



The Summit
Green Campus of Canton Baptist Temple

Resources for Your Life

The Books of 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon
39 Sessions

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Resource Guide

This resource was compiled from the personal Bible study and blog entries created by Tom Hogsed, pastor of the Summit in Green. You can find the original blog entries at www.tomhogsed.com.

The **introduction** to this book has been written so the reader has a better understanding of the Biblical author, his purpose in writing, and important points to understand before reading.

Following the introduction, each new page represents a **verse by verse overview** of the Scripture passage. The best way to study is to first read the Scripture verses from your Bible relying on the Holy Spirit to provide understanding and then to support your understanding with the commentary written below.

At the end of each Scripture commentary, there is a short **prayer** written so the reader can personally apply what has been discovered; however, it is suggested that you also pray from your heart in response to God's Word.

Feel free to make your own personal notes in your Bible, on this page, or even in a journal.

If this resource has helped you or you have further questions, please send an e-mail to tomhogsed@gmail.com.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY

Paul writes this letter around AD 62-64 to the young pastor, Timothy, who was his son in the faith (2 Timothy 1:2). Timothy was raised by Eunice (his mother) and Lois (his grandmother) who passed on their faith in Jesus Christ to him. Paul writes concerning Timothy's upbringing in 2 Timothy 1:5: "when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also." It can be assumed from 2 Timothy 3:15 that they also faithfully taught him the Holy Scriptures because they knew it was "able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." We cannot be certain as to why his father is not mentioned by Paul, but it is possible that he had died early in Timothy's life (see Acts 16:1).

Timothy's mother was a Jew and his father was Greek making him a perfect candidate to minister as a missionary with Paul to both cultures. Timothy came to salvation under Paul's ministry in Lystra during his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23) and when he returned to Lystra he chose Timothy to go with him because the people of Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him (Acts 16:1-3). At this time, Timothy was very young (probably a teenager or young adult). He began ministering in many churches in the place of Paul and this letter was penned while Timothy was pastoring the church at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). Having written this letter after his release from imprisonment in Rome, Paul had ministered in many cities including Ephesus but had left Timothy there in order to provide some stability and guidance to the struggling church. Issues such as false doctrine, weak leadership in the church, misconduct in worship, and apathy had crept into the church and Paul wanted Timothy to confront it head on. Sprinkled throughout the letter, Paul writes practical instructions for pastoring as well as important doctrinal truths for Timothy to grasp. This letter is meant to assist Timothy in being an effective pastor who instructs and teaches the church to mature in their faith.

1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11

False doctrine has a habit of making its way into the church and destroying the foundation of scripture; in fact, compromising the inerrancy of scripture has led more churches down the wrong path than blatant sin. At the root of false teaching is the belief that man's opinions and ideals are superior to God's and ultimately leads to dependence on self. Eve experienced this in the garden when Satan tempted her saying "Has God indeed said...." (Genesis 3:1) Satan wanted Eve to question the very words of God causing her to choose between her own reasoning and the word of God. Not much has changed over the centuries and one of the greatest tools Satan uses inside (and outside) the church is to make people question the validity and accuracy of God's word. Such was the case with young Timothy who was pastoring the church at Ephesus. Paul writes "charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith." (1:3-4) At the core of this false teaching was the nature of salvation - did it come through the law or through faith in Jesus Christ? The teachers of the law created their own system of rules by which a person needed to follow in order to be saved (1:7). Paul declares that these teachers understand "neither what they say nor the things which they affirm." This type of teaching only leads to disagreement and fighting because it is man-made tradition; however, the gospel of Jesus Christ produces "love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith." (1:5) Paul does go on to say that the law does serve an important purpose, but does not have the power to bring salvation. The law teaches God's holy standard and exposes our sinfulness. The law was not intended for a person who thinks they are righteous, but rather an individual who recognizes their sinfulness before God. These so-called religious teachers believed that obedience to the law made them holy, but God intended for the law to reveal our true sinfulness. When a person's sin is exposed by understanding the law it should result in conviction of sin, repentance, and asking God for forgiveness not arrogant self-righteousness. From the very beginning of this letter to Timothy, Paul wanted him to unapologetically guard the gospel of Jesus Christ and instruct the church in rejecting any teaching which would compromise the very words of God.

Dear God, may I guard the truth about salvation by rejecting any other teaching that is contrary to Your word. Thank you for the law which exposes my sin, but also for providing forgiveness and mercy through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 TIMOTHY 1:12-17

Having just condemned any doctrine which teaches anything contrary to salvation through Jesus Christ, Paul now shares a little about his experience in coming to faith in Jesus Christ (the true gospel). "I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and and insolent man...." Paul was formerly a persecutor of Christians who manifested violence against the church because of his belief in salvation through the law rather than faith in Jesus Christ. He was a zealous Jew who was only defending what he thought to be the true way to salvation. Paul makes it clear, however, that he did not fully understand the gospel of Jesus Christ and was ignorant. He did not reject the person of Jesus Christ with full knowledge as to who He was and why He came, unlike those who were now spreading a false gospel (1:13). Now Paul was a follower of Jesus Christ and was thankful to God "who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry...and the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." (1:12, 14) Paul recognized that God was gracious in allowing him to convert from the empty rules of Judaism to become a devoted follower of Christ. There was nothing within him which deserved God's mercy, but he believed "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (1:15) If God could be patient with a sinner such as Paul, he knew that through him could come an example of longsuffering to those who had not accepted salvation in Jesus Christ (1:16). Maybe you are reading this and wondering if God could bring salvation into a life which is a mess with sin and rebellion. The answer is "yes." Paul was a blasphemer and rejector of God, yet God brought salvation into his life. Those who willingly admit their sin and humble themselves before God will be granted mercy.

Dear God, thank you for offering salvation to anyone who will confess their sin and believe in salvation through Jesus Christ who died, was buried, and rose again the third day!

1 TIMOTHY 1:18-20

Paul has spent most of chapter 1 communicating the importance of one gospel. In a society where false teachers and so-called religious groups sought to deceive the faithful, Paul warned Timothy about accepting any other gospel than that which is of Jesus Christ. Paul gave personal testimony about his failure to believe in Jesus Christ and his propagation of the law. Thankfully, God was gracious to Paul and allowed him to be exposed to the truth about Jesus to which he responded in faith. Turning his full attention to Timothy (Paul's son in the faith), Paul writes "this charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare." (1:18) Prior to this writing, prophecies had been made about Timothy being called into the ministry. 1 Timothy 4:14 commands him not to "neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership." There was no doubt in Paul's mind that Timothy had been called by God to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of his calling, Timothy was like a soldier...not a physical one but a spiritual one. This is why Paul commanded him to "wage the good warfare" meaning that he would be in battle against those who were the enemies of God and compromised the one, true gospel. Paul continues to write that Timothy have "faith and a good conscience" (1:19) which is a challenge for him to keep the faith and gain assurance from obedience to God. What would happen if Timothy got off track and taught his own ideals? Paul reminded Timothy of Hymenaeus and Alexander who "concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck" and "whom I [Paul] delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme." (1:20) Timothy must have known these two men who had heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, but had chosen to reject it and believe a lie. When Paul mentions that they "suffered shipwreck" he was not referring to a literal incident but a spiritual shipwreck. Their failure to believe in salvation provided by Jesus Christ had left them in ruins and without hope. For this reason, Paul removed them from the church where they were spreading a false gospel and gave them over to judgment by Satan. Even though Paul is writing to the young pastor, Timothy, those who read his letter should carefully guard the gospel of Jesus Christ and commit to keep it pure. Compromising of the gospel brings severe punishment and God's judgment upon those who take it lightly.

Dear God, protect the gospel of Jesus Christ and may I never allow it to be compromised!

