and Titus and draws lessons from their lives that can help us today. Their lives will educate, motivate, encourage and challenge us as we seek to serve the Lord here and now. Despite their flaws and faults, God used them greatly.

He can and will use you greatly as well. The Bible is His training manual. The lives and writings of Paul, Timothy and Titus are specifically for church leaders and pastors. As you read this book, pray and ask God to show you His truth for you in it. Take notes. Write down what God wants you to remember and apply. He will bless you and use you as He blessed and used Paul.

I. THE PASTORS

A. PAUL

1. TIME IN HISTORY

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Acts 13-26, Epistles of Paul

BIBLE VERSE: *2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

TIME: AD 34-96

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Thomas arrives in India and starts a church there. Rome finishes the conquest of Wales. Julia Agrippina wife of Claudius poisons her husband and makes her son Nero the emperor (later he kills her). Rome burns. Judea rebels against Rome so Jerusalem is destroyed by Titus in 70 AD. Mt. Vesuvius explodes and 20,000 people are killed.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Mediterranean area, Palestine to Spain

As the early church grew and spread, it faced opposition from within and without. A strong person was needed to guide the church in truth. Peter's gentle personality protected the first coals until they burst into flame and started to spread. Then someone like Paul was needed to control the fire and to get it to grow in the right direction. Paul was just the man, by education and by personality. God used Paul to form the early church, but He also used the church to form Paul and make him more like Jesus.

2. PAUL'S EARLY LIFE

Paul was a person who does everything 100%, whether he was opposing or supporting the church. He never did anything half way.

ANCESTRY Paul was his Latin (Roman) name and Saul his Jewish name, which was used at home. His great-grandfather, from the tribe Benjamin, left Giscala in Galilee to move to Tarsus.

HOME TOWN Tarsus was a prosperous, self-governing city-state of ½ million people. It was a leading center of finances and education. It was a very worldly city for a Jew to grow up in.

PARENTS Paul's father was a wealthy Pharisee. He made tents from the long black wool of local sheep. He was also a leader in Tarsus and a Roman citizen, which was a proud privilege for anyone. Not much is known about Paul's mother. Perhaps she was sickly, maybe having died when his sister was born. Somehow his sister ended up in Jerusalem (Acts 23:16-35). It could have been she was raised by relatives there when her mother died.

EDUCATION Paul was home educated. In the synagogue he was taught Hebrew. By 13 he had mastered Jewish history, poetry and prophets. He had an excellent mind and marvelous memory.

LANGUAGE Paul, as most everyone in his day, was multilingual. He knew Greek from infancy, it was the main language of the day. Aramaic was the common language Jews used in their homes. Hebrew was the scholarly language boys learned to study the Scripture. He also had a good working knowledge of Latin.

CAREER Tent making was a humble occupation, but the Jews believed that all boys should learn a craft and know what it was to work. Tents were common and were used by caravans, nomads and armies. Paul spent many hours weaving cloth, pushing the shuttle back and forth. This left his mind free to think about God and Jewish beliefs.

FAITH While he lived in Tarsus, he didn't feel at home there. Baal worship, immorality, and persecution of those who worshiped God turned his heart to the land of his ancestors.

HOME LIFE Paul's home would have been a haven of piety with obedience to God emphasized. Perhaps there was a stern over-emphasis on external conformity.

GROWING UP Paul went through bar mitzva at 13, which is probably when he took his first trip to Jerusalem. He would have gone with his father and other men who were making the trip for various spiritual and/or business reasons. This was not only a special time religiously, but Paul got to see his sister. Sometime later Paul returned for training and study with the famous Rabbi Gamaliel. Jesus had spent time with Gamaliel when He went to the temple for His Bar Mitzvah several years earlier. Paul's training was long and hard. He mastered not only the Hebrew Scriptures but also Jewish interpretations and commentaries on them: the Mishna, Gemerra and the Targum. He quickly outstripped his contemporaries with his intellectual giftedness. He had a very logical mind, an excellent memory, fertile imagination and analytical reasoning. Because he always expected much of himself and others, he may not have had many close friends. Many others in training were only concerned about external conformity (hypocrisy) and impressing others. Paul was always concerned about doing the right thing for the right reason. Outside he seemed to attain perfection, but inside he struggled with pride, lust and materialism.

RETURN TO TARSUS In his early 30's, Paul returned to Tarsus and became a leader in the synagogue there, teaching the Scriptures while supporting himself by making tents. Perhaps it was in tent making that he met Barnabas.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE Paul seems to have been athletic, strong and in good physical condition. Tradition says he was under 5 foot, broad shouldered, with closely knit eyebrows and a thick beard. He had a long, crooked nose. He became prematurely gray and then bald. After his conversion experience he developed eye troubles. Friends said he was ugly; enemies preferred the term 'repulsive.' His great impact on the world didn't come from his physical appearance.

MARRIAGE While much in Paul's life is unknown, we can piece together some things about him. To be in the Sanhedrin a man had to be married and have a child, so perhaps he was married at one time and had a child. Perhaps both died in an epidemic which was common in those days. How that must have broken his heart and depressed him! It may have been that, along with the events of April 14, 33 AD, that caused him to return to Jerusalem. On that day it got dark everywhere at 12 noon. At 3 PM an earthquake shook the world and the light again shone. These things were obviously supernatural. When word from Jerusalem about the strange events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth came, Paul was intrigued. Being a strict Jew, Paul would have wanted to do anything he could to stamp out this new heresy. Perhaps all his hurt and pain, the depression and emptiness came out in anger and hate to those who saw Jesus as the Messiah. Paul ended up in Jerusalem opposing this new movement with everything he had.

PAUL THE PERSECUTOR Throwing himself into this new venture helped him escape the memories of his lost family as well as give him a new challenge, something to fill the empty void inside. He lived and worked on the street of the tent makers in Jerusalem but spent as much time as he could with the

religious rulers. He became a leading Pharisee in Jerusalem. Men that he had admired and respected, such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Stephen, now became his hated enemies. Paul was one of the youngest Sanhedrin members, and thus one of the most influential men in Israel. His whole future was before him.

SPIRITUAL YEARNINGS Yet Paul was empty, searching for real meaning and purpose in life. The harder he worked at being a perfect Jew the emptier he felt. Later he explains that felt crushed under the burden of the law and tradition, but knew of no other way to seek God. He took his frustrations out on the followers of Jesus who claimed to have the peace he sought.

ONLY JESUS SATISFIES Paul had everything the world could offer, everything one could want. He had a well-to-do, important, supportive and loving family. He had the finest education one could have in both Judaism (Hebrew) and secular (Greek) knowledge. He had a successful career as a tent maker and as a rabbi. It seems he was in the Sanhedrin (the top 70 men in Israel world-wide with the power to govern in all areas of Jewish life). He was on the rise, and he was still quite young. He was near perfect in his religion, exhibiting outward sinlessness. He seemed to have it all. But he was empty and searching inside. He missed the one thing that alone can satisfy – Jesus. He had heard a lot about Jesus. Perhaps he and Stephen had been friends. They attended the same Jerusalem synagogue. Paul couldn't counter Stephen's arguments proving Jesus as the Messiah. Paul must have grasped the full implication of it all, what it would mean to him personally and to Judaism if Jesus of Nazareth really had been the promised Messiah. It would take away the one thing Paul built his life on – Jewish law and outer observances. Finally, since he couldn't silence Stephen's words any other way, perhaps he used his authority to have Stephen stoned to death.

FULL-BLOWN PERSECUTION That didn't settle the matter for Paul, though. In fact, things got worse. He attacked Christianity with all his strength. His personality and his zeal for the things of God, the emptiness he felt spiritually and the jealousy he experienced towards Christians who seemed to have everything he sought, all seemed to drive him to destroy and kill. He would burst into homes and synagogues. He imprisoned or killed men and women as well as children. Others were beaten and crippled. During all this, though, Paul was coming in deeper and deeper contact with the gospel. As he secretly attended their services and heard their defense at their 'trials,' he learned more and more about this Jesus. He heard from those who were eye witnesses of Jesus miracles and who had memorized whole speeches Jesus had given. He saw that the great pain he inflicted on them didn't take away their joy. Nothing did.

CHRISTIANITY SPREADS Finally the Christians in Jerusalem were driven out of town or so deeply underground that they couldn't be easily found. Jerusalem seemed safe from this new cult, but instead of putting it out, Paul discovered he had just spread it around. Like kicking a fire apart to put it out, only to realize that each spark caught on and started a new fire where it landed, Paul realized that those who left Jerusalem were taking their message elsewhere. Not content to just purify Jerusalem, Paul wanted the belief totally eradicated everywhere. He knew that if he didn't stop it soon it would spread beyond his ability to destroy it. It was already getting a strong footing in Damascus to the north. If it was allowed to take root and grow, there was no telling where this heresy would spread and what damage it would do to Judaism!

ON TO DAMASCUS Damascus had a large Jewish population, which made it ripe for the spread of this new message. Paul received official papers, gathered Jewish soldiers (Levites) and other officials and set out to move his headquarters to Damascus. There he wanted to end, once and for all, this blasphemy. Damascus was a 4-day donkey trip to the north, 150 miles away. They traveled through Galilee, past the Golan Heights, then by Mt Hermon. He must have recalled the adventures of God with His people at these places.

CONVERSION! Suddenly a light greater than the sun, the Shekinah Glory itself, shown on Paul and the group he was traveling with. They all fell before it. All heard a sound, but only Paul the words:

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” They were spoken by a Man about Paul’s own age, and instantly Paul knew Who He was, even though he had never seen the Man before. To confirm his suspicions Paul asked, “Who are you?” The answer was what he expected, “I am Jesus.” In a second that seemed like an eternity, Paul knew that Jesus loved those whom Paul was persecuting, and He loved Paul. Immediately Paul broke in surrender. All his old theological arguments melted away. It no longer mattered what his Jewish contemporaries would think or what future in Judaism he was giving up. Stephen was right, Paul was wrong – it was that simple. Accepting that brought what Paul had been seeking his whole life, for instantly sweet peace flooded over his soul. He surrendered his life 100% to the authority of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jewish Messiah, God Himself come to earth as man. Paul had a new Master Whom he served with unswerving dedication the rest of his life.

THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF NEW LIFE Paul was blind for the next 3 days. In fact, it seems his eyesight was affected for the rest of his life. It was a constant reminder of when God broke him, as Jacob’s limp reminded him of a similar event in his life. Those three days were spent without food or water, for he had no desire to eat. He was so focused, so overwhelmed with the newness of this it was all he could think about. Proud, independent, self-sufficient Paul had to be led by the hand into Damascus and cared for by others. He was no conquering hero, but a conquered prodigal. He had plenty of time to think. Stephen was a time bomb that detonated in his mind. He recalled point after point that Stephen made, word for word, and each one hit home like a sharp sword. How could he have been so blind? How could he have missed it? It was so clear, so very clear to him now. Guilt and remorse washed over him in waves, followed by grace and peace. The words of Stephen would stay with him forever. They would become the framework, the basic structure for the words Paul himself would speak. Now Paul would be speaking Stephen’s words. It was as if Stephen still lived – certainly his message lived on. Then God sent a man named Ananias to Paul. That was quite an act of faith. The Christians in Damascus had been praying Paul wouldn’t come, and if he did wouldn’t find them! Through Ananias, Paul received his sight and publicly showed his new faith by adult baptism (immersion). Paul spent the next few days in Damascus and at once preached that Jesus was the Messiah in the synagogues. What a time that must have been! Some probably thought that he was using this as a trick to sneak into the church and find out who was a Christian so he could have them killed. Because of this uproar, he couldn’t stay in Damascus long, though.

BASIC TRAINING Paul spent the next three years in the Arabian desert, from the summer of 35 to the summer of 37 AD. He fled partly to protect his life but also to learn more about his new faith. He learned to depend on God during these years. God taught him spiritual truths and how to apply the information he already knew about the Old Testament to Christianity. Perhaps he personally met with Jesus for instruction. He had time to think, reflect, digest and integrate this new world view into his life. He witnessed to and taught others he happened upon, learning to share his new faith. He had time to grow spiritually. Something similar happened to Moses in the same desert. God used this time for Paul to grow spiritually.

APPRENTICESHIP During the summer to the fall of 37 AD, Paul was back in Damascus for a while, then in Jerusalem and finally in Tarsus. He started to apply his new knowledge in practical situations, gaining experience teaching and preaching about Jesus. Jerusalem was especially hard on Paul, for his conversion account wasn’t believed by the believing Jews, who didn’t trust him. Only his old friend Barnabas stood by him and encouraged the others to accept him as a brother in the faith. With the persecution now over and Paul helping spread the Word, a period of peace and growth came to the church. It seems Paul went home to Tarsus during this time, too. I wonder how his father and others there responded to this change in Paul’s life? Paul must have really desired to see them put their faith in Jesus, but we don’t know if any did or not. It seems he was beaten 5 times by the synagogue leaders, so he wasn’t any quicker to quit than they were to believe. Some say this is what undermined his health and that he was bowlegged the rest of his life. A complete break from family and Judaism occurred now.

3. PAUL'S MINISTRY

BEGINNING MINISTRY Then Paul went to Syria and Cilicia from the fall of 37 to spring of 43 AD – 5 ½ years. He ministered, but he learned as well. He traveled on his own as God was preparing him for the upcoming missionary journeys he would lead. He preached, planted and strengthened churches and learned patience through suffering. He may have even experienced death and come back to life during this time (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). There was a complete, total change in his life and heart. Now he had the satisfaction and peace which had eluded him for so long. His life totally turned around. Outwardly he went from the top to the bottom (a leader in Judaism to a rejected and persecuted Christian). Inwardly, though, things went from the bottom (turmoil and guilt) to the top (peace and satisfaction). Eventually Paul ended up in Antioch where a very strong Christian church had begun, and where believers were first called 'Christians' (Acts 11). This is where the story 'Ben Hur' takes place. Paul became a leader in the church there – not one of the top men but a leader in training. God was preparing him for the upcoming missionary outreach to Gentiles.

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY God led the church in Antioch to send Barnabas and Paul to spread the gospel to those who hadn't heard (Acts 12:1-3; April 48). They spent 2 years traveling through Cyprus and the southern part of Asia Minor telling the people about Jesus (Acts 12-14). They would first go to the local synagogue and speak there. Usually, their message was rejected by the majority of Jews so they then went to Gentiles. They retraced their steps coming home, revisiting the young churches they had started to encourage and train the people and leaders. In April of 50 AD they were back in Antioch.

JERUSALEM COUNCIL Because so many Gentiles were coming to Jesus, a conflict arose. Some Jewish believers said they needed to keep the law and be circumcised, others said that wasn't necessary. A council was held in Jerusalem in the fall of 49 AD (Acts 15) where it was affirmed that salvation is by faith and not works. It is all God's grace alone through faith in Jesus alone. This was a landmark decision for the church and its impact is felt by us today.

SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY Paul then revisited the churches he had started and gave them the news of the council's decision (May 50-Summer 53 – Acts 16-18). Silas accompanied Paul, and Timothy joined them later. They traveled to western Asia Minor and then into Greece, taking the gospel to Europe and starting churches there. They returned to Jerusalem, then Antioch.

THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY After a few months in Antioch, Paul and Silas again left to revisit churches and start others (Acts 19-20 – Sept 53 to May 57). They faced growing opposition from Jews as well as Gentiles and much persecution. There were many problems in the new churches as new believers tried to live as Christ commanded. God blessed their work and it prospered and grew. Paul returned to Jerusalem with an offering for the poor Christians there.

TRIP TO ROME After a series of trials and long years of imprisonment, Paul finally got to Rome (Acts 21-28 – 57 – 62 AD). However, he went as a prisoner in chains. His days of traveling and starting churches were over. Younger men took up the work. Paul continued to write letters to the churches he had started. Eventually he was released and traveled until he was arrested again. That is when he wrote to Timothy and Titus. Soon after, he was beheaded by Nero in 65 AD. (For more detailed information about Paul, see the section on Acts in my book "Bible Overview.")

4. LESSONS FROM PAUL'S LIFE

a. GOD CAN USE ANYONE (Lessons from Paul 1)

Sometimes God has a very strange way of doing things. When He needed someone to do more good for the church than anyone else ever had, He chose the very man who was doing more

harm to the church than anyone else. He used the same man who had been bringing death to many Christians to bring life to numerous unbelievers. The greatest destroyer of the church became the greatest builder of the church.

Paul was zealous for his Jewish faith and went from synagogue to synagogue encouraging the persecution of Jews who had accepted Jesus as their Messiah. He was involved with Stephen's death and approved of it (Acts 7:54-8:1). Then God revealed Himself to Paul on the road to Damascus and his whole life changed (Acts 9:1-9). He went from being someone who was persecuting the church to someone who was willing to be persecuted for the church.

No one who knew Paul before he became a believer would have ever thought God would use him to build the church. Paul proves that no one is outside of God's reach. No one is too bad for Him to save and use. You may have given up on someone because of their sinful ways or their evil desire to harm Christians, but God doesn't give up on anyone. You may think that your sinful past disqualifies you from serving Him, but God doesn't think so. God doesn't give up on anyone. In fact, He often chooses those who seem the most disqualified to serve Him because then He gets the glory, not the person. He is the God of second chances. He gives multiple second chances, as many as are needed. Perhaps He has given you a second chance. Perhaps He has given you a second chance many times over! That's the kind of God He is! His grace really is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9).

No one is beyond grace. No one is useless. No one is beyond redemption and service. It's been said that every saint has a past and every sinner has a future. So do not give up on anyone you are witnessing to and praying for. Do not give up on yourself. If God can use a murderer like Paul or David, a coward like Peter (denying the Lord) or Gideon (hiding in a pit) or a sinner like Rahab or Samson, He can and He will use you and me – IF we let Him. He does not look at our ability. He can give that or take it away. What He looks for is availability to be used in His service. Are you available? Are you willing to let Him use you?

PAUL'S ADVICE: God can use anyone who makes themselves available, and that includes you.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

Have you given up talking to or praying for someone who seems too far gone to be used by God? Pray for them now, and keep praying for them.

Do you use your own failures and sins as an excuse to keep from serving the Lord, thinking He can't use you? Confess that attitude as sin and commit to serve Him 100%

Do you know some people who have turned from the Lord? Have you given up on them? God hasn't. Ask Him to show you what you can do to win them back to Him.

b. OUR ACHIEVEMENTS DO NOT DEFINE US (Lessons from Paul 2)

Most of those Jesus chose to follow Him were blue-collar workers, men and women who worked with their hands. They were fishermen, farmers, carpenters or day workers. But Paul was totally different. He could work with his hands making tents (Acts 18:1-4) but he was very well educated and trained, a high-ranking Jew who outdid others in keeping the law (Philippians 3:4-9). He was a natural leader. He was gifted, talented and very productive. Yet he did not see himself as special or better than others. In his letters he introduced himself as "a servant of Christ Jesus" (Romans 1:1).

Paul knew he still had room for growth (Philippians 3:12). If there was anyone who could boast about what he was before salvation, or what he did for God after salvation, it was Paul. But he

never did so. He recognized that all he had was by God's grace (1 Corinthians 15:10). He admitted he still struggled with sin (Romans 7:15). He didn't want to fail in his service for Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:27). He didn't let his achievements make him think he was better than others.

Paul is a good example for us today. Too often we define ourselves by what we do, either by our job or our achievements. We evaluate others by what they do. Many feel that pastors and missionaries are the most spiritual people in the church. Then come other church leaders and workers. Last are those who "just" attend church. That can make us feel proud of ourselves if we are active in church, or like second class citizens if we aren't. But when we make what we do equal to spirituality, we are missing all Jesus said about humbly serving God and others. Despite all he accomplished for God's work, Paul knew that his value as a person wasn't based on this. His worth didn't depend on what he did for God, but what God did for him.

Do you think God loves you more when you do something special for Him, or loves you less when you fail or sin? Remember, there is nothing you can do to have God love you any more than He does now. And there is nothing you can do to have Him love you any less than He does now. Our worth is not based on what we do, but on who we are. We are blood-bought children of God, forgiven and destined for eternity in heaven with Him. That's who we are. Nothing we do can add to that or take away from that.

PAUL'S ADVICE: God loves us for who we are, not what we do. We don't have to earn His love, we already have it.

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

Are you guilty of evaluating others by what they do? Do you assign more worth to those who are 'successful' in life or busy in church activity?

Do you define yourself as a person or Christian by the things you do instead of by who you are as a person?

c. THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTENTMENT (Lessons from Paul 3)

Imagine going from being well-off, highly respected, a community leader and a very popular leader to being flogged, beaten, stoned and imprisoned? How well would you accept that change in life? That's the adjustment Paul had to make. Being content when one has everything is easy, but it's much harder when one has nothing. Yet Paul had learned to be content in either situation. When he entered a town, he could be invited to live in a rich person's mansion and share all they had, or instead lived with a very poor man in a hut. Either way he was content because he saw it as coming from God. Knowing he didn't deserve anything from God made it much easier to be content with less.

Notice Paul says he "learned" to be content (Philippians 4:11-13). Contentment must be learned. It doesn't come naturally. Have you ever seen a baby that was content, patient and understanding when its needs weren't immediately met? We are all born self-centered and demanding, thinking only about ourselves and our wants. When does a baby outgrow that? The answer is 'never.' Discontent is something we must fight our whole lives. Contentment must be learned and it isn't easy. It takes an attitude adjustment of trusting God's provision and accepting whatever we have as coming from Him. Paul knew that God would provide all his needs (Philippians 4:19) but not all his wants. Paul knew God would give him what was best for him because he knew God gave him the very best (Jesus) when he deserved absolutely nothing but eternal judgment.

When we say we want to live for God and serve Him, trusting He knows what is best for us, we must accept everything that happens as coming from Him. When we want Him to use us for His glory, we give up our right to make demands of Him and expect Him to serve us. In the Lord's Prayer we pray "THY kingdom come; THY will be done" (Matthew 6:10). We don't pray "MY kingdom come; MY will be done." Yet that is often what we really mean inside. It's easy to be discontent when life becomes difficult, especially if we feel God owes us an easy life. Contentment means accepting whatever happens in life as God's perfect plan for us. It means trusting and serving Him when things seem bad just the same as when things are really good.

Enduring pain and trials is hard. Even more difficult is to face it with a good attitude. That's what contentment is all about. It means we accept whatever circumstances we face in life as coming from God, no matter if we like them or not. That's what Paul learned to do. We need to learn it as well. That's contentment.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Be content with your life, trusting it is God's perfect will for you.

Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how content would you say you are? What rating would God give you?

When do you have the most trouble being content? Why? What must you do to adjust your attitude?

d. PAUL LIVED TO PLEASE GOD, NOT MAN (Lessons from Paul 4)

As Christians, we are facing more and more opposition to the Gospel. That can cause a lot of pressure to compromise so we aren't rejected for our faith. It can be hard for us to stand up and declare the truth of God's Word when we know we won't be received very well and we won't be popular for saying it. It was hard for Paul as well, but he did it (Galatians 1:10). He never sugar-coated the truth so it would be better received. He never worried about what others might think of him. He was only concerned with what God thought of him.

He would have liked to have everyone think well of him, but he knew that wouldn't happen (Matthew 5:11-12). In fact, he knew that if everyone did agree with him then something was wrong and he wasn't standing up for God's truth (Luke 6:26).

It's tempting today to try to be a Christian but not say or do anything that will offend others because we don't want their criticism or rejection. It's easy to become too dependent on what others think and say about us. Fear of others can be a big problem. We can't fear both God and man. It's one or the other.

We can see the lives of many around us who do all they can to be popular and well-liked by everyone. We may even envy them. But would you really change places with them if you could? Would you give up Jesus and all you have from Him just to be popular? How much better it is to have Jesus' approval and smile than that of others around you. If you believe He is the Truth you have a responsibility to share His truth with others. Withholding the solution to their problems would be like a scientist withholding the cure for cancer from others because he thought they may mock him and not believe him. Yet we have something much more valuable and life-changing than even a cure for cancer. We have the answer to all man's needs. Don't keep it to yourself. Don't fear how others may react. Like Paul, live to please God, not man.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Faithfully serve God no matter what others think.

Galatians 1:10 Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Luke 6:26 Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

Who are you living to please? Whose opinion of you are you most aware of, people's or God's?

When are you most tempted to avoid standing up for the truth of God's Word? Why? Ask God to give you courage when you need it.

5. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM PAUL'S SHIPWRECK

READ Acts 27:1 – 28:10

Paul is one of the greatest leaders in the history of the church. God used him in mighty ways to start churches and to write more books in the Bible than anyone else. There are many wonderful leadership lessons we can glean from his life, but we will look at some from the final chapters of the book of Acts, Paul's shipwreck experience. It is said that trials and difficult times bring out the best in leaders, and that is certainly true of Paul.

Paul was converted on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) and went to Arabia to learn and grow spiritually. He spent most of his ministry on three missionary journeys, starting churches and writing letters to other churches (Acts 13-20). After 30 years of ministry, he was arrested in Jerusalem for something he didn't do and eventually transferred to Rome for trial (Acts 21-26). Although traveling as a prisoner in chains, Paul showed his leadership skills in several ways on that trip. There are important lessons we can learn from him.

a. A GODLY LEADER CAN BE TRUSTED (Lessons From Paul's Shipwreck 1)

When he was taken to Rome, Paul was a prisoner under the authority of a centurion named Julius who was assigned directly to Caesar (Acts 27:1). Paul was in chains, kept in the hold of the ship. His faithful friend Luke traveled with him at his own expense. In order to accompany Paul, he would have had to sign papers becoming Paul's slave. That was the only way he could go. While Paul gets the recognition and credit for all he did, it wouldn't have been possible without Luke's help and support in addition to his medical skill and help. I have been blessed with several men like that in my life, including P. K. Moses who helps me with my books and conferences in India. He is a fine man of God and a great servant who makes all I do possible.

At the first port where the ship landed, Julius allowed Paul to go ashore to get some medical help for conditions that developed or worsened while in prison (Acts 27:2-3). Paul had friends there who could provide what he needed.

It was unusual that the Roman soldier, Julius, allowed Paul to go ashore. It means he must have trusted Paul and his friends. If he lost any of his prisoners, he would be put to death, so he had to trust there was no plan on shore to free Paul, and that he would return as promised. What did Paul do to earn such respect and trust from a man who had just met him?

Those who knew Paul were convinced he cared about them and did all he could for their good (Matthew 20:25-28). He could be trusted to keep his word. They knew he wasn't just using them for his own purposes. He treated everyone this way: free and slaves, adults and children, men and women, high social standing and low standing. Jesus did the same thing. Paul served others and didn't expect them to serve him. Trust comes through integrity and character (1 Timothy 3:2, 7).

That is true of us today as well. We must have a reputation as someone who can be trusted to keep his word and to do what is right. A godly leader must be trusted.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Be a person whom others know can be trusted.

Do people trust you? Do you have a reputation, even among those who don't know you very well, of being honest and keeping your word? Do the people you work with know you put their needs before your own? Do you treat all the same, whatever their age, sex, wealth or social status?

b. A GODLY LEADER INITIATES (Lessons From Paul's Shipwreck 2)

Paul and Luke next sailed for a few days until landing at another port (Acts 27:4-5). There they switched to a larger ship carrying grain from Egypt to Rome (Acts 27:6), which would be safer for sailing in the open sea. There were 276 passengers on board. As they traveled on the new ship, they tried sailing against the winds, and it was hard sailing. They again landed, this time at a place on the island of Crete (Acts 27:7-9a). By now it was early October and too late to make the long trip to Rome. Strong winds and hurricane conditions were beginning, making sailing too dangerous until the spring. Despite being a prisoner, Paul warned the leaders that it would be dangerous trying to go on (Acts 27:9b). Trying to cross now could be disastrous.

It wasn't Paul's place to speak. The captain and the owner of the ship had the final say, yet Paul spoke up. That was a courageous thing to do. He had a strong conviction about what needed to be done so he shared it. He was gentle and polite, but he put himself into the position of a leader. He didn't criticize or put down the others. Nor did he demand to have his way. He didn't use anger to force his will. But he did state what he felt. He stepped into a leadership role when needed.

God expects pastors to be leaders (1 Peter 5:1-4). For some that is easy, but for others very hard. Being a leader came naturally to Peter for he liked to be surrounded by people who would listen to him. But it wasn't until he learned to put Jesus first in his life that he became a godly leader. For those who are shy or reserved it's harder to be in front of others and make decisions for the group. I am that kind of person. It's always been hard for me to initiate and lead. I do better at finding what the majority want and going that way, or letting someone more outgoing than I take over leadership. But I know that isn't right. Since God gave me leadership over the people and ministry under my responsibility, He also will give me the guidance I need to lead them. I need to trust that what God wants is right and best, and follow it. It's especially hard for me when someone criticizes me or opposes my leadership. Being a leader isn't about being popular and liked by everyone. It's not about pleasing the people but about pleasing God. That is what Paul did, and what we all must do. A leader must stand up and lead when the need arises.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Take the initiative to lead when necessary.

Is it hard or easy for you to lead? If it is easy, do you make sure you are doing what God wants and not just what you want?

If it is hard, what do you do to have victory over your fear and stand for what you know God wants?

Can you think of a time you initiated and lead as God wanted? How did it turn out? Think about a time you hesitated to lead, or went your own way instead of God's way? How did that turn out?

c. A GODLY LEADER IS STRONG DURING DIFFICULTIES (Lessons From Paul's Shipwreck 3)

Although Paul didn't think it was the right thing to do, the captain and owner of the ship both decided to sail. They wanted to get to a better place to spend the winter until they could go the rest of the way to Rome. They only needed to go 40 miles to get to a safe winter harbor, and it seemed like a safe gamble (Acts 27:11-13). But after they started the short trip, the weather quickly changed and a

hurricane hit them (Acts 27:14-15). They couldn't control the direction of the ship and did all they could to keep the ship from sinking, even throwing all the cargo and equipment overboard to lighten the ship (Acts 27:16-19).

The storm continued without stopping for many days. Everyone was awake trying to help keep the ship afloat. It was impossible to eat or sleep. At any moment the ship could break apart and they would drown. The emotional and physical stress was tremendous, and after many days of this they were exhausted and gave up hope of surviving (Acts 27:20-21a).

It was at this time that Paul's leadership instincts came into play. He stood up and reminded everyone that if they had listened to him, they wouldn't have had this happen (Acts 27:21). He wasn't trying to show that he was right and they were wrong, he wanted them to realize he knew what he was talking about. They didn't listen to him before, but now maybe they would. Paul tells everyone to not fear dying, for God had assured him that they would all survive. The ship would be lost, but they would be safe (Acts 27:22-24). Paul believed what God told him and confidently passed it on to the others. He wasn't expecting people to follow him, but to trust and follow God. God had spoken, and what He said would come about.

We must follow his example. When difficult times arise, we must step up and be a leader others can follow. When a person or family is going through a very trying time, go to them and give loving guidance to help them through. If your church is facing a trial or attack, from within or without, stand up and lead the people as God directs you. The pastor is the leader and must provide leadership, especially in difficult times.

PAUL'S ADVICE: During difficult times, stand up and be a strong leader.

Are you able to declare God's truth, especially during difficult times? Can you call people to follow God and trust in His Word and promises?

Are you able to clearly discern God's leading for you and your ministry so you can pass it on to others? Do you stick to it no matter how difficult the circumstances become?

Can you lead with authority because you know it is God who is leading and you are just following Him (Matthew 7:28-29)?

d. A GODLY LEADER ENCOURAGES OTHERS (Lessons From Paul's Shipwreck 4)

A godly leader always tries to encourage and build up the people he leads. He doesn't criticize, scold, or get angry with them. Everyone responds to encouragement better than criticism. That's how God Himself deals with us as well. That's what Paul did with the people on the ship, even though their refusal to listen to his advice got them into this situation. He encouraged them by affirming his trust in God (Acts 27:25-26). He set an example of one who wasn't afraid, but believed in God and trusted His promises.

Paul gave the people hope that they would live. He looked beyond the current circumstances to what God had promised. He was open and honest with the people, and they respected and trusted him.

That doesn't mean Paul never corrected people, for he did (Galatians 2:11-14). But he did by speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Jesus says we are to go to the person in private first, not bring it up in public unless he refuses to repent (Matthew 18:15-18). Even then, the whole purpose is to restore, not condemn. That's what God does with us (Romans 8:1).

There are many ways we can build up and encourage our people. We must always speak well of them, telling them we are proud of them and thanking them for their faithfulness. God doesn't criticize us but shows love and encouragement, even when we aren't doing so well. We must do the same with our people.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Always look for ways you can build up and encourage others.

Do people come to you for encouragement during difficult times? Are you good at encouraging people?

Do you do what you can to help even those who haven't taken your advice and have gotten into trouble because of it? Are you able to privately correct others in love?

Can you control your anger and frustration, replacing it with compassion and sympathy? Are you able to treat others the way God treats you?

e. A GODLY LEADER STANDS AGAINST SIN (Lessons From Paul's Shipwreck 5)

After 2 weeks of being violently tossed around by a hurricane, Paul's ship finally started approaching land (Acts 27:27-28). That meant the water became shallower and the danger of hitting rocks and being broken up were much greater (Acts 27:29). There was no way the people could swim to shore in that kind of weather.

