

The Book of 1 Timothy

Introduction

Date

Paul's missionary journeys were approximately the years A.D. 48-56. For two years, 61-62, Paul was held under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:30-31), then apparently, he was released and traveled more or less freely from 62-67, leaving Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete. Then he wrote them each a letter during that time. After being captured again, Paul wrote 2 Timothy in about 67, near the time of his death in Rome.



Background

Timothy apparently became a Christian as a result of Paul's missionary work in Lystra (Acts 14:6-23) on Paul's first missionary journey. He was the son of a Greek father and Jewish mother (Acts 16:1). No mention is made of his father being a Christian, but his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were both known for their sincere faith (2 Tim 1:5). Whether Paul led Timothy to Christ is not known, but Paul did take Timothy on as a protégé, referring to him as *my true son in the faith* (1 Tim 1:2). Near the end of Paul's life, he asked Timothy to come to him in Rome (2 Tim 4:9, 21).

Timothy joined Paul on the second missionary journey, when Paul's team passed through that area where Timothy lived (Acts 16:1-3). While on the second journey, Timothy helped Paul in Troas, Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth. During the third missionary journey, he worked with Paul in Ephesus. From there, Paul sent Timothy on to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Later he was joined by Paul in Macedonia (2 Cor 1:1, 19), and apparently traveled with the

apostle to Corinth (Rom 16:21). On the return trip to Ephesus, Timothy accompanied Paul through Macedonia as far as Troas (Acts 20:3-6). Still later, Timothy was with Paul in Rome (Col 1:1, Phile 1; Phil 1:1), and from there he probably made a trip to Philippi (Phil 2:19-23).

At the end of the book of Acts, Paul was under house arrest in Rome. Our knowledge of his activities after that only comes from a few references in his epistles. We have no Scripture of the history of this part of his work. Because Luke does not mention Paul's death in Acts, many believe that Paul was released and left free for another period of ministry in 62-67, during which he would have written 1 Timothy and Titus. Then he would have been recaptured, tried, and executed in 67. During this final imprisonment, he wrote 2 Timothy.

Having faithfully done all he could to teach the truths of the gospel throughout his ministry, Paul was concerned near the end of his life that his faithful disciples not change those truths, but rather, *All the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also* (2 Tim 2:2).

Chapter 1

I. The Salutation (1:1-2)

Verse 1—Paul—His Gentile name. Born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:27-28). His Jewish name was Saul.

—**an apostle of Christ Jesus**—As an apostle, “one who is sent” (but not one of “the twelve”). Paul did not seek to be an apostle. He was personally selected by Jesus and called by Jesus to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Apostles were the only men with authority in the church, as writers of the New Testament. ...*God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone* (Eph 2:20).

—**according to the commandment of God our Savior**—A phrase more common in the Old Testament (Psalms 106:21; Isaiah 45:21), Paul does also use it (1 Tim 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4). It emphasizes that God the Father is the initiator and source of salvation.

—**and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope**—*Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Col 1:27). He is our only hope for a future in glory with Him.

Application—Why did Paul start this personal letter to Timothy by mentioning his apostolic authority, which Timothy, of course, knew? Most probably because he intended this letter to be read by other believers. We have the authority of the Word of God (2 Tim 3:16), written by the apostle sent from God. This, too, is to be shared with anyone who will listen.

Verse 2—To Timothy—Timothy was not an apostle. He was a disciple of an apostle. But already the church is being led by the next generation after when the apostles lived. Timothy did not write any of the inspired Scriptures.

—**my true child in the faith**—this is the first of 19 times Paul used the word πιστις (*pistis* “faith”) in 1 Timothy. We are children of God by faith, not works.

—**Grace**—χαρις (*charis* “grace”), God's favor, used some 100 times in Paul's epistles. *For by grace you have been saved, through faith, ...not as a result of works...* (Eph 2:8-9).

—**mercy** (no condemnation) **and peace** (spiritual calm)

—**from God the Father**—a relationship with God that was not available in the Old Testament. We have the privilege of calling God our Father because God has brought us salvation (v. 1).

—**and Christ Jesus our Lord**—emphasizes Jesus as Lord in our lives while on earth.

II. Instructions Concerning False Teachers (1:3-20)

A. Warnings Against False Teachers (1:3-11)

Verse 3—*As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia*—as mentioned in the introduction, this occurred after the end of Acts. It’s not clear—was Paul leaving Ephesus for Macedonia or had he given Timothy instructions prior to having left Ephesus? Macedonia is northern Greece, specifically the cities of Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi.

—*remain on at Ephesus*—perhaps Timothy wanted to travel with Paul, as he had previously—*so that you may instruct certain men*—the purpose of why Timothy was to remain in Ephesus, to instruct some men who were teaching things contrary to the gospel and sound doctrine that Paul had taught. These men were Jews (v. 7). Two of them are named: *Hymenaeus and Alexander* (v. 20).

Application—We are criticized today for naming false teachers. But here is a biblical example of Paul doing that very thing. A warning about a system of false teaching can be hard to understand practically, but when a false teacher is actually named, then we have solid evidence to examine.

—*not to teach strange doctrines*—other than what Paul had taught, *the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which [he] had been entrusted* (v. 11).

Verse 4—*nor to pay attention to myths*—In Titus 1:14, Paul called them “Jewish myths,” also a problem for Titus in Crete. Some myths were added to the Old Testament, possibly from the apocrypha books (between the Old and New Testaments, in the Catholic Bible).

—*and endless genealogies*—archaeological evidence shows that myths that were commonly attached to genealogies listed in the Old Testament. This was so common that at one point, “genealogies” meant mythical history.

Application—Reminds me of the whole book (even a Christian movement) written about Jabez, who was simply mentioned in a genealogy of 1 Chronicles 4:9-10. Beware of books and stories (or movies) written to add color (speculations) where the Bible is silent. They will influence you. I’ve had women quote me something that was in a book, not in the Bible, but they thought it was in the Bible. Also, they can make the Bible seem boring, without color. If God meant for you to know it, He would have told us in the Bible. A danger is having the culture interpret the Bible, rather than the Bible interpret the culture. God has a purpose for the way the Bible is written. Peter wrote, *long for the pure milk of the Word that by it you may grow...* (1 Peter 2:2).

—*which give rise to mere speculation*—ideas that have no real answer, which are not God’s Word, which do nothing to contribute to the maturing of the believers.

—*rather than furthering the administration* [οικονομία *oikonomia* “dispensation” or “stewardship” or “management”] *of God*—God’s dispensation (management) of our age is by faith, not by myths, genealogies, speculations, ...

—*which is by faith*—We are justified by faith (Ephesians) and we are sanctified by faith (Galatians)

Application—The word “dispensation” is used nine times in the Bible (Luke 16:2, 3, 4; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph, 1:10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4). In these instances it is translated variously (“stewardship,” “dispensation,” “administration,” “job,” “commission”). A dispensation is an obvious historical division in Scripture in which God deals in a specific way with mankind on

earth, during a specified period or age (the Mosaic Law, our age of grace, and the Millennial Kingdom are three). A dispensation can be defined as a stage in the progressive revelation of God constituting a distinctive stewardship or rule of life. Although the concept of a dispensation and an age in the Bible is not precisely the same, it is obvious that each age has its dispensation.

Verse 5—*But the goal of our instruction*—in contrast to the false teachers (vv. 3-4)
—*is love*—*αγάπη agape*, God’s love, giving without reciprocity (exchanging for mutual benefit)
—*from a pure heart*—love from a cleansed heart (2 Tim 2:22)
—*and a good conscience*—a conscience untainted by sin and self-centeredness
—*and a sincere faith*—unhypocritical faith, not saying you exist by faith but practice listening to speculations, myths, endless genealogies...

Verse 6—*For some men, straying* [“missed the mark”] ***from these things***—i.e., the things of God mentioned in verse 5. See 1 Tim 6:21; 2 Tim 2:18.
—*have turned aside to fruitless discussion*—meaningless talk, empty chatter, useless words

Verse 7—*wanting to be teachers of the Law*—to be respected as a teacher or rabbi
—*even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions*—Instead of recognizing they were inadequate as teachers and needed to remain silent, they went on babbling as if with great authority, never even understanding their subject (the Law) or never understanding the very things they made confident assertions about.

Application—There were some of these at time of Christ. Jesus said, “*Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them...*” (Matt 6:1). It goes to our motivation. Do we want to please God or please men?

Verse 8—*But we know that the Law is good*—Paul wrote, *the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good* (Rom 7:12).
—*if one uses it lawfully*—i.e., to restrain evil (an improper use of the law would be what is presented in Galatians—as a works’ righteousness)

Verse 9—*realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person*—a person who has already recognized his/her sin and turned to Christ.
—*but for those who are lawless*—people who without any law
—*and rebellious*—people who refuse to obey laws

The following sins are violations of the 1st through 3rd commandments, against God Himself:

—*for the ungodly*—people who have no regard for God
— *and sinners*—for those who live in opposition to God
—*for the unholy*—for those who have no character of the morality of God
—*and profane*—a person who has no respect for anything to do with God, lit. a “desecrator”

The next group are examples of people who break the 5th through 7th commandments, against society:

—*for those who kill their fathers or mothers*—lit. “strike” fathers and mothers, no respect or affection for their own parents
—*for murderers*—intentional killing of other people

Verse 10—*and immoral men*—lit. *pornos*, from which we get the English “pornography,” usually used in the Bible for all immoral sexual activity
—***and homosexuals***—“a male who engages in sexual activity with a person of his own sex.” Some modern translations have added the word “practicing” to make a distinction between sexual orientation and actual behavior. But the word “practicing” is not in the text.

This group are examples of people who break the 8th and 9th commandments:
—***and kidnappers***—people who steal and often sell, or even kill, other people
—***and liars and perjurers***—people who bear false witness against other people
(Perhaps Paul did not mention the 10th commandment because coveting is not observable.)

—***and whatever else is contrary to sound*** (Gk *hygiaino*, from which we get “hygienic”) ***teaching***—healthy teaching. It’s used seven times in this epistle (1:10; 4:1, 6, 13, 16; 5:18; 6:1). Paul’s list was those things contrary to the (OT) Law, but now he adds anything contrary to “healthy teaching” (NT), which results in the proper Christian behavior of love, pure heart, good conscience, sincere faith (v. 5).