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

Since false teaching had entered the church at Ephesus, the members had stopped praying for the salvation of the lost. Paul wrote the words in chapter 1 to combat these false teachers who were instructing the church that only those who converted to Judaism could have a relationship with God. Because of the confusion, the church had become discouraged and felt that praying for the unsaved would be useless since salvation supposedly hinged on obedience to the law. Paul set his readers straight and challenged Timothy to bring prayer back into the church. He writes "I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men." (2:1) *Supplications* carries the idea of need and communicates a desperate need for the salvation of the lost. The concept of *intercessions* is asking on behalf of someone else, specifically that they would be saved. These types of prayers should be offered for everyone, including those in authority (2:2). Why does Paul ask Timothy and the church to pray for everyone? "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2:3-4) The church should fervently pray for the lost to find salvation in Jesus Christ because it is God's nature to desire everyone to know the truth. After all, Jesus Christ became the "Mediator [one who restores peace between two people] between God and men...who gave Himself a ransom [payment so that the sinner could be released from the bondage of sin] for all." (2:5-6) Since Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sin when He died on the cross, the believer should pray that many will put their faith in Him as the only way to salvation. The church has been given the responsibility to pray, especially for the lost. Paul urges Timothy to once again restore the passion for the lost by challenging them to pray. God loves those who are far from Him and desires, more than anything, that they would become true worshippers of Him. The church can play a major part in seeing the lost come to salvation when they pray!

Dear God, I pray for those who do not know the truth to encounter Your grace in a real way. Bring many who are lost to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ!

1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15

Paul has been writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, to challenge him in some areas at the church of Ephesus. False teachers had entered the church trying to deceive believers into accepting another gospel...a gospel of works. After warning Timothy of the dangers, Paul began advising him about some issues within the church which were causing them to lose effectiveness. The first characteristic lacking in the church was their failure to pray for the lost (1 Timothy 2:1-7). The second issue plaguing the church was a lack of understanding about the roles of men and women in the church as well as improper behavior in worship services. It seems that the wealthy women of the church were flaunting their riches by wearing expensive clothing and dressing in a manner which had caused much distraction in the church (2:9b). In the first century women would adorn themselves with "gold or pearls or costly clothing" to draw attention to their wealth. This cultural practice had made its way into the church and resulted in division between the rich and the poor women. Paul wrote to the women to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety [humility] and moderation [self-control]." (2:9a) Church is supposed to be about giving our full attention to God and no one should be distracting others from worshipping Him. In addition to dressing improperly, the women of the church were seeking high leadership roles in the church. Paul clearly outlines the role of women in the church - "let a woman learn in silence with all submission and I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." (2:11-12) God has given the role of teaching in the church to the man and women should never try to take this God-given authority from him. Paul then illustrates this concept by going back to Adam and Eve. God gave Adam authority over Eve. His responsibility was to protect and her responsibility was to remain under his authority. Eve chose to go out from under the authority of Adam and was deceived by Satan. Adam, even though he was not deceived, took of the forbidden fruit and sinned. All of this happened when man and woman left the roles God had intended. Paul was warning Timothy about man and woman failing to recognize their roles in the church and the possible chaos which could take place. Paul then makes clear the great responsibility of women - "Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control." Women have the unique role of shaping the lives of their children. Having a closer bond with their mother, children are greatly influenced by her. When a mom raises her children to follow after godliness, she is changing the course of history. Paul challenged mothers to spend their time learning at church and then passing on spiritual truth to their children. When men and women understand their roles, God has the freedom to accomplish His will in the church.

Dear God, help men and women to be satisfied in the unique roles You have given them. May the men teach with passion and may the women raise their children to be passionate followers of You.

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7

Keep in mind Paul is writing to Timothy in order to instruct him about matters within the church and of utmost importance is the character of the leaders. Paul wanted to make sure that those who were leading the church were qualified and setting a high standard in the way they conducted their everyday life. He writes that "if a man desires the position of a bishop [pastor], he desires a good work" (3:1); however, there are some standards by which this man must live his life. Beginning in verse 2 Paul lists sixteen qualifications for a man to become a pastor. First, this man must be *blameless* meaning that his life must be free from controversy and outright sin. Paul also mentions that he must be *the husband of one wife* implying that he must be committed to only one woman. Next, Paul writes that one who desires the office of a pastor must be *temperate* (watchful), *sober-minded* (disciplined in thinking), and *of good behavior* (self-controlled). Along with these characteristics, Paul also mentions that a pastor must be *hospitable* (loves others), *able to teach* (handles God's word with care), *not given to wine, not violent, and not greedy for money*. Paul continues to instruct Timothy that a pastor must be *gentle* (gracious), *not quarrelsome* (doesn't look for a fight), and *not covetous*. Paul spends many words on the next qualification - a pastor must rule *his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence*. As a follow up to this qualification, Paul makes the statement/asks the question that *if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?* A man who seeks the office of a pastor must have his house in order. He also must not be a *novice*, which would put him in danger of pride - a pastor must be a spiritually mature Christian. Lastly, he must *have a good testimony among those who are outside*. Even though those who are unbelievers may not agree with his belief system, he must be a respectable man in the community. If you are considering being a pastor, make sure your life lines up with these qualifications. Again, Paul is not saying that a man who desires to be a pastor must be perfect, but he must be in constant pursuit of a holy life before God and others.

Dear God, help me to live up to the qualifications of a pastor and may those who come behind me be found faithful in a holy life.

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-16

After detailing the qualifications for a pastor, Paul then writes Timothy regarding the qualifications of a deacon, one who serves under the leadership of the church. These people were responsible to do whatever was necessary to assist the leadership in making the church an effective place of ministry. Some of the qualifications given to the deacons are identical to the qualifications of a pastor, but we'll explore each one. 1 Timothy 3:8-9 reveals that deacons are to be *reverent* (take important matters seriously), *not double-tongued* (hypocritical in speech), *not given to much wine, not greedy for money* (handle money properly), and they must *hold the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience* (remain true to Scripture). There must be a consistent examination of the character of deacons, as called for in verse 10, and each time they must be *found blameless*. Paul then turns to the wives (can also be translated women) to give them advice. There are two views on who is being referred to as the wives. One view says they are the wives of the deacons and the other view says Paul is addressing the character of women deacons. Whichever view you take, the qualifications are the same. The women must be *reverent* (serious-minded), *not slanderers* (gossipers), *temperate* (watchful, alert to danger), and *faithful in all things* (dependable). Like the pastor, a deacon must be a one-woman man (*husband of one wife*) and rule *their children and their own houses well* (3:12). "For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (3:13). Referring to the first three chapters thus far, Paul lets Timothy know he has written these things so the people know how to conduct themselves in church. Obviously there were some major problems in their behavior and Paul wanted Timothy to direct the congregation in the right way. Let Paul's letter to Timothy also serve as a reminder to the modern day church as to how a church should function, remembering that it is God's church (3:15-16).

Dear God, may the church function by the instructions you have set forth in the writings of Paul.

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-11

Paul has already spent some time warning Timothy about the false teaching which always has the potential to enter a church if proper safeguards are not put in place (1 Timothy 1:3-11). In these verses, Paul gets very specific as to what these teachers are propagating. Paul refers to their teaching as a "depart[ing] from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron." From his strong language, the reader can conclude that Paul is warning Timothy about dangers of false teaching and ultimately the force behind it (Satan). In verses 3-5 the erroneous doctrine is revealed: "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth." It seems that legalism (system of salvation by works) had infiltrated the church at Ephesus and manifested itself in the forms of a person remaining single and following certain dietary laws. Without adherence to these laws, a person could not be saved. Paul had already made it very clear that salvation only comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone without works; however, these teachers were attempting to add certain traditions to the free gift of salvation. Paul makes the argument that since God created marriage and food, He meant for them to be enjoyed, but the false teachers were setting up their own rules (4:4-5). Rather than creating his own doctrine, Paul encouraged Timothy to instruct the church in the truths of Scripture (4:6) and reject all forms of false doctrine (4:7). Instead of getting caught up in all these false teachings, a believer should focus on godliness (living according to God's standards) and look forward to the hope given through Jesus Christ (4:8-11).