While waiting for the morning light, some of the sailors tried to take a lifeboat to make it to shore by themselves. This would have left the rest of the ship without their help the next day when it was greatly needed. Paul discovered what they were doing and warned Julius that they must be stopped or everyone would drown (Acts 27:30-31).

It seems Paul's leadership was now respected and trusted. Julius listened to what he said and acted on his suggestion (Acts 27:32). Paul has proven himself and they willingly followed him. Giving someone a title does not automatically make them a leader. Those who show others they have their best interests in mind and know how to meet their needs earn it. As a prisoner who most likely would die a cruel death in Rome, Paul should have been the one trying to escape. Instead, he stopped others from doing so for the good of the group. He is not looking out for himself and personal gain, but for the good of everyone.

Notice, too, that Paul didn't confront the fleeing sailors himself, but went to the one in authority to do so. He followed the chain of command. There are times we may be tempted to take things into our own hands, but it is better to work with the authority, be it the father of a family, the local government, or the head of a business. The same is true when dealing with people who are part of someone else's ministry or church.

It is true we must encourage and build up our people, but when there is sin the sin must be addressed. We are to attack the sin but love and encourage the sinner. Never attack the person, just the sin. Point out sin and the solution. That's what Paul did.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Take a courageous stand against sin.

Are you able to stand against sin, no matter who does it or for what reason?

Can you point out sin in love, privately at first, in a way that will restore the offending person?

f. A GODLY LEADER SETS A GOOD EXAMPLE (Lessons From Paul's Shipwreck 6)

The ship taking Paul to Rome was tossed around by a hurricane. It was clear the ship would soon break apart and sink. Everyone was tired from fighting the storm. Knowing the next day would be hard for everyone, Paul urged the people to eat to gain some much-needed strength (Acts 27:33-34). He set an example by starting to eat first (Acts 27:35). This encouraged everyone to do the same thing (Acts 27:36).

Paul didn't just tell them what to do, he showed by example. What we say must line up with what we do. If we teach one thing but do another we will cause great harm among those who know us.

We can talk about self-control, patience, sacrifice, humility or service. But that makes us responsible to put those very traits into our own lives. We have a great opportunity to influence others by what we preach and teach, but the greatest influence comes from what we do.

As leaders of the people in our ministry and children in our family, we must set a good example for them. We can't expect them to do what we say unless we first do it ourselves. We are always being watched, even when we don't think so. Little things, which we may not even notice, are observed by others. We need to keep a good reputation among unbelievers, but we also need to set a standard for believers. By setting a good example, we also show others how to live for Jesus and how to respond under various situations. How can we expect our children or our people to do what we say if we aren't doing it ourselves!

PAUL'S ADVICE: Set a good example for Jesus by all you say and do. Others are watching.

What example do you set for your children?

What about the people in your ministry? Do you see any bad habits or traits in them which they picked up from following you?

When have you set a good example for others? When have you set a bad example? Whose example do you watch and follow? Why?

g. A GODLY LEADER MINISTERS WHENEVER HE CAN (Lessons From Paul's Shipwreck 7)

The next day on the sinking ship happened just as Paul had said. The hurricane continued to batter the ship. It ship got closer to the shore before breaking up and sinking, but all the people drifted to shore on boards from the ship (Acts 27:37-41). The soldiers were about to kill the prisoners before leaving the ship, because if any escaped, they would die, but out of respect for Paul and what he had done Julius stopped the plan (Acts 27:37-40). Everyone was saved (Acts 27:41). But the story wasn't quite over.

On shore they built a fire to get warm and dry. There was a poisonous snake in the wood Paul picked up, and it bit him. Some thought that was judgment on him because he didn't drown in the sea. However, he didn't show any adverse effects of the poison (Acts 28:1-6) and the people were very impressed. Obviously, God was with Paul in a special way.

The chief official of the island welcomed them into his home. His father was in bed, very sick. Paul prayed for him and he was healed. Others on the island who were sick came, and Paul prayed for all of them. All were healed. Paul was able to minister to everyone and share the gospel to all on the island. They provided for the shipwrecked people all winter and helped supply them when it was time to leave (Acts 28:7-10).

Despite being tired, wet, and hungry, and having just been bitten by a poisonous snake, Paul saw an opportunity to pray for someone in need and did so. As a result, God opened the door for him to minister to everyone on the island. We see that throughout Paul's whole life. He was always looking for opportunities to minister and took advantage of all he could.

God says we, too, must always be ready to minister by word or deed (1 Peter 3:15). Times of great trials or pain can be opportunities in disguise to minister as we act and talk in a Christ-like way. Always look for a way to lift up Jesus in all you do.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Always be alert to any opportunity to serve God or others.

Are you always ready and willing to minister to others in any way you can, no matter how bad the time or what is happening in your life?

Do you sometimes hesitate to reach out and help someone if you are busy?

Do you ask God for opportunities each day to minister for Him, and then look for them throughout the day? Or do you sometimes get so busy doing what you have planned that you don't notice the needs of others around you?

B. TIMOTHY

1. TIMOTHY'S LIFE & MINISTRY

BACKGROUND Some people think all pastors must be outgoing and extroverted. They think pastors must be natural leaders and make friends easily and can talk to anyone about anything. But not all pastors or leaders are that way. Many are just the opposite, me included. I have learned a lot from Timothy, for he was shy and quiet just like I am.

FAMILY Timothy's father was a Greek who was not a Christian. He had a godly Jewish mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, who taught him God's Word and brought him up in the Jewish faith (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-17). His name, "Timothy", means "Honored of God." It must have been difficult for Timothy growing up without a godly father to help him grow to become a godly man. Still, Timothy's Jewish home in Lystra was a place where the Old Testament was taught for he knew it well (2 Timothy 1:3; 3:15). He put his faith in the God of the Jews at an early age (Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5). It is important to teach our children about God at a very young age.

SALVATION Timothy heard about Jesus from Paul during his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-19). Possibly his mother and grandmother also became believers at that time. Paul and those traveling with him probably were invited to stay at their home and that gave them plenty of time to talk. Timothy's family not only practiced Jewish hospitality, but seem to have had means to house Paul and friends. We can also assume Paul recovered from his stoning in Lystra at Timothy's home (Acts 14:19). As he grew as a Christian, Timothy earned a good reputation among the new believers in Lystra (Acts 16:2). Timothy grew up in a family that was Jewish and Gentile. Since he understood both ethnic groups, when he became a Christian, he was able to relate to and minister to both.

RELATIONSHIP WITH PAUL Paul became Timothy's spiritual father and mentor (2 Timothy 1:6). Timothy became the son Paul never had (2 Timothy 1:4; Philippians 2:22; 1 Timothy 1:2, 18) and Paul became the spiritual father Timothy needed. Acceptance and encouragement by a man he admired and respected helped Timothy gain confidence to be the man God created him to be. All boys need a man who can show them what being a mature man looks like. They also need a man to affirm them and encourage them as they become mature men.

TRAVELING WITH PAUL A year after he left, Paul returned to Lystra on his second missionary journey. Timothy was probably about 20 years old. He was about 35 when 1 Timothy was written and 37 when he received 2 Timothy from Paul.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS Timothy was a pastor and evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5) who planted churches and helped them grow. He had a deep spiritual commitment to Jesus and was faithful to Him his whole life.

PERSONALITY Physically and emotionally Timothy was weak and frail. He was fearful and timid (2 Timothy 1:6-7; 1 Corinthians 16:10-11). He was very sensitive to criticism and rejection. Not only was he shy, but he was younger than most of the people he was to lead and this was hard for him (1 Timothy 4:12). The stress and anxiety he faced caused him to have stomach problems (1 Timothy 5:23).

MINISTRY Timothy joined Paul and Silas in traveling and telling the good news of Jesus. He became one of Paul's trusted partners in ministry. He was one of Paul's leading troubleshooters. He was sent from Berea to Thessalonica (Acts 17:14; 1 Thessalonians 3:2). Then with Silas he joined Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:6) and stayed with him there (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1). Later he was sent back to Corinth to correct some wrong practices and beliefs (1 Corinthians 4:15-16). Troubles continued in Corinth so Timothy went there again (Romans 16:21; 2 Corinthians 1:19). Timothy was with Paul when he was in prison in Rome (Colossians 1:1; Philemon 1; Philippians 1:1). Paul sent Timothy back and forth to Philippi as his representative (Philippians 2:19)

TIMOTHY IN EPHESUS After Paul was released from prison one of the places he visited was Ephesus. When he left, he put Timothy in charge there. Timothy spent much time in Ephesus, correcting disorderly people (Acts 19:22). Ephesus had some strong women and weak, worldly men as well as false teachers. They opposed Timothy's leadership. Timothy got discouraged by the difficulties he faced in Ephesus and wanted to leave. That's why Paul wrote him the letters of 1st and 2nd Timothy encouraging him to stay and fight the good fight (1 Timothy 1:18-19). In 1 Timothy we see some of the problems he faced there. Some women were bossy and out of place (2:11-15), there was disorder in the church (3:14-15) and some were living in sin (4:6). He received a lot of criticism because of his youth and shyness (4:12-16). People were gossiping about him (5:19). There were power struggles among some of the people (5:21-22). No wonder he had stomach problems (5:23) and wanted to leave!

IMPORTANCE OF EPHESUS When Paul was arrested for the second time, Timothy went to join him. After Paul's death he went back to work in Ephesus, for it was a very important, strategic church. When persecution scattered the Christians in Jerusalem, the church in Antioch became the leading church. Then the center moved to Ephesus and was there for many years until it moved to Rome. Mary, mother of Jesus, and the apostle John lived in Ephesus. Numerous important church leaders came from there, including Ignatius and Polycarp. Important church councils took place there. Unfortunately, the church didn't stay faithful. Jesus called it the church that lost its first love (Revelation 2:1-7).

TIMOTHY'S DEATH Timothy faithfully served God his whole life. He was martyred during the reign of Domitian or Nerva (about 97 AD). He overcame his fear, stood for his faith and died for it.

2. LESSONS FROM TIMOTHY

a. TIMOTHY'S EXAMPLE (Life of Timothy 1)

Timothy had his struggles with fear and discouragement, but he stayed faithful to the end. There are many lessons we can learn from in Timothy's life.

1. He had a servant's heart (Acts 19:22). He was willing to serve instead of being served. Church leaders today know they are to be servants, but some expect the people in their church to serve them instead. *How would you rate yourself as a servant? How would your wife and children rate you? How does God rate you? What can you do to become more of a servant like Jesus?* Ask Jesus every day to help you be a servant like Him.

2. He was available (Acts 20:4). When Paul needed Timothy to come help him, he did. When he needed someone to go take care of a problem in one of the churches, he went. He was available to go where needed and do whatever helped Paul and the church. He wasn't trying to advance himself or grow a bigger church. He was available to serve in whatever way he was needed. God can use a man like that in a great way! *Are you available for God to use you, or do you have your*

own ideas about what you want to accomplish? Do you ask God to show you what He wants you to do or do you tell Him what you want Him to do so you can achieve your goals?

3. He was teachable (2 Timothy 3:10-11). Timothy wanted to learn all he could from Paul. He was open to correction when needed. He didn't think he knew it all or was always right. *How do you respond when someone corrects you? How do you react when you are wrong? How willing are you to learn from others?*

4. He genuinely cared for others (Philippians 2:19-20). When Paul sent Timothy to the church at Philippi he said about Timothy: "I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare" (Philippians 1:19-20). "Genuine" means he was sincere and sensitive. He really cared about others. *Do you really care about the people God has given you to influence, or do you get impatient and annoyed with them? Do you think about what they should do for you, or what you can do for them?* Timothy really cared about people, even the ones who were critical of him.

5. He was faithful (1 Corinthians 4:17) Timothy had a reputation for being faithful in all he did, and Paul recognized that in him. Timothy didn't just know the truth of God's Word, he put it into practice his own life. *Do you always practice what you preach? Are there areas in your life where you know improvement must be made? Do you preach and teach things your listeners should do or not do, but don't carry them out in your own life?*

6. He trained others (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:2). Timothy patterned his life after Paul, and he trained others to pattern their lives after his. He passed on what he knew and disciplined others. He mentored church leaders. *Who are you mentoring? Whose life are you building in to so they follow Jesus as you also follow Him?*

7. He learned to overcome his fear (1 Timothy 1:7; Philippians 4:6-7, 13) Timothy struggled with fear of people, fear of criticism and rejection, fear of failure and probably other fears as well. Paul encouraged him to face his fears instead of running from them and he did. He learned to gain victory over them. *What are your greatest fears in life? How do they impact your ministry? What are you doing to get victory over them?* Here are some promises to help you overcome fear: Proverbs 3:25; Isaiah 14:3; Psalm 34:4; Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13; 1 Samuel 17:45-47; 2 Samuel 22:33-35, 40-41; Philippians 4:6-7; 4:13; 2 Timothy 1:7; Proverbs 3:25; Isaiah 14:3; Psalm 34:4; Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13.

Timothy spent his whole ministry traveling from one problem situation to another. He represented Paul and faithfully served as Paul would have. There was nothing outstanding or dramatic about his service, as there was with Paul. But what he did was very necessary. What God has you doing is just as necessary. Serve as faithfully as Timothy did.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Follow Timothy's example in faithful service to God and others.

b. DISCOURAGEMENT: TOOL OF SATAN (Life of Timothy 2)

One of Satan's greatest tools against Christian leaders is discouragement. All of us must face it from time to time. Ministry can be very difficult and we often don't see the results we would like. People let us down. Satan knows just what will discourage us and he uses it against us as he did with Elijah (2 Kings 19). He did the same with Timothy, who tried to lead a church that didn't want to follow. Some people opposed and challenged Timothy and he wasn't always able to bring them under control. That led to discouragement.

Discouragement can also come when we are physically or emotionally tired. When we are drained, we don't have the energy or resources to stay strong. It's important to get enough healthy food, rest, exercise and relaxation to stay strong and fight off discouragement. That was part of God's cure for Elijah's discouragement (1 Kings 19:5-8).

Pressure can also cause discouragement. When we feel we have more to do than we have time, ability or resources, we may want to quit and give up. But remember, Jesus says it is His church and He will build it (Matthew 16:18). We are just to faithfully do our best, the rest is up to Him.

Another cause of discouragement is when we struggle with a sin that seems to defeat us. Timothy was often controlled by fear. When we focus is on ourselves and our failures, we will be discouraged. When we allow sin in our lives, we block God's Spirit from filling us with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Be alert to when you are feeling discouraged. Discouragement doesn't come from God; it is a tool of Satan to defeat and destroy us. Remember, God doesn't look at what we produce, He looks at our faithfulness in following Him. The results are up to Him, not us. We are only responsible to faithfully serve Him. We can't take credit when there is a great response to our ministry, nor can we take the blame when there is little or no response. That is up to God.

The best way to have victory over discouragement is to remember and rely on God's promises. He says He will always be with us (Joshua 1:1-9), never leave us (Hebrews 13:5), not give us more than we can handle with His help (1 Corinthians 10:13), His grace is always sufficient for whatever we are going through (2 Corinthians 12:9) and He will use whatever happens for our growth and His glory (Romans 8:28).

PAUL'S ADVICE: Be alert as to how Satan uses discouragement in your life and ministry.

1 Corinthians 4:2 *"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."*

1 Samuel 17:47 *7and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand."*

When are you most apt to struggle with discouragement? What must you do to prevent or overcome it?

What promises in the Bible mean the most to you when you are discouraged?

Do you know anyone who is discouraged? Stop and pray for them right now. Reach out to them today with God's truth to encourage them.

c. A TEACHABLE SPIRIT (Life of Timothy 3)

It's been my privilege to mentor several men who were learning how to pastor. It was a joy to train them because they were very teachable. They were open and willing to learn. They didn't mind correction and learned from it. If they thought they knew all they needed to know and that what they did was always right, I would not have been able to build anything into them. Their pride would have kept them from being open to learning and growing. But that was not the case, so working with them was a pleasure.

Timothy was a joy for Paul to train because he was open and willing to learn new things. A close bond developed between them, a father-son love and respect (2 Timothy 2:1-2). First and Second Timothy are full of Paul's advice to Timothy. He corrected him where necessary, taught new things where needed and encouraged him in all he did. When you read these books, you can see how open Timothy must have been to learn and grow. If he wasn't, he wouldn't have been useful to Paul or God.

The Bible says that people who are unteachable are fools (Proverbs 26:12; 11:14). Unteachable people don't realize they are this way, they just think they are always right (Proverbs 16:12). They see correction or suggestions as personal criticism and are offended (Proverbs 12:1). Their insecurity and fear of being incorrect make them unable to consider they may be wrong. It is their pride that won't

allow them to think there may be a better or different way. People with this attitude may pretend to listen, but they have already rejected what is being said. They stick with their way, even when it fails.

We all know people who feel they are always right and must have everything their way. It is bad for them and those around them. It is terrible when God's leaders are like this. God tries to reach them and help them mature, but they don't take advice from others as coming from God. They aren't open to new things God is trying to show them through others. Thus they even block themselves off from God.

If you honestly admit that sometimes you are not very teachable, then humble yourself before God. Pray and ask Him to forgive your pride. Yield to Him and accept His correction and teaching. Ask Him what you can learn from others who try to give you godly advice and suggestions.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Make sure you always have a teachable spirit and an openness to learn and grow.

Proverbs 26:12 Do you see a man who is unteachable and wise in his own eyes and full of self-conceit? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Proverbs 12:15 tells us, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise."

What is your first response when you are criticized?

How do you react when someone tries to show you a better way of doing something?

How do you react when you are wrong?

Would your wife or children say you are open to correction and new suggestions? Would God?

d. STICKING IN THE TOUGH TIMES (Life of Timothy 4)

Paul is recognized as the leader of the early church. We all know of his commitment and steadfastness despite much opposition and persecution. He pointed out sin wherever it was, even in Peter's life (Galatians 2:11-14). For him to admire Timothy for his commitment is a great complement, especially coming from Paul. He seems to have more confidence in Timothy than in any of the others who worked with him (1 Timothy 6:11-13).

Paul encouraged Timothy through rough times when leaders in the church in Ephesus were criticizing him and mocking his leadership. Timothy encouraged Paul through his long and difficult times in prison. They both served the church and each other in an unselfish manner. Too often today ministries revolve around the personality of the leader. When a church is built on and around one person, that is not good. Jesus is the only head of the church and shouldn't share His glory with anyone!

Timothy spent his whole life and ministry working behind the scenes. He was not interested in building Timothy's kingdom, just Jesus' kingdom. He invested his life in others and never regretted it. He wasn't interested in advancement, just in serving where needed.

It's easy to envy pastors who seem to have a more successful ministry than you do. You can become jealous of their popularity. When you struggle and others seem to have it easy, you can think God isn't being fair to you. Much of ministry is hard. Others aren't aware of what you do and you get very little recognition for it. For some, their whole ministry goes that way. That was true for Jeremiah, Isaiah and many other prophets. It may be true for you as well. Remember Timothy and serve faithfully no matter how difficult life may be.

PAUL'S ADVICE: When things get hard, stay faithful to your calling.

2 Timothy 4:1-2 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word;

be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage —with great patience and careful instruction.

Who do you know who is faithfully committed to serving Jesus as Timothy did? What can you learn from their life?

When others look at you, do they see the same kind of service, humility and Jesus-centered commitment as we see in Timothy?

e. ENCOURAGEMENT FOR STRUGGLING PASTORS (Life of Timothy 5)

Is there someone in your church who criticizes you? Have you been told your sermons aren't good enough? Is somebody making it hard for you to minister? Does it make you wonder if you should be a pastor? Do you sometimes feel like quitting? Welcome to the ministry.

Timothy isn't the only one who struggled as a pastor. It happens to young and older pastors. I faced some of the same difficulties Timothy did: fear of what people thought and said, dislike of confrontation, being a victim of gossip and criticism and opposition from strong-willed Christians who thought they knew God's will better than I did. More than one person wanted me to leave the church, even quit the ministry. I struggled with some of those for years. I didn't clearly see it at the time, but in hindsight I realize God was allowing it to cause me to face my weaknesses and grow in my faith. It was part of His plan to bring me closer to Him and help me become more like Jesus. I could have let it destroy my ministry and end my usefulness for God. Instead I pushed on and continued to do my best. Satan was trying to discourage me and make me ineffective, and sometimes it worked.

God never promised ministering would be easy or that He would silence all opposition (Matthew 10:16). He allows it for our growth (Psalm 119:71). Remember, God does not want us to get our affirmation from the people we lead but only from Him (Galatians 1:10). If we try to please others we won't always be pleasing God, it's one or the other (Galatians 1:10). The way to succeed in this is to stay close to God in prayer (Luke 18:1). The only approval we want is His: ***“Well done, good and faithful servant”*** (Matthew 25:21, 23). If pastoring was easy and fun, everyone would want to be a pastor.

Jeremiah is a good example of this. He was called by God to minister. God told Jeremiah: ***“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations”*** (Jeremiah 1:5). Jeremiah responded that he was too young and didn't know how to do what God wanted (Jeremiah 1:6). God reassured Jeremiah He would be with him, but that he would be criticized and rejected because the people would not follow God (Jeremiah 1:14-16). He was told from the start that his ministry would be a failure in the eyes of the world. God then warned Jeremiah to not fear people for He would be with him (Jeremiah 1:17-19). His message of coming judgment. Clearly this was not a popularity message because Jeremiah would be rejected and hated by all.

Jeremiah was God's willing servant. He was serving the Lord; the Lord wasn't serving him. When we agree to minister for God, we are saying we will do whatever He wants no matter how hard or difficult it is. We can't look at the response of people or how successful we think we are. We are just to stay faithful as Jeremiah did. He served for 40 years but had only 2 converts (Jeremiah 32:12; 36:1-4; 45:1-5; 38:7-13; 39:15-18). Isaiah ministered longer and had less converts (Isaiah 6). The people Jeremiah and Isaiah spoke to never did repent, in fact they martyred both Jeremiah and Isaiah. Yet in God's eyes both were faithful prophets. Remember them when you think you have it hard. Get your eyes off yourself and how hard you have it and keep your eyes on Jesus. After all, He was rejected, too, and if the world rejected Him, they will reject those who follow Him as well (John 13:16).

To help him, Jeremiah had God's promise: ***"They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord*** (Jeremiah 1:19). We have God's promises as well to rely on. God promises to meet our needs (Philippians 4:19) and give us His peace (Philippians 4:6-7). He promises to give us strength to do whatever He wants us to do (Philippians 4:13; Isaiah 40:31). He will never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:5-6; Hebrews 13:5). He will guide us (Proverbs 3:5-6). His grace is sufficient for whatever we face (2 Corinthians 12:9). He won't give us more than we can handle with His help (1 Corinthians 10:13) and He will use all that happens for our growth and His glory (Romans 8:28). Therefore we don't have to fear anyone or anything (Psalm 118:6; Hebrews 13:6).

Don't expect the ministry to be easy, not if you are following God 100% and serving Him alone. Don't let it bother you when others despise you (1 Timothy 4:12). Never give in to fear (2 Timothy 1:7) but be strong in God's grace (2 Timothy 2:1).

"I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matthew 10:16).

"It is good that I was afflicted," the psalmist said. "That I might learn thy ways" (Ps. 119:71).

What is the hardest part of ministry for you?

How is God using that to help you grow more like Jesus?

What promises does He give that you need to rely on during those times?

3. UNDERSTANDING AND CONTROLLING FEAR

Several years ago some hunters in Guam found a Japanese soldier who had been hiding in the jungle since 1944. His health was terrible and he was miserable. He was afraid to believe the war was over and for 50 years he hid. What a way to live! And yet how many of us are prisoners of fear in ways even worse?

Everyone faces fear. It was man's first reaction to sin — Adam and Eve hid from God because they were afraid (Genesis 3:10). Fear can be crippling emotionally and socially. It can cause many physical ailments, too. It is the opposite of faith. It hides under different names but all are fear: depression, loneliness, cowardice, inferiority, haughtiness, withdrawal, over aggression, shyness, timidity, indecision, doubt, worry and anxiety.

Fear can be sinful or sinless. Sinful fear doesn't come from God (2 Timothy 1:7), instead it separates us from God. There is no peace, and peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Sinless fear motivates us to do something positive (keep from pain or poisonous snakes,). You can tell the difference in yourself when you analyze what the fear motivates you to do: draw closer to God and be alert to the danger, or panic and lose your peace and trust in God. Ask yourself what Jesus would do.

The only cure for sinful fear is faith in God. When Peter was afraid the boat he was in would sink, he got his eyes on Jesus and, in faith, walked on the water to Jesus. Then when he got his eyes off Jesus and onto his surroundings he started to sink because his faith failed. He got his eyes back on Jesus and reached out to Jesus to lift him back into the boat. That is how it is with us, too. Memorize Scriptures such as Isaiah 12:2 41:10; 54:17; 2 Timothy 1:7; Revelation 1:17-18; Psalm 56:3, etc., and quote them to yourself when faced with fear to help you keep your eyes on Jesus.

Fear can make life miserable, but when we realize God is in control of everything and does what is best for us (Romans 8:28-31) we have nothing to fear. We fear that which we can't control, that which can cause us pain. However, knowing God is sovereign and in control of everything and He is

motivated in all He does by love for us should make us trust Him. We can either have fear or faith — not both. One drives out the other. Which do you allow to rule and reign on the throne of your heart? It's your choice, you know. Make the right one!

PAUL'S ADVICE: Fear is a great enemy of God's servants, learn how to have victory over it in your life.

BIBLE PROMISES TO USE WHEN BATTLING FEAR:

Fear of Death is gone for believers: Psalm 23:4; 49:15; 116:15; John 14:1-3, 6,-19, 27

Fear, Promises to claim: Proverbs 3:25; Isaiah 14:3; Psalm 34:4; Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13; 1 Samuel 17:45-47; 2 Samuel 22:33-35, 40-41; Philippians 4:6-7; 4:13; 2 Timothy 1:7

Fear, The Believer Has Nothing to Fear: Proverbs 3:25; Isaiah 14:3; Psalm 34:4; Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13; 1 Samuel 17:45-47; 2 Samuel 22:33-35, 40-41

C. TITUS

1. LIFE & MINISTRY

In many ways, Titus is very similar to Timothy in that both were trained by Paul and sent to minister wherever they were needed. We don't know much about Titus, though. Only a few passages speak about him (Galatians 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8:24). "Titus" is a common Latin name and means "I honor." Some scholars think that perhaps he was Luke's brother, because Luke doesn't mention himself or Titus in the book of Acts.

His home town may have been Crete. Nothing is known about his family or upbringing other than that he came from a Gentile family and had a typical Gentile education. Even his salvation experience is unknown although it may be that Paul led him to salvation (Galatians 2:3; Titus 1:4).

He seems to have a stronger, more forceful personality than Timothy and didn't struggle with fear like Timothy did. He had a strong affection and concern for the struggling church in Corinth. Paul used his zeal and efficiency as a trouble-shooter to send him to churches facing difficulties.

Titus worked with Paul in Antioch and went to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) as an example of a Gentile saved by grace without first becoming a Jew. We see him helping Paul in various ways. He worked a lot with the church in Crete and did evangelistic work in Dalmatia. He was sent from Ephesus to Corinth to collect money for the Jerusalem church (2 Corinthians 12). Then he joined Paul in Macedonia (2 Corinthians 7:6) and carried Paul's letter to Corinth (2 Corinthians). He worked with Paul and for Paul throughout Paul's ministry. Paul wrote the book of "Titus" to him shortly before he died. He was probably with Paul in Rome during Paul's final imprisonment.

Following Paul, he continued to minister for many years on the isle of Crete. Tradition says he died there at the age of 93.

2. LESSONS FROM TITUS

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT ME (Lesson from Titus)

Titus isn't nearly as well-known as Timothy. He assisted Paul like Timothy did. He also worked behind the scenes. But he wasn't Paul's number one trouble shooter. He also wasn't highly recommended and complemented by Paul. He didn't have Paul's love and father-son relationship like

Timothy did. He only received one short letter, most of which Paul already wrote to Timothy. His gifts and skills aren't recorded for us. He was just an average person doing his best to serve God any way he could.

We should be able to identify with him. Most of us will never be well known. We don't have special skills or gifts. We won't pastor large churches or do outstanding things that are recorded and remembered. After we are gone only a few people will remember us, and when they are gone that memory will also end. It may be hard for us to identify with Paul, sometimes even Timothy, but Titus is someone we all can look to as an example. He was a common, average person like us but he faithfully served God for his whole life.

How could he do that when there wasn't earthly recognition or reward? What did he get for his life's labor? He did it for God, out of love and devotion to Jesus. It wasn't all about Titus, it was all about Jesus. His reward came when he went to heaven, and he is now enjoying it for all eternity.

We are rewarded and blessed for all eternity because of our faithfulness, not because of what we produce (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). The world looks at the quantity of what we do but God looks at the quality of our heart in doing it (1 Corinthians 4:5). We tend to think that bigger is better so we think those who have large ministries or who do great things are more successful than we are. But God doesn't look at things that way (Psalm 147:10; 44:21; 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chronicles 28:9). He does not evaluate by outer appearances as we do (1 Samuel 16:7; Isaiah 55:8).

If we want to please Him, we must serve Him for His sake and not for what we get out of it. Our motive must be love for Him. The church in Ephesus was doing many good, impressive works for God (Revelation 2:2-3, 6). But they weren't doing it out of love for Jesus (Revelation 2:4). If they continued in that way God said He would end their ministry (Revelation 2:5) and that is what happened. Don't let that happen to you and your ministry!

PAUL'S ADVICE: Our focus must be on serving Jesus no matter what, not on our own advancement or achievement.

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

1 Samuel 16:7 The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

What would Jesus say about what you are doing for Him? Is it really for Him, or do you have a lot of yourself in your service?

Ask God to show you any wrong motives or selfish desires you have in your service for Him (Psalm 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.").

II. 1 TIMOTHY

A. BACKGROUND OF 1 TIMOTHY

TITLE: Named for recipient, Timothy

AUTHOR: Paul

THEME: Church Order

DATE of WRITING: 62 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Macedonia

RECIPIENT: Timothy, a young pastor friend

KEY VERSE: *if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ... But godliness with contentment is great gain. ... But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ... Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, 3:15; 6:6, 11-13, 20*

KEY WORDS: "Good" (22 times); "godliness" (8); "doctrine" (8); "teach/teacher" (7)

PURPOSE: Paul is providing guidance for his young trainee as a pastor. He warns him about false teachers and explains how he should operate a church.

THEME: Correct church order.



Before we even knew if our firstborn would be a boy or girl, God laid it on our hearts to name him 'Timothy' because he would be a servant of God. Timothy in the Bible is a fine example for anyone to follow. Born to a Greek father and Jewish mother, he was led to salvation in Jesus by Paul on his first missionary journey. Both his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, had had a fine godly influence on him. Because of his spiritual gifts and rapid maturity, and because he naturally got along very well with him, Paul asked Timothy to come with him and help on his second missionary journey. He helped Paul establish churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth. Paul sent him anywhere and everywhere as his official 'trouble-shooter,' to straighten out tough situations in churches which Paul himself was unable to visit. This went on for years. Timothy and Paul were very close to the very end. He was probably with Paul in Rome the second time Paul was imprisoned there. This arrest ended in Paul's execution. Timothy himself died as a martyr, killed by the Roman government.

BACKGROUND 1 Timothy was written about 3 years before Paul died. Timothy had been sent to Ephesus to solve problems while Paul ministered elsewhere. Paul expected to join him in Ephesus but was delayed, so he wrote this letter to Timothy instructing him how to carry on until he got there. Thus we have Paul's insight into how a church should run. Not being able to get to Ephesus was frustrating to Paul and Timothy, but certainly to our benefit.

I. MISSION OF TIMOTHY (1:3-20) Evidently things weren't going smoothly for easy-going Timothy. False teachers, domineering women, and church conflicts had him asking Paul if he could please leave Ephesus. It was so bad it was causing him stomach problems! Paul told him in no uncertain terms to stay and face up to the opposition. While that would not have been hard for Paul, Timothy was obviously of a different temperament. Thus Paul encouraged and supported Timothy in this difficult assignment. He gave him advice and guidance as well as reminding him of his obligation to stay and do the job. The church needed order and he was the one to bring it.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (2:1 – 3:16) Paul then talks about the importance of prayer in the church and that it should be led by men. He exhorts that Christian women should be marked by the inner adornment of the soul, not by the outward dress of the body. Their lives should express modesty and good works. Men are to be the leaders, women the supporters. Evidently that wasn't happening in Ephesus.

Paul then told Timothy what the qualifications should be for elders and deacons. The male leadership needed straightening up there, too. Who to choose for church leadership is always a very important subject. Since Paul couldn't visit there as soon as he had hoped, he instructs Timothy about how to choose and use leaders.

III. DUTIES OF TIMOTHY (4:1 – 6:19) This last section of 1 Timothy relates to Timothy's own walk and work within the church. Paul warned him about false teachers and reminded him of his duty to be a godly teacher. Paul talked about the church as a family and encouraged Timothy to treat the church people as he would treat family members: with respect and honor.

How does your church stack up against Paul's standards as listed in 1 Timothy? If it isn't meeting those principles something is wrong. If Paul were available, he'd come straighten things out. He isn't, but Timothy is. Be a Timothy and bring order to your church.