Verse 11—*according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God*—which is “by faith” (v. 4), “a sincere faith” (v. 5). This glorious gospel is the grace (gift) of God, through faith.
—***with which I have been entrusted***—Paul wrote, *by revelation there was made known to me...my insight into the mystery of Christ..., as it has now been revealed...that the Gentiles are...fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister* (Eph 3:3-8). This triggers Paul’s next verses of his gratefulness to God for entrusting this gospel to him, for putting him into God’s service of giving this gospel to the Gentiles (v. 12).

B. Paul’s Experience of Grace (1:12-17)

Verse 12—*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful*—It’s not skill or knowledge but faithfulness that Christ desires, and Christ will give the strength for the service as a believer.

—***putting me into service***—it was not Paul’s idea. Jesus supernaturally called Paul and put him into the service of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles. It was in the exact opposite direction he was heading, i.e., persecuting believers.

Verse 13—*even though I was formerly a blasphemer*—at that time, he thought it was the Christians who were the blasphemers, but in reality, Paul was the blasphemer against Christ, the Son of God.

—***and a persecutor and a violent aggressor***—“*I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it*”(Gal 1:13; see also Acts 8:3; 9:1, 2, 4, 5; 22:4, 5; 26:9-11).

—***Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief***—Paul wrote this same idea about his fellow Jews. “*They have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge*” (Rom 10:2). In other words, even as an unbeliever, Paul’s zeal was for God, not against God. That, for sure, did not save Him. But Jesus *can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided* (Heb 5:2). Once Paul was confronted, on the road to Damascus, with the truth of Jesus Christ, he no longer acted ignorantly in unbelief. He believed and was shown mercy by Jesus.

Verse 14—*and the grace* (*charis*) *of our Lord was more than abundant* (*υπερεπλεδασεν*, used only here in the NT, it means “to be present in great or superabundance”)—after a vivid and candid description of his sin as an unbeliever, Paul now tells us that God’s grace was

superabundant, it covered his sin and even more. It's like you need a cup of coffee, but I pour it to overflow the cup.

—**with the *faith* (*pistis*) and *love* (*agape*) which are found in Christ Jesus**—Paul's triplet: God's grace/gift of salvation, appropriated through faith, resulting in *agape* love for God and others.

Verse 15—*It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance*—Paul uses this phrase here and in 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8. This is a statement on which full reliance can be placed. —***that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners***—*For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him* (John 3:17). Christ's first coming was as a Savior. His second coming will be as a Judge (Rev 19–20). —***among whom I am foremost of all***—perhaps Paul meant that his sin was the foremost in the sense of gravity rather than chronology. Actually, he was what we would call a very moral person, being a Pharisee. However, his sin was worse because he was killing Christians, God's people. It's also the worse sin of the antichrist. Sins against humans are terrible. But sin against God is the worst.

Verse 16—*Yet for this reason I found mercy*—Paul did not brood over his sin, but he did not forget it either. Every time he remembered it, he remembered the still greater mercy of Jesus Christ.

—***so that in me as the foremost Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life***—Paul did not ever hide his record. Several times he shared his conversion story, realizing that God used him as an example of those who would believe. Paul murdered believers. If God can save him, God can save anyone. God's greatest enemy became God's greatest servant.

Application—Unbelievers, not acquainted even with the morality of God in the Bible, do not recognize sin in their life. Christians realize the sin in their lives, for which Jesus died. The air in a room seems to be clear, but when it is penetrated by the sunlight, it's seen to be full of dust and other impurities. So as we draw near to God, our souls are penetrated by the light of God (1 John 1:5), and we see more clearly our own sin and begin to feel for sin something of the hatred for it which God feels for it.

Verse 17—*Now to the King eternal* (sovereign), *immortal* (eternal), *invisible* (spiritual), *the only God* (unique, only One), *be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.* The unrighteous *did not honor Him as God, or give thanks...they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator* (Rom 1:19-25).

C. Paul's Charge to Timothy (1:18-20)

Verse 18—*This command*—“instruction” of verse 5, regarding the teaching of the false teachers mentioned in verse 3.

—***I entrust to you***—to assign responsibility to someone for doing something

—***Timothy, my son***—as Paul stated in verse 2, *my true child in the faith*. Paul was Timothy's spiritual father. Someone said a Christian should always have a Paul in their life (from whom they are learning) and a Timothy (to whom they are teaching).

— ***in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you***—There is no record of who gave them, when, or where, unless it is referring to 4:14, *the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance....* Evidently, these prophecies had to do with what Paul now says is Timothy's assignment in Ephesus.

—*that by them you fight the good fight*—this is not a skirmish, it is a campaign—that lasts your whole life.

Application—Being a Christian is being in a warfare. You are warring against your own sin nature (Rom 7). You are warring *against the rulers, against the power, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Eph 6:12). When does the war end? The moment after you take your last breath.

Verse 19—keeping faith—Paul wrote at the end of his life, “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith*” (2 Tim 4:7).

—*and a good conscience*—you cannot have a good conscience and sin at the same time.

—*which some have rejected*—*απωθεω*, *apotheo*, English “apathy.” To have no concern, no responsiveness either to the faith or conscience.

—*and suffered shipwreck*—the same word as Paul used in 2 Cor 11:25, *three times I was shipwrecked*, used of a ship that’s destroyed by being run aground or in a storm.

—*in regard to their faith*—Paul uses similar terms in 4:1, *in later times some will fall away from the faith* and in 6:10, *some by longing for it [love of money] have wandered away from the faith...*

Application—First, what we know—salvation is secure, one cannot lose it. A believer was chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4), nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom 8:38-39). Jesus gives us eternal life, and *they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand...and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand* (John 10:28-29).

What does it mean to *suffer shipwreck in regard to their faith*? There are professing Christians. *They went out from us, but they were not really of us; ...in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us* (1 John 2:19). But a true believer can certainly *grieve the Holy Spirit of God* (Eph 4:30—in fact, read all the commands of Ephesians 4 and you get an inkling of what struggles were happening there in Ephesus). A believer can also quench the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19). A Christian who remains a babe and doesn’t learn is susceptible to shipwreck. A Christian who is friends with the world and loves the things of the world is susceptible to shipwreck.

Paul seems to be telling Timothy that it is Timothy’s responsibility to fight the good fight and to keep the faith and a good conscience. We need to be on guard, *be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith...* (1 Pet 5:8-9). You have free will choices that direct your life toward or away from God.

Verse 20—Among these are Hymenaeus—Paul wrote, *But avoid worldly and empty chatter for it will lead to further ungodliness and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some* (2 Tim 2:16-18). Possibly some of those Paul warned about in Acts 20:28-31. *Be on guard...I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among our own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert...*

— *and Alexander*—Probably the Alexander mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy 4:24-25, *Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; ...Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.*

—*whom I have handed over to Satan*—evidently sent out of the protection of being with other believers. We know Paul did this in Corinth to the man who *has his father's wife*. Paul *deliver[ed] such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus* (1 Cor 5:5). In this instance, the man evidently would die, but his soul was still saved. Whether it's true of these Ephesian men is unknown.

— *so that they will be taught* [Gk. “discipline, training”] *not to blaspheme*—Paul's motive was remedial, not punitive. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, *If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. And yet do not regard him as an enemy but admonish him as a brother* (2 Thess 3:14-15).

Application—We have assignments: stand firm in your faith. Fight the good fight. Be on the alert for false teaching that draws you away from the Word of God. Be on guard for the enemy who is after your soul. Do not associate with false teaching—no one says, “I want to be influenced by false teaching”—but you will become whoever your community is, whoever with whom you fellowship. For example, Dave and I were in the student world at MSU, but our community, our fellowship, was the believers at our church, where the Word of God was taught and believed. Choose your community carefully—for that's what you will become. Count on it.

III. Instructions Concerning Conduct (2:1–3:13)

A. Instructions Concerning Prayer (2:1-7)

Verse 1—*First of all, then*—emphasizes importance rather than a list

—*I urge that entreaties* (used 19 times in the NT) *and prayers* (used 37 times), *petitions* (found only here and in 4:5)—All kinds of prayers should be made. *Since...we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...* (Heb 10:19-23). In the OT, they could not come anywhere near the holy place. But we can! So do it!

—*and thanksgivings*—a big part of prayer should be thanksgiving

Application—On the one hand, prayer is the easiest thing to do. It can be short or long. It can be done anywhere, at any time. It can be out loud or silent. It can be done by new believers and mature believers. On the other hand, it is often the thing that's not done. Prayer is a kind of God-consciousness. It's acknowledging God as part of whatever is going on in your life right now. Paul is here telling us it is of first importance. However much you pray—pray more!!

—*be made on behalf of all men*—(Gk $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omega\nu$ *anthropon*)—humans, both men and women. This is a specific word in contrast to “men” ($\alpha\nu\eta\rho$ *aner*) “males” in verse 8. Sadly, English translates them both as “men,” missing a big doctrinal point and practice. So here, all kinds of prayers are to be made on behalf of all kinds of people.

Verse 2—*for kings and all who are in authority*—God told Jeremiah to write to the Jewish captives in Babylon, saying, *Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare* (Jer 29:7). Paul is saying a similar thing here. Pray for your government leaders and your president.

—*so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity*—The reason to pray for your government is so you will be able to lead a quiet life of godliness. Thank God we have the freedom in this country to gather together as believers, etc. Although we can already see the enemy trying to take that away from us. Political and social upheaval are excellent times in which to die for Christ, but hard times in which to live for Him.

Verse 3—*This* [referring to verses 1-2] *is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior*—You want to do something that God considers “good,” then pray!!

Application—Believers often pray for God’s will to be done. Here we see what God’s will [desire] is—that people get saved (v. 4). God is our Savior, and in His grace, He’s provided salvation, and He wants people to be saved. So it’s a good thing, according to the will of God, to pray for a person’s salvation. A person may not allow you to speak to them about God, but they cannot prevent you from speaking to God about them!

Verse 4—*who desires all men* (humans) *to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth* [both the root and fruit of salvation]. A tranquil life in a society allows opportunities without penalty to share the gospel. Peter also wrote, “*The Lord...not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance*” (2 Pet 3:9). God’s desire is that all be saved, but His plan was for only some to be saved. For example, a teacher desires everyone in her class to pass, but she gives a test, planning on some failing.

Application—God’s plan could have been that everyone be saved. But that would make people robots. Instead, He planned for mankind to have free will, to choose whether to worship God or not. That’s the only way love can happen. Love requires choice. The greater the consequences of the choice, the greater the love. God said, “Choose Me or die.” It’s each person’s choice and consequences.