Dear God, guard me from any false teaching which contradict the truth of Scripture. Help me to rather focus on living a life according to Your holy standards.

1 TIMOTHY 4:12-16

Much advice had been written by the hand of Paul to Timothy about the structure and functions of the church. His words, thus far, included warning and guidance in how the church was to operate if it was going to effectively minister to people. Now, Paul turns his full attention to Timothy and gives him, what I believe, to be the most important instruction regarding his conduct in the ministry. Paul writes to the young pastor Timothy "let no one despise your youth" (4:12a). The society to which Timothy was ministering highly regarded the age of a person as evidence of maturity and a determination of respect. Since Timothy was young, many in the community probably did not give him the respect he deserved; after all, Timothy had been working directly with Paul from the time he was a teenager and had gained a wealth of experience. With this in mind, Paul did not want Timothy to be fearful because of his age nor did he want those who were under his leadership to look down on him. What could Timothy do to assure that people did not use his age against him? Timothy was to make sure his character was outstanding in these areas: in word (the way he talked), in conduct (the way he acted), in love (the way he served), in spirit (the way he was perceived), in faith (the way he was faithful), and in purity (the way he avoided immorality). In addition to these character issues, Paul wrote that Timothy must also "give attention to reading [the Scriptures], to exhortation [application of the Scriptures], to doctrine [teaching the Scriptures]" (4:13). Along with having godly character, Timothy should remember that God had given him the gift of leadership and preaching/teaching, which was also confirmed in him by the apostles (4:14). Keeping all these in mind, Timothy was to give himself "entirely to them, that your [his] progress may be evident to all" (4:15). Timothy was to give high priority to upholding the teachings of Scripture and support them through a holy life. Following these things would give indisputable evidence of his salvation (4:16). If you are a young leader, don't allow your youth to stop you from following God's will. Give yourself over to having character and a passion for doing what is good.

Dear God, help the youth of this world rise up and live the truth of Jesus Christ.

1 TIMOTHY 5:1-16

In writing to Timothy, Paul now turns his attention to the proper treatment of members in the church. He makes a brief statement mentioning that young men should give respect and reverence to older men (5:1-2). Specifically, Paul was referencing a situation when an older man was sinning and must be confronted by those who are younger. Instead of arrogantly approaching the sinning older man, the younger men should address him with love and kindness. After making this brief statement to the younger men, Paul uses the great majority of his words in chapter 5 discussing proper treatment of women who have lost their husbands (widows). Paul states the obvious reminding his readers to honor widows (5:3), but gives further instructions on the differences between older and younger widows. In verse 4, Paul gives a command to the family of a widow to take care of her so the church is not burdened with the situation. Children and grandchildren have the first responsibility to care for a widowed woman. However, if a woman is widowed and left with no family to care for her, let her be dependent on God for help continuing to live a godly life and the church will take care of her needs (5:5-7). Restating what he has already said, Paul again challenges children and grandchildren to care for a widowed woman, declaring that anyone who refuses to do so is worse than an unbeliever (5:8). Paul then defines older widows as those who are over the age of sixty and have lived a godly life - these women are to be given the proper respect. Younger widows, who almost always desire to marry again, should "marry, bear children, manage the house, and give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (5:14). Apparently some of the younger widows were causing problems in the church (5:12-13) and Paul wanted the church to only take care of those who were seeking a godly life (5:16).

Dear God, help me to properly take care of those who are widowed. Give me compassion and generosity toward them.

1 TIMOTHY 5:17-25

Paul has already written that Timothy (and the congregation) should give honor to older men as well as widows who have sought to live a godly life (5:1-16), but now he gives instructions about honoring the elders (pastors) of the congregation. Paul writes "let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine" (5:17). When read in conjunction with verse 18, we can carefully surmise that Paul is referring to money. 1 Timothy 5:18 reads "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain' and 'the laborer is worthy of his wages.'" For those pastors who faithfully carry out the ministry and labor in the word, Paul commands that they be paid well. Quoting from Deuteronomy 25:4, he uses an illustration of an ox who is treading out grain. Since this ox is doing a lot of work, it should not be muzzled from eating. The illustration is clear - a pastor who works hard should be compensated accordingly. Paul was not saying that a pastor should become rich, but that he should not be forced to struggle acquiring the basic necessities of life. It also becomes obvious the church at Ephesus needed direction on how to handle accusations toward a pastor. Paul's instruction is clear: "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses" (5:19). There may have been people falsely accusing pastors simply because they did not like them, but Paul commands that any accusation must be at the mouth of 2-3 people. For those pastors found guilty of sin, Paul instructs that they should be "rebuke[d] in the presence of all, that the rest may also fear...observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality" (5:20-21a). Then in reference to ordaining a man to preach the gospel, Paul warned Timothy not to participate quickly but rather examine the character first (5:22). Paul then writes "no longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities" (5:23). Some people view this verse as a license to drink wine, but I think that it is a total misunderstanding of the passage. I believe this verse communicates two things about Timothy: he had stomach problems (probably from unsanitary water conditions) and he had refused to drink wine because of his position as a leader. In Timothy's quest to keep his character pure, he was willing to suffer health problems for the sake of integrity. Timothy never wanted anyone to question his character. Using this verse as proof for drinking wine is a complete dismissal of the truth being taught. Timothy had purposely given up his Christian liberty in order to hold in the highest standard. Paul was making provision for Timothy to drink wine instead of polluted water for the sake of his health. Paul's letter to Timothy was a challenge for him to remain pure and have integrity. If you are a leader, put all of these things into practice knowing that people look to you for an example to be followed. Never abuse your freedom at the expense of your integrity.

Dear God, help me to closely follow the instructions you have given to the church. May I count my pastor as worthy, pray for his strength in temptation, and fight for his integrity. But provide the strength for me to follow Your ways and have a high standard of leadership.

1 TIMOTHY 6:1-2

The Ephesian believers also received some instruction from Paul concerning the way they treated their place of employment. From every indication in these verses, it seems that the Christians were not taking their jobs seriously and presenting a negative work ethic amongst the community. Paul writes "let as many bondservants as are under the yoke [submissive role in a job] count their own masters worthy of all honor" (6:1a). Being a bondservant can be closely associated with our modern-day employer/employee relationship and Paul commanded employees to treat their bosses with respect. Why did Paul want the Christians at Ephesus to work hard? "So that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed" (6:1b). The way we work is a direct reflection on our Christian character. Regardless of the type of job, every follower of Christ should have an outstanding reputation in the workplace. In a day where everyone complains about working, be positive and work hard at your job. Paul goes on to give specific guidelines to those whose employers are also Christians: "let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved" (6:2). A Christian who works for another Christian may dislike the authority over them, but Paul commands that they be submissive. Take some time right now to examine your attitude in the workplace. Are you a source of division and strife? Does your boss constantly reprimand you for a lack of work ethic? Do you slack off when your employer is not around? Do you complain to other employees about your job? Do you take personal offence to constructive criticism? Do you get involved in being judgmental of persons in authority? Work hard because your attitude at your job is reflection of your Christian character.

Dear God, help me to work hard today recognizing that ultimately it is You I am aiming to please.

