

Life In God's Family



Bible Studies in 1 Timothy

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Introduction

1 Timothy is one of the three pastoral letters that the apostle Paul wrote to young leaders of the Christian church.

Timothy was born in Lystra to a Greek father and a Jewish mother. His mother had taught him the scriptures from childhood. Timothy went with the apostle Paul on his second missionary journey and went on to help Paul in his work.

When Paul wrote this letter, Timothy was working as a teacher and leader of the church in Ephesus. Ephesus was a thriving harbour city of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). The apostle Paul spent about three years in total at Ephesus sharing the gospel and establishing the church.

In general terms Paul writes this letter to Timothy so that Timothy might know how the church is to conduct itself in the light of the gospel so that the church can uphold the gospel entrusted to it. This purpose is captured in 1 Tim 3:14-15

“Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.”

In this letter Paul passes on his help and advice, together with concrete instructions about leadership and church life. While the letter was written to Timothy, it has a lot to say to individuals and the church.

Study 1: The Ministry

Acts 20:17-38

Getting Started

1. What sort of ministry does the church do that you think it shouldn't be doing? Why?

Investigate Acts 20:17-38

2. Who is Paul addressing in these verses? (v. 17)

3. How does Paul describe his ministry in Ephesus? (vv. 19-20)

4. What was the message that Paul declared to Jews and Greeks? (vv. 21, 24, 25)

5. Why do the elders have to keep watch over the flock? (vv. 28-29)

Thinking it through

6. Why do you think Paul uses the shepherd and the flock as an image of Christian ministry?

7. How does Paul's instruction to the Ephesian elders shape and inform our expectation of Christian ministry?

8. How might we heed the warnings of this passage?

Prayer Points

Study 2: The good fight

1 Timothy 1:1-11

Getting Started

1. What sort of disagreements have you witnessed amongst Christians? Why or why not were they worthy of disagreement?

Investigate 1 Timothy 1:1-11

2. How does Paul establish his credentials in this letter? (v. 1)

3. What is the relationship between Paul and Timothy? (v. 2)

4. What challenge is Timothy facing in Ephesus? (vv. 3-4)

5. What is the problem with what "certain people" are teaching? (v. 4)

6. How does Paul describe the goal of setting these false teachers straight? (v. 5)

7. What do these false teachers hope to be? (v. 7)

8. What do we learn about God's law in verses 8-10?

9. What is the test for "sound doctrine"? (v. 11)

Thinking it through

10. How does this passage help us to have the courage to say that something is wrong?

11. What sort of good things are we tempted to put our faith in that we think contribute to our salvation?

12. What false teaching do you think confronts the church today?

13. What practical steps can we take to make sure that love is the goal when dealing with false teaching?

Prayer Points

Study 3: The gospel focus

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Getting Started

1. What might cause a church to lose its focus on the gospel?

Investigate 1 Timothy 1:12-17

2. Why is Paul thankful that he has been entrusted to serve Christ? (vv. 12-13)

3. How does Paul explain his previous behaviour? (vv. 12-13, see also Galatians 1:13)

4. How did the Lord change Paul's life? (v. 14)

5. Why was Paul shown mercy? (v. 16)

6. How does Paul respond to the Lord's work in his life? (v. 17)

Thinking it through

7. How does verse 15 help shape the life of the church?

8. Why is Paul such a good example to those who would believe in Christ?

9. How do you respond to God's mercy in your life?

Prayer Points

Study 4: God's desire for us

1 Timothy 1:18-2:7

Getting Started

1. Think about those who are in authority over us. How does our world encourage us to think and relate to those in authority?

Investigate 1 Timothy 1:18-2:7

2. Why does Paul recall the charge given to Timothy? (v. 18)

3. What will help Timothy fight this battle well? (v. 19)

4. What has happened to those who have not held onto the faith and a good conscience? (vv. 19-20)

5. In fighting this battle, what is the first thing Paul wants the church to do when it gathers for worship? (v. 1)

6. Why should we pray for those in authority? (v. 2)

7. What sort of exclusive and essential claims does Paul make regarding the Christian faith in verses 5-6?

Thinking it through

8. Why can a good conscience only come through faith in Christ?

9. How does 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 help our understanding of what "being handed over to satan" means?