B. OUTLINE OF 1 TIMOTHY

Greetings 1:1-2

I. MISSION OF TIMOTHY 1:3-20

A. PAUL WARNS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS 1:3-11

B. PAUL TESTIFIES TO GOD'S GRACE 1:12-17

C. PAUL CHARGES TIMOTHY TO MINISTER 1:18-20

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH 2:1 - 3:16

A. IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER 2:1-8

B. GUIDELINES FOR WOMEN 2:9-15

C. GUIDELINES FOR LEADERS 3:1-16

1. Overseer 3:1-7

2. Deacons 3:8-10,12

3. Deacons' Helpers 3:11

4. Timothy 3:14-16

III. DUTIES OF TIMOTHY 4:1 - 6:19

A. SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITY 4:1-16

1. The enemy: false teachers 4:1-5

2. The duty: faithful ministry 4:6-11

3. The duty: Godly life 4:12-16

B. SERVING OTHERS 5:1 - 6:2

1. Men & women 5:1-2

2. Older widows 5:3-10

3. Younger widows 5:11-16

4. Church leaders 5:17-25

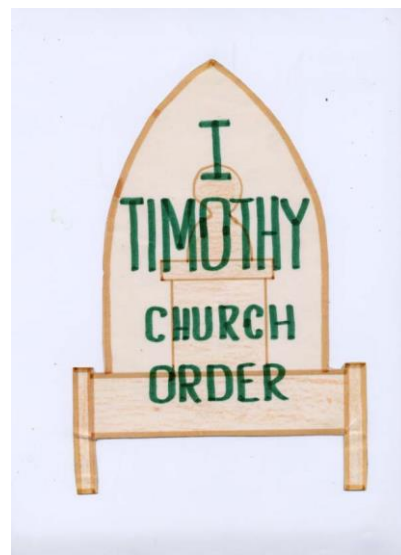
5. Masters & slaves 6:1-2

C. SUPERIORITY OF GODLINESS 6:3-19

1. Over false teachings 6:3-5

2. Over materialism 6:6-19

Close 6:20-21



C. ADVICE FOR PASTORS – I TIMOTHY

1. EVERYONE NEEDS A PAUL

When God calls a person to serve Him, He also equips that person. He gifts them and puts others in their lives who can train and guide them. As they grow and mature, He then leads them to younger believers into whom they can build. Barnabas disciplined Paul, then Paul trained Timothy.

Timothy's mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, were godly Jews. His father was not a Jew. However, he allowed his son to be named "Timothy," which means "honored of God." Timothy was taught the Old Testament growing up (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). Evidently, his family was well-to-do for they were able to offer hospitality to Paul when he was in Lystra on his first missionary journey. Perhaps Paul recovered there from being stoned (Acts 14:19).

Paul developed a close relationship with the family, especially Timothy. He led Timothy to salvation (Acts 15:6-19) and became his spiritual father and mentor (Philippians 2:22). Timothy was young, probably a teenager. He was shy and insecure, the opposite of Paul.

Paul returned to see him on his second missionary journey. He discovered that Timothy had been following and serving Jesus. He had a good reputation among the Christians there (Acts 16:2). When Paul left, Timothy traveled with him. Paul mentored and trained him.

Timothy traveled with Paul for the next 15 years. He assisted in starting churches and helping them grow (2 Timothy 4:5). Most of the time he ministered in Ephesus. Ephesus was a very important city and the center of the early church. Paul spent more time there than any other one place. It was an evil city under Satan's power. God did miracles through Paul to show His power was greater than Satan's power (Acts 19).

Many important events happened in Ephesus. It is where Apollos came to the knowledge of salvation. The apostle John and Mary, the mother of Jesus, lived there and trained many important church leaders. Mark wrote his gospel in Ephesus. John wrote 3 epistles from there as well. The church in Ephesus was very important and it was a great responsibility for Timothy to be assigned by Paul to serve there. Paul had been training Timothy for just such a responsibility. Everyone needs a mentor.

Paul was Timothy's mentor and Timothy was Paul's student. Every church leader needs to have someone to mentor them, like Timothy had Paul. Paul had Barnabas and Luke as his mentors. Each leader needs to have someone to help them grow. As they mature in the faith, they need to find someone to train, like Paul trained Timothy. We all must be building into younger leaders to prepare them for their future roles in church leadership. You need someone to help guide you as well as someone you can be training.

Paul had someone more mature in the faith to mentor him (Barnabas and Luke) and someone younger into whom he could build (Timothy). Paul also had someone of equal standing in life and maturity, a friend to share burdens with. Silas was such a man in his life. We, too, need a close ministry friend with whom we can share burdens and find encouragement.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Make sure you have someone you are mentoring as well as someone who is mentoring you.

2 Timothy 2:2 The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Who is your mentor? Who are you mentoring?

Who are your close ministry friends with whom you share your troubles and triumphs? Every pastor and leader should have some in each of these categories. If you don't, ask God to show you who can fill those roles in your life.

2. TIMID TIMOTHY (1 Timothy 1:1-3, 18-19)

READ 1 Timothy 1:1-3, 18-19)

Do you every get afraid? Some church leaders are quiet and shy. They are fearful of what might happen. That is something I have had to face, especially as a younger Christian. Timothy had the same problem. In fact, the reason Paul wrote 1 Timothy was to urge Timothy to stay in Ephesus and straighten out the problems the church was having. Ephesus was a very important city, and the church there was the leading church of its day. But fearful Timothy was facing difficulties that made him want to quit and leave Ephesus.

Paul was Timothy's friend and spiritual father, but he used his authority as an apostle to command Timothy to stay and correct the problems the church was facing. He starts his letter saying, ***"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God"*** (1:1). Timothy certainly knew who Paul was, but Paul is reminding him of the responsibility God gave Paul to oversee His church and its leaders.

"As I urged you ... stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer" (1:3). Paul had told Timothy this in person, but he still wanted to leave because the problems there were causing him stress and anxiety. He couldn't handle them so he wanted to quit and run away from them. He was discouraged and afraid.

What were the problems the church was facing? There were leaders and others who were teaching false doctrine (1:3-11), some strong-willed women who were pushing their wrong beliefs (2:11-15), disorder and disunity among the people (3:14-15), struggles for power among leadership (5:21-22) and gossip and criticism of godly leaders (5:19). Timothy was not taking a stand against these things. Some people were criticizing him and saying he was too young to lead (4:12-16; 6:11-14). The church had many difficulties that needed to be addressed. Some of these problems continued for a long time. Thirty years later, John wrote that this, his home church, had lost its first love (Revelation 2:1-7).

These were serious issues that needed to be fixed, but Timothy was having a hard time making changes. In fact, it was putting so much pressure on Timothy that he was having health problems from the stress and anxiety (5:23). He was afraid of confronting the people who were misleading the church.

Everyone experiences fear from time to time, some people more than others. Many church leaders fear failing in their ministry or being criticized by their people. I admit that I did, maybe you face this as well. We must remember that this fear does not come from God (2 Timothy 1:7). If we believe God is in sovereign control of everything, then we have nothing to fear. We can either let fear or faith motivate us. We can't follow both, just one or the other. Do you ever get fearful or discouraged? What do you do to have victory over it?

Like Timothy, we can want to quit when ministry gets hard. When we don't see the results we wanted and we face pressures and problems, we may want to leave the ministry, or switch to an easier task. We can also get discouraged by problems in our marriage or with our children. Financial or health struggles can seem overwhelming. Being defeated by sin in our lives can also make it hard to continue.

Paul's advice to Timothy is good advice to us as well. ***"I give you this instruction ... fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience"*** (1:18-19). "Fight the battle" is a

command, not an option. We are in a battle with our sin nature, the world and Satan and his demons. We can't win by quitting; we only win by fighting. We must fight our fears, discouragement and desire to quit by keeping strong faith and trust in God. By "faith and a good conscience" (1:19) we can have victory. When we know God's Word and believe His promises, we will trust Him and live a life pleasing to Him. If not, God's Spirit will convict us through our conscience so we know to repent and return to living for Him.

Serving Jesus can be hard. The battle can get very hard at times. There will always be opposition to God's truth and light. By keeping our eyes on God and our faith in Him, we can have victory over our fear.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Fear is an enemy that must be defeated at all costs.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Do you regularly spend time studying the Bible so your faith and obedience will grow?

Are you discouraged or fearful and wanting to quit the work God has given you to do?

Are you fighting your battles, or are you giving up and letting discouragement win? Trust God's promises to always be with you and give you strength for the battle and keep fighting with God's help.

3. APOSTATES AMONG US (1 Timothy 1:4-20)

READ: 1 Timothy 1:4-20

When I was a young Christian, I met some well-meaning older Christians who wanted to tell me everything I should or shouldn't be doing as a Christian. They felt they knew God's will for me in every situation. They told me how I should dress, talk and act. What I was to read, watch, listen to or do was all decided for me. The better I followed their demands, the more I was accepted by their group. Failure to do what they believed was right resulted in disapproval and rejection. When I conformed to their expectations, I started to believe that I was better than other Christians who didn't do so. My motive for what I did was fear of criticism by them and by God. I was trying to impress them and God. The result was self-centeredness and pride. Fortunately, God showed me the truth of His grace and set me free from that bondage.

The same thing was happening in Ephesus so Paul urged Timothy to correct those who were putting people into bondage. He warned Timothy about those who 'major on minors' (1:4). He had even stronger words for "apostates," those who once believed and followed the truth but now have turned from it (1:6). They didn't leave the church or Christianity, but stayed within to spread their lies and legalism (1:8). He explained that the purpose of the law was not to earn salvation or impress God, but to point out sin in our lives (1:19-10). He reminded Timothy that the message of salvation is "good news" (in Greek "gospel"). Legalism is bad news but grace is good news (1:11).

Then Paul used himself as proof against the false teachers and teachings (1:12-14). He is an example of God's grace, for without grace he would be nothing. He tried to keep all the Old Testament laws but that only brought him guilt and condemnation. He couldn't do anything to earn or keep his salvation. Despite his sin, God showed Paul grace by granting him salvation and appointing him to minister for God.

Paul is so grateful for God's mercy shown to him that he burst out in praise to Jesus (1:15-17). Since he was the worst of sinners, God's grace in his life showed God's patience and love for the people He has created. We must thank God for His love and patience to us as well. We should praise Him along with Paul: **"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen" 1:17).**

The false teachers like Hymenaeus and Alexander were not like Paul. They turned from God's truth and influenced others to do the same. Paul is ever grateful for God's grace in his life (1:19-20). Paul had been fighting the good fight (1:18) but they had not. This is a not-so-subtle warning to Timothy to faithfully serve like Paul instead of falling by the wayside like Hymenaeus and Alexander. It's a strong warning for us today as well. Know God's Word and turn from any teaching that isn't clearly taught in it.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Be alert to those who do not teach Jesus' truth 100% and keep from them.

Paul summed up his feelings in 1:15-16: ***"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His immense patience as an example for those who would believe in Him and receive eternal life."***

Can you say these words of Paul's? Read over them, saying them to God.

God doesn't expect us to be perfect, but He does want us to be faithfully living for Him and "fighting the good fight." Are you trying your best to do so?

4. PRAYING LIKE PAUL (1 Timothy 2:1-8)

READ: 1 Timothy 2:1-8

It would have been wonderful to hear Paul teach and preach. It would have been even more special to hear him pray. How did he pray? What did he pray for? In 1 Timothy 2:1-8 Paul explains prayer to Timothy. It gives us insight into Paul's prayer life and helps us know how we should pray.

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people" (2:1) Paul begins by listing WHAT they should pray. "Petitions" are personal prayers for our own needs. "Prayers" refer to reverent communication with God, connecting with Him from our heart to His, sharing our feelings and desires with Him. "Intercession" focuses on praying for the needs of others. "Thanksgiving" reminds us to always have an attitude of gratitude when we pray. Prayer is talking with God, connecting to Him on a deep level. It is sharing our needs, joys, questions and problems with Him.

Prayer is for us, but it is also for others. Paul tells Timothy WHO to pray for: all people, but especially for those in authority (1:2). Paul then gives three reasons WHY we should pray for those in authority (2:2-4). 1) For everyone's sake, to live "peaceful and quiet lives" (2:2). 2) For believer's sake, to live "in all godliness and holiness" (2:2). 3) For God's sake, because praying for authorities to rule in peace "is good and pleases God our Savior" (2:3). God wants everyone to know and follow Him (2:4), and it is harder to spread the gospel in times of turmoil and stress. The whole reason God created mankind is to have fellowship with Him. That's also why He came to die for us when sin separated us from Him. He wants us with Him because He loves us.

WHO are we to pray to then? Paul tells Timothy we pray to God through our mediator, Jesus, the go-between. Jesus is God Himself who became man so He could ransom us by paying the price for our sins and reconcile us to God (2:5-6). Paul thanks God for the privilege of letting others know about these wonderful blessings from God (2:7). Now that privilege is ours. Are you grateful for the honor you have of sharing God's truth with others? Do you thank Him for that blessing?

Finally, Paul talks about HOW to pray, the mechanics of prayer. ***"I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing" (2:8)***. "Prayer" is in the present tense, meaning we are to pray any time and all the time. "Men" are to initiate and take the lead in their families, church and nation. Prayer can be done "everywhere," not just in church.

The place doesn't matter, but the heart attitude does. It must be done in all sincerity: "lifting up holy hands." There are many positions for prayer used in the Bible: lifting hands, lying on face, kneeling, sitting and standing. No one is better than the other. What matters is the heart attitude, for it must be "holy." Sin separates us from God, it blocks our prayers. How can we closely connect with God when we have rebelled against Him by sin? Sin breaks human relationships in families, marriages and among friends. It does the same with our relationship with God.

Paul especially warns against the sins of anger and disputing (2:8). He is probably referring to the conflicts going on in the Ephesus house churches and why their prayers aren't being heard. Timothy must resolve these conflicts and provide godly leadership for the church so their prayers won't be hindered.

This gives us a glimpse into Paul's prayers and how he taught others to pray. His life was filled with prayer. The early church was characterized by prayer. They spent much time in prayer (Acts 2:42). Healthy Christians and churches must do the same today.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Men of God are also men of prayer.

James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Do you believe prayer is important and that it changes things?

How much time do you spend in prayer each day?

Do you make sure there is no sin in your life when you pray? Do you struggle with anger? Are you not getting along with someone? Confess your sins and turn from them now.

5. THE ROLE OF WOMEN (1 Timothy 2:9-15)

READ: 1 Timothy 2:1-8

Have you ever had problems in your church that you didn't know how to handle? That was Timothy's problem. Paul wrote 1 Timothy to tell him what to do to correct the difficulties in the church in Ephesus. He talked about men initiating leadership in prayer (2:8). Then, he gave some guidelines for women (2:9-15). Evidently some of the difficulties were created by women. He begins by stating that women should dress modestly (2:9-10).

Their appearance should be neat, sensible and clean. Their focus should be on their inner beauty, not just on outer show or appearance. Peter says the same thing in more detail (1 Peter 3:1-6). Perhaps some women were showing off their wealth and focusing attention on their appearance. God's people are to be known for modesty and humility, not for pride in their appearance.

Women aren't just to dress modestly (2:9-10), they are also to act modestly (2:11-15). ***"A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet" (2:11-12).***

"A woman should learn" means there must be godly men to treat her and teach her the same way Jesus treated and taught women: with respect and kindness. Women are equal to men as a person, they are just under men in duty and responsibility. An employer is not a better person than his employees, but he has a function that is above theirs. That is true of men and women.

Paul says women should learn in "quietness." He does not use the Greek word for "silence," because he is not saying they can't talk. He is referring to controlled speech. She must recognize that in God's order men are responsible for taking charge of the church and family. She must not interfere with her husband or pastor fulfilling his leadership role in her life. Paul repeats this command in 2:12: "she must be quiet."

To further help Timothy control the unruly women in the Ephesus house-churches he says they must be in “full submission” (2:11). When a woman trusts in God and submits to Him, she submits to His order of authority as well. The Bible does not say all women are to submit to all men, it only says wives are to submit to their own husbands (Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1) and women to their church leaders (1 Timothy 2:11-12). That doesn’t mean women can’t lead women or children, share their testimony, pray, sing or do similar functions in church. It is only positions of authority over men that are denied them. The Bible is full of outstanding women who served God: Miriam, Deborah, Esther, Mary, Martha, Phoebe, Anna, Abigail, etc.

Paul specifically says women aren’t to be telling men what God wants them to do. They can make suggestions, offer wisdom and opinions and share their thoughts and feelings. Any husband would be foolish to not listen to what a godly wife has to offer. Women often have insight and perspective that men lack. A woman cannot have the final say, overruling what male leaders think God wants. Woman can and should serve in many capacities in a church, but not as the primary pastor/leader.

Although the Bible is clear on this, I know of fine women who pastor. Often the role is thrust on them because there is no man to step up and take the responsibility. That was the case when Deborah was the only one willing to lead Israel because Barak didn’t want to lead (Judges 4:6-10). We can assume she was under her husband’s headship even when leading Israel (Judges 4:4). I have met many fine women pastors who have stepped up to keep the church going after their husband died. If it weren’t for them, the church would close and the people would have no place to go. I would never judge a woman who feels God is calling her to a ministry, that is between her and God. But we can evaluate her actions by the Word of God and Paul makes it clear a woman is not to lead men.

After making such a strong statement, Paul supports it from Scripture (2:13-15). He doesn’t say that men are to be the leaders in the church (and family) to restrict women, but to benefit them by allowing them to function in the role for which they were created. Women are natural care-givers and can experience a great amount of compassion and love. Sometimes they can believe they are doing what is right when it is really against what God wants, as was the case of Eve giving the fruit to Adam (Genesis 3).

Paul points out that Adam was the one responsible for the sin in Eden. He knew better and sinned willingly while Eve thought she was doing what was right (2:14). When godly men stand and fulfill their role as leaders in a loving way, following the example of Jesus, it is much easier for women to trust and submit to them as they do to Jesus. There will always be some women who want to usurp more authority than God has given them, but the majority are glad to follow godly men who lead with gentleness and compassion. Instead of focusing on how to restrict women, the church should focus on training and equipping men to initiate Christ-like leadership. That’s what Paul was telling Timothy to do and that’s what is needed today as well.

PAUL’S ADVICE: Women can make great contributions to a church so allow them to minister, but only men can exercise authority over other men.

MEN: Do you treat the women in your life the way Jesus treated the women in His life? What do you need to do to be more Christ-like in your dealings with women?

WOMEN: Do you show honor and respect to the men who have authority over you, trusting them as you trust Jesus? When you submit to Jesus, you are trusting Him to lead through your husband and church leaders, even if you disagree with them. If you can’t trust them, you can trust Jesus.

6. WHAT DOES A PASTOR DO? (1 Timothy 3:1-3)

READ: 1 Timothy 3:1-3

Being a leader of God's people is a great privilege but also a big responsibility. It's important to know just what God expects us to do. Paul tells Timothy, and us, in 1 Timothy 3:1.

“If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task” (3:1).

“Overseer” (Greek word “episcopos” from which we get ‘Episcopal’) is one of several words used for the person we would call ‘Pastor’ today. The “overseer,” also translated “bishop,” was the title used for the leader of a group of Gentiles. It literally means ‘guardian’ and was became the word used for the spiritual leader of a Gentile church (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Churches with Jewish roots called their spiritual leader an “elder” (Greek “presuteros” from which we get ‘Presbytery’). He was the man in charge of a Jewish synagogue. When synagogues became churches, they used the same title for their leader (1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:1,17,19; Titus 1:5-6). Literally the term means ‘commanding officer.’ An elder and an overseer referred to the same role: pastor. They just came from different cultures.

The term “pastor” (Greek poimen, literally ‘shepherd’) refers to one who protects, guides, leads and feeds sheep (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The fourth term used is “minister” (Greek “diaconos”, from which we get ‘deacon’). It literally refers to ‘one who waits on tables,’ a servant. Deacon is an office in the church, but the word is also used for pastors since they are servants of God (1 Timothy 4:6; 2 Timothy 4:5).

All these terms refer to the same person, the pastor or spiritual leader (or leaders) of a group of believers. They describe what a pastor does. The overseer/bishop refers to the pastor's responsibility to organize the church and oversee its operation. Elder is similar, but while overseer was used by Gentile believers, Elder was used by Christian Jews for their leader. He was a man with authority, dignity and maturity. The people looked to him for spiritual leadership as well as carrying out the daily functions of their group. Neither of these were expected to do all the work themselves, but they were responsible to plan, delegate and oversee the work to make sure it was carried out correctly. That is what pastors and church leaders are to do. We don't have to do it all ourselves but must make sure it is done.

Paul says in Ephesians 4:12-16 that pastors are to “equip the saints for the work of ministry.” Paul is saying that we don't have to do everything, but we are responsible to make sure it all gets done. God gifts each believer differently. No one person can do everything. We must use the gifts God has provided through others because all parts of the church work together, just like all parts of our body work together (1 Corinthians 12).

Leaders are to lead following the example of our leader, Jesus. We are to lead in mercy, kindness and by serving others, just like Jesus did. That's what the title minister refers to as well. A minister is a servant of God. We serve His people. That doesn't mean we do everything they want or expect. We do what God wants us to do for them, what is best for them in the long run. Good parents don't do everything their children want, they do what is best for the children even if the child doesn't understand or like it. We serve our children, and the people we lead, by doing what is best for them. We serve God by obeying and trusting Him in all things.

The term shepherd (pastor) sums it all up. We protect our sheep from danger, from false teaching, from sin and from those who would harm or mislead them. We give guidance and direction to them to help them grow and mature in the faith. We lead by example and word. We feed them by teaching them God's Word. This is a very important responsibility for shepherds of sheep and people!

“If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task” (1 Timothy 3:1).
Being a church leader is very noble, special, honorable and privileged responsibility. But it is a “task” – it is a job assignment that requires work. There is no better work a person can do than serve God. But we must do it His way.

PAUL’S ADVICE: Pastors are to protect and equip their people by teaching them God’s Word.

Would God say you are faithfully serving Him? Are you serving your sheep? Do you protect, guide, lead and feed them?

7. WHAT GOD LOOKS FOR IN A LEADER (1 Timothy 3:1-3)

READ: 1 Timothy 3:1-3

Some churches today choose men to become leaders just because they are confident, successful businessmen or important, educated community leaders, even if they aren’t living a godly life. When we make men church leaders just because of their status in the unbelieving world, problems arise in the church. The difficulties in the house-churches in Ephesus should have been taken care of by qualified leaders, instead they were often the ones causing the problems! Most of the troubles Timothy faced would have been prevented if he would have had good men serving under him. To help him find the kind of leaders God wants, Paul gave him a list of qualifications in 1 Timothy 3. (For a detailed description of these requirement, see V. STANDARDS FOR PASTORS & LEADERS below.)

“Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money” (3:2-3).

Paul says a pastor “is to be.” This is a command, not a suggestion. The leaders in Ephesus must be men like he describes. There are no exceptions. They must “be,” which is in the present tense, referring to them now. They may not have been this way in the past, but they have grown in faith and now can serve. It’s not the past that matters. Paul, who is writing this, was responsible for the torture and death of many Christians but God used him greatly. Also, “be” refers to their character traits. What matters is who they are, not what they can do. Paul doesn’t list gifts, talents, education, training or skills. He tells what kind of men they must be. God can give anyone the ability they need, but they must of their own free will commit to serve Him to the best of their ability.

He says they must be “above reproach,” meaning there can be no cause for blame or criticism in their current life. When wrong they must apologize. When they sin, they must confess the sin. They don’t have to be perfect, but must be striving to live and act like Jesus, the One they represent.

After this first general, over-all description, Paul goes into detail of what it means to be above reproach. He starts first with marriage: “faithful to his wife.” This means he must be a godly husband to the woman he is currently married to. It doesn’t mean he can’t serve if he is single or widowed, it means if he has a wife, he must treat her as Jesus treats him. He must put her needs before his own and serve her in love while initiating leadership in a gentle, considerate way. If a man doesn’t have a godly relationship with his wife, he can’t be a pastor. Peter adds that if he isn’t treating his wife as he should, his prayers won’t be answered (1 Peter 3:7).

Next Paul gives a description of this person. He is to be “temperate” meaning moderate in all things and “self-controlled” literally meaning “have a sound mind,” one who makes well-thought decisions and good choices. He is to live in a way that others honor and admire (“respectable”) and show hospitality by generously sharing with those in need (“hospitable”).

Because teaching God's Word is a major responsibility of pastors, Paul includes "able to teach" to this list. He must be someone who studies God's Word and then uses the gifts God has given him to pass those truths on to others.

This describes the kind of person he must be. In contrast there are some character traits he absolutely cannot have if he is to lead God's people. "Drunkenness" is mentioned first. The Bible does not forbid drinking wine, but it cannot be to excess. "Not violent but gentle" means he must be considerate and sensitive of others and not have a short temper. Also, he cannot be argumentative and want his own way ("quarrelsome"). He cannot be greedy ("lover of money").

Then Paul goes back and elaborates on the first character trait he mentioned because it is so important. He must "manage his family well", because if he can't take care of his family, he won't be able to take care of the church (3:4-5). He doesn't have to have a perfect marriage or perfect children, but he needs to be following Biblical guidelines in dealing with the problems and difficulties every family faces. He must lovingly and gently initiate solutions for every situation that arises, just as Jesus does with Him.

Paul concludes with a warning that a leader cannot be a new believer because Satan can tempt him with pride and defeat him (3:6). He must be a maturing believer who has experience living for Jesus and knows how to have victory over temptations and trials. Pride and self-centeredness are real problems for many pastors. Unfortunately, a proud or self-centered person cannot see this in themselves and they don't take it well if someone points it out to them. It's hard to grow in humbleness, but very important.

Then Paul concludes with a general statement, "he must have a good reputation with outsiders" so they will think well of the God that he and the church represent. This is the same as "above reproach" he started with and summarizes all he has said. All these traits together describe a true man of God. In fact, they describe Jesus, the perfect Man of God. He is the One we represent and the One we are to be like.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Pastors are to be examples of Jesus to those around them.

How do you rate yourself against these qualifications? In which character traits are you strong? In which are you weak? What can you do, starting today, to improve in your weak areas?

For more details about these important standards, see V. STANDARDS FOR PASTORS AND LEADERS

8. WHAT GOD LOOKS FOR IN A CHURCH WORKER (1_Timothy 3:8-16)

READ: 1_Timothy 3:8-16

We saw in the last section that it is very important for those who lead a group of Christians to have godly character traits so they can set a good example for Jesus. The church in Ephesus didn't have this and it resulted in many problems. The unqualified leaders were unable to correct errors in the church, and were causing many of the problems themselves. Godly leaders are a must. This applies to anyone in any type of leadership role in the church, including those who help the leaders.

The apostles in the early church in Jerusalem were so busy taking care of the physical needs of the people that they didn't have time to study the Bible and pray, so they ordained deacons to assist them by taking care of physical needs of people and property (Acts 6). Paul describes these people in 3:8-10: "***In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.***"

The godly characteristics for church leaders (3:1-7) are the same for helpers (3:8-12). "In the same way" means they, too, are to "be" godly men. They may have different spiritual gifts but they also must be good examples of Jesus. Like the overseers, they "are to be." Paul is commanding Timothy to have qualified people who in the present time are "worthy of respect." They, too, are to be honorable and have a good reputation among those who know them. They must be "sincere," having no deceit, dishonesty, hypocrisy or deception. They can't be "indulging in much wine," nor are they to be greedy and be "pursuing dishonest gain." They must be faithful in all they do (3:9) and must have proven themselves to be competent and dependable (3:10).

Again, Paul emphasizes the importance of being a godly husband and father (3:12). Those who serve are commanded to meet the needs of their family before anything else. Those who meet these standards and faithfully help the leaders will be blessed now and in all eternity, (3:13).

While all Paul has said so far is for male leaders, there is a place for females to serve as helpers of leaders as well. These women deacons can minister to women and children, often much easier and more successfully than men can. **3:12 In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.**

They, too, are commanded to "be" godly women setting a good example for Jesus. They are to be "worthy of respect" just like the men. They cannot be women who gossip, criticize or slander others ("not malicious talkers"). Instead, they are to be self-controlled, especially when it comes to drinking wine ("temperate"). Because of the responsibility given to them they must be "trustworthy in everything." They will be looked up to and respected. They will know things about others that no one else knows. They can cause much hurt and damage if they aren't mature, godly women who don't gossip or talk about others.

Paul includes this whole subject about what kind of a person a leader or helper must be so Timothy can correct the leadership problems in Ephesus (3:15). He encourages Timothy by telling him he wants to come in person (3:14). It would not be good for Paul to arrive and find Timothy hasn't corrected some of the problem areas in the Ephesus house-churches. Thinking about Christ's church brings to mind a hymn of the early church and Paul quotes some of it as a way of praising Jesus (3:16).

PAUL'S ADVICE: Look for mature, godly, faithful Christians to help serve in a church.

"I am writing these instructions so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth" (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

If Paul were writing you a letter about your church, what would he say?

What problems would he point out? What would he tell you to do about them?

What would he say about the leaders and workers in your church?

9. HOW TO SPOT A FALSE TEACHER (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

READ: 1 Timothy 4:1-5

When I was a young pastor, a man who was a false teacher came to my church, although I didn't know he was a false teacher until later. He was very friendly and everyone liked him. He knew the Bible well and seemed to be a committed Christian. Before long, though, problems started coming up in the church. Each one could be traced back to things he was teaching people which weren't Biblical. Because he was so convincing, many people believed him and followed his false ways. It was very difficult to remove him. Some people left and never came back. The same thing happened several years later, only this time it was a woman instead of a man. The results were the

same. She gathered a following because of her pleasing personality and acting very spiritual, but she was teaching things not in God's Word. False teachers like these people can cause much harm in a church, especially if the leaders don't stand up for the truth and remove the person. It wasn't easy for me to remove their influence, nor was it easy for Timothy. But it had to be done.

Paul described what godly leaders and workers are to be like. Next, he wrote about those who are ungodly, who work from within to bring destruction. Satan has always been more successful at attacking the church from within than from without. We must know how to protect God's sheep and have victory over those who would mislead them.

"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons" (1 Timothy 4:1). "Some" is a figure of speech meaning "a vast number." The nearer it gets to Jesus' return, the greater the number of those who turn from the faith. This isn't just Paul's opinion, "the Spirit clearly says" it and there can be no denying it.

"Abandon" is the Greek word from which we get "apostasy." It literally means "to turn away from, to depart." Some who claimed to be Christians will voluntarily turn from the truth of the Bible and reject some of its basic truths. But they don't leave the church or stop calling themselves "Christians." They stay in the fellowship and mislead whoever they can. Attacks from without usually make the church stronger as Christians stand together against the opposition. Attacks from within are much harder to defeat. People are deceived and start believing lies. This doesn't come from God's Spirit. It comes from Satan: "deceiving spirits and things taught by demons." Satan first did this with Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) and continues to do so today. He is very good at it.

We see many examples of this today. There are Christians, churches, even whole denominations who deny Jesus was born of a virgin and is both God and man. Many within the church don't believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Eternal punishment is rejected because they say a loving God could never send anyone to hell. Some claim to be prophets or prophetesses and say they receive special knowledge from God. Others teach that God wants everyone healed and wealthy. Still others say that we must do certain things to gain or keep salvation. They de-emphasize sin and push legalism and humanism. There are even some who go so far as to say abstaining from sex or certain foods makes you more spiritual (4:3-5). They claim to be knowledgeable authorities and speak with confidence and pride, but they are spreading lies for Satan. Timothy faced this and we still do today as well.

Paul calls these people "hypocritical liars." ***"Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron" (4:2).*** They may convince themselves they are right in what they believe, but that is because they have deadened their conscience against the Spirit's warnings (4:2).

Paul is reminding Timothy that false teachers will come. As the time of Jesus' return approaches there will be more of them. While they seem sincere, they deceive and mislead those who don't have a good knowledge of God's Word. Don't fear their opposition, stand true. Preach grace, not legalism. Know God's Word well and stand for it's truth.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Be alert to the fact that many will claim to be representing God but aren't if they aren't true to His Word. They and their influence must be removed from the church.

When have you had to deal with false teachers? What happened?

What should you do as soon as you know someone is teaching something contrary to God's Word?

Ask God to show you if you are ignorantly teaching anything that isn't true.

10. COMMAND AND TEACH (1 Timothy 4:6-11)

READ: 1 Timothy 4:6-11

Paul has just explained how to spot false teachers. He then told Timothy what to do about them: ***“If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed”*** (4:6). Timothy was responsible to challenge false teachers and correct them. He had to teach the truth to the believers so they wouldn’t be misled. In order to do this Timothy had to know God’s Word very well. He had to study it and teach it consistently.

Timothy had been taught by Paul and others that he needed to put what he had learned into practice in his life and not let fear keep him from facing the challenges of ministry. He was “nourished on the truths of the faith.” Now he needed to nourish others so they would be godly Christians and leaders as well. He had “followed good teaching.” Now he had to provide accurate, godly teaching for others to follow. That’s true for us as well. We have been taught and trained by others. Now we must pass those things on to other Christians.

Teach the truth so counterfeit truth doesn’t spread. The best way to spot a counterfeit is to know in detail what the original is like, then you can see where the fake deviates. That is true in counterfeit money, art or jewelry. It’s also true with God’s truth. Anything that isn’t taught by Scripture is to be rejected (4:7a).