1 TIMOTHY 6:3-10

Paul changes the subject again and warns against false teachers who do not "consent to wholesome words...of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness" (6:3). At the heart of these false teachers was the disregard for the authority of Scripture and its' resulting godly lifestyle. They were also "proud...obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings...who suppose that godliness is a means of gain" (6:4-5). Paul claims that the false teachers are only using people for a way to get money. With this in mind, he provides some important instruction about a person's view of money. He writes "godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (6:6-7). A Christian should be satisfied with what he has and recognize that money is only temporary (we cannot take money with us when we die). Instead of wanting more, a follower of Jesus Christ should be content with the basic needs of life because those who strive to be rich place themselves in a precarious situation (6:8-9). A lust for more money is said to bring "temptation and a snare, and into many harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." There is nothing wrong with having money, but "the **love** of money is a root of all kinds of evil...." (6:10a) An obsession with money can lead to a life of sin and destructive behavior. Paul mentions that by the love of money "some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (6:10b). Christians should never get caught up in thinking that if they had a little more money, they would be happy. Money does not bring happiness; in fact, Paul says it can bring "many sorrows." As a follower of Christ, do not allow money to become your obsession. Be satisfied with what you have even if it is a little. When you entered the world you did not own one thing and when you leave, you will leave with nothing. Life is not a quest for more things, but a journey of being content with what you already possess.

Dear God, I need Your help in having the right view of money. May I not love money or be obsessed with acquiring it, but rather help me to be satisfied with what I already own.

1 TIMOTHY 6:11-21

Paul leaves his final advice to Timothy, who is the young pastor at the church of Ephesus. He has used this letter primarily as a guideline for Timothy to conduct the church with decency and godliness. In the first and fourth chapters, Paul warned Timothy about the false teachers who would try to enter the church and destroy the members with their cunningness. In chapter 2, Paul wrote concerning the importance of prayer as well as the role of men/women in the church. Chapter 3 is dedicated to revealing the qualifications of a pastor and a deacon. The fifth chapter addressed matters of respect toward the widows, elders, and slaves. Finally, Paul spent the first part of chapter 6 discussing the dangers of loving money and its' ability to destroy our faith. Keeping all these instructions in mind, Paul writes to Timothy, "O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (6:11). Paul's advice is clear - stay away from the world's philosophy in order to follow after godliness. Paul continues to instruct Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (6:12). Being a Christian brings us into direct conflict with the enemy - Satan and his evil system of values. Timothy must have courage to stand against these forces of evil and live as a light in a dark world. He was not to be characterized by the same attitudes and actions as the world - he was to be different until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (6:14-16)! Then, returning to the theme of money Paul commands those who are rich "not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God...do good, that they be rich in good works, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation" (6:17-19). In summary of all that Paul had said, Timothy was to guard the truth and avoid any form of false teachings, which ultimately leads to a sinful lifestyle (6:20-21). If you are a young adult, you should especially take Paul's advice to Timothy to heart because the church needs people to stand for the truth and not compromise. It is easy to be like everyone else...it is easy to act like everyone else; however, God calls His followers to live with integrity, with character, and with passion. Be distinct from the lost world around you and do not let them tell you how to live. Let us be reminded of what Paul wrote to Timothy concerning his young leadership: "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity...for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Timothy 4:12, 16b).

Dear God, make me a leader with character and integrity that others may be drawn to You by the way I live my life!

INTRODUCTION TO 2 TIMOTHY

2 Timothy is the final inspired writing by the Apostle Paul before he was martyred around AD 67. He had already written one letter to Timothy, who was his son in the faith, and instructed him about matters of the church. Since Timothy was a young pastor, Paul wanted him to conduct himself with integrity so that the church could be effective in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul wrote from a Roman prison knowing his time was short but he wanted to be certain Timothy would faithfully continue in the ministry. Paul's themes in this letter include not quitting (chapter 1), following the right examples (chapter 2), avoiding false teachings (chapter 3), and preaching faithfully (chapter 4). Paul may have been concerned that Timothy was compromising his faith due to the carnality of the church and the persecution he was experiencing from the world. Paul did not want Timothy to weaken under this pressure but faithfully carry out the work which God had called him to do. I believe every Christian can relate with the experience of Timothy as we can become frustrated with the apathy of the church and the pressure from the outside world. Instead of fighting apathy and temptation, sometimes we give in and compromise our faith; however, we must remember that God has called us to be faithful.

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-7

Paul writes to the young pastor Timothy as "a beloved son" (1:1-2a) from a Roman prison where he foresees that his end is near. Christians were being persecuted by Nero for their belief in Jesus Christ causing some in the church to abandon their faith, but he had faithfully preached Christ. Paul had spent much time mentoring Timothy in the faith and wanted to make sure that he would continue after Paul had died. In essence, Paul was passing the torch of leadership over to Timothy. If Timothy chose to compromise his faith, the church would also be in danger of becoming fearful and apathetic toward the things of God. With these things in mind, Paul reminds Timothy that he had "serve[d] with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did...." Paul was not a quitter and Timothy also should not be tempted to give up amid persecution and apathy. Instead, Timothy should remember "the genuine faith that is in you [him], which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also" (1:5). Timothy had a great heritage of faith and it was his responsibility to pass it on to the next generation. It appears Paul was fearful that Timothy was losing his passion for the things of God so he challenged him "to stir up the gift of God which is in you" (1:6a). God had given Timothy the gift of preaching, teaching, and evangelizing but was not using it to the best of his ability. Paul wanted him to "stir up" or reignite the gift God had given him. It was easy for Timothy to become fearful about preaching Christ because of persecution from the government, the church's questioning of his leadership, and the attacks of false teachers. But Paul reminded him that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (1:7). God's power has the ability to sustain us even when the enemy is attacking. God's love reminds us that we are also to love one another, even when they seek your harm. A sound mind is a simple recognition that God is ultimately in control of all things even when we think it is out of control. Are you fearing people around you? Are they holding you back from what God has asked you to do? If so, reignite your passion for God's ways and depend on Him to give you power, love, and a sound mind.

Dear God, when opposition comes my way help me not to quit, but to rely on Your power and love knowing that You are in control.

2 TIMOTHY 1:8-12

Fearing persecution from the government, pressure from the church, and distraction from false teachers Timothy was weakening in his faith and maybe even contemplating quitting the ministry. Earlier in chapter 1, Paul had written for Timothy not to be consumed with a spirit of fear, but rather a spirit of boldness and courage in spreading the message of the gospel. Obviously in the face of intense persecution and even seeing that preaching the gospel had landed Paul in prison, Timothy feared for his own life. I mean, who wouldn't? No one wants to do something which may have a negative backlash and endanger their very life. But Paul felt as if the message of the gospel was worth laying down his life and he desired Timothy to have the same attitude. Paul writes "do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God" (1:8). In the first century, Christians feared persecution for their faith mostly because they were rejecting the belief system of the culture and trusting in Jesus Christ, but the modern day church (in the United States) knows nothing of this type of persecution...yet we are ashamed of the gospel. Sure, we may be laughed at or mocked for speaking the gospel, but usually there is no fear for our life. Jesus Christ has freely given us salvation (1:9), "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel..." (1:10) so that we can share the gospel with others. Paul had been "appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles" (1:11) in order to make this message accessible to all. I believe it is also our responsibility to make sure this message is placed into the hands of the next generation who will also faithfully share the truth about Jesus Christ. What made Paul so courageous in sharing his faith? He knew that his life was in God's hands and would one day experience eternal life with Christ (1:12). There is no need to fear a life that is temporary anyway, so Paul chose to live radically, live passionately, and live faithfully. What about you?

Dear God, I'm not sure why I am so fearful about sharing the life-changing message of the gospel so give me the courage to make my faith public and apologetically share the gospel with others.