10. How might "peaceful and quiet lives" help in God's plan to see people saved?

11. Think of the different people who are in authority over you. How might you pray for them?

Prayer Points

Study 5: Order in the church

1 Timothy 2:8-15

Getting Started

1. These verses, concerning how men and women who are created equal in the image of God, but have different responsibilities in the life of the church, have caused a great deal of controversy. How do they clash with our culture today?

Investigate 1 Timothy 2:8-15

2. How do you think the word "Therefore" in v. 18 relates to verses 3-7?

3. What sort of inclination in men can damage the life of the church? What remedy does the apostle require of men?

4. What is required of Christian women to demonstrate they worship God? (v. 9-10, see also 1 Peter 3:3-6)

5. What positive activity are women commanded to do in v. 11? How should they do it?

6. Looking carefully at the context of the passage, who is the Christian woman to submit to?

7. What does Paul as an apostle, not permit a Christian woman to do in church? (v. 12)

8. Where in the Bible does Paul offer his reason for this instruction to Christian women? (vv. 13-14)

Thinking it through

9. Why might men struggle to live in prayerful dependence on God?

10. Give examples of what it means for Christian women to adorn themselves with "good deeds"?

11. How do these following verses show us, that Paul did not teach women to be quiet at all times in church?

1 Corinthians 11:5

Ephesians 5:19

Colossians 3:16

12. Verse 15 is a difficult verse. There are two ways this verse can be reasonably understood in the context of 1 Timothy 2.

1. **That salvation comes through the birth of the Child.**
This points to the promise of Genesis 3:15, that Eve's son will crush the serpent's head. If a woman continues to believe, with "faith, love and holiness with propriety", she shares in the salvation won by the son of Eve.
2. **That women will be saved by bearing children.**
This does not mean that a woman must bear children in order to be saved, but that bringing up children is a godly activity for a Christian woman. This fits with Paul's teaching in Philipians 2:12-13

Discuss which of these seem to make the best sense of this difficult verse?

13. How can we best live out these verses with joyful obedience at St Luke's?

Prayer Points

Study 6: Appropriately led

1 Timothy 3:1-16

Getting Started

1. If you had to come up with a list of personal characteristics and capabilities for leading a church in 21st century Australia, what would you choose and why?

Investigate 1 Timothy 3:1-16

2. In selecting people to exercise leadership in a church we look at their convictions, character and competencies. Where would you place the different qualities listed for the overseer, deacon and deacon's wife in that schedule?

Overseer (vv. 1-7)

Convictions	Character	Competencies

Deacon (vv. 8-13)

Convictions	Character	Competencies

Deacon's wife (v. 11)

Convictions	Character	Competencies

3. What is the purpose of this letter from Paul to Timothy? (v. 14-15)

4. What four things do we learn about the church in verse 15?

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5. In verse 16 Paul seeks to define godliness for the church. Where does Paul look for that definition of godliness?

Thinking it through

6. Why do you think Paul seems to focus on character of the overseer and not the job description or competencies? How does this compare to leadership in politics or business?

7. Why do you think managing your family and household is necessary for an overseer or deacon? What does this suggest about church life?

8. Do you think the qualities listed are only necessary for Christian leaders to aspire too? Why?

9. Which gospel truths from verse 16 are explained in the following verses?

Verse	Gospel truth
Romans 1:4	
Acts 1:19	
John 1:14	
Acts 13:48	
Romans 16:25-26	
John 20:11-12	

Prayer Points

Study 7: Committed to Godliness

1 Timothy 4:1-16

Getting Started

1. What sort of false teaching are you aware of in 'the church' throughout the world?

Investigate 1 Timothy 4:1-16

2. What do verses 1-2 teach us about false teachers?

3. What is the focus of the false teachers' form of godliness? (v. 3) How does it compare to Paul's focus in 1 Timothy 3:16?