“Godless myths” and “old wives’ tales” refer to popular beliefs that aren’t taught by the Bible. They may seem interesting and get attention from those who don’t know better. These things may be debated and argued over, but they are not true. Some people like to look for secret truths that others haven’t yet discovered. In 2 Timothy 4:2 Paul calls this “itchy ears:” wanting to hear something new and different. They are looking for a short-cut to spiritual maturity, an easy way to have quick victory in life without learning and growing. They are bored with the truths of God’s word and want something new and different.

It takes self-discipline to study and teach God’s Word accurately and thoroughly. An athlete must have will power to train his body (4:7b). Physical training to make our body as healthy as possible is good, but spiritual training for our heart and mind are much better (4:8). This is not just a suggestion; it is a requirement for all Christians (4:11). ***“Command and teach these things”*** (4:11). If people know the Bible, they will be able to discern error and avoid it. If they don’t know the truth, they will be open to all lies that the enemy spreads.

Timothy was a minister (“diakonos” servant), but Paul said he needed to be a “good” minister. Anyone can be a pastor, church leader or church worker. But being a “good” one is what matters. We must be effective in carrying out the responsibility God has given us. You may be a pastor or leader, but would God say you are a “good” one?

PAUL’S ADVICE: It is very important to learn God’s Word in detail and teach its truth to others.

Think of who taught and trained you for ministry? Thank God for them. Who are you discipling and mentoring?

Are you a student of God’s Word? Do you know it better than you did a few months ago? Do you have a deep desire to know and apply it to your life? Are you faithful in teaching it to others so they won’t be misled by false teaching?

Would God say you are a GOOD pastor or church leader? What are your hardest struggles in faithfully serving Him?

11. PAUL'S COMMANDS TO PASTORS TODAY (1 Timothy 4:12-16)

READ: 1 Timothy 4:12-16

If Paul were to speak at a pastors' conference today, what would he tell us? What advice would he give? That would be very helpful to know. We can study what he wrote to Timothy about pastoring. He would probably tell us the same things today. Paul gave Timothy characteristics of a godly leader (4:1-13) and warned him against false teachings and teachers (4:1-5). He also commanded Timothy to teach and preach God's Word (4:6-11). Then Paul summarized and concluded what he told Timothy to do to protect people from the false teachers who had arisen among them. He gave him 8 commands, which are very important for us as well.

1. ***Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young (4:12a)*** Evidently people weren't showing respect to Timothy because of his youth and inexperience. Because Timothy was fearful of rejection and criticism, he didn't stand up to those who opposed him. When we speak for God we have God's authority, so we have nothing to fear. Don't let anyone look down on you for any reason: your age, size, education or income. Jesus has called you to serve and if He is behind you, it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks.
2. ***But set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (4:12b)*** Don't worry about what others think, just live faithfully for God. That will set a good example for others.
3. ***Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching (4:13)***. "Devote yourself" means it is a top priority, the most important responsibility a pastor or leader has. We must know, teach and apply God's Word whenever we speak to our people. That is to be our priority.
4. ***Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you (4:14)***. God has gifted each pastor in different ways. No two of us are alike. So don't compare yourself to others or try to be like someone else. That just brings discouragement. Be yourself, the way God made you, and use the gifts He gave you.
5. ***Be diligent in these matters (4:15a)***. "Be diligent" means to take care, to be deeply involved in preaching and teaching God's Word and in using your spiritual gifts.
6. ***Give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress (4:15b)***. Make preaching, teaching and ministering in the areas where God has gifted you your top priority. Others will be encouraged as they see your growth. That will set an example for others to follow.
7. ***Watch your life and doctrine closely (4:16a)***. Knowing God's Word is very important, but if it is just head knowledge and doesn't affect the way we live, then something is wrong. Spend time in prayer, praise, worship and meditation each day. Don't just grow in knowledge, grow in your relationship with God. People will watch how you live to see if it matches up to what you say!
8. ***Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers (4:16b)***. Perseverance is necessary to keep going when things get hard and we get discouraged. It's not easy to be a mate, parent or church leader. Timothy wanted to quit but Paul said he must persevere, and not think of quitting. We, too, must keep moving ahead in our life and ministry no matter the difficulties or trials we face.

If Paul were to lead a pastors' conference today these are the things he would command of pastors.

PAUL'S ADVICE: A pastor must faithfully serve Jesus in truth no matter what difficulties arise.

Which of these commands apply most to you? Which are the hardest for you to follow? Why? What can you do to better apply them to your life?

Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Are you using them, or do you spend most of your time trying to do things that you are not good at?

12. HOW TO TREAT YOUR SHEEP (1 Timothy 5:1-16)

READ: 1 Timothy 5:1-16

I once heard a pastor say that pastoring a church would be easy if it weren't for the people. That is very true. The hardest part of pastoring is dealing with the pride, self-centeredness, stubbornness, rebellion and sin of people. I'm sure God would say that about us as well! I love studying the Bible and teaching/preaching, but ministering to difficult people can be a real challenge. People can be critical, rude, demanding and insensitive.

Timothy, too, was having difficulty with rebellious, troublesome people so Paul gave him advice on how to treat people. ***“Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity” (1 Timothy 5:1-2).*** Paul's advice is simple: treat everyone like family. Be respectful and kind to those who are older than you, even when correcting sin in their lives. Treat them as you would your own parents. Those who are younger we should also treat with gentleness and respect, as we would a brother or sister whom we love.

Paul then focuses on a situation Timothy was facing in Ephesus. The church helped widows with food and clothing, but just which widows qualified for support? When free help and food are provided, some will claim they are in need when they really aren't. Paul said there are certain qualifications a widow must meet to be supported financially (5:3-10). They must have no family to support them (5:4), because: ***“Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (5:8).*** This is the first condition and is repeated three times it is so important (5:4, 8, 16). These strong words show how necessary it is for families to take care of each other and not assume the church will do it for them. Yet often relatives expect the church to provide so they don't have to. Timothy had to teach his people that they have responsibility for their families and so do we.

There are other requirements to be met for widows to be supported by the church. They must have a close relationship to God (5:5), not live a self-centered life (5:6) and be unable to earn a living and they are over 60 (5:9a). They had to be a loyal mate when married (5:9b), have a good reputation as a godly person (5:10), have been a good mother to their children (5:10) and hospitable to strangers (5:10). Having helped other Christians as well as anyone in need (5:10) and being devoted to holiness (5:10) are also necessary. Limits must be set on who a church helps financially or everyone will come for free money and there won't be enough for those who really deserve it and need it. We must be good stewards with the resources God gives us today as well. Sometimes it can be hard to turn away someone who is demanding or who may complain to others about us, but we must be careful in how we use God's money.

Having talked about helping older widows who have a need, Paul then talks about what to do about younger widows (5:11-15). Should they also be financially supported? Paul says they should not be given money because if they don't work, they may use all their free time unwisely (5:13). They may put relationships with men and sexual desires before God (5:11). They may get involved with ungodly people, misuse their time, become nosey gossips and waste their life (5:13).

If those who can support themselves have to do so they will take responsibility for their own lives, settle down with a family of their own and grow to spiritual maturity (5:14).

To summarize, Paul says we are to treat others with respect, as a close family member whom we love. The Golden Rule applies here: treat others as you want them to treat you (Matthew 7:12).

We are to sacrificially help those who are in real need. But we aren't to support those who can help themselves or who have family who should help them. If there is government help available that must be used instead of church money as well. Not doing so just wastes God's resources and doesn't really help them. It enables others to not do their God-given duty. We must help others, but make sure what we do really helps them and doesn't just enable them to stay in their current situation.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Treat others with respect. Help those who truly need help but don't do things for others that they should be doing for themselves.

Are you following these guidelines in your family and church? Is there anything you, like Timothy, need to change in how you treat people or support those in need?

We are responsible to treat people as Jesus treated them, even when it isn't easy. Ask Him for patience, love, wisdom, compassion and kindness as you interact with others, especially people that are hard to get along with.

13. CHOOSING & PAYING GODLY PASTORS (1 Timothy 5:17-25)

READ: 1 Timothy 5:17-25

In 1 Timothy 5 Paul instructed Timothy about how to treat people. He talked about financial support for widows in need. That brought up the questions of financially supporting pastors. Should they work for their salary instead of taking money from the church? After all, didn't Paul support himself as a tent maker? Paul told Timothy just what he thought about a pastor being paid in 1 Timothy 5:17: ***"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."***

"Elder" was the Jewish term used for the leader of a synagogue, the same as "Overseer" was used of a Gentile leader. They both refer to the person we would call "pastor." Paul said there are two main responsibilities for these men. First, they were to "direct the affairs of the church." They didn't have to do everything themselves, but they had to see it got done. They were like the principal of a school, like the leader of a synagogue. In Ephesians 4:12-13 Paul says pastors are to "equip God's people for works of service." Pastors don't do all the work themselves; they train others to minister and serve.

The second responsibility for pastors is "preaching and teaching." Shepherds must feed the sheep or they won't mature and grow. The same is true of pastors as well. Teaching the Bible is how we equip others to serve (Ephesians 4:12-13). We can get so busy with all the other responsibilities and duties of leading a church that we neglect studying the Bible and developing good messages to teach His Word. That is very wrong (Acts 6:4).

Pastors who direct their church and feed their people are "worthy of double honor." A pastor receives honor and respect from the people to whom he ministers. He is also to receive financial support so he has time to study, pray and minister. If he works for a salary, he has far less time to serve. Pastors are as worthy of financial support as they are of respect and honor. How do we know Paul is talking about paying a pastor here? Read the next verse.

"For" means he is giving proof of what he just said. His proof is what "the Scripture says" (5:18). He quotes two Old Testament passages to prove that people should pay pastors: Deuteronomy 25:4 and 24:15. Not only do pastors need the money to live and minister, people need to learn to share and sacrifice to contribute to the ministry. God gives His people extra finances so they will have some to pass on to their pastors, but often in their greed they want to keep it all for themselves. Those who pastor well are to be honored and supported. But what if a pastor isn't serving well and people complain about him? Then what?

When there is criticism of a pastor, it must be proven by 2 or more people (5:19). If there is truth to what is said, the offending leader must be corrected (5:20). If the sin was publicly known, the correction and repentance should be public as well. It's important to be fair and impartial when evaluating accusations against a pastor. Treat him as you would want to be treated.

A lot of these problems with pastors can be solved by making sure the men who are chosen to be pastors are godly, mature men (5:22, 24-25). Don't be too quick to ordain someone young who shows promise (5:22). Give them time to mature. Make sure you know them well and watch their lives (5:24-25). If you put unworthy men in places of responsibility, it is partly your fault when things go wrong.

All of this is very hard on Timothy who is fearful of confrontation and criticism. The stress and anxiety are so bad he wants to leave. It is even affecting his health, so Paul advises he drink a little wine for his stomach's sake (5:23). Water was unsanitary and a little wine could help. The content of alcohol in wine then was very low, so a small amount could be beneficial to him. That was just treating the symptoms, though. Timothy needed to trust in God confront his fears to be truly free, and so do we.

So, we see that pastors who direct their church and preach and teach well should be given honor as well as a salary they can live on. We shouldn't listen to criticism of pastors unless it is proven by at least two people, but if it is true, we must correct the errors in a gentle, loving way. To prevent many of these problems, make sure those you put in position of authority are godly, mature men.

PAUL'S ADVICE: People who are shepherded by a pastor must do their best to provide support for their pastor so he is able to study, pray and minister.

Do you teach your people that it is important for them to give you a livable salary, equal to their standard of living?

Do you handle problems with church leaders in the way Paul tells Timothy? What can you do to improve?

What part of ministry causes stress and anxiety in you? How do you handle it?

14. HOW TO RECOGNIZE FALSE TEACHERS (1 Timothy 6:1-5)

READ: 1 Timothy 6:1-5

They say old people repeat themselves and say the same thing over and over. Paul is in the last years of his life when he writes 1 Timothy, and he wrote about the same thing 3 times, but it wasn't because he forgot he had already talked about it. It was because it was such an important subject and Timothy really needed to get it right for the house-churches in Ephesus to be healthy, growing churches. The subject he is bring up over and over is the problem of false teachers and teachings (1:4-17; 4:1-5; 6:1-5).

First, Paul clears up a problem between Christian owners and their Christian slaves (6:1-2). The slaves shouldn't take advantage of their master's kindness because this would be a bad example and not bring glory to Christ. The same is true for Christian employees. They should be the best workers and not take advantage of their master's compassion. They must do their best in all things.

Having covered that, Paul again turns to the subject so often on his mind when he thinks of the troubles in Ephesus: people teaching anything other than what Paul has taught them and what is in the Bible (6:3). These people are not to be allowed to teach or minister in the church. That is not just because of the wrong things they say, it is also because of the character people who are liars.

Outwardly these people may seem godly and friendly, they may be popular and influential. Many others may follow them, but inside they are full of sin and deception (6:4-5). Paul says they are “conceited,” blinded by pride and self-centeredness. They may claim to know more than others, but really, they “understand nothing” because they are ignorant of God’s truth. They like to argue because they have “an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words.” They enjoy getting in long discussion about minor, unimportant things. They are full of “envy” – they are jealous of other leaders and want attention for themselves. They don’t get along with others and have “strife.” Sins of the tongue are common. They are known for “malicious talk,” they criticize and gossip, they put others down and judge them.

Doing this causes “constant friction between people.” Their teachings bring disunity and discord among believers. Because they have a “corrupt mind” they distort things and don’t think clearly. They once followed the truth but “have been robbed of the truth” by allowing themselves to believe lies and move into untruth. In addition, they become greedy and want to make a profit from the ministry. They think that “godliness is a means to financial gain.” They use Christianity to get ahead in life. They try to impress others and use their position to get ahead financially.

Jesus also warned about these people: “***Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves***” (Matthew 7:15). Some may be true believers who have allowed themselves to go astray and turn from the truth, like Balaam (Numbers 22-24). Others may have appeared to be believers, but never came to a saving knowledge of the truth, like the seed on hard ground (Matthew 13:1-23). Thus, they do not deny Christianity but subtly change important parts of what we believe. The error grows and spreads and ultimately great damage is done. They serve Satan’s purpose for he is a deceiver and a liar (John 8:44).

If Paul saw this as such a terrible problem, we should as well. We must know God’s Word thoroughly so we can pick out any error. Then we must have the courage to confront it and replace it with God’s truth. Timothy wasn’t doing this and things were falling apart. That will be the case today as well if we allow error in our churches. It may be hard to stand against popular people or beliefs for we will be criticized and attacked. But we must stand for the truth, whatever the cost.

PAUL’S ADVICE: False teaching can at first seem to be true, so look carefully to make sure only God’s truth is taught to your people.

Do any of the terms Paul uses to describe false prophets apply to you? What about someone you know? If so, what should you do about it?

15. COMMANDS FOR THE MAN OF GOD (1 Timothy 6:6-21)

READ: 1 Timothy 6:1-5

Paul concludes his letter to his ‘son’ Timothy with 8 commands. These summarize what Paul has recently said about the temptation of greed. He warned Timothy about false teachers who used their influence to gain money (6:5), now he reminds Timothy that Christ-likeness is greater than material gain (6:6-8). He warns Timothy of the danger of greed and the destruction it brings (6:9-10). Money isn’t sinful, but the love of money is (6:10). It’s important for us to remember that as well.

Paul’s first command is based on this truth: “***But you, man of God, flee from all this***” (6:11). Keep far from what the false teachers are doing and the greed that accompanies it. We, too, must flee the subtle temptation for money and possessions. We quickly notice others who are greedy, but it is very hard to recognize it in ourselves. Ask God to show you any greed in your heart.

Second, Paul tells Timothy what to seek instead: “***pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness***” (6:11). Instead of going after what the false teachers seek, his goal should be righteousness (living a holy life), godliness (Christ-like maturity), faith (trust in action),

love (unconditional love for all), endurance (perseverance, steadfastness) and gentleness (attitude of humility in how you treat others).

The third command is to keep moving ahead in perseverance, no matter what trials he faces: ***“fight the good fight of the faith” (6:12)***. Living for Jesus is a battle and we only have victory by using God's weapons (Ephesians 6:0-18) and following Jesus (Joshua 1). Don't expect God to make your life smooth and easy because you are serving Him. It gets harder so you learn to trust and follow Him.

Fourth, we are to stay faithful because that is the only way to win the battle. ***“Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (12)***. Timothy needs to remember his commitment to serve no matter what, and we must as well. Don't look at your circumstances, look at Jesus and remember your promise to serve.

Fifth, Paul again commands Timothy (and us) to never give up but to persevere no matter what (6:13-16). ***“Keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (14)***. Instead of quitting, Timothy needs to keep moving ahead, no matter how hard it is.

In the sixth command, Paul reminds Timothy that he needs to correct the stubborn false teachers and bring order to the house-churches in Ephesus (6:17-19). He must correct the rich and powerful people who are prideful and greedy. These are the very people he is afraid of because they criticize and look down on him. They need to be taught that godly lives are more important than money and possessions. Material is temporary, spiritual is eternal.

Paul concludes his letter with 2 more commands. The seventh is ***“guard what has been entrusted to your care” (20)***. “Guard” is a word used of a soldier protecting precious treasure and “entrust” is a banking term for protecting an investment. Both refer to what Timothy then, and we today, need to do with the knowledge of the gospel that has been passed on to us. We must guard it as something very valuable and pass it on to others. It is a great privilege but also an awesome responsibility to have God's Word entrusted to us.

The eighth and final command is to have nothing to do with the false teaching going around (6:20-21). Paul starts and ends with warnings against false teaching. Even a little error is too much. Even a little bit of rat poison in our drinking water is disastrous. The same is true with God's Word.

Paul then closes with ***“Grace be with you all” (6:21)***. Timothy will need God's grace to stay in Ephesus and correct the problems that have arisen because the wrong people have been allowed into positions of leadership.

Paul would tell us the same thing: don't give up or quit, persevere, don't let the wrong people lead and don't let false teaching enter your church. It sounds simple but is harder to accomplish. We, like Timothy, need God's help to make this happen. May God bless you and be with you as you continue to faithfully serve Him!

PAUL'S ADVICE: Serving the Lord takes faithfulness, perseverance, holiness and courage.

What has God taught you from 1 Timothy? What are the main lessons He wants you to learn? Are there any changes you need to make in your life? Write them down so you don't forget them.

III. 2 TIMOTHY

A. BACKGROUND OF 2 TIMOTHY

TITLE: Named for recipient

AUTHOR: Paul

THEME: Faithful Service

DATE of WRITING: 64 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (prison #2)

RECIPIENT: Timothy, a young pastor

KEY VERSE: *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. 4:1-5*

KEY WORD: "Good" (5 times)

PURPOSE: Paul is providing more guidance for the young man he is training in the pastorate. He tells him how to live as a true servant in a time of apostasy. He also asks Timothy to come to him quickly, as he was about to be executed.

THEME: Paul's final words are to faithfully serve God.

Paul has been serving God faithfully for over 30 years. It's been 20 years since his first missionary journey. He has suffered much, sacrificed much, and been near death often. His brilliant, gifted mind and strong personality has led the early church through its tough growing years when false teachers and jealous political leaders tried to destroy it. When he wrote 2 Timothy, he was in prison again. In the 5 years since his first imprisonment Paul had been able to travel to see churches he has started as well as go start new ones in places he had never been. Now the end is near and Paul knows it. God has raised up a new generation of local leaders to take over the guidance of the church. Paul was worn out physically. He wrote one final letter, to the one person (other than faithful Luke who was with him to the end) he loves more than anyone, his son in the faith, Timothy. 2 Timothy contains Paul's dying words, his final communication as he faces death. If a news reporters had interviewed Paul at that time, they would have asked him if he had any doubts about how he spent his life. "Paul, was it worth it?" "Yes!" Paul would affirm, "and much more." "What final parting words do you have for your followers out there?" the reporter would ask. Paul answered "Be faithful." That, in effect, is the message of 2 Timothy. "Be faithful!"

BACKGROUND Persecution was getting worse for believers. Thousands were being martyred. They were considered enemies of Rome with no right to a fair trial. Then when Nero burned Rome and blamed it on the Christians, things got worse. Everyone started blaming them for everything. Peter was also in prison, soon to be crucified upside down. Paul was public enemy number one. He was betrayed and deceived while in Ephesus, and thus was imprisoned in Rome. He was not under house arrest but in a dungeon awaiting execution. This stripped away all pretense and got right to the heart and core of what is in a person. When one faces death, all façade is stripped away. That's what makes 2 Timothy such a revealing letter.

I. FAITHFUL TO GOD (1:3-18) Paul began by encouraging Timothy to stay faithful to God and use his spiritual gift of teaching for God's glory. With all the oppression going on, it seemed Timothy was fighting depression and Paul did his best to encourage and motivate him to stay faithful to God and not be ashamed of the gospel. Paul didn't want Timothy to feel badly because of Paul's sufferings. He

said that it was a real privilege to suffer for the gospel. Many were defecting under pressure, but Paul told Timothy to make sure he remained faithful to Jesus.

II. FAITHFUL TO SELF (2:1-26) Paul then used seven illustrations of faithfulness as examples to Timothy: a teacher, soldier, athlete, farmer, workman, vessel and slave. Knowing that things will get much worse for Timothy, Paul wanted to make sure he stayed true.

III. FAITHFUL TO OTHERS (3:1 – 4:15) Despite how bad the circumstances were, Paul told Timothy to stay faithful to God and his ministry. He assured him that he was in God's will and told him to live so he won't have regrets when he died. Paul helps him keep things in eternal perspective. Paul concluded with compliments for those who have been faithful to him. He wanted to see Timothy one more time before he died if possible. We don't know if he got there in time or not. Some say Timothy was arrested when he tried to see Paul. If so, he was released and ministered in Ephesus for some time with John until being martyred for his faithfulness.

Paul would tell us the same thing today – be faithful. That was Jesus' request of His followers as well. What about you. Are you faithful? Are you passing the test? Make sure!

B. OUTLINE OF 2 TIMOTHY

Salutations 1:1-2

Expression of Gratitude 1:3-5

I. QUALITIES OF FAITHFUL PASTOR 1:6-18

A. ZEAL 1:6-7

B. COURAGE 1:8-12

C. FAITHFULNESS 1:13-18

1. Appeal 1:13-14

2. Incentive 1:15-18

II. DUTIES OF A FAITHFUL PASTOR 2:1-4:8

A. PERSONAL STRENGTHENING 2:1

B. TRANSMITTING THE TRUTH 2:2

C. ENDURANCE 2:3-13

1. As a Soldier 2:3-4

2. As an Athlete 2:5

3. As a Farmer 2:6-7

4. Motivation for Endurance 2:8-13

D. WARN OF SIN 2:14

E. LIVE FOR GOD 2:15

F. GODLY TALK 2:16-19

G. PURITY 2:20-26

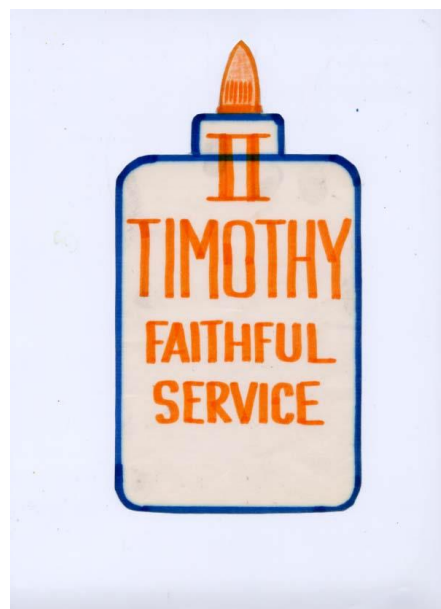
H. SEPARATION 3:1-9

I. FAITHFUL IN PERSECUTION 3:10-13

J. PREACH THE WORD 3:14 – 4:5

K. LONG-RANGE GOALS 4:6-8

L. Personal Requests 4:9-22



C. ADVICE FOR PASTORS – 2 TIMOTHY

1. PAUL'S DYING WORDS (2 Timothy 1:1-5)

READ: 2 Timothy 1:1-5

The final words of a person are important because they reflect what means the most to the person. In 2 Timothy we have Paul's final words to the person closest to him on earth, his 'son' Timothy. Knowing this would be his last opportunity to give advice to Timothy, he made every word count. Paul was back in prison in Rome, 5 years after he had been released. He knew there would be no release this time. The date was approximately 64 AD. Paul took this final opportunity to encourage Timothy to remain faithful.

In addressing Timothy, Paul identified himself as an "apostle" (2 Timothy 1:1) – someone sent by God to minister for Him. God chose him and he followed. Paul always saw himself as a servant of God by God's grace, even at the end of his life. He was nothing, Jesus was everything.

He calls Timothy his "dear son," showing their close relationship. It must have been very hard for Paul to write to Timothy for the last time. Timothy was still in Ephesus. He followed Paul's commands and stayed, even though it was very hard for him. Receiving this letter must have been both encouraging for Timothy yet very sad knowing his end was near. Tradition says he did make it to Rome to see Paul shortly before Paul was martyred, but it must have been very dangerous for him to be associated with Paul.

Timothy was mentored by Paul, and Paul was encouraged by Timothy. Despite facing death in prison, Paul gives thanks to God for Timothy (2 Timothy 1:3). He assured Timothy he was faithfully praying for him. Do you have younger men you are mentoring and training to serve God? Do you daily pray for them, including ones you trained in the past? Paul did. Thank God for those who are praying for you.

As he approached death, Paul could look back on his service to God with a clear conscience. Even though he had persecuted Christians, he knew he was forgiven and did his best to faithfully serve. What a joy it must be to come to the end of life having a clear conscience. Too many who claim to be church leaders get into sin and ruin their reputation and ministry. Live now so that your conscience will be clear.

Timothy's faithful life was an encouragement to Paul as he remembered Timothy's love for him (verse 4) and lifelong faithful service (verse 5). This was foremost in Paul's mind when he wrote..

When you come to the end of your life, who will you look to for encouragement? Whose faithful life will bring joy to you? Are you training and building into others now, as Paul did with Timothy? Or are you too busy with other things?

PAUL'S ADVICE: Find encouragement in the faithful lives of those you have helped grow in the faith.

Colossians 1:3-5 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints — 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth,

Ephesians 1:10 15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

Thank God for those who have helped you in your Christian growth.

Pray for the ones you have helped grow spiritually.

2. QUALITIES OF A FAITHFUL PASTOR 1: ZEAL & COURAGE (2 Timothy 1:6-12)

READ: 2 Timothy 1:6-12

In 2 Timothy, Paul is sending his final letter to a man he has loved and trained for many years. As he looks back on his life, Paul realizes there are certain qualities that are essential for those who serve God. He begins his letter reminding Timothy of the importance of zeal, courage and faithfulness.

ZEAL: Paul has seen numerous men who were on fire for God but over time faded and turned from the faith. That still happens today. It could happen to anyone. In 2 Timothy 1:6 Paul encouraged Timothy to **“fan into flame the gift of God.”** He told him to keep using the unique set of spiritual gifts God gave him (1 Peter 4:10). After years of battling the world, the flesh and Satan, a person can become weary and discouraged. Cowardice and fear are tools of Satan’s we are to guard against. 2 Timothy 1:7 **“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and of love and of self-discipline”** is a good verse to memorize and quote when facing fear. Timothy lacked confidence in himself (1 Corinthians 6:10-11; 1 Timothy 4:12) and needed to depend on God’s power, love and self-control. So must we. This verse has helped me through my struggles with fear, and it can help you as well.

COURAGE: This is the first of 3 exhortations Paul gave Timothy (1:8-12; 1:13-14; 2:1). His command is **“do not be ashamed”** (2 Timothy 1:8). Timothy was criticized by unbelievers for his faithfulness to Jesus and by false teachers for his faithfulness to Paul. Jesus said **“Woe to you when all men speak well of you”** (Luke 6:26). Following Jesus, and Paul, often means persecution and opposition. Paul stated that **“All who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”** (2 Timothy 3:12). Paul reminded Timothy that anything he achieved in ministry was not his own doing but God’s, he could not take credit for it himself (verse 9). That is a sobering and humbling thought for us as well. All we have comes from His unconditional love and grace. God chooses those who will come to Him for salvation, and out of them He chooses some to minister for Him. It is a great privilege and honor to be chosen. Charles Spurgeon once said, “If God has called you to be His servant, don’t stoop to be a king.” Serving the King of Kings is the greatest privilege one can have.

The older I get the more clearly I see the wonderful honor God has given me by choosing me to serve Him. My own unworthiness and failures become more visible yet His all-sufficient strength and grace overcomes them all. This should encourage us to have courage to stand despite the difficulties and opposition. It should embolden us and give us courage to press on no matter what we face.

In 2 Timothy 1:12 Paul shared his own testimony, despite facing death for his faith: **“Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.”** This is true of us as well. We must keep our eyes on Jesus and trust He is able to sustain us as long as he wants us alive. That is where our courage comes from.

If you are a pastor or leader, you have to keep your zeal and courage because you will face opposition from unbelievers and believers alike. It didn’t stop Jesus, nor did it stop Paul or Timothy. Don’t ever let it stop you.

PAUL’S ADVICE: Don’t let your zeal and courage for ministry fade.

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

How is your zeal? Has it grown cold over the years, or is it as fresh and strong as when you first came to the Lord?

What brings the most fear into your life? What can you do to have God's courage to face those things?

3. QUALITIES OF A FAITHFUL PASTOR 2: FAITHFULNESS (2 Timothy 1:13-18)

READ: 2 Timothy 1:13-18

Paul started off his final correspondence to his son Timothy reminding him of the importance of keeping his zeal and courage for ministry. He adds a third necessary quality next: faithfulness. First, he exhorts Timothy to have courage (2 Timothy 1:8-12) and now he exhorts him to faithfully guard the gospel (2 Timothy 1:13-18). **"Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us"** (2 Timothy 1:14).

"Guard" is a banking term. Much money was given to the goddess Artemis in Ephesus where Timothy ministered, and it was carefully guarded to keep it safe. That's the picture Paul uses to remind Timothy of what he is to go with the good news of the Gospel of Jesus, which is even more precious than any amount of money.

Unfortunately, not everyone who once spread the truth continued to do so. Because of opposition and dangers, many had deserted their service to God and Paul, and Paul is alone, abandoned by others (verse 15). That's why it's so important for God's servants to stay faithful.

Many deserted Paul and the gospel, but a few could still be depended on by Paul and by God (verses 16-18). Onesiphorus was such a one. He had stayed faithful to the message and to Paul. How valuable a trustworthy friend is, a fellow laborer for Jesus who can be counted on no matter what! You need men like that in your life. And you need to be that kind of man to others around you.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Stay faithful to God and those who serve Him.

Proverbs 18:24 A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Romans 12:10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

Who are those you can count on no matter what, who will support and help you whatever happens? Thank God for them.

Who in the ministry can count on your support when going through difficulties?

Is anyone you know facing hard times? Reach out to them today to encourage and support them.

4. DUTY 1: BE STRONG (2 Timothy 2:1)

READ: 2 Timothy 2:1

Having reminded Timothy of some important qualities he needed (zeal, courage and faithfulness), Paul began a list of 11 duties Timothy must carry out to be a godly pastor and leader. The first duty is was the third exhortation Paul gave Timothy: be strong. **"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"** (2 Timothy 2:1).

"Be strong" is a command, a must for all pastors. The Greek tense in which it is written says it is something we receive, not something we must provide ourselves. Strength doesn't come from within us, it is something God gives us when we trust Him. This command is in the present tense

which means that we must always be letting God's strength work in us. I am naturally fearful and weak. I have always needed God's strength to stand for Him, correct those in error, keep going when criticized or travel to difficult locations. I have been involved in spiritual ministry for 40 years and I need God's strength to minister to people in bondage to demons. I have learned, along with Paul, that the weaker I am the more clearly God's power can be seen working through me (2 Corinthians 12:9-11).

Paul doesn't just say we are to be strong. And He doesn't say we are to be strong in power, words, actions or abilities. He says we are to **"be strong in grace."** Grace is the source of our strength. As we grow spiritually, we become more aware of our need for grace and God's provision of it. When we walk in submission to His Spirit and follow His will, His grace (undeserved favor) fills us with all the wisdom, strength and guidance we need to do what He wants.

Growing in this is a life-long process. Pastors and leaders still need to keep growing. Some think that they have arrived at spiritual maturity because they are leaders, but that isn't true. Pastors are not exempt from the trials and temptations others face in life. In fact, often we face more because we serve Him. God uses the difficulties and problems of pastoring to cause us to trust Him more and lean on His grace more completely. God did not remove challenges and hardships I faced in ministry; He has allowed them so I learn to trust Him more fully. He wants all of us, like Paul, to learn that **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"** (2 Corinthians 12:9).

God doesn't need us to do His work. He could get along very well without us. But we need Him 100% to accomplish what He wants. He allows us the privilege of having a front row seat as we watch Him work through us. It is His strength working in us that produces His results. What He wants from us is our submission and service, done out of love. He wants to have a personal, intimate relationship with us, not just a working relationship where we do things for Him. He wants us to spend time connecting to Him and loving Him and experiencing His love.

We grow in His grace by spending time in His Word, listening to Him talk to us and talking to Him, worshiping Him, meditating on Him and His truth and by living for Him. Are you doing that? Are you growing in Him as His grace grows in you?

PAUL'S ADVICE: Allow God to work in you and through you by His grace so you can minister in His strength, not your own.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Are you becoming more aware that all the good that happens in your life and ministry comes from God?