2 TIMOTHY 1:13-18

Timothy was under tremendous pressure from all sides and the church at Ephesus was also a part of this stress. They probably disregarded his leadership because he was young and may have been listening to false teachers who were seeking to undermine Timothy's doctrine. Rather than stand firm in his faith, Timothy seemed to be weakening under the attacks, but Paul wanted to be sure he did not quit. He wrote "hold fast the pattern of sound doctrine which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing [salvation] which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us" (1:13-14). Of dire concern was Timothy's belief system (doctrine). Paul had carefully taught Timothy right doctrine, which came directly from God, and he wanted to be certain that he would not compromise his faith. Two men, Phygellus and Hermogenes, had already abandoned Paul in time of opposition and turn their back on their faith (1:15). These men may have been leaders in the church who turned their back on Paul when persecution came their way. Paul did not want Timothy to follow their example, but rather look to Onesiphorus who was a loyal co-laborer with Paul. Onesiphorus did not abandon Paul during the time of persecution, but often visited him in prison and took care of his needs (1:16-18). Through the example of Onesiphorus, Paul was trying to communicate that a person does not have to quit and can be faithful to God's calling, even when it is not popular. You may be looking around and see very few standing for their faith and living the truth; however, you must remember that you are responsible for your life, not the life of others. People may be waiting for you to stand strong in your beliefs and not compromise with the world around you so they can follow. Be the one who remains faithful to your calling as a Christian and do not abandon the God who has saved you and given you all spiritual blessings through Christ Jesus.

Dear God, help me to stand even when no one else is doing so.

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:1-2 about what I believe to be one of the weaknesses of the modern-day church...training leaders from the next generation. Paul gives Timothy clear instructions on what he is to do with the truths of Scripture: "...the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2:2). The concept of spiritual reproduction is simple, yet we somehow miss it. The pastor or spiritual leaders of the church are responsible to take the truth they have been given (from the Word of God) and teach it to others. Paul had taught Timothy the truths of Scripture and now Timothy was to teach others in the church at Ephesus who would in turn teach other men. This idea of coming to church every week, listening to the message, and walking away with no action is not what Paul intended. We should willingly receive the truths of Scripture, obey God's commands, and then encourage others to obey Him also. If the current generation fails to challenge the next generation to obey God, eventually our society will become godless. Parents have a responsibility to pass on the truth to their children, pastors have a responsibility to pass on the truth to their congregation, men have a responsibility to pass on the truth to other men, women have a responsibility to pass on the truth to other women, and students have a responsibility to pass on the truth to their friends. The list could continue but you get the idea - God has given mature Christians the mandate to pass on the truth. Before you think this is just an exchange of information, let me also remind you that the truth must also be demonstrated in lifestyle. The truth of God's word is just information until we do something with it. God did not mean for us to know all the facts and memorize a bunch of verses, but He intended that the way we think and act be changed. As you have been entrusted with the truth of Scripture, pass it on through instruction and demonstration. When we take this command seriously, it will change the generation to follow.

Dear God, use me to pass on the truth to the next generation.

2 TIMOTHY 2:3-13

Through the end of chapter 2, Paul provides a pattern of the man of God. Using several understandable illustrations, Paul compares the consistent Christian life to a soldier (2:3-4), an athlete (2:5), a farmer (2:6-7), the life of Jesus Christ (2:8-13), a worker (2:14-19), a vessel (2:20-23), and a servant (2:24-26). Today we will look at the first four illustrations. First, Paul compares the man of God to a soldier. Living the Christian life is easily compared to a battle because the follower of Christ is engaged in warfare against Satan and his evil system of values and beliefs. During the time of Paul's writing, the church was experiencing severe persecution and could likely identify with war. Paul wanted to remind Timothy (and the church) that he was involved in battle and not to allow the actions of the world to cause him to quit (2:3-4). Next, Paul illustrates the faithful Christian life by comparing it to an athlete who "competes according to the rules" (2:5). Scripture is the "rulebook" of life and believers must read and obey it in order to compete properly. In verse 7 Paul illustrates the character of the man of God by examining a farmer. Farmers are universally recognized as hard workers who faithfully do their job with the hope of future harvest. The follower of Christ should not be lazy but rather carry out the work to which God has called him knowing that in the end his work will be rewarded. Of course, Jesus Christ is the best example of a man of God because He became God in human flesh and perfectly lived out the Christian life (2:8-13). Jesus was raised from the dead (2:8) after having suffered death for the sake of sinners. Now Paul was faithful to also preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and he desired Timothy to follow in his steps. Let us never become discouraged to the point of quitting but pray that God gives us strength to fight as the soldier, obey the rules as the athlete, work hard as the farmer, and strive to live holy as Jesus.

Dear God, help me never to quit, but to be faithful to the ministry to which you have called me.

2 TIMOTHY 2:14-26

Paul had already used four illustrations to describe the character of the man of God. In the first part of chapter 2 Paul compared the faithful follower of Christ to a soldier (2:3-4), an athlete (2:5), a farmer (2:6-7), and also the perfect example of Jesus Christ (2:8-13). Today, we will take a look at his comparisons with a worker (2:14-19), a vessel (2:20-23), and a servant (2:24-26). First of all, the worker in the kingdom of God is called to abstain from senseless arguing with false teachers (2:14). Timothy, no doubt, had many confrontations with false teachers who were attempting to deceive the church at Ephesus into accepting another gospel, but Paul challenged Timothy not to waste his words on them. Instead, Timothy should "be diligent to present yourself [himself] approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2:15). A man of God should spend more time studying, understanding, and communicating Scripture rather than debating doctrine with false teachers (2:16). Paul even mentioned specific false teachers (Hymenaeus and Philetus) who had spread an erroneous message and confused those in the church (2:17-19). Paul also uses an illustration of vessels of gold/silver and wood/clay. The gold and silver vessels served a greater purpose than the vessels of wood and clay. Gold and silver vessels are used to serve family and guests while wood and clay vessels were used to dispose of trash. A man of God should seek to be a vessel of gold and silver which symbolizes usefulness in the hands of God for His purposes (2:21). We remain useful to God when we continue in the truth and live a life of obedience to His word. Paul challenges Timothy to "flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2:22). The last illustration is a servant (2:24-26). "A servant of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition...so that they may know the truth..." (2:24-25). In these illustrations, Paul was urging Timothy to be focused like a worker, clean as a usable vessel, and humble as a servant. Leaders must lead with passion, with purpose, and with purity.

Dear God, help me to be a leader with character and integrity that I may share the gospel with boldness.

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9

Paul wanted to remind Timothy that he was living in the "last days." In this passage, the last days simply point to the time following Jesus' life here on earth; in other words, we are currently living in the last days before Christ will return in the clouds to remove all Christians from the earth to be with Him. Some refer to the time we are living in as the church age, which implies that the church is responsible to spread the message of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for sin. Whatever we label it, we are living in the last days before God will pour out His wrath upon those who reject salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. An explanation is given to Timothy as to what he can expect in the last days. "In the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (3:3-5). The implication is clear - these characteristics will become worse as time goes on and will define the lives of the people within the culture. This extensive list is frightening when you compare it to the world around us. What is even more alarming is that these character points are defining people who profess a relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul warns Timothy to stay away from anyone who manifests these characteristics because they have a tendency to be vulnerable to the deception of false teachers (3:6-9). Let us be completely aware of the dangerous times we live in and guard against allowing these attitudes.

Dear God, I know we are living in the last days so help me to obey You and guard against the sinful characteristics of the world. May I also keep myself away from the influence of those whose lives are filled with disobedience, rebellion, and sinful habits.