—This is perhaps one of the best definitions of saving faith: *come to the knowledge of the truth*. It’s not a feeling, not good works, not commitment. It’s propositional: i.e., coming to the knowledge of the truth about Jesus.

Verse 5—*For there is one God*—*But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God and the everlasting King* (Jer 10:10). Idols are “*like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they, and they cannot speak, they must be carried because they cannot walk! Do not fear them, for they can do no harm, nor can they do any good....they are altogether stupid and foolish*” (Jer 10:2-8). Any so-called god is stupid and foolish. *For there is one God*.

—*and one mediator*—in English today, a mediator is someone who works for compromise between opposing parties. The Greek word, however, means the only one able to go between man and God.

—*also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*—Jesus by His death restored the harmony between God and man which sin had broken. Jesus is the bridge. He has one foot planted in eternity and the other foot planted in time. He provided the bridge by which we can come into the presence of God.

Application—What’s interesting about the religions in the world, they claim to be the way to heaven for mankind, but they have no guarantee from God that their way will work. So, they create a god who they say will accept their way! But the Bible says that there is one and only one God, and He provided the way to Himself through the mediator, His Son. God initiated restoring the relationship between Himself and man. He made a plan that satisfied both His righteousness and His justice and offered that restoration as a gift of His *charis* [grace], through *pistis* [faith], not works.

Verse 6—*who gave Himself as a ransom* [a word that only occurs here in the NT]. It means “what is given in exchange for another as the price of his redemption.” In the first century, it was used for the ransom price paid to free a slave.

—*for* [on behalf of] *all*—TULIP says that Jesus only died for the elect. But we just read that God *desires all men to be saved* (v. 4). He could only desire that if Jesus actually died for all, to make it possible for all to be saved.

—*the testimony given at the proper time*—This is a difficult phrase. It seems to possibly mean that Christ’s death was planned from all eternity, but now has come to light at the time God intended, in the work of Christ [NET Bible Notes].

Verse 7—*For this I was appointed* [lit. “placed, set”] *a preacher* [“herald,” proclaimer of God’s Word] *and an apostle* [one sent, in the NT, one with authority from God Himself] (*I am telling the truth, I am not lying*—perhaps some in Ephesus were challenging his apostolic authority) —*as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth*—this ties his ministry to the message of God (1) who desires all men to be saved, (2) who sent a mediator between Himself and man, (3) Jesus Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for all men, Jews AND Gentiles, and (4) who sent Paul to those Gentiles to proclaim this message of salvation.

B. Instructions Concerning Men and Women (2:8-15)

Verse 8—*Therefore I want the men*—the Greek word *ανηρ* (*aner*) “males.” Paul uses the definite article “the” to emphasize his point that he’s talking about “the males,” not generally about humans

—*in every place*—wherever believers gather together

—*to pray*—lead in public prayer. This continues his section on prayer begun in 2:1-2. In public gatherings of believers, the men are the ones who are told to do the praying. Women praying in public gatherings of believers Paul dealt with in 1 Corinthians 11. Generally speaking, if there are men present, they are the ones to do the praying.

—*lifting up holy hands*—a common OT practice (1 Kings 8:22; 2 Chron 6:13; Ezra 9:5; Ps 28:2; 141:2; Lam 2:19). Of course, the emphasis would be on “holy,” i.e., undefiled, pleasing to God.

—*without wrath* (anger) *and dissension* (disagreements, arguments)

Application—There are two points here: (1) public prayer is to be done by the men and (2) the men are to be “holy,” “without anger,” and without “arguments.” It’s doubtful he’s giving a “law” about physically raising their hands, although from the OT, a person would recognize someone is praying if their hands were raised (similar to our time, if we see a bowed head with eyes closed, we would assume that person is praying). The point is, a man should have a reverent attitude when he prays.

Verse 9—*Likewise, I want women*—“likewise” connects with the previous verse, that is, in the public gathering of believers.

—*to adorn* [*κοσμειν, kosmein*, English “cosmetics”] *themselves*—they are positive words. You are to adorn yourself, but with the proper adornment.

—*with proper clothing*—you wouldn’t wear a party dress to the kids’ soccer game or sweats to a party. Different places have proper clothing for those places or events. This is the proper clothing to wear when believers (including the men) gather to teach and pray.

—*modestly*—moderation, sensible, sound judgment

—*and discreetly*—inconspicuous, understated

—*not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments*—It’s excessive jewelry and clothes meant to draw attention to yourself. It’s glitter and gaudiness.

Application—The purpose in believers gathering together is to think about God. Therefore, anything you wear that distracts from that would not be appropriate. Anything that draws attention to you or makes people think about you and what you are wearing instead of thinking

about God is the point. (For sure, low tops and short skirts even cause males to lust!) Don't think of what you cannot wear, think of what you should wear that would not take any glory from God. Sometimes, on Sunday morning, some people gather in order to display their economic status. A person of modest economic means could not help but feel a sense of exclusion.

—The opposite can also be true. A woman can draw attention to herself, wearing improper clothing, by dressing too casual, or sloppy, or unkempt or ill-groomed. Again, it would result in drawing attention to herself and away from God.

Verse 10—*but rather*—a contrast to improper clothing

—***by means of good works***—who you are and what you do are more important than what you look like! Remember what Jesus said about the Pharisees: *For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness* (Matthew 23:27-28). Looks can be deceiving.

— ***as is proper for women making a claim to godliness***—it's not just proper for women in general, but it's what is proper for women who are claiming to be godly. This is one of the ways we express our faith. It makes a distinction between the holy and unholy. We should not be looking like the world (consumed with how we dress) or act like the world (emphasis on how we look rather than who we are—the children of God).

Application—Most likely, we spend a lot more time putting on make-up and getting dressed to leave than we do even thinking about “adorning” ourselves with godliness. Think about these verses: Eph 4:24; 6:11; Col 3:10, 12, 14; 1 Thess 5:8; 1 Pet 3:4.

Verse 11—*A woman must quietly receive instruction*—First, Paul is departing from the traditional Jewish view that women should not learn. Here he specifically says that women are to receive instruction. They are included in the teaching that is done among the believers when they gathered. “Quietly” does not mean without saying anything. That is a different Greek word. Rather, it has the idea of not being loud and argumentative.

—***with entire submissiveness***—“The injunction is not directed towards a surrender of mind and conscience, or the abandonment of the duty of private judgment; the phrase ‘with all subjection’ is a warning against the usurpation of authority, as in the next verse” [Vine]. It has nothing to do with personal superiority and inferiority. It's the role. There are roles in the Godhead, yet Jesus is not less God because He is in submission to the Father.

Verse 12—*But I do not allow a woman to teach*—Paul speaks appreciatively of the fact that Timothy himself had been taught the right way by his godly mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15). Paul also wrote that the older women are to teach the younger women (Tit 2:3, 4). So Paul is not against women learning and teaching, especially of children and other women. But women are not to teach men, i.e., in the public gathering of believers, with the purpose of teaching and prayer.

—***or exercise authority over a man***—The question to be answered is: am I trying to usurp the place of male leadership, give orders to men, dictate to men, in the public gathering of the believers?

—***but to remain quiet***—not loud and argumentative, trying to take over. It has to do with your intent, your motivation. Are you seeking to understand the Scripture being taught or trying to argue and overcome what the teacher is saying.

Application—(1) A woman can counsel or correct or teach privately in a conversation with men. For example, Priscilla and Aquila *took him [Apollos] aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately* (Acts 18:26). Obviously, Priscilla was well-taught in the Scriptures.

- (2) Sunday school is a modern concept, begun in 1865 by William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. So can women teach boys in Sunday School? First, ask is there a man who will do it? If not, then the decision has to be made as to when “boys” become “men.” It seems that teaching young children would be okay, but maybe not teenagers. Some draw the line at graduation from high school. But this is an individual conviction. That situation was not in the Bible.
- (3) What about on the mission field where there is no man to teach? Can a woman teach other men there? That would seem to be appropriate, as long as the woman would be willing to leave her position if a man comes along who can be the teacher (even if he is not as good a teacher as her!).
- (4) Wonder if the man teacher is doing a terrible job? Can a woman replace him? No. [And don’t sit there thinking how much better a teacher you would be. God knows and judges your thoughts as well as your actions! See Matt 9:4; 15:19; 1 Cor 2:11; Heb 4:12.]
- (5) Another issue today is the belief that a woman can have authority over other men in the local church as long as she herself is under the authority of a man. For example, the push for women elders and even women pastors (under the authority of male elders). What defense is there for disobeying the Bible and thinking it’s ok because a man “in authority” said it was ok?

Verse 13—*For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve*—This isn’t just a new idea for the church age. The first reason for these roles of men and women is because of creation itself (Gen 2:8; 3:6). It was God who made man to have the role of leadership and woman to be the helper to the man. Matthew Henry wrote: “The woman... was not made out of the man’s head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side and near his heart to be beloved.” [Nice thought.] Eve was not responsible to God for Adam in the same sense that Adam was responsible for Eve.

—If a person believes in evolution, then there are no roles. To accept and live within the boundaries of roles is to make a statement of belief in creation and in the Creator whose idea it was to have roles. God made man in His own image, which was with roles, as exist within the Godhead.

—Just want to point out that the disciples and apostles, who were the first leaders and teachers and authorities in the church were men.

Verse 14—*And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression*—(1) This is a historical fact (Gen 3:1-6).

- (2) For sure, this does not mean that all women are genetically predisposed to being deceived!! There is nothing in the Bible to support that idea.
- (3) It could be that when Eve was deceived, she abandoned her helper role and convinced Adam to disobey God, thereby resulting in sin. It’s an example of a woman usurping the leadership role of the male. This is not a new issue. It’s been around since the very beginning of men and women. It actually started before there was sin. And it continues throughout history, to the time of Paul and Timothy, to now.

Verse 15—*But*— One thing is clear, verse 15 is to lessen the impact of verses 13-14. This is one of the hardest verses to interpret in the NT. And there are many interpretations.

—***women will be preserved through the bearing of children*** [the process of bearing children, rather than the product of a child]. Is she not necessary, then, being the helper and not the role of leader? Yes, she is absolutely necessary (preserved, saved), being the one who bears the children, who carries and gives birth to males. Without her giving birth, there would be no males. God Himself said, “*It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him*” (Gen 2:18). So God created the roles, but then created the absolute necessity of having the woman.