Spend some time thanking Him for all He does in you and through you, giving Him the credit for it all.

5. DUTY 2: TRANSMIT TRUTH (2 Timothy 2:2)

READ: 2 Timothy 2:2

I owe all I am and have to God's grace working in my life. One of the ways He did this was by bringing Godly men into my life to train and mentor me. They passed their knowledge and experience on to me and now I am passing it on to others. In the future they will share these truths

with the next generation of pastors. It's like passing a baton from one runner to the next in a relay race. Each generation of pastors teaches those who will take over and replace them. Mentoring and training younger pastors is a duty God commands of all of us. Paul commanded it of Timothy as well: **"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others"** (2 Timothy 2:2).

Notice Paul said Timothy is to pass what he has learned to "reliable" men. These are men who are faithful to learn and serve. God has chosen us because He sees us as trustworthy men. In my early years I was not always reliable, and I continue to fail many times even now. But He is merciful to forgive and restore me.

We are to "teach" these reliable men, as others have taught us. Paul taught Timothy who passed it on to "reliable men" who in turn trained "others." This kept going for 2,000 years until it was passed to us. Now we must train younger men who can carry on His work. This is an important responsibility for all who are in Christian service. Jesus is our example. He trained the disciples so they could carry on the work when He left.

Many years ago God gave me a strong desire to mentor younger pastors. It is not always easy, but it has been a joy and blessing to encourage and help these men. God has patiently taught me much about serving Him and His church. It's a privilege and an obligation to pass that knowledge on to others. Transmitting His truth is a serious but fulfilling responsibility.

The best way to do this is to follow Jesus' example. He spent time with the disciples, took them with Him in His daily ministry, trained them and gave them opportunities to use their newly-developed skills in service. Paul did the same with Timothy, Titus and others. He patiently passed on truth, encouraged, corrected when necessary and prayed for them regularly. We must do the same.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Pass on Bible truth and ministry skills to the next generation of pastors so they can continue the work when we are no longer able.

Ephesians 4:11-12 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service

2 Timothy 2:1-2 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Who has mentored you in your life? What did you learn from them? Thank them and thank God for them.

Who are you currently mentoring?

Who do you know that would benefit from your encouragement and training?

6. DUTY 3: ENDURE DIFFICULTIES (2 Timothy 2:3-7)

READ: 2 Timothy 2:3-7

In this, his final letter to Timothy, Paul passed on important advice to help Timothy better carry out his ministry. He told him he needs to have zeal, courage and faithfulness (2 Timothy 1:6-18). Paul then started reminding him of some very important duties a pastor has. He said Timothy must let God strengthen him with His grace (2 Timothy 2:1) and he must pass on what he knows about pastoring to others who can benefit (2 Timothy 2:2). Now he is giving a third duty: endure the

difficulties he faces (2 Timothy 2:3-7). He commanded Timothy to “**endure hardship**” and gave three examples to illustrate this.

First, he used soldiers as an example: “**Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs — he wants to please his commanding officer**” (2 Timothy 2:3-4). When I was in the US Army I went where they sent me and did what they assigned me to do. I had to always be ready to serve. I didn’t do what I wanted but what I was commanded to do. The same is true in ministering for Jesus. We are to serve Him first and foremost. A soldier must have right priorities, and serving God always comes first.

Next, Paul used an athlete as an illustration: “**Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules**” (2 Timothy 2:5). An athlete must obey the rules if he wants to be victorious. Greek athletes had to prepare ahead of time for their contests. It took hard work and self-discipline. Nothing else could come first. The rules of competition had to be strictly followed if one was to win the prize. For us to receive God’s reward for faithful service we, too, must exercise self-control in all things. We must serve as He directs in His Word. We must lead His way and let nothing come before it. Only then will we receive the prize of God’s approval for a job well done.

The final analogy Paul used is that of a farmer: “**The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops**” (2 Timothy 2:6). Farming is hard work. It isn’t glamorous but is necessary so people can eat. It takes patience and perseverance. Results are not seen right away. All this is true of pastoring, too. It takes hard work and patience to lead God’s people. We don’t always see immediate results of our service, but in time we will.

Paul encourages Timothy to think about and meditate on these analogies as he applies them to his life because God will use them to help him learn (2 Timothy 2:7). There is much we can learn from them as well. Ask God to help you learn from them.

PAUL’S ADVICE: Endure hardship by serving God first in life (as a soldier), do things God’s way (as an athlete) and work hard but be patient (as a farmer).

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith.

Which analogy speaks most to you: a soldier, athlete or farmer? Why?

What is God teaching you through this passage?

7. JESUS OUR EXAMPLE OF ENDURANCE (2 Timothy 2:8-13)

READ: 2 Timothy 2:8-13

In 2 Timothy 2, Paul has been reminding Timothy of his duty to endure hardships in his service for Jesus. He used the example of a soldier, athlete and farmer to illustrate hard work, self-control and perseverance (2 Timothy 2:8-13). He then gave two more illustrations of enduring hardship in God’s service – himself (verses 9-10) and Jesus (verses 8, 11-13).

Paul uses himself in prison as an example of persevering for the sake of other believers (2 Timothy 2:9-10). He was an example of faithfulness despite persecution. He didn’t just tell Timothy to “endure hardship” (verse 3), he did it himself (verses 9-10). As pastors, we preach that God can be trusted to keep His promises no matter what we face. There are times we need to apply that to our own lives and “practice what we preach.” We are not immune from trials because we are pastors, in fact sometimes we have more than others. God allows them so we can learn from experience He is faithful so He can be glorified by our lives as we trust Him through hardship and pain.

The greatest illustration of enduring hardship is Jesus Himself (verses 8, 11-13). He is our greatest example of suffering for a good purpose. He was God ("Christ," "raised from the dead") and man ("Jesus," "descended from David"). Paul then quoted a common saying, perhaps even sung as a hymn, about us following Jesus' example of staying faithful no matter what (verses 11-13).

This early Christian poem starts off assuring us that since we died with Jesus in salvation, we will be with him for all eternity (verse 11). In addition to eternal life, we will be rewarded in eternity for our faithful endurance (verse 12a). We are assured of eternal life because we died with Jesus, but in addition we will also be rewarded if we stand firm against opposition or temptation. However, if we don't stay faithful then we won't be rewarded (verse 12b). We will still go to heaven when we die, salvation is not the issue. But special reward in heaven is at stake.

This poem is all about enduring hardship like Jesus did. Salvation cannot be lost, Paul made this clear many times (Romans 8:1, 28-30; Ephesians 1:4, 11-12; 2:8-9), so has Jesus (John 5:41; 6:37-40; 10:28-30), John (1 John 5:13; 3:15-16), Peter (1 Peter 1:4-5) and Jude (Jude 24-25). Our salvation isn't dependent on our faithfulness or endurance, but future reward is. The last stanza in this song reinforces that to make sure no one thinks it is referring to salvation. Even if we don't always live by faith, God won't disown us (verse 13). We are His and He cannot disown Himself (2 Timothy 2:13).

Paul reminded Timothy of his duty to endure difficulties no matter what. He used himself and Jesus as examples. I'm sure you can think of others who have set a good example of faithfully serving Jesus during difficult times. Do you set that same example for others that are watching you?

PAUL'S ADVICE: Faithfully endure as Jesus did. If you do, you will be rewarded for all eternity.

1 Peter 4:2 *They do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.*

What difficulties are you facing right now? Are you faithfully trusting God to do what He knows is best?

8. DUTY 4: OPPOSE FALSE TEACHINGS (2 Timothy 2:14, 16-19)

READ: 2 Timothy 2:14, 16-19

Sometimes pastors get so busy doing all that needs to be done to lead a church that they stop doing the most important things. It can be easy to major on minors and neglect that which God sees as top priorities. To make sure that doesn't happen to Timothy, Paul wrote to him just before he died reminding him of his duty to God and others. One of Timothy's more important duties was to remind people to avoid quarreling about fine points of doctrine (2 Timothy 2:14, 16-19). That's an important duty for us today as well because too many Christians get in big arguments over little things.

Timothy's duty is to "keep reminding" them to keep from unbiblical teachings (verses 14, 16). We do that in our preaching, teaching and in personal conversations. He, and we, need to keep going over the basic truths of the faith and apply them to life. False teachers and Satan promote lies so we need to keep the truth first and foremost. "Quarreling about words" is wrong because 1) we aren't to quarrel, just have mature discussions and 2) there are many more important things to do with our time and energy than focus on minor, hair-splitting controversies. Doing that often brings division among believers and harms the testimony of Jesus. Pride enters when people want to be right and will do anything to 'win.'

Similarly, Paul tells Timothy to "avoid godless chatter" (verse 16). "Godless" is talk which doesn't glorify Him with the truth but instead is false and in error. "Chatter" describes empty, foolish talk which doesn't edify or build others up. It is fruitless discussion of things which aren't supported

by Scripture. These false teachings distract people from important issues and cause divisions and arguments. They are not just senseless, like “How many angels can sit on the point of a needle?” They are poisonous and destructive, like gangrene (verse 17). They bring sickness and decay into the Body of Christ.

The example Paul used was the false teaching that the resurrection had already come (verse 18). Some today still say there is no real physical resurrection, it is just ‘spiritual,’ something that happens at salvation. You can imagine the confusion and loss of hope that would bring! It must have caused problems throughout the church in Ephesus. It was up to Timothy then, and us today, to correct false teachings as soon as they appear.

Still, God is in sovereign control. Paul reminded them of this by quoting the Old Testament: “The Lord knows those who are His” (2 Timothy 2:19; Numbers 16:5, 26). Those who are His people must turn from these false teachings and teachers (2 Timothy 2:19; Isaiah 52:11; Joel 3:5).

It’s one thing when someone comes to your church and denies the truth of the Bible and the deity of Jesus. It is clear and obvious that they are wrong and must be opposed. It is more difficult if it is someone who claims to be a Christian following the Bible. Then the people respect and trust them and they gain a foothold in the church and start talking to people about things that aren’t supported by the Bible. People can be deceived, like Adam and Eve. Some people look for something new to believe, perhaps an easier way to live the Christian life. They may fear they are missing something and the false teacher knows something they don’t. It can be very difficult to challenge and correct people like these. I have faced this several times in my years as a pastor. It ended with people hurt and confused, and some leaving the church and even the faith. It almost always brought conflict and hard feelings. It is sad when it happens, but it is our duty to oppose false teachings no matter how hard or painful. They are like gangrene. The poison will spread and cause more destruction if we let it go on. Keep teaching your people the truth of God’s Word. Make sure your sermons teach and explain Bible passages, and not just the same ones over and over. Cover the whole Bible and all its teachings. Pray for wisdom and courage, then stand for the truth.

PAUL’S ADVICE: Stand against any teaching that is not clearly supported by Scripture.

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

Have you had to stand against anyone who brought false teachings into your church? What happened?

Are you tempted to compromise and avoid conflict when someone starts leading people astray? Ask for courage to stand for the truth.

9. DUTY 5: SEEK ONLY GOD’S APPROVAL (2 Timothy 2:15)

READ: 2 Timothy 2:15

Good parents expect their children to do their best. They know the strengths and weaknesses of each child, their abilities and limits. If the child is trying his hardest then a good parent is satisfied. The same is true of our heavenly Father with His children. He knows our capabilities and difficulties. He doesn’t compare us to others. He doesn’t expect us to be perfect, He “knows we are dust” (Psalm 104:13), but He doesn’t want us to be careless about sin, either. The parable of the talents teaches that God doesn’t compare us with others but to use the gifts and resources He gives us the best we can (Matthew 25:14-30).

Paul expects the same from Timothy, as seen in 2 Timothy 2:15. **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”** God is the only One whose approval we want and need. We aren’t trying to please or impress others, although that is often a temptation for pastors. It’s natural to want people to like us and think well of us. But we can’t compromise the truth for popularity. In fact, if we are faithfully serving Jesus there always will be some who oppose us. Jesus Himself was not liked by many people. He warns us in Luke 6:26: **“Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you.”** He also said in Matthew 5:11: **“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”** Being a pastor is not a popularity contest. God is the only one whose opinion we are to care about.

The example Paul gives is of someone working for someone else. He wants to please the one he is working for and do a job he is pleased with. If their work is not acceptable, the worker will be embarrassed of the work done. It doesn’t matter if everyone else thinks he has done a great job, if the one employing them doesn’t think so he will be ashamed. I want to hear God say **“Well done, good and faithful servant!”** (Matthew 25:23) and I’m sure you do as well. That means we must seek to please Him in all we do, if others agree or not.

The second illustration Paul uses is of a tentmaker who must cut his material correctly so the seams match perfectly. “Correctly handles” means “to cut a straight line.” The word is also used of a builder laying blocks in a straight row and of a road maker constructing a straight road. It can also refer to a farmer plowing a straight furrow in his field. Paul is applying this same truth to a pastor who accurately and truthfully handles God’s Word. We can’t take shortcuts in our study and sermon preparation. Everything must be done thoroughly and carefully. We can’t be in a hurry or look for shortcuts, for God will not approve our ministry if we are not true to His Word in all we do or say.

“The Word of truth” is our tool. All workmen have tools. Doctors, farmers, soldiers, all have tools of their trade. The Bible is the tool a pastor uses to change lives and bring glory to God. The better we know our tool the better we will be able to pastor for Him.

The Bible is called “the sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17). This refers to a sharp, double-edged sword, which is a very effective weapon in the hands of a skilled swordsman. But if a person doesn’t know how to use it, he can cut himself. Pastors need to become skillful in the knowledge and use of the Bible. It is our only offensive weapon, our only means of victory. God expects us to be proficient in its use. If we are, we will receive His approval and won’t have to be ashamed. Are you skilled with your Bible? Does He approve of your knowledge and use of His word?

PAUL’S ADVICE: Know and use God’s Word accurately to receive His approval of your ministry, for only His approval matters.

Matthew 25:22-23 *“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’ ‘His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”*

Are you growing in your knowledge and use of God’s Word?

Are you living and ministering according to the Bible?

10. DUTY 6: BE PURE (2 Timothy 2:20-26)

READ: 2 Timothy 2:20-26

Paul uses many analogies to help us understand the Christian life and ministry. In 2 Timothy he uses the example of a soldier (2:3-4), athlete (2:5), farmer (2:6), worker (2:15), vessel (2:20-21)

and servant (2:24-26). Elsewhere he equates living for Jesus to being a steward (1 Corinthians 4:1-2) or ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20). Peter says we are living stones (1 Peter 2:5), priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10) and strangers (1 Peter 2:11). Jesus Himself called us fishermen (Matthew 4:19), salt (Matthew 5:13), light (Matthew 5:14-16) and branches (John 15:5).

When Paul reminds Timothy of his sixth duty, being pure, he starts by comparing people to dishes and containers of wood or clay (2 Timothy 2:20-21). Some are clean and useful for many purposes; others have become polluted and unclean so are no longer useful. The same is true of the Christians in Ephesus. We must be ready and useful for service, having kept ourselves clean inside and out. We must be available for whenever needed.

Then Paul gets specific about what can cause uncleanness and what must be avoided. He lists evil desires (verse 22), foolish and stupid talk (verse 23), quarreling (verse 24) and not being open to instruction (verses 25-26).

“Flee the evil desires of youth” (2 Timothy 2:22). Those who are young are often more susceptible to sexual sins and other sins like arguing, pride, opposing the established ways and thinking they know best. Instead, righteousness, faith, love and peace should be pursued.

“Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments” (2 Timothy 2:23). Avoid false teachings and false teachers. Not only are they wrong, but they cause arguments among believers. Those today who promote legalism (no grace, only works) or liberalism (no works, only grace) are to be corrected.

“The Lord’s servant must not quarrel” (2 Timothy 2:24). Stay away from false teachings and you’ll stay away from a lot of arguing. Instead, Paul says we are to be kind to everyone by showing grace and being gentle and loving. We are to always be ready to communicate God’s truth to others (1 Peter 3:15) and we are to not be resentful. We are to forgive others as well.

“Opponents must be gently instructed” (2 Timothy 2:25-26) so they see the error of their wrong beliefs and turn to the truth. Those deluded by false teachings are trapped by Satan and need to escape his influence.

As pastors today, these words of Paul to Timothy apply to us as well. We need to be clean vessels so God can use us for whatever assignment or responsibility He wants to give us. That means we must avoid false teaching and only follow His Word. We must stop any lies from spreading in our church and reach out to those who are misled and lead them into the truth. Wrong teachings includes teachings that claim God will give us everything we ask for, that we should never be sick or struggle with difficulties, that He will do whatever miracles we want to make our life easier and that minimize the seriousness of sin and disobedience. Know His Word and seek His guidance always.

PAUL’S ADVICE: Live a pure, holy life by turning from sin and opposing all false teaching.

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Psalms 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Where is your greatest struggle with purity?

What must you do to have victory?

11. DUTY 7: BE ALERT TO WORLD’S OPPOSITION (2 Timothy 3:1-9)

READ: 2 Timothy 3:1-9

Each generation thinks the world is getting worse. We think that today. Paul thought that as well. He not only thought it, he gave proof of it. The further we move into the last days, the greater is

the growth of evil in the world. In his final letter (2 Timothy), Paul reminded Timothy of his duties as a pastor. He was to grow stronger in his faith (2:1), transmit truth (2:2), endure difficulties (2:3-13), oppose false teachings (2:14,16-19), seek only God's approval (2:15), be pure (2:20-26) and now to be alert to the growing opposition from the world (3:1-9). Paul, who was in prison for his faith, knew times were bad but will get worse. We must know what is coming and know what to do about it.

"There will be terrible times in the last days" (2 Timothy 3:1-9). "The last days" refers to the final days before Jesus' return, and no one knows when that will be. Therefore, Paul felt these days had already begun and Timothy was living in them. He explains what they will be like.

2 Timothy 3:2-5 **People will be lovers of themselves** (self-centered, narcissistic), **lovers of money** (greedy), **boastful** (bring attention to themselves), **proud** (continual arrogance), **abusive** (treat others cruelly, without respect), **disobedient to their parents** (rebellious, disrespectful), **ungrateful** (entitlement attitude, no appreciation for anything), **unholy** (nothing good, righteous, moral), **without love** (heartless, callous, hateful, hard, don't care about anyone but themselves), **unforgiving** (from same root word as 'devil,' devilish actions like Satan who never forgives but is vengeful), **slanderous** (cruel, hurtful, untrue words to put others down), **without self-control** (gone wild, no self-restraint, do what they want when they want it), **brutal** (untamed, literally 'uncivilized,' cruel, animalistic), **not lovers of the good** (therefore hate what is good and love what is evil, destructive, hurtful), **treacherous** (betray those they should be loyal to), **rash** (reckless in thoughts and actions), **conceited** (literally 'puffed up' with own importance), **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God** (hedonistic, no morals, devoted to making self feel good, own pleasure the only god they serve) — **having a form of godliness but denying its power** (hypocrites, pretend to be religious, aren't even honest about what they are really like) and **always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth** (they are believing lies, they do not see the Bible as God's final, absolute authority for us today).

Have nothing to do with such people. This strong command by Paul sums up what Timothy's reaction to them must be. He warns that they use good-sounding talk to slip into the lives of those who are vulnerable and gullible. They gain their trust and slowly but surely lead them into sin (verse 6). Jannes and Jambres, the two servants of Satan who opposed Moses in Pharaoh's court, are prime examples of people like this who are depraved and under God's judgment (verse 8).

These opponents of Moses back then, like the opponents of truth in Timothy's day, knew God was greater than their demonic power but still didn't repent (verse 9). One day everyone will see their sin for what it really is. This is what it will be like in the last days, and as we get closer to the return of Jesus we see more and more of these things. Hypocrisy, sin, self-centeredness, pride and all the rest are becoming more and more common around us. Follow Paul's command to Timothy and have nothing to do with them.

Sometimes it is hard to tell who is a false teacher and who is honestly trying to find just what God's Word means. You can tell the two apart by looking for their motive. What kind of reputation do they have? What is their attitude to pastors and to God's Word? Do they use anger, power, fear or control to get their own way? Are they open to learn new things? Will they listen attentively to your Biblical explanations? That will help you decide. God's Spirit within you will give you guidance and wisdom.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Stay away from prideful., self-centered, hateful people who oppose the things of God and try to lead others in the same way.

Who do you know that fits this description? (Remember, they often appear to be religious but really aren't.)

Are you careful to protect yourself and your church from them?

12. DUTY 8: BE FAITHFUL IN PERSECUTION (2 Timothy 3:10-13)

READ: 2 Timothy 3:10-13

Paul warned Timothy about those who will turn further and further from God as the return of Jesus draws near (2 Timothy 3:1-9). These people tear down and try to discredit the true servants of God so people will listen to them instead. The ones in Ephesus have been criticizing Paul. Since they can't discredit truth, they try to discredit the truth bearer. People who can't disprove your teachings about Jesus will attack you personally instead. They will find things they don't like about you or your personality and complain about them so others won't respect what you say. It happens to everyone who serves Jesus. It happened to Jesus, and to Paul as well (2 Timothy 3:10-13).

Paul reminded Timothy of the persecution he endured so Timothy wouldn't be surprised when he faced it. We can think opposition and difficulties are our fault, because we are doing something wrong. More often, though, they are because we are doing things right, just the way God wants. His enemies (the world, the flesh and Satan) rise in opposition to God and any who represent Him. This ties in with the third duty Paul reminded Timothy of, to endure difficulties (2 Timothy 2:3-13). Paul taught Timothy about these things by his words and well as his actions, setting an example of applying what he taught to his own life.

The sad truth is that much of the opposition and criticism Paul faced, and which we do as well, comes from within the church, not without. That was true of the early church, and is still true today. Yet God is still faithful to carry out His mission through us. It doesn't mean there won't be pain, rejection, hard times and loss, but God will be with us to help us endure them all (2 Timothy 3:10-11).

One of the reasons God allowed Paul to face so much was to be an example to Timothy and others, and to us today as well. Who are you a good example to? Who is watching you that you don't know about? God allows it and uses it for our growth and His glory.

Then Paul makes a striking statement, actually a promise although it isn't one we claim very often. **"Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted"** (2 Timothy 3:13). If you don't want to be opposed and persecuted, then stop living for Jesus and Satan will stop putting pressure on you. Don't be surprised or disappointed when facing hardships in life and ministry. "Everyone" includes you and me. Clearly the prosperity gospel is Scriptural.

The second part of the promise in verse 12 states that evildoers and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. The truth will win, but we may not see it happen in our lifetime. When Jesus returns everything will be made perfect, but not until then. Don't be surprised when those who oppose God and His people seem to prosper while those who serve God struggle. That's the way it's always been and always will be.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Don't be surprised when the ministry is very hard, just stay faithful.

Matthew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

What is your first response when things don't go as you want or when people oppose you?

How did Jesus respond to rejection and opposition? That's how we must as well.

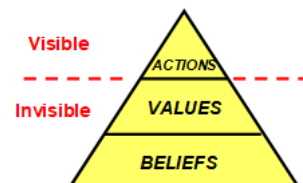
13. DUTY 9: LIVE THE WORD (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

READ: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

In his final correspondence with his beloved son, Timothy, Paul gave advice that was true in his day as well as today. He encouraged Timothy to stay faithful (1:1-5) then listed three important qualities of those who would serve God: zeal, courage and faithfulness (1:6-18). Next, he made a

series of duties Timothy was to carry out, commands for all pastors and leaders (2:1-4:8). Having said most of what he wants to say, Paul now speaks directly to Timothy (3:14-4:5). Paul orders him to “continue in what you have learned” (2 Timothy 3:14).

Knowing the Bible doesn’t do any good unless we put it into practice in our lives. Timothy must faithfully persevere in the truth and not be distracted by those who oppose and criticize him or by those who teach falsehoods. God’s Word is our only absolute, the only protector from error, the only way to know truth. Our actions are determined by our values, and our values are built on our beliefs. Timothy believes God’s Word; thus his values are the same as God’s values. That is seen in his actions. People’s actions show what they believe. How they treat people reveals their beliefs about the value of others. Timothy first learned these things as a child (verse 15) and Paul is reminding him they are still true.



It is very important to teach God’s Word to young children. Simple stories and games have their place, but children need to learn the truths of God as revealed in His Word. Too often pastors think children aren’t important and ignore them while focusing on ministering to adults. Children have their whole lives ahead of them to serve and are very important. I illustrate this by showing people two pencils. One is full size, the other half worn down and only half size. I ask them which pencil they would choose of the two and they always choose the larger one. When I ask why they say it is because it will last longer and more can be done with it. The large pencil pictures children who have their whole lives ahead of them. The short pencil pictures adults who have already lived much of their lives. When we invest in children we are making a long-term investment into the far future. Timothy was taught the Bible as a young child: “from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures” (2 Timothy 3:15). It alone can “make you wise for salvation” (verse 15).

To show the importance of Scripture in the life of a Christian, Paul writes one of the most-used verses about the Bible: “**All (every single word) Scripture is God-breathed (inspired, 100% true and accurate) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work**” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

“**Teaching**” refers to instruction in truth, conveying knowledge so people know what is right. “**Rebuking**” is necessary where the truth is replaced with lies, it focuses on revising what is not right. “**Correcting**” means restoring a person from error, showing what is wrong and what is right. “**Training in righteousness**” is literally “child-training,” teaching how to live in all areas of life, how to apply to life what God’s Word teaches.

The purpose of teaching and applying God’s Word, is “**so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work**” (2 Timothy 3:17). The Bible prepares and arms us to serve and live for Him. Knowing and following God’s Word is the only way to be a ‘man of God.’ What better desire can we have in life? What higher reputation can we ever have than being known as a “man of God.” That’s how I’d like to be remembered. What about you?

PAUL’S ADVICE: God’s Word contains His truth for us today. We must learn and follow it.

Who comes to mind when you think of a ‘man of God’?

Do the members of your family think of you as a ‘man of God’? What about the people in your church?

14. DUTY 10: PREACH THE WORD (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

READ: 2 Timothy 4:1-2

The seminary where I studied has as its motto Paul’s words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, “Preach the Word.” It was written on the front wall of our chapel and placed where we would see it

many times a day. Because of that it is engraved in my mind and heart. It summarizes our responsibility to God and others. It is God's privilege for us and His command to us. It is Paul's culminating assignment to Timothy, the duty to which all others have built.

In this final teaching session, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Paul gives Timothy 11 commands, one after another, all built on preaching the word. Paul shows the seriousness of what he is about to say in how he introduces it. **"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus** (we are accountable to Him, He watches all we do) **who will judge the living and the dead** (reward for faithful service), **and in view of His appearing and His kingdom** (Jesus could return at any time so always be ready), **I give you this charge** (Paul is using his Apostolic authority to give Timothy this responsibility, this goes far beyond their father-son relationship)" (2 Timothy 4:1-2). Timothy is to get and keep the church in Ephesus ready for the return of King Jesus. We are to do this as well.

Then comes the glorious command: **"Preach the Word."** "Preach" means to make a public proclamation of something, like an ambassador who is sent by the king to proclaim his message with authority. He is to relay the king's words loud and clear, as are we. It was a great honor and privilege to be chosen to represent the king. There is nothing better we can do with our lives than to spend them representing King Jesus. In fact, if God puts it in your heart to serve Him and you don't, there will be no real joy or peace in your life (1 Corinthians 9:16).

We publicly proclaim God's truth by preaching and teaching. We also do it when talking to individuals in counseling or in our daily conversation. We especially do it by our life as others watch how we live and act.

What Paul says we are to preach is "the Word." The ambassador doesn't give his own message, only what the king directs. He passes on the king's words. He doesn't add to them, change them or take from them. He makes them as clear and understandable as possible. He isn't to draw attention to himself or impress people, just accurately communicate the king's message. That's a great description of what we as pastors are to do as well. We don't pass on our personal opinions, tell fancy stories, take political sides or say things to entertain our listeners and be more popular. The content of our message is God's Word. That means we teach and explain a Bible passage, verse by verse, word by word, making sure our listeners understand what it was saying to the people it was originally written to. Then we apply it to their daily lives and circumstances.

We aren't to "preach *from* the Word" by taking a passage and then going off in a different direction, making it say what we want it to mean. Nor do we "preach *about* the Word" by giving our personal opinion of what it means. We must read and explain it's very words, word by word. That means we must study it and learn it ourselves (2 Timothy 2:15). (For more information on how to study the Bible see my book "How to Study God's Word." For help in sermon preparation see my book "Preaching and Teaching God's Word." They are available online in English, Telugu, Spanish and Hindi at <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/india/books/>).

Remember, God didn't call you to build a church, that is His job (Matthew 16:18). Your job is to preach the Word!

PAUL'S ADVICE: Our great responsibility as a pastor is to communicate God's Word to people, like an ambassador would speak for his king.

2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

God listens when you preach. Would He say you are doing your bests to know and communicate His Word? If not, where must you improve?

15. DUTY 10: BE READY TO PREACH THE WORD (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

READ: 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Paul has been giving Timothy good advice about pastoring. As he comes to the end of his letter, he gives him five very important commands, orders for pastors today as well as back then (2 Timothy 4:1-5). These imperatives are “preach,” “be prepared,” “correct,” “rebuke” and “encourage.” In the previous section we talked about the command “Preach the Word.” Now we want to look at the other commands.

“**Be prepared**” means pastors are always to be ready to “preach the Word.” That refers to explaining God’s truth in group sermons or personal conversations. Peter Hammond, a missionary to Sudan. Once said, “A missionary needs to be prepared to preach, pray or die at a moment’s notice.” That is very true for pastors as well. That’s just what Paul is telling Timothy. We must always be ready to apply the truth of God’s Word, when it is convenient or when it is very difficult (“in season and out of season”). “**Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have**” (1 Peter 3:15).

That means we must be ready intellectually to answer questions people may have about how we know God exists, the Bible is true and Jesus is God. We must be able to prove from the Bible that salvation is by grace and know the answers about living the Christian life and anything else people ask. (For more information see my books, “Know Why You Believe” and “Topical Index of Bible Verses” available at <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/india/books/>)

We must also always be prepared spiritually to share God’s truth. There can be no sin in or life or anything that will hinder God’s Holy Spirit from speaking through us (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). We must be growing spiritually and spending time in worship, prayer and meditation.

Finally, we must be ready socially to speak God’s truth to people when we have an opportunity. We must have a good reputation and have earned the respect of others so they will listen. We need to befriend those around us so they feel comfortable with us. We need to listen to others and be sensitive to their needs instead of just thinking of ourselves and doing all the talking. Learn to listen.

Always look for opportunities to speak to others about Jesus. Know the Bible well enough so you can answer their questions and objections about spiritual things. Be able to explain what you believe and to defend your beliefs when necessary. If you don’t know an answer, honestly tell the person you don’t know but will study to find the answer and get back to them. Never pretend you know when you don’t. That is all part of what Paul means when he commands us to “preach the Word.” He isn’t just talking about a Sunday morning sermon, he is talking about our being ready all day every day, no matter the circumstances or response.

PAUL’S ADVICE: Doing a good job of preaching the Word means you must be prepared, and that takes time and work.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

How well prepared are you to answer questions and objections about your faith?

Are you alert for opportunities to bring God’s truth into a conversation?

Do you pray and look for times when you can share the Bible with others?

16. DUTY 10: CORRECT, REBUKE AND ENCOURAGE (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

READ: 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Paul gave Timothy his great final command to “Preach the Word.” He told him to be ready to use any and every opportunity to speak for Jesus as His ambassador, using His words in the Bible. He must be alert for opportunities to teach in everyday life, like parents are with children. There are three other commands Paul gave him that also relate to his command to “Preach the Word.”

“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2). Not only is Timothy, but we are to teach truth, we are to correct error. Paul has already said this several times because it is so necessary and important. We are to teach truth where it isn’t known or followed. We are also to correct false beliefs whenever and wherever we find them. It takes a good, thorough knowledge of Scripture to find and correct error, for often it is hidden inside of truth and carefully concealed. When a person wants to counterfeit something, they make it as much like the original as possible, but it still is fake. That is true of false teachings and teachers as well. We must correct others with gentleness and love. We must correct others as we would like to be corrected (the Golden Rule). Those who can distinguish counterfeits can do so because they know the original so well, they can spot any deviation. That’s how complete our knowledge of Scripture must be as well.

Unfortunately, not everyone will respond to correction. Many will insist on holding to the lies they believe and the sin that results in their lives. In that case our preaching takes the form of rebuking them – pointing out their rebellion and disobedience. They must be warned so they know they are wrong, and others must be alerted to their sin so they don’t follow in it.

The Greek word that is translated “rebuke” is a very strong word that refers to a sharp, severe reprimand. It must be done in love, as a parent correcting a child who is doing something wrong and dangerous. But it must also be done with seriousness and no compromise, just like a parent. It’s like seeing someone’s house on fire, but they are inside and don’t know it. You will rush to inform them so they can flee to safety. That’s what it means to “rebuke” with the Word.

Finally, “preach the Word” also includes encouraging our listeners. We are to correct and rebuke, but also do all we can to build up and encourage, not discourage. A good parent is always looking for times and ways to build up their children. They don’t just look for errors to correct. Positive encouragement goes a lot further to helping improve a person than negative criticism.

Everyone needs encouragement to continue in faithfulness. Sharing God’s promises are the best way of comforting and reassuring others. We must know and use God’s promises so we can share them with others.