4. Why are the false teachers wrong? (v. 5)

5. What is Timothy instructed to do in response to false teachers and false teaching? (v. 6)

6. What is the "trustworthy statement that demands full acceptance"? (v. 8)

7. How does Paul encourage Timothy to make sure church members don't look down on him? (v. 11)

8. What is the value of persevering in life and doctrine? (v. 16)

Thinking it through

9. What sort of issues in our world and culture might give rise to false teaching in Christian churches? Why?

10. How does 1 Timothy 3:16 help us understand Paul's instruction in verses 7-8?

11. Why is devotion to the reading, teaching and preaching of Scripture so important to Timothy's task leading the church in Ephesus?

12. Does setting a good example mean that our leaders must be perfect?

13. How do Paul's instructions to Timothy shape your expectations for church and Christian ministry?

Prayer Points

Study 8: Relating well with the church

1 Timothy 5:1-6:2

Getting Started

1. What will promote or hinder good relationships within the church?

Investigate 1 Timothy 5:1-6:2

2. How do verses 1-2 shape our understanding of the church? How does this compare with the description of the church in 1 Timothy 3:14-15?

3. What reasons does Paul give for children to support their parents or grandparents? (vv. 3-4)

4. What is at stake for Christians in the care of their family? (vv. 7-8)

5. What sort of discernment does Paul suggest when it comes to older and younger widows in verses 9-16?

6. Why should the church elder be honoured? (vv. 17-18)

7. Why should a church elder who sins be publicly rebuked? (vv. 19-20)

8. Why should slaves show respect to their believing or non believing masters? (vv. 1-2)

Thinking it through

9. What principles can we learn from this passage when comes to care for those in need?

10. What responsibilities do you have towards:

your own family:

your church family:

11. How should an elder be honoured in the church today?

12. Paul is concerned that God's name and Christian teaching is not slandered. This is still true today. How might this happen in your different situations?

Prayer Points

Study 9: Seeking what matters

1 Timothy 6:3-11

Getting Started

1. Is it better to be rich or poor in this world?

Investigate 1 Timothy 6:3-11

2. What do verses 3-5 teach us about false teachers?

3. What is the result of false teaching? (vv. 4-5)

4. How does verse 7 explain why "godliness with contentment is great gain"? (see also 1 Timothy 4:8)

5. What do verse 7-10 teach us about money?

6. In contrast to the pursuit of money, what should the “man of God” be eager to pursue? (v. 11)

Thinking it through

7. How can a Christian person avoid self denial on the one hand and extravagance on the other?

8. What sort of temptation, trap and foolish and harmful desires can befall a person who wants to get rich?

Temptation:

Trap:

Foolish and harmful desires:

9. How can we encourage one another to be content and avoid the love of money?

10. What will helps us to not wander from the faith?

Prayer Points

Study 10: Guarding the church

1 Timothy 6:12-21

Getting Started

1. Why is the church still worth fighting for?

Investigate 1 Timothy 6:13-21

2. What fight does Paul speak about in v. 12?

3. How does verse 13 encourage Timothy to take up the fight?

4. Why does Paul mention the return of Christ? (vv. 14-15)

5. What dangers does Paul associate with wealth? (vv. 17)

6. What positive instruction does Paul give regarding wealth?
(vv. 18-19)

7. Thinking back over the letter, what is Timothy to guard?
(see also 1 Timothy 1:3, 18-19, 4:16)

8. What is Timothy to avoid? What might this mean?

Thinking it through

9. Timothy is told to “fight the good fight of the faith”. What will that mean for us today and how should we do that?

10. To what extent should the return of Christ shape the way that you live?

11. What do you think it will mean for you to lay up treasures in the coming age?

12. How might you best guard the gospel in order to guard the church?

Prayer Points