Without her, the human race would end. So her role might “seem” less, but in actuality, she is vitally important.

Application—Jesus who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking on the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil 2:7-9). Jesus is our example. Although God, He humbled Himself to serve and to give His life so we might have eternal life. Do we resist our role because we do not want to humble ourselves?

—*if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint*—perhaps as illustrated by the faith of Timothy’s mother Eunice and grandmother Lois. Paul wrote of Timothy, *from childhood you have known the sacred writings, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus* (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15). Both mother and grandmother impacted Timothy with their faith and their knowledge of the Scriptures.

C. Instructions Concerning Overseers (3:1-13)

Verse 1—*It is a trustworthy statement*—Paul says this a number of times (1:15; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8).

—*if any man aspires*—a male desires to be a leader in his local group of believers. I remember Clark saying he didn’t qualify for the very first thing because he never aspired to be an overseer.

—*to the [office] of overseer*—I really have trouble here because every commentary assumes an institutional local church, with offices, translators even adding it to the text. But there was no such thing at the time of Paul. There were only groups of believers who gathered to receive teaching and to pray (of course, to also sing, and have Communion). The word “office” is not in the text. It’s simply “aspires to oversight.”

Application—Oversight does not mean “authority.” Jesus forbid authority. *Jesus...said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”* (Matt 20:25-28). An overseer has responsibilities, stewardships, a servant’s heart.

—*it is a fine work he desires to do*. Timothy evidently was not an overseer, neither was Paul. Neither of them had these qualifications that we know of (i.e., husband of one wife...children). Also, Paul didn’t desire his job as an apostle. God singled him out and sent him out. And it sounds like Paul sent Timothy to stay in Ephesus. Timothy did not aspire to it.

—It’s a fine work to desire because it comes from the motivation of maturity in Christ and then teaching others.

Verse 2—*An overseer, then, must be above reproach*—i.e., no observable flaw in his character or conduct, or cause for criticism, either now or in the past, that anyone should discredit him and therefore also discredit the other believers and even Jesus.

—*the husband of one wife* [Gk. “woman”]—First, the obvious. He must be married [to a woman].

—Paul thought celibacy was better because a person could be more dedicated to God without worrying about a family during the time of persecution (1 Cor 7:37-38). But he didn’t criticize being married. And here, it is a requirement.

—It may mean having only one wife at a time, due to divorce. This does not seem likely because divorce ends marriage, so he wouldn't be having two wives.

—Or it could allow for a widower to marry as he would only have one wife at a time.

—Most likely, it means he has only wife during his whole life. The reverse of this is “one-man woman” in 5:9, which can only mean “married only once.”

—A question would be—would the wife need to be living, i.e., would a widower qualify? It would not be sinful, but it might disqualify him from leadership.

—**temperate**—Gk. “well-balanced”—In older Greek it meant “not mixed with wine,” but then became translated “temperate” or “sober.” See also verse 3, “not addicted to wine.”

—**prudent**—self-control, showing care and thought of the future

—**respectable**—lit. “with modesty” (same as 2:9).

—**hospitable**—in the Bible, this was usually to believers who were strangers (no Hamptons or Hiltons back then). This is a characteristic of the tribulation, when believers (without the 666) need food and shelter. Jesus said that how they treated the believers was as if they were doing it for Christ. *I was a stranger, and you invited me in* (see Matthew 25:31f). However, this hospitality is to be to believers. In 3 John 10-11, John wrote, *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house...for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds*. It would be very detrimental to your children to invite a person of a cult or other religion into your home to spread their evil in your family.

Application—On a personal note, when I was growing up and missionaries visited our church, my family was quick to invite them to stay in our home, exposing us children to believers from all over the world. It probably influenced me to become a missionary myself. It's a wonderful thing for the family to be exposed to believers from other cultures.

—**able to teach**—Not just a desire or willingness to teach but one who is willing to study the Word, like Ezra, *For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel* (Ezra 7:10). Paul told Titus, an overseer must *be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict* (Titus 1:9).

Application—How many times are teaching positions filled by people who are willing to do it but are not qualified to do it. I don't know how to fix that problem, but it's sad the Bible misinformation that is often taught by a teacher (especially Sunday school or Christian schools) who does not know the Bible (but we're just so thankful someone is willing to do it!).

Verse 3—**not addicted to wine**—lit. “lingering with the cup.” Perhaps we need to apply that also to drugs and opioids.

—**or pugnacious**—lit. “not a striker” or hitter, often a side effect of addictions

—**but**—in contrast

—**gentle**—patient, bearing with others

—**peaceable**—not quarrelsome

—**free from the love of money**—It's the love of money rather than the possession of it that is disqualifying. Poor people as well as the rich may love money, and not all rich people love it. The opposite is contentment. Paul gave this testimony, *I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need* (Phil 4:11-12).

Application—What is the secret of being content? Paul said he “learned to be content.” The dictionary says it's to be satisfied and not wishing for more. But how do you do that? Maybe that's why Paul calls it “the secret.”

Verse 4—*He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity*—all the commentaries I read put the emphasis on the children’s behavior, that they would be obedient and respectful. However, it seems to me the verse is not talking about the children, per se, it’s talking about how this father *manages* his family. How does he handle the issues that come up with the children? There are going to be bad situations, both in families and in groups of believers. He needs to be able to manage those situations.

Verse 5—*(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)*—the home is viewed as a training ground for the overseer’s ministry. Failure in the home raises a red flag for one’s ability to be an overseer.

Verse 6—*and not a new convert [neophyte], so that he will not become conceited [puffed up with pride] and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil*—Satan was condemned for his pride.

Verse 7—*And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church*—it seems that often an elder is chosen because he is a successful businessman. But what is the man’s reputation among unbelievers? A man can be successful through shady practices, not Christian-like at all. —*so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil*—probably meaning what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:26, ...*that they may...escape the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.*

Verse 8—Deacons—Gk. δῆακονοϋ (diakonos) minister or servant. Early in the history of the church Stephen and Philip and five other men were chosen to *diakonoein* (to serve), feeding the Greek widows so the apostles could dedicate their time to the teaching of the Word (Acts 6:1-6). So the word “deacon” is basically a transliteration of the word meaning “to serve.” Whereas the overseers were over the spiritual teaching of the believers, the deacons were to serve to help meet physical needs. Josephus used the word for those who wait on tables.
—*likewise*—similar qualifications as the overseers
—*must be men of dignity*—it combines the thoughts of gravity and respect, a seriousness of purpose and conduct
—*not double-tongued*—not be hypocritical, to be seen one way with the believers and another way with their family or fellow workers in the world
—*or addicted to much wine*—The emphasis here would be on the words “addicted” and “much.” Paul was not against wine in general. He told Timothy to *use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments* (1 Tim 5:23).
—*or fond of sordid gain*—dishonest—this would be especially important as these men were more likely to be responsible for the collective money of the believers and distributing it.

Verse 9—*but*—contrast word

—*holding* [embrace, support] *to the mystery of the faith*—Paul wrote, *that by revelation, there was made known to me...the mystery of Christ, which on other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed...* (Eph 3:2-6).

—*with a clear conscience*—Gk ἀνεγκλήτοϋ, a word used only by Paul in the NT (1 Cor 1:8; Col 1:22; 1 Tim 3:10; Titus 1:6-7). He combines two words, meaning “being free from accusation,” so it is a man who is unaccused, free from any charge at all. He is never accused of wrong doing.

Verse 10—*These men must also first be tested*—Paul wrote to the Corinthians, from whom he raised money to bring to the poor believers in Jerusalem. ...*taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; for we have regard for what is*

honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we have sent them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things... (2 Cor 8:20-22).

Before Paul sent this (probably large) gift from the Corinthians to the Jerusalem believers, he tested the man who would carry the gift, that he would be beyond reproach.

—***then let them serve as deacons***—Sadly, we hear too often of those in charge of the funds of Christian non-profits who embezzle money for their own use. Do what you can to check out to whom you are giving. They need to be tested, then they can serve. How casually both overseers and deacons are elected or appointed without extensive vetting.

—***if they are beyond reproach***—no blemish or stain in their character, their reputation, their family, their job—i.e., a mature believer.

Verse 11—*Women*—the question here is, are these women who are wives of the deacons? Or as most believe, that these women are “deaconesses.” The Greek word is translated both as “woman” and as “wife,” so that doesn’t help us. Probably, this refers to being the wife of the deacon:

- (1) It would be strange for Paul to discuss women deacons right in the middle of the qualifications for male deacons (between verses 10 and 12). It would be more natural for him to finish the section on deacons and then for the women to be addressed by themselves.
- (2) In verse 12, Paul says deacons must be husbands of only one wife, for which a deaconess (female deacon) would not qualify.
- (3) Most of the qualifications given for deacons elsewhere do not appear here in this verse, so he is not actually referring to women deacons.
- (4) In light of the general principle of 2:12, that a woman is not to teach or have authority over a man, it seems like the leadership among believers is limited to men, with no women deaconesses.

—***must likewise***—similar qualifications for the wives of deacons

—***be dignified***—someone who is respected by other believers

—***not malicious*** [Gk. διαβολουσ *diabolous*, English “diabolical,” evil, of the devil] ***gossips*** [casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true]

—***but temperate***—well-balanced

—***faithful in all things***—women who could be trusted, who keeps confidences

Application—The point here, I think, is that both the overseer and deacon come in a package. They are to have only one wife, but that wife is also to be a mature believer. For sure, someone could not be an overseer or deacon if their wife was not a believer, for example. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:15 if the spouse is an unbeliever and willing to stay married to the believer, that’s good because that’s the best chance of them getting saved. However, that would disqualify that man from being an overseer or deacon. The point here is that the overseer’s and deacon’s wife has qualifications, too.

Application—Because the institutional local churches we have today developed through history and not the Scriptures, if a church decided to have deaconesses, that would be their decision—just don’t try to support it from the Scripture. They are free to have whatever they want as the leadership. It’s their own convictions (Rom 14). Local churches today have praise teams, used to have choirs, have Sunday schools—or not, have 1 service on Sunday, have 2 services on Sunday, etc. The church I grew up in had deaconesses who prepared the table for Communion, who organized food for shut-ins or church events, like a potluck for missionaries in town, etc.