2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

Timothy had been facing a lot of pressure from false teachers, haters of Christians, and immature people in the church. It seems that Paul is writing to Timothy in order to challenge him not to quit the ministry. Paul is quick to remind Timothy that he had seen him undergo persecution, but the Lord had delivered him and provided the strength to endure (3:10-11). "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (3:12). Even though the false teachers and evil men continue to "grow worse and worse" Timothy was to "continue in the things which he had learned and been assured of...that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (3:14-15). Timothy had been taught Scripture from a young age giving him a solid foundation of faith in God. Paul as well as Timothy's family invested much time into teaching him the word of God so that he would become a committed follower of Jesus Christ. A huge emphasis is placed on the strength and power of Scripture. Paul writes what I believe to be some of the most important words in the Bible: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." (3:16). All words in Scripture are inspired, meaning they are God-breathed. So, when Scripture speaks, God speaks (MacArthur Study Bible). This gives the words value and meaning because they are God's words to human beings. Paul then shows Timothy the value of Scripture - it is profitable for doctrine (what is right), for reproof (what is wrong), for correction (how to get it right), and instruction in righteousness (how to keep it right). In other words, Scripture has all the answers to living and enduring the life to which God has called us. To be a man of God, a man must be a man of the Word. Paul goes on to point out the result of being a man of the Word - "that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (3:17). I'm not exactly sure if Timothy had been ignoring the word of God as a result of his ongoing persecution and stress, but it seems as if Paul is urging him to rediscover the power of Scripture in order to become a man of good works. I firmly believe that Scripture is one of the key elements in living a holy life. Ignoring the word of God will leave a person full of their own opinions, ideals, philosophies, and viewpoints but allowing Scripture to influence our daily life will provide the capability to do the will of God.

Dear God, I love Your word. Help me to consistently spend time allowing it to change me into the person You desire me to become.

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

Paul feared that Timothy was losing his passion for ministry because of the tremendous pressure coming from false teachers, immature people in the church, and persecutors of the church. Out of concern for Timothy, Paul wrote this letter and challenged him to "stir up the gift of God...for God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:6-7). Instead of fearing people, Paul commanded Timothy to be more concerned about God's view of him. One day Jesus will "judge the living and the dead at his appearing and His kingdom" (4:1). This was Paul's way of reminding Timothy that God was watching his ministry and in the future will evaluate him according to his faithfulness. Then, with passion in his pen Paul writes "Preach the word! Be instant in season and out of season" (4:2a). This means he should preach the gospel when it is popular and even when it is not. Preaching was to consist of convincing and rebuking (correcting sinful behavior) as well as exhorting and teaching (instructing in doctrine). Paul warns that the time would come when people will believe false teaching and only desire to hear what makes them feel good (4:2-4). Timothy was to preach the entire word of God without compromise and "be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your [his] ministry" (4:5). It is easier to quit than to continue doing something which is not popular, but Timothy was to be faithful in all things. Even when things got tough, he was to carry on. I believe the command is the same for those who name the name of Jesus Christ - we must faithfully spread the message of salvation to all people, tribes, tongues, and nations. We should not back down. We should not give up but we should be faithful until our work on earth is done!

Dear God, when I feel like quitting remind me of the great responsibility to preach Your word to all those who will hear. Help me never back down or never give up!

2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8

We must keep in mind that one of the big reasons Paul wrote this letter to Timothy was because he was nearing the end of his life and was, in a sense, passing the torch of leadership on to Timothy. If Timothy was to quit or lose heart, Paul's ministry may not continue into the next generation. Paul's time was short here on earth and he fully recognized that fact. Paul writes "for I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand" (4:6). However, even though his life was about to come to a close, he was able to reflect back on what God had accomplished through his willingness to be used. His words are strong and an important reminder for all of us to be faithful to God's purposes until the end: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (4:7). Paul had lived his Christian life as a soldier (one who was not distracted by the world), an athlete (one who did not quit until he had finished God's will), and a devoted follower of Jesus Christ (one who had obeyed God until the end). Because he was faithful in this life, Paul knew there was a "crown of righteousness" in store for him when he would appear before Jesus Christ (4:8). This crown of righteousness was probably not a literal crown, but rather the future righteousness a believer will receive at Christ's appearing. This time will signify that our work on earth is done and that we have been granted eternal righteousness - something we have never before experienced. Paul knew the hardships of this life could not compare with the future glory he would experience one day. I believe this attitude is what sustained Paul through many trials. It is as if Paul is trying to challenge Timothy to be faithful to God because eternal life will be the reward which makes all the earthly struggle worth it. Maybe today you want to give up and quit. Just remember that your current hardships are only temporary and God will reward you with eternal righteousness!

Dear God, continue reminding me of the glories which await those who finish faithfully in the work You've called them to do. May I be faithful to the end.

2 TIMOTHY 4:9-22

In his concluding words of this letter, Paul asked Timothy to come quickly to visit him in prison because he was well aware that his days were few (4:9). Paul provided Timothy with a couple updates on people who were working alongside him in the ministry. He wrote that Demas had forsaken him "having loved this present world." Demas had apparently abandoned Paul as the pressure mounted and forsook his friend. Paul had sent Crescens and Titus to minister in different places and only Luke remained with him (4:10-11a). Paul did request that Timothy bring Mark with him "for he is useful to me for ministry." This is an amazing statement because according to Acts 15:36-41 Paul and Barnabas had a falling out over John Mark. It appears that John Mark had abandoned them earlier and Paul felt Mark was not ready to minister. But in this letter to Timothy, Paul's heart had changed toward John Mark and he felt that Mark had matured in his faith. Paul gives some other final instructions in his letter to Timothy (4:12-16) and Paul closes his letter with some powerful words. "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" Paul had a life of hardship and persecution, but the Lord sustained Him so that he might be able to spread the gospel to the Gentiles. He was faithful to complete the work entrusted to him by God because he knew he would soon enter into His heavenly kingdom. In essence, Paul was giving testimony of God's faithfulness to him during his ministry so that Timothy would know that God would also sustain him through much adversity. I guess if there is one overriding message of Paul's second letter to Timothy it is this - Be faithful to God until the end! We must closely examine our hearts and daily commit to carrying out God's work. We must never give up. We must never quit. We must be faithful because the glories which await us pale in comparison to what God has in store for those who love Him.

Dear God, help me to be faithful to the end and look forward to eternity with You.

INTRODUCTION TO TITUS

This pastoral letter was written by the Apostle Paul around AD 62-64 to the young pastor, Titus. Paul's writing to Titus is very similar in nature to 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy because he is mainly providing advice and encouragement in the operations of the church. Titus was most likely converted under Paul's ministry during his first missionary journey and showed great promise as a young leader. It is likely he became a traveling companion on Paul's second and third missionary journey. Through his times with Paul, he had been exposed to many situations which equipped him for the ministry. Titus had labored together with Paul on the island of Crete where he was eventually left behind to "set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city...." (1:5). Titus had a large task ahead but Paul knew he could handle it through the power of Christ. For the churches in Crete to be effective, Paul wrote that the leaders must be godly (1:5-16), the church must have right behavior within the church (2:1-15), and the church must have right behavior outside the church (3:1-11). Living in this manner would assure the churches of Crete that they would be effective in their witness and carry out the work of God. I believe the letter of Titus will serve as a great reminder to live holy in this present age.

TITUS 1:1-4

In his introductory words to the young pastor, Titus, Paul introduces himself as "a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ." By referring to himself as a bondservant, he was confessing his unwavering service to God. When I picture a servant, I imagine one who gives himself completely and willingly over to the will of another in order to accomplish the task at hand. Paul was truly an example of one who had devoted his life to accomplishing the purposes of God. He also describes himself as an apostle. An apostle is defined as one who delivers a message for another. In Paul's case he was proclaiming the wonderful message of the gospel to all who would hear and receive. God had called him to preach this message on His behalf which gave him the authority to speak in the name of God. So, Paul willingly submitted himself as a servant of God to spread the truth of the gospel as an apostle. With this authority given to him by God, Paul was concerned about continuing the spread of the gospel to the next generation. Much like Timothy, Titus was also a young pastor who had been left on the island of Crete to provide leadership to the churches. Paul writes to Titus as "a true son in our common faith" (1:4). From the very first words of this letter, we can surmise that Paul had a sincere love for Titus and desired to see him effectively minister the truth to all in Crete. I think these first few verses are a great challenge to the church to invest time and much effort into future leaders. Paul knew he would not live forever, but he was assuring the continuation of his ministry by developing young leaders in the faith. Let us not ignore the youth, but raise them up to be communicators of truth and the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. If you are a spiritually mature leader, invest time in the youth. If you are young leader in the faith, seek wisdom from those who have experience in ministry. By doing this, we can be assured that the next generation will hear and have the opportunity to receive the truth.