PAUL’S ADVICE: Preaching God’s Word includes correcting error, rebuking those who won’t accept God’s truth and encouraging those we speak to.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Who encourages you? Have you thanked them?

Who do you know who could use some encouragement? What can you do today to encourage them?

17. DUTY 10: HOW TO PREACH THE WORD (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

READ: 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Paul commanded Timothy, and us, to preach the Word, always be ready to correct, rebuke and encourage others. That is *what* we are to do. Next Paul will tell Timothy *how* to do it.

“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with **great patience and careful instruction**” (2 Timothy 4:2). How are we to “preach the Word”? We are to communicate it with patience and accuracy.

First, we must use “great patience” in teaching and applying God’s Word. The Greek word means “patience endurance.” It’s like “run with patience” (Hebrews 12:1). It is a continuing, ongoing, active action but done with patient faithfulness. Often, we must teach and explain the same thing over and over and over. Parents must do that with children, and God must do it with His children, too. It takes great patience to be a good parent, and to be a good pastor. Patience doesn’t come naturally or easily. It is a fruit of God’s Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), not something we can produce on our own. It’s not something we can fake or pretend we have. It either is real or we don’t have it. God’s fruit is only produced in us when we live close to Him and have no sin in our life. We need patience to pastor. As Paul says, we need *great* patience.

The other way we are to share God’s truth is by “careful instruction.” We must teach all the Bible, not just a few favorite parts. We must cover everything a passage or verse says, not just pick out what we want to talk about. We must go over it again and again until people really understand it. Then we must make sure it is accurately applied to their lives. The Bible must be taught in an organized, systematic way. My book, “Bible Overview,” will help you understand the Bible and organize your teaching of it (see <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/india/books/>).

A good way to become a better Bible teacher is to teach children, your own children or grandchildren or those in your church. That will help you break Bible truths down to make them simpler and more understandable. Children will tell you when they don’t understand. You will have to think and plan more carefully before talking and that is good.

There is much error in the world today. Only the Bible is God’s absolute authority of truth. People, even pastors, can be easily misled if they don’t totally and completely know the Bible. That’s why it is so important for us to “preach the Word” and to do it with “great patience” and “careful instruction.”

PAUL’S ADVICE: Communicating God’s Word must be done with great patience and careful instruction.

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Are you a patient person?

Would your family say you are patient?

What must you do to become more patient and therefore more Christlike?

18. DUTY 10: WHY TO PREACH THE WORD (2 Timothy 4:3-5)

READ: 2 Timothy 4:3-5

Having explained the importance of patiently and thoroughly teaching the Bible, Paul then explained why this was so important. First, he said WHAT to do: preach, be prepared, correct, rebuke and encourage (1 Timothy 4:2a). Then he explained HOW to do it: with great patience and

careful instruction (1 Timothy 4:2b). Then he told Timothy WHY he was to do this: people will turn from the truth and believe lies (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

We know the world rejects truth and believes lies, but Paul is speaking specifically about church people doing this. We certainly see that happening today as well. **“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear” (1 Timothy 4:3).** Many who call themselves Christians will become bored with the truth and apathetic to it (“not put up with”).

Paul has much to say to Timothy about “truth.” He wrote about it 5 times in his first letter to Timothy (2:4,7; 3:15; 4:3; 6:5) and 6 times in this second letter (2:15,18,25; 3:7,8). Paul tells Timothy and us to know the truth, follow the truth and proclaim the truth. That’s a summary of what a good pastor is and does.

“They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:4) such as atheism, humanism, evolution, liberalism, false religions, reincarnation and many others. Many so-called Christians will turn away from truth, but Timothy is commanded to remain faithful. **“But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry”** (2 Timothy 4:5). Paul here gives Timothy 4 final commands to help him face and overcome false teachings and teachers.

First, **“keep your head in all situations.”** Literally it means “be sober.” Be alert to what is not true. Be self-controlled and don’t react emotionally. Don’t give in to fear of criticism or pressure from others. False teachers are like wolves that come to destroy sheep (Acts 20:28-20). Satan is like a lion that has come to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8). If there were real wolves or lions near your children you would be very alert and careful. That’s how we are to be spiritually.

Next, Paul repeats his command to **“endure hardship.”** A pastor’s life is not easy, not if he is following Jesus and serving Him. Those who put themselves first and use the ministry for their own pride do not have to endure hardship, but those who serve as Jesus did will suffer criticism and rejection as He did (2 Timothy 3:12). We face loneliness, frustration, confusion, discouragement, financial problems, marriage and family issues, personal sins, health issues, not having enough time, demands of people, sorrow over people who don’t follow God’s Word and many others. God allows all this because He uses it to make us more like Jesus. No pastor who is following Jesus is exempt from the trials that stretch and strengthen our faith.

Third, Paul reminds Timothy to **“do the work of an evangelist.”** Evangelism was part of Timothy’s mix of spiritual gifts. We all have a unique combination of spiritual gifts that God equips us with so we can minister to other Christians. They include such things as pastoring, leadership, organization & administration, teaching, knowledge, wisdom evangelism, missionary work, service, mercy, helps, hospitality, encouraging, faith, prayer, giving, sacrificial living, discernment. (For more information about spiritual gifts, see “Duties of a Pastor,” Appendix 2 <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/india/books/>).

Even if we don’t have the gift of evangelism, where talking to people about salvation comes naturally and easily, we are still responsible to share His good news. He is to be the focus of our lives. Each sermon, conversation, Bible study and counseling time must include lifting up Jesus.

The final command to Timothy is to **“discharge all the duties of your ministry.”** We are to use our spiritual gifts, but not neglect other areas of ministry. (See my book, “Duties of Pastors and Leaders” for more information <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/india/books/>). “Discharge” means to bring to full measure.” We are to wholly follow Jesus in all a pastor must do.

Being a pastor is much more than a job. It is not like being a builder, farmer or doctor. People choose those jobs, but God chooses who will minister for Him. Other careers need ability, but to be

chosen by God to pastor we need only to have availability. Other careers bring earthly honor to the person by a job well done. We are to serve so all the honor goes to Jesus. Our reward in heaven is eternal and will last forever.

PAUL'S ADVICE: We are to preach the Word because many people, even those claiming to be Christians, can turn from the truth.

How do you do in following Paul's four commands to Timothy? Which is easiest for you to follow? Which is hardest? Why? What can you do to improve in it?

19. DUTIES TO OUR WIVES

Paul has been writing to pastors in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. But what about their wives? What advice would Paul give to pastor's wife today?

In prioritizing our duties, our families come before our ministries (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1-6). When Adam walked and talked with God in Eden, he realized something was missing from his life. God met that need by creating Eve, a wife for him to love and share his life (Genesis 2:18-24). He didn't create children for him to raise, parents for him to support or a church for him to pastor. After our duty to God Himself, our next duty is to our wives and children, even before our ministries.

God has blessed me with a wonderful wife or I would not be the person I am today. The longer I am married to her the more I appreciate the fine person she is, and the more I thank God for such a special gift. Her behind-the-scenes work and faithfulness in my life and ministry is invaluable. I think her faithful, deep prayer life accomplishes more for the Kingdom than my frantic business. She is my greatest prayer supporter.

Through her I have learned about God's unconditional love for me, because I have seen it demonstrated through her. I better understand how God can and will forgive me, for she has exemplified that time and time again. I can trust His faithfulness better because I see it lived out in her life.

Sometimes we think we could accomplish more in life if it were not for the needs of our mates and families. We can resent the time they take. Perhaps I could have spent more time in ministry without my wife and family, but it would not have accomplished as much, and the quality would have been far less. I am sure I would have burned out or failed without her help.

God commands I serve her before myself or my church (Ephesians 5:25-33). In fact, He says if I cannot serve her first, I should not be a pastor (1 Timothy 3:2-5; Titus 2:6). Being a good husband is more important than being a good pastor (1 Peter 3:7). (For more information about Christian marriage see "Marriage and Ministry" by Jerry Schroyer https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/download/india/Books/english_translations/Marriage-and-Ministry-book.pdf)

God expects me to love her as He loves me (Ephesians 5:25). I am to serve her, not just have her serve me. I must show her love, help her in any way I can and always be kind and gentle to her.

Meeting her needs before my own does not take away from my ministry, but rather enriches it by maturing me. Whatever time and love I put into her I get back many times over. Learning to put someone before myself has not been easy, but has been essential in marriage and ministry. It helps me become more like Jesus Who is characterized by putting others before Himself.

The main lessons I have learned in life and the greatest spiritual and emotional growth I have experienced in life have come through my marriage. Things have not always been easy for us. God

uses our imperfections and our conflicts to teach about humility, service, apologizing, forgiving and accepting forgiveness. These things cannot be learned from a book, only from life.

The older I get and the further I go in life and ministry, the more I realize that a good wife IS worth far more than rubies (Ecclesiastes 31:10-12, 30-31). And so is a good husband for you wives reading this!

Sometimes it is God's will for a man or woman to not marry but live alone. This is no less God's will for them than getting married is for others. God Himself promises to meet needs when there is no mate to meet them. Never feel something is wrong because you aren't married!

PAUL'S ADVICE: Put your wife's needs before your ministry and love and serve your wife unconditionally, as Christ loves you.

Proverbs 19:22 22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.

Proverbs 31: 10, 31 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. ... 30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Men, when you stand before God, will He say "Well done, good and faithful servant" for the way you loved and served His daughter, your wife?

Would your wife say she is more important than your ministry or work?

Can she give examples of when you put her before your own needs?

What can you do, starting today, to be a more Christlike to your wife?

20. DUTIES TO OUR CHILDREN

We know what advice Paul gave Timothy about being a godly pastor and husband, but what would he say about being a father? What advice would Paul give to pastors today? I'll share some things He has taught me about being a godly father.

As I look back on my life, I have a perspective that many of you who are younger do not have. My children are grown, married and raising children of their own. My impact on their life has largely been made. I thank God that He convicted me at the start of ministry of the importance of making my family my number one congregation. Others have come and gone in my life, but my family is still my family. There is no one I have had more influence on or ever will have more influence on than my wife and children.

Jesus' top priority while on earth was His 'family' of disciples, not the crowds, and not new programs and projects. He put them and their needs first, often withdrawing from the crowds or sending others away to spend time with the disciples (Matthew 8:18; 14:13-15; 15:39). His pattern is ours to follow today. There is no one you will reproduce yourself in more completely than your children. And you WILL reproduce yourself in them, for good or for bad. You cannot change the fact that you will totally influence their lives. The question is what the influence will be, not if you will have influence. Children are like soft clay which you are forming and molding into whatever image you choose (Proverbs 22:6). If you are too busy to be with them, that makes them feel rejected and unimportant. You represent God in their lives. How you treat them will lead them to or from Jesus. You are forming them and will form them more than anyone else in your ministry.

It is a shame that the children of those in ministry often have a reputation for rebellion and disobedience. Whose fault is that? God Himself says that if we cannot manage our families then we cannot manage His church (1 Timothy 3:4-5). Your children need you more than your church. Sometimes we get so wrapped up in our service for God and our 'success' in the eyes of others that

we miss what is most important. God gave us our children to disciple for Him. Nothing is more important! He will never lead us to neglect our children for the sake of other things, even ministry. They are precious to Him and He entrusts them to us. He will never give us so much to do that we cannot have time for them. That comes from our wrong priorities.

One of my greatest joys in life is watching my children serve the Lord and follow Him. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." (3 John 4). Each one of them has chosen to stay faithful to God and serve Him wholeheartedly. Make sure you see your children as of top importance in your ministry. Only your wife is more important.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Put your children before your ministry but not your wife and raise them to be disciples of Jesus.

Deuteronomy 11:18-22 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

I am sure you would say your family is your number 1 priority, but would they agree?

What proof can you present that shows you put your wife and children before your work?

Would your children say that they know they are more important to you than your ministry?

21. DUTIES OF A PASTOR'S WIFE

A pastor's wife is, first and foremost, a daughter of God. Her identity is in Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17-18), not being married to a pastor. In order to be all God created her to be, she needs to take care of her health by eating healthy, getting proper rest and balancing home and ministry. Life in ministry has many demands. She has responsibilities to her husband and children, plus needs of the church. She is responsible to do her best to keep her herself and her husband healthy.

Her main responsibility as a wife is to support and help her husband (Ephesians 5:22-24, 33; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6). God created the woman as a helper for her husband. (Genesis 2:18) Married men need a supportive, helpful wife. Her role is crucial. Abigail was a good example (1 Samuel 25:39-42). A wife helps by encouraging, praying, advising and protecting him from those who try to defeat and discourage him.

The husband and wife form a team in ministry. The wife does not function in the same work or authority in the church as her husband, but they are yoked together in ministry because of marriage (2 Corinthians 6:14). Sadly, some pastors' wives view pastoring as "his" ministry and do not participate with him. Also, some pastors relegate the jobs no one else wants to their wives. This is not loving or appropriate. She has her own gifts and talents and must be encouraged to use them.

After God and her husband, but before the church, a pastor's wife is to be a godly mother (Psalm 127:3-4). Her husband is required to "manage his own household well" in order to be a pastor (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6). This means leading his wife and children to live godly lives of love and respect for each other. A wife can make this easier or harder for him. She has great influence on the children and sets the emotional mood for the household. If she is happy, hopeful and joyful, the home will be also. If she is angry and critical, that will impact everyone else as well. She needs to work with her husband to create a loving, faithful family. She is his partner and his team mate, in family life as well as ministry.

As with all Christians; the pastor's wife has special gifts God gave her to serve the Body of Christ (Romans 12:6-8). She is God's gift to the church to fill those needs (Ephesians 4:10-12). God expects her to use those gifts (1 Peter 4:10-11). If she doesn't, then the whole church suffers. If she is busy doing other things, she won't have time or energy to do what God has equipped her to do. Anna in Luke 2:36-37, Dorcas in Acts 9:36, Lydia in Acts 16:15, Priscilla in Acts 18:26, Philip's daughters in Acts 21:9, Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2, and the widows in 1 Timothy 5:3-10 are all good examples. Prioritize your time in areas of giftedness first. Add other areas as God leads you.

It is an honor to have a pastor husband. You see firsthand lives transformed and God's hand work in ways others do not. Pray for him daily. Support him in love (gentle spirit) and without fear (peaceful inner spirit) (1 Peter 3:4). When problems arise, be a good listener, not critical and blaming him or the believers. Be a part of the solution, not adding to the problem by talking, gossip, criticizing or complaining. Take that to the Lord alone.

Do not discuss private family matters concerning your pastor husband to those in your fellowship. If you need advice or guidance, speak with a trusted, confidential, older and wise female believer. If deep concerns need attention such as physical or verbal abuse, direct your issues to a trusted elder.

Do not expect your pastor husband to always be right or respond in a godly manner. He, too, is "in process." Extend grace to him. He needs it as well as you do. Forgive quickly to prevent a root of bitterness. Complement him; ask him about what concerns him and what encourages him. Be actively engaged in listening to his response. Be a safe listener.

In an orchestra, the first violin carries the melody and gets all the attention. But the second violinist makes the harmony and creates the musical beauty. Pastors' wives are second violinists. They don't get much attention but they create beautiful harmony.

Enjoy. Be blessed. Get eternal rewards. Be the best Christian woman you can be and you will automatically be a good pastor's wife.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Love your husband unconditionally, submit to his leadership with respect and help him in any way you can.

1 Timothy 3:11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

What do you enjoy most about being married to a pastor?

What is the hardest thing for you as a pastor's wife?

22. DUTY 11: BE FAITHFUL TO THE END - 1 (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

READ: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

In his final letter (2 Timothy), Paul reminded Timothy of his duties as a pastor. He was to grow stronger in his faith (2:1), transmit truth (2:2), endure difficulties (2:3-13), oppose false teachings (2:14,16-19), seek only God's approval (2:15), be pure (2:20-26), be alert to the growing opposition from the world (3:1-9), be faithful in persecution (3:10-13), live the Word (3:14-16) and preach the Word (4:1-5). Paul concludes his teaching remarks with a personal testimony of how he is doing in prison (4:6-8). He doesn't command or advise Timothy but there is clearly a challenge in it for him and all of us. **"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge,**

will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

What a great note of victory Paul concludes with. Despite being in prison and facing martyrdom very soon, he keeps his eyes on Jesus. That was a great encouragement to Timothy and to many since.

He is “**poured out like a drink offering.**” This refers to a priest pouring a sacrifice of wine on the altar until it is all gone. That is how Paul feels. He admits he is facing tremendous trials and is enduring hardship himself. Have you ever felt that way? You have given all and there is no more physical or emotional energy left to give any more. There have been times I could identify with Paul’s words. God was very real and close at those times, and I’m sure He was with Paul as well.

Paul knows his death (“**departure**”) is near and he is offering his life to God as a sacrificial offering. “Departure” is used of a traveler leaving their country, a soldier breaking camp to move on or a sailor leaving dock. What a perfect word picture for death. It isn’t the end, just a major change. Life doesn’t end, but it does move from this world to eternity. What a joy that will be! Paul was really looking forward to it, as should we all.

As he looks back on his life, Paul evaluates his performance with three phrases. The first is “**I have fought the good fight.**” The Greek word used is literally “agony.” It is used of a boxer or wrestler giving all he has in an extremely difficult battle. That’s how Paul thought about his life in ministry. Serving Jesus is a battle, a hard battle. We fight temptation from sin, Satan and his forces and the opposition of the world around us, the same enemies Jesus fought. Why should we expect it to be any different for us who follow Him? Jesus doesn’t remove our battle but helps us win it. Parents who remove all obstacles from their children will have spoiled, self-centered, immature children. The same is true of God’s children. Obstacles make us stronger.

Are you able to look back at your Christian life so far and say you have fought the good fight? Are you standing firm in the battles you have to fight today, or are you giving in and letting them defeat you?

The second way Paul summarizes his life is that he has “**finished the race.**” In his day, it was not just speed that counted in a race, it was finishing with your torch still burning. That speaks of Paul’s faithfulness to God until the end of his life. He didn’t turn from the faith or his God-given responsibility. He had struggles and difficulties, but he persevered through.

Do you continue to faithfully serve just as you did when you first started following Jesus? Are you committed to doing so for the rest of your life?

Finally, Paul says he “**kept the faith.**” This is a military term that refers to standing guard, protecting what was assigned to him. For Paul, this was the Christian faith, the body of truth conveyed in the Bible. He was a faithful steward, as the man in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14–30 Luke 19:11–27). Even during persecution and threats on his life, he never denied or turned from God’s truth as revealed in His Word.

When have you abandoned, turned from, compromised or neglected some part of God’s commands and directions in His Word? Are there any you aren’t following 100% today?

PAUL’S ADVICE: Live your life for Jesus now so at the end you can say you have fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith.

Who do you know who is an example of someone who is fighting the good fight, running the race and keeping the faith? What can you learn from them to help you as you live for Jesus?

23. DUTY 11: FAITHFUL TO THE END - 2 (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

READ: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

As he ended his final words of advice to Timothy, Paul shared how he viewed his life for Jesus. He said he has fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:6-8). This was an unspoken challenge to Timothy to live his life so he could say the same thing when he was facing death. It is the duty of all of us to be faithful to the end. We all want to be, but it can be hard.

Even if you haven't been as faithful as Paul was (and very few are), if you confess any sin or failure and turn from it, God will forgive you and restore you so you can start again with a clean record (1 John 1:9). Stay faithful from here on. And if you fail, He will forgive and restore you as often as you need it.

God will bless you in this life with peace, joy and close fellowship with Himself. He will also reward you in heaven for all eternity. That's why Paul next says: **"Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness..."** Crowns were given to victors in sporting events then like we give medals and trophies today. God's awards aren't given for beating others but for fulfilling your own course. They are rewards for all eternity. Not only will we live forever with Jesus, but we will have special blessings and privileges from Him for our faithful service. These are given by Jesus to all believers (1 Corinthians 9:4-27). Faithful pastors will receive a crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4). All Christians (2 Timothy 4:8), including pastors, can receive an imperishable crown for living a disciplined life (1 Corinthians 9:25), a crown of rejoicing for leading people to Jesus and helping them grow (1 Thessalonians 2:19), a crown of righteousness for loving Jesus' return (2 Timothy 4:8) and a crown of life for enduring trials (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).

Which of these crowns do you think you will receive? How will it make you feel to reach heaven and receive them from Jesus?

We won't be able to take anything from this life to heaven with us. All we have will be the crowns Jesus gives us there. When we worship Him on the throne and see His greatness and beauty, we'll want to show our love so we'll give Him the only thing we have – our crowns. We'll lay them at His feet in recognition that they belong to Him for we wouldn't have them without His mercy and power (Revelation 4:10). All we can produce on our own is wood, hay and stubble – nothing worthy of Him (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). How sad it would be to not have a crown to give Him!

Second Timothy is Paul's final writing to Timothy before he was martyred. Last words are significant and meaningful. One day you and I will be saying our final words. Will we be able to say, **"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."** (2 Timothy 4:7-8)? Paul's time on earth is over but we are still here, we can still live for Him and serve Him.

Are you doing that now? Will you continue to do that for the rest of your life, no matter what you face?

Even more important than our last words on earth are Jesus' first words to us in heaven. I want to hear Him say, **"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"** (Matthew 25:23). Just being in heaven will be marvelous, but to meet Jesus and hear Him say that face to face will be beyond anything we can imagine.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Living for Jesus not only brings blessings in this life, but special crowns and rewards for all eternity.

Spend some time in prayer thanking Jesus for all He has done in your life in the past, what He is doing now and for all you will have with Him for eternity in heaven.

24. FINAL YEARS OF PAUL & TIMOTHY (2 Timothy 4:9-22)

READ: 2 Timothy 4:9-22

When writing a letter in Paul's day, it was common to sign your name at the start and add personal comments at the end, just the opposite of the way we write our letters today (read 2 Timothy 4:9-22). Having said what he wanted to Timothy, Paul now includes personal greetings to friends he will never see again (verses 19-21). He asked Mark, who he had refused to take on his second missionary journey because Mark abandoned him on the first, to come with Timothy and bring his coat and scrolls to him (verse 12-13). Evidently Mark had matured spiritually and was now a dependable servant. Only faithful Luke was with Paul in Rome (verse 11). He concludes with, **"The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all"** (verse 22). Grace was the theme of Paul's whole life, and should be of ours as well.

No one knows the details of Paul's death, but it seems certain he was beheaded in Rome during a terrible persecution by Nero. Nero burned Rome in AD 64 and blamed the Christians, thus starting another wave of awful persecution and murder. Because he was a Roman citizen, Paul was spared crucifixion. Peter and his wife were crucified about this same time. Tradition says Peter wanted to be crucified upside down because he didn't deserve to die as His Master did.

As for Timothy, it seems he was able to join Paul in Rome about 66 AD when Timothy was about 31 years old. He spent the rest of his life ministering in Ephesus, the very place he wanted to leave, until he was martyred. John and Mary also lived there. What a great help they must have been to him as well. He died under persecutions by Domitian or Nerva, about 97 AD, when he was 62 years old.

Timothy lived a long life of service to God. He learned from Paul and passed what he learned on to others who kept passing it on until it has come down to us today (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:2). He reproduced what he knew in others, training them to ministry. Timothy also had a servant's heart and was willing to serve instead of being served (Acts 19:22). He was available to go where God wanted him to go and ministered as a trouble-shooter to churches with problems (Acts 20:4). The fact that he was teachable and willing to learn was important to keep him growing and staying in ministry (2 Timothy 3:10-11). He took the things he learned and passed them on to others.

Because he shared Paul's goals and motives, Timothy could faithfully represent Paul's (and God's) will and desire (Philippians 2:19-20). Some pastors are more interested in building a name and reputation for themselves than helping others and serving where needed. Despite the difficulties he faced, Timothy was faithful in all he did (1 Corinthians 4:17). He continues to be a great example for all pastors today.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Follow Paul and Timothy, not because they are perfect but because they followed Jesus.

1 Corinthians 4:17 I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Who are you more like, Paul or Timothy?

In what ways are you like Paul? What problems do you face that he faced?

In what ways are you like Timothy? What problems do you face that he faced?

What have you learned from Paul and Timothy that can help you be a better pastor?

25. DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS TO THEIR PASTOR

We have looked at the duties of shepherds to their sheep, let's talk about the responsibilities of Christians to their pastors. Sheep can make a shepherd's work easier or harder, depending on how they respond to his leadership. That is true of God's sheep as well. Christians are commanded to honor their leaders (1 Timothy 5:17-25). They can do this by recognizing them for their faithful service and showing them respect (1 Thessalonians 5:12). It is important to show them love, for leaders need it as much as anyone else (1 Thessalonians 5:13). People need to help their pastors any way they can. They must pray for them daily.

Never gossip or criticize a leader (1 Corinthians 4:3-4). If there are biblical concerns pray for the person. If it continues, go to an appropriate leader to express your concerns about this person and let them handle it. If it does not resolve and God leads you to leave the church, do so quietly without gossip or criticism (Proverbs 16:28; 11:9,13; 10:18; Psalm 15:2-3; Ephesians 4:29).

Christians must encourage their leaders by thanking them for their service, assisting them when facing difficulties and helping in any way they can. Regular attendance at church services encourages a pastor as well.

Believers are to pray regularly, specifically and lovingly for their leaders. The church I pastored for 35 years was excellent in their support of me and prayers for me. I know the difference their prayers made, but I could not have pastored without them.

Paul commanded early churches to have regular offerings (1 Corinthians 16:2). God told the Jews in the Old Testament to give 10% of their wealth to God's work (Genesis 14:20; 28:22) and Jesus approved of tithing (Luke 11:42). We are no longer under God's Old Testament Law, so those commands do not apply to us. Still, that can give us a guideline as to how much to give. Paul said we are to give as God has prospered us (1 Corinthians 16:2), which for most of us will be beyond 10%. Paul devotes two chapters, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, to writing about the importance of financial giving.

Some of the money given to the church should go to providing a pastor with an adequate salary, for the workman is worthy of his pay (Deuteronomy 24:15). The picture in Deuteronomy 24:15 is of an ox working to produce food for the owner by pulling weights to thresh the grain. It's only right he be allowed to benefit from his work so he has energy to keep working. Paying a pastor enables him to have time to keep studying and pastoring.

If people don't have money to give, they can provide food or something useful for the pastor's family. When the church I pastored didn't have money to pay me, individuals in the church gave us food. It was greatly needed and much appreciated.

Paul states that a pastor is worthy of "double honor" (1 Timothy 5:17-18). Not only should he be respected and honored as God's representative, but he should receive financial support to help him have time to minister. Too many Christians and churches do not pay a pastor enough for him to support his family. A pastor doesn't need to make more money than the average person in his church, but he shouldn't make less, either.

The Bible forbids Christians to go into debt and a church should do its very best to stay out of debt of any kind (Romans 13:8; Proverbs 22:7; Psalm 37:21; Luke 14:28; Hebrews 13:5). It may be necessary to buy a building, but cost should be as low as possible and paid off as quickly as possible.

Being a pastor is a difficult job. Do all you can to make it as easy as possible.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Show honor and respect for your pastor, help him and financially support him.

Jeremiah 3:15 Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.

Do your people treat you with respect? Are you treating them with respect to set a good example?

Do you teach them about the importance of being good stewards and supporting the church financially?

Do you teach your people the importance of supporting you the best they can?

26. DUTIES OF PASTORS TO OTHER PASTORS

We have been looking at the duties and responsibilities of a pastor as seen in 2 Timothy. We have seen the obligations pastors have to their people and those which the people have to their pastors. One final area of consideration is the duties pastors have to other pastors.

We are on the same team, working for the same Great Shepherd. There can be no competition, jealousy or criticism of other pastors or churches (1 Corinthians 3:9). We are to evaluate and pass judgment on false teachers, but not fellow pastors and their ministries (1 Timothy 5:19-25; Romans 14:4). We must support each other, not compete with each other (1 Corinthians 3:8-9). We are one Body working together (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Romans 12:4). When body parts work against each other the body becomes weak and unhealthy. That happens to the church as well when pastors and churches are jealous or compete with each other. Everyone suffers.

We need to pray for each other, help each other, encourage each other and together work against our common enemy. Fellowship and cooperation with other pastors is very important. We can share concerns, provide insight and wisdom, encourage during difficulties and hold each other accountable when necessary. We can share our gifts and strengths to help others when needed. We need each other. I think one of the reasons so many pastors struggle today is because they do not have other pastors who can encourage or help them when needed. Timothy had fellow pastors like Titus to share the work. He also had Paul as a mentor. Paul had Barnabas as a mentor and Luke as a friend who traveled and ministered with him. Jesus had His disciples, and especially James, John and Peter. You need other pastors and they need you. You should never be too busy to develop relationships with other pastors. They are very, very important.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Pastors must support and help each other in any way they can.

Hebrews 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

Are there any pastors or church leaders with whom you are not getting along? What can you do to heal the relationship?

Which pastors are you jealous of? Why? Confess your jealousy and ask God to forgive you.

Who can you go to when in need? Who can you share struggles and difficulties with?

Who will seek you out if you struggle? Who holds you accountable if you slip?

Who is your mentor? Who are you mentoring?

What young pastors are you training and helping? What are you doing for them?

IV. TITUS

A. BACKGROUND OF TITUS

TITLE: Named for recipient

AUTHOR: Paul

THEME: Daily Walk

DATE of WRITING: 62 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Corinth

RECIPIENT: Titus, a young pastor Paul is training for ministry

KEY VERSES: 11 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. 2:11-14*



KEY WORDS: "Good" (11 times); "good works" (6 times); "sound" (5 times)

PURPOSE:

1 TIMOTHY	TITUS	2 TIMOTHY
Mostly pastoral	Less pastoral	Mostly pastoral
Guard the gospel 6:20	Practice the gospel 3:8	Preach the gospel 4:2

THEME: How to live a godly life

After his third missionary journey, Paul went to Jerusalem where he was falsely accused of breaking the Jewish law and arrested. For his safety he was taken to Caesarea where he spent 2 years in house arrest. Paul appealed to Caesar and was taken to Rome. On the way he was shipwrecked. Eventually he was released because the Jews couldn't prove any charges against him. Paul then went to Ephesus and left Timothy there to help churches in that whole area. Paul continued to northern Greece and wrote to Timothy, encouraging him in his work and explaining about church order and organization (1 Timothy). Next Paul went to Crete and left Titus there to supervise those churches. Soon Paul left Crete and went to Corinth. From there he wrote to Titus encouraging him (the book of Titus). Eventually he ended in Ephesus again where he was arrested for the second time and taken back to Rome for the crime of being a Christian. From prison there he wrote to Timothy again (2 Timothy).

BACKGROUND Sandwiched between 1 and 2 Timothy is the book of Titus which is very similar to 1 Timothy. Titus was a Gentile who Paul led to salvation. Paul took him to the Jerusalem council to show the leaders a Gentile could be saved without being circumcised (Acts 15:1-11; Titus 2:11-14; Galatians 2:3). At the end of the third missionary journey Titus again is mentioned. Paul sent him to Corinth to deal with delicate problems there (much the same as Timothy was sent to Ephesus). Mainly, though, Titus worked with the churches on Crete, just as Timothy worked with the churches in Ephesus.

I. CONDUCT OF THE LEADERS (1:5-16) Paul begins by reminding Titus how the church leaders were to live and act. Qualifications and requirements were given for deacons and elders. Paul also

warns them about false teachers and their danger. Titus couldn't be everywhere on the island of Crete, so he needed dependable leaders to oversee the various house-churches there. This was the same organization used in all the cities where there were churches.

II. CONDUCT OF THE LAITY (2:1-10) Paul tells Titus how all believers are to live. Older men are to be self-controlled; women reverent and faithful, younger men are to be sensible. All are to set godly examples for others. Servants, too, are to live godly, submissive lives.

In all ways and at all times they are to live by grace. They are to turn from ungodly lusts and desires. They are to live remembering that Jesus could come back for them at any time and they are to always be ready. Holiness must characterize God's people.

In their relationship to the government they are to be good citizens. To all people they are to be ready to do what is good, honest in all they say and do, gracious and always forgiving to all and considerate and humble. They are to avoid strife and contentiousness among themselves. This will show others what a Christian really is like.

Any who don't follow these principles are to be disciplined so they repent or are removed. This will show the seriousness of sin and keep the church pure. Living the Christian life is mandatory, not optional. It is a requirement, not suggestion. How are you doing?

B. OUTLINE OF TITUS

I. CHARACTER, CONDUCT, QUALIFICATIONS OF THE LEADERS 1:5-16

A. CHARACTER OF GODLY LEADERS 1:5-9

B. CHARACTER OF FALSE TEACHERS 1:10-16

II. CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS 2:1-3:11

A. IN RELATION TO THEIR AGE & STATUS 2:1-10

1. Older 2:1-5

a. General Principal 2:1

b. Older Men 2:2

c. Older Women 2:3

2. Younger People 2:6-8

3. Slaves to Masters 2:9-10

B. IN RELATION TO THE WORLD 2:11-15

C. IN RELATION TO THE GOVERNMENT 3:1

D. IN RELATION TO ALL PEOPLE 3:2-7

E. IN RELATION TO UNBELIEVERS 3:8-11

Closing 3:12-15



C. ADVICE FOR PASTORS - TITUS

1. DELIVER THE MESSAGE (Titus 1:1-4)

READ: Titus 1:1-4

If you were asked to describe yourself in one word or phrase, what word would you choose? Paul used the word “**servant**” or “**slave**” to describe himself to Titus (Titus 1:1a). The Greek word for servant or slave referred to “one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another.” There were many

slaves on the Island of Crete, where Titus was when Paul wrote to him. They were slaves of human masters and had to do what they were told, no matter what they thought or wanted to do. Paul said he was a slave of Jesus, not just in what he did but also in what he thought and felt. His will was to do the will of God.