Verse 12—Deacons must be husbands of only one wife—see verse 2
—and good managers of their children and their own households—see verses 4-5

Verse 13—For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing— Compared to worldly standards, a servant may seem menial and unattractive, but to followers of Jesus it looks quite different. Jesus said that the one who wishes to be great must be a servant [διακονος “*deacon—servant*”], just as the Son of Man came to serve [διακονος “*deacon—servant*”], not to be served (Matt 20:26-28).
—and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus—they have great boldness to act on the truth of their convictions. Humble service becomes the true test of one’s motives.

IV. Instructions Concerning Guarding the Truth (3:14–4:16)

A. The Church and Its Truth (3:14-16)

Verse 14—I am writing these things to you—the whole book
—hoping to come to you before long—it was Paul’s hope, but he wasn’t able to come

Verse 15—but in case I am delayed—but Paul wanted to make sure Timothy knew of these things

—I write so that you will know—reminding us of John who wrote, *These things I have written you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life* (1 John 5:13). Jesus said, “*If you abide in My Word, then you are truly disciples of mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* (John 8:31-32). God’s Word is the truth, and God wants us to know the truth.

—how one ought to conduct [behave] himself in the household [family] of God—The Jews had laws by which they were to live. Believers are part of a family, not a business, or nation, or some other organization. Each family has behaviors unique to them. As does God’s family.

—which is the church [εκκλησια *ekklesia* “called out ones”] of the living God—saints by calling (1 Cor 1:2). We are called out from the world and the things of the world.

—the pillar and support of the truth—We are not to change or distort the truth (Gal 1:7), we are to support the truth. Two things are the truth: Jesus, who said, “*I am...the truth*” and God’s Word. Jesus said, “*Sanctify them in the truth; Thy Word is truth*” (John 17:17). We are to support that truth and behave in the way that supports that truth. Jesus also said, “*Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?*” (Luke 6:46). It’s not just beliefs, it’s how we live our lives.

Verse 16—By common confession—Gk. “most certainly, beyond all question,” by common agreement

—great is the mystery of godliness—something previously hidden in God, but now widely known (Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:8; 4:1; Eph 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19; Col 1:26-27; 4:3).

—He who was revealed in the flesh—the incarnation of Jesus (2 Tim 1:10, Titus 2:11)

—Was vindicated [demonstrations of His deity] in the Spirit—by His resurrection (Rom 8:11)

—Seen by angels—may refer to the angels who watched over Him during His earthly ministry (Matt 4:11; Luke 22:43)

—Proclaimed among the nations [Gk. *ethnos*, “nations” but often translated “Gentiles”]—Col 1:23. What was proclaimed was not a theory or even a creed, but a Person. “*We preach Christ*” (1 Cor 1:23)

—Believed on in the world—Those *ethnos* believed in Christ (1 Cor 1:18–2:5)

—Taken up in glory—Christ’s ascension (Acts 1:2; Eph 4:10)

—Jesus has bridged the gap between things that have always been poles apart:

- The flesh (physical) and the Spiritual
- Angels (those closest to God) and Gentiles (those farthest from God)
- The world (the present sphere of existence) and heaven (the future sphere of existence)

Application—Our common confession is the life of Christ, His death, His resurrection, and ascension, as the glorified Lord. We are not proclaiming a way of life, a way of belief, etc. “*We proclaim Christ.*” He is the Gospel. And we, the called-out ones, are the support of that truth.

B. Predictions of Apostasy (4:1-5)

Verse 1—*But the Spirit explicitly* [clearly] *says*—in other Scripture such as Mark 13:22; Acts 20:29; 2 Thess 2:1-12; 2 Peter 3:1-18

—*that in later times*—the closer we get to Christ’s return, which, to Paul, even meant in his time. The point is, when you have believers, you will also have those who fall away from the faith.

—*some will fall away* [abandon, withdraw, become apostate] *from the faith*

Application—Our immediate question is, are these who *fall away from the faith* believers or unbelievers? It could be either one. There is not enough information in this context to know. However, both things are true.

In some passages, the context argues for Christian apostates, called “backsliders” or “carnal (fleshly) Christians” (Luke 8:13; 1 Tim 1:18-20; 4:1; 6:20-21; Heb 3:12). Satan uses professed Christians to accomplish his work. He once used Peter to try to lead Jesus on the wrong path (Matt 16:21-23), and he used Ananias and Sapphira to try to deceive the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 5). Paul warned that false teachers would arise *from within the church* (Acts 20:30).

Other passages point to non-Christian apostates (Luke 13:27; 2 Thess 2:11). In other passages, both seem to be in view, and we don’t have enough information to say (2 Thess 2:3; Titus 1:14).

Christians can stop believing God (Matt 10:33; Mark 8:32; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:8). This does not mean they lose their salvation, since salvation is God’s work, not ours (John 10:28; Rom 8:31-39; 2 Tim 2:13). Someone has said, “I believe in the perseverance of the Savior, but I do not believe in the perseverance of the saints.”

—*paying attention to deceitful spirits*—Satan has strategies he uses to deceive. Those who fall away are convinced that what they believe is the truth. Paul wrote, *such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness* (2 Cor 10:13-15).

—*and doctrines of demons*—The source of these deceptions are demons. They have doctrines, i.e., ordered systems by which they deceive.

Verse 2—*by means of the hypocrisy of liars*—who claim to tell the truth, but really it’s lies—*seared* [cauterized, burned, desensitized] *in their own conscience as with a branding iron*—so they are unable to notice the difference between right and wrong

Application—First we may tolerate false teaching, thinking we know it when we see it, but then as time goes on, and with frequent exposure, our conscience becomes more and more cauterized, so we recognize less and less lies, until finally, one day, we accept the false teaching

as truth, and then we promote the false teaching. Like the story of the frog in the pot of water, slowly coming to a boil. It's desensitized to the change in the heat until it's too late—and the hot water kills it.

Verse 3—men who forbid marriage—Paul wrote, *It's better to marry than to burn* (1 Cor 7:9). As we often hear in the news, the priests, who have been forbidden to marry, end up in all kinds of sexual perversions. Satan loves that!! God put a boundary on sex, and that boundary is marriage. When man removes that boundary, all kinds of sin can and does happen. [That boundary can be removed by viewing pornography, etc. that removes a person mentally and emotionally from marriage.]

—and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth—probably because of so many Jewish restrictions on food and then the food that was offered to pagan idols, we often see verses about food. Today, there are also restrictions on food—“kosher” for Jews and “halal” for Muslims (companies such as Kraft and Campbells). These foods have been “blessed” by their rabbis and imams. Can we eat those foods? Yes. Unless it causes a stumbling block to a less mature Christian.

Verse 4—For everything created by God is good—i.e., what God created is good (Gen 1–2), not the perversions man has made of those things.

—and nothing is to be rejected if it is received [“for partaking”] **with gratitude**—some were creating these laws (eat only fish on Friday), which threatened our freedom in Christ. Eat it all, with thanksgiving [but maybe don't eat all of it!!]

—Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them (1 Cor 6:13).

Verse 5—for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer—The point is that even the common things such as what you eat, can become holy in the sense that you are giving thanks to God for them, and they become an occasion for praise to God, even to others if done in the presence of others. [It seems to be contradictory to give thanks for food and then complain about it!! Just saying.....]

C. Responsibilities of a Good Minister of Christ (4:6-16)

Verse 6—In pointing out these things to the brethren—a word also used for “fellow Christians”

—you (Timothy) **will be a good servant of Christ Jesus**—One of the harder things to do—to confront believers about following false teaching, but that's what a good servant of Jesus must do

—constantly nourished [only here in the NT]—strengthened, sustained, fed

—on the words of the faith—Jude 3 says, *contend earnestly for the faith...*

—and of the sound doctrine—Paul has referred to this numerous times in the book (1:10; 4:1, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1). In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul told Timothy, *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman...handling accurately the word of truth.* That's sound doctrine. Doctrine is simply organizing information. For example, you may organize all the Bible verses on salvation, and you would have the “doctrine” of salvation. Doctrines are not traditions or creeds.

—which you have been following—Timothy has been doing good so far. So Paul is entrusting him with even more responsibility.

Verse 7—But have nothing to do with worldly [profane, godless] **fables** [“myths” as in 1:4, untrue stories] **fit only for old women** [used only here in NT]—similar to English “old wives’

tales,” a term used to indicate that a supposed truth is actually a superstition or incorrect. They were said to be passed down by older women to a younger generation, hence the name.

—**On the other hand**—instead of godless myths

—**discipline yourself**—train yourself. The Greek word γυμναζε *gumnache*, from which we get the English word “gymnasium.”

—**for the purpose of godliness**—Timothy’s training and discipline was for the purpose of godliness, spiritual maturity.

Application—How many Christians think maturity will just come in time, with little or no effort? The writer of Hebrews said, *by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food...But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil...let us press on to maturity* (Heb 5:11–6:1). Just years as a believer won’t create maturity. It takes discipline. How much time with effort do you put into Bible study and prayer? Sadly, in our culture it’s a mentality—“I’m 20, I’m 30, I’m 40, I’m mature.” Years don’t create maturity, discipline does.

Verse 8—**for bodily discipline is only of little profit** [lit. “for a little time”]—possibly referring to the physical disciplines of forbidding marriage and not eating certain foods of verse 3.

—*why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence* (Col 2:20-23).

Application—As is taught in Galatians, the problem is assigning spiritual value to physical things. Does not eating meat on Friday have spiritual value? Does it move me along the path to spiritual maturity? Whether you do certain physical things or abstain from certain physical things—they are *only of little profit* [for this time here and now], and they are of no spiritual [spiritual maturity or eternal reward] profit. Peter wrote, *long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation* (1 Pet 2:2).

—**but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come**—Godliness colors all aspects of this temporal life and eternal life. As in verse 5, even saying a prayer before you eat gives praise to God. *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God* (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17, 23). It’s an amazing, awesome thing that whatever we are doing can actually not only benefit us in this life but be rewarded in eternity.

Verse 9—**It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance**—a common phrase of Paul’s

Verse 10—**For it is for this [godliness] we labor** [lit. “grow weary” or “work with effort, toil”] **and strive** [lit. “agonize”]—godliness doesn’t come with no effort. Making a godly decision can be an agonizing decision—we fight this war with our sin nature, the world, and Satan. It doesn’t happen easily. It’s like we are paddling upstream—it’s going to take work with effort.

—**because we have fixed**—this verb tense denotes an action with continuing results

—**our hope on the living God**—our hope is not on ourselves or some philosophy of life, or other people, or nonexistent gods—our hope is fixed on the **living God**.