Dear God, use me to carry the truth to the next generation!

TITUS 1:5-9

One of the main reasons Paul left Titus on the island of Crete was to "appoint elders in every city" (1:5). Weak leadership in the church would lead to instability and disunity, so Titus needed to empower men who were spiritually mature to pastor and oversee these congregations. This would be no easy task because not just anyone could be an elder, but only those who were qualified. Paul goes on to list the qualifications of an elder which are very similar to the ones he had written to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:1-7). An elder must be blameless. Being blameless is probably the primary characteristic of an elder because it implies a life free from controversy or indiscretion. Someone who was plagued by a shameful public testimony should not hold the office of an elder. Secondly, he must be the husband of one wife which literally means he should be a one-woman man. His children also should be faithful "not accused of dissipation or insubordination" (1:6). Simply put, the pastor must be able to handle his own household before guiding the church. An elder is a steward of God meaning that he has been entrusted to carefully handle the truth as well as the church (1:7a). Paul goes on to write that one who leads the church must not be "self-willed, quick-tempered, given to wine, violent, or greedy for money" (1:7b). On the other hand, the elder must be "hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word...that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict" (1:8-9). Yes, the standard for being a leader in the church is high, but God desires people who will represent Him well before the people. Again, God is not expecting a man to be perfect, but to be completely devoted to follow in His steps. The church is very close to the heart of God. Paul even wrote in the letter to the Ephesians that Christ loved the church and sacrificially gave Himself for it, so an elder must also have a great love for the people of God. Let the standard remain high for those who wish to lead the people of God and may they continually submitted to His will. If you are already a leader in the church, rededicate yourself to exhibiting these characteristics in your ministry. Represent God's church blamelessly that others may see your example and seek to follow.

Dear God, make me a blameless leader before Your people. Do not allow me to let down my guard. May I take the ministry You have entrusted to me seriously and lead the people in the way they should go.

TITUS 1:10-16

After providing Titus with the type of person who could lead the church, Paul turns his attention to the responsibility of the elders. The task ahead would not be an easy one, but God would grant the strength to handle every circumstance so that His church can be effective in spreading the gospel. Paul reminded Titus that "there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain" (1:10-11). These false teachers were Jews who believed that circumcision was necessary for salvation. Apparently, they were spreading a false message to the churches in Crete seeking to deceive many for the purpose of financial gain. Paul further defined the character of these false teachers by using a quote from the Cretan poet, Epimenides: "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (1:12). Paul knew these men must be stopped, but he understood Titus would not be able to do this alone. Titus needed spiritually mature men to come alongside him and conduct the ministry of the churches with integrity, consistency, and doctrinal purity. The task of the elders would be to rebuke those people who were listening the false teachers and bring them back to a position of being "sound in the faith" (1:13-14). Although the words of the false teachers sounded spiritual, the faithful should have been able to tell they were lying because of the sinfulness of their lifestyle. Paul writes that the false teachers "profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work" (1:16). The church must remain a place of sound doctrine and not allow deceitful men to enter in with teachings which do not reflect the word of God. There are even many in our modern day churches who are saying things in the name of God, but in reality are not speaking the truth. One of the best ways to distinguish what is being said is to examine the actions of the teacher. What is in the heart will always manifest itself in action. Do not be a Christian who is always caught up in the latest "doctrinal trend" but be discerning and a lover of the truth. God has provided us with His word to give us guidance and direction. Never grasp on to something labeled spiritual without first comparing it to Scripture.

Dear God, I desire to be a discerning Christian who is faithful to uphold the purity of the word of God. May I reject those who attempt to teach that which is contrary to Your word. Protect the church by sending many wise men who will stand for truth.

TITUS 2:1-10

In the first chapter of Titus, Paul spent most of his words addressing the characteristics of leaders in the church. In order for a church to attain God's calling, they must be led by those who are spiritually mature in the faith (Titus 1:5-16). However, when godly leadership is in place, those who make up the church must also seek to live godly lives. Paul gets very specific about the character of different people groups within the church and provides exactly what is expected from the Cretan Christians. Before Paul expounds the list he gives the key to godly character - a proper response to biblical truth (2:1). As the word of God is faithfully preached by the leaders, people should respond to the truth by modeling a holy lifestyle. The first group of people Paul addresses is the older men. He commands that they "be sober [sensible], reverent [dignified], sound in faith, in love, in patience" (2:2). Secondly, he advises the older women. The older women must be "reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things" (2:3). Along with these character issues, the older women are also given the responsibility to teach the younger women "to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet [appropriate in all situations], chaste [pure], homemakers [keeping a peaceful home for her husband and children], good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (2:4-5). The younger men should be "sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you" (2:6-8). Last, Paul gives the character of the employees. Those who work for another should "be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering [stealing money], but showing all good fidelity [loyalty], that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (2:9-10). Although this is a large list of character points, you need to find which category you fit in and make these characteristics a part of your life. When you have godly character, you honor God and the outside world is drawn to Him. Seek to live a life worthy of that which you believe. Model Christian character in your words, your attitudes, your actions, and your reactions. Allow God to shape your life through His truth.

Dear God, help me to live a life of character so that people's attention might be drawn to You.

TITUS 2:11-15

In Titus 1, Paul had addressed the character of leadership in the church and provided him with the qualities which make a leader effective in ministry. In Titus 2, Paul dealt with the character of those within the church and the importance of modeling a godly lifestyle. The church could not reach its full potential in the community until righteous behavior characterized the people. So, what makes a person live an obedient lifestyle before God and others? Paul has already alluded to the answer - proper doctrine. When a person has the right belief system, it should lead to right attitudes and actions. And when a leader is clothed with integrity and those within the church are living right, God's will is being fulfilled. To remind them of this, Paul writes "for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (2:11-12). In essence, Paul is saying that genuine salvation has the ability to change someones actions and cause them to resist the power of sin over them. New life in Christ should result in a transformed life before God and others. Paul writes in Romans 6:6-7 - "...our old man was crucified with Him [Christ], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died [with Christ] has been freed from sin." To the Cretans, this should have been good news - they no longer had to live under the power and control of sin! Now God's people should be able to look "for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing [the rapture and millennial kingdom] of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (2:13). Jesus Christ became the sacrifice for our sin so that He could "redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (2:14). The church has been saved in order to do good. Are you characterized by good works toward God and others?

Dear God, make me zealous for good works and realize that I do not have to live under sin's control.

TITUS 3:1

The final advice given by Paul to the young pastor, Titus, was regarding behavior outside the walls of the church. Paul had spent the first words of his letter addressing behavior inside the church...mainly the leadership (Titus 1) and the congregation (Titus 2); however, the believers must also exemplify proper behavior outside the church. The first instruction Paul writes is "to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work" (3:1). A good Christian testimony in the community is directly related to the response of believers to human authorities (government). In a day where people are always complaining and badmouthing government, the follower of Christ should never get caught up in rebellion against these God-given authorities. Although many members of the government are not Christians, we are called to submit to their authority. What should be the substitute for criticism? Prayer. Paul wrote to Timothy, who was also a young pastor, about this same issue of government and here is what he said: "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority..." (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Rather than spending all your waking hours criticizing government authority and discussing what you think they should be doing, believers should pray and be thankful for them. I am not saying that they always make the right decisions, but I am commanded to pray for them. Paul gives a stern reminder to the believers on the island of Crete - submit to human authority. Do not get caught in the media and 24-hour news coverage which spends every moment analyzing governmental decisions. Be distinct...be different...it is easy to sit back and judge, but it is another thing to show your support by praying!