Paul then used another word to describe what his specific servant role was: he was sent by God (“**apostle**”) to carry the good news of Jesus to those God has chosen for salvation (Titus 1:1b). He not only brought the message of salvation, but he then taught them God’s Word so that they grew in knowledge and godliness. He assured them of eternal life, which God promised them (Titus 1:2). Paul affirmed that God does not lie (verse 2), a clear reference to the god Zeus worshiped on Crete, who was known as a liar. It was Paul’s honor and privilege to carry this message wherever God led him (Titus 1:3).

Paul made it clear that his job was to **convey God’s Word** wherever he went. It was not his truth but God’s, he just delivered it. When you eat in a restaurant, a waiter brings you your food. He doesn’t cook it, someone else does. His job is just to deliver what someone else cooked. That’s what we do as pastors, teachers and leaders. We don’t create our message; we just deliver what God said. We don’t change it, add to it, compromise it or alter it in any way. We simply deliver it from God’s Word to the people to whom we speak. That’s what Paul did and we must do as well. That’s what he is encouraging Titus to do also.

Paul called Titus his “**true son**” showing the close relationship he had with him. Paul was approaching the end of his life and would be dead in a couple years. He wrote his first letter to Timothy in August 62 AD. Titus was written in the summer of 66 AD and 2 Timothy a year later, in the fall of 67 AD. Six months later Paul was martyred.

Titus was older and more stable than Timothy. The church on Crete, where Titus ministered, wasn’t nearly as problematic as in Ephesus where Timothy was. Paul didn’t know if he would see Titus again or not, so he wrote to encourage him to continue in ministry, as he did with Timothy. Titus, like us, was to deliver the message God has given.

Today we are the “sent ones” taking the message about Jesus to those around us. Paul, Timothy and Titus are no longer here to do it. It is our turn, theirs is over. They no longer can serve Jesus on earth – but we can. We still have an opportunity to be His slaves in all we think and do. We can tell others about Him and help them grow in their faith. This earthly life is the only chance we will have. We only live one time so let’s make it count for Jesus!

PAUL’S ADVICE: We are slaves for God, sent to spread His truth everywhere.

Matthew 28:18-20 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

What one word or phrase would God use to describe you?

Would it include “good and faithful servant/slave?”

2. A GOD OF ORDER AND STRUCTURE (Titus 1:5)

READ: Titus 1:5

God likes structure and organization. He made the universe to run very precisely. The laws of mathematics rule science and they never change. Everything has its place and interconnects with everything else. There is order, not chaos; planning, not chance; design, not accident. Since God

created the universe to run that way, it should be no surprise He wants the church to run that way as well. We see that at the very start of Paul's words to Titus.

After his opening introduction (Titus 1:1-4), Paul gets right to the reason he is writing: **“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you”** (Titus 1:5). Titus was Paul's representative to the house churches scattered throughout the island. Paul visited Crete many years earlier on his earliest missionary journeys but didn't start any churches there. They had already been planted, probably by Jews who accepted Jesus as their Savior at Pentecost and returned home to Crete (Acts 2:11). The church was composed mainly of slaves who were owned by immoral, ungodly masters.

Titus is commanded to **“straighten out what was left unfinished”** (Titus 1:5). “Straighten out” is a medical term referring to setting a broken bone. The church there needed to be organized, structured, led by qualified, trained men who knew and followed the truth of God's Word. The people on Crete had a reputation for being dishonest, lazy and corrupt (Titus 1:12). Becoming a Christian doesn't automatically change all that. Each person still has a free will choice to make about how they live. Paul had a lot to say about living a holy life and doing good works, because that was needed there, and it was up to Titus to encourage it. Also, there was a lot of false teaching going on (Titus 1:10-11). It was up to Titus to get things organized and moving in the right direction.

One of the first things Titus needed to do to accomplish this was to **“appoint elders”** (Titus 1:5). Paul always emphasized the need for order and organization in churches. In 2 Timothy he focused on church leadership and in Titus on church organization. Structure is very important to church health. It is necessary for the gospel to spread and believers to grow. God put structure, order and organization into the universe. We see it in math and science. We need to see it in the church as well.

These elders were to be spiritually mature, godly men who would oversee the Christians in the various house churches. There were usually two or more doing the planning, teaching and guiding in each local gathering throughout the island. Gentiles in the church would be familiar with the term and concept of qualified men leading others. Jewish synagogues had such an office as well.

There are two groups of leaders in a church: Elders are spiritual leaders and oversee the spiritual needs of the people. We also call them pastors today. Deacons are the second group and they care for the physical needs of the building, people, finances and resources so the elders can focus on the more important spiritual needs.

	POIMEN	PRESBUTEROS	EPISCOPOS	DIACONOS
Transliteration		Presbytery	Episcopal	Deacon
Translation	Pastor	Elder	Overseer (bishop)	Minister (servant)
Literal	Shepherd	Commanding officer	Guardian	Wait on tables Servant
Main Idea	Gift, Duty Shepherd by leading, feeding	Office; Jewish title for head of synagogue – authority, personal dignity, maturity	Office; Gentile title for head of group of people, policy-maker	Attitude Servant, slave of God
FROM	God	Others	Others	Self
	Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-4	1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:1,17,19; Titus 1:5-6	1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4	1 Timothy 4:6; 2 Timothy 4:5

Our job today as pastors is also to make sure things are going well in our church and the lives of our people. We must plan ahead, be organized and do things in a systematic order. We must set goals and make plans to reach them. We must keep the people in order with everyone working together like a big family. We can't put off things that need doing or let disorder or discord take over in the church. We are in charge; God wants us to keep things in control and oversee everyone as He oversees us.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Each church needs leaders to organize and oversee its function.

1 Peter 5:1-4 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

What are some of the problems you have had to straighten out in your church?

Where is there disorder and disorganization in your life right now?

What must you do about it to follow God's command to be organized?

3. BEHAVIOR OF GODLY LEADERS (Titus 1:6-9)

READ: Titus 1:6-9

In his letter to Titus, Paul began by reminding him of the need to straighten out any problems or disorganization in the church. He needed to appoint spiritually mature, godly men with self-control and a good reputation to lead the house-churches scattered throughout Crete. These men, the pastors of the local house-churches, were the key to making sure God's Word was followed and people grew spiritually. Because this position was so important, certain requirements were required of them (Titus 1:6-9). Paul had already given Timothy these same qualifications (1 Timothy 1:6-9). (See V. STANDARDS FOR PASTORS AND LEADERS for a detailed explanation of these traits.)

It's important to note that the same high standards were expected of church leaders in the small Jewish churches in rural Crete that were expected of the Gentiles in the large and important city of Ephesus where Timothy ministered. They apply to all leaders in all churches at all times in all places for all time.

A godly leader must have godly qualities. He must be mature and experienced in working in a church. He must be dependable, humble and able to give godly advice. He must have a good reputation with those inside and outside the church. He must listen when others talk, be patient and understanding, get along with others and make people feel comfortable when with him. He must treat others with respect and understanding.

He must know the Bible well and be able to communicate its truths to others. A godly life and close relationship with God must be evident. There can be no unconfessed sin in his life. He doesn't have to be perfect and sinless, but he needs to be growing in victory over sin and becoming more like Jesus all the time. This will be seen in how he treats his wife and children.

He cannot be greedy or materialistic. Instead, he needs to be generous in giving to others in need. He must keep himself under control at all times and set an example of Christlike living in his family, church and community.

It takes time to attain these, a lifetime of work. Even then we won't be anyway near perfect. Becoming like Jesus is a long, slow process – but there must be growth in the right direction for those who are pastors and leaders. These standards give us a goal to strive for, they motivate and inspire

us to keep moving ahead in our own spiritual growth. Jesus is our example. Becoming like Him is our goal. Are you moving in that direction?

PAUL'S ADVICE: Church leaders must be spiritually mature, godly and Christ-like at home, church and in the community.

Titus 1:6-9 An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. 7 Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. 8 Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. 9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Who do you know that exemplifies the qualities listed above?

Do others think you meet the standards?

Which do you have the hardest time meeting? What must you do to be more Christlike in that area?

4. BEHAVIOR OF FALSE TEACHERS (Titus 1:10-14)

READ: Titus 1:10-14

Paul wrote final instructions to Titus telling him to straighten out problems in the church by appointing spiritually mature, godly men to lead the local home churches (Titus 1:1-5). He then explained in detail what kind of men they are to be (Titus 1:6-9). In contrast, though, there were false teachers who were causing problems in the church (Titus 1:10-16). They claimed to be Christians and were involved in the church but what they taught was not in line with what Paul taught. If they unbelievers who attacked from without the church, they could be easily recognized and ignored. But when popular, influential people who seemed sincere in their faith and accurate in their teaching mislead people, it can be very damaging.

Paul calls them “rebellious” (Titus 1:10 – against God’s truth), “mere talkers” (teaching human opinion and not god’s truth) and “deceivers” (convincing others they had the truth when they didn’t. Most of them came from the “circumcision group,” referring to Jews who claimed to be Christians, and may have been. Jews were known for their arguing and legalism. As the joke goes, “Ask two Jews, get three opinions.”

These men “must be silenced” (Titus 1:11) Paul emphatically commands. He then gave the reason (“because”). First, “they are ruining whole households” by their false teachings. Whole families, even whole house churches, were disrupted, misled and in conflict. As if that wasn’t bad enough, the reason they did this was to make money. The people on Crete were known for their greed, and some had found a way to get money from the Christians. They said what would bring them the greatest financial reward. Perhaps they were selling their ‘hidden truths’ about God, or they may have been expecting the people they taught to contribute money to them. Unfortunately there are pastors and leaders today who see the ministry as a career, a way to earn an income. They work to get larger and larger churches and more financial support.

To prove his point Paul quotes Epimenides who lived earlier and said “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons” (Titus 1:12). Callimachus, who lived 300 years before Paul wrote, also said they were liars. Lying was not condemned on Crete but actually seen as a good way to get what one wanted. In their legends and traditions, the main god they worshiped, Zeus, lied to attract the women he wanted. They said Zeus was buried on Crete, which was also a lie.

Paul's command to Titus was to "rebuke them sharply" (Titus 1:13). Be very clear and strong in your condemnation of them and their teachings. Don't hold back but attack the lies (not the people) as hard as you can. Cretans were rough, harsh and uncultivated so a simple; polite rebuke wouldn't make much difference. Paul told Timothy in cultivated Ephesus to be gentle and meek in his rebuke for that was all the people there needed. There is no right or wrong way to do this, it depends on the circumstances and God's leading. However it is done, false teaching must be challenged and stopped. If not, it shows the pastor either doesn't respect the truth of God's Word or he is afraid of what others may say about him. The reason they are to be strongly reprimanded for their error is so that they will return to the true faith (Titus 1:13).

False teaching can take many forms but on Crete it was about "Jewish myths" (Titus 1:14). The Jews had developed many stories and legends that were untrue but were passed on because people wanted to hear them. They had legends, music, oral history, proverbs, jokes, popular beliefs, fairy tales, stories, tall tales and customs that are the traditions of Judaism. These include stories of vampires and monsters, secret messages hidden in the names of people, supposed strange things God said or did in the past that aren't in the Bible, stories and parables with odd lessons revealed only to special people. People were fascinated by these, even those that were extreme and often unbelievable. Perhaps some people feared they were true so wanted to know more about them. Others may have been looking for a short-cut to an easy, problem-free life.

PAUL'S ADVICE: False teachers must be confronted and corrected.

2 Peter 2:1-3 But there were also false prophets * among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. * They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord * who bought them *—bringing swift destruction on themselves. 2 Many will follow their shameful ways * and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. 3 In their greed * these teachers will exploit you * with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

Which false teachings do you have to deal with?

Why are they so appealing to people?

What is so dangerous about them?

What must you do to oppose them?

5. FALSE TEACHINGS TODAY - 1 (Titus 1:15-16)

READ: Titus 1:15-16

We have just seen that false teachers are very dangerous liars and their false teachings must be corrected. Paul wasn't done speaking about them. He then explained why they caused so much trouble.

It became very dangerous when people started following "the commands of those who reject the truth" (Titus 1:14). Judaism turned into a legalistic system as it developed thousands of rules and laws which had to be followed to avoid negative consequences. Legalism is always motivated by fear: fear of what God will do to us and what others will say if we don't follow all the rules. The Jews had thousands of laws about food, working on the sabbath, how to treat others and how to serve God. When they became believers in Jesus, some of them kept these laws and regulations as Christians. They added Jesus to Judaism. The early church ruled against this at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, almost 20 years earlier. Paul was in conflict with these false teachers almost everywhere he went. His first letter, to the Galatians, was about this very principle.

Some who were pushing these lies were true believers but they replaced grace with works (Luke 8:13; 1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 3:12), others had never come to Jesus for salvation but attended church to spread their false ideas (Luke 13:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:11).

Whatever the status of their salvation, they promoted false teaching by saying Jesus wasn't enough – works were also necessary. In fact, Paul says they and their teachings are "corrupt" (Titus 1:15). While claiming others are ceremonially unclean because they don't keep kosher laws, they are the ones who are spiritually unclean in their beliefs.

Paul concluded by saying, "**They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good**" (Titus 1:16). These are very strong words! "Unfit" means they are rejected as worthless when tested because they do not meet God's approval. Their words and works are off course.

When I was a young Christian, I was mentored by people who focused on a list of do's and don'ts – mostly don'ts. There were certain things I couldn't do, wear, read or eat. Everything was prescribed for me. The more closely I followed their dictates, the more I was accepted and praised. If I deviated, I was seen as carnal or backsliding. It took a while for me to learn I was under grace and could come to God for guidance about what He wanted for me. It's not that the things they had me do were all wrong, it's that I was doing them for the wrong reason. I was motivated by fear. If I didn't do what I was told I feared God and other Christians would reject me.

Grace is the free and unmerited favor of God as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings. It is the undeserved, unmerited, unearned favor of God. We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9) and live by grace (Hebrews 13:9).

Some false teachers try to put God's people under laws and regulations as the way to earn His love. Other false teachers say God loves us so much it doesn't matter how we live or what we do. We can do whatever we want and it's OK with Him. Both extremes are wrong. When we live by fear we lack love, joy and peace. We become critical of others and are a bad testimony to unbelievers. When we feel everything is OK, we sin and separate ourselves from God. That leads to more sin and thus we have no love, joy or peace either. Then we become a bad testimony to others as well. The Prodigal Son felt he could do whatever he wanted and ended up in misery, guilt and loss. His elder brother lived by legalism and also had no love, joy or peace. He was judgmental and critical. Both extremes are dangerous and wrong. Satan uses them to counterfeit the truth and make it seem like they are right when they are just traps to put us in bondage and defeat.

PAUL'S ADVICE: False teachers are very dangerous and bring destruction.

Hebrews 13:9 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them.

Which extreme are you more tempted to: feeling we have to do (or not do) things to earn God's love and approval or believing it's OK to do anything because God will forgive you and it will be OK?

6. FALSE TEACHINGS TODAY - 2 (Titus 1:15-16)

READ: Titus 1:15-16

Be it money, paintings, or anything else, the most dangerous counterfeit is that which comes closest to resembling the original. The closer it is, the more deceptive it is. The same is true of God's teachings in the Bible. Satan is a liar and deceiver (John 8:44). He opposes God's truth by denying it, but he is often more successful at counterfeiting it. He makes his false doctrines seem right by having them contain some truth, but adds just enough error to make them dangerous. We saw how

he does this with legalism, laws and rules that are based on fear. They take away personal freedom and use guilt and rejection to manipulate behavior. God's Word clearly says we are under grace, not the law (Romans 6:14).

There are some who take grace to mean it is OK to sin or do whatever we want because God is a God of love and accepts everyone no matter what. It is true God is love, but that does not allow disobedience. Just because we have salvation doesn't mean we can do anything we want without suffering the consequences of that sin. That doesn't mean salvation can be lost, but fellowship with God is broken and we lose joy, peace and the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Another very dangerous false teaching today is that our salvation is not secure in Jesus, that we can do something to lose it. That puts fear into a person's heart, so what they do for Jesus isn't done out of love of Him, but for themselves, to earn or keep their salvation. It's like a wife who serves her husband because she is afraid that he will reject her if she doesn't. A close, loving, trusting relationship cannot develop that way. Salvation is a free gift. There is nothing we do to get it and nothing to lose it (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:16-18, 36; 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; 20:30-31; Romans 4:6-8; 8:14-16, 28, 37-39; 14:8; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 3:12).

One of the most common lies today is that it is God's will for everyone to be healthy and wealthy when clearly very few of those who followed Jesus in the Bible were either of these. Jesus died to remove our sin, not to provide health or wealth. This lie focuses on our greed and self-centeredness. It leaves people feeling guilty and doubting their faith when they struggle with health or finances.

Similar to that deception is the one that says we can "claim" a blessing or "speak" a miracle into our lives. Only God can do that (Romans 4:17). We serve Him, we do not give Him orders. The Lord's prayer says "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done," not "My kingdom come, my will be done" (Matthew 6:10). He is the Master; we are the servant.

The misuse of speaking in tongues today is very damaging as well. Saying everyone must speak in tongues to show their salvation is contrary to Scripture (1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 30; 14). Spiritual gifts are chosen and given by God, we aren't to ask for or demand them. God gives everyone different gifts (1 Corinthians 12) and it is wrong to elevate one gift above another (1 Corinthians 12; 14). Making tongues a sign of salvation or spirituality plays into Satan's hands and causes fear, guilt and pride in people.

Many other false doctrines are prevalent today. Some deny the existence of hell or judgment. Others elevate Jesus' humanity above His deity, or His deity above His humanity when He was 100% each. A group claims we can do what Jesus did on earth through the Holy Spirit. Some people claim there are prophets today who speak on the same level as written Scripture. Others claim to know God's will for other people and tell them what God wants them to do.

A common lie today is that there are no absolutes. They reject the Bible as God's eternal standard and replace it with what they think is right or wrong. Man becomes the final determining factor, not God. Some who claim to be prophets speak as if they know what is right for everyone and they alone have God's truth.

There are many forms and variations of these errors. Everything must be evaluated by God's Word, no matter who says anything different or what reasoning they use to support it. Watch out for counterfeits – they can be very deceptive. Just because something seems close to the truth does not make it truth!

PAUL'S ADVICE: False teaching takes many forms but has one thing in common: it is not supported by the full truth of God's Word.

Revelation 22:18-19 *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

Which of the false teachings mentioned above have you been exposed to?

Have any of them deceived you in the past? How did you get free?

What are you doing to protect the people in your church from being misled by these errors?

7. CONSEQUENCES OF FALSE TEACHINGS (Titus 1:10-16)

READ: Titus 1:10-16

We have talked about some of the counterfeit teachings present today. They can seem very close to the truth but they have error in them that is dangerous and spiritually unhealthy. They can bring many terrible consequences. God's truth comes from God Himself as revealed in His Word. Anything not fully supported by God's Word is from man and not God. The Christian's responsibility is clear: We are to learn God's truth by searching God's Word. We must carefully evaluate every teaching according to God's unfailing standard. What passes the test is sound doctrine, and what fails the test is false teaching.

False doctrine mixes error with truth but true teaching shows error from truth. It takes time studying and learning God's Word to discern true from false (Hebrews 5:12-14). We must know God's truth and then hold to it and it alone. When we allow error in, even a little, the door is open for more to follow.

False doctrine keeps us from growing in holiness while true teaching leads to godliness. That which is false prevents righteousness because it focuses on what is new and different, not what is true and godly (1 Timothy 1:3-6).

False doctrine will lead to sin but Bible truth will prevent it. False doctrine allows sin to take root in our hearts and minds and work its way out in our lives. Sound doctrine confronts our sinfulness and motivates us to repent (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The doctrine contained in Scripture teaches and reproves, it corrects and trains, purges sin and motivates to righteousness.

False doctrine draws attention to leaders who teach error, while sound Bible teaching shows who is a true man of God. Church leaders must be men who know and teach truth while being able to refute what is false (Titus 1:9). If a person isn't teaching all the truth and only the truth, he can't be a pastor or leader.

False doctrine opens the door to more error but true teaching protects against falsehood. That which isn't fully God's truth weakens a church, divides people and allows openings for more false teaching to spread. That is what had happened in the church in Crete (Titus 1:9-10, 16).

False doctrine removes God's blessing but sound teaching brings more blessing. Revelation promises this (1:3; 22:7). There are strong warnings for those who fail to hold to God's truth (Revelation 2:14-16, 20-23). God blesses those who honor His word and curses those who misuse it.

False doctrine weakens the church while true teaching equips the church for times of difficulty. Learning God's Word is essential (2 Timothy 4:2), for a time is coming when churches will turn from the truth (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Paul told Timothy to "guard the deposit" that had been entrusted to him (1 Timothy 6:20, 2 Timothy 1:14). But it was not enough for Timothy to guard it

personally. He was called by God to raise up the next generation of leaders who would hold to it and, in turn, entrust it to the generation after them (2 Timothy 2:2).

To summarize, false teaching is dangerous because it mixes error in with truth, keeps us from growing in holiness, leads to sin, draws attention to false teachers, opens the door to more error, removes God's blessing and weakens Christians and the church. On the other hand, true teaching shows error from truth, leads to godliness, prevents sin, shows who are true men of God, protects against falsehood, brings God's blessing and equips the church for times of difficulty.

False teaching is nothing to take lightly or ignore. It is a dangerous trick of Satan to deceive and destroy. It must be confronted and stopped as soon as possible.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Keep alert for any false teaching and immediately remove it.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Are you able to discern false teaching from true? Who can you go to for help and advice?

When is it hardest for you to confront someone teaching something that is false?

8. HOW TO SPOT FALSE TEACHING (Titus 1:10-16)

READ: Titus 1:10-16

We've been learning about false teachers and false teachings. Paul kept coming back to the subject in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. It was a big problem then and is today as well. T.D. Jakes says that God eternally exists in three manifestations, not three persons. Greg Boyd says God knows some aspects of the future, but that other future events are outside of his knowledge. Creflo Dollar says because we are created in the image of God, we are little gods. Mormonism says God revealed new scripture to Joseph Smith that supersedes the Bible. Roman Catholicism says we are justified by faith, but not by faith alone. It seems that almost every day something new comes along trying to counterfeit the truth. John tells us to "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1) and Paul says to "test everything" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). God holds us, as pastors and leaders, responsible to examine everything that is taught to our people and make sure it is true. But how can we distinguish sound doctrine from false? How can we distinguish teachers of truth from teachers of error?

1. The test of ORIGIN. Sound truth comes from God's Word alone, false teaching is something man adds to God's truth. It can be very deceptive, it may seem to make sense and the people teaching it may seem very sincere and godly, but unless it is clearly and completely taught in Scripture it is false. Truth comes from God alone (John 7:16; Galatians 1:11-12). True doctrine originates with the God who is true (Titus 1:2).

Paul warned the Colossian church to avoid doctrine that originates with man (Colossians 2:22) for it really has demons behind it (1 Timothy 4:1). God is the Father of truth and Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). The test is this: "Does this teaching originate with God and His Word or has it been added by someone? Sometimes it's easy to tell, but other times it can be difficult. When that happens, use the second test.

2. The test of AUTHORITY. Truth is clearly founded on and fully supported by God's Word, but false doctrine is based on sources other than the Bible. It may be the authority of a strong leader or popular Bible teacher. It could be human reasoning and rational explanations are used to support it. Perhaps it is based on the experience of a person. Or it could come from strong emotion: it just feels

so right that it must be true. We must be like the Bereans who “received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so” (Acts 17:11). They knew that all doctrines must be compared to God’s Word, His source of truth. Likewise, Paul praised the Thessalonians for their careful assessment and acceptance of his teaching because they understood its divine authority (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Sound doctrine originates in the mind of God and is recorded in His authoritative self-revelation, the Bible.

But what happens when two opposite teachings both claim the Bible teaches what they believe? How can we know which is true? Use test 3.

3. The test of CONSISTENCY. God’s truth is supported by all of Scripture, not just a few questionable passages. Scripture is consistent and does not contradict itself. There is a sameness or familiarity to true doctrine and a strangeness or unfamiliarity to false doctrine. The writer who wrote the letter to the Hebrews warned his congregation about “diverse and strange teachings,” while Paul warned Timothy about accepting “different doctrine” (Hebrews 13:9; 1 Timothy 1:3, 6:3). Both emphasize that doctrine must always be compared to the established, accepted body of truth. Those who are knowledgeable about that body of truth will be in the best position to immediately identify and refute what is false. There is no contradiction or confusion in the mind of God, therefore there can be none in the Bible either.

What the Bible teaches in one place cannot be refuted in another. Therefore, any true doctrine must be consistent with the whole of Scripture. Doctrine must never be treated in isolation, but always in the light of a correct understanding of the entire Bible. We must always let Scripture interpret Scripture. Too many false teachers isolate verses or ideas that cannot withstand the scrutiny of the whole Book.

Once we have tested doctrine and found it to be true, according to these three criteria, we can also see its soundness by its effects on us and those around us. That is test 4.

4. The test of SPIRITUAL GROWTH and GODLY LIVING. Sound doctrine brings spiritual growth (1 Timothy 4:6). Timothy is an example of this (1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 1:5). Sound doctrine produces spiritually healthy, mature, knowledgeable Christians. False doctrine leads to spiritually unhealthy, immature, ignorant Christians who may not be true Christians at all. What we believe manifests itself in how we act. Truth is seen in holy living, falsehood and error are seen in pride, divisiveness, exclusiveness, self-righteousness and disobedience to the whole Word of God. The focus is on the false teaching and false teachers, not on Jesus.

A teaching is true when it is based on God’s Word, comes from God Himself, is consistent with all of Scripture and results in holy, righteous living and spiritual growth. Anything else is to be avoided like poison – for that’s what it is.

Jesus told the Christians in Thyatira to “hold fast what you have until I come” (Revelation 2:25). Paul said a church leader must stay faithful to the truth so he can teach it and rebuke those who are in error (Titus 1:9). We must do the same (1 Corinthians 5:9).

PAUL’S ADVICE: Learn to distinguish true doctrine from false, and turn from anything false.

Titus 2:1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

Do you understand the four tests above? Become very familiar with them so you can apply them when needed.

If there is any teaching going around which you aren’t sure of, use these tests on it now.

9. BEHAVIOR OF CHRISTIAN MEN (Titus 2:1-2)

READ: Titus 2:1-2

It's interesting that when Paul wrote his final letter to Titus he doesn't write about doctrine or beliefs. He didn't teach theology or even church order, as he did with Timothy. What he focused on was behavior: actions in daily life. We can talk about Bible truth all we want, but if it doesn't impact our lives for the better it is just that – talk. Paul started by talking about how godly leaders should live (Titus 1-9), then about how false teachers are living (Titus 1:10-16). The evidence is clear: the truth about Jesus changes lives for the better; lies containing false truths show corruption and greed within. What we believe is important, but how we put it into practice in our lives is even more important.

Next Paul wrote about how those who weren't leaders were to live. He was speaking of the Christians who made up the house churches on Crete (Titus 2:1-10). Titus was responsible to teach the people so they would know how to live godly lives. He broke it down by various groups: men, women, older and younger. Each have different roles and functions in life and in the church but they must work together as one in Christ.

Paul starts this section with a general command: **"You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine"** (Titus 2:1). Truth is the best defense against falsehood. Paul has just warned about those teaching Jewish legalism and bringing confusion and disorder into the church. The way to keep error from taking over is to teach the truth. When people know God's Word there will be no fertile ground for lies to take hold. When people know and follow the truth, their behavior will be affected. Titus 2:1-10 explain how.

Men who are more mature ("older") will display six signs of spiritual growth. They will be **temperate**. They will be balanced, clear-headed, vigilant and moderate in all things. Next, they will be **worthy of respect**. These men will be serious-minded, not foolish clowns whom others avoid. Third, they will be **self-controlled**, not impulsive or out of control. They will have discernment and good judgment. In addition, they will be **sound in faith** (they will trust God and His Word), **sound in love** (treat others in loving ways) and **sound in endurance** (perseverance, patience and faithfulness).

It takes God's power within to transform men. Only God's Spirit can produce that in others. Without Jesus, men will be controllers and manipulators, wanting to be in charge of everyone and everything. Jezebel was an example of this kind of person. Others will become controlled by anger and use temper outbursts to control people. They will become very critical and unfriendly. Cain was one of these. Another sign of those without Jesus is arrogance. These people are proud, thinking about themselves, always believing they are right and others wrong. They put down others, especially those who are weak and vulnerable. An example of this kind of person is Herod. Some others become negative and critical of everything. They don't have anything positive to say but complain no matter what. They worry and whine about everything. Job's three friends showed some of these traits.

Only in Christ can we become Christlike. That's God's goal for us in our lives and in the lives of our people. It's our responsibility to teach and train our people to live in this way.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Teach Christians to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

Ephesians 4:31-32 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

How do you do personally in these areas Paul talks about?

Do your people have these traits in their lives? What can you do to help them grow in these things?

10. BEHAVIOR OF WOMEN & YOUNG MEN (Titus 2:3-8)

READ: Titus 2:3-8

The truth of Scripture is to be taught so people can apply it to their lives and become more like Christ. This will draw others to Him for their good and God's glory. Paul tells Titus to teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled and sound in faith, in love and in endurance (Titus 2:1-2). Paul also applies this to women.

The older, more spiritually mature women are also to be taught how to apply God's truth to their lives (Titus 2:3-5). They, too, are to show Jesus by their character and actions (Titus 2:3 "Likewise"). As examples, Paul states they are to be **"reverent in the way they live,"** meaning they are to live holy, godly lives. This means they are **"not to be slanderers"** by gossiping, criticizing and talking about others. Some people become preoccupied with others' lives and pass judgment on everything others do. Unfortunately there is no grace shown to others. This negative attitude comes from bitterness in their hearts. This is the way the Pharisees treated Jesus.

Additionally, a godly trait of mature women is that they are **"not addicted to much wine"** because it is a bad testimony and not good for their health. Proverbs has much to say against drunkenness (Proverbs 21:17; 23:20-21,31; 31:4,6). Today there are many more substances a person can become addicted to such as drugs and even caffeine in coffee, sodas and chocolate. Lot is a clear example of the dangers of becoming drunk (Genesis 19:30-38).

Instead of turning to gossip or alcohol, godly women should **"teach what is good"** (Titus 2:3). That means instructing other women in what is helpful for them. Mature women, when their children are grown and gone, should be occupied mentoring younger women, especially helping them to grow as wives and mothers (**"husbands and children"** Titus 2:4). Also they must help younger women grow in **"self-control"** (Titus 2:5) so they have sensible, good judgment. Other important traits for women to pass on to others include being **"pure"** (holy in thoughts and actions in a culture on Crete where immorality was common), **"busy at home"** (home and family their top priority, now going from place-to-place gossiping and drinking alcohol), **"kind"** (not harsh or difficult) and **"subject to their husbands"** (not wild or a bad testimony to others).

Paul said all this is important not only for the women themselves, but for their Christian testimony to others: **"so that no one will malign the word of God."** If the church in Crete is to help others find the peace and joy that only Jesus can bring, they need to show those traits in their everyday life to attract others to Jesus.

The young women are to do the things listed above that Paul as pointed out, and young men are also to be a good testimony for Jesus in how they live (Titus 2:6). The characteristic Paul emphasizes for younger men is **"self-control."** This Greek word is used 4 times in this passage (verses 2,4,5,6) indicating the importance of self-restraint in all Christians, whatever their age. Many younger men hurt others and harm their own reputations and lives by impulsively doing whatever seems pleasurable at the moment. Titus was to keep warning his people about this, and by setting an example of self-control himself (Titus 1:7). As leaders, people watch us closely and learn more from what we do than what we say. When our actions don't line up with what we say, others will see us as hypocrites and not pay attention to what we teach or preach.

We, like Titus, are to set an example that backs up our teaching so people will learn **"integrity," "seriousness"** and **"sound speech"** so Christians will have a good testimony and unbelievers can't mock Jesus (Titus 2:7-8).

PAUL'S ADVICE: Christian men and women must live in a godly way that brings glory to Jesus.

Deuteronomy 12:32 Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.

If you were teaching a new Christian how to live for Jesus, what advice would you give? List three specific characteristics that are most important.

How would you evaluate yourself on these three?

11. BEHAVIOR OF SLAVES (Titus 2:9-10)

READ: Titus 2:9-10

It's no surprise Paul would give instructions about how Christian men and women of various ages should live out their faith in their daily life. But his next subject might surprise us, for he tells Christian slaves to obey their masters (Titus 2:9-10). In the first century, the practice of slavery was still quite common, and often a bondservant, or slave, was seen to be less of a human being. God views someone who is a bondservant as equal to those who aren't. His word often addresses their situation directly. Ephesians 6 has several verses talking to bondservants, the entire book of Philemon is about a bondservant, Onesimus. So we should not be surprised to find a couple of verses ending this section on the duties and responsibilities of leaders to discuss the duties of bondservants. Why? Because both older, mature believers as well as younger, maturing believers would certainly be included in this category.