—**who is the Savior of all men**—as stated in 1:1; 2:2-6, God desires all to be saved and has provided Christ as the ransom to make salvation available for all people.

—**especially of believers**—but only those who believe are actually saved.

Verse 11—Prescribe [lit. “insist on, command”]—Paul uses this same word in 5:7 and 6:13. —**and teach these things**—both *prescribe* and *teach* are in the present tense of continuous action. Timothy is to keep on doing them. *These things* are whatever else Paul is writing in this book.

Verse 12—Let no one look down on your youthfulness—probably in his 30s. How could Timothy control whether someone looked down on him? By demonstrating godliness as an example in every area of his life.

—**but rather in speech**—the things he says (365-24-7)

—**conduct**—manner of living

—**love**—*agape*, giving without reciprocity

—**faith**—*pistis*

—**and purity** [moral cleanness], used only here and in 5:2

—**show yourself an example** [pattern] **of those who believe**—all these things are a vital characteristic of a mature believer in Christ. Whether we want to be an example or not, we are!!

Verse 13—Until I come—but Paul was never able to come, though he intended to come

—**give attention to the public reading of Scripture**—this was a practice in the Jewish temple as well as the synagogues (Ex 24:7; Deut 31:11; Josh 8:35; 2 Kings 23:2; Neh 8:7-8; Luke 4:16; Acts 13:15; 15:21; 2 Cor 3:14; 1 Thess 5:27). This was especially important in those days, many years before the invention of the printing press, as most people did not have copies of the Scriptures. Also, many of the people were illiterate. Today, the family should read the Bible together. Children need to see and hear the actual words of God. It’s by the Word of God that people grow, not by your explanations (or by books, movies, videos, etc.).

—**to exhortation**—explanation and application of the text

—**and teaching**—how this fits in with the doctrines of the faith

Application—Ezra is such a good example. *For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel* (Ezra 7:10). *...they read from the book, from the law of God, explaining to give the sense so that they understood the reading...because they understood the words which had been made to them* (Neh 8:1-12). You always have someone in your life who knows less about the Bible than you do. You have been studying it for years. You have a responsibility to help others understand the Bible.

Verse 14—Do not neglect the—a double negative “not, not take care of” = emphasis. Paul called it *kindle afresh* [“to fire again to life”] in 2 Timothy 1:6. In Galatians 6:9-10, Paul wrote, *let us not lose heart in doing good...while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith*. It seems that possibly Timothy was discouraged, sensing some were looking down on him because of his youth. But Paul encouraged him to not lose heart because his spiritual gift within him from God, and the support of Paul and the elders. So...*kindle afresh*...

—**spiritual gift**—*χαρισματος charismatos*—*charis*= gift of grace

—**within you**—the spiritual gift given to each believer at the moment of salvation (Eph 4:7)

—**which was bestowed on you through** [lit. not “by means of” but “accompanied by prophecy”]

—**prophetic utterance**—the gift of grace was from the Spirit within Timothy,

—**with the laying on of hands**—associated with a continuity of leadership (Num 27:18-23; Deut 34:9; Acts 6:6; 8:18; 13:3; Heb 6:2). Paul also wrote, *I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands* (2 Tim 1:6). So both Paul and the Ephesian elders supported Timothy’s ministry there in Ephesus.

—*by the presbytery*—lit. “the older men group”—there is no “board” or “presbytery” in the Bible. These are offices developed throughout church history, a model translators have inserted into the text (and into commentaries about the text).

—To try to paraphrase: Timothy, stir up the spiritual gift within you. Remember when the elders and I, Paul, laid hands on you, to support your ministry. They prophesied God would work through you as you teach the believers in Ephesus. So don’t worry about anyone looking down on your youth. But be an example of godliness before them, and teach them God’s Word.

Application—It’s interesting that there was a Reformation in the 1500s regarding salvation, away from works and to faith alone in Christ alone. But there was never a reformation away from the ecclesiastical Roman Catholic model of the church. The Anabaptists and the Brethren have moved away from the “pastorate” to a plurality of elders, but in other ways they have accepted that model. Of course, believers can gather in any way they want (they are “free”) and can have whatever leadership they want, but the problem is they often soon say, “Thus saith the Lord” to their model.

Verse 15—Take pains [“be diligent, cultivate, practice”] *with these things*—This is the opposite Greek word as “neglect” in verse 14.

—*be absorbed in them*—like a sponge, soak it up

—*so that your progress will be evident to all*—both his own spiritual growth and his teaching

Verse 16—Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching—As James wrote, *Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.* Paul also wrote, *you, therefore, who teach another do you not teach yourself?* (Rom 2:21).

—*persevere in these things*—stick to it, keep on in spite of obstacles

—*for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you*—this is not a gospel passage, so Paul is not here talking about eternal salvation, but the salvation of turning an erring brother from his destructive path (James 5:19-20; Jude 23). The more a person knows the Word, the less they will be likely to follow a false teacher.

V. Instructions Concerning Various Groups (5:1-6:10)

A. Concerning Various Age Groups (5:1-2)

Verses 1-2—Do not sharply rebuke [“speak harshly to”] *an older man* [same word translated “presbytery” in 4:14]. It’s interesting that translators insert “presbytery” when they want to and “older man” when it doesn’t fit their ecclesiastical model. The word is “older man.”

—*but rather appeal to him as a father*—ask, request

—*to the younger men as brothers*—appeal, not sharply rebuke

—*the older women as mothers*—appeal, not sharply rebuke

—*and the younger women as sisters, in all purity*—treating a young woman believer as his sister, would safeguard Timothy from any impropriety.

Application—Timothy was to look at other believers based on the family model, “the household of God” (3:15), not an authoritarian ecclesiastical model.

B. Concerning Widows (5:3-16)

Paul talks about three categories of widows: (1) widows who have children or grandchildren who can help take care of her, (2) widows indeed, who are at least 60 years old and have no family to take care of them, and (3) young widows, who should get married.

Verse 3—Honor—a Greek word with the double meaning of respect and financial support—**widows**—widows are especially vulnerable. God has always shown special concern for their protection (Deut 10:18; 24:17; Ps 68:5; Isa 1:17; Luke 2:37; Acts 6:1; 9:39).
—**who are widows indeed**—those widows who do not have family available to help care for them.

Verse 4—but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God—first, widows were to be cared for by their own families, if possible, not the church and not the government. This would be a way they could give recompense to the widows (mothers, grandmothers) for all they have done for the children. This is pleasing to God.

Verse 5—Now she who is a widow indeed [with no family support] **and who has been left alone** [childless]
—**has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day**—Anna in Luke 2:36-38 is a good example here. *She lived with a husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.*

Verse 6—But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure [Gk. one word, meaning to live luxuriously or self-indulgently] **is dead** [spiritually empty] **even while she lives**—because she is living only for herself and her own pleasures

Application—It seems like a natural thing for an aging widow who is alone to be self-consumed with her own needs and desires. But here Paul suggests that she has spiritual significance in her prayer life. She may not be able to do the physical things she used to do, but she should still be attentive to her time with God in prayer.

Verse 7—Prescribe [insist on, command, as in 4:11] **these things as well, so that they may be above reproach**—open to blame. These instructions about widows should be understood by everyone so there will be no blame because someone didn't do as they were supposed to do.

Verse 8—But if anyone does not provide [to supply what is necessary] **for his own, and especially for those of his household**—even from the cross, Jesus made provision for his mother's care with a believer, the Apostle John (John 19:26-27). His brothers were not believers at this time (John 7:5; 1 Cor 15:7). There could be a general application of this of parents providing for their children, but in this context, it is specifically about families taking care of widows in your family.

—**he has denied the faith**—he calls himself a believer, but his actions deny that claim. As a believer, practicing godliness begins in your home, especially because we have specific commands about it that he would be disobeying.

—**and is worse than an unbeliever**—who may not have been taught any better, or who does take care of his family.

Verse 9—A widow is to be put on the list—this would be a roll list of “widows indeed,” who do not have a family to take care of them

—(1) **only if she is not less than sixty years old**—there is an age limit, not less than 60 years old

—(2) **having been the wife of one man**—Gk. lit. “one-man woman,” i.e., has had but one husband

Verse 10—(3) *having a reputation for good works*—good works such as the following things:—*and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers* (traveling believers, such as missionaries), *if she has washed the saints' feet* (today, it may be humbly serving others, not for show or reward), *if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.*

Verse 11—*But refuse to put younger widows on the list*—the list of older widows who have no families and need other believers to help them—*for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ*—those widows on the list have dedicated themselves in service to other believers. But a younger widow, if she would be put on the list (probably thinking she would dedicate her life to serving as in v. 10, and would not get married again), yet if she has young children, for example...—*they want to get married*—whereas it is more unlikely that a widow over 60 would get married again, the chances are good that a younger widow would want to get married again.

Verse 12—*thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge*—To be put on the widows' list was to commit to service, not just free money from the believers. So if a young widow were to be put on the list, she might think she wants to be dedicated to this service, but because she is young, it is likely she will want to get married, so then she has to break her commitment she made when she put her name on the list. (Most likely, this is a reference to a particular situation that occurred in Ephesus—maybe more than once.)

Verse 13—Another reason to not put young widows on the list—*At the same time they* [young widows] *also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention*—With the other believers supporting her, she has too much time with not enough to do. And it seems that often younger widows are also younger in the faith and not necessarily mature believers. So they are more susceptible to the descriptions in this verse (though certainly not always).

Verse 14—*Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house*—use their energy and time to take care of a husband, children, and their house.—*and give the enemy no occasion for reproach*—breaking her commitment when put on the widow's list, and then have occasions for sinful behavior. Getting married again puts some boundaries around her.

Verse 15—*for some have already turned aside to follow Satan*—In light of the earlier teaching in the book about the man/husband being the teacher, and the woman being the helper, without a husband, it seems that some of these widows have been deceived by false teachers, much like Eve was deceived. A husband should be a protector from false teaching.

A summary statement:

Verse 16—*If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows*—believing children or grandchildren who have a dependent widow—*she must assist them*—believing children and grandchildren are responsible for taking care of a widow in their own family—*and the church must not be burdened*—it's not proper to have the other believers care for that widow—*so that it may assist those who are widows indeed*—because the believers have to be free to assist those widows who do not have any family to take care of them.