Dear God, I thank you for placing authority in our lives. I pray that You would help them to make the right decisions and help me to be supportive, even when I do not agree with their choices.

TITUS 3:2-15

As Paul closes out this letter to Titus, he leaves instructions about the behavior of believers outside the walls of the church. It was extremely important that the church conducted themselves with integrity and love while interacting with those who were outside the church. The actions of Christians would directly affect the way the lost would think about Jesus Christ. If there was no distinction in their conduct, why would non-believers want to become believers? Paul had already challenged the followers of Christ to submit themselves to government authority (3:1) and he continues his instructions by commanding them to "speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men" (3:2). Then Paul reminds them of their past so that pride would not enter into their relationships with others: "For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (3:3). I guess we all need this reminder in case we think highly of ourselves when it comes to relationships. So what now makes the difference in the lives of these Cretan believers? Paul writes that only through "the kindness and the love of God our Savior" we have experienced mercy and forgiveness (3:4). The implication is clear - we have accepted God's forgiveness and we must extend patience and forgiveness to those who treat us wrong. Paul gives them bottom line of what he is trying to say by writing "those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men" (3:8). Those who all called Christians should be characterized by doing good to all people. Before giving his final farewell and instructions with this letter (3:12-15), Paul writes that the Cretan Christians should "avoid foolish disputes [arguing for the sake of arguing], genealogies, contentions, strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned" (3:9-11). Paul has written many things in these last verses of Titus, but we must heed his words for they will bring effectiveness to the church in reaching out to a lost world who needs to hear the saving message of Jesus Christ.

Dear God, fill me with good works so that others will see You living through me!

INTRODUCTION TO PHILEMON

This is the shortest letter written by Paul in the New Testament and is classified as a prison epistle (written while Paul was imprisoned). Philemon is closely associated with the book of Colossians and was probably written around the same time, AD 60-62. Paul was writing to Philemon, a relatively wealthy man owning a respectably sized house (v.2) and also at least one slave named Onesimus. Philemon was a follower of Christ and his home was even used as a gathering place for a church as indicated in verse 2. The real thrust of this letter is not about a church or even a doctrinal treatise, but rather written to address an isolated circumstance which transpired between Philemon and his slave, Onesimus. Apparently Onesimus had stolen something from Philemon and ran away. This act, under Roman law, was punishable by death. In God's providence, Onesimus fled to Rome (where countless runaway slaves hid) and met the apostle Paul who was being held as a prisoner. Although we are not certain of the circumstances surrounding this providential meeting, Onesimus came to faith in Jesus Christ under the teaching of Paul. It seems that Onesimus was honest with Paul about his situation so Paul sent this letter by the hand of Onesimus who carried it to Philemon. In this very personal letter, Paul asks Philemon to forgive Onesimus and receive him as a brother in the faith. Even though Paul never uses the word forgiveness, this letter relevantly explains the meaning of the act of forgiveness. In the brief twenty-five verses, the reader is challenged to be characterized by mercy even when people treat you wrong. Paul's message is clear - may those of us who have been forgiven of much be the quickest to forgive others.

Dear God, teach me about mercy and forgiveness through the reading of Philemon.

PHILEMON 1-7

Paul begins this letter to Philemon in an odd sort of way. We do know that at the time of this writing he was imprisoned, but rather than declaring himself as a prisoner of Rome he declares himself a "prisoner of Jesus Christ" (v.1). This declaration proves that Paul looked at every situation as being God's plan and he was content to accept his hardship. Even from the very first verse we can surmise that Paul was preparing Philemon to accept the wrong which had been done to him by his slave, Onesimus. Paul writes to "Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer" and offers "grace...and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (v.3). Instead of getting right to the point, Paul spends some time commending Philemon for his godly character. Paul writes "I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints" (vv.4-5). It appears that Philemon had a great love for God, which led to a great love for people; furthermore, Philemon was known as one who refreshed the hearts of the people (vv.6-7). From every appearance, Philemon was a man of God who had a passionate love for God and a good reputation amongst the church. Because of his integrity, Paul knew he could speak openly to Philemon about the situation at hand. I believe approachability is imperative in the Christian faith. Others believers should have the feeling that they can approach you about a particular circumstance without you becoming angry or defensive. Philemon is a perfect example of one who was ready to listen so that he could be a better follower of Jesus Christ.

Dear God, help me to listen to the advice of others without becoming defensive or angry. May I be humble and willing to examine my heart to see if I need to change.

PHILEMON 8-16

After commending Philemon for his "love and faith...toward the Lord Jesus and all saints" Paul began unveiling the ultimate purpose behind his writing this letter. Philemon had a slave named Onesimus who had stolen some things from him and ran away to Rome. Onesimus' actions were punishable under Roman law and Philemon had every right to discipline him if he was found. However, in his fleeing to Rome Onesimus providentially met Paul, became a follower of Christ, and became useful in the Lord's work (v.11). It does appear that Onesimus was honest with Paul and revealed his sinful deeds against his former master, Philemon. Paul knew that this situation must be resolved so he wrote these words and sent them by the hand of Onesimus: "though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you...for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains" (vv.8-10). Paul had every right, as an apostle, to demand that Philemon forgive Onesimus but he wanted it to be because of their mutual love for one another, not out of forcefulness. Onesimus had become a great help to Paul during his imprisonment and desired that Onesimus could continue to minister to his needs during this hardship (vv.12-13). You have to respect Paul because he wanted to make sure that Onesimus had taken care of any unresolved issues before he continued ministering in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe there is a two-fold lesson here. First, those who desire to serve should resolve any sins from the past before representing the name of Christ. Secondly, those who have a tainted past can be forgiven and become useful in God's work. Paul reminds Philemon that even evil can be turned around for good. In this case, God used Onesimus' sin to bring him in contact with Paul, who was able to share the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ with him (v.15). Now Paul was asking Philemon to accept Onesimus "no longer as a slave but more than a slave - [as] a beloved brother" (v.16). As a follower of Christ we should be quick to forgive, remembering that God freely forgave us of all our sin (Romans 5:8).

Dear God, may I have an attitude of forgiveness toward all people.

PHILEMON 17-25

Since Paul strongly believed that God had providentially allowed Onesimus (runaway slave who had stolen from Philemon) and him to meet, Paul wrote Philemon a letter asking him to forgive Onesimus for his wrongdoing. Onesimus had become a follower of Christ during Paul's imprisonment in Rome and now spent much of his time ministering to the needs of Paul. He had become valuable to Paul (vv.11-13), but he also wanted to make sure Onesimus straightened out his unresolved issues with Philemon. So Paul was sending this letter by the hand of Onesimus in order to ask Philemon to extend forgiveness to the runaway slave who was now a fellow believer. In concluding this very brief letter Paul writes from his heart "receive him [Onesimus] as you would me. But if he has wronged you or owes you anything, put that on my account" (vv.17-18). This is a perfect picture of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross when the sin of mankind was placed on His account in order that man might be forgiven. Paul did not hold the sin of Onesimus over his head, but willingly accepted him as a brother and now he is challenging Philemon to do the same. Paul reminds Philemon that he is forever indebted to him because through Paul's witness he had received the message of the gospel (v.19). There was confidence in the heart of Paul that Philemon would willingly forgive Onesimus for his sin (v.21). I believe the letter Paul wrote to Philemon is so relevant to us. Every day we encounter situations where people treat us wrongly and do things against us which are offensive. However, we must always remember the forgiveness of Jesus Christ offered to us with no strings attached. When you are treated unfairly, be quick to extend a forgiving hand because when you do so, you are acting like Jesus.

Dear God, may I freely forgive anyone who does wrong to me.