Paul reminds slaves to obey their masters and try to please them, to not talk back or steal but to be trustworthy so as to be a good example of Jesus (Titus 2:9-10). In the early church, a very large percentage of the Christians were slaves. Around the world today that is still true: those who are the poorest are often the first to respond to the good news of the Gospel. Salvation sets them free from sin, but not from their responsibility to their masters. Perhaps some false teachers were saying they didn't have to obey their masters if they were Christians, because they were equal in Christ. Can you imagine the disruption of society if every slave who became a Christian didn't have to obey their master? Every slave would claim to be a Christian just so they didn't have to submit to a master. Certainly slavery is wrong and must be abolished, but that wasn't the way to do it. That would bring chaos and an uproar against Christians.

The Old Testament Mosaic Law limited and regulated slavery and sought to correct its inhumane abuses (Exodus 20:10; 21:20-27). Slaves in Israel were recognized as full persons who possessed human dignity and basic rights (Deuteronomy 5:14; Job 31:13-15). Abusing one's slaves and servants was viewed as being both imprudent and immoral (Deuteronomy 23:15-16).

Still, we often wonder why Paul didn't clearly condemn slavery (Ephesians 6:5). He did, but not as directly as we would have liked. Understanding what was happening in Paul's day helps us better understand. Slavery was practiced by every ancient people of which we have any historical record: Egyptians, Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Greeks, Romans, and all the rest. Furthermore, during the first century A.D., approximately 85 to 90 percent of Rome's population consisted of slaves.

When we in America think of slavery, we think of three million black Africans brought across the Atlantic in chains and extreme cruelty. Roman slavery was very different. Most slaves were prisoners of war and had they not been enslaved on the battlefield they would almost certainly have been slaughtered instead. Black slaves in the USA tended to be slaves for life, but most Roman slaves could win their freedom within a decade. That doesn't mean it was right, but it does mean it is wrong for us to read these verses without being aware of our own cultural influence.

Paul's purpose was to bring spiritual freedom from sin. As important as physical freedom from slavery was, it wasn't as important as spreading the Gospel. He couldn't do both well, so he focused on salvation. When he wrote Ephesians 6:5 telling slaves to obey their

masters there were about 250,000 free citizens and 400,000 slaves in Ephesus. Most of these slaves were very poor and would have starved if not fed by their masters. Freedom could bring them more problems and suffering than they already had.

The best way to do away with slavery is from the inside out, not just by-passing new laws. Masters who become Christians should treat their slaves well, and Christian slaves should set a good example in obeying their masters. When people saw the godly character of Christian slaves, they began to take Paul seriously when he argued that the slave trade was evil (1 Timothy 1:10), that slaves should gain their freedom if they could (1 Corinthians 7:21), that masters ought to view their slaves as equals (Ephesians 6:9; Galatians 3:28), and that they ought to set them free at the proper time (Philemon 16). Although governments resisted his teaching for many years, Paul's teaching eventually prevailed.

Of all the world's religions, including the three great monotheisms (Christianity, Judaism and Islam), only in Christianity did the idea develop that slavery was sinful and must be abolished. Antislavery teachings began to appear in Christian theology soon after the decline of Rome and were accompanied by the eventual disappearance of slavery in all but the fringes of Christian Europe. When Europeans subsequently instituted slavery in the New World, they did so over objection from Christians and the church. The abolition of New World slavery was initiated and achieved by Christian activists.

For us today, we may draw an application of the role and responsibilities of bondservants and masters to that of employee and employer (or boss). And notice how, just as with the first century bondservant, these last two verses will address both the older, mature believer who is an employee as well as the younger, maturing believer who is an employee. How are we, as representatives of God, to act during the work day, the work week? How do we make sure that we are being the same people during the week that we are on Sunday? Be submissive to your master (your employer, your boss).

PAUL'S ADVICE: Be obedient to those you serve so you set a good testimony for Jesus.

John 15:12-13 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

How would Jesus act if He was working for your employer? Is that how you act?

How would Jesus treat your workers if they were working for Him? Is that how you treat them?

12. MAKING GODLY CHOICES (Titus 2:11-15)

READ: Titus 2:11-15

Life is a series of choices. Every day we are making decisions about big or little things: what to wear, what to do first, how much to eat, how to respond to a question, what advice to give, how to respond to a difficulty or disappointment, etc., etc., etc. Without realizing it we are saying "yes" or "no" to options all day long. Life is made up these selections. Most may seem small, but they add up to big consequences. Living for Jesus or self is one of our main choices in life, but choices come with small decisions, not big ones. How do we react when a temptation arises to think something sinful or ungodly? When we have an opportunity to feed a lust, do we give in? Should we say or do something that feels right, but is against God's Word? What about a little gossip, or complaining or putting off something we should do? Before salvation we just do whatever we want, but when Jesus lives within us things change. Now we can, and should, **"say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age"** (Titus 2:12). Before salvation we couldn't resist sin but now that we have God's grace working in us, we can (Titus 2:11).

We must remember that this world is temporary and one day, maybe very soon, we will be with Jesus (Titus 2:13). The thought of being in His presence at any time can help us focus on living an obedient, holy life. Just remembering all He went through for us, to cleanse us from sin, should motivate us to live in a way that is pleasing to Him (Titus 2:14).

We are to teach our people these things as well. That's what Paul told Titus (Titus 2:15). He is to **“teach”** them. This means “to announce, reveal, disclose, make God’s truth clear so listeners understand.” That’s God’s first command to pastors and leaders: “feed my sheep” (John 21:15-17). This is to be done **“with all authority,”** meaning it is an official command to Titus. Jesus taught with authority which came from God (Matthew 7:28-30). We have that authority as well (Luke 9:1; Matthew 10:1). We have God’s Word to teach and it contains God’s authority as well (Hebrews 4:12). When we preach or teach, we are proclaiming what Jesus proclaimed, with His backing and authority. We have total authority to proclaim God’s Word clearly and authoritatively, but not go one sentence beyond it, take anything from it, change anything in it or add anything to it. When we preach, teach, counsel or give advice we are speaking for God and conveying His truth to others.

Part of teaching is to **“encourage and rebuke.”** We motivate people to keep doing right. Some Bible teachers scold and condemn, that doesn’t help make people want to do better. Guilt and fear are not proper motivators. Life is hard, people are hurting and everyone needs a word of encouragement to keep doing what is right. But when someone is continually disobeying the Word we must point out their sin in a loving way, the way we would want to be corrected were we the one in the wrong. We do not do it to condemn or defeat them but to encourage them to correct their ways and move ahead in truth. All of that is part of teaching the Word.

Paul’s final command to Titus in this section is **“don’t let anyone despise you.”** The word “despise” means to show disrespect or disregard. It’s not about us personally, but it is about the One we represent and speak for. Live and speak in such a way you bring honor and glory to Jesus, then if you are rejected it is really Jesus they are rejecting. Don’t ever do anything that would bring disrespect to Him!

Today you will be making many choices and decisions, small and large. Remember to make each one based on what Jesus would want because one day, maybe very soon, you’ll be with Him, the One who paid for all your sins.

PAUL’S ADVICE: Say “no” to sin but “yes” to living a holy, godly life for Jesus. Teach others His Word so they will do the same.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Which day by day choices do you have the hardest time with? Which tempt you to disobey?

What can you do to make the godly decision next time the opportunity arises?

13. BEHAVIOR TO AUTHORITIES (Titus 3:1-7)

READ: Titus 3:1-7

It’s been said that living the Christian life is like riding a bicycle. You are either moving forward or falling off. There is no standing still. Living for Jesus applies to all aspects of life, as Paul is reminding Titus and telling him to remind his people. That includes our relationship with the government and others in positions of leadership over us (Titus 3:1). Titus was commanded to remind the people **“to be subject to rulers and authorities”** (to obey with respect the government, employers, parents, husbands, pastors and all leaders), **“to be obedient”** (unless their command is

against God's Word), and **"to be ready to do whatever is good"** (have a sincere, loving eagerness to serve others). Pastors are to teach this to the people, but first to exemplify it by their lives.

Paul continues reminding us in Titus 3:2 to teach our people **"to slander no one"** (not curse, treat with contempt or speak evil against even enemies of the church and Jesus, but to speak truth in Christian love), **"to be peaceable"** (friendly with all, not quarrelsome), **"considerate"** (gentle, moderate, fair, patient, **"and to show true humility toward all men"** (not fake but real heartfelt love for others, as Jesus does). In Titus 1, Paul used these same traits as qualifications for church leaders. Now he has applied them to everyone. Leaders are to train the people in these ways. But first, they must have these in their own lives (Titus 1:5-9).

Having spoken about humility in verse 2, Paul reminds them that all of us were unbelievers and lived as they do (Titus 3:3), so we have nothing to brag or boast about. It is only God's grace in our lives that makes us any different than unbelievers. Salvation isn't anything we can brag about or take credit for. It's only by His mercy that He reached out to us with forgiveness (Titus 3:4-6). It is only as His Spirit worked in us that we saw our guilt and need of forgiveness. Only because the Spirit revealed Jesus as the God-man, our Savior, did we turn to Him for salvation. We cannot take any of the credit. It is only His amazing grace that stood between us and eternity in hell. Instead, we will spend eternity in heaven with Him (Titus 3:7). We must show the same compassion to others that God showed to us.

Before we believed, there were thousands of steps between us and God. He took all the steps towards us except the final one. He gives us a free will and won't force anyone to believe. It's up to us to take that final step. But we wouldn't even do that if it weren't for His Holy Spirit working in us to show us our need and His provision. All praise and glory to Him! How could we ever do anything but reach out in humility, with love and compassion, to those who are now just like we were? Perhaps God, in His mercy, will work through us to open their eyes to the good news of Jesus!

Ephesians 1:3-14 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ... In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.

Take a few moments to quietly pray and think of what life would be like if God had not chosen to work in you to bring you to faith. Thank Him for it.

Apologize for any complaints against God or for taking any credit for what He has done in your life.

14. AWAITING JESUS' RETURN (Titus 3:8-15)

READ: Titus 3:8-15

Those who preach or teach know that the conclusion to a message is very important. It is the last thought you leave with the people. It needs to summarize, conclude and motivate to action. Paul's conclusion to his letter to Titus does all those things (Titus 3:8-15).

Paul referred back to his words about doing what is good (Titus 3:1-7) to begin his final words to Titus. Again he repeated the importance of training his people **"to devote themselves to doing what is good"** (Titus 3:8). Just because one accepts Jesus' free gift of salvation and is going to heaven when they die, doesn't mean they can't or won't continue to sin in this life (1 John 1:7-10).

Our old sin nature doesn't change with salvation. We receive a new nature, God's Spirit within us, so we no longer have to be controlled by sin (Romans 6:12-23). We still have a free will and can choose to sin just as we did before salvation. The pull of the flesh is still strong after salvation, sometimes stronger than before! We do not lose our salvation when we sin (1 Corinthians 3:1-23), but there are consequences. Sin blocks the working of God's Holy Spirit in us so we do not experience His peace, guidance, power and help (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). When God's Spirit fills (controls Romans 8:9) us, He produces His fruit in us (Galatians 5:22-23) which builds up believers and attracts unbelievers to Jesus (Titus 3:8).

Doing what is "good" means not getting into discussions and arguments about the details of what is OK for a Christian to do and what is not, especially as pertains to the Old Testament law (Titus 3:9). Paul is referring back to the legalism he talked about in Titus 1:10-16. Getting into these legalistic arguments about minor details of life is **"unprofitable and useless"** (Titus 3:9). Nothing good comes from it, but conflict, divisions, fear of doing what is wrong, pride in feeling more righteous than others and replacing grace with law result.

Try to correct these people, in fact try twice (Matthew 18:15-17). But if they continue in their error then have nothing to do with them (Titus 3:10). Don't waste your time on them nor give them the attention they crave. Warn others to not listen to them and don't give them an opportunity to speak in church. These people are **"warped and sinful"** and are **"self-condemned"** (Titus 3:11). These are very strong words but true. Even though they may be popular and seem sincere, and people admire them and like to listen to them, we must protect our sheep by removing them from any place of influence. Suppose you were having a meal after church and everyone brought something to share, and one person brought some food with just a little bit of rat poison in it. Would you let them share it with everyone? Even if they were a nice, sincere person and you didn't want to offend the, you couldn't let others eat their poison. The same is true of false teachers. It takes only a small amount to do a lot of damage!

Paul then closed his letter with a few personal messages (Titus 3:12-15) and sent the letter on its way to Titus, and eventually to us today. We aren't able to sit with Paul and be trained by him, but by reading and following his letters to Timothy and Titus we can be recipients of his advice for us today. Do what is right and spiritually pure and teach others to do so. Those who teach anything else are to be warned, they will be rejected and removed. These are strong words but history has shown they are true. They are true for us today as well.

PAUL'S ADVICE: Do what is good and have nothing to do with those who teach falsehood.

Galatians 6:9-10 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

When others see you, do they give glory to God for the good you do?

How have you responded to false teachers who have tried to mislead people in your church?

What should you do next time someone teaches false doctrine?

V. STANDARDS FOR PASTORS & LEADERS

When we think of leadership, we usually think of what the person does, his actions in carrying out his role as leader. However, outer actions are based on inner character, not our personality or knowledge. Leadership is first of all something we ARE, not just something we DO. Paul lists qualifications for godly leaders in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Each one has to do with inner integrity and maturity. They are not just a list from which we can pick and choose. They go together to describe one person – a godly leader. The only one who has ever fulfilled this whole list is Jesus; so the more we grow in these qualities the more we become like Him. Let's look at them now.

A. A GODLY LEADER MUST WANT TO BE A GODLY LEADER

READ 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

The first thing Paul says is that a person must want to be a godly leader. He must “set his heart on it” and “desire” it (1 Timothy 3:1). Never talk someone into serving, no matter how good a leader you think he may become. God must put that desire in his heart, and then he must respond to that by being willing to follow and serve. Without these fundamental truths, no one will make a godly leader. No one!

PAUL'S ADVICE: God doesn't force anyone to serve Him, it must be something we are willing to do.

When did God put it in your heart to serve Him? Was it hard for you to commit to doing so? Have you changed your mind about wanting to serve Him? Reaffirm your commitment to serve Him. If you wonder if He called you, I can assure you that if you want to serve Him then that desire has come from Him, unless you just want to serve out of pride or greed.

B. A GODLY LEADER HAS GODLY INNER QUALITIES

READ 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

For those who are called and respond by wanting to serve, Paul has 25 character traits that describe a godly leader. It takes a lifetime of spiritual growth to attain these, and no one but Jesus has ever attained all of them to perfection. It is a process we begin and continue throughout our lives.

The first inner quality listed is **balance** (1 Timothy 3:2). It refers to someone who is even tempered and avoids extremes, someone not easily deceived or carried away, someone who is always stable and steady and who doesn't fall apart under pressure.

Sensible (1 Timothy 3:2) is similar but a bit different. This person is self-controlled, reasonable and makes good decisions because they approach problems with maturity and experience. They do a good job when hard decisions have to be made.

Also a godly leader must be **disciplined** (Titus 1:8). This means literally “strength under control.” A godly leader doesn't overindulge in food, sleep or anything else. He knows when to say no (Proverbs 25:28). He is not easy prey to temptation or someone who spends too much money. He does not let anger, pride, greed or laziness control him.

PAUL'S ADVICE: A godly leader is even tempered, self-controlled and disciplined.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself on balance and self-control in your life? How would your mate or best friends rate you? Do you have self-control when you need it? Do others come to you for advice in tough situations because you have a reputation of making wise decisions?

C. A GODLY LEADER HAS GODLY INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

READ 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

To be a godly leader means we need to get along with others. Paul lists several qualities God expects godly leaders to have so they treat others correctly.

A godly leader cannot be **quick-tempered** (Titus 1:7) or **violent** (1 Timothy 3:3). He cannot get angry quickly or easily, or be someone who argues a lot with others (Proverbs 29:22). That includes how he treats his wife and children as well. He must remain calm under pressure. There is a godly anger, righteous indignation, like when Jesus sent the money changers out of the temple, but it must be done under control and only against sin that demands it. Even then we must be very, very careful we don't end up in sin ourselves (Ephesians 4:26).

Paul adds that a leader can't be **quarrelsome** (1 Timothy 3:3). He can't be someone who is known for arguing. He can't insult those who insult him or criticize others. He can't be a person who dominates the conversation and must always be right about everything (Proverbs 20:3). Instead, a godly leader must be willing to listen, open to learn, and able to change his opinion when necessary.

This person doesn't have to have his own way all the time. He are not **overbearing** (Titus 1:7), not arrogant or prideful. He gets along with others and works well as part of a team.

After saying what we are not to be like with others, Paul also says what we are to be like: **gentle** (1 Timothy 3:3). This has the idea of patience with others, being kind and considerate. It means being willing to yield, to forgive and to overlook an offense. People never feel put down or criticized by this person.

PAUL'S ADVICE: A godly leader is kind, gentle and gets along well with others.

Would your wife or children say you get angry a lot? Do they think you always have to be right? Are you willing to listen to them and change your mind if they make good sense? Do others see you as someone who is patient and kind in all your dealing, no matter their situation in life?

D. A GODLY LEADER HAS A GODLY REPUTATION

READ 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

These quality traits deal with how others feel about a leader and what they say behind their back. It has to do with how they describe you to others. It is very important for every Christian to have a good reputation, for we represent Jesus. This is especially important for leaders. Here is what God says our reputations should be like.

He describes the reputation of a godly leader as being **above reproach** (1 Timothy 3:2) and **blameless** (Titus 1:6-7). "Above reproach" means literally "without wrinkles" and speaks of a garment that is smooth and free from folds. Leaders are to have no questionable conduct, no secret sins and no unresolved conflicts with others. We can't have others saying we cheated them or thinking that we have greed or pride. "Blameless" is similar. It is a legal term and refers to someone who is not accused of any wrong doing of any kind. We don't have to be perfect as leaders, but when we offend someone or do something wrong, we must immediately apologize and make it right.

In addition, Paul says we are to be **respectable** (1 Timothy 3:2). This refers to a person who is worthy of respect and honor, a Christian gentleman.

One way this happens is by being **upright** (Titus 1:8) in all our dealings with others. That means we are to be fair and honest, keep our promises, pay our bills on time, keep our word and always speak kindly of others.

Furthermore, we are to be **hospitable** (Titus 1:8) to those in need. In Paul's day there were no

hotels, so people traveling had to depend on others for housing. A godly leader has to have an attitude of sacrifice and caring, being willing to share what they have with others.

The result of all these is that we will have a **good reputation with outsiders** (1 Timothy 3:7). Others in the community think of us with respect and honor. Even if they don't agree with what we believe about Jesus, they know we are good, honest and trustworthy people.

PAUL'S ADVICE: A godly leader must have a good reputation with others, just like Jesus.

What kind of a reputation do you have in your community? What do those who aren't Christians think of you? What about Christians that don't attend your church, how do they speak of you? Do people know your word is good and trust what you say? Do people think better of Jesus because they know you represent Him?

E. A GODLY LEADER HAS A GODLY SPIRITUAL LIFE

READ 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

Another list of character traits that Paul mentions focuses on a leader's individual spiritual growth and maturity. This, too, is very important for all leaders.

A godly leader must be **holy** (Titus 1:8). He must be a man or woman who lives for God and pleases God. He does his best to make sure there is no sin in what he thinks or does. None of us can ever be perfect, but we must make sure there is no unconfessed sin in our lives. Others should be able to sense the presence of God in his life. He needs to have matured in his Christian walk so he is becoming more holy.

He also needs to mature in His Christian knowledge. Paul says a godly leader must **hold fast to sound doctrine** (Titus 1:9). He must be able to explain and defend the truth of the Word. He must show it in operation as he lives his daily life.

Because it takes time to mature in our daily life and Bible knowledge, Paul also says a leader is **not to be a new convert** (1 Timothy 3:6). The word "new" here refers to a new, tender plant, that needs sun and water to grow strong. New believers need to learn God's Word and apply it to their lives. It takes time to mature and grow spiritually. Paul warns that if there isn't enough time for this to happen, the new leader can become proud because of his position and fall into sin. When a Christian has been growing for a while, he can be put into the position of assisting another leader so he can be trained and learn, but he must be under the authority and accountable to that leader until he is mature enough to handle leadership without becoming proud or self-centered.

The final qualification related to his spiritual life is that a leader must be **able to teach** (1 Timothy 3:2). This means first of all that he must have a teachable spirit and be willing to learn and grow spiritually while growing in Bible knowledge. Then he must be able to communicate God's truth to others. Not all leaders are gifted with teaching, but all must do their best to share God's truth with others in any way they can. We are not all gifted with evangelism or prayer, either, but we need to do our best anyway. The same is true of leaders being teachers. This is the only quality that touches upon a leadership skill. By adding this requirement God is again showing how important it is for pastors and leaders to teach and preach God's Word.

PAUL'S ADVICE: A godly leader must be spending time with God every day growing in his faith.

Are you growing in holiness and victory over sin? Are there any sins in your life that are defeating you? What must you do to have victory in those areas? Are you faithfully studying and learning the Bible? Can you discern error and show others God's truth from the Word? Do you do your best to communicate God's truth to others? Are you still maturing and growing in your faith and knowledge?

VI. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A. CONFLICT IS INEVITABLE (Conflict Resolution 1)

Conflict. We can't get away from it. From Cain and Abel until the present, nations, individuals, families, and churches have had conflict. They come from our sinful nature. James 4:1-2 says: ***"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight."*** Only when the Prince of Peace returns will there be real peace on earth between people. Until then, we must learn to manage our conflicts and control them so they don't control us.

Paul, Timothy and Titus faced many conflicts with other people. Most were with fellow Christians. One of the reasons Paul wrote 1 Timothy was to help him handle the problems and disagreements among people in the church at Ephesus. That's why Timothy was sent there, but he was having a hard time stopping the fights and struggles among the people. That is true of many pastors and churches today as well.

Conflict is inevitable, but it must be handled in a godly way. When those who aren't believers fight, the one who is the loudest, largest, strongest or richest usually gets their own way. There often is no satisfactory reconciliation, there is just a winner and a loser. But that isn't the way it is to be among Christians in church or in the home. It always made me sad when my children fought and didn't get along. Our Heavenly Father is sad, too, when He sees His children acting the same way.

Conflict is inevitable because we are all born naturally selfish and self-centered. We put self first. That's our sin nature. Satan stirs up our flesh and engineers' conflict wherever possible, especially among Christians in church and home.

The way of the world is to fight to win: might makes right. But the way of the cross is to look at our individual part in the conflict honestly and humbly. It's easier to blame others, much harder to overlook their faults and focus on our own. Yet God's Word says ***"for ALL have sinned"*** (Romans 3:23). Jesus Himself taught, ***"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye"*** (Matthew 7:3-5).

It's very clear that, if we are going to follow Jesus, we must look for our own faults and part in the conflict before concerning ourselves with others. This first step is very important if there is to be true reconciliation and resolution, not just having a winner and loser. Either both parties win or no one really wins. That is especially true in marriage, but in church and individual relationships as well.

What might we have done, even unintentionally, to contribute to the conflict?

What could we have done to prevent or end the conflict?

Has our attitude to the other person been one of compassion and forgiveness, or is there revenge or bitterness inside?

B. TAKE THE FIRST STEP (Conflict Resolution 2)

Teaching children how to get along with each other can be one of the hardest parts of being a parent. The same can be said of pastors with people who are in conflict. Even in our own marriages

and relationships with others, it can be difficult to end an argument. Often, we just stop fighting but nothing is settled and hard feelings remain. The next time something comes up, all the past hurt rushes to the surface and we are back where we were.

Just ignoring problems and pretending they don't exist is no option. God says we are to ***“be at peace with all men”*** as far as it depends on us (Romans 12:18). That means we are responsible to bring any conflict to an end, no matter if we started it or not. Initiating resolution is our second step in conflict management, after honestly confronting our own part in the situation. Even if we are totally innocent, we are still responsible to go to the offended person and bring healing: ***“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone”*** (Matthew 18:15).

Jesus also said we must initiate reconciliation with someone who has something against us, even if we have done nothing to offend the person, before we can worship God. ***“So, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift”*** (Matthew 5:23-24). Jesus makes it clear that we can't be in right standing with God if there is someone not in right standing with us. Even if we haven't done anything to cause the problem, we are still responsible to do all we can to end it (Galatians 6:1). Once we know about it, we have a duty to seek out the person and resolve the issue. We can't avoid them, wait for them to come to us or expect them to apologize first. God calls us to initiate, to make the first move. That is true in marriage, in church and with everyone.

It takes humility and courage to seek to be reunited with someone who dislikes you. Apologizing is hard, especially when you aren't sure what you have done wrong. Treat them as you want them to treat you.

If you are offended by someone, and it is a minor issue or something they may not even be aware of, then the issue is between you and God. Forgive them and move on, just as you would want someone to overlook something minor you might not even have meant.

Before going to speak to a person, pray for God's peace and guidance. It can be helpful to write out what you want to say so you know exactly how to word things. Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Talk to them as you would want to be talked to were the roles reversed. ***“Don't let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen”*** (Colossians 3:13).

Listen carefully and closely to the other person's response. Don't think of what you will say next, focus on putting yourself in their place and understanding them. You should be able to accurately summarize what they say before responding. If they apologize, forgive them unconditionally and never bring it up again. Always go by the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). Speak to others as you would want them to speak to you. Speak the truth, but do it in love (Ephesians 4:15). When the issue is resolved, forgive and forget. Never bring it up again, even in your own mind.

If the other person is in known sin follow Matthew 18:15-17. Go to them privately and express your concern (verse 15). If they don't respond in a positive way, take one or two mature believers with you and speak to him again (verse 16). If there is still no repentance, make it known to the whole church so they can pray and encourage him to repent, and so they aren't wrongly influenced by the person in sin. If that doesn't bring repentance then treat him as an unbeliever so the Holy Spirit will bring conviction (verse 17).

Is there anyone who has anything against you? Have you done all you can to talk to him and bring about reconciliation?

Pray for the situation. Ask God to show you if there is anything more you can do to bring healing.

C. WHEN PEACEMAKING FAILS (Conflict Resolution 3)

Why is it sometimes so hard to get Christians to stop fighting and get along with each other? As a person, and as a pastor, one of the things I most dislike is conflict between people, especially when I was involved. I want to do everything I can to resolve the issue and make everything smooth and good again. But I found not everyone is like that. There are some who seem to enjoy conflict. It seems there is always one or more broken relationships in their lives. Personally, I can't imagine living like that. I have a hard time helping people like that, especially if they don't want to heal the hurts among themselves and others. Yet the Bible commands us to intervene and do all we can to restore things. What are we to do?

We have seen that conflict is inevitable and that we must initiate resolution, even if the problem isn't our fault. What are we to do if one or both of the offended parties is not willing to reconcile? It can't just be ignored, for it is like an infected wound that poisons the whole body. Disagreements between believers poison the whole Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:25-27). They must be resolved.

If you can't bring the situation to a healthy conclusion, then go to a pastor or mature church leader to help (Matthew 18:15-17; Philippians 4:2-3). Outside help can be a good way to keep emotions in check and help rational communication develop. Bring in someone who is neutral and objective and be receptive to advice they may give you about what you can do to help. God uses wise Biblical counsel so be open to God working through the mediator.

Believers should be able to resolve issues between them so they don't have to go to unbelievers for resolution for that would be a poor example and witness (1 Corinthians 6:1-8). If you are in the wrong do whatever you can to end the problem as quickly as possible (Matthew 5:25-26).

If nothing else works, both parties should agree to go to a neutral arbitrator and explain the situation clearly and honestly. Before entering the process, both parties must agree to abide by the conclusions of the mediator. That is better than paying lots of money to have unbelieving lawyers and judges decide the matter. Peace among brothers is more important than personal rights or revenge for hurts.

Sometimes, no matter what you do to resolve problems with those who have something against you, or those in your church who are in conflict, the problems continue. Sometimes one or both parties won't reconcile. What are we to do then? Romans 12:18 tells us. **"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."** We are commanded to live at peace with everyone, but it takes two for that to happen. If we have done everything possible and have done everything that is dependent on us to do, then we can do no more. We can only walk away from the issue. Pushing can just make things worse, and take away our peace from us. Jesus understands. He tried to reconcile with those who disliked Him, but they would have none of it so He walked away from them. Jesus did that and told His followers to do the same (Matthew 10:14; Luke 9:5). So did Paul (Acts 13:51). Pray for them and the situation, and watch that unforgiveness or resentment does not build in your heart. Love them, forgive them and move on.

2 Corinthians 13:11 "Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you."

Is there anyone you have had a long time conflict with? What can you do now to help resolve it?

Are there any broken relationships in your life that you have been unable to mend? Pray for that relationship and ask God to help you to love them and forgive them. Pray for them as well.

D. CONFLICT IN PHILIPPI (Conflict Resolution 4)

Conflict among believers is nothing new. Paul faced it with two close friends and fellow workers in Philippi who weren't getting along. READ Philippians 4:2-9. ***Philippians 4:2-3 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.*** This disagreement was so severe everyone knew about it. We don't know what happened to turn these two partners into enemies, but they couldn't resolve the issue so Paul asks a mature believer to step in and bring restoration.

Paul next writes about how Christians should live and act, but probably still has the conflict he mentioned in mind. Therefore, these next verses address the issue as well as all of life. We can find clear principles here about how to get along with others.

1. REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS 4:4 *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"* Even in difficult situations, like conflict with others, we are to rejoice in Jesus – not because of the problem but in spite of it. Paul repeats this command twice for emphasis. Despite being in pain, we can rejoice because our joy does not come from our circumstances but because of all Jesus has done for us (Philippians 2:1-11). Joy is a byproduct of faith that God allows difficult situations for a good purpose (Philippians 1:18-21).

2. LET YOUR GENTLENESS BE EVIDENT TO ALL 4:5a *"Let your gentleness be evident to all"*. Commit to having a very most open and teachable spirit. Look to your own part and what to do to improve, don't focus on the other (log & speck Matthew 7:3). Don't gossip to others, criticize, defend yourself or attack the other – let God work in you and him.

3. REMEMBER THE LORD IS NEAR 4:5b *"The Lord is near."* You are not alone; God is with you. God will protect and defend you at the right time and in the right way.

4. DON'T BE ANXIOUS ABOUT THE CONFLICT BUT ASK GOD TO RESOLVE IT 4:6
"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." I fear conflict and confrontation – they bring me great stress and anxiety. I am learning to turn it over to God and let Him take care of it and me. Don't go to others to fix the problem, seek God's advice and help

5. GUARD YOUR HEART AND MIND WITH GOD'S PEACE 4:7 Even when it doesn't seem to make sense to do so. God promises *"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Pray for the fruit of peace in your life, turn from thoughts that bring stress or pain. Turn them over to Jesus.

6. FIND SOMETHING PRAISEWORTHY IN OPPONENT 4:8 *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."* Find something good and positive about other person and the problem. Don't just look for the negative and magnify it

7. FIND GOOD ROLE MODELS AND CONTINUE PRACTICING THESE THINGS 4:9
"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." Paul endured much opposition and criticism. He suffered conflict with many believers (Philippians 1:12-20). Knew what it was like, so he is a good example of how to respond during it. You can find other good examples in the Bible or in the lives of those you know. Learn from them. Respond as they would.

When our enemies are enemies of the cross (Philippians 3:18) and are spreading evil (Philippians 3:2), we must stand firm in the Lord against them (Philippians 4:1). When they are fellow

believers, we must work together to bring reconciliation to the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:25-27).

Which of the principles above can help you in your current situation?

How can you apply these truths to your life and relationships?

CONCLUSION

Proverbs 27:17 proclaims: ***“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another”***. There is much we as pastors can learn from each other, especially from older pastors. Paul told Timothy, ***“The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others”*** (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul passed on what he knew to Timothy, who was to pass it on to others who were in turn to keep passing it on until it has come to us today. Paul’s advice 2,000 years ago is still good today, Learn it and pass it on. As we learn these things, we are to pass them on to younger leaders and pastors so they can better serve Jesus. Then they, in turn, will pass them on to others. My prayer is that you will learn from this book and that you will pass these things on to others, mentoring and training other men in God’s service.

END OF BOOK REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Take some time to answer the following questions. They will help you apply what you have learned to your own life and ministry. Pray and ask for God's wisdom and insight. Take your time, don't rush. Talk about them with a friend, fellow pastor or your mate. Write down what you think God is teaching you so you can reflect on it and better apply it to life. This is just for your benefit; you don't have to turn in the answers.

What lessons from Paul's life apply most to you?

What lessons from Timothy's life apply most to you?

What advice given by Paul to Timothy and Titus apply most to you?

Who are you more like: Paul, Timothy or Titus?

What can you learn from each of them?

In Paul's list of character requirements for pastors and leaders, which are your strengths?

In Paul's list of character requirements for pastors and leaders, which are your weaknesses?

What can you do to better utilize your strengths?

What can you do to overcome your weaknesses?

Think of a time you tried to reconcile a conflict between two people, how successful were you?

What have you learned in this book that can help you resolve problems between people?

If someone is teaching unbiblical doctrines to some of your people, what should you do to protect your people?

What should you do to restore the person teaching error?

If Paul were speaking to you in person, what advice might he give you to help you in your present ministry?