Application—So many things to apply here. If children or grandchildren have a widow over 60 in their family, they are responsible to physically provide for her (this could mean having her

live with you, having a care agency come in, like Visiting Angels, or put her in assisted living if needed, or senior daycare, etc.). If a woman is over 60 and a widow with no family to care for her, it is the responsibility of the believers in her assembly to take care of a fellow sister in Christ. Sadly, most groups of believers have given that responsibility over to the government. If there is a young widow, she should get married again.

C. Concerning Elders (5:17-25)

Verse 17—*The elders* [Gk. “older man”] *who rule* [same Gk. word for “manage” in v 3:4] *well*—The church is the body of Christ (Eph 1:23). It has only one head who rules, Jesus Christ (Eph 1:22). No one else is to rule or have authority over you (Matt 20:25-26). Almost every group of believers who meet together has someone who is the manager—“Let’s start,” “Let’s close in a word of prayer” “Where will we meet next week?” Etc.

—*are to be considered worthy of double honor*—earlier in verse 3, Paul had said that widows deserved honor. Here the older men who lead the groups of believers are worthy of double the honor the widows get. As with the widows, this would mean respect and financial support.

—*especially those who work hard at [preaching] and teaching*—Gk. “of double value let be worthy, especially the ones laboring in word and teaching.” There are specific Greek words used for “preaching,” and not only are they not here, ‘preaching’ has been added to the English text. In ministering to the believers, different spiritual gifts are used. Some with mercy, some with administration, some with teaching. Why is teaching worthy of “double honor”? They are handling the Word of God, they have a greater responsibility to practice what they teach, to study to teach is hard work, very time consuming and tiring, it’s a responsibility to help believers along the path to maturity. Teachers “shall incur a stricter judgment” (James 3:1). It doesn’t say those showing mercy, or helps, etc. will get a stricter judgment. For example, if you make a casserole for someone in need, and it didn’t turn out too well, it’s not that big a deal. But if a teacher teaches error as God’s Word—that has eternal ramifications.

Verse 18—*For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing”*—from Deuteronomy 25:4. Especially in Paul’s case, when he first traveled, he had to make tents to support himself (Acts 18:3; 20:34; 1 Cor 4:12) until the believers started to support him. The disciples appointed men to take care of the widows, so they *will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word* (Acts 6:4).

—Paul could just be referring to Deuteronomy 25:4 as Scripture, which Jesus also quoted, which Luke recorded (10:7).

—*and “The laborer is worthy of his wages”*—This is certainly a true for any kind of work. If anyone does work for you, make sure to pay him his wages he or she is due. The same is true for those who teach you the Word. It seems like this would include the radio and podcasts you listen to, also. Anywhere and from anyone you are receiving teaching from the Word of God.

Verse 19—*Do not receive an accusation against an elder* [one of the older men leaders] *except on the basis of two or three witnesses*—Originally in the Old Testament Law (Deut 19:15), repeated by Jesus (Matthew 18:16) and by Paul (2 Cor 13:1).

Verse 20—*Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all* [the other older men leaders], *so that the rest* [of the older men leaders] *also will be fearful of sinning*—if the accusation proved to be true, then Timothy was to rebuke the offenders in the presence of the other elders as a deterrent.

Application—This is, in fact, what Paul did to Peter in Galatians 2:11-14. Peter ate with the Gentile believers, but when some Jewish believers came to town, Peter refused to eat with the

Gentile believers. And this hypocrisy infected even Barnabas. So right there, in the presence of the group where this was happening, Paul rebuked Peter, which was also was a lesson to the others. Perhaps today we connect this with moral sins, but often it is doctrinal errors. There are a number of well-known preachers/teachers who continue to distort the Scriptures, but where are the elders in their lives to confront them? Today, there are quite a few examples of older men in ministry with younger sons teaching error—yet their fathers support them rather than confront them.

Verse 21—*I solemnly charge you*—warn, or urge, an intensive verb
—*in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels*—The trio of witnesses watching Timothy. Paul has referred to angels watching us (1 Cor 4:9; 11:10).
—*to maintain these principles without bias*—lit. “prejudgment” (used only here in NT)
—*doing nothing in a spirit of partiality*—lit. “favoritism toward someone” (used only here in NT). Timothy was not to permit his personal prejudices to tip the scales of justice. Paul’s confronting Peter is, once again, a good example of being impartial and without bias to Peter (Gal 2:11-14), but standing firmly on the Word of God.
—Paul had already told Timothy to not sharply rebuke older men but *but rather appeal to him as a father* (5:1).

Verse 22—*Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily*—laying on of hands was done in setting Timothy aside as a leader among the Ephesian believers (4:14). This was probably done for other leaders also. Or for those sent out on missionary journeys, as Paul and Barnabas were (Acts 13:3).
—*and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others*—the laying on of hands was an endorsement as to the character of that person. If that person fell into a sinful lifestyle, Timothy would be implicated because he approved them for their ministry.
—*keep yourself free from sin*—by being careful who you support. Also, may refer to Paul who laid his hands on Timothy. If Timothy were to fall into sin, Paul would be implicated, so he was especially mindful of Timothy keeping free from sin.

Application—Our first full-time ministry job was with a small evangelistic ministry. But when the head of that ministry became known in town as a liar, the whole staff (except one man) confronted the leader, who refused to repent. Therefore, the whole staff left that ministry because we were sharing in that person’s sin by association.

—You “lay hands upon them” in the sense that you support them. We all know of pastors, or radio speakers, or some leaders in our communities, who fall into sin, especially sexual immorality. So be careful who you support, financially, verbally, etc. because when they fall, you will somehow be associated with that, depending on how much you supported them.

—Of course, no one is perfect. However, we need to examine more carefully those we support. Personally, I support people I know, who are in ministry. I stay in touch with them. I know their families. I know their lives. I try to make intelligent and prayerful decisions about support.

—Support people, not organizations (you do not know what they do with your gift). Also, don’t let organizations decide what to do with your gift. For example, you may want to support Bill and Jane with such-and-such an organization. Bill and Jane need \$1000 a month, but your \$200 gift puts them at \$1200 a month income. Where do you think the \$200 you sent goes to? Not to Bill and Jane!! It goes to the budget. Some even charge as much as 28% of a missionary’s income for administration. Know the organization’s policy.

This verse seems to be a parenthesis to Paul’s current topic in verse 22.

Verse 23—*No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments*—Commentaries on this verse were amazing:

- The words imply that Timothy was a total abstainer and that the advice is given in relation to a medical problem.
- Timothy was inclined to asceticism, which was associated with abstention, which led to his frequent illnesses and stomach problems.
- The poor quality of the water he drank.
- This instruction applies only to using wine for medicinal purposes, not as a beverage.
- The word for “wine” means unfermented grape juice.
- The wine of Jesus’ day was rather weak, especially among the Jews.
- The wine was diluted with water.
- Safe drinking water was not always readily available in those eastern countries.
- At those times, the science of medicine was in its infancy among Greek physicians, so wine was one of the chief remedy agents.

—If the water was so bad, he shouldn’t drink it at all, but Paul says here to not drink it exclusively

—If the water was so bad, why didn’t Paul warn all the believers in Ephesus to not drink it. He’s spent verses warning them all about other things.

—There is no evidence, that I know of, that wine was diluted. In the Old Testament, those who chose to take the *vow of a Nazirite, to dedicate himself to the Lord, he shall abstain from wine and strong drink; ...neither shall he drink any grape juice* (Num 6:2-3). Here is a passage that makes a distinction between those three things. If they knew those three things in 1500 B.C., it seems to be that in the NT they would also know wine was wine. Also, Paul is writing to Gentile believers in Ephesus. Even if the Jews did not drink wine, the Gentiles certainly did. (Try giving them watered down wine! I don’t think so!) In Galatians, Paul is adamant that Gentile believers not live a Jewish lifestyle.

—For sure, Paul says no water “exclusively” but “a little wine” and “for the sake of your stomach...and ailments.” Paul has written in Ephesians, *do not get drunk with wine*. [Is it too obvious that if wine can make a person drunk, it must not be very diluted—or diluted at all!!!]

—Conclusion: drink (undiluted) wine, but not enough to get drunk.

Getting back to the topic of verse 22, about laying hands on someone too hastily—

Verse 24—*The sins of some men are quite evident* (obvious, clearly evident), ***going before them to judgment***—

—***for others, their sins follow after***—for others, their sins are not so obvious on earth during the person’s lifetime, but become known after the person’s death

Verse 25—*Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident* (obvious, clearly evident), ***and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed*** (hidden)—

—When considering a person for ministry, with some, their sin or their good works will be obvious, or clearly evident. For others, they may be hidden or not known for a long time, or even after they die. So that’s why Timothy should not be hasty to lay his hands on someone. Investigate as much as he can first. Get as much information about the person as he can.

Application—It’s amazing today how immorality can be a non-issue if a person is good at raising money for the organization. Or if a person has a beautiful voice and can sell many records. Sins are forgiven and paid for by Christ on the cross. But some sins should remove a person from leadership. What message does it send those who are younger in their faith? Will it cause them to stumble? That’s why Paul said this is not a decision that should be made “hastily.” There is a higher moral standard for Christian leadership. And anyone who is publicly in front of others, is in leadership.

D. Concerning Slaves and Masters (6:1-2)

Verse 1—*All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor*—The NT writers do not question the institution of slavery but teach improved attitudes of both masters and slaves as fellow believers in Christ (1 Cor 7:20-21; Eph 6:5-9).

—The book of Philemon is the prime example. Philemon had a slave named Onesimus who had run away. Paul and Timothy led him to Christ and sent him back to Philemon, with this note: *perhaps he was for this reason parted from you for a while, that you should have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother* (Philemon 15-16).

—It is claimed that half the population of the Roman Empire in the first century was slaves, estimates are 60,000,000 slaves.

—*so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against*—no matter who a believer is or what their position or job is, all believers are to live and work in such a way that the name of God and doctrine will not be spoken against. You don't want to ever hear: "I didn't think Christians would do that..."

Verse 2—*Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved*—as a Christian slave, perhaps they thought the master should be more lenient to them, etc. But Paul said that was disrespectful and they should serve the master even more because they are fellow believers.

—*Teach and [preach] these principles*—Gk. "teach and encourage these principles."

Application—We could apply this section to employees and employers, or students and teachers. The point is—you don't just represent yourself, you represent God, wherever you are and whatever you do. Don't forget that!!

E. Concerning the Heretical and Greedy (6:3-10)

Verse 3—*If anyone advocates*—one who publicly supports or recommends a certain cause

—(1) *a different doctrine*—set of beliefs, not the same, unlike in nature, form, or quality

—(2) *and does not agree with sound [healthy] words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ*—they have different beliefs than taught by Jesus and the apostles. Their teaching involves a willful rejection of God's pattern.

—(3) *and with the doctrine conforming to godliness*—the beliefs they promoted did not conform to the godliness described in the Scriptures.

Verse 4—the attitudes of false teachers—*he is conceited*—lit. "puffed up," desires to exalt self, which usually leads to controversy, as they like to make their opinions known and argue

—*and understands nothing*—of the truth of the Scriptures

—*but he has a morbid interest* [lit. "diseased with"] *in controversial questions* [lit. "debates"]—

—*and disputes about words* [lit. "battles of words"]—

—the fruits of their ministry—*out of which arise*—when the tree is not good, neither is the fruit

—*envy*—desiring to have what someone else has

—*strife*—quarreling

—*abusive language*—lit. *blasphemiai*, "blasphemy" when directed against God, "abusive speech" or "slander" when directed against men.

—*evil suspicions*—opinions or conclusions formed on the basis of incomplete information

Verse 5—*and constant friction between men*—mutual irritations

—(1) *of depraved mind*—the perfect passive participle suggests “thoroughly corrupted or depraved”

—(2) *and deprived of the truth*—by Satan, the father of lies (Luke 8:5, 12; John 8:44)

—their motivation—(3) *who suppose that godliness is a means of gain*, i.e. greed (1 Pet 5:2).

Verse 6—*But* [in contrast] *godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment*—Using the same words, Paul shifts the meaning from error to truth. Godliness is a means of great gain—but not financial gain. But when godliness is accompanied by contentment, there is great gain. This verse is a contrast to the beliefs and actions of the false teachers (v. 3-5).

Application—Contentment is something that is learned. Paul wrote, *I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need* (Phil 4:11-12). “Content” is hard to describe. Discontent, unsatisfied, is an easier concept to understand. It’s not about improving yourself or your lot in life (why we clean house and go to school). And we’re told to spiritually *press on to maturity* (Heb 6:1). So what is contentment and how can we learn it?

Verse 7—*For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either*—You arrive naked and you leave naked. So what is valuable inbetween?

Application—It’s interesting how people try to keep who they are alive after they are dead. They have monuments. They name stadiums and gardens after themselves. We even see how some want to keep hatreds alive after they die (McCain’s for Trump, for example, “He’s not coming to MY funeral!!). Even statues of civil war heroes are being torn down. We want to say, “I’m significant!” “I was here!” Jesus said, *“Rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven”* (Luke 10:20). You are significant. You are one of the few who have their names recorded in heaven!! You do take that with you after your life here is over. Jesus also said, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth or rust destroys...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matt 6:20-21).

Verse 8—*If we have food and covering* (all the necessities of life), *with these we shall be content*—All material things are to be used and enjoyed to the glory of God. *Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights* (James 1:17).

Verse 9—*But those who want to get rich*—many other vices enter a person through this trap. Notice that it is not being rich (which is a gift from the Father—James 1:17), but craving to get rich that is the problem.

—(1) *fall into temptation*—tempted to treat people badly, tempted to cheat or steal, tempted to neglect the family because of hours at work...

—(2) *and a snare*—a trap. It gets its hooks in you and doesn’t let go.

—(3) *and many foolish*—you start to value foolish things that have no value and not value important things—like God, spouse, kids, ...

—(4) *and harmful desires*—hurtful not only to you but usually to those around you

—*which* (5) *plunge* (deep, as a sinking ship) *men into ruin and destruction*—the combination of these two results has the idea of ‘loss for time and eternity.’ Christians who focus on getting rich and grasping for money, instead of godliness, will lose rewards in eternity. Godliness is what is rewarded. What reward will a person get for what brand clothes they wear or what country club they are a member of?!?!?

Verse 10—*For the love of money*—often misquoted without the word “love.” It’s possible to have very little money and yet to love it (look at who buys lottery tickets!). Money itself is neither good or bad. It has no morals. It’s people who bring morals to it.

Application—Jesus said, “Beware, and be on your guard against *every form* of greed, for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” He went on to tell a parable about a man who was so rich, he had to keep tearing down his barns to build bigger barns. *But God said, “You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?” So is the man who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God*” (Luke 12:15-21).

—*is a root of all sorts of evil*, lit. “all evils”—When you look at various evils, their root cause is the love of money.

—*and some by longing* [lit. “reaching after, grasping for” money] *for it have wandered away from the faith*—perhaps following a false teacher (who themselves are grasping for money!!)

—*and pierced themselves with many griefs* (pains)

VI. Final—Charge to Timothy (6:11-21)

A. Exhortation to Godliness (6:11-16)

Verse 11—*But*—contrasted to those who loved and longed for more money, greed—*flee from these things*—run away from, a hasty retreat, escape from these things (vv. 3-10), run like a bear is chasing you. It’s not simply, “I don’t believe in those things.” You must make a hasty escape from those things, because they will start to influence you, you will be deceived, you are in danger.

—*you man of God*—a mature believer, leader among the believers in Ephesus. Though often used in the OT of Moses (Deut 33:1), David (Neh 12:24), Elijah (1 Kings 17:18), in the NT, it’s only used here of Timothy.

—*and pursue* [lit. “keep on pursuing”] *righteousness*—i.e., pursue [run after, chase, hunt, go after] spiritual rather than physical goals, the things God calls “right.” It’s the opposite idea of “flee.”

—*godliness*—Godlike character and conduct

—*faith*—trust in God

—*love*—giving without reciprocity (something in return)

—*perseverance*—continuing through discouraging circumstances

—*and gentleness*—tender kindness toward others

Verse 12—*Fight the good fight of faith*—At the end of Paul’s life, he wrote to Timothy, “*I have fought the good fight, ...I have kept the faith*” (2 Tim 4:7). Jude wrote, *Contend earnestly for the faith* (Jude 3). We are in a fight for the truth of God’s Word—among believers!

—*take hold of the eternal life*—Paul wrote, *I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus* (Phil 3:12). To “take hold of” means to grasp it, cling to it.

—*to which you were called*—we are all *saints by calling* 1 Cor 1:2). It’s our salvation, our eternal life

—*and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses*—possibly at his baptism

Application—There are no works that result in salvation. *For by grace you have been saved through faith...it is a gift of God* (Eph 2:8-9). But after salvation, *For we are His workmanship*,

created in Christ Jesus for good works... , that we should walk in them (Eph 2:10). “Wesley practiced what he preached. He looked for ways to express his spiritual life throughout the day. Whether he was traveling, or working, or with family, he was intent on devoting his life to Christ. He did not try to have a devotional *time*, so much as a devotional *life*” (GES).

Verse 13—*I charge [you]*—probably implied is Timothy. “Charge” is to entrust with a task as a responsibility
—*in the presence of God* [God is watching us], *who gives life to all things*—(lit. “preserves alive”)
—*and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate*—Jesus was our example of the good confession in His hour of trial

Verse 14—*that you keep the commandment without stain* [damage or disgrace, which cannot be easily removed] *or reproach* [similar to “stain” but “to be above suspicion”]
—*until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*—which could happen at any moment (it’s interesting that Paul didn’t say, “until your death.” This shows that Paul thought the Rapture was imminent and could actually precede Timothy’s natural death.)

Verse 15—*which He will bring about at the proper time*—i.e., at the time ordered and appointed by God (even the angels and Jesus don’t know the day and hour—Matthew 24:36)
—*He who is the blessed and only Sovereign*—“dynasty”, possessor of power
—*the King of kings and Lord of lords*—repeated in Revelation 17:14 and 19:16, about Christ’s Second Coming to reign on the earth

Verse 16—*who alone possesses immortality* [lit. “deathlessness”]—*the Father has life in Himself* (John 5:25). It means “not subject to death.” Our immortality is derived from Him. It is at the resurrection (the Rapture) that the believer receives his/her immortal body (1 Cor 15:53).
—*and dwells in unapproachable* [used only here in the NT] *light*—His light is so bright that in the New Jerusalem, *the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it* (Rev 21:23).
—*whom no man has seen or can see*—*No man has seen God at any time...* (John 1:18). There are descriptions of the Father on the throne, but these are visions (like Rev 4–5). It seems (to me) that this means living humans cannot see God the Father. Revelation 21:22 describes the New Jerusalem on the New Earth, with *the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb* in it, but then maybe we can see God because we will be in our glorified resurrected eternal bodies (with no sin).
—*To Him be honor*—recognition for who He is, the highest respect (not casual blasphemy!!!)
—*and eternal dominion!*—His control forever
—*Amen*—So be it

B. Instructions for the Rich (6:17-19)

Verse 17—*Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited*—i.e., pride, to think you deserve the riches, that you have greater personal value or that you are responsible for getting the riches. There’s people who do nothing and simply inherit riches or make some tiny invention and get wealthy. And there are good people who work very hard and barely have enough money to feed their families.
—*or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches*—The second problem that misleads the rich is that their riches guarantee power and security. It can be all taken away in a moment. Paul is saying that riches are a bad thing to fix your hope on because they are uncertain. If you think they are certain, you are deceived.

—**but on God**—It's not that you shouldn't have riches, but the point is to not be prideful about the riches and don't fix your hope on those riches but instead put your hope on God
—**who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy**—He is the One who supplies us with all things. *Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights* (James 1:17).

Verse 18—***Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share***—these apply to us all. We have time. We have food. We have energy. We have God's love. Don't use it all up on yourself.

Verse 19—***storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed***—No matter what you have, God has given it to you as a stewardship. We are all to use our money, our belongings, our homes, our energy, our time, etc. for the glory of God, so we will be storing up treasure (rewards) in heaven. It's not how much you have—it's what you do with what you have that God is watching.

C. Exhortations to Remain Faithful (6:20-21)

Verse 20—***O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you***—do we even realize what God has entrusted to our care? God put you in the country you were born in. He gave you parents. He gave you children. He gave you grandchildren. He gave you skills. He gave you talents and abilities. All He has entrusted to you. Now—what are you going to do with it?

—You have learned to understand the Bible literally. Guard that!! Don't let anyone take that from you. In Jude 3, he wrote, *contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*, i.e., the Word of God.

—***avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"***—This would be especially the teaching of the false teachers, trying to pull you away from the Word of God

Verse 21—***which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith***—I think we all know of people like this. They professed to believe but then went astray from the faith. Don't let that be you!!

—***Grace*** [God's favor] ***be with you.***